1-1-2014

The Human Robot: A Narrative Study of Identity Change in Mexico Through an Analysis of Mexican Films

Cesar Vela-Beltran-del-Rio

Nova Southeastern University, cesarvelabr@gmail.com

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The Human Robot: A Narrative Study of Identity Change in Mexico
Through an Analysis of Mexican Films

by

César Vela-Beltrán-del-Río

A Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2014
Abstract

In order to succeed in an intellectually, economically, socially, and politically controlled system, as México, one has to develop a sense of inner direction and empowerment, where critical thinking is vital yet patriarchy becomes an impediment to the development of an inner compass and empowerment when it shapes and controls the masses’ identity and behavior through different strategies, methods, and institutions. One of the most powerful and popular identity shaping strategies is film making. Film is considered by most as a source of entertainment portraying social interactions. Yet it is a powerful identity-shaping tool for the establishment. It has been used by the Mexican government and its associates, for a long time, in an effort to sustain the status quo and justify its existence and social performance. The selected methodology of this study allowed comparison and contrasting of messages transmitted about identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts, using films from three different periods of the development of México: agricultural (1920s-1950s), industrial (1950s-1990s), and neoliberal (1990s-today). Religion, social interactions, gender, ethnicity, and nation-states are some of the main themes that emerged from this exploration of identity and behavior shaping strategies used in the Mexican films analyzed. The Identity shaping strategies are an efficient way of dealing with conflict because controlling and constraining is done by the individuals rather than by the nation-state.
Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by César Vela-Beltrán-del-Río under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

05/27/14
Date of Defense

Marcia Sweedler, Ph.D.
Chair

Susanne Marshall, Ph.D.

Cheryl Duckworth, Ph.D.

7/31/2014
Date of Final Approval

Marcia Sweedler, Ph.D.
Chair
Dedication

The dissertation is dedicated to Alexa María and Juan Pablo, my children, who had to endure this almost never ending adventure; suffered with me hardships and enjoyed beautiful endless moments because we were together. Their staying with me and their most kind words made all the difference in the world. Alexa María and Juan Pablo have also encouraged me to continue becoming a better person and father.
Acknowledgements

This is only a small subset of all the people that impacted and helped reach this achievement, while at the same time, close this cycle of my life. First of all, I would like to thank God for allowing me to finish what He had me start almost eight years ago. I also need to thank my children: Alexa María and Juan Pablo, in order of appearance in order to avoid unnecessary conflict. They helped me with their unconditional love and presence. I must as well thank my parents, César and Concepción Socorro, for their example, love, support, values, and encouragement. I have to thank my siblings Iliana, René, Jorge, and Conty for all those happy years growing up together. I am also grateful to Gustavo and Ileana Muñoz that have been significant supporters of my life endeavors. To my friends, Jaime, Jorge, José Antonio, Gerardo, and Alfredo, who are my brothers as well. Finally, I also have to thank my friends that shared this path with me: Héctor, Aniuska, Amy, Consuelo, Nawal, Ronald, and Hassan.

I especially need to thank my Committee Members, Marcia, Susie, and Cheryl for their endless generosity, mentorship, and their continual support. Without their help, I would not have been able to finish. I also need to thank Elena, Judith, and Richard for all their help and mentorship. Gay and Aarika were also very supportive and interested in my wellbeing. I likewise need to thank Nova Southeastern University which offered me a job that helped me support my children for almost eight years and making it possible for me to link theory and practice. Finally, thanks to the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología in México for granting me a five-year scholarship that provided the necessary funds to be able to start the process.
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Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

Snapshot

In a globalized world, where infringements against human rights and other abuses are harder than ever to keep secret, governments wishing to control and influence the population must do so by giving an impression of using seemingly civilized, natural, and neutral processes. However, society has always been organized to sustain the interests of elite groups. Different mechanisms have been used historically and globally to uphold this way of life. For instance, the “Mesoamerica[n] religion legitimized [their] hierarchy, [it cemented the] social bonds between the elite and the peasantry. Religion was closely associated with social organization and political authority” (Acuña, 2004, p. 4). But this social arrangement and the mechanism used, religion, are not exclusive to the mentioned region. Society’s relational patterns and structural organization are not neutral; they are designed to sustain the interests of elite groups.

The elite, also defined as patriarchy, controls the current socio-political economic and production system and delineates people’s identities, behavior, and their social roles. This has been historically accomplished by “force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor” (Bem, 1993, p. 40). However, as we will see, there are many more social concepts, mechanisms, strategies, and/or institutions that shape each individual’s identity and behavior. For instance,

within society, the state is the predominant or, at least in certain historical cases, the exclusive organization. Political power denotes, within the state society, the exercise of effective control of the power holders over the power addressees.
Social control, in the narrower sense of contemporary political science, is the policy-making or policy-deciding function and the ability to make the power addresses obey the policy decision. The core of every political system, thus, lies in the ideologies, institutions, and techniques operative within the state society for the attainment, exercise, and control of political power. (Loewenstein, 1957, pp. 6-7)

However, when most people think about individual identity and identity shaping, they hardly ever consider mass control, marginalization, dispossession, and even self-constriction for the benefit of others, usually a small privileged group. Today people everywhere, beyond their understanding and awareness, are being conditioned or programmed by both the local nation-states and the global market, though with different goals (Mathews, 2000). The reason behind it is simple enough: nation-states require defensive/offensive human resources at their disposal, and markets must have consumers. Shaping people’s character with these goals in mind is both profitable and essential for such elite groups; such strategy is about resources, power, and maintaining the status quo. One example of corporate patriarchy is the Disney Company that constantly shapes the identity of the people through manipulating the understanding of the past and how society interacts with it.

There are few cultural icons in the United States that can match the significant power of the Disney Company. …[It] has become synonymous with the notion of innocence that aggressively rewrites the historical and collective identity of the American past. Behind the ideological appeal [, this] multinational conglomerate wields enormous influence pedagogically and politically in a variety of public
spheres… There is the issue of cultural power and how it works to make claims on our understanding of the past, national coherence, and popular memory as a site of injustice, criticism, and renewal. Innocence in Disney’s world becomes the ideological vehicle through which history is both rewritten and purged of its seamy side. In this case, innocence becomes important as an ideological construct less through its appeal to nostalgia, stylized consumption, [and/] or a unified notion of national identity than as marker for recognizing the past as a terrain of pedagogical and ideological struggle. The Disney Company is not ignorant of history, it reinvents it as a pedagogical and political tool to secure its own interests, authority, and power. (Giroux, 1995, pp. 45-46)

**Introduction**

Certain populations have been kept in extreme situations of vulnerability, marginalization, and dispossession for the benefit of elite groups. The *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista National Liberation Army) in its first *Declaración de la Selva Lacandona* (Lacandón Jungle Declaration), in Chiapas, México described their experience and explained why:

We have been denied the most elemental education so that others can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They do not care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food, and no education. Nor are we able freely and democratically to elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace or justice for ourselves and our children. (Farmer, 2005, p. 93)
Statement of the Problem

“If those in charge of our society-politicians, corporate executives, and owners of press and television-can dominate our ideas, they will be secure in their power. They will not need soldiers patrolling the streets. We will control ourselves” (Zinn, 1990, p. 2). Thus, in order to succeed in an intellectually, economically, and politically controlled system, one has to develop a sense of inner direction and empowerment, where critical thinking is vital. Yet, I will argue, patriarchy becomes an impediment to this development of empowerment when it shapes and controls the masses’ identity and behavior through different strategies, methods, and institutions. One of the most powerful and popular identity shaping strategies is film making.

Film is a powerful influence on identities, behavior, and role-identification (Hirschman & Stern, 2000), through the transmission of values or life scripts (Swidler, 1986). Throughout the world large corporations and national and local governments have an interest in maintaining the status quo (Galtung, 1971; Klein, 2007), and therefore, in controlling the film industry (Gordon, 2004). This is because certain films are vehicles to transmit messages about identity, behavior, role-identification, and values or life scripts that support the status quo in which powerless individuals accept their status, while other films are depictions of social movement.

Goals of the Study

To understand how film transmits messages about identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts, one has to:
1. Understand how the socio-political-economic-production changing-context is portrayed through films, seen from the perspective of the identity shaping strategies.

2. Become consciously aware of the messages transmitted.

3. Become aware of the messages that are aimed to sustain the status quo and/or that can potentially be internalized and constrain agency.

4. Understand the individual’s identity creation process.

5. Understand the process by which films shape individual identity, role-identification, values, and life scripts.

6. Produce a model that could be applied to other media and the education system to evaluate and corroborate if the individual’s identity shaping and behavior, the assignment of role-identification, and the transmission of values and life scripts are achieved as they are through film.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The research questions follow:

1. How do films reflect changes in the socio/economic/political systems in México?

2. How is social change shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

3. How is ideology shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

4. How is agency portrayed and constrained in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?
5. How are caste, class, education, ethnicity, gender, kinship, lineage, nationalism, race, and/or societal roles portrayed in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

6. Are identity and identity-change portrayed individually or as part of a larger social context in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

7. How are values and life scripts shown or transmitted in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

8. How can Marxist theory help explain the identity change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

9. How can Galtung’s Structural Theory of Imperialism help explain the social interactions and change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

10. How can Erickson’s Psychiatric Techniques help explain the social change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods?

The following comprise the hypotheses:

1. These types of films do not depict social changes.

2. These types of films do not depict social changes.

3. Ideology is portrayed in these types of films as the desired way of life; as something natural that the whole society practices and religious values foster.

4. Agency is portrayed as a natural trait of human beings as a choice made by individuals and their conscience.
5. Caste, class, education, ethnicity, gender, kinship, lineage, nationalism, race and/or societal roles are portrayed as natural; as based on nature’s principles.

6. These types of identity issues and identity changes will not be addressed in these types of films.

7. Values and life scripts are transmitted through what the characters say and do in these types of films.

8. Marxist theory might help explain why the different characters do what they do and how they are assigned to different social groups.

9. Galtung’s Structural Theory of Imperialism might help explain why the different characters do what they do and how they are assigned to different social groups.

10. Erickson’s Psychiatric Techniques might help explain the characters’ behavior in this type of movies.

**Expected Contributions and Limitations of the Study**

**Contributions.** The first and obvious contribution of the present research is related to providing information and understanding about how identity and behavior are shaped by media, in particular films. This is important because there is basically no information about the subject. This is true for the United States and most developed countries, but it is particularly the case for México.

Secondly, it will bring to the light that identity and behavior shaping and manipulating is a common practice.
Third, people who go through this identity change need help and guidance in order to adapt to the new reality or paradigm upon which I will elaborate throughout my thesis.

Fourth, the conflict definition has to be updated in order to incorporate this practice.

**Limitations.** The limitations to my research had to do with the type of methodology used. For many academics phenomenology would have been a better fit in order to understand the inner process. Yet, because identity shaping is an unconscious process, I chose narrative description. Nonetheless, hearing what people think and feel about this process would have been both enriching and complementary.

**Additional Research**

More research has to be done in relation to the effects of media over identity and behavior, because people assume that identity shaping and behavioral choices are independent of the media messages—but as this research has proven, that appreciation is incorrect. Media and film in particular have profound affectations over identity and behavior—especially with children and young adults. Furthermore, there is basically no research about this topic. The same research can also be performed for television and print media. A phenomenological research would potentially be a great tool to determine how media messages and values transmitted have effects over identity and behavior.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

I believe that since we are the stories that resonate with us, due to our experiences, desires, and needs, it is vital to know history, both the dominant and what for you is the real one, in order to shape our identity according to our needs and desires; not only to what society requires.

Identity Formation Process

Introduction

Looking at the history of my country, I have noticed that those who are uncertain of their identity or because they need an alternate identity due to their group’s circumstances, usually go back to their roots, real or imagined. This could be done with the intention of clearing doubts, clarifying acceptable paths, measuring movement, remembering alliances and loyalties, gathering strength, clarifying hierarchies and goals, embracing an alternative identity that would allow them better access to resources, or remembering better times or circumstances. This takes them to previous times and/or even previous cultures, usually with a desirable status quo. However, this can prevent them from looking at the present and perceiving the future. Furthermore, these people are kept entertained without looking at their surrounding environment and getting ahead financially and otherwise. In a globalized environment, those who do not have identity issues are always facing the future firmly linked to their surrounding environment, where identity is usually and currently not all encompassing but is only an aspect of whom they are and determines their behavior under certain circumstances or in a specific situation. When you are not sure about whom you really are (identity and behavior wise), valuable time is “wasted” not connecting to the environment and being successful. In such
circumstances, valuable time is “invested” trying to figure out who you are and who you are not. And therefore, you are not planning for a better future and wasting the present. Identity is not determined by one’s essence but instead through the groups to which one belongs. Yet, this is not the way it has always been, especially in México, where identity has been usually all encompassing. This current apparently unsurpassable gap, between people facing the past and those facing the future, has to be eliminated so Mexicans can become more competitive and define their own destiny by correctly reading the environment and therefore, acting accordingly. There are, of course, other important aspects that determine foreign dependency, but mental dependency would not be one of them. The current National Mexican identity is not the right one to accomplish this task.

In Mexican history, I see recurring themes, values, and attitudes, including Mexican identities and behavior, blood or violence, disconnection from the land, misunderstood obedience, religiosity, and/or spirituality real or ritual but with real consequences for the current wellbeing. Yet that is changing: ignorance, dispossession and marginalization, and silence are normal relational patterns for Mexicans. Is this recurrence a sort of reincarnation, until people learn to do it correctly, or is it a perception shift, back to their true essence or culture? Or is it a development cycle that all cultures must have to go to?

**Maslow’s Need Pyramid**

According the Maslow’s Needs Pyramid (Sweedler & Kent, 1992), human beings share the same basic needs throughout the world, regardless of their specific cultures (see Figure 1). The correct link to the environment assures access to higher levels of satisfaction and to the higher needs, from physiological; to safety; then love, belonging,
or affection; esteem; and finally to self-actualization. Without a minimal degree of satisfaction of the lower needs, individuals cannot adequately reach higher needs and satisfaction levels required for living a fulfilling life. It is for this reason that the incorrect connection with the environment would foster negative satisfaction levels but exclusively at the lower layers of the Needs Pyramid, without allowing those individuals access to the higher needs and satisfaction levels. The incorrect identity and behavior also keep individuals at the lower stages and dissatisfaction levels because such circumstance discourages an appropriate link with the environment. This situation would deprive most from achieving self-actualization and esteem. Even love, belonging, or affection is reserved for the lucky few with access to resources. In the case of México, approximately 50 percent of its population lives in poverty or extreme poverty. In such conditions, an alternate understanding of the reality is provided by governments to try to peacefully and efficiently manage the population, without major social incidents.
Overview of the Section

The literature review section will include context and theory subsections that affect the identity-shaping process, summarizing them and explaining how they relate to the study. The context subsection will briefly touch on the most commonly used identity-shaping strategies or mechanisms. I believe that it is important to be aware of the most common identity shaping strategies or mechanisms because I consider that they operate in a coordinated and reinforcing manner. The theory subsection will describe how identity formation is a lifelong process, greatly influenced by the context; by the way individuals define who they are and what they do within their society, according to their

*Figure 1.* Maslow’s hierarchy of needs adapted from Maslow (1943); Sweedler & Kent (1992).
personal characteristics or preferences. Powerful forces shape individual identity. The concepts and theories that follow will help explain how the human identity, at every level, is shaped by different social players, including institutions and media, through diverse, coordinated, and reinforcing stimuli.

**Context**

**Conflict and Social Change.** Conflict is endemic to humankind. However, it is never perceived and/or understood the same way by each involved individual. “Conflict is universal yet distinct in every culture; it is common to all persons yet experienced uniquely by every individual” (Augsburger, 1992, p. 18). Some perceive it as triggered in the pursuit of scarce resources and/or power (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). Yet others identify it as incompatible beliefs and interpretations of the world (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). I believe conflict is also about clashing identities (Black, 2003) and shaping people’s identity, controlling their behavior, and assigning some to lower social roles without them being aware. Negative peace and the inexistence of latent conflict do not imply the absence of structural marginalizing and dispossessing barriers and conditions. It simply means the conflict has yet to emerge into the public’s overt domain.

Throughout human history, a quest for resources has fostered conflict. Some conquering nations and individuals have learned to control the purposely subdued populations, like the Roman Empire did it, even though there were repeated bloodbaths. Others simply massacred the dominated local populations, like the European countries that invaded and conquered the American continent.

Population control has been engineered through social interactions where the dominated parties learn to replicate submissive, passive, and other ‘socially acceptable’
behaviors assigned to them. This has historically been the case in all the colonies and even in some countries, including the United States, where the African American slaves and later citizens during the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and part of the twentieth century behaved in such a manner, internalizing the social norms established for them. The underlying motivation for this type of relationship is the self-interest of dominant groups.

The twentieth century was characterized by its contrasts, including countless technical advances and the resultant human tragedies, including the use of the atomic bomb, DuPont’s India accident, and other environmental damage, such as the Exxon Valdez crash in Alaska, the BP oil leak in the Gulf of México, and the Japanese nuclear disaster in Fukushima. Natural catastrophes and diseases hit globally, but while there are substructures ready to help, the assistance comes with severe conditions favorable to the provider, e.g., through covenants attached to credit lines or inaccessible to the masses due to its cost. These schemes, upheld by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are common in Latin America, yet are not exclusive to the region. The Shock Doctrine, according to Naomi Klein (2007), is a common practice because “only a crisis-actual or perceived-produces real change” (p. 7). That is what happened in Sri Lanka after the 2004 Tsunami when:

foreign investors and international lenders had teamed up to use the atmosphere of panic to hand the entire beautiful coastline over to entrepreneurs who quickly built large resorts, blocking hundreds of thousands of fishing people from rebuilding their villages near the water. (Klein, 2007, p. 9)
During the twentieth century there was a massive development of antibiotics and medical breakthroughs to cure most common diseases and save lives, but most could not afford them. Inequality grew as never before; currently “20 percent consume 86 percent of all goods and services, while the poorest 20 percent consume just 1.3 percent” (McMichael, 2008, p. 1). Food tech—which includes developments that have increased the food supply through process optimization, storing mechanisms, the way food is transported, and other means have changed the way some live. Yet, even though it was a reality, millions starved and poverty reached 50% in some populations, including those in México. Wars of all kinds brought death and misery to most, yet others profited, e.g., the privatization schemes used during the Iranian and Afghanistan wars.

Last century was without doubt one where conflict levels dramatically rose. On the darkest side, the world witnessed: two world wars; a major holocaust; countless regional wars, including revolutions and civil wars; and ethnic purges, massacres and genocides. Death estimates exclusively from those conflicts range from 160-180 million people during the twentieth century;¹ 160 to 180 million people represent between 50 and almost 60 percent of the current population of the United States.

Identity shaping is not isolated from the wider world. Sociopolitical economic systems and crises are not natural and predetermined, but in many occasions are produced and used for ulterior purposes. In our minds, identity related changes are the results of antagonistic and polarizing forces. It is through the assumptions, belief systems, and the ideology of groups we belong to, as we will see in the “Identity” subsection, that

¹ See related data on the following web pages: http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/war-1900.htm and http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/massacre.html
individuals define who they are, their behavior, and who they are not. Furthermore, conflict is also an identity-related phenomena [, since] it is widely assumed that differences in ethnicity, race, gender, nationalism, and so on somehow cause conflict. …Less widely recognized, though, is the fact that conflict can play an important role in generating and sustaining social identity. In other words, deep-rooted social identity may be a product of conflict at least as much as deep-rooted conflict is a product of clashing social identities. … many (if not most) deep-rooted conflicts seem to involve parties organized around competing social identities. (Black, 2003, pp. 122-123)

During the Second World War, for instance, Adolph Hitler and his military team shaped the identity and behavior of the German population to produce the offensive/defensive resources needed during WWII through use of propaganda, certain ideas of ethnic superiority (the Arian race), nationalism, and the related Nazi ideology. On the other hand, the targeted groups, under such adverse circumstances, also modified their behavior. For example, the targeted Jewish populations refrained from fighting back because they believed this strategy was their best alternative. Such forces are extremely difficult to resist.

**Religion.** According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, religion “is a set of beliefs, symbols, and practices, which is based on the idea of the sacred, and which unites believers into a socio-religious community” (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 560). Religion, through the values it passes, outlines proper and improper behaviors too. This shapes the
identity aiming to control the behavior of the followers or believers. This strategy reduces overt conflict because behavior is framed as a personal choice based on sacred reasons.

The concept of religion has changed through time, mainly because of sociopolitical and economic systems, but these new forms are also considered religious identity shapers because social scientists see religion as a continuum, distinguishing the original sacred concept or institutional from civil, invisible, and private religions, and secularization (Scott & Marshall, 2005). For instance, it is argued that in modern America [civil religion practices] were attaching sacred qualities to certain of their institutional arrangements and historical events. … The theme of American civil religion was therefore one of Americans as the new Chosen People… The basic idea behind this and other variants of the ‘civil religion thesis’ is that in advanced industrial societies, which are increasingly secular in terms of institutional religions, civil religions (such as the celebration of the state or civil society) now serve the functions of prescribing the overall values of society, providing social cohesion, and facilitating emotional expression. In other words, civil religions offer a ‘functional equivalent’ or ‘functional alternative’ to institutional religions, since they meet the same needs within the social system. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 71)

Secularization, as part of the religious effect on identity, has mirrored the additional options and greater control that individuals have over the environment due to technological advances, as opposed to competency only assigned to God not long ago. But the religious effect is embedded with ideology due to the requirements of the
changing socio political economic system (Scott & Marshall, 2005). Religion is not about God and/or spirituality any more but about control and the dynamic needs of the system.

Religion is considered an all-encompassing or a salient identity shaper, and conflict, under its realm, is portrayed as a struggle between good and evil (Black, 2003). Black also mentions that “because religion so often claims for itself a special status as the domain of the ultimate truth and morality, religious teachings are very likely to be mobilized as offensive or defensive weapons” (p. 132). The religiously-shaped identity does not require being an expert on the belief and related subjects.

**Globalization.** Throughout human history, survival has gone from strength based to knowledge supported, yet it continues to be a brutal confrontation. In prehistoric times, endurance tools or weapons have their origins in rocks and bones, but now knowledge and capital provide the ultimate competitive edge, financing exclusively what is deemed required or benefits the system, including technological advances; because without financing competitors go bankrupt. Yet, sociopolitical economic systems control everything that does not benefit them through many means, including not funding certain projects, ‘market mechanisms,’ or even violence.

The human experience has taken the long path. Culture has gone from community based to individually determined due to the use of technology, from God-centered to a scientifically driven economic pursuit, from countless regional languages to a few, basically all encompassing, and finally from local to global.

Globalization refers to the process that is making the world homogeneous and smaller, due to technological advances. This process aims at eliminating the identity baggage that creates diversity; the concept describes a “global cultural system” (Scott &
According to Scott and Marshall (2005), this development is the outcome of: a worldwide information system; cosmopolitan life-styles, and the extension of human rights; global entertainment, including sports, and tourism; globalized attitudes, beliefs, patterns, and consumption rights; worldwide armed forces, a political system, and other related movements; the reduction of national sovereignty; worldwide environmental and health emergencies; and the fact that religions’ relational patterns are getting closer, among other causes.

More importantly, globalism involves a new consciousness of the world as a single place. Globalization has been described, therefore, as ‘the concrete structuration of the world as a whole’: that is a growing awareness at a global level that ‘the world’ is a continually constructed environment. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 249)

This new perception has changed and/or demanded the change of millions. This ‘new reality’ constitutes the required perception shift that changes peoples’ identity. In other words, a new social organization requires a new type of citizen; one that behaves and relates differently than citizens in the previous sociopolitical and economic systems. Nationalism attempted to make similar what was diverse in culture and identity, while globalization is attempting to make people from every country all the same, and for that purpose it is shaping not only our identity and behavior, but also our understanding of the world.

**Language.** Language assigns words with meaning to reality and circumstances that both create and describe the environment, which changes through time and cultures. One example of created reality is nation-states, which relied on people believing in
imagined communities for social cohesion. The issue with language is that people perceive reality differently and have different ideas about the world, among many other things. For this reason, the assigned meaning to each word changes from individual to individual; humans see the world differently and language tries to homologize it in theory, in order to efficiently transfer and receive messages. Besides shaping the perception of the world, language also shapes people’s identity.

[Languages cover] any verbal or non-verbal communication engaged in by human, animals, or even machines… [Additionally;] languages in many ways reflect the culture of a society [at a specific time] … For example, languages show how societies classify and evaluate their environment, including kinship relations, the animal kingdom, colors, food, and the natural world. Each society has its own distinctive system of classification which serves in part to maintain boundaries between insiders and outsiders… The power of language can be seen in political rhetoric or slogan-making, where single words (such as ‘democracy’) or phrases (such as ‘Black is Beautiful’) can mobilize large and diverse groups to political action [or even genocide]. Language also demonstrates important divisions within societies that reflect broader political and economic factors. For example, Basil Bernstein has shown that, although middle and working classes’ speech codes are linguistically of equal validity, the working-class (or restricted) code is liable to be discriminated against in the educational arena. A similar phenomenon may be perceived in the relationship between language and regional, ethnic, or religious background. On the other hand, ethnic groups may utilize their languages as a symbolic means of fostering or developing their own self identity, or as a means
of defense against encroachment by outsiders. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, pp. 353-354)

**Dominant Culture.** Societies also regularly impose values and behavior on minorities. This is done with the purpose of imposing, on certain groups, an allowed behavior and being able to control them. Money, power, and media are the devices most commonly used to accomplish such goals.

Whereas traditional societies can be characterized by a high consistency of cultural traits and customs, modern societies are often a conglomeration of different, often competing, cultures and subcultures. In such situation of diversity, a dominant culture is one whose values, language, and ways of behaving are imposed on a subordinate culture or cultures through economic or political power. This may be achieved through legal or political suppression of other sets of values and patterns of behavior, or monopolizing the media of communication. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 166)

**Dominant Ideology Thesis.** Ideology and/or coercion—along with money, power, and media—are likewise used to manipulate certain groups against their own interests. Ideology and/or coercion are also used to control the population. The excuses used to implement such strategies socially are usually social cohesion and peace. Under such circumstances, the masses do not pursue and protect their own interests but are conditioned to support the status quo.

Proponents of this thesis identify ideology, a term used (in this context) synonymously with concepts such as shared belief systems, ultimate values, and common culture, as the mainstay of social order in advanced capitalist societies.
The argument assumes that, in class-stratified societies, the ruling class controls the production of ideas as well as material production. It propagates a set of coherent beliefs which dominate subordinate meaning systems and, as a consequence, shapes working-class consciousness in the interests of the status quo. The dominant class effectively diffuses a false consciousness among the masses who are thus rendered incapable of defending their class interests. In other words, a dominant ideology functions to incorporate the working class into capitalist society, thereby maintaining social cohesion.

[This theory helps explain why revolutionary behavior is not normally associated with the working class. Yet this theory is under scrutiny because theorists have] failed to explain the process by which the ruling imposes such ideology on the masses.

…Both the feudal manor and capitalist family firm depend on the conservation and accumulation of property. Private possession of land and capital required a stable marriage system, with unambiguous rules about inheritance, legitimacy, and remarriage. The dominant ideology was a complex of legal, moral, and religious values which had the required effect of preserving wealth. Among the ruling classes, for example, Catholicism and the system of honor provided ideological guarantees that children would remain loyal to the family holdings. By comparison the peasantry (and in early capitalism the factory workforce) were co-opted by the sheer exigencies of laboring to live – the ‘dull compulsion of economic relations. [Yet] even in the late capitalism the “iron cage” of everyday life offers a better explanation of working-class quiescence
than does ideological incorporation. Moral pluralism and great diversity of political, social, and cultural deviance can readily be tolerated because the compliance of subordinate strata is secured by economic constraints, political coercion, and the bureaucratic mechanisms of school, family, workplace, and prison …

In short, the consequences of a dominant ideology for social order have almost certainly been overstated, and the sources of social cohesion are to be found also in economic compulsion and interdependence, legal and political coercion, the constraints of every day routine, and (perhaps) fatalism. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, pp. 167-168)

**Dual Consciousness.** Even though minority members have their own set of beliefs, the formal world and institutions veil the real world and the minority’s real interests. This dual consciousness also encourages the masses to accommodate the elite interests before their own, being forced to adapt to the status quo.

[Dual consciousness is the] term used to describe the world-view of people who simultaneously hold two apparently inconsistent sets of beliefs… This is usually ascribed to the fact that people receive a set of beliefs through general socialization into a dominant culture but have another set of beliefs based on their own practical experiences of life… [The dominant value system and subordinate value system are important concepts because] the former refers to the fact that ‘the social and political definitions of those in dominant positions tend to become objectified and enshrined in the macro institutional orders, so providing the moral framework of the entire social system’… [On the other hand, subordinate value
system is described] as ‘essentially accommodative; that is to say its representation of the class structure and inequality emphasizes various modes of adaptation, rather than full endorsement of, or opposition to, the status quo.’

(Scott & Marshall, 2005, pp. 170-171)

This is really important because people in general but especially young children are being taught by those responsible for them, including their own parents and teachers among many others in power, how to behave and be,

not to see what they see: by which blacks are reassured that there is no real inequality in the world, just their own bad dreams; and by which women are taught not to experience what they experience, in deference to men’s ways of knowing. (Williams, 1997, p. 156)

Likewise,

Growing Up Male: Men don’t suddenly appear in life armed and dangerous. It takes years and years of training to turn boys into violent men. Starting with my personal experiences of raising a son and being a son… That training includes how we are taught to relate to other men, what we are taught about women, and how we are taught to relate to our own cultural and ethnic traditions. (Kivel, 1992, p. 1)

In this way reality becomes personal, definitely not shared by most, and individuals only see what they were trained to not see, a fragmented, fictional reality. Therefore, we all have our own reality. Through this incorrect link to the environment, most do not accomplish much. Some movies put it on the screen for the audiences to see and internalize. Such internalization relates to the human society, how it operates, and its
diverse echelons, along with the rights and access to resources of each social layer. Furthermore, the system is portrayed as indestructible. Finally, the right of access to such world is extremely high for those disenfranchised minorities that actually represent the majorities or masses.

*The Little Mermaid* establishes the world on land and the world under the sea as two contrasting spaces, one factual and one fictive, one real and the other imaginary. In this dualistic and hierarchical construction, the human world can be aligned with the white male system and the water world situated outside that system. In *Women’s Reality* (1981), Ann Wilson Schaef uses the term “white male system” to characterize the dominant culture of American patriarchy. According to Schaef, the white male system operates on several contradictory myths, at least two of which are relevant to the complementary worlds of this film. First, nothing exists outside the white male system; and second, the white male system knows and understands everything (pp. 8-9). Those who are privileged by the white male system are oblivious to anything outside the system, while those outside the system know about the dominant culture as well as their own marginalized culture. These two contradictory myths speak to the relationship between the land and sea worlds: the sea world is rendered either invisible or mythic while the land world is endowed with cultural validity …

As Pat Murphy convincingly argues in his…critique of *The Little Mermaid*, the film firmly establishes a colonialist, first world/third world relationship between the human and sea worlds. The world under the sea, despite its aristocratic décor, is the colonized space of marginalized or muted cultures,
often invisible to the inhabitants of the white male system. Sebastian and many of
the other sea creatures have the facial features of people of color. When in their
own world, the sea creatures spend their days singing and dancing to calypso
music. When they venture across the boundary into the “real world,” they risk
being reduced to human food …

The human oblivion to other worlds becomes a major plot device in the
film [by dismissing the other] world and its inhabitants as mere “fairy tales”…

The repeated depictions of the land and sea as complementary also create
a hierarchical relationship…

Autonomy and independence, as many feminists have recognized, is never
easy; the cost for participating in the white male system can be quite clear. About
to enter the real world, Ariel faces the pain of conforming to impossible ideals as
she physically mutilates her own body by exchanging her fins for the mobility of
human legs. Even more disheartening, she purchases this physical transformation
with her voice. Like so many women who enter “the workforce” or any other
“male sphere,” Ariel wrestles with the double-binding cultural expectations of
choosing between either voice or access, but never both. (Sells, 1995, pp. 178-
179)

This is particularly dangerous when science and history are manipulated to prove
a point and explain the current states of affairs, as if it would have happened naturally
and through normal evolution of institutions and societies. To achieve this, the past is
manipulated to conform to the present, or to prove the accuracy of a theory, and/or to
justify the current status quo.
In different ways Edward Said and Salman Rushdie address the complex relationship between memory and history on the one hand and culture and power on the other. By historicizing culture and problematizing knowledge, both authors point to the necessity for a cultural politics that engages relationship between knowledge and authority, how it is established, and what relationship it has to dominant regimes of representation. Today’s “cultural wars,” largely organized around liberal and conservative arguments, each make claims about how the “past is remembered, understood, and linked to the present”… On one side conservatives invoke claims to national unity and world responsibility through an appeal to a nostalgic past written as an unchanging narrative, the loss of which marks a crisis of leadership and innocence. On the other side, various nationalists and progressives embrace collective memory as something to be merely covered, an essentialized force that must be granted its place in the public arenas that define the parameters of cultural authority. (Giroux, 1995, pp. 43-44)

**Family.** Socially speaking families are considered economic links rather than those created out of love. Such loyalties are established mainly for the accumulation of wealth for the purpose of sustaining a specific status quo. Even though this concept changes across time and cultures, families remain the social unit where most of us learn initially to behave and be, all of which has deep implications for the individuals’ life and for society as well. For these reasons, an important topic within the family is how functions and money are allocated among the members.

The family is an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating, or legal ties. It has a very resilient
social unit that has survived and adapted through time… [Many consider it a declining institution] because it is viewed as an oppressive and bankrupt institution…[mainly because] family oppresses and represses individuality…[and] the nature and consequences of current sex-role divisions in the contemporary family…

Different ethnic and religious groups hold quite a different values and beliefs, and these differences affect not only gender-role conceptions, the internal family divisions of labor, and child-rearing, but also attitudes to work and other social institutions. Similar differences emerge for families of different class backgrounds… Child-raising orientations also vary by social class… [M]idle classes tend to emphasize autonomy and the working class value obedience in their respective off-spring. Kohn attributes this difference in orientation to the father’s occupation, making it clear that family relationships and work roles interconnect.

Families and work have often been conceptualized as separate spheres, with women being linked to the home and men to the workplace… [Some factors that families are: single vs. dual-earners; its life-cycle; and] the timing of earlier events (such as age of first marriage) are shown to have a great impact of later outcomes (such as divorce). Family transitions also have economic consequences. [Additionally,] single-parent families [are another type of family, the structure of which structure also has implications for society]… For example, to what degree does a remarriage terminate the existing child-grandparent relationship, and how
does this affect the transfer of equity, inheritance, and family culture across the
generations?

Through field studies of family organization, Frédéric Le Play (1806-82) claimed to have distinguished four fundamental family types: namely, patriarchal, unstable, [particularistic] and stem. The stem family was described as a more flexible modification of the patriarchal type. It was said to be typical of Central Europe, Spain and Scandinavia; was ideal for stability and prosperity; and consisted of six or seven members, typically free [workers] or farm tenants, with clear intergenerational inheritance of either tenancy or smallholding.

A family form was identified…in the early 1970s and said to be increasingly common, in which the domestic division of labor is less marked, and the home more central to social life and social identities. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, pp. 212-214)

The distinctive roles of husband and wife [are the] result from the division of labor in the family [, where usually] one spouse [is] responsible for supporting the family financially, and the other for the domestic tasks involved in housekeeping and child-care. … [On the other hand,] joint conjugal roles tended to be associated with middle-class marriages… However, while more recent empirical studies suggest that the traditional division of labor is becoming less rigid, it is clear that inequalities remain. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, pp. 570-571)

**Catholicism.** The Catholic Church, or the Roman Catholic Church, is the world’s largest church based on Jesus Christ’s teachings and values, with over one billion followers worldwide, mainly in Latin America. Christianity was founded by Jesus Christ
(0–33 C.E.), who is believed to be the Son of God and a human virgin. Christianity has important Jewish bases. Furthermore, Christians have always believed in one male God, but when this religion was established most competing religions believed in many gods. Christianity survived because the Roman Empire took it as its formal religion before it collapsed and spread it through Europe. Later on, the superpowers of the time, Spain, England, France, and Portugal, mainly, spread it throughout the world.

Catholicism is relevant to the study because México’s population is mostly Catholic. The Catholic Church is led by the Pope, who is also Rome’s Bishop, and under him there are numerous cardinals and bishops, and other lower echelons. According to its teachings, the Catholic Church believes that there is only one true church that was founded by Jesus Christ.

Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Jesus of Nazareth, is believed to be the incarnated Son of God and the central figure to both Christianity and Catholicism. Jesus Christ is considered to be the awaited Messiah, especially for those people living during the Old Testament period. His mission, according to the bible teachings, was to deliver us from evil and create a new alliance with God, for humanity’s sake.

Both Catholics, an independent branch of Christianity, and Christians believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit and that he is the Son of Mary, a virgin. Jesus Christ performed many miracles, founded the Church, was crucified as a voluntary sacrifice to achieve atonement for human sins, rose from the dead after three days, and ascended to heaven. Both Christians and Catholics believe, as well, that Jesus Christ will come back, from Heaven, to earth to judge humanity.
The Catholic Church asserts that its faith, morals, traditions, and values are infallible and has a variety of doctrinal and theological practices. The Catholic Church’s members and followers believe in the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). It also defines its mission as spreading, throughout the world, the Jesus Christ teachings or Gospel, the Sacrament administration, and Charity practices. Its worship practices are liturgical, especially through the Mass celebration, focusing on the Eucharist that is the miracle by which bread and wine become Jesus Christ’s body and blood. This institution only offers the Eucharist to baptized members without sins, forcing its followers to behave in a certain way that would ensure them access to both the Sacraments and Heaven.

One of the most loved beings of the Catholic Church is the Virgin Mary, who became pregnant through the miracle of the Immaculate Conception, and is considered to be Jesus Christ’s mother. Virgin Mary is also believed to have been born without the original sin, that the rest of humanity shares, and be an everlasting Virgin. Finally, it is believed that she flew to Heaven at the end of her life. The Catholic Church emphasizes helping others—mainly the disfranchised, elderly, and the sick—through schools, hospitals, shelters, and other social means, as solidarity.

The Catholic Church, one the world’s oldest institutions, played an important role in shaping history and even the world, unifying Europe, and helping with the conquest of the new world, while controlling the local population. It also fostered art, culture, knowledge, and philosophy. For all these reasons, the papacy became involved with world politics. However, the Catholic Church has been receiving harsh criticism due to its siding with the powerful and controlling of the masses, its sexual practice doctrine,
and the lack of women’s ordination, corruption, money laundering, as well as for its mishandling of sexual-abuse cases of its members against children and young adults.

Most of Jesus Christ’s dogma is embedded in the bible, a book that has shaped the identity and behavior of many generations of both Christians and Catholics, for over 1,300 years, and it is believed by such groups that it was one of God’s creations.

The Bible is perhaps the most widely read book in the world. Historically, it has had a far-reaching impact on society and culture, particularly in the West. The book is of historical value, for it encompasses more than thirteen hundred years of history of the ancient Near East. The Bible also has literary value, having inspired a multitude of great writers throughout many ages. It has moral value as well; its spiritual force has affected the lives of countless individuals, young and old. Undoubtedly, it constitutes an essential part of Western civilization.

The Bible is a literature of faith …

The authority of the Bible has often been supported by the claim that, being dictated by God word by word, the Bible as a whole is the Word of God, and thus entirely free from error, historical as well as theological… [However,] the Bible is a religious book, and religious language is by nature symbolic…

The Bible demonstrates two-way communication between God and people; God elicits human emotion, thought, and action, and people evoke God’s response. The people of the Bible discovered and expressed the meaning and purpose of their lives in God…

Human beings are creatures of meaning. As we inquire into the meaning of our experiences, we participate in those experiences even more deeply.
Meaning does not emerge from nothing, nor is it isolated. Meaning always arises in the historical and social context which people share. Therefore, meaning is by its nature communal…

The inspirational nature of the Bible, therefore, should be viewed in the light of such a communal and historical context…

The Bible furnishes the very basic source of knowledge concerning God and Jesus Christ, and it also generates faith in this God, which steers the life and community of believers. Christians are the ones who elect to follow this pattern in their lives. As such the Bible is a basis of teachings of the Christian community, the Church. Consequently, both the Old and New Testaments constitute a vital source of identity for Christians just as the Hebrew Scripture does for Jews. (Fujita, 1981, pp. 2-4)

**Economic Neoliberalism.** According to Philip McMichael (2008), we must be aware of the “causal forces that transcend national boundaries, economies, and politics” (p. xiii). If we ignore our context, we are bound to socio-political and economic failure. Sociopolitical and economic systems must adapt to times and societies in order to survive but at the same time retain their ultimate goal: human control and the transfer of wealth from nations and individuals.

The thread that weaves together the story of colonialism, developmentalism, and globalization is that development is a project of rule. It takes different forms in different historical periods, and these have been laid out as changing sets of political-economic relations, animated by powerful discourses of discipline and opportunity. … The account of development focuses on social and political
transformations, and the various ways in which development is realized through social and spatial inequalities. (McMichael, 2008, p. xv)

Such transformations are mirrored at the individual level, as well. However, it is important to notice that many times identity changes are initiated at the governmental level with the purposes of changing or modifying the current sociopolitical and economic system, either partially or totally. Without changes at the individuals’ identity level, sociopolitical economic systems will not work efficiently and/or last long.

Economic neoliberalism is described in many complementary ways. For McMichael, it is “a philosophy positing an individual instinct for economic self-interest, justifying elevation of market principles as the organizing principle of society, where private interest trumps [over] the public good” (2008, p. 341). It is also considered a sociopolitical and economic movement that endorses wealth accumulation through free market practices and deregulation policies. It also advocates individuals’ financial independence through agency and access to limited information-dramatically changing the nature of the previous state-citizen relationship. Under this scheme, social justice hopefully will be achieved through market forces and with minimal state interference, which is one of the reasons why, for instance, mediation in the Unites States has been well received within the judicial system and disputants as well. Currently under this scheme, nation-states’ main function is to uphold law and order for exchange viability and market efficiency purposes exclusively.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, neoliberalism is a collection of thoughts impacting, mainly but not exclusively, the economic and political realms (Scott & Marshall, 2005). Economic neoliberalism has become an economic policy that has
been well received by corporate America for forty years as a solution to their shrinking profit income ratio crisis. Even though the term economic neoliberalism is rarely heard of in the United States, its effects are found here too as the social classes’ gap continues to widen, as it happens elsewhere. Economic and political neoliberalism has been enforced upon the world mainly through financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank, in addition to the World Trade Organization, which inspired the corporate elite to revive economic liberalism (Ross & Gibson, 2007).

For some authors, economic neoliberalism has not yet been satisfactorily defined due to its ideological base. However, for Farmer (2005), this movement is linked to an ideology sponsoring the “dominance of a competition-driven market model” (p. 5), where individuals have dissimilar identities and roles relative to the previous agricultural model. Furthermore, such identities and roles are not all encompassing, as in the past, but are based on the groups and roles that the individual is related to. Under the neoliberal system, socially driven matters are at best considered secondary. According to Farmer (2005), neoliberalism purposely avoids explaining economic and social gaps among classes due to its ideological base. Broadly speaking, neoliberalism promotes market supremacy over other social matters, yet it also fosters individual freedom in its search for consumers. Nevertheless the end result is that most lose social mobility and live in misery. In such environments, the state’s role is significantly reduced to exclusively ensure market efficiency and the performance of certain required administrative tasks (Haag, 2002), leaving virtually unattended national control, unemployment, insecurity, and other vital social matters, including illegal activities.
Finally, for the U.S. government, this sociopolitical economic model is linked to reforms pursuing market predominance over social aspects and the related human costs. This model is based on a severe reduction of public social expending such as education, healthcare, and welfare—yet countries specifically tailor it according to their unique needs. Neoliberalism is also based on the abolition of the public-good concept and therefore, pressuring even further the poorest, large segment of society to solve their situation through individual responsibility even though their situation is the direct result of how the system works (Ross & Gibson, 2007), and the structural barriers it creates, producing disfranchised majorities. Economic reforms also take the form of fiscal administration; macro-economic strength; state privatizations; employment conditions, reducing the bargaining power of unions and labor costs through lowering perks and other security contributions, and other flexible employment mechanisms; and trade liberalization or deregulation (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). Other neoliberal reforms also include periodic currency devaluations to allow core countries the possibility of acquiring cheaper, peripherally produced goods and services and assets; harsh foreign debt payment schedules with total and overt disregard of local social needs; infrastructure development aiming for market efficiency; subsidy elimination or drastic reductions on basic consumer goods; and transportation and public spending controls in general (Almeida, 2006).

Large segments of the population, mainly in Latin America, have only experienced paternalistic relations with their local governments and upholding their rights and attaining financial and intellectual independence is much more than a life’s challenge. For instance, half of México’s population lives in poverty and extreme poverty and due to the structural barriers they have endured for generations, becoming financially
and intellectually independent is simply an impossibility. As previously mentioned, an important feature of this system is the brutal reduction of the state’s social expenditures, forcing individuals into poverty when the search for alternative sources of income fails, including the local informal economy, which acts as a social buffer and therefore, are encouraged by the same sociopolitical and economic system. Even though the specific policies are country specific, “the most common attribute is its efforts to maintain a tight money supply and a balanced budget in pursuit of manageable inflation and exchange rates. Balanced, or nearly balanced, budgets are pursued through cutbacks (often quite severe) in social spending” (Haber, 2006, p. 60). “Thus, as the market is prioritized and the state is divested of responsibility for social welfare, relations between social groups are defined by market forces and mediated by civil society itself” (Speed, 2007, p. 175).

Neoliberal reforms in Latin America, in most of the cases, were accompanied by constitutional changes, e.g., Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and México (Speed, 2007). And once the constitutional reforms became effective, the relationship between the state and its citizens changed forever; now both the state and the citizens must adapt to the new reality. In the case of México, this means that in order to govern better, the state must govern less; to optimize the economy, one must govern through the entrepreneurship of autonomous actors–individuals and families, firms and corporations. Once responsibilized and entrepreneurialized, they would govern themselves within a state secured framework of law and order. (Speed, 2007, p. 175)

This new approach to the state-citizen relationship is “about creating new strategies of governance that create the legal, institutional and cultural conditions”
(Speed, 2007, p. 175). I would add that the market has shaped individuals’ identity and behavior accordingly.

Summarizing, neoliberalism is an economic sociopolitical approach to wealth accumulation, characterized by free market practices and deregulation, which acts against the social wellbeing of millions of constrained individuals worldwide through the establishment of market structures. It can be considered as “the newest form of domination” (Gogol, 2002, p. 5). It is a dispossessing and polarizing instrument because of

the imposition on the world of politics which promote the market and cut back on those activities of the state which do not immediately favour business, has brought prosperity to some and poverty to many. The gap between the rich and the poor has grown, both within and between countries. For over a thousand million people, the message is received through extreme poverty, the daily struggle just to get enough food to be undernourished, with all the illness and degradation that that involves. (Holloway & Pelaez, 1998, pp. 2-3)

Sociopolitical and economic systems require their citizens to have a specific identity and behavior, both of which, in many cases, need to be shaped with the system’s goals in mind. Economic neoliberalism did it by changing the local constitutions of many countries in Latin America where there was a paternalistic relationship. Now the citizens of those countries must become proactive and financially independent, something which they have not accomplished for generations because they were conditioned to be obedient and docile.

This leads to Research Questions 1 and 2.
RQ1  How do films reflect the changes in the socio/economic/political systems in México?

RQ2  How is social change shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberalism periods?

**Ideology.** Ideology is a set of values and practices that disguise social asymmetrical relations. It pushes certain dominating ideas while discouraging others. Even here in the United States, there is a preferred ideology. “We grow up in a society where our choice of ideas is limited and where certain ideas dominate…. They constitute an American ideology—that is a dominant pattern of ideas” (Zinn, 1990, p. 3). Those ideas are the result of an “unnatural selection [process] in which certain orthodox ideas are encouraged, financed, and pushed forward by the most powerful mechanisms of our culture. These ideas are preferred because they are safe; they do not threaten established wealth or power” (Zinn, 1990, p. 3). Moreover,

to some, ideology is dogmatic, while to others it carries connotations of political sophistication; to some it refers to dominant modes of thought, and to others it refers primarily to those most alienated by the status quo (e.g. revolutionary movements and parties). To some it is based in the concrete interests of a social class, while to others it is characterized by the absence of economic self-interest. (Gerring, 1997, p. 957)

The androcentric ideology, through its patriarchal structure, establishes the mechanisms to shape people’s identity, behavior, and roles, “whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit … [defining] social and political policy” (Ross & Gibson,
Furthermore, according to Campbell, myth is actually related to humans’ desires, fears, and needs (2008), and therefore, is a highly efficient behavior motivator when linked to any ideology.

Ideology or indoctrination has been commonly used to shape social change and/or to uphold a desired status quo. In the Mexican case, for instance, the new elite in power wanted to use it to sustain their changes after over 100 years of internal armed turmoil and the 1910 revolution.

We must enter and conquer the minds of the children, the minds of the young, because they do and they must belong to the revolution. … Our socialist education attempts to inculcate in our children a true sympathy for the working class and for the ideals of the revolution. (Benjamin, 2000, p. 485)

**Ideology in Film.** In relation to this study, accurately understanding a film depends on the audience’s familiarity with the values and way of life it portrays, because films also convey the ideology of the filmmaker or the parties he or she represents.

Ideology is usually defined as a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture. The term is generally associated with politics and party platforms, but it can also mean a given set of values that are implicit in any human enterprise-including filmmaking. Virtually every movie presents us with [a] role model, ideal ways of behaving, negative traits, and an implied morality based in the filmmaker’s sense of right and wrong. In short, every film has a slant, a given ideological perspective that privileges certain characters, institutions, behaviors, and motives as attractive, and downgrades an opposing set as repellent. (Giannetti, 1999, p. 396)
Films portray ideologies differently: neutral, implicit, and explicit (Giannetti, 1999), yet, the overwhelming majority of fiction films fall into the implicit category. In other words, because the characters don’t talk at length about what they believe in, we have got to dig beneath the surface and construct their value systems on the basis of what their goals are, what they take for granted, how they behave with others, how they react to a crisis, and so on. (Giannetti, 1999, p. 398)

Some of the ideological values that are more commonly portrayed in films are the following, presented as dualities (Giannetti, 1999, pp. 401-411). The values offered here are simply the messages the filmmakers want to convey to their audiences through different dualities. First, we have the democratic-hereditary duality.

Leftists believe that human behavior is learned and can be changed by proper environmental incentives. Antisocial behavior is largely the result of poverty, prejudice, lack of education, and low social status rather than human nature or lack of character. (Giannetti, 1999, p. 402)

Secondly, we have the relative-absolute duality, followed by the secular-religious pair. In fourth place is the future-past duality.

In general, leftists view the past with disdain because it was dominated by ignorance, class conflict, and exploitation of the weak. Future, on the other hand, is filled with hope, with infinite promise of improvement. (Giannetti, 1999, p. 405)

The fifth duality relates to cooperation-competition. The sixth relates to outsiders-insiders
“Leftists identify with the poor, the disenfranchised. They often romanticize rebels as outsiders” (Giannetti, 1999, p. 407). In seventh place we have the international-nationalistic duality. And finally, in eighth place, is the sexual freedom-marital monogamy duality. However, there might be other dualities for other theorists.

Ideological ideas and frames of mind are used to shape individuals’ identity and behavior. The world is not black or white, and therefore dualities do not offer the gray tones that life offers. When people are given dualities to choose from, it is easy to manipulate the outcome.

This leads to Research Question 3.

RQ3 How is ideology shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial and neoliberalism periods?

**Mexican Education System.** The current Mexican education system is the result of centuries of social struggles for intellectual and economic independence. Originally, it was one of the means used to create and secure the status quo that involved controlling and exploiting the local population for centuries, while wealth was being transferred to Spain. The individual’s character and the social engineering of the people were originally performed through the Education Secretariat during the 1920s-1930s that followed the Mexican Revolution:

the new Mexican citizen would be formed in the government school… Educators sought to redeem the child, the adult, the woman, the peasant and the worker, the nation… To integrate Mexico through the rural school – that is to reach the people of the mountains and of the faraway valleys, the millions of people that are
Mexicans but are not yet Mexican, to teach them the love of Mexico and the meaning of Mexico. (Benjamin, 2000, pp. 479–480)

The role-identity analysis was a fit for the agrarian society, while in an industrial society people are expected to constantly switch jobs or roles (Gellner, 2006). Therefore, in industrial societies, identity, behavior, and constrained professional mobility are manipulated, while at the same time people are minimally and similarly trained, and consequently can be easily substituted due to the labor division strategy of businesses and technological innovations (Gellner, 2006).

Furthermore, the education system, as currently used, is no longer used to shorten the gap between the have and the have-nots; on the contrary, it is about the pillage and control because

the crises affecting the teachings and learning processes around the world must be grounded in the history of capitalism and its constant crises. The current ‘gales of creative destruction’ are aimed at gathering greater profits; moreover, this necessities exercising greater control over every person, organization, institution, process, and activity that threaten neoliberal goals. (Brosio, 2007, p. ix)

**Media.** According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2005), mass media is:

[a one way] means of communication, such as print, radio, or television…[that] dominates the mental life of modern societies… [That is why it was been analyzed in relation to its] possible dangers, [such as the] media content studies, concerned with the cultural quality of media output, or with specific biases and effects such as stereotyping or the promotion of anti-social behavior and violence, especially in children’s television. [This renewed analysis is due to the fact that
under the mass media pressure, otherwise stable communities] would be highly vulnerable to the appeals of totalitarian mass movements. (pp. 393-394)

Seen from the nation-state perspective,
the role of the nascent media, especially newspapers and novels [but films included], in providing the means—such as ‘empty space’ [concept that describes the idea of simultaneity, crucial to imagining others at parking in the national community]-whereby it would become possible for people to think of themselves as having a culture in common with others they have never met and will never meet—[in other words, of developing a national identity—and the role of the elites and intelligentsias engaging in nation and state building, often for personal gain, are also taken into consideration. (De La Garza, 1988, p. 10)

Of all the available media options, I will be focusing on films because of their quick and efficient narrative and due to the fact that they attract large audiences, including international. Also films appear to construct conditioning or programming features, because

social scientists have traditionally conceptualized media as serving one of two functions in society: Either they effect social change…or they further the social control of predominant ideologies and the social structures. The latter function, by which mainstream media perpetuate existing institutions, regnant values, and normative social systems… Not surprisingly, Hollywood cinema has figured importantly in efforts to posit media as significant forces in the consolidation, extension, and continuation of the established social order. … Their guiding assumption is that the regular oscillation between popular cinema’s challenges to
and maintenance of social values and structures enables Hollywood to serve as both an agent of social control and change. (Slocum, 2000, p. 649)

This is not a new concept. William Hays, the film czar in the 1920s, said it more eloquently: “just as you serve the leisure hours of the masses, so do you rivet the girders of society” (Hays, 1927, p. 29).

These men who will speak to you realize that they are the responsible custodians not only of the greatest industries in the world, but of a most potent instrument for moral influence, inspiration, and education and of the most universal medium of art that the world has ever known. (Hays, 1927, p. 31)

Far beyond this physical or commercial importance of motion pictures is their importance as an influence upon the ideas and ideals, upon the conduct and customs of those who see them. (p. 32)

He was responsible for creating a code with the ‘Don’ts and Be Carefuls’ for the film industry that outlined the proper representation of race relations (miscegenation), profanity, nudity, and sex perversion, among other concepts, in the United States for generations.

Identity in Context. The power of films is that their audiences “identify with the situation the character is in” (Suber, 2006, p. 206), and therefore, remember a potential behavioral response. Under such conditions, individuals act as films’ heroes do because since the child is partly conditioned before he can manipulate symbols, he is formed without being able to put any distance between him and what is happening to him. … The result is that the person acts out his hero-style automatically and uncritically for the rest of his life. (Mathews, 2000, p. 14)
Octavio Paz (2002) phrases it differently, by linking the effects of non-amended child traumas to society. “La persistencia de traumas y estructuras psíquicas infantiles en la vida adulta es el equivalente de la permanencia de ciertas estructuras históricas en las sociedades [the persistence of uncorrected traumas and of psychological child structures during adulthood is the equivalent of the permanency of certain historic structures in societies]” (p. 72).

Moreover, every film portrays the characters’ attitudes, or the ways they position themselves, through time, relative to life itself and others (Suber, 2006). Films also deal with attributes, including unconscious/instinctive behavior, over which people have no control due to genetics, social rules, aptitudes, outside people’s “conscious intention or control, and thus part of our fate” (Suber, p. 33). This suggests audiences evaluate people, including themselves, by what they do and not by whom they are or the daily challenges they face that are beyond their awareness and control. This identity-shaping mechanism is successful because films offer to their audience, depending on the theory, values or scripts filled with “habits, skills, and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’” (Swidler, 1986, p. 273) and ultimately their identity, because we are what we do and think; that is our identity, that is who we are.

**Other identity shaping categories.** In an effort to complete the continuum of identity-shaping tools, I am also considering other categories such as agency, caste, class, ethnicity, gender, groups' shared experiences, kinship, lineage, nationalism, race, region, sexual orientation, social roles, and urban district location. All these social constructs are embedded with an ideology that signals behavior. More specific to the Mexican case, Octavio Paz, who is well known for writing about the Mexican Identity, also includes as
identity changing strategies “mitos, ritos, y metáforas (myths, rites, and metaphors)” (Paz, 2000, p. 29). It is important to keep in mind that all of the identities shaping strategies reinforce each other; all of them coexist, “as with class, none of the possible bases for social identity…exists in isolation; the empirical challenge for conflict analysis and resolution is to specify in particular situations just how they are mutually intertwined” (Black, 2003, p. 133).

**Agency.** First, agency refers to independent human action; “the psychological and social psychological make-up of the actor, and to imply the capacity for willed (voluntary) action” (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 8). For Winslade and Monk (2001), agency is the act of diminishing the extent to which the discursive context can capture and control a person’s activities. … It is helpful to recognize that there is enormous variation in the extent to which people are constrained or encouraged by discursive placement. (p. 100)

For Bush and Folger (2005) agency is a matter of “basic human consciousness, every person senses that he or she is a separate, autonomous agent, authoring his or her own life” (p. 60). Yet at the same time, we are social beings too. Other theorists refer to agency when considering groups, organizations, and nations as well. Both agency and structures are located at both micro and macro levels. Theoretically speaking, agency has been tied to structures of any type including mental, culture, and language (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004).

The powerful connectedness-individuality duality of humans determines our identity. This balance can be manipulated, and therefore our identity altered and controlled.
This leads to Research Question 4.

**RQ4** How is agency portrayed and constrained in Mexican films from the rural, industrial and neoliberalism periods?

*Caste*. Caste is an identity group “which [is] differentially ranked within a stratified social system. … [It is based on an] ideology of purity and pollution and [therefore, the individuals’] intrinsic worth, combined with a set of rules for intergroup interaction, scaffold this system” (Black, 2003, p. 135). Other distinctive traits of this identity shaping strategy include that

it is characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system, based on concepts of purity and pollution. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 55)

The issue with castes that is relevant to the study is that lower strata members accept and interiorize the concepts, values, and rules provided by the system they live in that result in their marginalization and dispossession (Black, 2003). It also assumes that there is a cosmic order to life that must not be changed and that social improvement and mobility are only seized by reincarnation after a successful life of accepting the status quo (Scott & Marshall, 2005). These ideas translate into identity and behavior changes.

*Class*. Third, class refers to the social class individuals belong to. According to Black (2003) social class is

defined by differential relations to the production of wealth, are objectively real and determinative of social relations, especially in the form of class conflict. [It] is fundamental to other social identities… [and] may in whole or in part be
derived from position in an occupational structure and thus, of course, in the class system. (p. 133)

The term indicates that social classes have different and even polarizing interests and ways of life. This is because it is widely believed that we live in a zero-sum world, where the sum of total assets is fixed, and whatever I do not have, it is because someone else has it. It is important to notice that the underlying criterion for defining a class is its interest definition, as “classes have objective interests” (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 75). This involves “a set of environmental variables (concentration of factories, communication, mechanization), a distinctive way of life and distinctive cultural activities” (p. 73). Furthermore,

class structure is…a terrain of social relations that determine objective material interests of the actors, and class struggle is understood as the form of social practices which attempt to realize those interests [and] class consciousness can be understood as the subjective process that shape intentional choices with respect to those interests and struggles. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 75)

It is how those choices are shaped through the manipulation of the identity with the purpose of controlling the behavior of the class members that is relevant to the present study. The concept of class presupposes aimed and coordinated efforts to seize their interests.

*Ethnicity.* Fourth, ethnicity is a synonym of the term ethnic group and describes “individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, and from which they develop their distinctive cultural behavior from an ethnic group” (Scott &
The considered characteristics may be biological but more important are the cultural aspects, such as language, occupation, political affiliation, and/or religion.

Ethnicity is a term with ethnocentric roots in the United States that was coined to deal with power relations and policymaking both locally and abroad. It is supposed to be a concept to replace the term tribe; it is also a social outcome of the effects of the nation-states (Black 2003). “Briefly, as previously autonomous cultural groups are brought into the orbit of the state, symbolic markers of difference, often drawn from tradition, real or invented, are incorporated into understandings of the self and the other” (Black, p. 125), with huge political implications. Since by thinking and then acting as though ethnic groups were the result of natural process instead of being the products of human activity, the boundaries between them are constituted as permanent features of the natural world instead of the social order, thus becoming reified. Furthermore, cultural ideologies of ethnicity (as well as other forms of the social identity) often represent a response to threat. … This ethnogenesis is often a consequence of the ideological activities of elites. … Social identities are vulnerable to history, especially to the social enactment over time of important cultural propositions about selves, groups, and the relations between them. (Black, 2003, pp. 125-127)

**Gender.** Fifth, gender is to sex what ethnicity is to race. While sex and race are considered biological outcomes that define the individuals’ characteristics, gender and ethnicity are social constructs. Furthermore, it is important to consider that “gender
relations (like race relations and ethnic relations) are often also power relations” (Black, 2003, p. 131). Gender is the

socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity. … The term has become extended to refer not only individual identity and personality but also, at the symbolic level, to cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, and at the structural level, to the sexual division of labor in institutions and organizations. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 240)

It is important to consider that through these cultural processes the “human sexual dimorphism is converted by social processes to human gender dimorphism that can serve as the basis for identity group formation” (Black, 2003, p. 131). Furthermore, a social role “highlights the social expectations attached to particular social positions and analyzes the workings of such expectations… Here, roles become institutionalized clusters of normative rights and obligations” (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 569). It is under these circumstances that “gender roles and gender role expectations, which differ from culture to culture, are the crucial determinants of gender differences” (Black, p. 130), and therefore identity and behavior are shaped.

**Kinship.** Sixth, kinship has been the organizing structure of society historically. These relationships aid in shaping the identity and behavior of individuals, as well as understanding the reason behind the political, economic, and social interactions. These organizing principles also include the establishment of “rights in the sexual, reproductive, economic and domestic services of women” (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 335). Furthermore,
kinship models establish relationships between individuals and groups on the model of relationships between parents and children, between siblings, and between marital partners. … [T]hese relationships are systematic, entailing the observation of norms relating to behavior between those related by kin or affinity. The relationships between parents and children (and by extension between grandparents and grandchildren) determine modes of inheritance as well as the overall political relationship between generations. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 335)

Access to elite groups is extremely difficult to achieve; membership is exclusive through birth and marriage (Black, 2003), but the access criteria are not universal: different ethnic and religious groups hold quite different values and beliefs, and its differences affect not only gender-role conceptions, the internal family division of labour and child-rearing, but also attitudes to work and other social institutions. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 213)

We need to remember that family and kinship do mold individuals’ identity and behavior, also causing conflict, through role performance relative to expectation, among other causes. That is why I would say that the values and life perception received at home are seldom questioned, if at all.

**Lineage and clan.** Seventh, lineage and clan are also social structures whose relational patterns are ruled by how closely related the group members are.

A clan is a unilineal kin group which is usually exogamous, claiming descent from a common ancestor… Clans are of either matrilineal (matriclan) or patrilineal (patriclan) descent, recruiting the children as either male or female
members accordingly. A clan is usually segmented into lineages, which are the branches of decent from a common ancestor. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 72)

These social organizations are usually structured around labor division or ritual functions. These social cells are relevant to the study because they are also organized around performance and gender and labor division, all of which shape identity and behavior.

Nationalism. Eighth, nationalism is a social construction aiming to homogenize local populations and hierarchizing the nation-state above everything else—but it is important to realize that there are types.

However, it also entails certain assumptions about the will to self-determination, the existence and indeed desirability of diversity, the superiority of the sovereign state over other forms of rule, and the centrality of national loyalty to politician power as the basic form of legitimation. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 437)

Nationalism can be defined as either Western/civic or Eastern/ethnic depending on the goals pursued. For the Westerners nationalism offers a cultural justification, as understood by the masses, for the political system in place, while for the Easterners it provides the justification for the implementation of the nation-state and related processes taking into consideration the local population requirements (Scott & Marshall, 2005). It is within that context that individuals shape their sense of identity.

People are born into a particular nationality, which then determines their interests, sentiments, and sense of attachment to a particular nation. This distinction is appealing to many Western and liberal observers, because it allows them to differentiate between of a freely chosen, politically decent nationalism…and the
nationalism that celebrates inherited cultural identity. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 438)

Its rituals, ideas, and values have contributed to consider nationalism as a civil or civic religion; others consider it as a kind of a secular form of consciousness (Scott & Marshall, 2005). Yet, there are some accounts of nationalism [that] appear [to be] deterministic. For example, Ernest Gellner’s writings…suggest that history can be seen as a succession of changing technologies, each of which generates the need for a specific socio-political order, and that nationalism is the style of politics that is best suited to the current (industrial) technology (because industrial societies, unlike agrarian ones, need homogeneous languages and culture in order to work efficiently). (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 438)

Sociopolitical, economic, and production systems are so powerful, shaping the masses’ identity because some authors trace nationalism to (possibly innate) human tendencies to affiliate in social groups, and then act in the furtherance of these groups. Within this particular research paradigm, social identities are viewed as integral aspects of an overall sense self; those rooted in racial or national groups are found to be particularly important for self-esteem; and so it is difficult for people not to think nationalistically, to feel loyalties to their given (even if ‘imagined’) national community, and to pursue its particular interests against those of other nations. (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 438)
**Race.** Ninth, race as considered here is the categorization of individuals according to their assumed or stereotyped physical characteristics or phenotypical differences; such differences are interiorized resulting in identity and behavior shaping.

Like other forms of social identity, race may well map actual social and cultural differences between groups. But inasmuch as there are differences between the groups constituted, those differences reside at the group or aggregate level… Such a flawed understanding lends itself easily to racism, the use of ideas about race in the oppression of one group by another… It is no secret that groups in power use such ideas to justify the social order, especially the maintenance of hierarchy and their privilege. (Black, 2003, p. 129)

**Social roles.** Tenth, social roles are also social constructs that outline and shape identity and behavior. “Common to most definitions of role is the view that an individual behaves with reference to the expectations that others have about the way he or she should behave” (Rahim, 2001, p. 98). The same author (2001) mentions three potential levels of the concept.

First, role is used to mean a normative status that includes the behavior, attitudes, and values attributed by society to a person occupying a given position. Second, role is used to mean an individual’s conceptualization of his or her situation with reference to his or her and other’s positions in society. Third, role is used to refer to the behavior of a person occupying a social position. (Rahim, 2001, pp. 98-99)

Social roles can be analyzed through the behavior of the individuals or the structure that allows role formation. In society both are present producing formal
behavior or the possibility of informally defining or taking roles (Scott & Marshall, 2005).

Social roles condition individuals both positively and negatively because of performance relative to the social standard should determine the outcome. Roles go beyond behavior and include the attitudes and values that a position holder should have. Roles should define individual’s behavior at a position. Roles provide an instant location and evaluation of the individual’s worth relative to society. All these social interactions are interiorized shaping identity and behavior.

**Symbolism.** Eleventh, in México, symbolism is part of our history and culture; where myths, rites, metaphors, and duality are our way of life. México is the place where the Western and Mesoamerican civilizations both converge and clash: an incessant confrontation that has lasted for over five centuries. Before explaining these concepts I must put them in the Mexican context.

The Spanish invaders and colonizers in an attempt to control the local population colonized the indigenous groups that they encountered. The colonial effects translate into identity changes and identity rejections. The present “Mexican society [does] not recognize themselves as Indians. Here we find evidence of de-Indianization, which is the loss of these groups’ original collective identity as a result of the colonial dominion” (Bonfil-Batalla, 1996, p. xviii).

Furthermore,

México is not a mestizo county. Rather, it is a country whose majority population continues to be rooted in Mesoamerican civilization and whose way of life reflects cultural patterns and values with thousands of years of history. … These
people constitute the México profundo. Their way of life has endured, as they have resisted outside forces, appropriated and adopted as their own useful items from outside, and in turn created new and original elements of Mesoamerican civilization (p. vii). … Since the conquest, the peoples of México profundo have been dominated by an ‘imaginary México’ imposed by the West. It is imaginary not because it does not exist, but because it denies the cultural reality lived daily by most Mexicans. (Dennis, 1996, back cover)

**Sexual orientation, shared experiences, and region.** And finally sexual orientation, shared experiences within a group, and region, including urban/district location, are also identity and behavior shapers. These operate similarly to the previous eleven concepts. The groups’ norms and expectations are interiorized shaping the individuals’ identity and behavior. It is through group interaction mainly that we establish who we are, who we are not, and learn how we ought to behave, in addition to the outcome if we do not comply with those social norms. Those relational patterns are far beyond affection; they determine social organization and societal obligations and privileges, and therefore behavior (Scott & Marshall, 2005).

This leads to Research Question 5.

**RQ5** How are caste, class, ethnicity, gender, kinship, lineage, nationalism, race, and/or societal roles portrayed in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberalism periods?

**Identity-formation Theory.** Psychology, sociology, and other social and behavioral sciences have been jointly and duly analyzing identity since the 1970s. Theoretically speaking, identity or the “self is not really a single topic at all, but rather an
aggregate of loosely related subtopics [that include...] self-awareness, self-control, identity, self-verification, self-affirmation, self-conscious emotions, self-discrepancy, self-evaluation, self-monitoring, and so on” (Leary & Price-Tangney, 2003, p. 3). However, it is a clear fact that identity does impact human behavior:

many complex human behaviors involve some degree of self-reflection. Some phenomena – such as long-term planning, choking under pressure, self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame and guilt), self-verification, and deliberate self-presentation – simply cannot occur in animals that are unable to self-reflect. Other phenomena – such as interpersonal communication, conformity, cooperation, mating, and nonsocial emotions, such as sadness and fear, do not necessarily require self-reflection yet are drastically modified when people think about themselves. It seems impossible to understand the complexities of the human behavior without reference to the human capacity to think about oneself. (Leary & Price-Tangney, 2003, pp. 3-4).

We must also always remember that we are products of a culture. Who we are and the way we behave has to do with societal rules and conventions. However, it is important to mention that there are also psychologically-based identity theories.

A sociological approach to self and identity begins with the assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and Society. The self influences society through the actions of individuals, thereby creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. Reciprocally, society influences the self through its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect on oneself as an object… Because the self
emerges in and is reflective of society, the sociological approach to understanding the self and its parts (identities) means that we must also understand the society in which the self is acting, keeping in mind that the self is always acting in a social context in which other selves exist. (Stets & Burke, 2003, p. 128)

Identity is equivalent to choices and behavior within a society because it “is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 3). Identity defines who we are within a group, according to both the expected and shown behavior.

It is for that reason that one’s identity can be and is constantly under attack for shaping and manipulating purposes by different social players. This goes far beyond the concept described as the social construction of identity. All it requires is to provide an alternate understanding of how society works and the individual’s place within it. This alternate perception changes people’s identity (Toumey, 2009). Identity is, for the purposes of this paper, also considered the rational behavioral response to social interactions. The social context shapes the way people socialize through the assigned meaning.

There are many potential identity transformations, yet in talking about the one imprinted by nation-states, it relates to a required behavior within a sociopolitical, economic, and production system for performance maintenance or a required modification. The different stages through which systems go do in fact “affect the material life conditions and the life of the people” (Acuña, 2004, p. 1). We live in a dynamic world, and therefore, we must constantly adapt to it. It is for that reason that
personal and “national identities would undergo transformations when the economic, social, [and] political conditions for the existence of the nations…in turn either ceased to be or become so intense as to change in nature” (De La Garza, 1988, p. 10). Failure to update our behavioral to the context and social players would be irrational and self-deceiving, thus, inserting us in a cruel cycle of dispossession and marginalization. However, adapting to it uncritically is not necessarily a good thing either.

The identity shaping/manipulating process is at the moment accomplished mainly through media and the local education system (Gauntlett, 2002), due to their effects over people’s behaviors, the molding of their expectations, and how reality is presented and perceived. Yet, we saw that there are many other complementary mechanisms or strategies. Contrary to what many would consider, I see these mechanisms, media, and the education system, adequately coordinated and reinforcing each other, along with other identity shaping strategies, within a larger framework that needs unconscious and uncritical servants.²

According to Mathews (2000), identity is shaped at three independent stages/levels. Mathews uses as base Freud’s identity concept. First, at the unconscious level, where assumptions are made, language is interiorized resulting in behavior. The second stage or level is where options are considered respect to laws, rules, and other social pressures; and the third stage is where individuals express their agency but where indoctrination and other values shape and constrain their actions. The third level relates to the conscious choices that we make from the cultural supermarket. “This is the level at which selves sense that they freely pick and choose the ideas they want to live by”

² The word selection here was in the attempt to avoid using the word “slaves”.

People interiorize ulterior values, for instance religious principles, trading present wellbeing for future rewards, usually in an upcoming life (Fishman & Solomon, 1968). Under these circumstances people’s life’s expectations and potentiality are severely constrained, as is the behavioral outcome.

Even though shaping people’s identities significantly reduces typical overt and latent conflict levels because people are taught, through different mechanisms, to live according to societal rules and conventions, it means to live or behave in a limiting manner. Structural and direct violence along with war are simply at the opposing side of the same conflict continuum, otherwise people that have been tampered with will settle for much less.

People programmed or shaped for these purposes do not to see what is actually happening in their lives (Williams, 1997, p. 156) and/or behave in certain ways that can be easily controlled because “whereas in the past, the response to…inequality was to pretend it didn’t exist, the current reaction is to re-present it without changing the social, economic, and political conditions that create it” (Giroux, 1994, p. 40).

Not only that, inaccurately reading the context creates a vicious poverty/hopelessness circle, characterized by the “culture of silence of the dispossessed...direct product of the whole situation of economic, social, and political domination–and of the paternalism–of which they were victims” (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 30). Without critically assessing the situation, it will become a vicious cycle because the situation will never be overcome (Freire, 1970/2000). We have to remember that sociopolitical and economic systems require different types of individuals, from submissive and dependent to proactive and independent, in order to better achieve the establishment’s goals. Control is
never surrendered though. Economic neoliberalism, like colonialism in the past, has allowed the hegemonic powers to have the needed mechanisms to mold both domestic and foreign people to be able to transfer wealth, and people’s identity has been molded to achieve such goals.

Throughout history the study and analysis of identity has involved many theories and theorists, with the use of many gadgets and lenses. Even though it has not been a linear effort, for didactical purposes Mansfield (2000) positions Freud and Foucault at opposite sides of a continuum.

For Freud, we are not born with our subjectivity [or identity] intact. Instead, it is instilled in us a result of our encounter with the bodies—specially the gender—of those in our immediate environment, usually our parents. This encounter triggers a crisis that awakens our interior life, allowing us to feel we are separate from those around us, and gives rise to a complex, dynamic and sometimes obscure psychological structure—in short, the splitting of the subject into conscious and uncurious. (Mansfield, 2000, p. 8)

Foucault, on the other hand, believes subjectivity or identity has been invented by dominant systems of social organization in order to control us and manage us. We are educated and harassed till we believe that the proper organization of the world depends on the division of the human population into fixed categories—the sick separate from the well, the sane from the insane, the honest from the criminal—each exposed different types of management, in the hands of doctors, social workers, police, teachers, courts and institutions (from schools to prisons, factories to hospitals, asylums to the military), all regulated
according to the rational principles of truth and knowledge. In this way ‘subjectivity’ is not the free and spontaneous expression of our interior truth. It is in this way that we are lead to think about ourselves, so we will police and present ourselves in the correct way, as not insane, criminal, undisciplined, unkempt, perverse, or unpredictable. In sum, for Foucault the subject is the primary workroom of power, making us turn in on ourselves, trapping us in the illusion that we have a fixed and stable selfhood that science can know, institutions can organize and experts can correct. (Mansfield, 2000, p 10)

Foucault’s approach to identity development relates to analyzing the constitution of the subject’s mode of being. Here in referring to the theory of the subject, it seemed to me that one should try to analyze the different forms by which the individual is lead to constitute him or herself as subject. (Foucault, 2008, pp. 4-5)

This leads to Research Questions 6 and 7.

RQ6 Are identity and identity-change portrayed individually or are part of a larger social context in Mexican films from the rural, industrial and neoliberalism periods?

RQ7 How are values and life scripts shown or transmitted in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberalism periods?
Chapter 3: Methodology

Through this study, I wish to distinguish and identify the actual messages transmitted through Mexican films that impact identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts. This will allow me to establish how identity-shaping is negotiated through films, if at all. Even though identity-shaping is a process that takes place partially at the unconscious level, personal agency also takes a role in establishing individual identity. This negotiated process is constantly generated between several relevant social groups and individuals. In a continuum where control is at one end and independence is at the other, individuals have to choose the right mixture of both that will portray him or her; people are constantly negotiating what their own individual identities will be. The identity formation process was described in the theoretical section.

Second, I would like to help others become aware of the presence of these messages. Third, I want to be able to pinpoint the underlying forces shaping identity in México, because without adequate identities and their related behaviors, there is no successful future for the masses and the country in a world driven mainly by knowledge, technology, and globalization. By adequate identity, I mean one that will allow the Mexican people to objectively and rationally relate to their actual—not make believe—environment. The environment portrayed by media, and films specifically, not only does not necessarily accurately portray the sociopolitical and economic reality, but also the meaning assigned to this alternate environment is used to discourage activities that can destabilize the system or status quo. Once the socialization consequences and the marginalizing and dispossessing effects of identity-shaping are truly addressed, Mexicans will be able to negotiate for their true interests, hopefully before a violent identity
permeates to the typical Mexican. This research is also important because in order to work efficiently, alternate sociopolitical and economic systems require people with different identities, at both the individual and the collective levels. As systems evolve or change, people’s identities/behaviors must too; the absence of that evolution would render the system inefficient or provoke opposition.

The elite in certain sociopolitical and economic systems shape and control the masses’ identity and behavior through different strategies, methods, and/or institutions; however, this is not something new. Identity in such countries is imposed rather than negotiated. The Mexican identity has been under constant attack by powerful shaping forces since the colonial period. The indio, linked to rural areas, and the pelado, associated to cities, are two well-known sequential characterizations of what a typical Mexican should look and behave like throughout most of the twentieth century. Yet, the most recent assault on identity comes from NAFTA (since 1994), which ended a five-century long paternalistic relationship between the Mexican state and its citizens; the new relationship aims at shaping the Mexican masses’ behavior from obedient and docile to independent and proactive—but still behaving within the established legal framework.

Filmmaking is one of the most powerful identity-shaping strategies. The selected methodology of this study will allow me to compare and contrast the messages transmitted about identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts, using films from three different periods of the development of México: agricultural (1920s-1950s), industrial (1950s-1990s), and neoliberal (1990s-today).

Films have been repeatedly used by the Mexican government to entertain and indoctrinate the masses, while allegedly informing them about the Mexican society;
film’s propagandistic value has been well recognized and used. As noted, film is a powerful influence on identities, behavior, and role-identification (Hirschman & Stern, 2000), through the transmission of values or life scripts (Swidler, 1986). Throughout the world, large corporations and national and local governments have an interest in maintaining the status quo (Galtung, 1971; Klein, 2007), and therefore, controlling the film industry (Gordon, 2004). This is because certain films are vehicles that transmit messages about identity, behavior, role-identification, and values or life scripts that support the status quo in which powerless individuals accept their status.

Theorists who potentially influence this study include Foucault, Marx, Galtung, and Erickson. The films will be analyzed through their narratives to develop an operational understanding about how film shapes individual and group identity. This study will contribute to understanding conflict arising from negotiating the individual and group identity, as influenced by film and filmmakers.

**Marxism**

Karl Marx’s work provides a framework for explaining identity-molding and identity-shifts. He covered, through his work, some identity strategies, such as alienation (due to the conflicting aspects between human nature and ‘work in a capitalist society’), class, ideology, morality, power, and social structures (Miller, 1984).

It is through the Marxist lens that I expect to see: “1) segmentation of the labor force through barriers to mobility [to the most dispossessed groups], 2) ethnic cross-class conflict, and 3) [the most dispossessed groups’] unity through class solidarity” (Wright, 2009, para. 2).
Structural Theory of Imperialism

One important aspect of this theory, from the perspective of the present study, is that indoctrination is a common practice. Under the scope of this theory, for Galtung conflict is based on opposing and incompatible goals among social groups.

In our special case, goals are stipulated by an outsider, as the ‘true’ interests of the parties, disregarding wholly or completely what the parties themselves say explicitly are the values they pursue… Another, more important, reason is that rationality is unevenly distributed, that some may dominate the minds of others, and that this may lead to ‘false consciousness’. Thus learning to suppress one’s own true interests may be a major part of socialization in general and education in particular. (Galtung, 1971, p. 82)

As a corollary, this system leads to social exploitation and the psychological effects for the center nation are “a basic psychology of self reliance and autonomy” while for the periphery nation translates to “a basic psychology of dependence” (Galtung, 1971, p. 87).

Psychiatric Techniques of Milton H. Erickson

Sometimes people have problems coping with their social and/or professional requirements. Several socially acceptable aides, such as psychiatric techniques, aim to modify people’s behavior and eventually their identity. This practice is aimed at helping people by giving them the skills required, social and otherwise. Erickson was interested in establishing “how to direct another person to become more autonomous… [and/or] shifting an interpersonal problem into an advantage” (Haley, 1973/1993, p. 19). Erickson’s goals relate to the present study: once conflict is introduced and created, new
behavior is within the possibilities of a normal outcome because “only a crisis-actual or perceived-produces real change” (Klein, 2007, p. 7).

**Methodological Application**

Analyzing film and understanding how the embedded messages, values, and/or behavior of the characters were constructed to try shape and influence the identity and behavior of their audiences has not been an easy task. Especially since I had to craft my own perspective lenses or identity shaping strategies to try to understand what was actually happening during the film, from an ample array of teaching-behavior tools already in existence. Moreover, cultural interpretations of what is actually happening or has happened are never homogeneous and each social interaction presents many layers. In addition, there are high and low content cultures, and therefore, their interpretation of what is actually happening is usually different. Furthermore, as far as I know, this theoretical endeavor has not been done previously. And finally, many people consider identity a random outcome that only involves the individual. So, therefore, I had to apply the selected methodology in a way that it would be the right tool for the task at hand. Secondly, I had to select three movies that better illustrate the goal of my dissertation. Thirdly, I had to be unbiased and had to bracket my preconceived ideas all the time in order to try not to influence my findings.

My analysis had to be performed through the use of qualitative methodology because it is about meanings, values, beliefs, and/or life scripts, and social interactions bounded by social rules. It is based on the post-positivism understanding of the world, where it is believed that knowledge is based on human assumptions, considered as unproven theorems or conjectures, creating a framework of how the world works. For
this paradigm, reality is no longer considered as a set of unchangeable facts outside the human consciousness and for that reason quantitative research would had not been the appropriate tool (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The Qualitative approach offers “verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, and dialogues with subjects” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). Qualitative research offers a closer and more meaningful understanding of the individuals and their lives. This research approach also offers a better understanding of life’s constraints. Finally, qualitative research is a synonym of rich descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A quantitative analysis is, therefore, not an option for the topic, focus, and scope of the present paper.

It is important to remember that whenever we express ideas through a story, it is because we want to convey a specific message and sometimes even to construct a behavior; parents use these types of stories often. Most social interactions require messages to be transmitted back and forth in order to assure that the message was received as transmitted, and the expected interaction is as expected. However, from the perspective of the research, films can be considered as a monologue—because films (like any other media device) being a one-way communication channel, never involve the audience as the communication flow is unilateral; it is never an interactive dialogue. And yet, regardless of that reason, “in everyday oral storytelling, a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story” (Riessman, 2008, p. 3). However, how the message is structured has to do with the audience; not all messages are suitable for all audiences. Stories, therefore, have to be specifically constructed for the targeted
audience. “Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience [in mind]” (Riessman, 2008, p. 3).

How we communicate is not random at all; we pursue very specific goals every time we communicate. “Narrative shaping entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected” (Riessman, 2008, p. 5). We communicate through the use of a discourse highly influenced by our social institutions, and therefore, the meaning is socially shaped.

I introduce the story to anticipate key issues I take up in the book: The central place of narrative when personal lives and social institutions intersect in the ‘ruling regimes’ of schools, social welfare departments, workplaces, hospitals, and governments. The classroom illustrates how transforming a lived experience into language and constructing a story about it is not straightforward, but invariably mediated and regulated by controlling vocabularies. Narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture. Consequently, narratives don’t speak for themselves, offering a window into an ‘essential self’. (Riessman, 2008, p. 3)

Yet, narratives not only describe communication between people; narratives also apply to many other forms of communication. Narrative analysis, therefore, also applies to films.

The bakhtin epigraph to the book suggests that many kinds of texts can be viewed narratively, including spoken, written, and visual materials… Just as interview
participants tell stories, investigators construct stories from their data. Barthes notes the universality of the form and lists many sites where it can be found:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting…, stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, [and] conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very story of mankind (sic) and there nowhere is not has been a people without narrative…it is simply there like life itself. (Barthes as cited in Riesman, 2008, p. 4)

However, not all narratives are the same. Stories require people to react or adapt to the information provided by the narrative. Stories are adapted to fit films’ requirements changing the audience’s perspective, through an unexpected turn.

Sociolinguists reserve the term narrative for a general class, and story for a specific prototypic form:

Stories can be described not only as narratives that have a sequential and temporal ordering, but also as texts that include some kind of rupture or disturbance in the normal course of events, some kind of unexpected action that provokes a reaction and/or adjustment. (DeFina as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 6)

It is through narratives and/or stories that people shape their identity and behavior. I covered the theoretical array of identity construction in the correspondent chapter. This identity shaping process theoretically is an ongoing process throughout human life—in post modernity.
The discrete story that is the unit of analysis in Labov’s definition gives way to an evolving series of stories that are framed in and through interaction. An example here is Elliot Mishler’s study of the trajectories of identity development among a group of artists/craft persons constructed through extended interviews with them. (Riessman, 2008, p. 6)

It is also important to note that while personal stories are certainly prevalent in contemporary life, reflecting and producing the cult of ‘the self’ as a project in modernity, narrative has a robust life beyond the individual. As persons construct stories of experience, so too do identity groups, communities, nations, governments, and organizations construct preferred narratives about themselves…but identity. No longer viewed as a given and ‘natural,’ individuals must now construct who they are and how they want to be known, just as groups, organizations, and governments do. In postmodern times, identities can be assembled and disassembled, accepted and contested, and indeed performed for audiences. (Riessman, 2008, p. 7)

Narratives are powerful tools shaping people’s identity and behavior. They are used to construct individual and group identities. It is through narratives that we construct ourselves and define our groups, but there are definitely other uses for narratives. Narratives are purposely constructed to enact a particular behavior and produce a specific type of individuals. Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who are (and who they are not). But identity is fluid always producing itself through the
combined process of being and becoming and longing to belong. This duality is often reflected in narratives of identity. Personal narrative can also encourage others to act; speaking out invites political mobilization and change as evidenced by the ways stories invariably circulate in sites where social movements are forming… In a word, narratives are strategic, functional, and purposeful. (Yuval Davis as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 8)

Other uses of individual narrative are to “remember, argue, persuade, engage, entertain, and even mislead an audience” (Riessman, 2008, p. 8). The last point is particularly relevant for the present research as we saw at the analysis of each film. Groups also use narratives but to “mobilize others and to foster a sense of belonging” (p. 8). This narrative trait is also relevant to the present research. These two mentioned narrative traits explain why they are used in film not only to entertain but also to pursue a social behavior of the audience.

Narratives are also used to remember or try to explain the past. This trait of narratives is also used to create and sustain identities across time. Therefore, this trait is also relevant for my research because it explains why the masses’ concept of the past is altered in order to justify the present and shape the future.

There is, of course, a complicated relationship between narrative, time, and memory for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present. In a dynamic way then, narrative constitutes past experience at the same time as it provides ways for individuals to make sense of the past. And stories must always be considered in [the] context, for storytelling occurs at a historical moment with its circulating discourses and power relations. At a local
level, a story is designed for particular recipients – an audience who receives the story, and may interpret it differently. (Riessman, 2008, p. 8)

Other uses of narratives include, through stories, to: argue, persuade skeptical audiences, engage “an audience in the story of the narrator”, invite the audience to see the narrator’s perspective, entertain the audience, mislead the audience (as previously mentioned), and finally mobilize audiences (Riessman, 2008, p. 9).

From the film-analysis perspective, to summarize, narratives provide the meaning needed to connect with others when going through difficult times, like starting or sustaining a social change, mobilizing people, or encouraging them to behave in a certain way. This is particularly the case, because films’ stories contain emotions through laughter and/or tears, as explained in the analysis of the three films, allowing the establishment to be able to create and sustain a particular status quo. Narratives also create an imagined community or group, in this case Mexicans after the 1910 revolution; that is why narratives must be inexorably linked to their context and/or make believe context.

Telling stories about difficult times in our lives creates order and contains emotions, allowing a search for meaning and enabling connections with others…

When biographical disruptions occur that rupture expectations for continuity, individuals make sense of events through storytelling [or film making]. Interrogating the stories, uncovers how we ‘imbue life events with a temporal and logical order to demystify and establish coherence across past, present and as yet unrealized experience.’ Individuals, he argues, become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives. To be understood, these private
constructions of identity must mesh with a community of life stories, or ‘deep structures’ about the nature of life itself in a particular culture. Connecting biography and society becomes possible through the close analysis of stories. (Joan Didion and Jerome Bruner as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 10)

It is the communalities of the narratives that create “group belonging and set the stage of collective action” and organize and then mobilize identity groups (Riessman, 2008, p. 9); that is why I had to analyze three movies. I was trying to see both the commonalities and the differences, at three different times and contexts, creating an all-encompassing list of the messages or values of the selected films.

Narrative Analysis is a set of interpreting methods that “have in common a storied form…” and are “appropriate for interpreting many kinds of texts – oral, written, and visual” (Riessman, 2008, p. 11) at the relevant social level, from individuals to nations.

Attention to sequences of action distinguishes narrative analysis - the investigator focuses on ‘particular actors, in particular social places, at particular social times.

As a general field, narrative inquiry is ‘grounded in the study of the particular’ the analyst is interested in how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to communicate meaning, that is, make particular points to an audience. Narrative analysts interrogate intention and language – how and why incidents are storied, not simply to content to which language refers. (Riessman, 2008, p. 11)

It is of critically relevant to understand how and why the selected films attract their audiences. The three selected films describe poverty, hardships, and a way of life in
México, through three different contexts and times. Riessman (2008) frames its relevance through a series of questions.

For whom was this story constructed, and for what purpose? Why is the succession of events configured that way? What Cultural resources does the story draw on, or takes for granted? What storehouse of plots does it call up? What does the story accomplish? Are there gaps and inconsistencies that might suggest preferred, alternative, or counter-narrative? (Riessman, 2008, p. 11)

Furthermore, filmmakers develop stories in a particular way so that their point is better received by the audience, in order to shift their perception and accomplish a particular performance or social interaction. This is done in order to sustain the status quo.

In narrative study, however, attention shifts to the details – how and why a particular event is storied, perhaps, or what a narrator accomplishes by developing the story that way, and effects on the reader or listener. Who elicits the story, for what purpose, how does the audience affect what is told, and what cannot be spoken? In narrative study, particularities and context come to the fore. Human agency and the imagination of storytellers (and listeners and readers) can be interrogated, allowing research, to include many voices and subjectivities.

…Although narrative analysis is case centered [from individual to nation], it can generate ‘categories’ or, to put it differently, general concepts, as other case-based methods do.

…A good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text, and there is a move towards a broader commentary. Just because
narrative approaches interrogate cases (rather than population-based samples) do not mean results cannot be generalized. But inference is of a different kind. Generalizing from a sample to the entire population is the statistical approach; case study involves ‘generalization to theoretical propositions,’ which are, to some degree, transferable. Making conceptual inferences about a social process (the construction of an identity group, for example, from close observation of one community) is an equally ‘valid’ kind of inquiry with a long history in anthropology and sociology… Case centered models of research can generate knowledge that, over time, becomes the basis for others’ work – the ultimate test.

In sum the field of narrative studies is cross-disciplinary, a many layered expression of human thought and imagination… The general approach has a great deal to offer disciplines and professions that want to see how knowledge is constructed in the everyday world through an ordinary communicative act – storytelling. (Riessman, 2008, pp. 12-14)

**Film Selection and Analysis**

I started this research project, analyzing the last five hundred years of Mexican history—but through the identity and behavioral perspective—not from the chronological point of view. However, I also included the indigenous background, in an attempt to be able to identify indigenous or Mesoamerican behavior still present and to point to when the portrayed behavior replicated something similar from the past. I selected films that showed México’s sociopolitical economic and production development—as the relevant context, and that were produced and shown during the agricultural (1920s-1950s), industrial (1950s-1990s), and neoliberal (1990s to today) phases of the Mexican societal
development. I was looking for films that showed how the Mexican society was supposed to live and interact. I wanted to verify if most films produced and shown originally during each of these three periods carry similar or complementing messages that impact identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts.

It is important to contrast reality with what is shown in films and verify if the films’ depiction is accurate or not, and to understand what was happening in the country at the time due to the global context, due to the fact that “societal and global concerns are fundamental to a critical perspective; thus these studies situate the studied phenomenon in relation to larger units” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 513). But also because the gap between reality and the films’ depictions is useful to understand how the audience is supposed to understand reality and modify their identity and behavior accordingly. After viewing the most relevant films from each of the agricultural, industrial, and neoliberal periods in México, I selected one film from each period, in order to see if there are different individual identity requirements at each of these different stages, seen from the films’ period perspectives and the messages transmitted.

For each of the identified periods, I will describe the socio-political economic and production contexts and link them with identity requirements as presented by the selected films. I paid particular attention to the parties shown, their relational patterns, and to the value/life script messages presented in the films.

The idea was to see if films from different stages of sociopolitical and production development conveyed the same identity and behavior messages or not. During the twentieth century México developed from a rural economy to an industrialized one, and by the end of that century it became a market economy. Currently, México is one of the
more open economies of the world. The social implications of each sociopolitical economic and production stage of system are dramatic over the local population, especially the poor and ignorant masses. In the historical review of the twentieth century, I covered the details. However, for instance, the change from a rural to an industrialized economy, which was fostered by the presidency of Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), meant for a large segment of the indigenous layer of society, a migration to the cities.

The selected films had to be relevant somehow to the research, as not all movies show the identity shaping strategies and the related behavior patterns. In addition to this criterion, the film selections were based on the films’ popularity or if it even was considered a local blockbuster; whether each film belong to a successful film sequence or not; the inclusion or not in a list produced by local critics of the 100 most relevant Mexican films; whether iconic actors participated in the film; if it had received local and/or international awards; and/or the film’s reviews, if available. Another important selection criterion was what film, per period, is a better fit for the identity-shaping strategies. These criteria were relevant because the film had to have reached a large audience especially in México. This criterion also touches audiences through time because two of the selected movies are considered as classics: Nosotros los Pobres and Macario. Amores Perros is too current to be labeled as classic—yet, I believe it accurately portrays the current violent México that we see every day in the news. Another relevant factor was if there was a transcript available over the internet. This final criterion was relevant because transcribing the English version of the closed-caption is very time-consuming and could easily generate an error. I did, however, verify that the films’ transcripts were error free. Over the internet, I found the Amores Perros and Macario
transcripts; my daughter, Alexa, transcribed the *Nosotros los Pobres* English closed-caption transcript, and I verified it.

The dissertation research goal was to bring to the consciousness the messages or values embedded in the films’ story and understand how it was achieved. Equally important was to understand how the system portrayed and affected the people’s identity and behavior. I also wanted to see what was actually happening in the country at the time, due to the fact that “societal and global concerns are fundamental to a critical perspective. Thus, these studies situate the studied phenomenon in relation to larger units” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 513). From the agricultural, industrial, and neoliberal stages in México, I selected one film from each stage in order to see if there were different individual-identity requirements at each of these different stages, seen from the films’ stage perspectives and the messages or values transmitted.

I started the selection process on the internet, looking for the most popular Mexican films of all times. I found many complementing lists of potential films. I focused on the ten most watched films of all the lists, to see the commonalities, and then contrasted the results with the 100 most watched Mexican films of all times. I immediately made my own list of potential films for each stage or period. After that, I investigated a little about each film that might be a potential candidate, according to the selected criteria previously described. One important issue in addition to the film’s popularity was when it was produced. I needed to select only one film from each of the three mentioned Mexican developmental stages. From the 1940s, the decision was between *Ahí Esta el Detalle* and *Nosotros los Pobres*. Both were produced at the right time, both were very successful, and both could be used for my dissertation topic. I
selected *Nosotros los Pobres* over *Ahí Esta el Detalle* for three main reasons. The first one had to do with the fact that *Nosotros los Pobres* was the first delivery of a very successful film series while *Ahí Esta el Detalle* was not a series. The second reason had to do with the double meaning language used in *Ahí Esta el Detalle*. I did not feel sure that I accurately understood it. The third and final reason why I chose *Nosotros los Pobres* was because I chose tears as the catharsis element used, instead of laughter. The selection of the other two films was straight forward and much easier. *Macario* was one of the most awarded films of the industrial stage of development, and *Amores Perros* was for the neoliberal stage. In addition to the awards, both films have very compelling and interesting stories. Furthermore, all the films portray characters that perform behavior closely linked to what Mexicaness is supposed to look like.

In the twentieth-century context description, I covered what was actually happening at each of the mentioned stages in México; I described the sociopolitical, economic, and production context and linked it to the identity requirements as presented by the selected films. I paid particular attention to the films’ parties, their relational patterns, and the value/life script messages presented during movie. I analyzed their dialogs as well as their most obvert and likely meaning because the Mexican culture is high impact; we say indirectly—without actually saying it—what needs to be said. I also analyzed the supernatural-related scenes and related those to the context and explained why it was relevant. I always went under to superficial dialogs in an attempt to discover the real meaning of the films. The analysis process was carried out initially by investigating about the film—not only who produced and when, or the actors, but also about the plot and what has been written about it. Especially important was to try to find
anything about the real meaning and use of the film, like, for instance, the identity and behavior of the characters and the reasons behind it.

**Amores Perros Summary**

The first film that I analyzed was *Amores Perros*. I emphasized the significance analysis, in an effort to understand what was actually happening between the characters and why—and even what was under or behind the plot. I paid particular attention to what was said and why, but I also took into consideration what it really meant from the cultural perspective. I used the theoretical lenses selected and looked for uses of the identity strategies. I also paid attention to what the film portrayed as acceptable behavior and what was considered as unacceptable. I also dealt with the multiple uses or applications of the same word.

In order to understand the film, I had to go past the characters’ actions and their circumstances. I needed to go beyond the obvious and superficial. I had to understand why the characters were portrayed as they were and why. I had to analyze the plot sequence. I also described and summarized the complete film sequence, paying particular attention to the supernatural effects and what was not said but presented during the scenes—especially since the Mexican culture is high impact.

It was particularly relevant to the study to understand why lower strata members are portrayed as better than higher strata members; even though multiple hierarchies were presented. It was really interesting to see that the film favors, almost in every aspect, the poorer characters over the rich ones. Rich characters are portrayed as totally shallow and living in a make-believe world, while the poor live in the real and cruel world. Hardships, however, had rewards but especially in the heaven; yet, not all the characters shared the
same belief system. And among the poor characters, there was also a hierarchy present. It had to do with how those characters behaved—especially in a way that the audience is led to believe it is, or not, in a socially approved manner—even if they temporarily lost their way in the past, the poor heroes were portrayed as more successful and popular than other social groups. Economic wealth is not presented as success. The ideology that assessed the behaviors appears to be neutral, natural, and desirable. However, regardless of the personal situation of the characters or what they do, the system is portrayed as indestructible and the policemen as giving latitude but being successful when determined to stop certain criminal acts of terrorism.

I had to also understand why the establishment allows and even fosters certain behaviors but condemns others apparently similar (you can get away with robbing a pharmacy but never a bank—or why is it considered, to a certain degree, socially acceptable to use animals for dog fights or even kill people until we learn that such behavior is wrong because an animal helped us understand). Why is it that religiosity is portrayed as a private practice without any real meaning for public behavior? The film presents three independent stories linked by a car accident—giving the impression that each story takes place in independent and polarizing universes that only intersect when accidents happened—the poor main character is allowed to continue living his life as if nothing had happened while the rich had to endure their actions and be responsible. This sort of paternalism comes from the Mesoamerican past, where the members of the higher social layers are made responsible with their lives while the lower layer members have the option to not be responsible for their actions.
**Nosotros los Pobres Summary**

The second movie I analyzed was *Nosotros los Pobres*, and I did it basically in the same way as when analyzing *Amores Perros*. However, the identity shaping strategies were not emphasized as much as with the previous film, because even though many where present, the identity shaping strategies only made sense when the main film’s character was portrayed in a successful and desirable manner. Throughout the movie, the characters portray what they describe, to the audience, as the correct social interactions for each of them. People are to behave according to their gender. People also have their roles, which the characters portray throughout the film. Having such identity and behavior only made sense when the audience saw a successful, popular, and good character doing it in a positive and rewarding manner. It was done in a way that made sense to the audience who would, therefore, consider emulating the main character’s identity and behavior.

Pepe el Toro was extremely successful with women, very popular among men, a good son and father, and a good man in general. Pepe was also the main provider for his family and had a good heart. Pepe was also portrayed as a leader. Professionally speaking, he was good at his job. He had an identity and behavior that were socially approved, yet life, in the film, tested him repeatedly to make sure that he would do the right thing, again and again. In many aspects Pepe reminded me of a copy of Jesus Christ: always doing the right thing—trading present satisfaction for future rewards due to his supernatural or religious values. Those values and behavioral patterns have been inculcated for centuries, from Mesoamerica to the current sociopolitical system, through many complementing mechanisms, including the identity shaping strategies.
Here, in this film, the poor are also portrayed morally above the rich. The poor are also portrayed as happy. Rich people are portrayed as morally flawed, materialistic, and shallow, but educated people are portrayed even worse. The film between lines implies that education is wicked because all educated people are evil—trying to take advantage of weaker ignorant people.

**Macario Summary**

Finally, the third and last film that I analyzed was *Macario*. I analyzed *Macario* as I did the other two previous films. This film, as the previous two, portrayed relational patterns based on gender and included many other identity shaping strategies. Religion, as well, provided socially approved behavior for the masses. Again, patriarchy was the underlying preferred social system. The sociopolitical system was also portrayed as indestructible and its policing forces as cruelly effective. The Catholic Church (the inquisition) is portrayed as integrated by cruel unimaginative members lead by politicians, because during the colonial age the government and the Catholic Church were one and the same. This film puts into words the real temporal meaning of life and explains why we as humans should aspire to be poor, behave as portrayed in the film, behave well while alive, and trade immediate wellbeing for future out-of-this-world rewards. It also portrays a different reality, one in which God, the Devil, and Death interact with some mortals; for the masses this is a real possibility because no one questions their existence. It also links death with the mortals at least once a year, when death comes to eat from their relatives’ *ofrendas* or offering.
Chapter 4: Narrative Analysis

Nosotros los Pobres

*Nosotros los Pobres* or “We, the Poor” is a movie filmed and first released in 1947 and 1948, respectively, in México. It is the first of a very successful three-film series. *You the Rich* and *Pepe el Toro* are the other two films of the series and were equally successful as “We, the Poor.” Some generations of Mexicans really identify with the characters presented in the film; many others remember the film and its main characters.

“We, the Poor” belongs to a period known as the Golden Era of Mexican filmmaking, which resulted from the introduction of sound to filmmaking and access to financial resources. The first concept is the result of technological innovation, while the second has to do with a tool used to achieve a goal. The Mexican government heavily invested in this industry to promote a nationalistic sentiment and a specific view of the country, both locally and abroad, while at the same time upholding an ideology. There were definitely commercial considerations as well. All this effort was designed to justify the Mexican government and to control the people after the 1910 revolution, the Cristero War, and the creation of the Mexican state by Mexicans. México during this time was not an imagined, cohesive country; it really was a large territory housing many diverse ethnic groups that were displaced to cities. The imagined México was supported by a newly developed nationalism that justified the status quo, including the revolutionary state and social asymmetry. At the same time the Mexican national identify was forged in such a way that it would shape individuals with the appropriate, required characteristics for the revolutionary state. Through books and films, the standard for being a good Mexican was
set. Authors and filmmakers also, through their work, described what it meant to be Mexican. Other identity-shaping strategies were used as well with the same objective.

In the decades following the Revolution, specifically from the late 1920s to the early 1950s, México experienced a period of intense nationalism as the newly emerging revolutionary state sought to legitimize itself, consolidate its institutions and promote economic growth. As a direct and indirect consequence of this nationalism, these same years witnessed a fervent search for national self-awareness in the cultural sphere. Responding in part to the identity crisis triggered by the Revolution, many artists and intellectuals set out to define what it meant to be Mexican. They constructed new articulations of national identity which sought both to satisfy the demands of many Mexicans and to help the state attain the social control it needed to consolidate itself and implement its economic policies. Among the ways they did this was by 1) stressing the notion of a shared or collective identity; 2) compensating for social and economic inequalities and containing social tensions (above all glorifying the lower classes as the most virtuous and authentic Mexicans); 3) emphasizing character traits important to preparing Mexicans for a new era of economic modernization; and 4) urging Mexicans to gain self-awareness, or to be authentic (to avoid losing their identity as a result of cultural incursions from abroad, particularly from the United States).

Although these artists and intellectuals similarly aspired to promote nationalism, their constructions of national identity were not always uniform, and frequently they even contradicted each other. This becomes particularly evident when contrasting constructions of “Mexicanness” in the so called “high” or
“elite” arts with those in the “low” or popular ones. I believe these differences owed themselves to the arts’ diverse functions within the nationalistic project. (Doremus, 2000, p. 35)

It is important to notice that this film was produced during the agricultural México but at a time when México was shifting from a rural economy to one based on the industrial mode. According to Doremus (2000), the *Nosotros los Pobres* film was aimed at the lower classes in an attempt to shape their identity and control their behavior in the new sociopolitical and economic system, which emerged after the revolution, and that the new and revolutionary government was trying to implement at the time. In the film, this was accomplished through the offering of role models, both male and female, and through a crying catharsis that released the social tensions of the time. The same author also argues that there were, and still are, complementary mechanisms and parties focusing on the behavior and identity of the economically powerful. Books and films targeted the rich and the poor, respectively, to alter their behaviors.

Rodriguez [the producer of the film, was] attempting to help avert social unrest by providing catharsis for social discontent. “Nosotros los pobres” also sought to compensate for social injustices by promoting a sense of pride and identity, as well as establish models of conduct for the lower classes that would be important in a modern economy. (Doremus, 2000, p. 36)

It is important to keep in mind that at the time of the film’s release, there was an important and continuous exodus from the rural areas to the cities in México. People were forced by this jobless situation to leave their rural areas and way of life to go to cities trying to find a job without the marketable skills required in their new environment.
People with totally different traditions, ways of life, and languages, and from everywhere in the country, were migrating to the cities due to the shift that President Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) gave to the economy. Alemán Valdés did it by promoting industrialism, pursuing the industrial development of the country, rather than a rural economy. The pelado or poor urban immigrant was constantly under identity and behavior attack, especially during those times in order to shape his or her behavior—but the whole population was under attack for these same purposes. “[T]hese constructions accomplished…[these objectives by] appeasing distinct sectors of the Mexican society, dissipating tensions while at the same time preparing Mexicans of different social classes for a period of rapid industrialization and modernization” (Doremus, 2000, pp. 36-37). It is unlikely that without a peaceful transition, the revolutionary government would have been able to implement its national project. Books but especially filmmaking at the time, became a policymaking tool that the Mexican government used to promote its goals.

In the case of the writers, dedicating their work to topics of national interest enabled them to gain access to political positions which afforded them power, influence, and an income they would have not enjoyed had they tried to survive on their writing alone (given the small reading public in México at the time). The majority of México’s most renowned authors during the first part of [last] century were deeply involved in politics, and many held positions of substantial political weight. Filmmakers, on the other hand, became linked to the nationalist project primarily through state subsidization, which began once sound was introduced in 1931. The state subsidized the film industry in various forms from about 1931 to 1970. According to Charles Ramírez-Berg, “the state’s direct involvement gave it
a stake and say in the nation’s cinema and in turn made the industry sensitive to governmental policies and goals.” (Doremus, 2000, p. 37)

Film in México, as in the rest of the world, is not only for entertainment; it is also for shaping the identities and behavior of the population. Identity and behavior shaping is specifically targeted for both the elite and the masses, with the pursuit of unambiguous interests.

The [varied] way in which national identity was often constructed during this period revealed an attempt by artists and intellectuals to help the state to control the poor and maintain the status quo. In both the “high” and “popular” arts, national identity was frequently expressed through archetypes of the most disaffected members of Mexican society, including the peasant, the Indian and the urban proletariat… Archetypes such as these were chosen to express national identity because of their effectiveness in creating and reinforcing stereotypes about certain social groups. They could be utilized to influence and/or justify particular attitudes, behaviors and actions that would benefit the state and wealthier Mexicans. (Doremus, 2000, p. 37)

According Doremus (2000), during this period books were targeted mainly for the elite and films for the masses. Books and films highlighted the stereotyped behavior of each social group, giving them certain positive and negative attributes and most importantly using the specific lenses of the targeted social group portraying them as positive and good while the rest of the social groups are perceived as negative and even evil. Depending on the media mechanism used, book or film, and the social group targeted, the population saw the negative traits of the other social groups and how those
traits negatively impacted what the establishment depicted as the development of the country. This is a potential explanation about how certain minorities became the objective of marginalizing and dispossessing social policies. Any social group that delayed or did not favor what the establishment designed as desirable, became the target of attack; including identity, behavior, and otherwise. For instance, through books the pelado or pachuco was characterized as the “other” for the elite due to their weaknesses supporting the country’s “development”. Filmmakers, on the other hand, constructed a hero out of the pelado, assigning him the right traits, for the purpose of national “development” and social stability. Even though the construction of this role model glorified the poor illiterate masses, the objective as still the same.

As an urban figure, the pelado/pachuco was especially useful in promoting behaviors and attitudes designated to facilitate and gain support of the modernization process. The essayists, who were appealing to the middle-class and educated audience, utilized this archetype in order to point out defects in the national character that could hinder the modernization process and the national well-being in general. Their goal was to persuade Mexicans to seek the self-awareness and change [what was] needed to transform Mexico into a strong, modern nation. The filmmakers, on the other hand, constructed a positive image of the pelado. They used him as a model of the character traits important in a “modern” nation. They also utilized him in order to foster social stability, which was particularly important in the face of rapidly growing migration to the cities. They did this by emphasizing pride in “Mexicanness”, providing catharsis—laughter or tears—for the problems confronted by the poor, and offering
consolations for poverty. The consolations included telling the poor that they were morally and spiritually superior to the wealthy, and also happier (because they enjoyed a strong sense of family and community, unlike the rich). (Doremus, 2000, p. 38)

The pelado in “We, the Poor” is Pepe el Toro (or Pepe the Bull), who is permanently living one tragedy after the next. He and his family are in pursuit of divine or religiously established “appropriate” behaviors, constantly trading material instant gain for spiritual or divine future wellbeing in this world or the next. His character was engineered with the right mixture of required traits to avoid social confrontation and breakdown, while at the same time contributing to generate the right workforce, because shaping the identity and behavior of the masses would sustain the status quo due to the fact that the masses would be obedient and docile facilitating their marginalization, dispossession, and control. Rodríguez’s main character is an uneducated, hardworking carpenter with a big heart. Pepe very modestly but generously takes care of his mother, a mute paralytic, and his niece, who he told her was his daughter. He also told his niece that her mother died. Furthermore, Pepe is very popular, mainly with women but also among men, but he has a girlfriend. Other attributes that characterize his character is that he is a very skilled fighter, and therefore, men in general respect him too. It is through Pepe’s life and experiences that the audience discovers how hard life really is for some people, when their capricious destiny brings them one tragedy right after another. Regardless of life’s challenges, Pepe is always honest and accepts his destiny in a positive “socially approved” manner. Additionally, catharsis has played an important role sustaining the social status quo used after the Mexican Revolution.
Catharsis played an equally important role in another major film of this period, “Nosotros los pobres” but instead of laughter, tears were emphasized as a means of coping with the many difficulties the poor encounter. The pelado hero in this movie also served as a model for the impoverished, embodying qualities that would be important in avoiding social decay and in creating an effective work force. (Doremus, 2000, p. 40)

*Nosotros los Pobres* is a deliberate attempt to manipulate the behavior of the masses. It was not only about social cohesiveness and cheap workforce but also about keeping the masses happy yet extremely poor. Through this indoctrination strategy, the government was able to create and maintain the status quo that represented making some members of the government and their associates extremely rich while marginalizing and dispossessing most. It is through the stoic example of Pepe that the masses believe that there is a right behavior for acting against their own interests. Furthermore, the film’s catharsis also released social tensions in a polarized society where spiritual rewards are exchanged for monetary scarcity.

Besides attempting to boost poor Mexicans’ self-esteem, the film also attempted to shape the behaviors and attitudes of the poor through Pepe’s example. It emphasized traits (devotion to family, community and work, integrity, valor, stoicism, perseverance, etc.) that would be important in avoiding the social disintegration that could result from immigrants’ sudden contact with so-called “modern” society. These same traits would also be useful in creating an effective work force. “Nosotros los Pobres” further strived to contain social tensions. It did this, first of all, through catharsis. While [in the film] “Allí está el detalle” [the
film] urged the audience to laugh off its concerns, “Nosotros los Pobres” persuaded it to cry. Because Pepe’s machismo prevents him from shedding tears, it is the sentimentality of the women that provides an emotional outlet for the audience. Chachita [Pepe’s niece], in particular, is constantly crying, as her family experiences continual misfortunes.

Another way “Nosotros los Pobres” sought to achieve social containment was by offering a number of compensations for the financial hardships suffered by the poor. By casting Pepe as a real macho-tough (never allows himself to be humiliated), popular with the women, and always in charge-, and by defining the women in relationship to him, the film reassured males of their gender superiority. Charles Ramirez Berg discerns a trade-off between the male and the state in film as a whole during this period: “the male receives a secure identity and the state receives his allegiance; the male gains a favored place in the patriarchal system while the state accumulates political might” (23). It further attempted to compensate poor Mexicans of both genders by emphasizing their moral and spiritual superiority. It not only idealized the poor, but also portrayed the rich as unhappy and unscrupulous. It sent the message that the poor are better off than the rich because they understand and experience true love. This is directly expressed by one of the wealthy characters in the film, “Licenciado Montes,” who unsuccessfully attempts to woo Pepe’s fiancée: “I’ve always had to pay for everything... You the poor are happy because you have love.” (Doremus, 2000, p. 42)
Films of the time provided a detailed description of how people, both individually and as part of a group, should be and behave. Nothing was left to the initiative of the character. There are gender roles and behavior rules to follow; there is right and wrong behavior. Through the film, the audience, basically the masses, sees an alternate behavior that honors their traits and hardships, and therefore, they are encouraged not to attack the status quo. This is achieved through the mystification of the poor, dehumanizing the rich and educated, while providing the “right” labor force. Outside the right behavior there is no agency at all. Glorification of the masses is the strategy for sustaining the status quo, dispossessing them, and producing a wealthy elite-group.

*Nosotros los Pobres* is a film that, according to its producer, Ismael Rodríguez (1947), accurately depicts the life of poor people in the slums of México City at the time. It is under these harsh conditions that Rodríguez believes some exceptional people are able to socially, religiously, and spiritually flourish while they continue to be absolutely poor and are constantly presented with polarizing behavioral alternatives. Yet, Doremous (2000) considered that the film was the tool used to control the masses and avoid social polarization.

In this story you will find raw phrases and situations, but I appeal to your open mind, since my intention has been to portrait a faithful picture of the people who live in the poor neighborhoods, where side by side with the seven deadly sins grows virtue and kindness and the greatest of all heroisms: poverty! People from the city slums [are] constantly struggling with destiny. [They] take their strength from puns and nicknames. My effort is for all those simple and good people, [for those] whose only sin was to have been poor… Here we go! (Rodríguez, 1947)
The film starts with the whole neighborhood singing a song that describes what are the right and wrong approaches to social interactions among the people in the poor Mexican neighborhoods of the 1940s. The scene portrays a happy and functional group, singing in a coordinated manner. The song portrays a series of truths/values and situations to live by. Furthermore, the song phrases are presented above any potential social question or doubt. Many of the truths/values had to do with love, eating and drinking, living in a specified way, and gender allowed stereotypes. The film also presents the negative side of poverty, in the form of a coping mechanism, such as vices, prostitution, and illiteracy, but as an individual’s weakness and not something produced by structural barriers or the sociopolitical and economic system. It is within those presented and “approved” values that people must find courage and happiness to live by, at the hands of their capricious destiny. Behaving outside the allowed behavior is even worse for the poor, according to the song lyrics and ideology it is based on. It is important to realize that many of the song phrases hide sexual meanings and play with the words meanings and sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of people:</th>
<th>Laughing is so nice, loving is so nice…living is so nice, and women.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topillos:</td>
<td>That itch in my heart is so nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tostada:</td>
<td>This sensation is so nice, nothing to discuss woman!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planillas:</td>
<td>This plate with beans and a good loaf of bread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guayaba:</td>
<td>The highball [an alcoholic beverage] is so nice, nothing to discuss, woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of people:</td>
<td>Nothing to discuss woman!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepe:</td>
<td>Women are so very beautiful … when they really love us … but man, when they fight … their moms should stand them … nothing to discuss, woman!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Romantic:</td>
<td>Singing is so nice at a loved one’s lips … when they know how to woo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunken man:</td>
<td>Nothing to discuss, woman!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Romantic:</td>
<td>Soap is so nice, it painted me so nicely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chachita:</td>
<td>Hurry, Baby, go to dad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drunken man: Nothing to discuss, woman!
A man: Parties are so nice when you are with good friends … but if someone gets cold feet … nothing to discuss woman!
Group of people: Nothing to discuss woman!
Pepe: I was born a lowlife, yes sir … but I like it, what the hell! Come on, be brave my friend … its worse when you are a coward … nothing to discuss woman!
Chachita: If you must work in order to get food … you shouldn’t play hard to get.
Guayaba: Nothing to discuss, woman! I’m more beautiful than you.
Tostada: But more stupid than me
Topillos: You are both so mean!
Drunken man: Nothing to discuss woman!
Pepe: Mr. Bread Maker your bread is so cheap … it makes my heart pump … that is a song! The milkman is delivering his bottles. Be careful don’t slip!
Everyone: He did slip.
Pepe: Oh, women are so very beautiful … when they really love us … but man when they fight… their moms should stand them.
Everyone: Nothing to discuss woman!

The next scene describes men’s gender role as a provider of his family. A woman enters Pepe’s woodshop to pay Chachita, Pepe’s daughter, for her services washing the woman’s cloths. Pepe does not like Chachita to wash other peoples’ clothes because those who know him would believe that he cannot fulfill his gender role of provider. Pepe is very jealous of fulfilling his duties and does not want people to gossip about him.

A lady: Here Chachita, for the washing.
Chachita: Thank you. Would you like an orange? (Turning to her dad, Pepe)
Pepe: Don’t change the subject! You know I don’t like you washing other people’s stuff.
Chachita: Come on, dad… it was just a dozen.
Pepe: Even if it was just a handkerchief! People talk. They’ll think I can’t provide for you.
Chachita: Well, well… don’t get cranky.
Pepe: Don’t call me cranky.
Chachita: Well… loon.
Pepe: Well that’s enough. Be quiet.
Chachita: Okay Forgotten
Pepe: Forgotten.
Two drunken men, Topillos and Planillas, get upset because their women, Tostada and Guayaba, are out in public and drunk, while they should be at home, which the appropriate place for their gender according to the local gender rules presented in the film. Regardless of the social norm, drunken women usually do as they please. In this scene, the female characters play around with the sounds of words. Tostada and Guayaba at the end of the scene go to a bar to get even drunker, instead of going home, where they were told to go and where social norms approve.

Topillos: Tostada!
Planillas: Guayaba!
Topillos: Ladies! Go home!
Planillas: Go and do what is suitable for your gender.
Topillos: Ladies! Ladies… go home!
Tostada: Home? What home?
Guayaba: Home… run [drown the suffering – they are playing with the sound of two different words in Spanish that mean something totally different but sound alike], I guess. Do you want a drink?
Tostada: Sure thing!

Topillos and Planillas, the two drunken men of the previous scene, are at Pepe’s woodshop to collect some wood sticks they ordered. They are admiring Pepe’s work and discussing whether or not to buy a bed-set for each of them, to share with their respective woman, with Chachita. It is important to realize that the language used by the characters has an alternate and high sexual meaning veiled. Once they decide not to buy anything, Chachita is charging Topillos and Planillas too much for the wood sticks, and they go to Pepe for a better price, but Pepe gives Chachita her place, explaining why to Topillos and Planillas. Even with their total lack of education, Topillos and Planillas are polite with their own people.

Topillos: Look! What beautiful furniture!
Planillas: It should be for a worthy bride, shouldn’t it?
Chachita: Go ahead, then! Get one done for your girl [meaning woman].
Planillas:  No, the straw sleeping mat is enough for Guayaba to scream.
Topillos:  That’s right.
Planillas:  Hey, Topillos…
Topillos:  What, Planillas?
Planillas:  Get it for Tostada. Won’t you?
Topillos:  Come on! She’d fall from the bed! I’m just teaching her how to scream on a cot… and I have to tie her up, she gets convulsions.
Planillas:  Come on!
Chachita:  Your sticks are ready. Take them with you.
Planillas:  Chachita, how much will you charge for them?
Chachita:  Make it …. 30.
Topillos:  30?! Torito… (Turning to her dad, Pepe el Toro)
Pepe:  What’s up?
Topillos:  She wants 30 for those sticks.
Pepe:  So it be, man. She’s the manager. She washes our clothes and she irons.
Topillos:  She charges 30 and we feel like dying.
Planillas:  We’re so stupid!
Topillos:  Come on. We’ll be right back. We’ll just take a leak.
Planillas:  We won’t be long.
Pepe:  Go ahead.
Planillas:  Excuse us.
Topillos:  Come on, man!

Once the two drunken men leave, a boy comes in to tell Pepe that one of “his women” is calling him on the phone at the bar. The boy’s actions are veiled because Chachita is very jealous of any woman that has to do with her father. When Chachita hears that, she hits the boy with a broom.

Pepe:  What is it? (Turning to little boy)
Little boy:  I don’t want to go in because Chachita is jealous… and if she finds out that I am playing cupid… she’ll be upset.
Pepe:  Why cupid?
Little boy:  My sister told me, to tell you… that you have a call from one of your girls.
Pepe:  For me?
Little Boy:  So, she said “Go and tell that Don Juan Tenorio carpenter… one of his girls is calling.” Wow, Juan Tenorio!
Pepe:  Don’t call me that, brat, or I’ll kick your teeth out!
Little Boy:  Yeah right, you’re so cranky. Hey, Torito! Lend me your lucky charm so I can get some chicks too!
Chachita:  Here’s your lucky charm! BAH!
After arguing with Topillos and Planillas about their gender roles and playing with the words’ meaning, Tostada and Guayaba end up in a bar. They are trying to buy as many drinks as possible. It is at the same bar where Pepe is answering the phone call from one of “his women”. Tostada and Guayaba start gossiping about Pepe’s love life.

One of Pepe’s appeals, as previously indicated, is that he is very popular with women.

Bartender:  What else do you want?
Tostada:  Two 3 peso sours [alcoholic beverage] more.
Guayaba:  No, Tostada… No, Tostada. She should pour [a] tour [of] 2 pesos drinks, they’ll last longer.
Tostada:  Look Guayaba…
Guayaba:  What?
Tostada:  When I ask for something, don’t contradict me. Okay?
Guayaba:  Alright.
Tostada:  Three 2 pesos [drinks]?
Guayaba:  Okay.
Tostada:  (Turning to bartender) Then pour four 3 pesos [drinks] each.
Guayaba:  The bill is for her.
Tostada:  Look! She poured them already!
Pepe:  Do I have a call? (Asking bartender)
Bartender:  Yes…
Pepe:  Don’t call me “Juan Tenorio”! (Turning to the little boy)
Little boy:  Oh, you’re so touchy.
Pepe:  Hello? (Talking into the telephone) They need you over there. (Turning to the bartender)
Bartender:  Thank you.
Pepe:  Yes Miss? (Talking into phone) Oh…. Yolanda!
Guayaba & Tostada:  Yolanda…..!
Pepe:  I have nothing to talk to you about. Think whatever you want. I couldn’t care less. That’s the way it is, you wanted it so. Why don’t you find your husband and tell him?
Guayaba & Tostada:  Her husband….!
Pepe:  Don’t be so brave. (Talking into the phone) Yes, many things are easy to say on the phone. Well Yolanda, you know me! Even if you don’t agree! What the hell?
Bartender:  Don’t worry, Torito, it was loose already.
Pepe:  I’ll put some plaster to put it back.
Bartender:  Oh…
Pepe:  What? I was forgetting…
Bartender:  It’s nothing. You know you could live here and pay no rent.
Pepe:  Well, thanks.
Bartender:  Oh, Torito…Remember the cross I asked you for?
Pepe: Don’t worry babe.
Guayaba: Yolanda?
Tostada: Yolanda. This one is the tenth, I think.

Pepe goes back to his wood shop and begins communicating with Celia, his girlfriend, through whistling. It is said that certain Indigenous groups communicated like that, especially in the southern part of the country. Planillas and Topillos are looking at them, but only Topillos understands what Pepe and Celia are saying to each other. Afterwards, Celia and her stepfather fight over some broken eggs. Furthermore, the next scene describes that Celia’s stepfather is a drug addict. Alcohol and drug addictions are presented as normal aspects of society, but are due to the individual’s weaknesses or lack of morality, and there is nothing to worry about it.

Plantillas: Man! What’s going on with these nuts?
Topillos: He asks, does she love him very much? A lot! Last night she dreamt of him. He did too. Tell me how it was, she asked. I can’t tell you, he responded. She wants him to sing her a song.
Pepe: Here it goes.
Topillos: Here it goes!
Plantillas: Let it come!
Topillos: It will!
Pepe: My sweet love…I am craving…for a kiss…to be lit in the heat…of our huge love…my love. I want to be…one single being…one being with you. I want to see you…in love…so I can dream. In the sweet sensation…of a biting kiss…I would like…my sweet love…to tell you about my passion…for you. Partners in good…and wrong…not even years…will be too heavy for us. My sweet love…you will be…my love (Singing to The Romantic).

Romantic: Come on! Don’t hit me! (Turning to her steep father)
Romantic’s dad: Look at what you did while you were flirting! The eggs are on the floor and you’re frying the eggshells!
Romantic: What do you care?
Romantic’s dad: Don’t talk back to me or I’ll slap you!
Romantic: Go ahead!
Romantic’s dad: I care because your nonsense is affecting us all. We can’t afford to buy more eggs! They’re not free!
Romantic: I’ll buy them, what the hell.
Romantic’s mom: Don’t talk like that to you dad.
Romantic: Stepfather.
Romantic’s mom: Respect him.
Romantic: He shouldn’t mess with me.
Romantic’s dad: I shouldn’t? You know I…
Romantic: Okay, cut it. I’ll get some errands; I don’t want to fight with junkies.
Romantic’s mom: Daughter, please…!
Romantic’s dad: Junkies! You’ll see. What if I am a junkie? You need to have some vices…
Romantic’s mom: Calm down.
Romantic’s dad: Why telling me?

Sleepless saw that Celia was out, so she immediately goes to his carpentry shop to flirt with Pepe. She took his medal and then she tries to put it back in an awkward and compromising position. At precisely that moment Chachita walks in on them and threw Sleepless out of the carpentry shop. Through his interactions with Chachita, Pepe wants to manipulate reality in Chachita’s head: what she actually sees and what she sees wrongly.

Sleepless: Hi Torito. How are you?
Pepe: Fine. You got up early today.
Sleepless: I haven’t been to bed.
Pepe: Oh, you work very hard. Excuse me.
Sleepless: Are you telling me to leave? Great! That’s what I get for being bitchy.
Pepe: I’m not telling you to leave, but…
Sleepless: Oh, are you afraid she’ll hit you?
Pepe: It’s because of the girl. I don’t mind talking to you. I am a man.
Sleepless: Nice medal. Can I have it?
Pepe: Neither you nor anyone! It’s a gift from my mom. Hey! You got it loose!
Sleepless: I’m sorry! I’ll put it back on. Oh, I can’t! I can’t…
Pepe: Come on! Be still!
Sleepless: I can’t…
Chachita: Excuse me…. Excuse me…excuse me… excuse me…excuse me!
Sleepless: That’s enough, kid!
Man 2: At your service (Talking to The Sleepless)
Sleepless: What?
Pepe: Where is the plaster I told you to get? (Talking to Chachita)
Chachita: On the workbench, can’t you see it?
Pepe: What’s wrong with you? Answer, what is it? What’s wrong with you? I am talking to you!
Chachita: Nothing. I didn’t like seeing that The Sleepless… was embracing you.
Pepe: Answer me when I’m talking to you! You made me do something stupid! And she wasn’t embracing me; she was putting my medal on!
Chachita: I can’t discuss, you win…But I saw her embracing you!
Pepe: You saw wrong!
Chachita: She was biting your ears!
Pepe: That’s enough! Forgotten.
Chachita: Forgotten.

After Chachita threw her out of the woodshop, Sleepless goes to glow to Celia, knowing that she is jealous. During their conversation Sleepless sees that Celia has a bruise and encourages her to leave her home. While this was happening, a rich lawyer drives by, and Celia tells Sleepless that this lawyer has been wooing her.

Sleepless: Hello, sister [meaning sis or girlfriend]. (Talking to the Romantic)
Romantic: You were at the carpenter’s right?
Sleepless: Yes, I wanted to see if you were there.
Romantic: You know Torito, (Pepe) doesn’t like me being near you.
Sleepless: Oh… You’re ashamed to be my friend.
Romantic: I’m not ashamed, but…
Sleepless: Did the junkie hit you again? You should leave that house! Look, that’s Lawyer Montes.
Romantic: Yes…lately he’s become my shadow.
Sleepless: He has more money than a thief.
Romantic: Come on.

Topillos and Planillas saw the lawyer’s interest in Celia. They stereotyped women with what Celia might do or has already done, because according to popular stereotyping that is what women do; women might be unfaithful to men because it is in their essence.

Topillos: Hey! I think someone’s messing with Torito’s woman!
Planillas: At least they’re fooling him!
Topillos: Women are like that!

In the meantime, Celia and Sleepless continue talking about why Celia cannot leave home. Sleepless is advising Celia to leave so Celia’s stepfather does not hit her anymore, besides Celia is in love with Pepe. Celia does not want leave her mother alone
with her mother’s husband because he hits the mother too. Sleepless then tells Celia that Pepe is a womanizer and that if she gets involved with Pepe, Celia would have to take care of Pepe’s mother, a mute paralytic, and Chachita. When Sleepless leaves, she bumps into a blind man that calls her señorita but for her virginity is not something important so she laughs at its mention—but for some other women virginity is something desirable and valuable. There was a generation of men that would not marry but a virgin woman.

Romantic: (Talking to the Sleepless) No, I can’t leave home. I don’t want to leave mom alone with that man. Even when I’m there he’s constantly beating her! If I left, he’d kill her.
Sleepless: What did your mom see in him?
Romantic: Love…sis. She’s really in love with that guy.
Sleepless: Well the problem is hers, not yours.
Romantic: It’s mine too.
Sleepless: Como on! Are you in love with your step dad too?
Romantic: No way! But I love Torito…
Sleepless: Your case is hopeless. Don’t tell him I told you…but I saw him talking to a girl who has a birthmark here. You’d get in a big mess! Imagine! You’d have to deal with his mother! And she’s such a pain the ass!
Romantic: Love can deal with anything, sis. Well, you go ahead so they don’t see us together.
Sleepless: Yeah, right as if you could pervert me…
Man 3: Some charity for the love of Christ.
Sleepless: I have nothing today, blind man.
Man 3: Oh, it’s you, Miss!
Sleepless: Thank you, anyway.

While Chachita is taking care of her grandmother, the landlord comes in to collect the rent, but Chachita does not have enough money; she is three pesos short. She hands the money to the owner and explains that she will wash some more cloths and pay what is missing shortly. However, Chachita tells the owner not to say anything because Pepe does not like Chachita to wash other people’s cloths. Women know that men need to feel useful and fulfill their role as providers.

Lady 2: Chachita…
Chachita: Coming.
Lady 2: I don’t want to bother you, but it’s time to pay the rent.
Chachita: Hold on a second. The one with the bills is too poor. And the one with cents… is even worse. No, it’s not enough. Mrs., its only 3 pesos short, but The Sleepless wants me to wash her clothes. As soon as I have the money I’ll give it to you.
Lady 2: Ok, Chachita.
Chachita: Just don’t tell my dad, keep it to yourself.
Lady 2: I know, girl, I know.

During the next scene, the audience is introduced abruptly to the private female gender practices and roles. The scene is filled with emotion that continues building up until the very end of the movie. An emotional Chachita requires help to remember the mother that she never had. She also questions why her mother had to die. On the other hand, Pepe, being a practical man, turns to religion to give his daughter a better state of mind. Pepe tells Chachita that his mother is in heaven taking care of them from there. Also on his role, Pepe tries to stay silent as much as possible— but at the end he shares with his mother that he does not forgive Chachita’s mother. At the end of the scene, Chachita needs to be assured that no woman will ever take Pepe’s love from her. A summary of the scene follows: The bartender’s brother reminds Pepe of the cross they need for the next day, the Day of the Death. Chachita also wants to visit the grave of her supposedly dead mother; she wants to bring flowers to the grave. Pepe said that he was too busy to take Chachita and could not leave his mother alone, so Chachita has no one to take her and will ask Celia to take her. During the conversation, Chachita wanted to be “reminded” what her mother looked like, what type of flowers she liked, how much Pepe loved her. While crying Chachita asks Pepe why mothers die and how come there are no pictures of her in the house.

Little Boy: My sister told me to tell you not to forget her cross. (Talking to Pepe)
Pepe: (Turning to Chachita) Chachita…
Chachita: What’s up?
Pepe: Where are the 1.5 nails?
Chachita: The ones for the cross?
Little Boy: Yes, tomorrow is Dead People’s Day…and we wanted to take it to the graveyard.
Pepe: Tell your sister not to worry.
Little Boy: Yes. Hey, your namesake will be on the theater today.
Pepe: What namesake?
Pepe: This brat…!
Chachita: (Turning to her dad) Hey, at what time are we going to visit mom’s grave?
Pepe: No, I won’t be able to go with you. We can’t leave grandma alone.
Chachita: Then, can I ask the Romantic to go with me?
Pepe: Okay, let’s see if she has a chance.
Chachita: This time I will take her lot’s of flowers! I have 1.50 pesos.
Pepe: Fine.
Chachita: Roses were her favorite flowers, right?
Pepe: Um, huh.
Chachita: Hey daddy, tell me what mom was like.
Pepe: I’ve told you a million times!
Chachita: But I like to hear you talk about her. What were her eyes like?
Pepe: Just like yours. Her eyes were clean…kind…immensely sweet.
Chachita: Was her hair like mine?
Pepe: She would have loved you so much…but… she didn’t have a chance to meet you. She was a saint, that woman.
Chachita: You must have loved her really bad, didn’t you?
Pepe: With all my heart.
Chachita: Tell me, dad…why do good moms die?
Pepe: That’s what I wonder. Why do they die?
Chachita: What a pity… I have never even seen a picture of her.
Pepe: She never liked to have pictures of her taken.
Chachita: But don’t get sad, dad. Don’t you say she’s taking care of us from Heaven? Don’t you say everything here reminds you of her? It’s just as if she was alive. Sometimes I feel as if she was by my side. Dad… you will never bring another woman here…to take mom’s place, will you?
Pepe: What a thing to say, Chachita! The things that happen, mother! (Turning to The Paralytic, his mother) But you know I’ve never been good at forgiving.

The next scene continues building momentum and sadness from the previous one.

Chachita is really emotional so a drunken man explains to her that her mother is watching
over her from heaven, and when she sees Chachita sad in doing so she is also sad. If Chachita wants her mother in heaven to be happy Chachita herself needs to be happy too.

The drunken man continues explaining that we live in a valley of sorrows, a land of sadness. According to the logic presented, these types of situations are good because when people are really sad, God himself comforts His people.

Drunken Man: Hi Chachita. What’s wrong, Chachita?
Chachita: Tomorrow will be Dead People’s Day.
Drunken Man: But… don’t get like that. If our good Lord wanted to take her to Heaven…only He knows why he did it, and we shouldn’t complain…because she’s looking at you from up there…and if she sees you’re suffering, she’ll be sad too.
Chachita: I really feel like crying.
Drunken Man: Cry, then. Blessed are the eyes that can dry….because when tears have dried…they burn in your heart. Cry until you feel better…but don’t shed tears of despair and madness. Cry…because this is a valley of tears. Cry because your sadness becomes your tears…and God says: “Blessed are those who cry… for they shall be consoled.”

In the next scene, Celia visits Pepe at his carpentry shop, hiding from her stepfather because he does not like Celia visiting Pepe. He believes that Celia is going to give him a kiss, but Celia is jealous and complains that Pepe has too many girlfriends.

Pepe has to step outside of his woodshop and that is where her stepfather finds her. The stepfather takes Celia home by force but she fights back.

Pepe: Hello, my romantic one.
Romantic: Let me hide in here. If my stepfather sees me there will be a big mess.
Pepe: Have you come to give me a hug kiss?
Romantic: I came to tell you not to be a big flirt. I heard someone called Yolanda phoned you. Who is that?
Pepe: Look, if you really love me, pay no need to gossip. My Chorreada is so cute…
Romantic: Come on…don’t you dare kiss me.
Pepe: Of course not! That thought wouldn’t cross my mind!
Little Boy: Come over here!
Pepe: Hold on a minute. (Talking to the Romantic) Where is she? (Turning to the Little Boy).
Little Boy: Right at the corner.
Pepe: Okay, here.
Little boy: Thanks, man.
Pepe: I’ll be right back. (Talking to the Romantic) Someone is looking for me.
Romantic’s Dad: What are you doing at this wood-worker’s house? Back to study!
Romantic: I want to go because I want to…not because you say so.
Romantic’s Dad: Come on, you girl!

Yolanda, Pepe’s sister and Chachita’s real mother, visited him because she needs to be forgiven. Yet, Pepe does not forgive her. She is really sick; she has tuberculosis. Yolanda is asking Pepe something, but he interrupts her and tells her that she is dead for him. Daughters should not get pregnant unless they are married because otherwise they would cause health issues to their parents and their brothers would stop loving them.

Yolanda: Pepe…
Pepe: What do you want this time?
Yolanda: Don’t treat me that way, I’m tired of it. Everyone treats me badly. I’m tired of it.
Pepe: You’ve cheated on everyone.
Yolanda: You know I haven’t.
Pepe: I don’t. You should find that bastard, your husband.
Yolanda: I can ask you to forgive me, but that lowlife…
Pepe: Was that all?
Yolanda: No. I wanted to ask you…
Pepe: She died.
Yolanda: Pepe!
Pepe: I said she died. See you.
Yolanda: I’ll do something foolish.
Pepe: Don’t do anything more. Enough!
Yolanda: You’ll regret this! Pepe!

Celia is writing a love letter for Pepe, when the stepfather interrupts her and then they had a fight. Celia’s mother has to intervene, so things would not escalate even further. Good daughters must obey their stepfathers regardless of their many
shortcomings. At the very least, daughters must be quiet. This is another gender-role for women, who must always be quiet.

Romantic’s Dad: “There is no love as loving…as people in love’s love.” I imagined. You senseless romantic. You’ll never get it …until I break your mouth!
Romantic: Let’s fight, then.
Romantic’s Dad: Shut up! Don’t talk back to me. It’s time for you to work, we won’t support you forever.
Romantic: You don’t support me!
Romantic’s Dad: Shut up or I’ll show you a good beating.
Romantic: Yeah…
Romantic’s Mom: Please, be quiet. (Talking to the Romantic)

Topillos and Planillas tell Pepe that a rich man with a nice car is pursuing Celia’s affections. Pepe immediately asks then what Celia did because he knows that the problem for some men is not when other men woo “their” women but when “their” women want something from other men. Topillos and Planillas explained to Pepe that Celia looked at the car—but being a woman she cannot help herself. Coincidently, the same lawyer was looking for Pepe at that time because the lawyer wanted a wood bar for his home.

Topillos: That’s my Pepe “El Toro”
Planillas: That’s my… That’s my friend.
Topillos: Don’t say that we like gossip…but this morning on the way back…from leaving some baskets at the market…as we walked by a stand… Should I tell him?
Planillas: Tell it to him.
Topillos: Okay. This morning, you know we took the baskets…and on the way back from the market, we… I’d rather not tell him. (Talking to Planillas)
Pepe: Enough is enough! You’ve made me do something stupid. You’ll have to tell me.
Topillos: Well you’ll tell him man. (Talking to Planillas)
Planillas: Well, you see, my friend…that there is some guy…who has his eyes set on The Romantic.
Topillos: And the worst part is…he drives a really nice Lincoln.
Pepe: Did she pay heed to him?
Topillos: Not to him, but she did take a look at the Lincoln. Women are just like Judas… There he is!
Planillas: That’s him!
Topillos: That’s him!
Pepe: (Turning to Lawyer Montes) Do you need anything? Did you lose something?
Lawyer Montes: I’m looking for a carpenter, are you him?
Pepe: I am Pepe “El Toro”
Lawyer Montes: And I am Lawyer Montes. I hear you were very good at carving. I want to make a little bar for my house. Can you come to my office tomorrow? This is my address.
Pepe: Okay.
Lawyer Montes: Good Afternoon.
Pepe: Good Afternoon.

Celia is explaining to Sleepless about her situation with Pepe but then Chachita comes in. One of the issues with marring a widower is the ghost of Pepe’s ex-wife. For some Mexicans, ghosts are real, and they are afraid of them. Sleepless leaves and Chachita asks Celia to take her to the graveyard to visit her mother’s grave.

Romantic: Honestly, this isn’t life anymore. It’s all quarrels and problems. It’s a mess.
Sleepless: If I were you, I’d break up with Pepe. If I married a widower, the dead wife would haunt me. And if she really loved him…it’s certain you’d see her ghost.
Romantic: Be quiet, Chachita’s coming.
Chachita: Your clothes. (Talking to the Sleepless)
Sleepless: Thank you Chachita.
Chachita: Can we talk outside? (Turning to the Romantic)
Sleepless: Well, see you (talking to the Romantic) I don’t like listening to nonsense (talking to Chachita).
Chachita: Hey, sis, I would like you to come to the graveyard with me…to take my mother flowers.
Romantic: Graveyard? No…I have no time. I have to go to my shorthand class.
Chachita: It will be okay if you skip it one day.
Romantic: No…Well, the truth is I don’t like graveyards.
Chachita: Fine… I thought we were friends.
Romantic: We are but…
Chachita: No discussion, girl, you win. Anyway, that’s all.
Romantic: Okay. Don’t tell I’m scared.
Chachita: Thank you!

Guayaba and Tostada are drunk, as usual, and talking what about what they heard about Pepe. They heard that Pepe allegedly killed his wife, supposedly Chachita’s
mother. Chachita walks in on them and hears them, becoming very emotional again.

Daughters must defend their parents, especially from gossip.

Guayaba: Just as I hear it, I tell it.
Tostada: What are you talking about?
Guayaba: I heard that Pepe killed Chachita’s mom…and so she died.
Tostada: Come on!
Guayaba: No, I swear I heard it. You saw her?
Tostada: No…but when you die, sis…you die just once and for all, like this…and you’ve kicked the bucket. Hey, sis…
Guayaba: What is it?
Tostada: I think Pepe’s life…is really, and I mean really…really obscure.
Guayaba: You think so?
Tostada: Of course it is. It wouldn’t sound so odd…that he should have murdered that poor woman. One of these days…he may murder the girl as well! He is insane! Insane!
Guayaba: But…
Chachita: Liars! My mom was a holy woman! She died on childbirth! My dad loved her a lot. Do you hear me, you fools? Viper tongues!
Tostada: I suspect that we blew it this time.
Guayaba: But don’t worry… (Talking to Tostada) Don’t… don’t worry. (Turning to Chachita) Look, Chachita…don’t listen to Tostada. She has such a big mouth! Besides, She’s never reasonable. You see? That what I was telling her…that your mother was a saint…a saint, really. (Talking to Tostada) I’ve fixed it, sis! But the truth is, if Pepe asked me to marry him…
Tostada: Would you marry him?
Guayaba: Me? Marry? He’s insane, sis.
Tostada: Insane.
Guayaba: So insane. Well, why don’t we get the next to last drink?
Tostada: No!
Guayaba: Will you play hard to get?
Tostada: I’m not going!
Guayaba: Don’t get like that! Why aren’t you going?
Tostada: Because when I say no, it means no.
Guayaba: Really?
Tostada: Really!
Guayaba: You piss me off! I don’t have to deal with drunks!
Tostada: Now I’m going.
Guayaba: No, you’re not
Tostada: I am
Guayaba: Okay, we stay.
Tostada: Hey, sis…
Guayaba: What is it?
Tostada: Is Pepe your type?
Guayaba: No. I’ve never liked him.
Tostada: Really?
Guayaba: And you? You do like him! Stop that or I’ll tell Topillos…and he’ll beat you. Let’s have the next to last drink! The next to last!

Chachita’s emotional rollercoaster continues building up. She keeps displaying to the audience her female-gender role as well. The scene also starts to describe that lying has consequences, sooner or later. During the present scene, Celia takes Chachita to the graveyard to visit Chachita’s mother’s grave. While Chachita is crying on the tomb, a woman approaches her and asks her if Chachita knew the woman’s daughter—that is not Chachita’s mother. The woman proves that the person in the tomb is not Chachita’s mother, but the woman’s daughter. When Chachita returns home, she immediately confronts Pepe, asking him why her mother’s grave is not where he told her it was. Pepe told both Celia and Chachita that they must likely have visited the wrong grave and that he will take Chachita to the right grave some other day. Unable to get anything from Pepe, Chachita leaves crying. After Chachita is gone, Celia too confronts Pepe about where Chachita’s mother is buried. Pepe finally accepts that Chachita’s is not buried where he told them. Celia pressures Pepe even further to find out where the body is buried. Celia even asks Pepe if what people, meaning what Guayaba and Tostada, are saying is true: that he killed her. Pepe asks Celia to trust him.

Chachita returns and sees Pepe and Celia kissing. Chachita confronts Celia first telling her that she, Chachita, considered her, Celia, her friend. Celia has no option but to leave. Chachita confronts Pepe again, telling him that she defended him, that he is evil, and that he has no respect for her mother’s memories. Chachita asks Pepe how is it possible that he sent her to the wrong grave and if he actually killed her mother, as people are saying. Pepe explodes, losing control of his actions, and slaps Chachita a few times.
When Pepe regains control of his actions and realizes what he has just done, he punishes himself by hitting his hands until he bleeds profusely. Pepe finally stops hitting himself because Chachita makes him stop, both physically and by telling Pepe that she did not mean what she just said. When men lose control of their actions, and hurt someone they love, they should hurt themselves.

Lady 3: Daughter…Are you a friend of my girl’s?
Chachita: What girl?
Lady 3: My daughter Elvira, who is buried here.
Chachita: No, my mother is here.
Lady 3: No, girl, look.
Chachita: Why isn’t my mother buried there? You’ve lied to me! (Talking to Pepe)
Pepe: You must have picked the wrong grave.
Chachita: Then take me to where she’s buried!
Pepe: Not today, girl. I’ll take you some other day.
Chachita: Don’t you want me to take her flowers? Dear mommy…
Pepe: I told you I’ll take you some other day! You must have been to another grave.
(Turning to The Romantic.)
Romantic: No, Pepe. There’s something you won’t tell us. That’s not Chachita’s mother’s grave, is it?
Pepe: No.
Romantic: Where is she buried, then?
Pepe: I can’t tell you.
Romantic: You see? You don’t dare. You don’t dare because….
Pepe: Because what? What were you going to say?
Romantic: Let me go.
Pepe: What, Celia? (The Romantic) What are you thinking?
Romantic (Celia): Maybe…maybe what people say is true. That something terrible happened to Chachita’s mom. That you killed her. Say it isn’t so! That those terrible things I’m thinking…are not true. I love you so much, Pepe.
Pepe: Trust … me. I can’t tell you…but trust … me, please.
Romantic: It’s just that I love you so much, Torito!
Pepe: Not half as much as I love you.
Romantic: I’ve heard so many things about you…
Pepe: Come on, stop that. Come on; let me see your eyes. Aren’t you ashamed? Such a big girl, crying. Come one, give me one huge kiss.

Chachita: And you call yourself my friend… (Talking to the Romantic) Damn you! My friend…!
Pepe: Go (Talking to The Romantic).
Chachita: And I used to defend you! I used to say you were the greatest dad on Earth! You have no soul, no respect, no love! You are mean…
Pepe: Chachita! Daughter!
Chachita: I don’t want to be your daughter! You told me no one would stain my mother’s house. Is this how you respect her sacred memory? And today! This is how you respect her worth!
Pepe: Chachita, don’t talk like that!
Chachita: Yes! I’ve been praying on a grave that’s not my mom’s! What did you do to her? What did you do to my mom? You’re not telling me. I’m glad she’s dead so she can’t see what I see. I’d like to be old so I could make you suffer…and hurt you! I was saving for you every cent I earned. If I saw you dying now I wouldn’t care…because now I believe what people say! - That you killed my mom!
Pepe: Chachita!
Chachita: That it was you who killed her!
Pepe: Daughter!
Chachita: Yes! You killed her!
Pepe: Quiet!
Chachita: You killed her!
Pepe: Quiet!
Chachita: No…No! Don’t do that, dad! Forgive me! Don’t do that! How could you believe I meant that?

Due to the day’s events, Pepe and Chachita are not able to sleep at all. However, all their friends came to wish Chachita a happy birthday and sing her the “Mañanitas” on her birthday. Pepe tells the gang that he would rather have her sleep because of what happened the previous day. People wanted to congratulate Chachita. Then one of the guys tells Pepe how much Chachita has been praying to be serenaded. Finally, the gang convinces Pepe to sing to Chachita. Due to the commotion, a policeman arrives to see what is happening. Pepe explains that they are going to sing Chachita the “Mañanitas.”

A man: Come on, guys, you’ll wake up the whole neighborhood.
Pepe: What’s up, people?
Planillas: Hi Pepe. We came to sing the “Mañanitas” for Chachita’s. We are all ready.
Pepe: Gee, guys…I wouldn’t want to do that.
Group of men: Why not?
Pepe: So many stupid things have happened…I don’t know if we should sing for her…or let the girl rest.

Planillas: No!
Group of men: Come on!
Topillos: You don’t know how…hopefully…and faithfully…your girl is waiting for this day. She has promised penance to all of the celestial court…for us not to miss. Hey, Torito…how is your voice doing?

Pepe: If you will help me, let’s try it.
Group of men: Okay!
Pepe: Let’s walk through the neighborhood.
Group of men: Okay.
Planillas: Hey, man, why don’t you walk through here…and open that door for us to save our feet [and wallets since they do not want to walk nor pay for using the entrance]?

Group of men: Yeah!
Pepe: I don’t want the door woman to scold us. Let’s knock.
Man 4: Hey, man, what happened to your hand?
Pepe: Nothing. I hit it with the hammer.
Topillos: With the hammer?
Man 3: Yeah, right! Sure, it was a sledgehammer!
Men 5: Are you left handed?
Pepe: That’s enough! Forgotten!
Policeman: What is it here? Did you steal music, or what?
Man 4: Do we look like thieves?
Policeman: Not thieves…murderers!
Pepe: Come on! We’ll sing the “Mañanitas” for my daughter’s birthday.
Policeman: Oh, Ok.
Everyone: Good Morning. Good Morning.

The policeman continues with his route and finds a drunken woman; he assumes that she is a prostitute. The policeman tells her to leave immediately or he will take her into the police station. The woman was also on her way to sing the “Mañanitas” to Chachita. The scene also presents policemen as nice, respectful people with a role to play, and that they should be obeyed and respected. Pepe and his gang were respectful of the policemen.

Policeman: Are you still here?
Yolanda: Good evening…
Policeman: Come on, beat it or I’ll take you to the precinct.
Yolanda: No. I’m waiting. Waiting…
Policeman: Waiting… Waiting. Don’t give me that I’m in “love” look!
Yolanda: In love…
Policeman: Well, that’s enough. You need to go to sleep.
Yolanda: No.
Policeman: If I don’t take you the police car will…and I’ll be compromised.
Come on…come on. Come on!

When the gang asks Chachita what happened to her face, she would not say that Pepe hit her. According to the social rules presented, family members forgive and protect each other. I also find it really interesting to see how people say potentially impolite things without actually saying it. The Mexican culture is indirect and attempts to avoid social conflict, as much as possible, even when dealing with the obvious: domestic violence.

Pepe: My dear daughter, on behalf of your holy mother…who is in Heaven and mine, get this.
Group of men: Hurray, Chachita! Open it! Open it!
Pepe: I hope she’ll keep the change [coins] so it can be full of cents…and she can have what she deserves.
Topillos: She can keep a lot of money in there.
Pepe: Do you like it?
Chachita: It’s cool! When did you make it? I never saw you. You’re so tricky!
Man 5: Chachita, you haven’t told us what happened to your mouth.
Chachita: I…I hit myself with a hammer.
Man 6: With the same hammer?
Man 5: An epidemic, right?

People are supposed to bring food to parties, even if they steal it. People are to try to contribute, as much as possible, even if they have to steal it in order to celebrate a group member’s birthday. In addition, there are always people who are always drunk, which is an acceptable social expression, according to the film’s producers and director.

Drunken man: I always say, “Better late, than never” I’m sorry, but they just gave it to me at the bakery. Chachita…excuse me for the inscription…but all my heart is in it.
Chachita: Thank you!
Drunken man: You are welcome, Chachita.
Topillos: You should have brought one for each one of us!
Group of men: Yes!
Drunken man: Sure! I am so rich…! Here, Chachita.
Chachita: They smell so nice! Right? (Asking Pepe)
Man 3: Like a hot bun!
Topillos: Hey, family!
Planillas: We’re here! We said we would get it…and we did.
Topillos: Be quiet! We’re quiet already.
Planillas: Quiet! Didn’t you hear? Okay, forgotten. In this beautiful day…this child’s birthday…I went with this stinky man…to get the meals.
Topillos: Hey, haven’t Guayaba and Tostada come here?
Man 4: They are over there, with the old lady.
Topillos: But why did you let them go in?
Man 4: Why?
Planillas: They’ll fall on top of her like the other time.
Topillos: Don’t you see their brain is no good?
Man 4: Were they dropped as babies?
Topillos: No, they dropped dead drunk.
Man 4: That’s their usual status.

Celia also brings Chachita a present, but Chachita would not accept it until Pepe commands Chachita to take it. Chachita takes Celia’s present so Pepe would not hit her again. Children must obey their parents—no matter what, otherwise there are consequences.

Romantic: Congratulations, Chachita. I brought you this.
Chachita: I don’t need anything.
Pepe: Chachita…
Chachita: Is it an order?
Pepe: Yes.
Chachita: No discussion, then. You win again [here there is no discussion because Chachita knows that Pepe can hit her again] (Talking to the Pepe.)

During Chachita’s party, it becomes clear that some people do not know how to read. Furthermore, playing with words that sound alike but mean totally different things is considered funny. Ignorance is normal for a social stratum.

Planillas: Look! There’s the fine mass wine here! [Here it means that Planillas does not know how to read, since he confused two words
that are written in Spanish that sound almost alike: 
*misa* and *mesa*. 

**Topillos:** You mean table wine, not mass wine!

Yolanda, Pepe’s sister, Chachita’s mother, and the person the policeman confused with a prostitute, comes in to say good bye. She knows that she is sick but is threatening to commit suicide. Yet, she is trying to hide from reality in her vices. Here the film implies that when people are dying they should go back to their families.

Yolanda: Pepe…
Pepe: Yolanda! What are you doing?
Yolanda: I came to…
Pepe: Quiet! Come this way.
Yolanda: I came to tell you that I’m leaving. I’m here to say good-bye. I’ll never bother you again.
Pepe: Are you leaving Mexico? […] That again! [Meaning that she is drunk]
Yolanda: Don’t get mad.
Pepe: Aren’t you ashamed to be like that? [Probably thinking that she might commit suicide]
Yolanda: I’m terribly ashamed. Forgive me. Last night I tried to get drowned…to get dumb with wine, to get dizzy with music…but I couldn’t. The ice coldness of your contempt is killing me. Always contempt! I don’t deserve that.
Pepe: Weren’t you leaving Mexico?
Yolanda: I’m leaving this life. No one cares, anyway. Say good-bye.
Pepe: What nonsense are you thinking?

In the meantime, Celia is trying to convince Chachita to let her marry Pepe. But Chachita is jealous because she was raised up by a single parent, and therefore, is insecure of Pepe’s paternal love. While walking, both of them see Pepe and Yolanda. Both of them confront Pepe about his female companion, but Pepe would not say anything. Pepe would not answer who Yolanda is and why she loves him. Pepe sends Chachita away, to take care of the gang. Pepe begs Celia to trust him, but she would not. Finally, Pepe explains to Celia that Yolanda is his sister, Chachita’s mother, and the responsible party for his mother condition. Since Celia did not trust him, Pepe finished
their relationship right there because trust is important for close friends and family. Social relations in México are based on blood, shared hardships, and trust, mainly.

**Romantic:** Don’t be ungrateful, girl. (Talking to Chachita) I really love you. You’re my best friend.

**Chachita:** Friend… You don’t do to a friend what you did to me. You don’t understand my old man is all I have in life.

**Romantic:** No matter how much you love him, you can’t love him like I do.

**Chachita:** You have no right to love him! I do, because he’s my dad.

**Romantic:** Just let us get married. I’ll take care of you loving you as a friend…as a sister…loving you as a mother.

**Chachita:** Don’t make me laugh.

**Romantic:** We’ll take care of your sick grandma together, struggle together. Give me a little corner at your home, Chachita…to take care of Pepe…to watch over him…

**Chachita:** No! My only pride is watching over him! Why do you want to steal what’s mine? You suffer with your stepfather, right?

**Romantic:** A lot.

**Chachita:** And you want a stepmother for me? You call yourself my friend?

**Romantic:** I’d be different!

**Chachita:** No, that’s what you say…and every step mom and step dad must say that.

**Romantic:** Then you’re afraid of suffering…and to the hell with me, Pepe, and the poor Paralytic.

**Chachita:** I want women like you not to offer yourselves to dad! Woman like you with no dignity…that won’t leave my dad alone! Because if he wanted someone else…to take my mother’s sacred place…if he told me that himself…no discussion, then. That day I’d leave somewhere because I can’t see anyone staining my dead mom’s home. But as long as he says nothing….I’ll slap and kill anyone offering herself to him! Even if I go to jail! Listen carefully. If I see you with him again…I don’t care that you’re tall…

**Romantic:** You’ll do nothing! Not you nor anyone! I love Toro. And when a woman like me wants a male…no stupid girl will take him away from her! For the record, I came to beg you…to talk to you as a friend, to make you see the truth. But what do you know? Right now I’ll tell Pepe to tell you!

**Yolanda:** I love you very much, Pepe… You have no right…what you do to me isn’t fair…Pepe no…

**Pepe:** This can’t be anymore. Go your way and stay out of my life. I’ll be damned! They saw us!

**Yolanda:** What do I care? I want you to forgive me.

**Pepe:** I do but wait here.

**Yolanda:** I’ll wait here…

**Romantic:** Who is that woman?
Pepe: You must not know.  
Romantic: Why do you defend her? Who is she? I thought you were base and mean, but you’re even worse. You don’t even respect your daughter’s birthday!  
Pepe: (Turning to Chachita) Chachita, go and wait on the gang. Go, I said! [Here again the threat of violence.]  
Romantic: You didn’t want your daughter to listen…but she saw you, and that’s worse. You are so cynical…At your own home! And I was defending you, fighting for your love…which is trash. But what could be expected from you? What I have taken beatings and insults…from my stepfather for? There were rumors. They said you had other women. I didn’t want to listen, because I thought you were good. I wanted you to be good. But…  
Pepe: Celia, don’t talk like that…you may regret it.  
Romantic: I do regret loving you! You can’t deny it; you locked that woman over there.  
Pepe: There is nothing between us! Nothing!  
Romantic: That’s why there’s lipstick all over your face. You don’t need to tell me who she is. I know she is a bitch.  
Pepe: Shut up!  
Romantic: You see? Why are you defending her? Why don’t you want me to slap her?  
Pepe: Celia, please…  
Romantic: Who is she?  
Pepe: If I tell you… we’re over.  
Romantic: Let it be over! Who is she? Who is that bitch?  
Pepe: That bitch…is my sister. And now what?  
Romantic: Your sister…  
Pepe: Yes, my sister! She is to blame for my mother being a paralytic. But you had to know, didn’t you. You couldn’t respect this I kept inside me…because it burnt my soul.  
Romantic: Pepe…  
Pepe: I asked you to trust me… now leave!  
Romantic: Forgive me, Pepe.  
Pepe: Beat it!  
Little Boy: Lawyer Montes is asking whether you’ll go or not. Hey! Don’t make a pass on me! I’m just a kid! (Turning to Yolanda)  

When Pepe is with the Lawyer that is pursuing Celia’s affections to do a job for him, Pepe requires cash rather that a check because bank tellers mistreat poor people. Being poor (the disenfranchised) constrains those who suffer such types of violence, mainly because no one trusts them; they become the mistrusted “other”. Lacking
financial resources puts the disfranchised in a vulnerable position because they need access to resources, including money. Pepe cannot protect his girlfriend from the actions of a rich lawyer.

Lawyer Montes: How much will you need? All 400 pesos?
Pepe: For the wood, yes, sir. And just give me 25 that I need for medicine.
Lawyer Montes: Miss, my checkbook, please (Talking to Lady 4).
Pepe: You’ll give me a check? I’d rather have it in cash.
Lawyer Montes: Why?
Pepe: It means a series of difficulties. Since they see us poor, no one wants to authorize it…and I’d rather not do something stupid [meaning that the way people see you they will treat you; if they see you poor they will make your life even more difficult].
Lawyer Montes: You are right.

Religion is also an identity and behavior shaping strategy because its values outline appropriate and inappropriate behavior and values. Chachita also displays her religious practices and rituals when praying for Topillos and Planillas, along with the rest of the gang. Praying is an important ritual and social bond.

Chachita: Saint Tadeo, Saint Rosa de Caspio…impossible causes advocate, help them please. Oh, Saint Nicolas de Bari…No, he’s for the Lottery. Oh, Saint Dimas, good thief…don’t let them go to jail!

After collecting money from the lawyer, Pepe gives it to Chachita, who places it in a hole behind a picture. Celia’s stepfather saw the whole thing and when Chachita is out he steals the 400 pesos in front of the mute paralytic. He did it because he knows Chachita’s grandmother is mute. It is also very interesting to see how Chachita thanks God for everything good life throws at them. However, soon things would change. Bad people will get what they deserve, here or in the afterlife.

Chachita: Look, grandma! Its 400 pesos. At least 25 from here are for your shots. I’ll have to buy a candle for each saint. God knows who did this miracle for us. Whoever did it was great…and we should
thank him, right grandma? Well, start praying to thank them…while I wash these clothes, will you?

Man 10: Newspaper! For those who can’t read! Hey, Torito! Jesus! How can they leave the shop unattended? Hi, ma’am. How are you doing? Well, see you. Newspaper! Newspaper! For those who can’t read!

People in love and family are not to share their secrets and actions with anyone. There is a bond between the members of a social group. That is why Celia could not tell Sleepless what happened between her and Pepe. Furthermore, women also stereotype men and what is supposed to be their socially approved behavior and what is expected from their relationship and their mates.

Romantic: Pepe… Torito…
Sleepless: What is it, sis?
Romantic: He does not love me anymore. And I am to blame for that.
Sleepless: You? Why?
Romantic: I can’t tell you.
Sleepless: You don’t have to tell me. They’re all the same! They forget you as soon as they get what they want [meaning sexual favors].
Romantic: But he hasn’t got anything!
Sleepless: And so? I don’t get it woman!
Romantic: Well, I’m going to my class.

The lawyer is following Celia “to offer her a job.” But Celia tells him that she cannot get anything from him because Pepe is very jealous. So the lawyer throws a business card at her. When Yolanda sees all of this, she advises Celia not to do it because men have a different standard for everything, even for cheating. Men cheat repeatedly without thinking, but women are not even allowed to cheat in their thoughts. Women carry a cross for the way they behave towards men since they do not forget any minor disloyalty, or what is actually done. According to Yolanda, Pepe’s sister, women are all the same: promiscuous under certain circumstances.

Romantic: Hey! Are you following me?
Lawyer Montes: I heard you were looking...for a job. I'm a lawyer and I need a secretary.

Romantic: I'm not done studying yet.

Lawyer Montes: There's no need. You're friend says you're very smart. I can give you a good salary. You could have a much better life.

Romantic: I like the way I live.

Lawyer Montes: Fine. If you ever need a job, I'm at your service. Here's my business card. Take it.

Romantic: I can't take anything from you. My boyfriend would go nuts.

Lawyer Montes: I don't think so. Things aren't the way one thinks. Good-bye.

Yolanda: (Talking to the Romantic.) No, girl. Don't do that. He who gives you his name like that deserves you not. He can give you his name, but not like that.

Romantic: Please, don't tell Pepe. I took the card without thinking, but I swear...

Yolanda: It doesn't matter. We women sometimes betray in our thoughts...but they, thoughtlessly, betray us once and again. You know who I am, don't you?

Romantic: Yes. Pepe's sister.

Yolanda: No. I was Pepe's sister...but now he wants nothing to do with me. And he loved me so much...I was his pet. He was so proud to walk around with me. But when he knew... Don't ever hurt Pepe “El Toro”, he can't forgive.

Romantic: Then...I've lost him forever.

Yolanda: What did you do to him? So, that lawyer and you...?

Romantic: No, not that!

Yolanda: So? We are all the same.

Due to the stolen money, Pepe is trying to obtain a co-signer for the usurer but rich people have no memory, especially when it involves money. Knowledge and school do not make people good either; actually is the other way around. What happened in the past is in the past; the poors’ good deeds are usually not carried into the present.

Pepe: Excuse me, sir. Mr. Antonio Morales?

Mr. Morales: Hello! Hi, Torito. Long time, no see! (Turning to Man 10) You ended up selling periodicals. You used to cut classes periodically. Great joke, isn't it? But don't worry, many have started from there... and they've become great men. (Turning back to Torito) You only attended school for a year, right?

Pepe: Yes, my mother's illness forced me to work...since I was very young.

Man 10: The Gorilla studied there. Pepe fought him once to defend you, remember?
Mr. Montes: It was more than once! I’ll always thank you Torito.
Pepe: Never mind.
Man 16: Mr. Morales…
Mr. Morales: Sixty thousand pesos! Why?
Man 16: The architect’s fee.
Mr. Morales: Oh, yes. He built my home.
Pepe: Lucky you, you finished school.
Mr. Morales: Right. Well, what is the reason for your visit?
Pepe: You know? I need your signature to get a loan.
Mr. Morales: My signature?
Man 10: Come on, don’t play dumb. You’ll get a soul out of limbo.
Mr. Morales: I don’t think you know how business works, but…my signature alone is worthless. This is a society, and…
Mr. Morales: Well, see you.
Man 10: Let’s go.

Women in general, but especially those who are easy or promiscuous, would not find a way to survive unless someone defends, protects, and supports them. A woman that is left alone, isolated, and/or due to a “mistake” will have a very difficult time succeeding in life; most of them will end up as prostitutes, and most men will try to take advantage of them.

Yolanda: Good morning.
Mr. Morales: What are you doing here? Don’t mistake an affair for something else. We had drunk too much…and I won’t stand seeing you here every day.
Yolanda: Okay, I won’t bother you anymore.
Mr. Morales: Here’s 5 pesos. They may come in handy. If you ever come back, I’ll call the consumption hospital.
Man 17: Mr. Morales…
Pepe: Don’t talk to women like that, bastard!
Mr. Morales: No, Pepe, no! No, Pepe, no!
Man 10: They both fell. Well, is someone missing? We’re leaving. Right, Pepe? Pepe! Damn, man! They fooled that poor bitch! They left her with nothing…
Pepe: Shut up!
Man 10: Come on, it’s not like she’s your sister! Don’t be upset, man. Let’s see Chencho at the workshop.
Evil people will try to tempt Pepe, but he is strong enough in his beliefs because he is good. This is another religious metaphor. Silence is a requirement of bad people too. On the other hand, bad people will never understand good people. Finally, life eventually will punish those that deserve it, in this world or the next.

Pepe: That’s what friends are for…
Man 10: I feel like kicking their ass. Well, Pepito, I have to go. See you.
Pepe: Good-bye, man.
Man 18: Can we talk for a second?
Pepe: Talk about what?
Man 18: About money. Interested?
Pepe: Interested.
Man 18: Come in. How much did you ask the usurer for?
Pepe: 400 pesos.
Man 18: And the guy who was with you…is he loyal? He could be very useful.
Pepe: Useful for what?
Man 18: Just don’t ask. Is he loyal or not?
Pepe: He’s brave, but he’ll go to the States to work. His train leaves to work today at 20:20.
Man 18: Pity. Can we speak frankly?
Pepe: Shoot.
Man 18: Did you see how much money that woman had on her closet? Bunches of thousands. Lot’s of them.
Pepe: And so?
Man 18: She said she wanted a carpenter, didn’t she? My friends and I just want someone to let us in. You can just pretend to go out to buy something…pretend to forget to lock the door…then we go in…and 5,000 are for you.
Pepe: 5,000 pesos?
Man 18: Straight to your pocket.
Pepe: I’m not in.
Man 18: Anyway…Be careful not to say a thing.
Pepe: As long as you stay out of my life…this never happened.
Man 18: Easy.
Man 19: What’s wrong with you?

Rich and bad people are the same. They will take advantage of poor people or anyone that would not defend his or herself. Wealth and education make people evil. Class and knowledge prevent people from reaching heaven.
Pepe: I’m charging 15 because I need the money to buy a shot. It’s a medicine that’s doing my mom good.

Lady 5: You should sell me that medal, then. I’ll give you forty pesos. Sell it to me and you’ll be better off.

Pepe: No, ma’am…

Lady 5: I’ll pay you 15 if you fix the other room’s floor…the window’s sill and a broken sofa.

Pepe: Okay, ma’am. Please take care of my tools for a minute. I’ll just buy nails to fix the floor.

Lady 5: Oh! Don’t forget to lock the portico’s door.

Pepe is charged with a murder he did not commit. But that is the destiny of good, poor men. All those people that Pepe helped during his life would not help him, except for Topillos and Planillas. Knowledge and education prevent people from reaching out and helping each other. But at the end of the day, we should only care about what family and group members think, according to the film. Chachita was the only one that believed in Pepe’s innocence.

Lady 6: It was him, gentlemen! I saw him! I saw him!

Man 20: That’s enough, ma’am

Lawyer Montes: Did you hear your honor? Of course, the fairy tale told by the accused…can’t convince anyone. A guy who invited him to a robbery. The accused doesn’t know his name nor where he is. I don’t think a thief would confide in any stranger…and invite him to a theft. However, that scarecrow, that innocent thief…broke in to steal…oh…but he only committed murder. Murder seemed more profitable than stealing…having so much cash at hand! (Turning to Pepe.) Right, sir?

Pepe: I’m telling you, I heard a noise when I went back.

Lawyer Montes: There were mice in the house.

Pepe: No, it was someone running away. I’m sure they had no time to steal anything.

Lawyer Montes: But they waited for you to compromise you…and put a bloody knife in your hand to condemn you! Such a talented murder.

Pepe: No, sir, the lady was alive and moaning when I got there. That’s why I took out the knife she had on her back.

Lawyer Montes: Your Honor…this is a vulgar thief hiding behind an honest job…to commit the worst crimes…to con innocent people who open their homes to him…thinking he’s a decent carpenter. Tell me, I was one of his victims. (Talking to Pepe.) Where is my money?

Pepe: I told you, I was robbed.
Lawyer Montes: Yeah, we were all born yesterday. Your Honor, it’s obvious that Pepe “El Toro” is a thief...a despicable murderer!

Chachita: No! My dad is not a murderer! My dad is not a thief! You are the thieves taking him away from me, being innocent! My dad is good! He is good! (Turning to Pepe) Dad is a good man, right? Tell them it wasn’t you! Right, dad? It wasn’t you!

The Judge: Take the girl away.

Chachita: No! I want to be with my dad! No! No! I want to be with my dad! Let me go! No!

Pepe: I am not a murderer! I didn’t kill her! Chachita! I didn’t kill her.

After Pepe is sent to prison, Celia empathizes with her mother because she now understands her mother’s feelings for her husband, Celia’s stepfather. On the other hand, evil people with knowledge would take advantage of the weak, even though there is nothing of value to steal. Lawyer Montes’ assistants left Pepe and his family without anything, literally, through an illegal action. These bad lawyers did not feel any fear from their actions because they knew that Pepe and his family were totally ignorant of the law and had no way of defending themselves. Furthermore, we have to remember that in México and throughout Latin America there is a culture of silence. Conflict is also considered as something negative.

Romantic: Mom, now I understand why you love Mr. Pilar. I don’t care that Pepe is a murderer...I don’t care that he’s mean...I love him.

Romantic’s Mom: What will you do, baby?

Romantic: A lawyer has been flirting with me...and I’m willing to...do anything to save Pepe.

Lawyer Montes: Nothing here is worth a thing. My 400 pesos are gone. Well, I’m leaving. See you later at the office. See the truck off, it’s paid for.

Man 21: That’s fine, sir. Well, what do you say? (Turning to Man 22)

Man 22: What?

Man 21: Do we seize on our own?

Man 22: But...that’s illegal.

Man 21: What can these illiterate know about the law?

Man 22: Okay, let’s do it.

Man 21: Guys, carry everything on the truck, come on.

Little Boy: Chachita! Chachita! Some guys are emptying your house!

Chachita: What?

Little Boy: They’re taking everything!
Chachita: Thank you.
Man 22: Come on, carry that.
Chachita: What are you doing, sir?
Man 21: We are recovering what your dad stole from Mr. Montes. Let’s go.
Man 22: Let’s go.
Man 21: You know, guys, take everything.
Man 23: Yes, boss. I think that’s everything. Take the bundle.
Man 24: Let’s move the lady first.
Man 23: Okay
Chachita: No! Not her chair! Please! Take anything but her chair!
Man 24: Stop it!
Chachita: No! Not her chair! She’s paralytic! Please, no! No! No! Please don’t!
Man 23: Move her.
Chachita: Please, don’t hurt her!
Man 24: Come on!
Man 23: Step aside.
Chachita: Be careful, she’s paralytic! Please! Be very careful!
Man 24: Let’s go. It’s late.
Chachita: Don’t worry, grandma. Those bastards took everything…but I’ll buy everything back. I’ll work harder and we’ll bail dad out of jail.
Man 23: Come on, the bundle. And you, brat, give me that.
Chachita: No, please, not these! No! No! It was a gift from dad! Please, don’t
Man 24: Go and take care of your grandma.
Chachita: Grandma…

Pepe is in jail for a crime that he did not commit while Topillos and Planillas, along with the rest of the gang, are in jail for stealing food for Chachita’s birthday party. Topillos and Planillas are to be released, but they would rather stay with Pepe because he is their friend and because they are better off inside of prison. Life outside the prison is even tougher.

Man 25: “Canta Recio” Trio, come to the director’s office. You’ll be released tomorrow. Topillos and Planillas are released.
Pepe: Didn’t you hear?
Planillas: We rather stay here with you.
Topillos: Yes, man
Pepe: Don’t be stupid! If you can go, go.
Planillas: If you say so, man.
Topillos: Come on. Let’s get dressed.
Planillas: You mean get undressed.
Chachita questions God why He has forgotten them, but immediately Celia’s stepfather takes them in. Chachita is grateful, but Celia’s stepfather wants Celia to be “grateful” too.

Chachita: My poor grandma…Why has God forsaken us? Aren’t we, the poor, his children too? Is God only for rich people? We don’t harm anyone…why do these things happen to us?
Romantic: Chachita…I want you to forgive me.
Chachita: You forgive me. This time I really have nothing left. My dad will be in jail for many years.
Romantic: Do not despair. I’ll ask my step father if we can take your grandma home.
Romantic’s Dad: Sure. She can take her. It can be said that an honest man denies his roof…to a needy woman.
Chachita: Thank you, Mr. Pilar!
Romantic’s Dad: Well, girl, at least you are grateful. Unlike others …

At the time Topillos and Planillas were supposed to leave prison, they are caught with a stolen gun. At the same time they are being sent back in, the real murderer of the crime Pepe was framed for is also entering prison. This evil person would do as he pleases in prison; no one would stand up to him. Simultaneously to all of this, Pepe receives a letter from Celia, in which she tells Pepe that she plans to visit him in prison the very next day. However, Pepe gets into a fight with the person who is actually guilty of the crime Pepe is paying for and is sent to solitary confinement. Pepe is definitely not afraid of anyone, and he will fight back for what is his, unlike other people that are too afraid to defend what is theirs.

Man 26: Fresh shipment, out!
Man 27: Hey! We’re not equal!
Man 28: Where to?
Man 27: Oh, no!
Man 28: What are you doing here?
Man 27: I work for the Government.
Man 28: Where were you in here?
Man 27: I had my own salary
Topillos: He had his own salary!
Planillas: Did you offer a “bri”? 
Man 27: A “bri”? 
Topillos: A bribe, man! Come on! 
Man 27: Don’t be like that! 
Man 28: Your watch! 
Man 27: Don’t push it. 
Man 28: Your watch! 
Man 27: Oh, okay… 
Man 28: Take it off…Come on. 
Man 27: You’re so mean. 
Man 28: Hurry! 
Man 27: But, sir… 
Man 28: Take your coat off! 
Man 27: Okay. 
Man 28: You won’t be needing it. Beat it, come on! 
Pepe: Thanks, man. 
Romantic’s Letter: My life is no life anymore. No one sings to me. I no longer have your kisses. No one calls me Chorreada anymore. If I knew you had forgiven me…but this doubt is killing me. Torito, darling, I know the fault was mine…because I was too jealous…but that shows how much I love you. I’ll visit you tomorrow. You won’t be as mean as to reject me, will you? Your Chorreada…Celia 
Group of men singing: They say I’m a robber, a burglar…that I’m a thief. I won’t deny it, my fellows…but if I should say the truth…it wasn’t the lack of money…it was lack of education. 
Pepe: Howdy. 
Man 30: You have a visit. [I am visiting] 
Pepe: Are you looking for something? 

Celia’s stepfather is starting to feel guilty for steeling the 400 pesos that ended up with Pepe in jail for a crime that he did not commit. Another byproduct of Celia’s stepfather’s actions is Chachita and her grandmother living with him. But Celia’s stepfather is not done taking advantage of the weak; he wants Chachita to become his maid. 

Romantic’s Mom: What are you looking for? 
Romantic’s Dad: Brown sugar, I got it. 
Romantic’s Mom: Stop smoking, Pilar! 
Romantic’s Dad: I won’t smoke, I just want something sweet. (Turning to Chachita) Are you comfortable?
Chachita: At least I don’t feel as lonely being with you.
Romantic’s Dad: Chachita: Now, Chachita, you’ll open the portico. Careful with the money. I like honest people.
Romantic: No I’ll go. She must look after her grandma.
Romantic’s Dad: No, daughter. Chachita does not want to become a burden…do you?
Chachita: No, sir. I’ll do whatever I [can] to help. It’s enough for you to have taken grandma in.
Romantic’s Mom: Pilar, the girl doesn’t need to do that. I’ll keep on opening the door.
Romantic’s Dad: Are you insane we got ourselves a maid! Instead of salary she’ll have food for her…and her sick grandma. What more?

Celia’s stepfather could not take the guilt of his actions anymore. This is especially the case when looking at the mute paralytic. Drugs and alcohol made him hallucinate. Through his hallucinations, as depicted in the film, Pilar is able to see the supernatural, and therefore, he cannot escape from his own conscience. In an attempt to do so, he beats to death the mute paralytic without anyone being able to stop him.

Romantic’s Dad: Why are you staring at me, you bitch? Close your eyes! Close your eyes! Close them now! Close your eyes!
Romantic’s Mom: No, Pilar! No!
Romantic’s Dad: Close your eyes or I’ll kill you!
Romantic’s Mom: Pilar, please, what are you doing?
Romantic’s Dad: What? What? (Turning to the Paralytic) Close your eyes, you bitch! Close them! Close them! Close them!
Romantic: No, Pilar!
Romantic’s Dad: Damn you! Close them! Close them! Close them!
Chachita: Grandma…Grandma…

For some lucky ones, distance and confinement are not impediments to continue communicating with each other. For those who really love, distance is not a barrier. That is exactly what Pepe and his girlfriend Celia have.

Group of men singing: My sweet love…to tell you about my passion for you. Partners in good and wrong…not even years will be too heavy for us. My sweet love, you will be…my love.
Romantic singing: My sweet love…I am craving…for a kiss…to be lit in the heat…of our huge love…my love.
Pepe singing: I want to be…one single being…one being with you.
Romantic singing: I want to see you…in love…so I can dream.
Pepe’s family situation becomes desperate. After the beating, the mute paralytic is dying in the hospital, and Chachita has no money to pay for her care. Celia, unable to find any better solution, calls the lawyer that has been pursuing her affections and tells him that she is willing to do anything. Tostada and Guayaba hear the whole conversation, because the only available phone is in the bar.

Celia goes to prison to say goodbye to Pepe because she is going to give herself to the lawyer in exchange for the money she needs to pay for the care of Pepe’s mother, the mute paralytic, and hopefully get Pepe out of prison. This is a form of love that men would never understand, and Pepe especially would never forgive such a disloyalty from Celia.
Pepe: Sell the tools. Those few cents may be of some use. Please, do whatever you can for her.

Romantic: Okay, Pepe. I think I can do something for her and for you. Even if this is the last time you and I meet.

Pepe: Why is that?

Romantic: We both must take our own way. You will be free…but don’t ever look for me. Pepe…remember me from time to time.

Pepe: Celia, what are you up to? I don’t understand you.

Romantic: This means that…

Man 32: Visits make a line! We’ll call the roll!

Pepe: Celia! Explain it to me, please.

Romantic: Good-bye, Pepe! Good-bye forever!

Man 32: Prisoners! Make a line! Prisoners! Make a line!

Usually hardships come in pairs. Yolanda is dying at the same hospital where Chachita’s grandmother is also dying. A priest is with her. She is confessing her sins.

Yolanda: And that girl was born. I thought she was a curse in my life. Because of stupid pride…I never told anything to the girl’s father. I didn’t want to give him the joy of seeing my daughter. I wanted revenge. But before I sank in shamelessness and vice…I left my little daughter with my brother Pepe. He has always taken care of her as if he was her real father. It was my fault that my mother…became a paralytic.

Priest: Do you know where Chachita’s father is?

Yolanda: Here are her father’s papers…and his business card.

Priest: Mr. Manuel de la Colina y Barcena.

Yolanda: No. Just a man, like any other. But…since I…since I am leaving…I’d like to see my daughter for the last time…hold her in my arms…and give her with my last breath…all the motherly love I denied her in my life.

Celia gave her virginity to the lawyer, something really valuable in the Mexican society of the 1940s, but he would not help Pepe. Poor people have love; rich people do not even believe love exists—they always have to pay for it. The lawyer offers Celia money, but she would not take it because if she does, she would become a prostitute.

Romantic: I have no other option. I love my boyfriend with all my heart. If I must lose him to free him…I don’t mind. Save him, sir!

Lawyer Montes: No, girl, you are wrong. I made love to you as a man, not as an official. Love…I’ve never believed in it. I’ve always had to pay for it. But know I see it’s real…sincere. If a woman like you can
renounce love...for love itself...love does exist...and you, the poor
are happy...because you have love.

Romantic: Then you will help my Pepe.
Lawyer Montes: Pepe “El Toro” is lost there is too much against him. Not even the
best advocate could prove his innocence.
Romantic: But he isn’t guilty, I’m sure!
Lawyer Montes: Love makes us blind. That’s the truth. I am sorry, but I can do
nothing for him. However...Take as much as you need. No strings
attached. I swear.
Romantic: Thank you very much, sir. The only thing I want is to save Pepe.

Pepe escapes from prison to say goodbye to his mother, but he ends up also
saying goodbye to his sister as well. Seconds before Yolanda dies, Pepe tells Chachita
that Yolanda is her real mother. A priest tells Chachita what to do in relation to his real
father, but Chachita tells the priest that her only father is Pepe el toro.

Chachita: Grandma. Grandma! Miss, please come see my grandma! Doctor,
be merciful! My grandma is dying! She has told me through her
eyes! (Turning to Yolanda) It had to be you! They’re taking care of
you and letting my grandma die! Die! I don’t ever want to see you
again! (Talking to Doctor) Doctor, come and see my grandma!

Doctor: Take this girl away.
Chachita: No! Why do you treat us like this? I hate you! I hate you! Die!

Pepe: Shut up, Chachita!

Chachita: Dad! They are letting grandma die and it’s her fault!

Pepe: Shut up! That woman...is your mother.

Yolanda: Forgive me, Chachita. Call me just once... “mom”.

Chachita: Mom! Don’t die, mommy! Don’t die! Forgive me. I didn’t know
you were my mother! Why did you never tell me? Dear
mommy...Why did you never tell me? Why did you die when I
found you? Don’t die, mommy! Don’t die!

Pepe: Let me stay for a minute. My old woman just died.

Lady 7: Ask to be given her body...for her not to be buried at the common
grave.

Man 35: Chachita...you have finally met your mother. May God have
forgiven her! Now, take these papers...this business card...and tell
Pepe to take you with your father. You will live like a queen. You
will have everything.

Chachita: I have no father...but Pepe “El Toro” (Turning to Pepe) Dad!

Pepe: My, girl.

Romantic: Pepe...forget what I told you. I will wait for you forever.

Pepe: Take my medal...and buy a coffin for my mother.
Pepe is returned to prison. The criminal that actually killed the person for which Pepe is being blamed for wants to kill him, but Pepe kills him. But before he dies, the real murderer confesses to the crime that Pepe is blamed for.

Man 32: Confinement!
Pepe: Open up!
Man 39: It’s Pepe “El Toro”
Man 34: Hold on. We’ll kick his ass when he’s in confinement.
Pepe: Open up!
Man 34: Shut up, you toon!
Pepe: What’s up? Don’t you owe me?
Man 34: I’m tired of you, man.
Man 39: You think you’re so brave, don’t you?
Man 34: This will teach you. I told you to keep quiet about the usurer.
Pepe: As long as you stayed out of my life, bastard!
Man 34: Right now you’ll join her, then.
Man 40: Guard!
Man 32: What is it?
Man 40: There’s a quarrel in confinement!
Man 32: It’s locked from the inside. Open up!
Man 34: This will keep you quiet forever! Forever you hear me?
Man 32: Pepe! Pepe! Let him go! Let him go! Don’t be stupid! Don’t attack him.
Pepe: Now you will talk. Tell me who killed her? You did, didn’t you? Tell them I am not a murderer! Speak!
Man 32: Let him go! Let him go, or I’ll shoot you!
Pepe: Who killed her? You did, didn’t you? You did! Confess! You are the murderer! Confess, you bastard! You tell them! Who killed her?
Man 32: Let him go! Shoot them!
Pepe: Tell them I’m innocent!
Man 32: I can’t they are against the wall!
Pepe: Scream to them that you are the murderer!
Man 32: Where’s that riffle?
Man 39: Here!
Pepe: Tell them!
Man 32: Kill him!
Pepe: Confess!
Man 34: No! No! Please! No!
Pepe: Confess, you bastard!
Man 32: Let him go, Pepe!
Man 34: No! I am the murder! I killed the usurer! Pepe “El Toro” didn’t! Stop it, please! Pepe “El Toro” is innocent!
After all his hardships, finally Pepe is set free. He and Celia get married and have a son after one year of marriage. Additionally, Chachita finally has a grave to cry over.

This circumstance allows her to have closure.

Guayaba: Jesus! Such is life. Yesterday you were alive…and today you’ve kicked the bucket.
Tostada: Such is life. Look, they got married just a year ago…and boom! They already have a kid!
Topillos: We must make up the losses.
Planillas: And lose those who made up!
Pepe: Hey! Look what my son did!
Romantic: Oh, this is Torito…
Lady 3: Girl, are you mistaken again?
Chachita: No, madam. Now I do have a grave to cry on.
Pepe: Come on, Chachita!
Chachita: I’m coming!

One suffers but learns!!
The End

Through this film, we see the type of identity and behavior that is encouraged by a governmental financed film. The array of roles shown in the film is very limiting, mostly gender-based. That is particularly the case during economic crisis when both men and women have to perform outside the socially assigned roles. The current migration patterns also challenge regional or country-based social roles. Men are to be providers and impregnators while working in the public arena. Men’s work ethics have to resemble religious values in order to have access to heaven. Women, on the other hand, are to have babies, only when married, and take care of them and their private arena. This social arrangement might not provide fulfillment outside the basic needs for both men and women of the masses.

Especially relevant to the Mexican society is to control the sexuality of their women. Pepe’s sister makes the case for having sex before marriage and how her life was ruined. She dies a horrible death. The film plays with the idea that heaven penalizes the
simmers that act outside social norms that are portrayed as heavenly commands. Furthermore, social interactions are shaped by social sayings, stereotyping, and roles. There are different standards and penalties for men and women’s behavior.

The film describes a dual world; people are rich or poor, good or evil, educated or illiterate, civil or not, courageous or fearful, pure or impure, healthy or very sick, and drug free or junkie/alcoholic. It does not show the array of gray possibilities that are available in the world, because the world is not about dualities but continuums. It also shows a dysfunctional society in which the rich envy the poor while the poor would rather not go to school because knowledge makes them evil. Good, Catholic people trade good deeds while living for rewards in heaven rather than enjoy their life and fight for their own interests.

Vices are shown as a lack of character of the individuals rather than a byproduct of the sociopolitical and economic system in place. Structural barriers are not even acknowledged. Yet, those vices are socially accepted because, according to the film, poor people are inherently good. Domestic violence or threat of violence is an acceptable side of the society and a fact of life, as portrayed in the film.

The location, traits, and values assigned to different social groups keep them apart, unless there was a reason to link them. Even accidents are a reason that unites people belonging to different social groups or classes. Different social groups are deliberately separated and most of the time have nothing in common. Furthermore, education for the masses was veiled as something evil in the film. Moreover, education is portrayed as something undesirable in the film. Education would make people evil and keep them away from heaven. This was the case, according to the film, because all those
that went to school preferred material things; money was preferred over a friend that
defended them in past, forfeiting a life in heaven.

Religion and the supernatural also shape peoples’ identity and behavior. That is
why films usually use these topics to encourage their audiences to act in a certain way.
Filmmakers understand their main target audience. Poverty was portrayed as a way to
gain heaven. In other words, the people’s religiosity was exploited in order to encourage
a specific behavior required by the establishment and avoid social unrest.

Finally, the film wants to convey certain values or messages that show a world
where ghosts exist and behave similarly to the living. The supra reality in which the
world is presented in the film makes it logical to have positive explanations and
consequences for certain behaviors, while negative behaviors are punished even further.
The film shows the natural and supernatural connected to judge the evil. Furthermore, the
role assigned to Pepe el Toro has some similarities with Christ’s, because Pepe accepts
his destiny as if it was divinely inspired and acts according to desires and values.
According to the film, there is always a reward for his behavior in the future, if he only
provides his other cheek and acts correctly. He voluntarily accepted his own destiny and
happiness in a passive manner. The film also portrays the establishment as indestructible
and the police as nice and interested in the people’s wellbeing.

The identity shaping strategies reinforce each other and when that is the case,
people seldom question their accuracy and fairness. That is because people copy the
interactions their parents and ancestors used, reinforcing a way of live and sustaining a
status quo. That is why films depict the required social interactions to sustain a status
quo.
Macario

*Macario* is a Mexican film produced in 1960, portraying the colonial México. Yet, the film is relevant to the study because the massive migration to the cities continued. Furthermore, the film belongs to the Mexican period that I called the industrial because it was produced while the country embraced industrialism, rather than agriculture, as the national production system. It won 12 international awards (Membrez, 2004, p. 28). It is the story of a good, illiterate, and poor Indian that was slowly starving to death, along with his family. One day after sharing his lunch with Death, and for this reason, Death allows Macario to perceive an alternate life for himself and his family. This alternate life was like the one Macario always wanted for him and his family, but Death wanted Macario to understand what really matters in life, according to the film. The film is the adaptation of novel of a German novelist that lived much of his life in México (B. Traven 1882 – 1969).

The film is based on the millennial religious belief shared in México that life is not extinguished by death. Reincarnation was somehow embedded in this belief system. Souls are allowed once a year to go back to their living relatives.

At the beginning of the movie, Macario’s wife is lighting a candle for a recently deceased family member. She also explains to her daughters that lighting candles is only for the dead—never for the living. Macario’s wife also explains to the girls that they, as a family, are genuine, that they live their life the only way they can and know how. Pretending is not correct for both the dead and living, according to a film’s character. Here again, the poor are portrayed more positively than the rich, as in *Nosotros los
_Pobres_. Macario follows the same ideological base portraying social groups similar to _Nosotros los Pobres_. The social and gender roles are also replicated in this film.

Daughter 1: Who is that candle for?
Macario’s wife: It’s for your godmother Rosa. May she rest in peace! She was always very good to us.
Daughter 2: And you’re not going to light a candle for papa?
Macario’s wife: No, my child. Your father is alive, thank God. The candles are only for the dead.
Daughter 1: At Mr. Narciso’s house they’re setting up a large offering...
Macario’s wife: As usual...They’re so pretentious [and pretending to have something that they really do not], even with the dead. We aren’t. This is what we eat and this is what our dead eat.

After a long day, Macario is returning from work with gifts for his children. The children are expecting something, but they’d rather have food, because they are always hungry.

Son 1: Papa is coming!
Daughter 1: What did you bring to us?
Macario: Later, later. I brought nice things. Children, what are you doing?
Son 2: Papa! Papa!
Son 3: Give me one, give me one.
Macario: Easy, easy ... I brought lots of things for everybody. The baby first. There you are.
Son 1: Me, me.
Macario: A little bird.
Daughter 1: It’s so nice!
Son 3: Is it to eat?
Macario: Not at all.
Daughter 1: Look, it’s so nice.

In the next scene Macario teaches his children to pray and to thank God for everything they receive, implying that they might not get it every day. During the dinner, it becomes obvious that they, Macario and his family, are slowly starving to death. Things are so bad that Macario even has to give up his share so his children can eat a little more, but it is never enough. His oldest son eats very fast so he can have more before the food is gone. By the end of the scene, the children are fighting over the food.
In the next scene both Macario and his wife seem to be feeling really bad for not being able to feed their children adequately.

During the previous scene, the actors also convey to the audience some gender roles. During dinner, Macario’s wife was standing up and serving everybody, a traditional gender-role assigned to women in México at least. She was not sitting down as was the rest of the family, because wives’/mothers’ role is to serve their family and then eat. That is her socially approved role. Macario, on the other hand, is the head of the family, and he leads family praying.

Macario: Our Father, who art in heaven, we thank you for our food today. May we have it tomorrow. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
Son 1: I have finished, mom.
Daughter 1: That’s not true. His mouth is still full!
Son 1: I want more. I want more.
Son 2: So do I.
Daughter 1: Can I have more?
Daughter 2: Me too.
Son 3: Give me more.
Daughter 1: Please give some more?

The next scene explains that there are independent places and realms for the rich and the poor here in earth. Furthermore, according to the film, death does not modify people’s status, class, or social association. Ancestors are to come and eat from their families’ offerings exclusively. However, the same scene also contrasts gender roles and the set of beliefs for the rich and the poor. The rich despise excuses for overcharging, and the poor require those excuses to have what they need only during the holidays.

Son 2: Eh, look! Come here, it’s so beautiful!
Son 1: What a lot of food!
Daughter 1: The dead are going to eat all of that?
Son 1: If I die, can I come to eat here?
Macario’s wife: No, only the rich dead people eat here. Our dead eat from our offerings.
Son 1: Then, I’d better not come.
Son 2: Mom, can we go and look at the stands?
Macario’s wife: Yes my children, you can go, but behave. I’ll be with you in a moment.
Daughter 1: Mom, if they don’t behave, shall I hit them?
Macario’s wife: No, don’t do that. Good morning Chona. Good morning. It’s 3 reals.
Chona: And why is it so much?
Macario’s wife: They sent me many lace shirts from Mr. Ramiro. I charge more for those.
Chona: You always find a way to overcharge. I’ll see what Doña Eulalia says.
Macario’s wife: Hey, tell her not to forget my holiday tip.
Chona: Doña Eulalia was saying a moment ago that the dead shouldn’t be a pretext for asking for money. I’ll ask her anyway.

Probably the next scene is one of the most important scenes of the film. It describes the meaning of life and death. It explains that humans came to this life only to suffer and die. A person in authority, from Macario’s perspective, tells Macario how life is like and its purpose. The same person also explains that death is not only inevitable but also that the afterlife lasts longer than this life. But more importantly than that is the fact that a person in authority explains to a subordinated person that the meaning of life is working and suffering. That is what the system needs to work efficiently. The person in authority also says to the subordinated party that the cause of our death is to be found within our own body, or if it is not within, it would be created somehow and sometime in the future to crush somehow us.

It is under these considerations that dying is not only imminent, but it is what defines the meaning of life. It is under such conditions that life’s hierarchies are altered and its hardships reevaluated. There is no point in being bad during this life, if the next life is the real one, when we are dead, and lasts longer than the current one. These words
are so important for the film’s plot that they are repeated at the beginning of the next scene.

Macario: Good morning.
Men 1: How is it going Macario? Come in. The boss is here.
Boss: How are you doing Macario? Wait a second. Because today the dead are giving us a lot of work. So many candles, eh? As you can see, they’re not enough for today. [Those for the] dead are more than what I have here. Aren’t you going to buy yours? They’re cheaper for you.
Macario: No, thank you.
Boss: That’s not good, Macario. You’ve got to have more consideration for the dead, because we spend more time dead than alive. Anyway, in this life, we are all born to die. What do we earn here? [We get] some pleasure, and sometimes, not even that[;] lots of work, lots of sufferings. When we’re born, we’re carrying our death hidden in the liver or in the stomach or here in the heart, that one day will beat no more. It can also be outside sitting under a tree that hasn’t grown yet but that will fall on you when you’re old.

If finding food to eat during this life is difficult to achieve for the poor, eating in the afterlife, according to the film, depends on the persons’ descendants and their life circumstances. Therefore, the afterlife is even more constraining. If that is the case, the current life should not be considered that bad. On the other hand, access to resources during the present life is considered random at best. Macario is a dignified person that does not request holiday tips, yet his wife asked for it at her work. Requesting handouts is not part of Macario’s social role.

Macario: Good morning.
Baker: How’s it going Macario?
Woman: Excuse me Senior Alfredo it’s very late and I haven’t got my bread yet! My poor dead relatives have been waiting since very early this morning.
Baker: It’s delayed, please excuse us. But we have a very special order from Don Ramiro.
Woman: From Don Ramiro...who else could it be? He’s got his own oven, so he has tasty home bread.
Baker: But his oven has fallen apart so he brought six turkeys to be cooked. He has important guests.

Woman: So my bread will never be ready!

Baker: It’ll be ready later. You have my word.

Woman: Ok.

Chona: What do you think of our turkeys, my friend?

Woman 3: Our? Are they yours too?

Chona: You’ll see, those of us who work for Don Ramiro, eat the same food as him. We have very important guests today. Do you know who is coming? The Canon Don Cristino Alatriste.

Woman 3: Who is he?

Chona: You don’t know him? That’s outrageous! He’s...er...er ... Be careful, you’re going to spill the sauce.

Baker: Put it back in! Are going to give us the wood for free today? What happens to him? He didn’t even ask for his holiday tip.

After seeing such delicious turkeys, that night Macario was having a dream about rebelling against the establishment in order to eat, but he then awakes and realizes that there is nothing to do. It is important to notice that most films portray the establishment as indestructible.

Macario: Don’t finish them. Leave me one. Leave one for me!

Macario’s wife: What’s wrong Macario?

Macario: Nothing. Go back to sleep.

At the next scene, Macario realizes that he is slowly starving to death, so he’d rather die quickly. The other option was to be selfish and not share his food with anyone, especially his children and wife. Macario also explains what it means to be poor: to think of nothing else but about eating, just like his children do. The film portrays a Macario without options and agency, unable to save his family and himself from famine.

Macario’s wife: Macario ... Macario, aren’t you going to eat anything? The children have already eaten yours. But I saved a little when I noticed you weren’t having lunch. If you don’t go, they’ll eat that as well.

Macario: Let them eat it!

Macario’s wife: Aren’t you hungry?

Macario: Hungry ... Hungry ... I haven’t felt anything else but hunger my whole life. Like you. Like my children. I have never thought of
anything else but eating. We’ve been starving all of our lives. You saw those turkeys yesterday. I’m not going to slowly starve to death any more. I’m going to die once and for all. I will never eat again until I can eat a whole turkey all by myself, without sharing it with anyone. Without having to put up with hunger so that the others can eat. Even though the others are my own children. I want to eat by myself. All for me. All of it, and if not, I will never eat again. I want to be full[,] not hungry with the taste of turkey in my mouth. [N]ot wanting to eat another piece. Give the kids what you saved for me, because I’m never going to eat again.

When people have nothing to eat, under such constraining circumstances, wanting to have food and not to share it is not selfish, according to the film. Macario’s wife understands perfectly. Under such conditions, stealing is not wrong either; that is why Macario’s wife steals a turkey for Macario. However, if she would have been caught, she would have lost a hand for stealing the bird.

Macario’s wife: Macario! Here. You said you wanted one just for yourself. I understand, Macario. I have also wanted something only for myself that I didn’t want to share with anyone. Not even with you. But leave quickly. Because if the children see it, they will ask for some, won’t they? Come on ... Come on, Macario ... Take it away with you now.

Macario is tested repeatedly by three singular characters. We might like to remember that Christ, according to the Bible, was tested three times by the devil. The first character to test Macario was the Devil. Macario is tested three times by the Devil, but Macario, as Jesus Christ once was, knows who he is actually dealing with. However, more than testing Macario, the Devil is trying to trick him.

Devil: Hey friend ... the turkey you’re about to eat looks so good. Are you going to invite me to have a little bit?
Macario: I’m not your friend. And I’m not going to share any of it with you.
Devil: Hey my friend that animal looks so tasty... Let’s make a deal. If you give me one leg of that turkey, nothing else ... I’ll give you my silver spurs.
Macario: Why would I want spurs? I don’t even have a horse.
Devil: Well ... I can give you some other thing. Do you see the buttons on my trousers? They are made of gold. If you give me a slice of the breast ... just a small slice of the breast ... I’ll give you these coins.

Macario: And what am I going to do with them? If I went to exchange them, they’d think [of me as if I were] a thief and cut off my hand. A person like me doesn’t pay with gold coins. Go away, leave me alone!

Devil: Well Macario, I’ll give you a much better deal. If you give me a wing ... just a single wing ... I’ll give you this whole forest. All these trees will be yours. What do you say?

Macario: What good would it do me if I were the owner? Just as I do now, I’d have to cut, carry and sell the wood. Besides, you cannot give me this forest, because it’s not yours. It belongs to God, our Lord.

The Devil is not the only one testing Macario. God himself will test him too.

However, God does not want to trick Macario; He simply wants Macario to perform a good deed. Macario knows what God is after, but he also knows that God gave us free will. At the end of the scene, God does not impose Himself on Macario and leaves without answering him.

God: Sir, can you spare me something?
Macario: You, sir you want a piece?...
God: Just a small piece. That is if you would give it to me.
Macario: Why, sir? Why? You’re not interested in this little piece. You’re interested in a gesture of good will ... a good deed ... You know that I have never wanted anything only for myself in my whole life. So, this desire ... for you it’s a dead animal. It’s just an excuse for me to be good. But for me, it’s everything. All the hunger of my life. All that I have given. All that I have never received. Forgive me. I know that you can forgive me if you want. I don’t want to share it with you. I don’t want to. But if you really want a little piece...

The third and final character that tests Macario is Death. Every culture throughout time has a being that takes individuals to the afterlife. Death also wants to see if Macario is willing to share the turkey with him. Macario realizes that he cannot eat the whole turkey by himself; he has to share it with someone or not at all if Death takes him immediately. After both finish eating, Macario explains to Death why he shared the
turkey with him and not with the Devil and God. After their conversation, Death grants Macario healing water capable of curing some—but not all—death or terminally ill people. Macario, after eating, explained to Death that material wealth is not important, that there are things only worth sharing with family and friends.

Death: Friend, all that turkey is just for you? I’m very hungry. I’ve been hungry for quite a long time. It’s been thousands of years since I last ate. Can you share a little bit with me?

Macario: I knew that this couldn’t be true. It was too much to ask. I’m going to share it with you. I’m going to cut it in half. Pick the one that you prefer.

Death: Thank you very much.

Macario: Some water?

Death: No, thanks. … Very tasty! I can affirm that your wife is an excellent cook. Would you mind if we chatted for a while? I speak to men so rarely.

Macario: Rarely.

Death: We meet for an instant and there’s really nothing to say nor time to say it in. Can I ask you something? Why did you share it with me? Because you were very hungry. It was quite clear. Hungrier than I have ever been.

Death: And that’s why you shared with me?

Macario: Well, yes. Mainly because of that.

Death: And the first man who asked you ... Why didn’t you share with him?

Macario: With him? Of course not! He tried to trick me. Above all, if I didn’t share with my children or with my wife, do you think that some spurs or some coins would be worth more than the satisfaction of my family?

Death: You know ... and the second man? Why didn’t you invite him?

Macario: He’s the owner of everything that exists ... of me, of you...of everything. He only cared about me doing a good deed. And after sharing with him, I’d have run away full of repentance ... about not having shared with my family, and not having eaten anything myself.

Death: And me, why did you share with me? You said that it was mainly because of my hunger. Or was there another reason?

Macario: The truth is ... when I saw you I thought I didn’t have enough time left for even one single bite. When you appear, you don’t give any time to do anything. Then I thought that if I gave you a half and we ate at the same time ... while you ate, I’d eat too.

Death: You have shared food with me, You have kept me company ... and you have even made me laugh a little. So I’m indebted to you and
I’m going to reward you. For your sharing with me, I am going to pay you such a high price, something you never would have dreamt. Now empty you gourd. Give it to me. Macario, this water can cure any illness, as long as I myself have no reason to object to curing the person afflicted. I give it to you. Believe this, that no man has ever had the power that I place in your hands. Be careful of how you use it. If you visit a sick man, you will always see me by his side. When I am at the foot of his bed, give him a drop. Just a single drop of the water I have given you. Because that’ll be enough to cure him. But if I’m at the head of the bed, don’t give him anything. He will die. You don’t believe me, do you? It’s all right. Very soon I will give you ... today, you’ll have the chance to believe me.

Macario: Today?
Death: And be careful. Don’t spill a single drop, because I’ll never give you any more. And remember ... If you see me at the foot of the bed, with a drop you’ll give him health. [A]nd if I’m at the head of the bed, don’t do anything. That person belongs to me. See you later, Macario. We may not talk again, but we’ll see each other often. And remember, use my gift wisely. And be worthy of my friendship. There [it] is!

After receiving the healing water from Death, Macario heads home only to find out that one of his sons fell into the well and drowned. After Macario heals his son, the son is starving after the near-death experience and is only interested in eating. Even after the joy of bringing his son back from the death, it should be extremely difficult for any parent to be reminded that he or she cannot adequately support his or her family, especially children and when talking about nourishment.

After Macario’s receives his healing powers rumors are spread over the whole town; the film brings to the audience’s attention that the wife of the richest man in town is also severely ill. The rich are portrayed as shallow and selfish, like in Nosotros los Pobres. In addition, the rich people would like to be considered as scientifically driven, yet they are not. They promise to pay, yet they seldom deliver as promised; the word of rich people is worthless. Poor people are shown to be at the mercy of rich and evil
people. Under such circumstances, according to the film, poor people must choose between the rich’s enmity and their gratitude. In this scene, the audience hears Don Ramiro, the richest person in the town, bargaining with the Mother of God, Mary. In the next scene, the audience listens to Don Ramiro present himself to Macario.

**Don Ramiro:** Mother, if you save Eulalia ... I promise you a gold medal. And look, well ... I promise you the medal ... and a little gold crown for your son, but a small one, eh ... But save her. In the name of the Father ... 

**Macario’s wife:** Macario, someone’s coming.  
**Don Ramiro:** You’re Macario, aren’t you?  
**Macario:** To serve God.  
**Don Ramiro:** You know who I am?  
**Macario:** You are Don Ramiro.  
**Don Ramiro:** I’m rich, Macario. As you know. My wife is ill. I don’t believe in tall tales, but the doctor has done all that he can. He has covered my wife with suckers ... a hundred leeches sucked her blood, but her condition is [still] the same. I have been told that you can heal, and I do not believe it. Is it true that you can cure?  
**Macario:** It is true that I can sometimes heal...  
**Don Ramiro:** Come with me to see her. If you cure her, I’ll give you whatever you want.  
**Macario:** Ok. Wait for me there.

In the next scene, the audience is introduced to a greater evil than wealth: knowledge. It is during this scene that so-called “science” men use their knowledge for evil deeds and to amass wealth and power. Rich people continue to be portrayed as shallow and selfish. Rich people are also portrayed as unable to deliver as they promised, breaching their verbal agreements. Finally, poor people are portrayed as naïve but good and willing to help. The scene also shows a subordination of knowledge to wealth. Finally, the film does not show a link between knowledge and wealth. Knowledge, as portrayed in the film, in the case of the poor, is a supernatural occurrence.

**Macario:** I need for you to leave me alone with her, Don Ramiro.
Don Ramiro: Alone?
Macario: It’s the only way that I can do something.
Doctor: I have to object as a doctor that this man has come to obstruct the work of science.
Don Ramiro: Please doctor! Come with me.
Macario: Don Ramiro! I can cure your wife.
Don Ramiro: And how much are you going to charge me?
Macario: How much do you think her life is worth?
Don Ramiro: Well ... I’ll give you ... I’ll give you ... Ten ounces of gold.
Macario: That’s how much you value your wife’s life?
Don Ramiro: I pay only one ounce to the doctor.
Macario: But I’m going to cure her.
Don Ramiro: And how much do you want?
Macario: I want ... One hundred ounces.
Don Ramiro: One hundred ounces! Ok. I’ll give them to you. But only when she’s completely cured. Do you hear?
Don Ramiro’s wife: What time is it?
Don Ramiro: It’s... it’s the middle of the night, darling.
Don Ramiro’s wife: Why are you awake? I’m very sleepy.
Don Ramiro: You cured her!
Macario: I told you I would.
Don Ramiro: Well ... I’ve got to pay. Of course. We talked about ... It was pretty expensive ...
Macario: Give me ten ounces. That’ll be enough. I don’t want your enmity, I want your gratitude.
Don Ramiro: Here. Here’s your money.

Instead of enjoying time with his healed wife, who almost died, Don Ramiro was only interested in making more money. Immediately after Don Ramiro’s wife is healed, Don Ramiro is planning his new business venture. He wants to use Macario’s healing powers to cure his rich friends and certainly profit from it.

Don Ramiro’s wife: What are you doing, my husband? You haven’t slept all night long.
Don Ramiro: I’m making some business plans. Hey...do you remember who else among our friends is sick? Besides the ones I’m going to name ... Don. Manuel Centeno de la Barrera, Don José Luis Torres Salazar[,] ... Count Francisco de Valderrama.

After Macario is paid for healing Don Ramiro’s wife, he is so happy to be able to appropriately feed his complete family. Here, in this scene, Macario’s wife does not sit down to eat; she is still standing up to serve her family until Macario gently encourages
her to sit down, signaling a role change for her. Yet, Macario is still the head of the family and the main supporter. Macario still encourages his family to pray and thank God and ask God to be as generous as He was today. Good people always remember God and are grateful.

Macario: Our Father, who art in heaven ... thank you very much for our food today. May we have tomorrow [–] the same! In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is through this song that a person and/or a group are exalted while others are disparaged. The singers tell the story of the good deeds that Macario performed including healing and defending a hopeless widow. The song also described that the doctor lost an important piece of his clientele because he was unable to actually cure, implying that science does not cure but God does. And since there were still dying people, the coffin maker was still in business, but the business was not booming as it was before. The song also described death as the ultimate equalizer, because both rich and poor pass on just the same. Macario defended a young widow from Don Macario’s predatory actions and returned her the money he took from her. The song brings into the conscious the fact that poor and rich people live differently but die the same. Money is described as a means not an end for Macario.

Song: Ladies and gentlemen, open your eyes and listen carefully [...] pain, discomfort and groans are over ... discomfort and groan ... they come quickly in carriages ... because everybody is in a rush ... if they want a place to be cured by Macario ... to be cured by Macario. He’s cured many rich people, but at God’s willing ... money worth nothing ... rich people also die, rich people also die. The doctor and the carpenter win ... The widow cries afflicted, she’s going to lose all her money ... she’s going to lose all her money. Macario doesn’t allow it, because he’s an honest man ... He gives it back to the widow, and its well-done ... it’s well done.
The next scene describes that going against the interests of others is an inevitable fact of life, according to the film. Macario’s healing practices and powers severely reduced the doctor’s business and negatively impacted that of the coffin maker. So if Macario was not a naïve person, he would have been expecting some retribution from them. However, since Macario is a naïve and well-intentioned person, he cannot even imagine what is coming against him. It is also very interesting to see how, according to the level of knowledge each person has, aggravated parties use it to “balance the score”; therefore, education not only makes people evil but also more dangerous. The first scene describes the actions of the coffin maker to discredit Macario, and the second describes what the doctor did; he denounced Macario’s healing practices as witchcraft to the inquisition.

Chona: Look at Macario’s wealth. He has more than my boss. Well, not that much more, but you can see the change.
Woman: How much has he paid for these?
Coffin maker: Of course, he cures only rich people!
Woman: That’s not true. Macario cures everybody. And he charges whatever they want to pay. My grandfather had only a pig and that’s all he paid.
Woman 2: That’s true ... I gave him only a dozen eggs ... I would have given him the hen, but he didn’t want her.
Woman 3: He accepted my baby goat. I didn’t have another, and he ate it in a barbecue. But as you can see I’m good as new!
Coffin maker: Not that new!

Doctor: The one on the corner.
Inquisition officer: So this Macario cures miraculously. He’s a sorcerer, isn’t he?
Woman: He’s not a sorcerer. It happens that the Blessed … Virgin helps him … She tells him how to cure.
Woman 1: No Virgin at all. It’s the Archangel Gabriel. You think Holy Virgin would bother to come? That’s what archangels are for…to run her errands.
Coffin maker: I haven’t smelt incense when Macario passes by. Rather the opposite.
Inquisition officer 2: And what’s the smell? Sulfur?
With his new wealth, Macario buys a big house and a lot of furniture, but his family gets lost in their new place, implying that having money is not always good or better. For his wife and children money and what it can buy, a new house and furniture, is not important; all that they really wanted was to eat. They were, apparently, happy with what they had. Furthermore, Macario’s wife is worried about her husband’s new power and its origin; Macario’s wife was worried that the devil would be behind her husband’s healing powers.

Macario’s children: Mama, mama! She’s not here. Let’s go! Mama, mama ... Papa, papa! Papa, papa ... Papa...
Chona: This is real wealth. So many things! You’ve been planning well, very well ... You’ve got to have a stock.
Macario’s wife: It wasn’t my idea. It was Macario’s.
Chona: Very well done. Well done. You never know, since God is helping him.
Macario’s wife: Yes. I hope it is God.
Chona: Of course it’s God. Who else?
Macario’s daughters: Mama, mama!
Macario’s wife: I’m here.
Macario’s daughters: Mama, we didn’t find papa or anybody. Help us find him.
Macario’s wife: Yes children. Let’s go. I’ll be back soon, Chona.
Chona: Go on, don’t worry about me.

Macario’s daughter 1: I prefer the other house because we didn’t get lost there.
Macario: Where are you, my wife! Where is everybody?
Macario’s wife: Here.
Macario: Why were you hiding?
Macario’s wife: We weren’t hiding, we got lost.
Macario’s son: Papa, papa!
Macario: Take this. I’m going to visit the sick.

The image of the Catholic Church provided by the film can be easily understood by remembering that the Mexican government sacked the churches and all its assets for over fifty years because the Catholic Church had the means to fund the new Mexican State. During the colonial period the Catholic Church was the second wealthiest institution in the New Spain, after the Spanish Crown. By seizing the assets of the Catholic Church, the Mexican Government eliminated the possibility of the Catholic Church continuing its education of and care for the Indians, Mestizos, and those in need, but blamed the Catholic Church for actually allowing and promoting the opposite. There was even a war, the Cristero War, which was fought in order to determine the new role that the Catholic Church would play after Mexican independence from Spain, in particular the twentieth century.

During the film, it becomes obvious the different perspectives used to present both the Catholic Church with the inquisition and the local church. It is clear, as presented by the film, how the Viceroy’s government and the Catholic Church controlled through threats and fear, and bled the whole country. It is also obvious that the inquisition did not take into consideration potential conflicts of interest, when accusing someone of sorcery or massacres.

High official: I’m not opposed to you arresting him and taking him to the capital. I warn you though that Macario has brought wealth and health to this town. There will be a riot to defend him!
Inquisition officer 1: We can wait and ask for more forces. How big could the riot be?
High official: The whole town!
Inquisition officer 1: Even if it were the whole country, we would crush it!
Local priest: Beating and killing people?
Inquisition officer 2: It would appear that you are not in agreement with the Holy Office.
Local priest: No, no, never ... It's only that he has only been accused, and someone who is accused can also be innocent.
Doctor: That diabolical man is guilty without a doubt.
Local priest: Diabolical, perhaps ... But the church has never had as many candles ... and alms as it has today.
High official: Well, if you have to arrest him, it would be wise to do so in secret. Take him carefully, by surprise, to avoid a bloodbath.

Macario and his wife, through their actions and words, show the audience a relational pattern based on gender. There are functions for males and females but men can be the patriarchs exclusively.

Macario: Wife! Wife! Keep this. But keep it very safe.
Macario’s wife: What is it?
Macario: It’s our health and that of our children.
Macario’s wife: Macario. Why you have you never told me who taught you how to cure? [W]here you got the water from, all of this. The house and so many things. I’m afraid, Macario.
Macario: Take care of the children ... and the house. Everything else will be taken care of by your husband.
Macario’s wife: Macario ... Why don’t we go back to the other house?

For the soldiers, acting under the orders of the Viceroy and the Inquisition, accusing without proofs was normal and acceptable. They’d rather be feared than respected. That was how the colonial system operated. Furthermore, the soldiers had no idea of what they were looking for because while looking for evidence they actually destroy the evidence.

Macario’s wife: Why are you doing this to us?
Soldier: So you’ll learn what authority is. You two keep on searching. Get out! Open it!
Macario’s wife: But sir, what have we done?
Soldier: You are sorcerers, blasphemers and heretics. Open that.
Macario’s wife: But sir, why are you breaking it? Here is the key.
Soldier: The law doesn’t need keys. Come on, open it! Break those bottles.
Macario is trialed by the inquisition. Regardless of his potential innocence, extreme hardships await Macario. The scene reveals a cruel and evil inquisition and Catholic Church, with panel members who lack knowledge and creativity. According to the film, knowledge is the driving force making people cruel and sneaky. The real outcome options for Macario do not include innocence, regardless of everything including the conflict of interest faced by Macario’s accuser, the local doctor. Furthermore, the fabricated outcome of the trial does not take into consideration neither the trick the inquisition panel devised for Macario or the preconceived trial outcome outlined by the inquisition. At the end of the scene, Macario’s accuracy in predicting who will heal and who will die is labeled as diabolical; he is to be tortured and burnt at a stake.

Inquisition panel member 1: It doesn’t seem sane what you’re saying, Macario. Remember that if this court finds out that you have been lying ... we can get to the truth by means of torture.
Macario: I swear sir that I have told the whole truth.
Inquisition panel member 1: When did you start to heal the sick?
Macario: I have already said so, sir. The first was my son...
Inquisition panel member 1: How did you know how to cure him?
Macario: When you walk in the mountains, one learns what one least expects to learn.
Inquisition panel member 1: If we went to the mountain with you, would we also learn to heal?
Macario: It would depend on Your Worships and not on me what you would learn, sir.
Inquisition panel member 1: Might it not be the Devil who taught you how to heal, Macario?
Macario: No, sir, it’s not the Devil. I’d say that it was most likely God, our Lord. And maybe even the Blessed Virgin.
Inquisition panel member 1: And how do you know who is going to die and who isn’t? Did you learn that on the mountain too?
Macario: I’d say that I learnt that from the sick themselves. When you practice, there’s no possible mistake.
Inquisition panel member 1: Where do you notice it? In the eyes?
Macario: In the feet and in the head, sir.
Inquisition panel member 1: Officer! Take the prisoner out to wait! We are going to deliberate.

High official: If this man is a charlatan ... the punishment will only be to cut out his tongue ... and pillory him for one week. But if he has made a pact with the devil ... then he shall be tortured and burnt at the stake. That’s why I believe it’s very important to clearly define ... if he’s a charlatan or a sorcerer. To this end, there’s a test that has come to my mind...

Inquisition panel member 1: A test? How does it work?

High official: It’s very simple. Some of our prisoners are ill, aren’t they?

Inquisition panel member 1: True. The blasphemous Jew is dying.

High official: Well, let’s put all the sick in a cell ... and we’ll also put in someone who is very healthy. A soldier or ... the executioner himself. The executioner is a fountain of health. And this Macario should be able to tell us what is going to happen to each one. That way we’ll know if he’s either a charlatan or a sorcerer.

Inquisition panel member 1: Very good idea.

High official: Excellent, isn’t it? We can also include the condemned man, who will be executed tomorrow.

Inquisition panel member 2: That’s true. I entrust you to give the orders.

Inquisition panel member 2: Are all the sick ones here?

Soldier: All of them.

Inquisition panel member 2: Well, I have reserved these two beds. One is for the condemned man. Bring him here. You are going to be on the other one.

Executioner: Don’t make me sleep here! I want nothing to do with sorcerers.

Inquisition panel member 2: Come on, don’t be stupid. What can he do to you?

Executioner: If I knew, I wouldn’t be afraid. Please leave me to my job. I only know how to torture and strangle people; and I do that well. If you want, I can fill the sorcerer’s ears with lead[,] ... but I don’t want to be lying here, alone with him.

Inquisition panel member 2: Stop your sobbing! Take that hood off and lie down! Let them know that everything is ready.

Executioner: I’m sweating ... and my heart is beating as if it were going to explode! Please, don’t do this to me!

Inquisition panel member 2: Shut up and obey! You’re shaking, sweating and you’re pale ... That’s good. You look even sicker than the others.

Executioner: Have mercy on me!

Inquisition panel member 2: If you keep on like this, I’ll give you a reason to cry.

He’s asked to be alone with the sick.

High official: It’s the only way his wisdom comes out.
Inquisition panel member 1: We’ll please him. Let’s leave him alone.
Macario: Not this one? And this one who looks so sick, not him either? Not anyone?
Executioner: Anyone what? Anyone what?
Macario: This one, yes. Yes?
Executioner: Me, what? What about me?
Macario: Gentleman, I can now tell you, gentlemen.
Inquisition panel member 1: Well Macario, we’re waiting for your diagnosis. Let’s see the surprise you have for us.
High official: Let’s see.
Macario: Everybody is going to live, except one of them.
Inquisition panel member 1: I’ve already said so! A charlatan! Of course the one who is dying will die.
Macario: Everyone will live, except that one.
Inquisition panel member 1: See who he’s chosen. You have now lost your tongue, Macario.
High official: We won’t need to burn him. Even the condemned man will live?
Inquisition panel member 1: Tell the dying man to get up!
Soldier: He’s dead! His heart stopped beating.
High official: This is really powerful.
Messenger: I bring a pardon from His Excellency. The condemned man will only serve a life sentence.
High official: Pardoned.
Messenger: He’s been given a pardon so he can pray from his cell ... for the health of the son of His Excellency the Viceroy ... who is very ill.
Inquisition panel member 2: This is diabolical. Truly diabolical!
Inquisition panel member 1: There is no doubt that he is a sorcerer.
High official: He knew it all accurately. And it turns out that the dying man was only pretending so as to avoid torture.

But before Macario is tortured and burnt at the stake, he has another chance to save his life. Macario’s healing powers are known even at the Viceroy’s court, since the Viceroy’s son is dying. On the other hand, here at the court the gender rules are not the same as at Macario’s level. Here at the court, wives have voice and power over their husbands—totally different from the perspective of Macario’s wife.

Viceroy: It’s strange.
Viceroy’s aid: It’s a miracle, sir.
High official: Miraculous, the Blessed Virgin!
Viceroy: I trust the power of the Holy Office. The works of the Devil are false. That’s what they are, hoaxes.
Viceroy’s wife: My husband ... I’m amazed. They have told me about a miraculous man with powers over life and death.
Viceroy: You too, my wife? It’s too much! I would have believed it possible from a peasant woman, but ...
Viceroy’s wife: Above all, I’m a mother and I see my son dying.
Viceroy: My lady, Viceroy’s cannot have anything to do with the Devil’s sorcerers. Our prestige is on the line.
Viceroy’s wife: I don’t care about prestige! I care about my son’s life. We must bring that man.
Viceroy: He won’t come.
Viceroy’s wife: Then I’ll go find him in his cell with my son in my arms ... and we’ll see how your prestige is endangered even more.

Macario’s required miracle is never delivered even though the needed medicine is available. Death would simply not cure the Viceroy’s son. Destiny cannot be cheated; therefore Macario has no other option but to escape to the mountains.

Viceroy: Well, what are you waiting for?
Macario: Where is the sick child, sir?
Viceroy: Can’t you hear the mother’s sobbing? Come on, get in at once!
Macario: Excuse me, sir ... I’ve got to see him alone.
Viceroy: As you wish. But remember, you’ll be pardoned if you save him. … torture and fire if he dies.
Macario: My friend ... This cannot be ... You can’t take this one away ... Don’t you know that I’ll be tortured and burnt if you take him? What are you doing there? Go to the other side! I ask you for this favor remembering that turkey. Go to the other side ... Let him live ... But you got me into this. I didn’t ask for it!
Death: I can do nothing. It’s a Supreme Order.
Macario: Think about my children when they see me burning. And think about me! Still alive, but burning and screaming! Let me cure him. Please, my friend. You have called me friend. ... [S]how me that you are. Let me cure him. Let him live.
Viceroy’s wife: Open the door, please. Is the boy cured? Open the door!
Macario: Help me! Help me!

Macario is on the run, but he runs into the Devil. The Devil reminds Macario that bad things happen to good people, especially because no one is interested in bad people.

Macario answers the devil that being associated with him is even worse. This long scene...
is probably another one of the most important scenes of the whole movie because God
tells the audience that the actions of this life have important repercussions of the real life,
which is the afterlife. Our deeds have consequences that we must face in this life in order
to enjoy the afterlife. If Macario that was always good is having these terrible options, the
audience is imagining what a real, normal person would face in the afterlife.

Devil: How’s it going, Macario? You’re just in time. And as usual, I’m
willing to help you. See how mistaken you were about whom you
treat to a meal. If I had been the one you treated, none of this
would have happened to you. Come, and I’ll show you how to be a
big winner. Come on, hurry up!

Macario: I’ve already told you that I don’t want your help! Go away; leave
me alone. Enough bad things have already happened to me! And
on top of all that, now you!

Macario: Once again it’s you, my Lord ... Don’t let them catch me, my Lord.

God: It’s you who are attracting them, Macario. Your deeds are what is
following you ... Don’t run anymore and face them. Think about
saving that part of you which does not die. Think about yourself.
Think about your deeds. Weigh them and judge them.

Macario: I’ve got to get away, my Lord. I’ve got to get away.

In his crazy run, Macario ends up at Death’s cave. In this scene Death explains
Macario what life is. According to Death life is really about being consumed by fire in
random events that cannot be understood during this life and its present conditions. Under
such framework, the film’s final message is that life should be lived for the afterlife and
not for the current life. Because destiny is fixed and there is nothing we can do to change
it, we must live our current life for the afterlife. God only knows the plan for each of us,
which incorporates reincarnation and a judgment after each life. Life is conducted by
Devine plans that no one can alter but God.

Death: Welcome to my cavern, Macario.

Macario: Hide me. They’re coming to get me. Why did you betray me?
Death: I have never betrayed you ... And I’m with you now more than ever. This is a place that no man has ever seen. And there are things here that you must learn. Come. Look Macario. This is mankind ... You can see lives burning quietly ... Sometimes the winds of war blow or the winds of plague ... and lives are extinguished in the thousands randomly ... High ones ... small ones ... straight ones ... twisted ones. Now there is peace. Look at them burning. Each one is made of different wax. Each one is unique. They last according to the material which feeds the flame. Do you see this stub of a candle? This is the life of the Viceroy’s son. You can see it here. A life. See how fragile it is, how precious and how brief it is. Like a butterfly from eternity. And it is with this that you have been playing and doing business, never understanding the significance of the gift I gave you. Look at this flame! The Viceroy’s son is dead now.

Macario: Why did you do that?

Death: It was the time. There is a supreme order. There are laws. There are many things that you do not understand.

Macario: And what about my candle? Tell me where it is. Let me see it. It’s extinguishing!

Death: Yes.

Macario: Aren’t you going to do anything? Are you going to let it go out?

Death: There’s an order, Macario.

Macario: But you can do something! There are many candles that have gone out. Don’t let it go out.

Death: Everything has its end and its place. We can’t do anything.

Macario: Don’t touch it! I know what you’re going to do.

Death: It’s in vain, Macario. Who do you want to escape from? From me? From you? Come back! It’s the moment of rest and judgment. A story ends and another one begins. When the deeds of a man finish it’s because the judgment is going to begin. Macario, don’t run anymore. Why run? Macario, Macario, Macario!

According to the film, humankind must behave appropriately; the punishment for misbehaving is severe. Starving to death is preferable to being tortured and burnt at a stake; Macario chose, or was assigned, the wrong destiny. This life might be bad, but it can be worse. Death gave Macario the opportunity to live two lives in one, or at least have a glance at another one. Macario got his own perspective of what it means to be good, rich, and illiterate living in a world run by evil men. I guess it made him understand
that his starving life was better that one being rich but persecuted for sorcery by the inquisition and meeting with the Devil and Death.

After the passing of her husband, a wife is to raise their children as their father and with his strengths. This is another social requirement based on gender. Widows are socially expected to be grateful to their dead husbands.

Macario’s wife: Macario! He never comes back this late. Always at sunset. He went out so happily today. Macario! Macario! Macario! Macario!

Man: Here he is!

Macario’s wife: He’s sleeping. Macario. Macario. You were like a child. With your whims. I am so glad to have been able to give you that pleasure. Life wasn’t easy, Macario. But it was good to have lived it together. Macario. I’m going to make our sons be like you. Good men. He couldn’t even finish his turkey.

From the identity-shaping strategies, the film Macario uses mainly gender roles, patriarchy, and religion-based ideas and values to shape people’s behavior. The film describes male and female roles. Men have to be the providers and impregnators. Women are to serve men and take care of their children. Women’s sexuality is to be controlled by the man of the house. Unfortunately, this gender-based arrangement between men and women might not fulfill their human needs all of the time. Men’s agency is bounded by religious values even when starving to death. Furthermore, agency is constrained when the concepts of destiny and afterlife come into play.

The film also explains how society should be organized so people are happy and functional. It reinforces the idea that being poor and behaving appropriately is the only way to heaven. Further, it shares with its audience that hardships in this world gain us heaven in the afterlife. It even explains the randomness of life and why we should focus exclusively in the afterlife. Macario, along with his family, is seen as the good character
in the film, while the rich are presented as shallow and the educated people as evil and
dangerous.

The Catholic Church is ill-presented in the film because it was the status quo
during the colonial period along with the Spanish Crown. The Catholic Church during
that period shaped both the identity and behavior of the people of the New Spain. After
1821 things started to change, but by the first half of the twentieth century the Mexican
nation-state was then in charge of shaping the people’s identity and behavior in a way to
sustain the status quo. Furthermore, the Mexican government illegally and corruptly
seized the Catholic Church’s assets.

**Amores Perros**

Thus far, two films have been analyzed. The first, “We, the Poor,” is set in the
agricultural period in México, which was from the 1920s to the 1950s. The second,
*Macario*, is set in the industrial period, from the 1950s to the 1980s. The ideology,
messages, and life scripts embedded in both films are very similar, even though these
films belong to different development periods. However, the country in both periods
experienced massive migration from the rural areas to the cities. The third and final
movie to analyze is *Amores Perros* or “Love is a Bitch” that is set in the neo-liberal
period, from the 1990s to the early 21st century. Probably a better English name for the
movie would have been “The Destructive Power of Love” (González-Iñárritu, 2000,
Director’s comment on the film).

This is a three-story film in which the characters of each story are interrelated
somehow with the characters of the other two stories. The interrelationship among
different social classes, according to this film, is strictly geographical, destiny mandated,
approved, or accidental since social classes should not interact otherwise, in view of the fact that the Mexican society is organized to minimize such contact.

The film starts somewhere in the middle of the narrative, a chaotic car chase and a violent crash, and then it flashes backwards through time in an attempt to introduce the characters of each of the three stories and their context. From there on, the movie mainly flashes forwards through time and to many places.

The first story, Octavio and Susana, is about a love triangle among two brothers and the wife of one of them. Octavio is obsessed with Susana mainly because he is misreading Susana’s actions, needs, and words, but also due to their inability to actually communicate. Octavio initially was trying to protect Susana and his nephew from the violence of Ramiro, Octavio’s brother and Susana’s husband. In an attempt to win Susana’s affections and respect, Octavio uses his dog, Cofi, to have access to financial resources, through illegal dog-fighting. Due to his naiveté, and even though Octavio has no marketable skills, he believes that becoming Susana’s provider would persuade her to run away with him along with Ramiro’s son and unborn son.

According to the film, life in the lowest echelons of society is chaotic, dangerous, dark, and extremely violent. Furthermore, choices are considered, as presented by the film, as basically inevitable and driven by destiny, or perhaps random at best. Throughout the film, Ramiro’s and Octavio’s father is absent. He is not even mentioned at all. They live with their mother who cannot control them and is really afraid that they would grow apart violently. The film argues that women’s sexuality must be controlled in order to avoid conflicts between men, especially if they are blood-related. Susana, Ramiro’s wife, has an alcoholic, irresponsible mother and no father, either.
It is on these lowest levels of the Mexican society, according to the film, that income is only available through violence, illegal actions, and/or the informal economy. Neoliberalism has concentrated wealth in very few hands, leaving everybody else in poverty or extreme poverty. The masses only have enough financial resources to survive in the short term and fulfill their basic needs. Even though there are available jobs, material and financial security is not provided for the immediate family.

Furthermore, dog-fighting and/or robbing, depending on the characters’ values or personal preferences also provides them with instant social status and access to important financial resources. It is for these reasons that Octavio, Ramiro, and Susana are the social byproduct of their dispossessing and marginalizing environment. The structural constrains of the low class might socially and temporarily raise them but will secure their downfall and permanency in their social class. Under such conditions, low class members make decisions that act against them, even in the short term. Any financial gain is not enough to obtain financial mobility or long-term benefits, but the risks are too great. Such an environment becomes a downward spiral and a circle of poverty and violence. Anyone under such adverse and limiting circumstances has no viable hopes for true love and/or financial security, which is why Susana and his dog mean so much to Octavio.

Once Susana has agreed to run away with Octavio, he hires hit-men to kill Ramiro. As part of his plans with Susana to move up socially and move to Juarez, Octavio gives up dog fighting, which does not fit with his new social status. However, he becomes greedy and accepts one last fight, at greatly increased stakes, against the dog of a local gang leader, Jarocho, who has been Octavio’s constant contender throughout this first story.
Octavio’s choices backfire, as expected, because Susana flees with Ramiro when he is severely beaten almost to death by Octavio’s hit-men, taking all the money Octavio has given her, along with Ramiro and their born and unborn sons. Furthermore, Jarocho shoots Octavio’s dog—threatening his future financial stability and security. After this series of reverses, Octavio stabs Jarocho and flees with a gang of thugs chasing him. This ends with the car chase and crash at the beginning of the movie.

In many ways, Cofi portrays Octavio and his behavior: an animal that kills under certain circumstances. Octavio is not only a monster that lacks a sentiment of guilt but also the notion of what is socially appropriate behavior. The film in a way justifies Octavio’s behavior, separating Octavio from his actions. The actions are, according to the film, the outcome of the environment. He seduced his sister-in-law, ordered his own brother to be beaten almost to death, participated in illegal dog fighting, disrespected his mother and physically pushed her when angry, showed no remorse for Ramiro’s death and the accidental death of his best friend, Jorge, at the car crash, and challenged everybody, even God and the film’s audience.

The second story is about Daniel and Valeria, who belong to the middle class or higher social Mexican classes. Their life is characterized as deceiving and ostentatious facades of wealth and frivolousness: living shallow lives. Daniel is a magazine editor and Valeria is a model that appears on TV. This story is about Daniel abandoning his wife and two daughters for a life with Valeria, a blond beautiful Spaniard; Daniel gradually becomes an absent father in his daughters’ life, living in a dysfunctional marriage that is a masquerade more than anything else. It is very interesting to see that Valeria has a lighter skin-color than Daniel’s wife, especially since México is a Mestizo country where the
White European Standard appears to be still in place. Valeria is also a fatherless daughter that even asks Daniel, after the accident, not to contact her absent father, afraid that he would condemn her and tell her that she deserves what just happened to her.

Their problems are totally different from Octavio’s and Susana’s. People living in these higher classes have more options and the opportunity to make decisions, thinking about or taking into consideration something else other than money exclusively. Daniel is able to support his two houses relatively well, until he decided to abandon his family and live with Valeria. He chose a beautiful-looking apartment instead of something practical and affordable. That masquerade of wealth was successful for only half of day when they started living together in the purchased apartment, until the car crash where Valeria is critically hurt and unable to afford her medical expenses because she does not have medical insurance. Therefore, Daniel had to pay for everything, an especially difficult challenge after having bought an expensive looking apartment. He borrowed and/or had to pay more than his income was able to sustain. Because of that, he bought no furniture but moved Valeria’s stuff to their new place. I wonder why people believe that their life circumstances will remain constant and nothing wrong could ever happen.

Symbolically speaking, their life together starts badly when Valeria punches a hole on the floor simply by walking through the apartment the first time she was there; bad things happen to people that behave badly. However, it is important here to pause to consider that the determination of what “bad” means is a social construct that applies exclusively to a particular society in a specific time. Usually socially allowed behaviors change over time and societies. Valeria leaves the apartment to buy something to toast with for their future together because Daniel forgot to do it. Valeria’s situation, after the
car crash, sours her character, constantly attacking Daniel’s words, ideas, actions, attitude, and apparently lack of commitment to her and/or her dog. The financial pressures, getting to know the real Valeria, and the loss of her beautiful body forces Daniel to reconsider whether or not to stay with Valeria. Through this wearing-down process, Valeria also has her doubts about staying with Daniel and looks to her past for strength, but her financial condition and her relationship with her father does not allow her any alternative.

The second story also has a dog. Valeria had a small, pampered dog that through the story becomes a symbol of Daniel’s dying obsession for Valeria, his new relationship, and himself. Her dog, Ritchie, also symbolizes Valeria’s innocence, superficiality, and being outside of her natural environment, in a threatening, dark, violent, and unfamiliar place, with a man that is not what she thought he would be and she needs. But for untold reasons, both decided to stay together and live unhappily, at least until the end of the film.

People within these relative higher social echelons have more choices, relative to lower income classes. Access to financial resources allows them to take other factors into consideration while choosing their identity, behavior, and/or roles such as status related and/or face saving strategies. Their gender-roles differ from those that the lower social strata have. Women, for instance, can work in the public arena and can disagree and not obey their husbands. Money for them is not the main criteria while selecting their identity and behavior. Daniel abandoned his wife and daughters but decided not to leave Valeria even though she was no longer the person or body he became infatuated with. But for
untold reasons, both decided to sustain their arrangement, keeping their identity and behavior.

Finally, the third story, Chivo and Maru, is about an absent father that is looking forward, only after he finds out by chance that his ex-wife has died, for a second chance with the daughter he abandoned many years ago. After the death of her mother and step-father, Maru is all alone and needs someone to protect and take care of her. Finding out about the death of his ex-wife triggers Chivo’s perception shift that will end up with an identity, behavior, and role change. Probably Chivo knew that his ex-wife would never give him a second chance with their daughter, but the film never explains why this perception shift was possible. Besides he wanted more than anything else to be a protective father. That was the driving force that shaped his identity and behavior with the help of Cofi, Octavio’s dog. Throughout the identity transition process, he would lose this canine family learning that killing is wrong, updating some of his behavior, which will define his new role, literally becoming a different person.

Chivo was a college professor that had a vision of how the world, or at least México, should be. He becomes a terrorist in an attempt to change México. That is why he abandoned both his wife and two-year-old daughter. He is caught in his attempt, jailed for terrorism, when freed becomes mentally unstable, and finally becomes an alcoholic hit-man. He is currently working for a corrupt commander of the Mexican police. During the plot of the film, he is hired to kill a business man and then to assassinate a rich business man by his own step-brother, who also happens to be his business partner.

It is through this story that we can also see, according to the film, the behavioral choices of the highest echelons of the Mexican society: their wrong and corrupt ways.
The high social class uses a mask of civility and decency, but they are as savage, morally corrupt, and violent as Octavio and Ramiro and as unconscious and shallow as Daniel. Money allows them to do what they crave for, veiling their socially unapproved behavior and hiding their real identity.

This story also explores how low a human being can go after abandoning his family, becoming a terrorist, going to jail for 20 years, losing his grip with reality, becoming an alcoholic garbage picker and hit-man, and living with dogs. He basically become an animal himself: dirty, acting on mere instinct, killing and stealing without remorse, and living with his own canine family.

For Chivo, the structural constraints that normally limit most people were not a deterrent, but his own actions and personal flaws, must likely his academic education, allowed this since he was a college professor. Academics in certain Mexican circles have some perks. Chivo’s deadly skills allowed him to travel undetected and freely among the different Mexican social worlds, rendering his services while promoted and protected by the police. He was able to move unconstrained through the realms of different social groups. He was neither constrained by lack of financial resources, unlike Octavio, Ramiro, and to certain extent Daniel; Chivo was in a quest searching for a way to naturally, organically, and sentimentally reconnect with his daughter Maru and redeem himself both for him and his daughter.

Originally Chivo’s canine family was the only connection he had with what was left of his own humanity. Chivo was unable to connect with other human beings and their hardships, something that he had with his dogs. The payment for his services and stealing practices allowed Chivo to buy certain respectability after Cofi taught him in a bad way,
through suffering, that killing is wrong, since it breaks families apart, when it killed Chivo’s entire canine family. After this tragic incident, many of the personal and environmental flaws he attributed to God, he now, after a finished perception shift, attributes to himself, and he was then able to see his environment and himself clearly. The film used the metaphor of wearing prescription glasses. He cleans up, shaves, and cuts his hair—becoming human again, at least in appearance. But at the beginning, he was not able to recognize himself, as if the dirt, beard, and long hair were a mask or an armor that he put up to hide from himself and fulfill his terrorist and hit-man identity, behavior, and roles.

That is why Chivo does not fulfill his last contract. Even though the film does not explain it, Chivo needed to change his behavior and roles in order to change his identity. He needed to fulfill his identity as a father to his daughter. He reunites the assassination-target with the contract-buyer and after forcing them to take a good look at their lives and lifestyles, asks them to work things out, but without much trust in the human essence, Chivo leaves them a gun in case things do not work out.

Yet Cofi, the dog, did not teach Chivo that stealing was also wrong. Chivo robbed everything from anyone, every chance he has, without regard for his victims’ situation or status. Furthermore, he was able to feel pain just for animals but not for human beings and could not connect with them at a human level. His dirt-armor prevented Chivo from feeling and probably understanding the outcome and consequences of his actions; he simply just did not care.

Chivo finds, basically at the end of the movie, the courage to contact Maru by telephone, leaving her a message when he knows she is not at her home to pick up,
because he broke in and was inside her house. Even though he leaves Maru a lot of money—not in an attempt to buy her but to reconnect with her—Chivo also, through the answering machine, tells her that he is still alive, though a living ghost. In addition, he tells what happened to him, why, and the outcome of his actions. Finally, he confides in her that once he recovers the right to talk her, he will be contacting her.

The common denominators among the three stories are absent fathers, or being an absent father, and dogs. In the three stories one absent father is not there to educate and discipline his children, the second abandons his small daughters, and the third father tries to come back to his abandoned daughter. Integrated into the three stories of the films, dogs aid their owners financially in the first story, keep them company in the second story, and in the third story the dog is a killer and family at the same time. In the third story a dog also teaches humans how life should be lived and that killing is wrong. Throughout the films, the dogs show positive and negative forms of loyalties, mirroring their owners’ actions with their leading family members. In the previous two films, approved behavior was a religious value, but in the third film a dog teaches Chivo that killing is wrong.

There are many layers to the three stories, many of which cannot be understood outside the seasoned understanding of the Mexican culture. In Amores Perros, actions speak louder or mean more that what is actually said. Likewise, what is not said is more important than what is said. And finally, how it is said is as important as what is said. For these and other reasons, the movie is highly symbolic for high context societies like the Mexican society.
The film also portrays the state of corruption, dissolution, and violence of the Mexican society at three different, yet somehow interrelated, levels or social classes. This state of affairs appears at first glance to be the product of the zero-sum of the sociopolitical and economic forces. Yet, the role of religion, or better said the lack of it as legally mandated by the reform laws, also has had a profound effect on the identity and behavior of the whole Mexican society. This, unfortunately, is nothing new; we have repeatedly seen throughout Mexican history, when the sociopolitical and economic system is unable to appropriately handle the bulk of the population, chaos, destruction, hopelessness, rape, and violence permeate from a localized segment to the whole society. But system breakdowns have been more common for the 100 years after the independence and partial breakdowns for the last 40 to 60 years.

Amores Perros is also about transformations. The main characters’ identity and behavior are altered throughout the movie. The characters are not fully developed at the beginning of the movie, and throughout the plot they continue with their development trying to reach their full potential; however, this was both positive and negative. The context in which they live defines the more viable outcome. The film narrates the identity and behavior transformation of the characters and the damaging consequences of their actions to them and to their close ones, especially to their children. Even though the film focuses on the main characters, it is not difficult to imagine what would happen to their affected children. Some of the characters lose their innocence to become beasts, while other beasts start the opposite process searching within for their buried human essence. Octavio, one of the main characters, reaches bottom to become a merciless selfish pseudo human being incapable of actual love, who acts more like an animal than a real human
being, while Chivo, a hit-man, who was initially only able to relate to dogs in a caring manner, gradually and limitedly starts to regain his humanity to be able to relate to other human beings and to love. Daniel moves along a line of superficiality and unconsciousness, initially disloyally abandoning his family, and gradually develops loyalty to his new love even though she loses her leg.

The film is also about second chances, but for the film’s main characters exclusively. Octavio has the potential of learning due to his love for Susana. Daniel appears to stay with Valeria. Finally, Chivo is trying to become the father that he never was to his abandoned daughter.

The main female characters also go through transformations, but silently, and suffer with dignity whatever destiny throws their way. Susana has to endure cheating on her husband with her brother-in-law. Susana also needs to find a way to support her children. Valeria has to learn to live with her new reality and to know the real Daniel. There is no main Character in Chivo’s story. His daughter, Maru, is not a main character, but she has to endure the passing of her real parents and get to know her biological father. In this tragic, raw film, characters also have to follow the socially-approved gender roles, yet those roles are not as constrained as the roles presented in Nosotros los Pobres and Macario.

Moreover, certain characters in the film are not bound by law or morality; they do whatever it takes to get what they want, within their voluntarily adopted or assigned social role requirements. They strive to fulfill their needs, including physical and financial security, relationship and status, and/or power. Other characters learn from their mistakes, hopefully. After the film, viewers have a working understanding of why the
films’ characters do what they do and cannot escape their environment, created by neoliberalism, why their social class constrains them, and the inevitability of their unchangeable but voluntarily created and somehow accepted destiny. Most characters in the film lack the human, material, and spiritual support required to actually succeed in life, creating and sustaining malicious cycles—masked with depravation, money, power, sex, and vices—of poverty or wealth, passion, and, probably more importantly, violence both physical and/or emotional.

Throughout the film, money is the ultimate seducer due to its purchasing power, along with passion and power, even though Chivo says he does not need money but he keeps stealing. This film clearly depicts love and money as destructive forces for both the individual characters and their loved ones. These destructive forces eventually permeate to society, but according to the film, only at certain locations, but it also applies to any excess.

Likewise, the movie explicitly depicts a world, a country, and even a city with many realities that are eventually interrelated. The film is also about losses: children that lose their fathers too soon, fathers that unilaterally decide to abandon their children, families that are destroyed by missing family members that have died or were killed, innocence that is compromised for whatever reason, dogs that are lost or killed, an amputated leg, an ideal that is never realized, a wasted life, and of course the deceitful, limited, and temporal power of money. The film mirrors a rat race that not even winners actually win because they are chasing something that is an illusion.

The lack of communication among the characters is also part of the problem. They talk about totally different things in the same conversation without actually
communicating and understanding each other at a deep emotional level, but believe that they do. From my perspective, this creates a sentiment or feeling of both loneliness and sadness, even when around the company of family members and/or other people. Frustration and anger for lack of understanding, among many other things, is not uncommon either throughout the film, especially in the Daniel and Valeria story. On the other hand, sometimes communication is extremely cruel without saying anything at all or nearly enough, as in Chivo’s story. Under these circumstances anger (contained or not) and/or threats are the normal social response in such universes.

The identity and behavior of the characters are constricted by several identity shaping strategies, including the socially expected roles and the environment’s structural constraints. That is why one of the films important themes is being bound to trying to fulfill a role’s social requirements and expectations. Octavio wanted to be Susana’s provider, husband, and the father to her son and unborn son. Ramiro knows well his responsibilities, yet he is not able to fulfill them to the expectation of his mother and wife, but he is not willingly going to give them up for Octavio’s sake. He has no other role to play, even though he has an intimate relationship at his work. He does not know who he is without his current role. Another example is Daniel, who wants to be the love of a beautiful foreign woman and live in a pretty-looking apartment, even though it is falling apart because he “did not have the money to fix it.” For him, upper class appearances are really important. For that reason, he gives up his role as father and husband, leaving behind his Mestizo-looking daughters and wife. For him, to be the love of a foreign beauty was more important, that is why he decided to stick with Valeria after her accident and subsequent souring of her character. Finally, Chivo is the only character
in the film who does not understand the concepts of responsibility and social expectations, yet throughout his life threats, making his victims evaluate their lives, he expects to reassume his teaching role in an uncommon way. He also wants to take the role of father of the daughter he abandoned many years ago. Even Octavio is given the opportunity to learn in order to regain Susana’s affection. Chivo does as he pleases and upholds his moral authority, imagined and sustained through his gun. In a way, he is a free spirit trying to find his human essence, recuperate his abandoned daughter, and recuperate his fatherhood, a role that he discarded to become a terrorist.

The final idea of the film is that regardless of what men have done or neglected to do, fathers should always strive to have a second chance to be with their children and perform their fatherly role. Throughout the film, the audience is presented the process of and the malignant and devastating effects of children with absent fathers. That is why Chivo was ashamed of his behavior, and in a desperate attempt to change his identity and role, reaches out to his unknown daughter Maru to try to be a father, her father. Octavio also wanted to be the substitute father of Susana’s children, even though he was not the biological father.

Closely linked to this idea, the film, from my perspective, also tries to warn society about the effects of socially tolerated violence and the need to establish a new criterion to define and measure social success. The current criterion is only leading to wealth concentration, privatization of assets, and nationalization of poverty, leaving most unfulfilled and with rage. Unbelievable but true, the hit-man is the hero of the three stories because he provides needed services but also because he wants to redeem himself from previous fatidic and erroneous deeds. Under such hard conditions, it is normal for
sons to abuse and not take into consideration their mother, and seduce his brother’s wife or to demand sex from a woman that just was released from the hospital because no one else would take care of her, since her family and friends are on another continent and that is one of roles socially assigned to women.

Table 1

*Summary of Identity Shaping Strategies Related to the Film’s Messages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Relevant to Mexican movies</th>
<th>Included in the movie</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Religiosity is a private matter that does not connect to their behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not directly but with access to global goods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sociopolitical and Economic System | Yes                       | Yes                   | 1. Those who attack the nation-state will be prosecuted and jailed and will lose everything.  
2. Economic activities that are allowed for masses, the middle class, and the elite. |
<p>| Ideology                         | Yes                       | Yes                   | Pro market and free enterprise. Government should not participate at all. Police should facilitate business activities. |
| Ideology in film                 |                           |                       |          |
| Democratic vs. hereditary        | Yes                       | No                    | Secular over religious, as explained above. |
| Relative vs. absolute            | Yes                       | No                    | Depending on the circumstances. |
| Secular vs. religious            | Yes                       | Yes                   | Depending on the social group taken as reference. |
| Cooperation vs. competition      | Yes                       | Yes                   |          |
| Outsiders vs. insiders           | Yes                       | Yes                   |          |
| International vs. nationalism    | Yes                       | No                    | In the three stories, the audience have access to the characters’ sexual freedom |
| Sexual freedom vs. monogamy      | Yes                       | Yes                   |          |
| Media education system           | Yes                       | No                    | There is no connection between school and marketable skills for a large social segment, mainly the masses. |
| Media                            | Yes                       | Yes                   | It is portrayed as a mere entertainment practice. |
| Other                            |                           |                       |          |
| Agency                           | Yes                       | Yes                   | I could not find any paternalistic messages. Agency is basically restricted by lack of knowledge, structural barriers, and gender roles. |
| Caste                            | Yes                       | No                    | It is the framework that sustains the film’s stories. |
| Class                            | Yes                       | Yes                   |          |
| Ethnicity                        | Yes                       | No                    |          |</p>
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Other types of messages that I was able to distinguish embedded in the film include: abortion, birth-control responsibilities, civility rules, evaluative comments, ethical standards, excuses, family rules, inability to adequately communicate, keeping secrets, lack of respect for the mother, loyalty or lack of, marriage is not forever, morale, Mexican folk heroes, need of a positive identity, obedience, passive option to get a divorce, private and public areas, religious metaphors, right treatment towards defenseless persons, education, self-destruction due to personal deeds, silence as a response, social norms for new loves and lovers, social rules, traditions (family and nationwide), no sexual monogamy, violent reaction against threats, and women’s right to change their minds.

**Detailed Analysis of Messages.** The first scene is a chaotic car chase that ends with a violent car-crash; killing Jorge and badly hurting both Valeria and Octavio. The reason behind this terrible accident is back in the future of the film. Valeria and Octavio
do not know each other prior to and after the accident, because they are to be bound by their own and independent social worlds.

The accident represents the crash of two socially different worlds; an anomaly since they are never to interact. That is how the Mexican society has been structured since Mesoamerican times. Low income, low class people, mainly men have no rules and are very violent. Such violence is sometimes contained, but anything can turn it loose very rapidly. Their behavior is what allows them to fulfill their needs. They live in a dark world without access to their biological fathers, especially when they are no longer boys and need them the most; at that time, they have very limited financial options. Their fathers are not there for them to offer discipline, guidance, all types of support, and love. Human support seems to be also nonexistent outside their immediate family, especially the women that take care of them.

All the characters in the film are under transition, but many of the low class characters are especially not fully developed, as the Aztec society that was not allowed to reach its maturity due to the Spanish invasion and conquest; those characters are innocent, unconscious, yet extremely cruel. The film also describes that there are public and private places where behavior is totally polarizing; in their private place they are allowed to be religious and even nice, but in the public sphere they are to be extremely violent and bloody. Furthermore, some of these characters are homosexual *machos* performing their assigned role in a patriarchal society, unable to let loose social requirements. Technology and cars have negative byproducts and gave them the means to go out to other social worlds (where middle and high end classes live), that otherwise are socially and geographically bounded. Such technology also causes accidents, where
people get hurt and die. Guns and knives are not used with positive outcomes either. Middle class and high class worlds are presented brighter and higher than those inhabited by low class groups. Higher social groups have more options due to their education/knowledge and/or money. Yet, higher social worlds are shallow and meaningless, simply masked by a deceiving veil of civility and wealth.

Jorge: What did you do? What did you...?  
Octavio: Nothing!  
Jorge: Nothing? Bullshit!

In the current context, killing someone means nothing; animal life’s is worth more. Human life is worth little. So Jorge believes that Octavio is lying. The reasons why Octavio is behaving like that is due to the gender roles and expectations.

In the next scene, Susana is getting in her house and the family’s dog, Cofi, escapes, again another random act that affects the future of all. Symbolism is important in the Mexican society. Susana arrives to the kitchen and asks her mother-in-law how is her baby son doing. It is obvious that the women of the house do not get along. Ramiro and Ramiro’s mother do not like the actions and values of Susana, especially in relation to Octavio because the mother knows how violent and antagonistic her sons are. The mother does not like Octavio’s and Susana’s relationship because Susana is married to Ramiro, Octavio’s brother.

Susana: Cofi! Cofi, come here! Fucking dog!

Apparently a meaningless random act, like the dog running away, marks the life of those near. This is because Mexicans believe that everything happens for a reason. Our understanding of the world for thousands of years was religiously based, even though that
has changed gradually to the point that religious values are not socially relevant anymore.

The scene continues inside the house, in the kitchen.

Susana: Hello, señora.
Mother: Susana, I can’t watch him tomorrow.
Susana: Why?
Mother: I have to help my sister move, and go to the market.
Susana: Señora, give me a break! I have a math final. I’ll iron tonight.
Mother: No. Leave the kid with your mother.
Susana: My mother? Just this week, then I’ll work it out.

There are civility rules that must be followed, even at private places. People who are arriving must properly greet the people that are already there. However, Susana and her mother do not get along well. In this particular scene, Susana’s mother-in-law is not willing to continue taking care of Susana’s baby; Susana is only receiving excuses. The mother-in-law might love her grandson but not like her daughter-in-law due to Susana’s behavior. Susana’s mother-in-law uses excuses and evaluates Susana’s mother indirectly because Susana’s mother is not responsible. What Susana’s mother-in-law is actually telling her is: you should emulate my behavior and adequately raise your son. But the underlying issue is that Susana’s and her mother-in-law’s expectation for Susana’s gender role performance is different, escalating the conflict between them.

The next scene portrays men in public places, especially at dog-fighting arenas. Men must be mean, demand blood, act violently, and drink alcoholic beverages. These actions are part of another social role that must be fulfilled; it might be part of the bonding ritual among males of certain social classes because the film only portrays men performing or trying to perform their gender roles.

With the next scene it becomes clear what bothers Susana’s mother-in-law. Octavio’s and Susana’s relationship is bound to cause problems between Ramiro and
Octavio. The mother-in-law is not worried about a potential divorce but about a deadly struggle between her two violent sons. In this particular scene Octavio is telling a joke about male babies, and Susana asks about female babies. This is not an adequate relationship among brother and sister-in-law; the husband would not like it. This is wrong and you must stop immediately. Civility, loyalty, and gender roles would solve the conflict and establish the adequate behavior for all the involved parties.

| Susana: | What about girls? |
| Octavio: | We finger them until they’re 18. |
| Mother:  | Stop bullshitting, Octavio. |

The same scene continues when Ramiro comes into the kitchen. Ramiro rudely complains to his wife about how careless and negligent her job is in relation to her home duties and letting the Cofi out of the house. Ramiro is complaining about Susana’s poor performance at her gender roles. With her intervention, his mother is telling Ramiro that he should not be fighting with his wife in front of everybody, especially his brother. Octavio takes the blame for letting the dog out because he and Susana get along. Due to this situation, the brothers’ conflict spirals upward, especially after Octavio tried to defend Susana. Octavio believed that it was not the way to talk to and treat Susana; the dog was an excuse to mistreat her. Ramiro, on the other hand, believes that this matter is between husband and wife, and Octavio should not have any type of relationship with her. Furthermore, the mother is unable to control any of them, including Susana. The mother is also afraid that the two brothers will have a violent struggle over Susana’s affections. Without direct words Ramiro and Octavio’s mother is telling Ramiro, Octavio, and Susana that there are social groups that precede others: brotherly love supersedes marriage love and that socially approved behavior is there to help run social groups and
society functionally. But specifically the mother’s message to Octavio is: you should not intervene in couple’s quarrels and form a friendship triangle.

Ramiro: Susana? Susana? Did you bleach my uniform? Look at it! And Cofi? Where is that fucking dog?
Susana: No “hello”...?
Ramiro: Where?
Susana: I don’t know.
Mother: [Enough] sit and eat.
Ramiro: You let him out again, right, bitch? I always tell you to watch it when you go out!
Octavio: Lay off!
Ramiro: Who asked you?
Octavio: You don’t care about that dog. I feed it.
Ramiro: This is between me and my wife.
Octavio: I’m the one who let him go, so lay off her.
Mother: Keep out of it! Shut up, please.

The next scene takes the audience to another world. The film takes its audience to the word of dog-fighting. After a dog-fight, Jarocho’s dog would calm down so his owner would continue fighting it, until it does. Jarocho tries first with Chivo’s dogs unsuccessfully and then Octavio’s dog. I wonder if this scene is also telling its audience that men, as dogs, behave violently until they calm down. Sometimes people are so angry that they need to hurt or kill until they calm down. Venting is not enough. Are these the gender roles, applicable to certain social groups, for public places?

Man 4: Fucking dog can’t get enough!
Man 5: Give him to me.
Jarocho: He won’t budge.
Man 3: Sic him on those dogs. That will cool him off.
Jarocho: Good idea.

The next scene brings the audience back to Octavio and Ramiro’s house. Susana goes to Octavio’s room to thank him for taking the blame about letting out Cofi. According to the indirect language of the film’s characters, brother and sister-in-law are
to help each other. That totally changed the husband-wife quarrel into a brothers-struggle. Octavio does not like the way his brother threats Susana and that she is not able to even try to defend her. During the scene both closely lay down on his bed to watch the TV. Octavio ask questions instead of being direct, a typical characteristic of high-context societies.

This same scene is also about gender roles and their expected performance while in private places. Both from the male and female perspective women are to excuse their men because men cannot help themselves and that is how they are. Men, on the other hand, know how men are like and what the proper behavior should be. Octavio believed that Susana could do a lot better than Ramiro. But at the end of the scene, Susana was still defending Ramiro, while Octavio was wondering why women cannot act as men do and fight back. Lack of efficient communication is also an implied topic of this scene, obstructed by the gender roles they both play differently.

Susana: Can I?
Octavio: Yes.
Susana: Thanks for earlier.
Octavio: What?
Susana: That was cool, taking the blame.
Octavio: What happened here?
Susana: It’s nothing.
Octavio: Did Ramiro do this to you?
Susana: Yes, but he didn’t mean it.
Octavio: Didn’t mean it?
Susana: You know what he’s like.
Octavio: Why do you put up with it? He treats you like shit.
Susana: Not always.
Octavio: Are you stupid or just pretending?

The next scene starts where the other one finished; it is a continuation of the same one. Jorge is looking for Octavio to tell him what Octavio’s dog did. Octavio’s mother seizes the opportunity to tell Octavio that what they, Octavio and Susana, are doing is not
right, that Ramiro and she do not like Octavio and Susana lying down together on Octavio’s bed. From the mother’s perspective, what Octavio and Susana are doing is morally wrong; it will get out of hand, and will hurt Ramiro, Octavio, and Susana. When mother knocks on the door, Susana moves away from Octavio. Octavio and Susana do not care what other people say about their relationship. The indirect message from the scene is that there are social rules and values that would discourage such behavior.

Mother: Someone’s here for you.
Octavio: Hang on.
Susana: Uh-huh.
Mother: You know Ramiro doesn’t want Susana in your room.
Octavio: We were watching TV!
Mother: Your brother doesn’t like it, neither do I. It’s the last time, you hear me? The last!

The next scene explains how an apparently random act, like the dog getting away, might be the cause of a life-changing situation for that household. A gang leader, Jarocho, goes to Octavio’s house to try to collect from him for the death of his fighting dog, which Cofi killed, even though it was the gang leader’s own fault. In a lawless dark society, men take by force what they want and/or need. In such an environment, the law of the jungle belongs to the stronger, meanest man. According to the current gender roles, men must be violent and fight each other to save face and comply with the socially mandated expectations. Under such conditions, men behave in a socially approved way, even if it causes their eventual self-destruction.

Jarocho: Know what your dog did?
Octavio: Yeah.
Jarocho: So?
Octavio: It’s okay, huh? It’s cool.
Jarocho: Cool? It’s not cool at all. Bring Pancho. See what he did? This dog was worth at least 20,000 pesos.
Octavio: Have him stuffed for your mantel.
Jarocho: Don’t be a smartass, kiddo. You have two choices. Pay me, or pay me.
Octavio: Why should I pay you?
Jarocho: Want to play with me? Okay.
Octavio: Wait! Why did you set Pancho on him?
Jarocho: Listen, give me your dog, and I’ll forget it.
Octavio: You’re nuts.
Jarocho: Start saving, ‘cause you’re gonna pay.
Jorge: Make Ramiro pay if you’re so cool. Afraid he’ll kick your ass again?
Jarocho: No way, asshole. I’m not taking any more shit. Got it, Octavio?
Let’s go.

The film then takes its audience to the next day. Ramiro and Octavio are having the breakfast their mother prepared. She is asking Ramiro for money, since he is her first born and according to the Mexican tradition he has to be the provider when the father is absent. Regardless of the circumstances men must bring money home. Due to the wording of her statements, I believe Ramiro’s mother is telling Ramiro that she believes that he has money. Yet, there is no respect for her in her own house. On another layer, Octavio knows that his brother is stealing. So the question arises: if everybody in the house knows that Ramiro is stealing, why doesn’t anyone wonder why he has no money?
Does Ramiro have a lover? Who knows about it? Why doesn’t Octavio use that knowledge to convince Susana to run away with him? How is loyalty upheld from Octavio’s perspective? What secrets should be kept and from whom?

These questions are relevant to understanding the story because the women’s gender roles at the lower social classes, along with their need to be supported, do not allow them to question the actions of their supporting males. They might not know what Ramiro is doing, or they decide to be silent about it. Octavio, on the other hand, can and does question Ramiro’s choices and actions. Octavio indirectly questions Ramiro’s income sources. At the middle classes, Valeria voices her objections but because she is
unable to support herself, she has no option but to silently face her hardships and
disappointments. At the highest social levels, again according to the film, women are
mere objects of pleasure, unless they are one’s daughter and then parents must protect
them. Octavio, however, believes that competition in violent environments has to be done
intelligently and not simply by force.

If women know what their supporting male counterparts are doing and they
decide to keep quiet, I wonder why they decide to do it. His mother never questions
Ramiro about where he is getting the money from. Susana, likewise, does not question
Ramiro when he gives her a walkman radio and cd player. The film does not provide
information if it is part of their gender roles, secrecy, loyalty, family rules, or why they
do it. From the film’s perspective, men have to keep secrecy or else. Providers might be
forced to steal, but they might not want to be publicly or privately linked to their way of
supporting their families.

Ramiro: What’s up? Got a joint?
Mother: Ramiro, I need money.
Ramiro: Don’t got any. Payday’s Friday.
Mother: So what do I do? The baby needs diapers and formula, and the
eggs you eat aren’t free.
Ramiro: Got no money.
Mother: "Got no money."
Octavio: So you got no money?
Ramiro: Are you deaf?
Octavio: Aren’t drugstores good business?
Ramiro: Keep your mouth shut, or else.
Octavio: Asshole!
Ramiro: One word and you’re dead.
Octavio: Being tough won’t make you smart.

Now the film fast forwards to the second story, Daniel and Valeria, even though
the one about Octavio and Susana is not over yet. Some of the second story characters are
introduced. Daniel and Julieta, with their two daughters, are arriving at their house when
the phone rings twice, and then the person on the other end of the line hangs up on two different occasions. Their marriage is basically over, and Julieta, even though she is aware of what is going on, does not care about her husband anymore. Julieta knows that Daniel has someone else because of Daniel’s insistence to know who it was on the phone. Julieta also knows that Daniel does not care about his marriage because he allows Valeria to call him at home. If there are other reasons the film does not explain them.

The film continues stereotyping male and female gender roles. Men, for instance, were historically and socially allowed to have female lovers through time and cultures. However, that prerogative was given mainly to rich people because they had the means to support more than one wife. In México men were socially allowed to have several women. On the other hand, the film also portrays women silently suffering men’s disloyalties. The film also portrays women’s options as limited to passively getting a divorce, as Julieta’s case, but exclusively at the middle classes because Susana had different values and behavior. Maru, Chivo’s abandoned daughter, is portrayed as pure and in need of protection. I wonder if the film deliberately aimed at suggesting that women behave better socially at the higher classes, as it was believed in the first half the twentieth century in México.

Girls: I’ll get it!
Girl 1: Hello? Hello?
Daniel: Who was it?
Girl 1: They hung up.
Julieta: That mute man again? Or that mute woman, maybe?
Daniel: I’ll get it.
Julieta: Hello? Hello? Hung up again. Weird!

The next scene brings the audience back to Octavio and Susana’s story. Susana again looks for Octavio’s support in his room, where and when both can be alone. She
was worried because she was pregnant again; that was not to happen especially since she is not sure whether or not she wants to continue living with Ramiro.

However, most of the conversation was led by gender-role “practicality”. Susana asked Octavio if he was ready to become her provider and “invited” him to mature fast enough to be able to have a relationship. She needed him to act according to the locally required gender roles. From what I saw in the film, love had nothing to do with social arrangements and functions. Furthermore, nothing in the film leads me to consider that Susana was interested in a relationship. Susana’s behavior was also bound by gender roles. At this stage in her life, she did not see herself behaving outside such constraints and more importantly the gender-role scripts guide her actions and conscience. Yet, she was considering an abortion and leaving Ramiro. Oddly enough, Octavio, acting outside his gender role but led by his conscience, opposed the abortion but not cheating with his brother’s wife. Both Susana and Daniel, from the second story, considered that marriage was not forever, and for the rich characters in the Chivo’s story, third and final story, marriage meant nothing, as we will see. Susana needed a provider; she did not seek to act outside her socially approved gender role by becoming a provider, for instance; and she “knew” what she was responsible, for instance, for actually avoiding unwanted pregnancies. She was supposed to be the sole responsible party, socially speaking, for correctly using her sexuality, without getting pregnant. She never thought of asking Ramiro to use birth control devices, for instance.

The scene is also about inefficient communication and Octavio trying to take what he wants. Susana needed emotional support, but Octavio misunderstood it with a physical and/or passion plea. After this encounter, Octavio grew bolder and more sophisticated in
his relentless pursuit for her affections. He even found a way to become a provider, willingly to fulfill Susana’s gender-role expectations. Finally, Octavio, on the other hand, reminded Susana that Ramiro acted according to his social role, when he married her because she became pregnant even though they were and meant nothing for each other. They got married because that was what they should do according to social practices. Here, again, from the film’s perspective, love had nothing to with the characters’ behavior because there is no mention of it. The sad part is that, from Susana’s perspective, she is willing to start a new relationship for the wrong reason with the wrong person. This decision might destroy her and her children.

Susana: Can I come in?
Octavio: What’s up?
Susana: You going out?
Octavio: Why?
Susana: No reason.
Octavio: Something wrong?
Susana: I...
Octavio: What happened
Susana: I’m in trouble. I don’t know what to do. I’m pregnant again.
Octavio: Shit, Susana, you want another baby already?
Susana: I didn’t want it! Ramiro is going to kill me.
Octavio: No, he won’t.
Susana: He went nuts once,
Octavio: but he still married you, didn’t he?
Susana: Yes, but I don’t know if I want to stay with him. I can’t have this baby, Octavio.
Octavio: Are you thinking about an abortion?
Susana: Do you have a better idea? What the fuck can I do?
Octavio: Come away with me.
Susana: What?
Octavio: Let’s go away. Far away.
Susana: I’m being serious!
Octavio: So am I.
Susana: Don’t talk shit. Where would we go? What are you doing, you jerk?
Octavio: Come away with me.
The next scene depicts how Ramiro fulfills his gender-mandated role. He decided to “increase” his income rather than reduce his expenses, besides he has no marketable skills, and usually low-class members can only expect to make it big illegally because of the structural barriers. The Mexican heroes, including Chanoc, are mythologized through media, are people like us, a collage of strengths and weaknesses, both physically and morally. The physical traits of the Mexican heroes also resemble the physical appearance of most Mexicans. Ramiro and a friend are getting ready to rob a pharmacy. Ramiro needs to fulfill his responsibilities as provider of his complete family. Some of the Mexican heroes are the antithesis of American heroes. Ramiro sees pharmacy robbing as training for his real goal: a bank. Even low class members have important aspirations and goals. Yet, most of them would not be able to meet all their needs. Finally, the film depicts that México City is not a safe place.

Man 4: How many are they?
Ramiro: Six bitches, three dicks. Ready?
Man 4: Wait.
Ramiro: That fat bitch is going in. I smell cash. Ever fucked a fatso like her? I have, it’s hot.
Man 4: You have? Who?
Ramiro: Your mother, asshole. Someday we’ll do that fucking bank, you’ll see.
Man 4: Keep cool, Tarzan [Chanoc].
Ramiro: We’re going big time, man. After that fucking bank, I’m out of here. It’s not safe around here. We’re on, she’s in. Everyone down on the floor!

The next scene takes place after the robbery, Ramiro returns home very excited and probably even high. He wakes up Susana to give her a present and starts touching her while dancing. Then Ramiro also wakes up the baby, who starts crying, after which Susana and Ramiro start shouting at each other. It is clear that the expectations that both
have from each other are totally different and therefore, not complementary. More importantly, their roles sometimes clash with each other’s.

The film, through this scene, continues outlining gender roles, as locally understood, for both men and women. Susana knows that when her provider comes back from work, the wife has to feed him and serve him. Sexual arousal is also part of her social duties. That is why Ramiro is trying to become a good provider, from Susana’s perspective. The gift that he got her tries to convey the message that he is an excellent provider; he needed to be acknowledged by his wife. Furthermore, from his perspective, men do not have to obey their wives. Working men also need to see their kids and worry about them, especially when they are sick. The father-based identity was important to Ramiro. This is especially the case because his other role-based identities are not positively evaluated by adults. Furthermore, his son is a baby and is easy to please. On the other hand, from the women’s perspective, men are not to wake up babies in the middle of the night. It is for that reason that mothers protect their children, especially when they are sick. Finally, their communication skills do not allow them to go past their gender roles, thus escalating their ongoing conflict.

Susana: What’s up? Want some dinner?
Ramiro: Look what I brought you.
Susana: Cool! No way! For me?
Ramiro: Like it? Was a bitch to get it.
Susana: Shh! Don’t shout, you’ll wake the baby [up].
Ramiro: Hang on. Baldy?
Susana: Don’t wake him.
Ramiro: Why not?
Susana: It was hard to get him to sleep.
Ramiro: I never see him, do I, Baldy?
Susana: He’s been puking all day. He’s sick. Selfish bastard!
Ramiro: Shut the fuck up. I gave you the Walkman! I’m cool to you, but you’re always on my ass!
Susana: The baby, shit! Shut up!
In the next scene Octavio is telling Jorge how he feels about Susana, and why.

Octavio might believe that it is a positive feeling when in reality it is selfish, boundless obsession. According to the practice of gender roles, men might try to get what they want; there are no rules when force is used. No woman is out of his reach, regardless of her condition. This is especially the case when Octavio knows that Ramiro is having an affair, and Susana has doubts about remaining married to Ramiro. Wooing Susana is what Octavio is planning on doing. Octavio also tells Jorge how he is going to get the money required to accomplish his goal. Octavio does not hear anyone, not even Jorge, and he does not care about values, reasons, or anything else. Octavio is only hearing that men have financial responsibilities when tied to a woman and that dogs also are a good source of income, under certain conditions.

Jorge: Wow, dude... she’s your brother’s woman.
Octavio: Yeah, but I always liked her, even before they met.
Jorge: But he got her first.
Octavio: My ass! Ramiro doesn’t care about her.
Jorge: But Susana does. You’re playing with fire, man.
Octavio: I can’t stop thinking about her.
Jorge: There’s thousands of bitches. Why do you want to fuck her?
Octavio: I don’t want to fuck her! I want her to leave with me.
Jorge: Yeah? With what money? You’re going to fight him? Where do we get the bet money?
Octavio: I’ll pimp your sister.
Jorge: You asshole!

During the next scene Octavio’s obsession grows bolder. Octavio is hearing Susana and Ramiro having sex, and he will not allow it; it might be Ramiro and Susana’s reconciliation. Furthermore, he will try to seduce her in front of Ramiro’s room. Yet, the language that Susana is using tells Octavio that there is a way, which he needs to figure out, to win her affections. Is Susana’s docility with Ramiro based on his violent behavior? The gender-role ideas depicted in this scene are that men answer for their
women, that there are no rules for certain men, and that men take by force what they like but there is a right way to do it.

Ramiro: Well?
Octavio: Phone call for Susana.
Ramiro: Who is it?
Octavio: Her mother.
Ramiro: Tell her to fuck off.
Octavio: She says it’s urgent.
Susana: Hello? Hello? Who was it?
Octavio: Me.
Octavio: Then how?

The next scene introduces the audience to the dark world of dog-fighting in México City. Mauricio, the ring master of the dog-fighting arena, explains the rules of the house to Octavio, rules that are also deceiving because they can always be broken by a rule-less man. Mauricio uses money to seduce Octavio into that world. In a jobless, growth-less economy encouraging the entrepreneurial efforts of the masses reduces the social pressures over the sociopolitical economic system.

Neoliberalism has polarized the Mexican society even further, concentrating wealth in very few hands while poverty in the masses. It creates easily exchangeable workers, with little marketable skills and basic knowledge, and poverty circles for most. All those jobless individuals must be allowed to find a means to fulfill at least the most basic needs in order to avoid generalized social unrest. The ideology disseminated “encourages” the masses to become entrepreneurs through the informal economy, which is controlled by the nation-state. The way it describes social entrepreneurship attracts many jobless individuals, reducing social unrest. That is why the film portrays them as honest businesses outside the law but with less hassle. Dog-fighting is just as any other business; Mauricio explains that he takes losses and makes investments. As expected, he
tests his potential investments. That is why this type of business allows him to earn money. Additionally, he also has binding contracts. Here he is in the pursuit of greed, making an investment, and finding a new partner to get rid of Jarocho. Even in the informal economy, money is the ultimate and most deceiving seducer.

From the gender-role perspective, what defines a man is his ability to fulfill his promises and that is what Octavio intended to do. Without offering Susana financial stability, she would not accept his advances. Octavio needs to perform to the expectations of men tied to women.

Mauricio: This dog looks pretty sad to me.
Jorge: But it killed Jarocho’s dog.
Mauricio: You know this business?
Octavio: More or less.
Mauricio: More or less? Sargento?
Sargento: Yes.
Mauricio: Sarge, take this dog. Come with me. This is my business. Zero taxes, zero strikes, zero unions. Pure hard [honest] cash. I take a loss now and then. This is Mac, my best investment. He’s old, but he can still fight. I got the van from his winnings. We can be partners, with your dog, and my stake money. We’ll split the profits 50 - 50. What do you think?
Octavio: Sounds good.
Mauricio: Good. Good for eight fights, then we’ll see.
Octavio: Fine.
Mauricio: But first, your dog goes around with Mac.
Octavio: Okay, it will cost you 5,000 win or lose.
Mauricio: Don’t bullshit me.
Octavio: What if your dog kills mine?
Mauricio: And what if mine dies?
Octavio: But I don’t have a van yet
Mauricio: I’ll give you 2,500. Will that do?
Octavio: Done.
Mauricio: Condom! Bring Mac. Here’s yours, take. Release them on three. Count.
Jorge: One... two... three!
Mauricio: That’s enough. Take your fucking dog. Sarge! Come back on Saturday at 12:00. It’s payback time for Jarocho.
This scene describes the identity formation process by which Ramiro’s identity is negotiated. Octavio goes to the pharmacy where Ramiro works to provoke him, by buying stuff for Susana and Ramiro’s baby instead of buying what he needed someplace else. For this reason, I assume that what Octavio wanted was to upset and anger Ramiro in a way that Ramiro’s identity would be threatened both as a husband and father. In other words, Octavio wanted to damage Ramiro’s identity and obscure his roles, probably to trigger a violent episode. Octavio was telling Ramiro that he could be Susana’s provider, threatening Ramiro’s self-worth, self-esteem, and roles. At the same time, Octavio was implying with his actions that men defend themselves and attack. The film portrays men who are actively violent and women who are passive receivers of violence. From the film’s perspective, money deceitfully allows individuals to apparently change their identity and behavior without a full transformation.

Ramiro: 20 is your change.
Woman 1: Thank you.
Ramiro: Did you find everything you needed?
Octavio: Except rubbers. You don’t have my size.
Ramiro: What the fuck are you doing here?
Octavio: Shopping.
Ramiro: Where did you get the dough?
Octavio: You don’t have money, but I do.
Ramiro: Stick it up your ass. I’ll buy my family’s things.
Octavio: Ring me up, or I’ll call the manager.
Ramiro: Asshole, get out or you’re dead.
Octavio: I’m not Susana, you know. You don’t scare me.
Woman 2: What happened?
Ramiro: Nothing, nothing. Fucking hell!

In this scene Octavio formally starts the process of seducing Susana with money and the stuff she needed, while playing the roles of a good husband, provider, and father. There is no loyalty towards Ramiro and no ethical standards binding Octavio and later on
also Susana, until it is too late for the three of them. Octavio desperately needed to change his identity; he wanted to be “husband”, provider, and father.

Octavio: Take it.
Susana: What for?
Octavio: So you can take care of him. And him.

This scene takes the audience back to the second story, Daniel and Valeria. Daniel does not care about his marriage anymore. He looks forwards to receiving phone calls from his new love at home. He even does it when lying down in their bed next to Julieta, his wife – the mother of her two daughters, who are in the next room. He is acting as an obsessed teenager who happens to be in love (or believes he is) with his European blond and different looking new love. Daniel has neither ethical constraints nor loyalty for his two daughters. It is a fact of life that marriages end for many reasons, yet the link between parents and their children should never be broken because under such circumstances, children’s potential would be severely constrained.

Malinchismo\(^3\) might play a role because Valeria was the beautiful, forbidden foreigner, and Daniel chooses her over Julieta and his daughters. Also, the decision was partially based on the fact that Daniel gets along better with Valeria than with Julieta, at least at the beginning of their story. It is also about this ancient social practice. In México men who have lovers is synonymous with status and wealth. This practice comes from the Aztec times when only nobility were allowed to have lovers or several wives. Other cultures also share this practice but the reasons might differ. This social custom still exists in México. In relation to ethnicity, I am not sure because there is not information

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\(^3\) Malinchismo is a pejorative term that denotes an inferiority complex expressed in a preference for foreign things. It communicates dislike for those attracted by foreign values, which are considered superior or better and therefore, worthy of imitation. The term applies to those attracted by foreigners and who feel disregard for their national culture.
about the different behaviors that Valeria and Julieta display, apart from the fact that Julieta does not get along with Daniel.

Daniel: Yes? Hey, brother, how are you? I’m very well. No, not much. Hang on. I can’t hear anything.
Julieta: Neither can I. Why don’t you leave?

This scene brings the audience back to Octavio and Susana’s story. Hours after Octavio provoked and hit Ramiro at Ramiro’s job, while Octavio is taking a shower, Ramiro comes into the bedroom and hits him with a pipe, according to the unwritten male code: “if you mess with me I will mess with you.” I do not believe that this is what Octavio had planned when he provoked Ramiro at his job. Is Ramiro a better human being than Octavio, but with an anger problem? Is Ramiro not as intelligent as Octavio? Ramiro economically supports his mother and brother; Ramiro had no one to support him, give him discipline, and love. Besides, Octavio kept quiet until he had money and a means to support himself. When Ramiro is told to stop hitting Octavio, he stops. Ramiro simply wants to be left alone to live his life as best as he can.

Octavio: What’s the matter? Stop! Stop, man!
Ramiro: Keep out of my business, asshole!

This scene places the audience in the dog-fighting world. The scene also appears to be about the constraints that homosexuals have to endure in a binary society that does not let them openly display their sexual preferences. Jarocho is upset with Mauricio because he is hanging out and drinking with Octavio. Are Miguel and Jarocho homosexual machos struggling with the social demands? Were they a couple? Are they unable to come out of the closet? Is Jarocho’s contained anger and violence a result of
that constraint? Men go there to drink and to bet. In the scene there are a couple of men who bring their boys so they can learn about dog fighting and how to bet and therefore, be able to make a living?

The same scene appears to display a jealous Jarocho because Mauricio is now closer to Octavio. Jarocho asked Mauricio why he was playing with girls, implying that playing with girls is wrong and why not play with real men like him. Mauricio indirectly acknowledged that Octavio was a girl but had a mean dog. At the same time, Jarocho assigns, through language, female gender-roles to Octavio. In particular scene Jarocho was telling Octavio that he should be quiet as women do.

Mauricio: Here, pal, take this.
Jarocho: What’s up, fatso?
Mauricio: Just hanging, Jarocho.
Jarocho: Why are you playing with girls?
Mauricio: Because they got mean dogs.
Jarocho: You’re betting 15 on it?
Octavio: My dog beats all of yours.
Jarocho: I’m talking to the ringmaster, princess. So... 15?
Mauricio: Make it 10.
Jarocho: Okay.
Mauricio: Place your bets, señores.
Octavio: Waste him!
Jarocho: Kill him!
Mauricio: Ready? Let them go!

This scene continues introducing the third story’s main character, Chivo. Chivo went to the cemetery where his ex-wife was being buried, and that is where he saw Maru, the daughter he abandoned many years ago. His sister-in-law confronts him and tells him that for Maru, he has been dead for many years. Between the lines she is telling him that he has done too much damage already. At this stage in the third story, there are more questions than answers. Coming back to life, because Maru was told that he died, would imply even more damage to her daughter, especially at such a vulnerable stage after her

At this stage of the third story, there is only a clash between Chivo and his sister-in-law. She is telling him that she cares about Maru and never abandoned her, as he did. She never hurt them as Chivo did to Maru and her mother, Chivo’s ex-wife. Is the idea that Chivo is still dead less damaging and confusing for Maru? Is coming back to life something for him or for her? This might be particularly the case because Maru’s mother told Maru that her father died. If Chivo introduces himself as Maru’s father, especially after her mother passed, this might be very confusing for Maru.

Sister-in-law: I’ll catch up. What are you doing here?
Chivo: Taking a stroll.
Sister-in-law: Stroll elsewhere. Don’t mess with us, and especially not her.
Chivo: It’s a free country, isn’t it?
Sister-in-law: To her, you’re dead. Don’t forget that
Chivo: You’re hostile, sister-in-law!

The next scene brings the audience to the dog-fighting place. After a dog-fight, where Jarocho’s dog was killed, he threatens Octavio, reminding Octavio that Octavio owns Jarocho two dogs. Violent men are not bound by anything and will try to get anything they want by force or threat of it. Mauricio intervenes telling Jarocho that losing is part of the business they are in.

Jarocho: That’s two you owe me.
Mauricio: Don’t be pissed, Jarochito. Win some, lose some.
This scene depicts Octavio wooing Susana. Octavio continues his pursuit over Susana’s affections. Wooing a woman requires a lot of planning and resources, especially for low class members. He has been giving her money and being nice to her and her son. For now, he is her short-term provider of stability. Octavio believed that he and Susana could be together if he saved enough money. There is “us and ours” and no one else. Wooing is a process that starts with small steps. From the identity perspective, Octavio is changing, not transforming, his identity to be provider, husband or friend, and father but exclusively through the power of money.

Susana is worried about the honesty of Octavio’s money, and because of Octavio’s moral character, he might end up in jail or dead, due to the risks involved in whatever he might be doing to get the money. I am assuming that Susana is concerned about how long that relationship might last, especially since she has one born son and one unborn child. Additionally, this is particularly important because Octavio is a person without marketable skills but uses his dog in dog-fights as a source of income. But there is something else that concerns Susana because she does not “want any more trouble.” Even though Octavio already has made a plan for them, something is worrying her; Susana is not yet ready to make a decision. Since money is supplied in important quantities at least for now, it had to be something else. Is it about being with violent men or men in general? Or is specifically related to Ramiro and/or Octavio and her relationship with her mother-in-law? Or is it about the fact that fathers abandon their children? Or what is it?

Another aspect of the scene is Octavio’s dehumanization of Ramiro; Ramiro is now the “other.” Ramiro steals, so therefore, he cannot be related to anyone else. There
are several reasons why Octavio feels this way about Ramiro. Octavio is a better provider than Ramiro; Octavio also shares his money with Susana. Octavio and Susana are linked by the money and secret of where the money is. Furthermore, because Octavio does not steal, he sees himself above Ramiro. It is important to notice that there is no animosity in Susana against Octavio for inappropriately touching her after the phone stunt.

Another important aspect of this scene is that in private, Octavio makes the sign of the cross on his forehead in front of religious motifs (se persina enfrente de la imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe). Unfortunately, it is rather that actual religious related deeds and/or behavior cannot be used publicly, and therefore, this means absolutely nothing at all. It is similar to when the friars catholicized (catolizaron) the Indians letting them sing and dance but using Catholic meanings. It is also like when after banning Catholicism, centuries later through the reform law, the presidents and other politicians were unable to use anything that might be considered a religious motif or ritual in public. Under such circumstances, religion is nothing more than a private rite without any consequences in the public realm. Finally, according to the film’s characters, there are honest and dishonest sources of money and whoever accesses each one serves as an indicator of his or her moral character.

Octavio: Here. It’s yours [ours]. But hide it, or my brother will take it.
Susana: Don’t worry.
Octavio: Got another place to stash it?
Susana: Yes. I put that other money in a case in the closet. Shh! The baby’s sleeping!
Octavio: This will be our bank, okay? Just yours and mine.
Susana: Octavio, you stealing too?
Octavio: No. This money’s clean [honest], so you’ll come away with me.
Susana: Come away with you? You still don’t get it, do you?
Octavio: No, you don’t get it. Jorge has cousins in Juarez. We’ll go there. We can open a store, we got cash. It’ll be cool.
Susana: No, I don’t want any more trouble. Can’t you understand? Understand?
Octavio: Come away with me. [Susana says no with her head.]

The next scene is actually a collage of many things happening basically simultaneously during a period of time. Ramiro continues stealing, Jarocho and Octavio continue fighting their dogs but Octavio always wins, Octavio buys a car, Octavio and Susana continue saving money and building up their relationship, Ramiro is having sex with another woman, Susana takes care of and cures Cofi, Mauricio is being nice to Octavio, Ramiro does not spend any time with Susana and his son, and finally Jarocho is upset with Mauricio. The important issue is that even though Ramiro is stealing, it is not shown in the picture how he spends it; he is most likely giving it to his new girlfriend, a fact that never alters the balance of the relationship between Susana and Octavio. Does anyone know about Ramiro’s new relationship? Susana? Octavio? Are there secrets that cannot be used against a brother? After all that is going on why does Ramiro need additional money? He already has two sources of income but might have as well two women; the film does not clarify it.

The next scene portrays Octavio is in his room watching TV when Ramiro comes in and lies down on the bed next to his brother. Ramiro requests half of Cofi’s income or threatens to kill it. In a rule-less house and environment, men try get what they want by force, through the use of violence, or threat of it. Octavio knows that Ramiro means it. Cofi, as a source of income, is vital for Octavio and his plans with Susana, since Octavio has no marketable skills. Octavio is afraid of losing his income and means towards Susana’s affections. Regardless of the current issue, the brothers do not get along and are fighting most of the time over something or someone.
Octavio: I didn’t say you could come in.
Ramiro: What are you watching?
Octavio: None of your business.
Ramiro: Change that shit. I don’t like it.
Octavio: What do you want?
Ramiro: I heard you’re getting rich with my dog. Your car is nice.
Octavio: Your dog? He’s mine.
Ramiro: Don’t talk shit, little brother! He’s as much mine as yours, so I get half of the winnings. Anyway, look at him. Doesn’t look like you care about him much.
Octavio: I care more than you know. Give you money? I’m not giving you shit.
Ramiro: It’s simple... cough it up, or I’ll blow your piggy bank away. Next time’s for real, so you better get me my dough.

The next scene depicts Chivo watching Maru from outside her house. Is Chivo obsessed with redeeming himself as Maru’s father? It is interesting to notice that from the film’s perspective, the identity shaping process has to build momentum over a period of time.

In the next scene, Octavio enters Susana’s room where she is playing with her son. Octavio gives her a lot of money, financially empowering her, and asks her to run away with him, again. They were a couple already. They talked but they did not actually communicate at all. Finally, they have sex on the floor next to the baby. I believe that for Susana everything is about Octavio’s sex need.

Toy: “The cock crows...”
Octavio: What’s up, Baldy? Look what I got you! Look at all this! Your mom’s going to put it away. We’re millionaires!
Susana: There’s enough to live on for two years.
Octavio: Come live them with me. What do you say, eh?
Susana: Why, Octavio?
Octavio: Why what?
Susana: Why do you want to live … with me?
Octavio: You still don’t get it?
Susana: No, I do get it.
In this scene Mauricio and Octavio, while Jorge was present, were talking about their future together as partners. Even though their arrangement was over, Jarocho still wanted a private fight between his dog and Octavio’s. Jarocho asked for an alternate location for the fight because, I guess, he had everything planned. If his new dog killed Cofi that would have been it; if not, he would have killed it and without any one present, he and his gang would have been able to control everything.

In such a world, there were still “business men” that negotiated contracts in a “civilized manner,” even though the matter of their business was illegal. According to the film, business men should be bound by their word and should do favors for each other. Besides, unity makes illegal business even stronger.

Here is where Octavio asked Mauricio to help him deal with Ramiro. It is important to promote “networking relations,” so stronger and meaner men can protect Octavio. It was never clear if it was about killing him or just beating him badly. However, if Ramiro was badly beaten, both Susana and Ramiro’s mother would have to take care of him. So, I would imagine the order was to kill him. Another question that was never answered was who was going to take care of the mother if Ramiro was no longer the house provider.

Octavio had dramatically changed his identity and behavior for the worst. He might think that he is making normal business decisions, but he is actually becoming a beast without any human feelings for his mother, brother, and sister-in-law. It is only about what he wanted and how to get it. His behavior was not bound by any ethical standards, moral values, or loyalty.

Mauricio: Give Jorge something to eat. I’ve got some business for you. Jarocho’s got a class “A” dog. He wants to fight Cofi.
Jorge: Yeah, right!
Mauricio: He’ll bet 40,000.
Octavio: 40? You in?
Mauricio: That’s too much for me. You’re on your own.
Octavio: What about our deal?
Mauricio: The deal was for eight fights. We’ve done 15. That’s enough. You won, I won, that’s it.
Octavio: Okay. When does he want to fight?
Mauricio: This Saturday. He wants it private, at Trujillo’s. No outside bets, just you and him.
Octavio: All right.
Mauricio: Do I confirm?
Octavio: Okay. Hey, fatso, I need you to do me a big favor.

The next scene was another collage of a few things happening basically simultaneously during a small period of time. The thugs that Mauricio hired were waiting for Ramiro to come out from his job, Ramiro was kissing his girlfriend, Octavio and Susana were having sex, and Ramiro was badly beaten.

This same scene was also showing, comparing, and contrasting Octavio and Susana’s reaction to their second cheating on Ramiro. Susana was feeling guilty/ashamed while Octavio was guiltless with his attitude and challenging anyone who was against his plans and desires.

In the next scene Octavio was making sure that everything was ready for running away with Susana and her baby; he needed to know that his plans would not be delayed. Additionally, Octavio was using a ritual for getting closer to Susana and making her believe as if they were a couple.

Octavio also was going to fight Cofi once again; he got greedy. When greed comes into our lives, we do not measure risk appropriately sometimes. Assuming extra risks can destroy people’s lives.
Octavio is also telling Susana to stop worrying about Ramiro, because he is being taken care of. Susana knew exactly what Octavio meant. For that reason, Susana was also afraid of Octavio and what he was doing. She was also ashamed and feeling guilty of cheating on her husband with her brother-in-law and about what was about to happen to Ramiro. Octavio was both fearless and guiltless about his actions. Even though Susana was scared, Octavio sent her a message that most likely made her even more scared of Octavio.

Octavio: How’s the baby?
Octavio: Got a name yet?
Susana: Umm... if it’s a girl, Susana.
Octavio: And if it’s a boy? Octavio? Everything’s ready. We leave Sunday. But I’m going to need some of the money. Saturday’s the big one.
Susana: Don’t fight him anymore. We’ve got enough.
Octavio: One last one? What time is the bus to Juarez?
Susana: It leaves at 12:00. Ramiro will still be at work.
Octavio: Don’t worry about Ramiro. He won’t fuck with us anymore, I’m sure. Are you scared?
Susana: It’s heavy shit.
Octavio: Scared?

In this scene Susana had to leave her baby with her mother, but her mother got drunk. I interpret this scene as a justification for Susana, explaining why she was forced by Octavio and the circumstances to do what she was doing. She had no way out and no one to help her.

Susana: Ma? Ma? Ma? So this is how you take care of the kid? Shh! What’s wrong? Now you can stay drunk.

In this next scene Octavio cynically reacted to the apparent news that Ramiro had been severally beaten and threatened, yet his reaction to Susana’s leaving was genuine. Also, his mother knew that he was responsible for what happened to Ramiro. She was also provoking Octavio when she told him that Ramiro left with his wife and baby.
Octavio never acknowledged responsibility for his actions and blamed both Ramiro and Susana for what happened. He never accepted that both Ramiro and Susana acted as socially expected. Susana acted as expected and according to her social role.

Octavio: What’s up, Ma?
Mother: Do you know what happened to your brother? He didn’t come home last night.
Octavio: No idea.
Mother: You don’t know? He got beat up bad.
Octavio: He must have pissed off a customer.
Mother: They threatened to kill him.
Octavio: God knows what he’s up to!
Mother: He left with the baby and Susana.
Octavio: Where to?
Mother: I don’t know where. Or if they’ll be back.
Octavio: What? Goddamn it! Motherfucker! And that bitch!

There is a transition scene to introduce the new story, Daniel and Valeria. In the next scene Jorge is telling Octavio that women trick men and that he warned Octavio. Tricking-women are a social stereotype portraying women as evil: that is women’s essence. Octavio blames everything on Ramiro and not Susana; he still needs to find her. Octavio would not accept his responsibility for what happened; he assigns blame to all but himself, especially Ramiro. While they are getting ready for the dog fight they are watching TV, but without enough money because Susana took it all.

Octavio: I have to find her, damn it!
Jorge: She tricked you. I warned you.
Octavio: It wasn’t her. It was Ramiro, that asshole.
TV Host 1: This is your year. You represent "Enchant" in Latin America, loads of models envy you...
Octavio: I’ll find her! How much you got?
Jorge: 7,000 and you?
Octavio: 10,000. I hope Jarocho will go with that.
Jorge: I’ve got 3,000 at home, I’ll loan them to you. That woman’s hot!

The transition scene continues introducing the new story, Daniel and Valeria. But before the next story, the next scene takes place at a private location where the final dog
fight is taking place. Yet, along with the dogs, Octavio and Jarocho were also fighting for their lives. It all ended when Jarocho shot Cofi because it was winning against his dog. However, before that, Jarocho continued stereotyping, bullying, and provoking Octavio. For some reason, Jarocho doubted Octavio’s manhood. Jarocho told Octavio that he was not man enough and that he usually hides behind his brother. To prove Jarocho wrong, Octavio stabbed Jarocho for shooting Cofi and all the stereotyping he received from Jarocho. This is the event that precipitates the car chase and crash at the beginning of the film.

Another stereotype that the scene presented to its audience was that men are never responsible for their actions: “the gun fired itself.” Secondly, real men never say they are responsible for anything. Men justify their actions based on something they defined or wanted. Thirdly, real men do not get involved when other men are fighting. Miguel told Octavio: that is outside the scope of our partnership; our partnership is over; and this is between you and him. Finally, the scene reaffirms again the stereotype that men do as they please. In the illegal situations, there are no rules and that the only rule is a man’s command.

Jarocho: What’s up? You didn’t back out?
Octavio: As you can see.
Mauricio: You get the 40?
Octavio: I only got 20.
Mauricio: Will that do?
Jarocho: You’re on. Playing for candy!
Mauricio: Sargento, put the dogs in the pool. Ready! On your marks! Release them!
Octavio: You crazy fucker!
Mauricio: Fight’s over!
Octavio: He was winning! Why did you shoot?
Jarocho: It just went off.
Octavio: What’s this shit?
Mauricio: It’s between you and him. Here’s your money. And yours.
This is the final transition scene to Daniel and Valeria’s story. In this scene the audience was presented a phony, shallow environment that allows people to live based on their looks and entertainment skills. In such environments, money is not a life and death resource, yet it is difficult to obtain; but environments are accessed only by certain social classes. Yet for Valeria, having access to such an environment was important because she would have a better life without doing anything that she would consider demeaning, besides she did not have any other marketable skills. Valeria was trying to achieve financial security, and from her perspective, she was living in a dark, threatening, and unfamiliar world. Therefore, she needed a man that would protect her. She is also trying to be labeled as a one-man woman. She presented her pseudo boyfriend on TV, but she was actually the love of a married man. Daniel decided to abandon his wife and two daughters to be with his new love, a beautiful foreigner.

Daniel and Valeria moved into a beautiful apartment that shined but it was badly damaged. The apartment as everything else in their lives was only for appearances. They were to live in a shiny, beautiful apartment that was falling apart. Daniel had “enough money to buy it, but not to fix it.” Symbolically speaking, the hole in the floor was a bad omen for their relationship because it meant that nothing is as it looks.

Some of the gender-role behavior presented in the scene was that women cannot say “no” to certain men. Secondly, certain men get away with everything and follow no
rules. In such a world, men get even: tit for tat. Thirdly, nothing is free, especially if money is a limited resource. Finally, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

TV Host 1: Thanks to Valeria Anaya and Andrés Salgado for being on the show. Friends, stay with us for more surprises on "People Today."
TV Host 2: Today.
Valeria: Valeria, I thought you were with someone else.
TV Host 2: Well, now you know.
Valeria: So many rumors.
TV man: People love gossip.
Valeria: Laura, 20 seconds!
Andrés: Right, goodbye.
Valeria: What are you doing now?
Andrés: Nothing, why?
Valeria: Have lunch with me.
Andrés: No thanks, Andrés.
Valeria: You would say no to Andrés Salgado?
Andrés: Listen, the show’s over. The show is over.
Valeria: I have a surprise you’ll love.
Andrés: Okay, let’s go.
Valeria: Where are you going?
Andrés: To the restaurant.
Valeria: I said lunch, I didn’t say where. Come in.
Andrés: Did you buy this place?
Valeria: Not exactly.
Andrés: It’s lovely!
Valeria: You like it?
Andrés: Of course! This couch is just like mine. It’s not like yours. In the bedroom, you’ll find your clothes, your perfumes...
Valeria: What are you playing at?
Andrés: That’s not all. Look at the view! You like it?
Valeria: You’ve gone too far. I’m going.
Andrés: Wait! Take the keys to your apartment.
Valeria: What do you mean, my apartment?
Daniel: That’s right, you’re home!
Valeria: Idiots!
Daniel: Darling!
Valeria: What’s this hole?
Daniel: I had enough to buy it, but not to fix it.
Andrés: Okay, enough!
Daniel: You’re jealous.
Valeria: Thanks! I’ve never seen you acting so well [to Andrés].
Andrés: You liked it?
Valeria: I love you, too. – Sorry [to Andrés]. I was joking [to Andrés].
Andrés: Bye!
Valeria: Wow!
Daniel: Thanks.
Andrés: Thanks for the magazine cover. Good luck, matador.
Valeria: My love, is it really true?
Daniel: Honey?
Valeria: What?
Daniel: I spoke with Julieta.
Valeria: And?
Daniel: As of today, we’re separated.
Valeria: You’re not lying to me?
Daniel: Starting tonight, we can sleep together.
Valeria: Are you sure about this?
Daniel: I am. Have you changed your mind?
Valeria: I just can’t believe it!

The next scene showed Chivo in front of the Partners’ office. Immediately after, the next scene explained that Daniel forgot to buy something to toast with in order to celebrate the occasion. He was preparing the food, and Valeria does not know how to cook at all. Their food production roles were totally reversed, relative to Octavio and Susana. Daniel cooks and Valeria does not. In what the film depicts as middle class, men and women have different roles, relative to lower social classes. Life changes in a second, usually with an irrelevant action or an oversight. From Valeria’s perspective, this is how she got involved in the car crash.

The next scene takes place in a hospital, after the car crash. In this scene Daniel and Andrés were waiting in a hospital for a doctor that could tell them about Valeria’s condition. Old acquaintances do not normally remember who the current roommate of a friend is but will remember the name of the ex-wife.

The film continues describing social roles for both men and women at the middle social class. For instance, men in their professional role must be concerned about income. The doctor was concerned with who is going to pay for Valeria’s care. Additionally, men
have to be supportive, especially under difficult circumstances. Moreover, according to Valeria, fathers blame their children for their mistakes and establish a link between behavior and what happens to them in life. Finally, men should protect women and educated/knowledgeable men are to give advice. Women, on the other hand, have to be funny after being involved in an accident, to release the stress of their partner. Additionally, women do not follow advice. Even under hard circumstances, women worry about whoever or whatever is under their care, due to their maternal instinct. Finally, women do not forgive.

Dr.: Excuse us.
Daniel: So?
Dr.: It’s hard to diagnose... massive blood loss, double fractured tibia and fibula, open fractured femur... the femoral biceps are almost completely severed. It’s a miracle she’s alive.
Daniel: Will she make it?
Dr.: I hope so.
Daniel: When can I see her?
Dr.: I don’t know... in two days, depending on how she recovers. Is there a relative I should notify?
Daniel: Her family’s in Spain. I don’t know if I should tell them.
Dr.: Will you take the responsibility?
Daniel: Thanks, Nacho.
Dr.: No problem. My regards to Julieta. Sorry, it’s habit. Kiss your girls for me.
Daniel: No problem.
Nurse: One, two, three. Don’t tire her out.
Daniel: No.
Valeria: I’ll never play soccer again.
Daniel: Shh! Take it easy.
Valeria: And Richie?
Daniel: He’s fine, he’s at home. Our home...
Valeria: Our home... Daniel...
Daniel: Huh?
Valeria: Don’t tell my father.
Daniel: Isn’t it time you spoke to him?
Valeria: I don’t want to. He’d say I deserved it.
Daniel: Okay. Don’t worry. Sleep... sleep. I’m here with you.
The next scene takes place in the hospital. Valeria and Daniel are in the hospital room. Valeria was awake, thinking, while Daniel is sleeping. Valeria was really scared for her looks and also for economic reasons, I assume; but I wonder what the scope of her worries was. The film continues showing polarizing behavior for men and women. For instance, the film depicts that men sleep while women were awake; women think at night. The film also points out that women rely on their looks.

Valeria: Are you awake?
Daniel: What is it?
Valeria: Daniel, I’m scared. Look at me!
Daniel: Don’t worry, they’ll take it off. You’ve been very brave.
Valeria: The truth is... I’m scared to death.
Daniel: You’ll be fine, you’ll see.

The next scene takes place at their apartment. Daniel brought Valeria back to the apartment from the hospital. He was supportive and told her that the apartment is still her home, their home. The scene pointed out that nothing had happened and that he will stand by her; they were still fine, as a couple.

Daniel: Richie, look! Look who’s here! Your mommy is back.
Valeria: Richie! I missed you, my little one. What did you do without me?
     My love!
Daniel: Welcome home, my love!

The next scene takes place in their apartment; Daniel is trying to make Valeria feel at home and release the stress by making her laugh. For Mexicans, home is a sacred magical place where they can relax and unwind. It is where they are to be safe and recuperate from the hostile environment they live in. But after the ritual, Daniel had needs that Valeria needed to fulfill; regardless of the circumstances Valeria had to deliver. In her physical and financial circumstances, Daniel was the only one that could take care of her. If she did not fulfill her responsibilities someone else would.
The film depicted Daniel as selfish and insensitive of Valeria’s needs, especially after her traumatic experience. In a way, Daniel was using his power, economic and otherwise, to get away with what he wanted. Regardless of the social class, according to the film, men do as they want, disregarding everybody else.

Daniel: The first one to blink loses, eh?
Valeria: No!
Daniel: You lose, you lose!
Valeria: What are you doing?
Daniel: I’m examining you.
Valeria: I can’t.
Daniel: Yes, you can.
Valeria: I can’t.
Daniel: Yes, you can.
Valeria: Let’s see how you do it.

The next scene also took place at their apartment. Daniel was worried about leaving Valeria home alone in order to go to work, but she reassures him that she will be fine alone. However, he knew that she would not follow the doctor’s instructions of not using her leg. Valeria keep looking at the picture of how she used to look. She was concerned about her looks because her looks were her livelihood.

According to the film, women in this social class have to appear strong and self-sufficient to men in an attempt to equalize power, something that society deprived them from. Valeria used sarcasm to make Daniel leave and leave her alone. Also according to the film, men tell women what is the most important thing under the circumstances. This is both paternalistic and demeaning to women, especially when men are not as bright and sophisticated.

Daniel: Sure you’ll be all right?
Valeria: Sure. I’m an expert. Left... right...
Daniel: What if you need something?
Valeria: I’ve got Richie, don’t I?
Daniel: Whatever you do, stay seated.
Valeria: Even if the earth quakes?
Daniel: Let it crumble. But you don’t leave that chair! I’ll be back by 8:00.
Valeria: I’ll be here. Good luck.
Daniel: I’ll miss you.

The following scene continued to introduce the members of Chivo’s story: When Maru is not in her house, Chivo breaks in, looks at her pictures, and steals one, which portrays Maru, her mother, Chivo’s ex-wife, and her ex-wife’s new husband. The scene depicts Chivo’s obsession with retaking his role as father and family man.

During the next scene Valeria was playing with her dog, Richie, throwing a ball at it, watching it go and get it, and then returning it to Valeria. During this game, the ball falls into the hole and the dog follows it; it never comes back. It is amazing and at the same time annoying the fact that the film portrays most of its characters not thinking ahead or being cautious about potential dangers and changes in their environment. It is part of the national character; Hidalgo, Lopez de Santa Anna, and others shared this trait as previously mentioned. Even if the characters think that things are really bad, they can get even worse due to their negligence and stupidity.

This scene takes place at Daniel and Valeria’s apartment. Daniel came back to the apartment after working all day and picking up some crutches for Valeria. Daniel told Valeria that he could and would not carry her any more. It was not clear to me if that was for selfish motives or to force Valeria to be self-sufficient. She then tells Daniel that Richie got into the hole hours ago and it has not yet come out. Daniels tries to provide advice and be useful. Men under such circumstances do not get emotionally involved. Once the bonding ritual is over, everything is about men and what they need.

It appears that Daniel and Valeria have a paternalistic relation. Daniel calls her the princess rather than queen. The same scene continues describing men and women’s
behavior. This scene pointed out that men try to be useful by improvising to provide hope and to calm women down, but they need facts before acting. Women, on the other hand, are dependent and expect men to solve things and be proactive. Finally, the scene highlights Daniel’s selfishness: now it is about me, after having provided hope and reframed the circumstances, he is hungry.

Daniel: It’s me!
Valeria: I’m in the kitchen.
Daniel: How did it go? From the doctor, so I don’t have to carry you. How’s my princess?
Valeria: Richie went into the hole.
Daniel: How?
Valeria: He was running after the ball.
Daniel: He’ll get out.
Valeria: That was five hours ago.
Daniel: What can we do? I know!
Valeria: What are you doing?
Daniel: Chocolates. He’ll come right out.
Valeria: Wait, I’m coming with you.
Daniel: Here, try the crutches. Why won’t he come out?
Valeria: He must be stuck down there.
Daniel: Don’t worry about it, he’ll come out. Richie?
Valeria: I tried that. I hear noises, but he won’t come out.
Daniel: Don’t worry, he’ll come out. You want an omelet? I’m hungry. He’s all right. A bit disoriented, but he’s here, not stolen, not lost. He’s here with us, okay?

The next scene took place at Daniel and Valeria’s apartment: Daniel and Valeria are in their bedroom; she is awake and he is not. Valeria woke Daniel because Richie was making noises. Both get out of bed and go to the living room to try to locate the dog under the floor. Suddenly the phone rings; it appears that Daniel knew who was calling late at night and tried to cover it up. Does Daniel know who was calling? Some of the stereotypes shown during the scene were that women do not sleep at night while men do, and women expect men to solve whatever is troubling them and help them.

Valeria: Daniel... Daniel?
Daniel: What?
Valeria: Listen, it’s Richie.
Daniel: Yes, it’s him.
Valeria: So?
Valeria: Daniel?
Daniel: What?
Valeria: Hurry, I think I heard him.
Daniel: Where is he?
Valeria: Help me. Careful. He’s under the living room. Richie, darling... Richie? Oh, shit! That scared me!
Daniel: Hello? Hello?
Valeria: Who was it?
Daniel: I don’t know. They hung up. Richie?

The next scene takes place after the car crash. Chivo stole money from Octavio, did nothing for Jorge which was apparently death, and lovingly started to heal Cofi.

In the next scene Valeria was home alone and called her agent. Her agent told her that businesses do not hire damaged goods. For that reason, her livelihood depended on Daniel exclusively. The scene also accurately depicted how businesses really work and how much they care about their employees, especially when such businesses sell an image.

Valeria: Manuel, bastard! Where have you been?
Manuel: Working, dear. How are you?
Valeria: I’m getting there.
Manuel: Take it easy, huh?
Valeria: In a month, if all goes well, I’ll be back on the Enchant campaign.
Manuel: Enchant? Forget about that.
Valeria: What do you mean?
Manuel: Listen, the contract with Enchant is finished.
Valeria: They pulled out?
Manuel: What did you expect? They hired you when you were well. Be realistic, you’re not well. When you get well, like before, we’ll contact Enchant and it’ll be fine...
In the next scene Valeria continued trying to rescue Richie. However, she would not obey the doctor’s orders to refrain from use of her fractured leg; rescuing her dog is more important to her than her wellbeing. She was unsuccessful in her rescue efforts.

In the next scene Daniel was working at his office, but he was not focusing at all on his job. He received a phone call, apparently from his wife, but it was really Valeria. All the pictures that he had on his desk were of his daughters; there was not even one of Valeria. I believe that Daniel was evaluating whether or not to continue living with Valeria. However, it is important to notice that Valeria was in a very vulnerable situation: jobless and without money; she also has been severely hurt at a car crash. Valeria called Daniel because she was worried about her dog.

Andrés: The title goes higher, and the photo to the left.
Technician: Like that?
Andrés: A bit more.
Daniel: Or raise the photo and bring the text down?
Technician: No, that breaks the harmony.
Secretary: Mr. Estrada, telephone.
Daniel: Tell them I’ll call back later.
Secretary: It seems urgent. I think it’s your wife.
Valeria: I’m not Julieta.
Daniel: Darling! I’m sorry, my secretary...
Valeria: What would you say to Julieta?
Daniel: Nothing, it was a mistake.
Valeria: What would you say?
Daniel: I swear.
Valeria: Well?
Daniel: This isn’t like you. What’s wrong? Valeria? My love?
Valeria: The rats ate Richie.
Daniel: What rats?

The next scene takes place in Daniel and Valeria’s Apartment. Valeria saw a rat and assumed that there were thousands which might have eaten Richie. When Daniel returned from work, Valeria was depressed and negative. Certainly, it was understandable after her trauma. Furthermore, she needed a practical approach to rescue Richie. Every
idea that he had, she rejected until he shouted. Then Daniel apologized. Next Valeria started complaining about her situation and what happened to her. Daniel wanted to reassure her by touching her in a gentle, loving way.

Valeria needed to release her frustrations. Touching is part of the Mexican way of expressing love and solidarity but not for Valeria, so she started yelling. Richie hears the yelling and makes some noises. Again Daniel offers suggestions that Valeria rejects until she hears one that she likes. Then the phone rings suddenly and loudly, and no one answers and therefore, Valeria starts questioning Daniel if he is cheating on her.

In this scene, the film continues stereotyping men and women’s behavior. Men are positioned strategically relative to women, suggesting a patriarchal interest in demeaning women. Following the scene’s structure other stereotypes include the following. Women overstate reality. Men want facts and are rational. Men do not get emotionally involved even though women are practical. Men give options. Women keep rejecting options. Men yell when frustrated/angry. Men can and say I am sorry. Men give hope. Valeria needed to vent and be listened to, but Daniel was rationalizing her problem. Supportive/loving touching is socially acceptable in México, but probably not in Spain. Certain situations might reunite struggling couples, especially when there is a potential solution. Then Daniel and Valeria restart the process by going back again to her ideas and his rationalization. Eventually Valeria agrees with his rationalization. Finally, men appear to lie.

Daniel: What happened, honey?
Valeria: There are thousands of rats down there.
Daniel: How do you know?
Valeria: I saw them. I’m sure they ate Richie.
Daniel: Don’t worry. Rats don’t eat dogs. They would get bitten.
Valeria: But there are thousands of them.
Daniel: We could put out some rat poison.
Valeria: Richie would eat it.
Daniel: We could send a cat down.
Valeria: A cat would fight with Richie.
Daniel: So what the fuck do we do? I’m sorry, baby, I’m sorry. Everything will be fine.
Valeria: You’re not in my position. Look at my leg, it’ll be covered with scars.
Daniel: Plastic surgery has come a long way. You’ll hardly see any scars...
Valeria: Don’t fucking touch me! It’s Richie! Richie! Richie!
Daniel: He heard you shouting.
Valeria: Richie!
Daniel: It’s him!
Both: Richie! Richie! Richie!
Daniel: I know!
Valeria: Where are you going? Richie!
Daniel: If I make it bigger, he’ll come out.
Valeria: The rats will come out!
Daniel: They didn’t come out before, I don’t know why they’d come out now.
Valeria: Make the hole as big as you can. Shit! Richie!
Valeria: Who was that, Daniel?
Daniel: No idea.
Valeria: When I used to call, you knew it was me. So who is it?
Daniel: I don’t know, okay?

In the next scene Valeria is looking at her big picture in the building across the street, feeling hurt and depressed. Daniel goes to her and tries to help, but this time he asks how before doing anything; holding is fine with her this time. Daniel makes sure that Valeria knew that he cared, but he did not know how to reach her.

Daniel: Valeria, what’s the matter?
Valeria: My leg really hurts. I can’t stand it.
Daniel: We’re going to the hospital.
Valeria: No, I talked to the doctor. He said it’s normal for it to hurt. But it feels like it’s going to burst.
Daniel: Did he prescribe anything?
Valeria: Tranquilizers and an anti-inflammatory.
Daniel: What can I do?
Valeria: Hold me.
In the next scene Valeria was alone in the apartment looking at pictures when she was a girl and a young teenager. In some of the pictures she was with her mother. I believe that she was searching for her inner strength, focusing on better and happier times. On one of the letters Valeria reads “See you soon.”

In the next scene Daniel and Valeria were driving back to the apartment from the hospital. He was trying to cheer her up, but he was not succeeding. Daniel looked like when he was about to leave his wife and daughters. Valeria needed to vent, trying to deal with her hardships, but Daniel needed a different type of relation, because Julieta was like that.

Daniel: Want to order take-out, or rent a movie?
Valeria: I’m not in the mood. I feel lousy.
Daniel: You’re going to be fine.
Valeria: Goddamn it! Is that all you can say?

In this scene, late at night Valeria was awake and Daniel was not. Valeria heard Richie whining and wanted Daniel to crack open the floor to rescue her dog. He said he could not because he did not have the money to fix it. Valeria did not care about money; she cared about her dog and what it meant to her. Daniel wanted the dog to come out by itself. Valeria felt hopeless about her situation and Richie’s; she wanted to take it out on Daniel. Their relationship was badly deteriorating.

Throughout this scene, the film kept contrasting men and women’s behavior and perspectives. Couples usually have different perspectives, focuses, and hierarchies; they fight over money issues. According to the film, women do not care about money as much as men do, yet Valeria was concerned about her physical and financial security. Valeria wanted to hurt Daniel; she believed that men are selfish. On the other hand, Daniel thought he was not selfish. He did a lot for Valeria, including paying for her medical
expenses, and he left behind his family. Yet for Valeria, Daniel’s ex-wife and daughters were worthless. Due to the dark and threatening environment she inhabited, Valeria felt hopeless about her situation and Richie’s.

Valeria: Daniel... It’s Richie! He’s whining, listen. Listen, it’s him! Get him out.
Daniel: How?
Valeria: Tear up the floor or something!
Daniel: I can’t tear it up. I don’t have the money to fix it...
Valeria: Money doesn’t matter!
Daniel: It does right now.
Valeria: Get him out!
Daniel: He can get himself out!
Valeria: You faggot! You’ve always been selfish!
Daniel: I gave up everything for you!
Valeria: Yeah, your bitchy wife and your stupid daughters!
Daniel: Shut up or I’ll hit you!
Valeria: You piece of shit! - Go fuck yourself!
Daniel: You and that stupid dog!
Valeria: You fucking asshole, drop dead! Drop dead,ucker! Fucker!

In the next scene Daniel left their bedroom to go sleep in the living room. Daniel was looking at Valeria’s poster and realized that he was shallow and that for him Valeria was only a beautiful body and that he never actually knew her before moving in with her.

The next scene also takes place in their apartment. The next day Daniel was about to leave to go to work and told Valeria that he would be back. She told him that she did not care if he did not come back.

The next scene took place in Daniel’s office. That day, while at work, Daniel called his house and Julieta answers. She said his nickname in a loving, forgiving manner. Daniel immediately hung up. Finally, Daniel still did not have any pictures of Valeria on his desk.

The next scene also took place at their apartment. Daniel came back from work; their room was locked and Valeria did not answer him. During the day Valeria cracked
open some parts of the floor trying to rescue Richie. He went to sleep in the living room again. In the morning, he tried to talk to her but still no answer from her. He apologized to her, through some sort of ritual, trying to fix everything between them. Finally, he knocks the door open and found Valeria unconscious on the floor and took her to the hospital. He did not want Valeria to die and leave him alone. Is it about guilt also? Who loves more, Daniel or Valeria? Why is it that when people are dying or getting hurt, the other partner forgets everything bad and focuses on the good? Why it is only through hardships and pains that human beings learn and become better?

Daniel:

Valeria, open the door. Open up, damn it! Valeria, open up! Open up, Valeria! Valeria, please. I have nothing to apologize for, but all right, I’m sorry. Okay now? Valeria, open up or I’ll do it myself. On the count of three, I’m breaking it down. One... two... two and a quarter... two and a half... two and three-quarters... shit! Valeria. What happened, honey? Valeria. Valeria, don’t do this to me, please! Valeria, we have to... Valeria!

The next scene took place in the hospital. That is where the doctor that has been taking care of Valeria told Daniel that he had to amputate her leg.

The next scene took place in their apartment. Daniel returned alone to the apartment and rescued Richie by cracking open the floor. Was Daniel symbolically rescuing Valeria, their relationship, and/or even himself? Was it about feeling guilty or about basing their relationship on superficial, shallow, temporal things such as her appearance? Do we get attached to goods because of what they give us or mean to us or someone else?

The next scene described when Valeria returned home from the hospital with her leg amputated. She immediately went to see her huge picture. Through that picture she could see the real Valeria, the whole Valeria, but since the huge poster was removed, for
Valeria that was death; in other words, she no longer existed. The living Valeria was just what was left of the other one.

With this scene, the audience was formally introduced to the third and final story of the movie: Chivo and Maru. Leonardo, a corrupt officer of the Mexican police, was taking a customer to request some services from Chivo, a hit man. I really enjoyed the language that the customer used, as if he were buying something from a departmental store, or was selecting a reliable supplier, or maybe as if he wanted to distance himself from his actions, framing and reframing them from the perspective of his profession, as if it were a simple business related decision. Leonardo also used the same type of language while Chivo used words that really described the meaning of what was going on. Through this narrative, the audience learned what type of terrorist Chivo was, why, and the consequences he and Maru had to endure because of his actions. In this story, the audience also learned who the customer was and his ethical standards.

It was also interesting to see how Leonardo could not perceive the differences between himself, Chivo, and the customer or partner 1, describing the three of them as normal guys until Chivo decided to attack the system.

Another thing that I found interesting was to see that the characters consider themselves as equal but with different roles; once the roles change they can even become friends and help each other. Leonardo in a way cared for Chivo, knew what type of sandwiches he liked, and paid attention to whether or not he wore his prescription glasses.

Finally, without actually telling the audience, the film transmits the message that if you decide to go against the nation-state, you will be caught and locked in jail for a
long time. Furthermore, you will lose your family and mental sanity and became an alcoholic.

Partner 1: Hello? Yes. Tell him 3:00 [pm]. Cancel the other one. Bye.
Leonardo: When we get to the house, turn that shit off. He hates that crap.
Partner 1: Why do we need 40 sandwiches?
Leonardo: It’s a gift for a friend, okay?
Partner 1: Sure your friend will do a good job?
Leonardo: I told you 20 times he will.
Partner 1: Who is this friend? Is he a cop too?
Leonardo: No, he was locked up for 20 years.
Partner 1: What for?
Leonardo: He was a guerrilla.
Partner 1: Like the Zapatistas?
Leonardo: That’s right, only he was a real son of a bitch. He planted a bomb in a mall, kidnapped a banker, [and] killed cops... Turn here. He had an army after him, the White Brigade. You know who got him?
Partner 1: Who?
Leonardo: Me! I caught him pissing at Sanborn’s Café! Can you believe that?
Partner 1: Hello? No. Deposit that money in my account. I’ll transfer it. Bye. What do I say to him?
Leonardo: Nothing. I’ll do the talking. Don’t ask personal questions.
Partner 1: Why not?
Leonardo: It pisses him off. He was a normal guy, like you and me. He was a college teacher, and one day, boom! He dumps his wife and daughter and becomes a guerrilla.
Partner 1: And his family?
Leonardo: What do you think? They told him to go to hell! His wife remarried. I guess his daughter thinks he’s dead. When he got out of the can, he went fucking nuts. When I found him, he was a wino. I felt sorry for him. I gave him some cash and a place to live. We even became pals. He started doing jobs for me.
Partner 1: Jobs... like this one?
Leonardo: Yeah. I’ll get it.
Partner 1: Why did you do that?
Leonardo: You’ll buy another one!

The next scene took place at Chivo’s place. Leonardo and Partner 1 finally arrive at Chivo’s place. Leonardo knew exactly what Chivo liked to eat and that he wore
prescription glasses, which he was not wearing that particular day. Leonardo tried to keep Chivo happy.

Chivo was trying to find alternative means to support himself and live his life, but unfortunately, human life requires material things. He was also searching for clues about God’s desires for him.

Chivo was some sort of judge that decided to do the job, based on what the customer told him about the target. Chivo still had socialist ideas and concepts that Leonardo shared but that the customer did not even understand. Chivo considered himself a professional and did not need anyone to tell him how to do his job.

Leonardo: What’s up, Chivito?
Chivo: What’s up, Leonardo? You all right?
Leonardo: Met my friend, Gustavo Garfias.
Chivo: Hello, brother. Pleased to meet you.
Leonardo: This is for you.
Chivo: Great! Cool. No chili, no onion. Perfect! Thanks. Sit there.
Leonardo: Did you lose your glasses?
Chivo: I stopped using them. If God wants me to see blurry, I’ll see blurry.
Leonardo: My friend Gustavo needs a favor. The photograph.
Chivo: I don’t do that anymore. I told you last time.
Leonardo: Come on. How are you going to live? On trash?
Chivo: Trash provides, Leonardo. Really. Look, a Citizen. I found it in the dumpster. This, too.
Leonardo: Don’t bullshit me. You stole it!
Chivo: No, I found it.
Partner 1: The Commander says you are very good.
Chivo: Good at what?
Leonardo: Come on, take it. Don’t fuck around.
Chivo: Who is he?
Partner 1: My partner.
Chivo: What did he do?
Partner 1: He’s cheating me.
Chivo: How much are you paying?
Leonardo: 50 now, 50 after.
Chivo: 100 now, 50 after.
Leonardo: Done?
Partner 1: Okay, but I only have 50 on me.
Chivo: His name?
Partner 1: Luis Miranda Solares. He lives at 1460 Sierra de Maika. He works on Montes Urales Street.
Chivo: Real blue collar [todo un proletario], huh!
Leonardo: All right.
Partner 1: Make it look like a robbery. No people, no trouble...
Chivo: Of course, brother. No people, no trouble, no shit.

In the next scene music was used to transfer messages to the audience. The following song told the audience how life should be lived. During the song, Chivo went to take some pictures of himself; on his way Chivo sees Susana and Ramiro with their son; Ramiro is badly beaten up. With his hands Chivo cut one of the pictures and pasted it on top of the head of the new husband of his ex-wife, between her and Maru, symbolically describing his desire to be a part of their lives.

Chivo was lost and was more animal than human. Chivo did not take care of his person and was always dirty. Chivo’s friends and family were his dogs that licked his feet and toes. Chivo started the investigation to kill Partner 2.

Lyrics:

All those who think that life’s unfair
Need to know that it isn’t so
That life is beautiful
You’ve got to live it
Those who think they’re sick and alone
They need to know that it isn’t so
In life no one’s alone
Someone’s always there
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
It’s better to live singing
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
You’ve got to sing your cares away
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
It’s better to live singing
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
You’ve got to sing your cares away...
Now the film went back to the crash scene, but this time from Chivo’s perspective. He arrived at the accident and tried to help, but when he saw Octavio’s money and wallet, he stole them. He was unable to connect at the human level with Octavio and Jorge, who was dead. Chivo had no contact with Valeria. Chivo was able to connect at the animal level with Cofi that is badly hurt. Chivo carried Cofi to his house; the trajectory lasted for several hours. It was in his house where he healed the dog as best as he could without the required drugs/antibiotics and required veterinary care. He used liquor to clean Cofi’s wound. During the time Chivo was taking care of Cofi, he did not continue with his efforts to investigate and kill Partner 2.

In the next scene Chivo was outside Maru’s house. When she opened her window, he waved at her. She did not know who he was and why he was waving at her. Later on Chivo went to the cemetery where his ex-wife was buried and cried in front of the grave. My understanding of this scene is that he is trying to live and feel what he missed when he became a terrorist. He was also trying to connect, at the human level, with his ex-wife (even though she was already dead) and with Maru.

During the next scene Ramiro and his friend finally went to rob a bank; unfortunately Ramiro was killed in his attempt to become a famous robber. Ramiro needed the money to get away from an unsafe city and start a new life with Susana and his son. Ramiro also was trying to fulfill his role as a provider with the only skills he had. During the robbery, Ramiro also stole from the bank’s customers where he grabbed Leonardo’s wallet. Leonardo seemed afraid and unaccustomed to that level of violence. A policeman shot Ramiro without warning him first. I wonder if the film’s message also included: Robbing drugstores might be safe while robbing a bank is deadly.
In the next scene Chivo was at his house making sure that Cofi finally healed. Chivo shared his house with his canine family; the house, however, was dirty and disorganized with many books and old newspapers. Chivo left Cofi unrestrained—a fully recovered and strong, unconscious fighting beast, with the rest of his loving and violent-less canine family. This is a mistake from which Chivo will learn that killing was wrong because it destroys families, but this would help him start recovering his human essence. Chivo left his dogs alone while he went to continue with the investigative work required to kill Partner 2.

In the next scene Chivo was parked outside of Partner 2’s office when Leonardo saw him. Leonardo told him in an amicable but firm way that he, Chivo, already took too long. Chivo offered to Leonardo to finish the task within two days. Leonardo answered him back, telling him that he has his word. In a corrupt, lawless, and violent environment a dishonest policemen and a hit man must trust each other and accept their words as worthy.

**Chivo:** What brings you here, Leo?
**Leonardo:** Just passing by. You’re taking your time. It’s been a week.
**Chivo:** It’s not easy.
**Leonardo:** It never is, is it?
**Chivo:** Tell your friend to keep cool. It’ll be done in two days.
**Leonardo:** I’ve got your word, Chivo? I’ve got to go to the bank.

In the next scene Chivo continued following Partner 2 in an attempt to kill him. He was about to do it in front of a mini corner store but some children approach Partner 2, asking for money. Chivo was forced to hide the gun and wait.

The next scene took place at a funeral home. At Ramiro’s funeral, his mother but not his widow received the condolences. Octavio stood up and sat beside Susana. Octavio starts to talk but at the wrong place and time, so Susana had to get up while Octavio
followed her so no one would hear them. Octavio was not showing any remorse and sadness for Ramiro’s death. He challenged anyone that opposes his plans, even God. Susana was feeling guilty for cheating on Ramiro. She was also angry with Octavio for Ramiro’s beating and probably other things. Octavio and Ramiro’s mother watched Octavio and Susana in a disapproving way. Without saying anything, the mother knew that what happened between Octavio and Susana contributed to Ramiro’s death, and was angry at Octavio. Susana would probably never forgive herself and Octavio.

Man 1: My condolences, Doña Concha.
Susana: Are you all right?
Octavio: Not as bad as I was. Why did you leave?
Susana: Now’s not the time to talk about it.
Octavio: Then when?
Susana: Ramiro was my husband, wasn’t he?
Octavio: And what about our plans?
Susana: Your plans. My grandmother used to say, "To make God laugh, tell Him your plans."
Octavio: You wronged [deceived] me, Susana.
Susana: No, Octavio. We were the ones who cheated.
Octavio: But not anymore. Come away with me.
Susana: How dare you? After everything that’s happened? You still don’t get it!
Octavio: Yes, I do. God can laugh, but I still have my plans. Sunday at 11:00 I leave for Ciudad Juarez.
Susana: You’ve really lost it! Look at you!
Octavio: I don’t give a fuck! Now you know everything. I’ll wait for you. You decide if you want to come. Do you get me now?
Susana: Ramiro... the baby’s name will be Ramiro.

In the next scene Chivo returned to his house after his failed attempt to kill Partner 2 only to find out that Cofi killed all his canine family. Chivo was unable to really talk to and kill Cofi; he was only able to say that killing is wrong. Chivo cried from his loss. This was the way that Chivo learned that killing is wrong; he feels hopeless and powerless against the death of his canine family. Through pain Chivo began recuperating his human essence. That night in total solitude, Chivo evaluated his life and ideas about
God. He then realized that it was not God that wanted him to see blurry, and that he had lenses that he could use to correct his vision problem. He put his glasses on and immediately and clearly he was able to see how he lived (symbolic meaning). In the morning the next day he got ready to fulfill his contract.

In the next scene Chivo finally kidnapped Partner 2 and was in the process of fulfilling his contract. Before killing him, Chivo asked Partner 2 to evaluate his life by asking him who might want him dead. Based on Partner 2’s answers, the audience realizes that Partner 2 had no moral standards at all, specifically in relation to his sexuality and loyalty but especially to his original family, in particular his step-brother. He said that he never robbed from his step-brother. It was in this scene that Chivo openly acknowledged that if it had not been for Cofi, Partner 2 would be dead. Another important realization of the movie was that human life is worth very little; some animals are worth a lot more.

Chivo: Look straight ahead of you. Don’t look at me. Open the door. No stupid moves. Don’t turn around. Stay cool. Move aside. Cuff your left hand. The right one to the wheel. Cuff it to the wheel, dickhead! Start the car. Let’s go.
Partner 2: What is this? Robbery or kidnapping?
Chivo: Maybe the last day of your life. I was paid to blow you away, brother. How about that? Stand still. On your knees. On the floor. Your hand. Sit. Lean there. Your hand, I said. Want a drink? I’ve got rum, water... or milk.
Partner 2: What will you do to me?
Chivo: What do you want? Rum, water or milk?
Partner 2: My question couldn’t be clearer.
Chivo: Look, asshole, I’m offering you a drink. If you had any sense, even a little bit, you’d realize I’m not going to kill you just now, dickhead. Rum, water or milk?
Partner 2: Water.
Chivo: Cheers!
Partner 2: How do I drink it?
Chivo: I’ll be the waiter, but not your nanny.
Partner 2: Who paid you to kill me?
Can’t you guess?
No.
What if I told you it was the chick you fuck daily in that motel?
Marta? No. It can’t be.
Right. Not her. Your wife.
My wife? She knows about Marta?
I don’t know. Does she? No, man. It’s not her, either.
Marta’s husband?
She’s married? I’ll be damned! Shit, brother! A lot of people want to kill you. You know what? My dog’s got no name. I found him in the street. What would you call him?
How about "Lost Dog"?
Some imagination! You must be in advertising. I was thinking, maybe Gustavo...
Gustavo?
Know any Gustavos?
My brother.
Gustavo Garfías.
Gustavo Miranda Garfías. He’s my half brother. Abel, Abel! What did you do to deserve a brother like that? He said he’s your partner.
Partner and half-brother. Was it him?
I don’t know. You tell me.
How much?
5,000 pesos.
Only 5,000 fucking pesos!
And... tickets to the Rolling Stones.
That son of a fucking bitch! Why? What did I do to him?
Says you’re screwing him.
No fucking way! He’s my brother!
Easy, man. That’s what he says. Quit yelling or I’ll have to fill you with lead. So, what do we call him?
Who cares about your fucking dog?
Don’t be rude! Masters take after their dogs, you know. And... how do I put it? If it weren’t for him, you’d be dead. Easy, easy. I’ll be in my room watching TV. If you need anything at all, just shout.

The next scene takes place at Chivo’s house. Chivo woke up and feeds Partner 2 and evaluates his eating manners, bluntly presenting again the power imbalance that had characterized his relationship between a hit man and his target and/or prisoner. Partner 2 tried unsuccessfully to buy his life and have his brother killed, because as Chivo explained it, he did not need money; he had enough. The perception shift continued for
Partner 2. This circumstance brought Partner 2 out of his comfort zone because he was accustomed to being able to buy everything. However, when it really mattered, because it is about his life, Partner 2 based his life on his purchasing power. His identity and behavior were based on his ability to purchase whatever he wanted, so that when it really mattered, as when an assassin was to kill him, Partner 2 could not buy his way out of the situation. In his own personal way, Chivo was telling the Partner 2 that killing is wrong. Partner 2 wanted his brother to pay with his life for what he has done, perhaps because Partner 1 was probably the one really stealing. Before leaving, Chivo notices that Partner 2 soiled himself because he was unable to go to the restroom. This continues with the perception shift for Partner 2. Chivo steals Partner 2’s car and sells it. I wonder if, from the movie perspective, stealing is socially allowed; it appears it is at least for certain social groups or people.

Chivo: Good morning. What’s up, brother? Got a good night’s sleep? [Chivo feeds Partner 2] What manners!
Partner 2: What will you do to me?
Chivo: I don’t know. I’m thinking.
Partner 2: If you let me go...I’ll make you rich. Kill my brother, and I’ll give you anything you want.
Chivo: I don’t need anything. Amazing, huh? I have to go. See you later.
Partner 2: I need to go to the bathroom.
Chivo: You already have. Look at you! You should have told me! See you later. Watch him for me.

The following scene takes place over the phone. Chivo called Partner 1 to inform him that the job was complete and that there was an unpaid balance that he must pay within the next two hours. The difficult part to understand is why Partner 1 was not aware that his brother neither came home that night nor showed up for work that morning. There was also an asymmetric relationship with Partner 1, mainly because he was shy and Chivo was a violent man.
Chivo: Hello? Got my money? Did you notice? He wasn’t at work today.
Partner 1: Did you do it?
Chivo: Bring the money to my place in two hours. Don’t keep me waiting.

In the next scene Partner 2 arrived to Chivo’s house to pay the balance due for killing his step-brother. Chivo politely forces him to come in. Then Chivo showed Partner 1 that his step-brother was still alive. Even then, Partner 1 was unable to say that Chivo was to kill his step-brother; he called it the job. Chivo handed him the gun, but he was unable to pull the trigger. Then Chivo asked both if they really wanted Chivo to kill his step-brother or him, and neither ever answer Chivo. Chivo ended up holding the two step-brothers over night. Chivo orchestrated this scene for Partner 2 to see and see himself from the perspective of his own step-brother, and vice versa.

How can a fearful man be unable to solve things but to resort to hiring a hit man against his own step-brother? What happened to him that he attributed it to his step-brother? Or was he stealing from his step-brother? How can he be able to order the job, pay for it, and yet be unable to do it himself, even if he can physically do it because the step-brother was restrained?

Chivo: Did you lock it, brother? Cars get stolen around here.
Partner 1: This won’t be long, will it? Here’s what we agreed to.
Chivo: Come in.
Partner 1: I’d better go.
Chivo: Come in.
Partner 1: What’s the matter? It’s all there.
Chivo: It’s cool. Come with me. In here. Have you two met?
Partner 2: This wasn’t the deal [he gaps when he sees his brother still alive].
Chivo: What was the deal?
Partner 2: You were going to... –
Chivo: Going to what, brother? What!?
Partner 2: That was your job!
Chivo: “Job”? I misunderstood. You wanted him off the map?
Do it yourself. He’s all yours, fucking Cain. Kill him, you faggot, he’s all yours!

Partner 1: I paid you... I paid you to do it. That was the deal!

In the next scene Octavio was at the bus station waiting for Susana, but she never showed up. The bus driver was unable to wait any longer and asks Octavio if he was “coming or staying.” Octavio decided to stay. He will not follow through his own plans. I wonder if Octavio’s love for Susana would be enough for his positive development as a human being.

The next scene took place at Chivo’s house. Chivo started his physical re-humanization process. His emotional re-humanization process started when he wanted to be Maru’s father again and Cofi killed Chivo’s canine family. He took a shower until he was actually clean, and then cut his beard, nails, toenails, and hair. He looked in the mirror and saw himself but did not recognize the person on the mirror. Symbolically speaking, a new identity needed new behavior. As he did not kill anymore, he also needed a new look and a new role. Chivo also must not to be identified by anyone, including the police. Besides, Chivo’s new look is closer to what Maru was accustomed to; Chivo was looking for a respectable father role.

He steals the shirt and coat of a partner and the mobile phone from the other partner. He took from his house what he needed: a photo album, a picture of Maru when she was a baby, money, and a gun. He also took Cofi. He went to where the two brothers were held, untied them, and told them to figure things out, but leaves a gun in case they do not. Interestingly enough, Chivo, a terrorist and a hit-man, suggested talking as a means to solve things. I wonder if the gun was loaded; I do not think it was. Yet, Partner
2 was really upset with his step-brother. The first reaction of both step-brothers was to reach for the gun.

Chivo: Good morning. Sleep well? You must have a lot to chat about. Pity I can’t stay, it would be fascinating. But as you might guess, I have to leave town. That’s how it works. Make yourselves at home. I hope you’ll work things out. What are you looking at? On the other hand, if talking doesn’t work, I’ll leave you this to help settle things. Okay? I’ll call to see how things went. Nice jacket. There’s milk and eggs in the fridge, if you want breakfast.

Partner 2: You’re dead, you bastard!

In the next scene Chivo took a new picture of his new self and pasted it in place of the other one. Then Chivo broke into Maru’s house again. He left a lot of money under her pillow and returned the picture that he previously stole in which he pasted the new picture looking like a human being and not as an animal. He also left a message for Maru on her answering machine.

He even had a new name, his original name. He was no longer Chivo. In his own words, Chivo explained to Maru who he was and what he had done. He mentioned to Maru who he was and who he is; he came back to life. He told her that when he finished with his transformation, when he is worthy again, he will contact her again.

Answering Machine: Hello. This is 55 44 58 40. I can’t take your call right now, but leave a message and a number, and I’ll get back to you. Thank you.

Chivo: Maru... my darling... This is Martin. Your dad... your real dad. You must think this is a sick joke. For all these years, I’ve been dead to you. In fact... I’m a living ghost. When I saw you last... you were only two. Since then, not a day passes that I don’t think of you. The afternoon I went away... I held you very tight. I took you in my arms... I begged forgiveness for what I was going to do. At the time, I thought there were more important things than being with you and your mom. I wanted to set the world right, and then share it with you. I failed, as you can see. I wound up in jail. Your mother and I agreed she would tell you... I’d died. That was my idea, not hers. I swore to her I’d
never try to see you again... but I couldn’t do it. I was dying; I was as dead as I could be. I’ll be back to find you... once I have the courage to look you in the eyes. I love you, my little girl.

In the next and final scene Chivo sold the stolen truck of Partner 1 and headed towards the unknown, threatening the world but wearing his glasses, so he could see clearly. Life, according to the film, gave him a new chance. I guess, from the film’s perspective, really being human means being vulnerable.

Mechanic: What’s your dog called?
Chivo: Blackie. Shut up, Blackie! See you around.
Mechanic: Bye.

Movie dedication: For Luciano, because we are also what we have lost.

Final song:

Lyrics: A giants’ joust turns the air into natural gas  
A wild duel warns me  
How close I am of going into an outrageous world  
I feel my fragility  
Some nightmare running away  
With a beast after me  
Tell me everything’s a lie  
Just a silly dream and nothing more  
I’m afraid of enormity  
Where nobody hears my voice  
Stop the deception  
Don’t try to hide  
That you’ve never tripped while moving around  
Paper monster  
I don’t know who I’m up against  
Or is there somebody else here?  
I believe in the terrible ghosts  
Of some strange place  
And in my foolishness to make you burst into laughter  
In an outrageous world  
I feel your fragility  
Stop the deception  
Don’t try to hide  
That you’ve never tripped while moving around  
Paper monster  
I don’t know who I’m up against
Analyzing the Films Through a Structural Theory of Imperialism

Johan Galtung (1971), through his Structural Theory of Imperialism, perceives the world as asymmetrical, both between nations and individuals. The three analyzed films depict both the franchised and the disenfranchised, and the way they live, focusing mainly on the disenfranchised. Such inequality relates to wealth concentration in general, but includes “all aspects of human conditions, including the power to decide over those living conditions” (Galtung, 1971, p. 81). According to the theory, the world is organized into centers of power and wealth and the periphery. In México, the periphery was the countryside or rural areas because it operates through a centralized system and changed from a rural to an industrialized economy. However, the center has its own center and there is a center in the periphery, as well. Cities in the Mexican case were power centers that offered a survival possibility to the pelados that came from the rural areas. For Galtung, imperialism is a type of dominance that creates structures and conditions to control the world and facilitate wealth transfer and concentration. It is through the Mexican rules of centralism that some benefit but others do not. “Imperialism is a system that splits up collectivities and relates some of the parts to each other in relations of harmony of interest, and other parts in relations of disharmony of interest, or conflict of interest” (Galtung, 1971, p. 81). Talking exclusively about México, the President selected
the state governors, who then selected their staff all the way to the county level, and that is how the Mexican harmonies of interest were created.

From the perspective of the research, the most important aspect of Galtung’s theory is that the theory acknowledges the facts that people do not act in their best interest, “rationality” is not an all-encompassing concept and therefore it is not equally shared, elite groups intellectually dominate the masses, and these four conditions create and foster a “false-consciousness.” That is the case in the Mexican films selected, when the main characters were given roles to be replicated by the audience and values, such as trading current wellbeing for afterlife happiness.

Thus, learning to suppress one’s own true interests may be a major part of socialization in general and education in particular.

Let us refer to this true interest as LC, living condition. It may perhaps be measured by using such indicators as income, standard of living in the usual materialistic sense – but notions of quality of life would certainly also enter, not to mention notions of autonomy. (Galtung, 1971, p. 82)

For the theory, the widening gap between nation and individuals is a constant characteristic of this type of domination. That is exactly what has happened in México; the rich got richer and the poor get poorer. Now, approximately fifty percent of the population lives in poverty or extreme poverty according to official records. Additionally, there are degrees of harmony and disharmony. Usually there are harmonious links between the center’s center and the periphery’s center, for the purpose of wealth transfer to the core nation and political purposes. In the case of México, considered a developing nation due to its world function, most of its population would perform manual related
labor, mostly related to raw materials or through the service economy. Tourism is another important aspect of this function which México performs. This has been particularly the case in the rural and industrial phases of Mexican development, but also currently due to the forces of globalization. Influenced by this international context, the Mexican population has shaped its identity and behavior, as well.

Table 2

*Exchange Reality between the Core and Periphery*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A (“developed”)</th>
<th>B (“developing”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-actor</td>
<td>Inter-actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effects</td>
<td>effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive (in)</td>
<td>Raw materials</td>
<td>Spin-offs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (out)</td>
<td>Manufactured</td>
<td>Pollution,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goods</td>
<td>exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raw materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depletion,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>exploitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An important segment of the Mexican population was linked to agricultural functions; such indigenous populations are locally known as indios. During the industrial stage, peasants continued migrating to cities and the indio became the pelado, as they are locally known. The pelado had no marketable skills for the cities in general terms, negatively impacting his or her identity and behavior. Such migration patterns also negatively impacted the cities’ harmony, peace levels, and required substructure. Additionally, many of them did not even speak Spanish. This new environment created poverty cycles for most, especially for the indigenous population that by then did not even have land to provide for the family’s subsistence. Moreover, most of them did not go to school. During the agricultural and industrial stages, professional skills were transmitted from parents to children, yet such skills were not in demand enough to result in reduced poverty cycles. During the rural and industrial México, identities were mostly
all encompassing; people linked their identity to their profession. Currently, identity and behavior are not all encompassing; they are based on the requirements of the groups or associations that individuals join.

Also aligned to the theory, an important part of the Mexican exports are raw materials. In addition, as additionally explained by the same theory, a significant portion of the Mexican imports are manufactured, non-strategic, not state-of-the-art goods. Therefore, the production capabilities in México are not at a world-wide competitive level. This condition creates dependence on foreign imports and currency. In general terms, the average Mexican is not well-educated because the average schooling does to reach fifth grade. High level executives are foreigners or belong to the tiny group that was educated abroad, mainly in the United States and the Western Europe. Most Mexicans will only achieve blue-collar labor status due to the structural barriers that they have encountered throughout their lives. Low or no education translated into vicious poverty circles that are difficult to overcome but translate to easy control for the government. For many years obedience and docility were the traits of the Mexican identity and behavior. After NAFTA that started slowly to change.
Table 3

*Intra-actor Effects of Interaction across Gaps in Processing Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Effect on the Center Nation</th>
<th>Effect on the Periphery Nation</th>
<th>Analyzed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Subsidiary economic effects</td>
<td>New <em>means of production</em> developed</td>
<td>Nothing developed, just a hole in the ground</td>
<td>Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Political position in world structure</td>
<td>Central position reinforced</td>
<td>Periphery position reinforced</td>
<td>International relations specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Military benefits</td>
<td><em>Means of destruction</em> can easily be produced</td>
<td>No benefits, wars cannot be fought by means of raw materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communication benefits</td>
<td>Means of communication easily developed</td>
<td>No benefits, transportation not by means of raw materials</td>
<td>Communication specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Knowledge and research</td>
<td>Much needed for higher levels of processing</td>
<td>Nothing needed, extraction based on being, not on becoming</td>
<td>Scientists, technicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Specialist needed</td>
<td>Specialists in <em>making</em>, scientists, engineers</td>
<td>Specialist in <em>having</em>, <em>lawyers</em></td>
<td>Sociologists of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Skill and education</td>
<td>Much needed to carry out processing</td>
<td>Nothing needed, just a hole in the ground</td>
<td>Education specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Social structure</td>
<td>Change needed for ability to convert into mobility</td>
<td>No change is needed, extraction based on ownership, not on ability</td>
<td>Sociologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Psychological effects</td>
<td>A basic psychology of self-reliance and autonomy</td>
<td>A basic psychology of dependence</td>
<td>Psychologists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Intra-actor effects of interaction across gaps in processing levels (Galtung, 1971, p. 87).*
From the perspective of the theory, the docility and obedience of the Mexican masses is in line with the Mexican position in the developing world. However, the Mexican masses have always been like that. For the nation-state this was not new; it simply took advantage, encouraged, and exploited a social trait of the masses to create and sustain a status quo. The deliberate lack of education provided by the Mexican education system was, and continues, to aim at the same goal.

Also in line with the theory, imperialism created polarized nations with the haves and have-nots, but mostly the have-nots or dispossessed. México is one of the most asymmetrical nations in the world. For instance one of the richest men in the world is a Mexican while over half of the local population lives in poverty and extreme poverty. Such asymmetries were achieved through neoliberalism and its policies.

In short, we see vertical interaction as the major source of the inequality in the world, whether it takes the form of looting, of highly unequal exchange, or highly differential spin-off effects due to the processing gaps… At present what we observe is an inequality between the world’s nations of a magnitude over time. (Galtung, 1971, p. 89)

Finally, according to Galtung (1971) there are five types of imperialism: economic, political, military, communication, and cultural. These types of imperialism are coordinated and reinforce each other in order to achieve total domination. The instructions and guidance permeate from the center to the periphery to achieve marginalization and dispossession. Domination could start through any of these types of imperialism.
It is rather sad that most Mexicans have not reached world-wide creativity levels but rather they obey and copy. If allowed to reach their full potential most Mexicans would be creative because it is part of their culture. Most Mexicans require validation and are dependent on others, which include foreigners, and give up their agency and right to define their future.

Table 4

The Five Types of Imperialism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center Nation Provides</td>
<td>Processing, means of production</td>
<td>Decisions models</td>
<td>Protection, means of destruction</td>
<td>News, means of communication</td>
<td>Teaching, means of creation - autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periphery Nation Provides</td>
<td>Raw materials, markets</td>
<td>Obedience, imitators</td>
<td>Discipline, traditional hardware</td>
<td>Events, passengers, goods</td>
<td>Learning, validation - dependence</td>
</tr>
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Source: The five types of imperialism (Galtung, 1971, p. 92).

As depicted in the theory, the films depict a México aligned to the Structural Theory of Imperialism. In the Nosotros los Pobres and Macario films, the main characters, and those like them, were portrayed as docile, obedient, and passive. In Amores Perros, most of the main characters showed agency but were constrained by the structural barriers set in place.

Furthermore, the lack of education is shared by most of the characters of the three films except for Chivo. Daniel had technical knowhow, but not a real understanding of the world. There are structural barriers that produce and maintain dispossession and marginalization of most in Nosotros los Pobres and Macario. Daniel and the Partners/step-brothers can be explained by harmony of interests. Middle and upper classes are adjacent to the periphery’s center.
In *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario*, religion was the main means to veil the consciousness of the main characters, trading future rewards in heaven for hardships on earth. In *Amores Perros*, Octavio replicated religious practices in a ritualized manner that meant nothing in relation to his public behavior. Daniel and Valeria cared mainly about appearances and financial viability. Chivo was not constrained by anything but his own ideas, especially blaming God for his misfortunes. Yet, a dog showed him that his misfortunes had nothing to do with God’s plan for him but his own constraining ideas that were wrong.

The professions of the main characters go in accordance with Galtung’s theory. In *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario*, the main characters are a carpenter and a wood cutter. In *Amores Perros* the main characters are the product of their environment. Octavio had no education, Daniel worked in advertising because México is considered a market rather that a production center even though there are factories in México, and Chivo was a terrorist/assassin.

In all three films, the nation-state is portrayed as indestructible and with capable structures to protect it against those individuals that would like to change it. In *Nosotros los Pobres* police played a social role but were competent in their work. In *Macario*, the police were portrayed as the inquisition. And in *Amores Perros*, the corrupt police were deadly efficient.

Finally, in *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario* the main characters are both marginalized and dispossessed. In *Amores Perros*, Octavio was also dispossessed and marginalized. Daniel appeared to belong to the middle upper class. Finally, Chivo was an
educated college professor that wanted to change México and became a terrorist, was jailed, and later became an assassin.
Chapter 5: Analysis, Findings, Implications, Policy, and Limitations

Analysis

My analysis had to be performed through the use of qualitative methodology because it was about meanings, values and/or life scripts, and social interactions bound by social rules. My research was based on the post-positivism understanding of the world, where it is believed that knowledge is based on human assumptions, not on fixed universal laws, considered as unproven theorems or conjectures, creating a framework of how the world works. Reality is no longer considered as a set of unchangeable facts outside the human consciousness and for that reason quantitative research was not the appropriate tool (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The qualitative approach offered “verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, and dialogues with subjects” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). Qualitative research offered a closer and more meaningful understanding of the individuals and their lives. This research approach also offered a better understanding of life’s constraints. Finally, qualitative research implies rich descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). A quantitative analysis was, therefore, not an option for the topic, focus, and scope of the present research.

It is important to remember that whenever we tell a story, it is because we want to convey a message and sometimes even to construct a specific behavior. Most social interactions require messages to be transmitted back and forth, in order to assure that the message was received as transmitted and the potential interaction is as expected, as constructed by the participants. However, from the perspective of the research, films can be considered as a monologue, because films (like any other media device) never involve
the audience’s feedback. As the communication flow is unilateral, it is never an interactive dialogue. And yet, regardless of that reason, “in everyday oral storytelling, a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story” (Riessman, 2008, p. 3). However, how the message is structured has to do with the audience; not all messages are suitable for all audiences. Stories, therefore, have to be specifically constructed for the target audience. “Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience [in mind]” (p. 3).

How we communicate is not random at all; we pursue very specific goals every time we communicate. “Narrative shaping entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected” (Riessman, 2008, p. 5). We communicate through the use of a discourse highly influenced by our social institutions, and therefore, the meaning is socially shaped.

I introduce the story to anticipate key issues I take up in the book: The central place of narrative when personal lives and social institutions intersect in the ‘ruling regimes’ of schools, social welfare departments, workplaces, hospitals, and governments. The classroom illustrates how transforming a lived experience into language and constructing a story about it is not straightforward, but invariably mediated and regulated by controlling vocabularies. Narratives are composed for particular audiences at moments in history, and they draw on taken-for-granted discourses and values circulating in a particular culture.
Consequently, narratives don’t speak for themselves, offering a window into an ‘essential self.’ (Riessman, 2008, p. 3)

Yet, narratives do not only describe communication between people; narratives apply to many other forms of communication. Narrative analysis, therefore, also applies to films and media in general.

The bakhtin epigraph to the book suggests that many kinds of texts can be viewed narratively, including spoken, written, and visual materials … Just as interview participants tell stories, investigators construct stories from their data. Barthes notes the universality of the form and lists many sites where it can be found:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting …, stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, [and] conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very story of mankind (sic) and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative … it is simply there, like life itself. (Barthes as cited in Riesman, 2008, p. 4)

However, not all narratives are the same. Stories require people to react or adapt to the information provided by the narrative. Yet, films include unexpected actions that “encourage” action or a perception shift.

Sociolinguists reserve the term narrative for a general class, and story for a specific prototypic form:

Stories can be described not only as narratives that have a sequential and temporal ordering, but also as texts that include some kind of rupture or
disturbance in the normal course of events, some kind of unexpected action that provokes a reaction and/or adjustment. (DeFina as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 6)

It is through narratives and/or stories that people shape their identity and behavior. For that reason, I covered the theoretical array of identity construction in the correspondent chapter. This identity shaping process, theoretically speaking, is an ongoing process throughout human life in the post-modernity paradigm.

The discrete story that is the unit of analysis in Labov’s definition gives way to an evolving series of stories that are framed in and through interaction. An example here is Elliot Mishler’s study of the trajectories of identity development among a group of artists/craft persons constructed through extended interviews with them (Riessman, 2008, p. 6).

It is also important to note that while personal stories are certainly prevalent in contemporary life, reflecting and producing the cult of ‘the self’ as a project in modernity, narrative has a robust life beyond the individual. As persons construct stories of experience, so too do identity groups, communities, nations, governments, and organizations construct preferred narratives about themselves… Perhaps the push toward narrative comes from contemporary preoccupations with identity. No longer viewed as given and ‘natural,’ individuals must now construct who they are and how they want to be known, just as groups, organizations, and governments do. In postmodern times, identities can be assembled and disassembled, accepted and contested, and indeed performed for audiences (p. 7).
Narratives are powerful tools, first used to construct individual and group identities. It is through narratives that we construct ourselves and define our groups. But there are definitely other uses for narratives.

Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not). But identity is fluid always producing itself through the combined process of being and becoming and longing to belong. This duality is often reflected in narratives of identity. Personal narrative can also encourage others to act; speaking out invites political mobilization and change as evidenced by the ways stories invariably circulate in sites where social movements are forming. … In a word, narratives are strategic, functional, and purposeful (Yuval Davis as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 8).

Other uses of individual narrative are to “remember, argue, persuade, engage, entertain, and even mislead an audience” (Riessman, 2008, p. 8). The last point is particularly relevant for the present research as we saw at the analysis of each film. Reality is veiled in films, shifting the perception of the masses and probably eliciting performance. Groups also use narratives to “mobilize others and to foster a sense of belonging” (p. 8). This narrative trait is also relevant to the present research. These two mentioned narrative traits explain why they are used in film not only to entreat but also to pursue a social behavior of the audience.

Narratives are also used to remember or try to explain the past. This trait of narratives is also used to create and sustain identities across time. Hence, this trait is also relevant for my research because it explains why the masses’ concept of the past has been altered in order to justify the present.
There is, of course, a complicated relationship between narrative, time, and memory for we revise and edit the remembered past to square with our identities in the present. In a dynamic way then, narrative constitutes past experience at the same time as it provides ways for individuals to make sense of the past. And stories must always be considered in [the] context, for storytelling occurs at a historical moment with its circulating discourses and power relations. At a local level, a story is designed for particular recipients – an audience who receives the story, and may interpret it differently. (Riessman, 2008, p. 8)

Other uses of narratives through stories include to: argue, persuade skeptical audiences, engage “an audience in the story of the narrator”, invite the audience to see the narrator’s perspective, entertain the audience, mislead the audience (as previously mentioned), and finally mobilize audiences (Riessman, 2008, p. 9).

From the film-analysis perspective, to summarize, narratives provide the meaning needed to connect with others when going through difficult times, like starting or sustaining a social change. This is particularly the case because films’ stories contain emotions through laughter and/or tears as explained at the analysis of the three films, allowing the establishment to be able to create and sustain a desirable status quo. Narratives also create an imagined community or group, in this case Mexicans after the 1910 revolution, and that is why narratives must be inexorably linked to their context and/or make believe context.

Telling stories about difficult times in our lives creates order and contains emotions, allowing a search for meaning and enabling connections with others… When biographical disruptions occur that rupture expectations for continuity,
individuals make sense of events through storytelling [or film making I would add]. Interrogating the stories, uncovers how we ‘imbue life events with a temporal and logical order to demystify and establish coherence across past, present and as yet unrealized experience.’ Individuals, he argues, become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives. To be understood, these private constructions of identity must mesh with a community of life stories, or ‘deep structures’ about the nature of life itself in a particular culture. Connecting biography and society becomes possible through the close analysis of stories. (Riessman, 2008, p. 10).

It is the commonalities of the narratives that create “group belonging and set the stage of collective action” and organize and then mobilize identity groups (Riessman, 2008, p. 9). That is why I had to analyze three movies. I was trying to see both the commonalities and the differences, at three different times and contexts, creating an all-encompassing list of the messages or values of the selected films.

Narrative analysis is a set of interpretive methods that “have in common a storied form” and are “appropriate for interpreting many kinds of texts – oral, written, and visual” (Riessman, 2008, p. 11) at the relevant social level, from individuals to nations.

Attention to sequences of action distinguishes narrative analysis- the investigator focuses on ‘particular actors, in particular social places, at particular social times. As a general field, narrative inquiry is ‘grounded in the study of the particular’ the analyst is interested in how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to communicate meaning, that is, make particular points to an audience. Narrative analysts interrogate intention and
language – how and why incidents are storied, not simply to content to which language refers. (Reisman, 2008, p. 11)

It is of critical relevance to explore how and why the selected films attract their audiences. The three selected films describe poverty in México through three different contexts and times. Riessman (2008) frames its relevance through a series of questions:

For whom was this story constructed, and for what purpose? Why is the succession of events configured that way? What Cultural resources does the story draw on, or takes for granted? What storehouse of plots does it call up? What does the story accomplish? Are there gaps and inconsistencies that might suggest preferred, alternative, or counter-narrative? (p. 11)

The identity formation process will determine what people will accomplish in life and how they will react to everyday challenges. If this process is tampered with, people will not reach their potential nor will they act in their best interests. This would allow the marginalization and dispossession of most. If the identity shaping process is tampered with, individuals will be easily manipulated and controlled. In a civilized society of laws driven by the market, people must police and control themselves; conflict must be dealt with efficiently and economically through market-driven forces. Therefore, the incentive to manipulate identity and behavior is always present. Yet, this is not a new phenomenon. We currently live in a market driven economy and social order, including solidarity, which must be achieved by business because the role of the state has changed. This approach to identity and behavior, for control purposes, has changed over time—yet the purpose is always the same. The use of force was the way of the past; subtle power is the current approach.
Identity and behavior are forever fluid and shaped by the ever-changing context in which the individuals, cultures, and societies live. Individuals and collectivities have identities which usually change basically simultaneously, observed from a historical perspective. The identity shaping process is a negotiated one that changes over time; however, this process takes place throughout the world but within different realities or environments (Adonon, Asakura, Carballido, & Galindo, 2011). Through this negotiated process, identities and behaviors are assigned to some parties by others that have different yet complementary social roles. That is why there is always a master, or boss, and subordinated people such as peasants or blue collar labor; this social order is relative and is replicated somehow throughout society through: “la producción de sujetos subalternos y sus identidades mutantes (the production of subaltern subjects and their changing identities)” (Dube, 2011 translation mine). It is important to remember that power plays an important role in this negotiated process, where dominant discourse and knowledge are also relevant (Adonon et al., 2011; Foucault, 1972).

There are several theoretical lenses to observe the identity shaping process: anthropological, biological, historical, psychological, and sociological to name just a few. There are, however, many theoretical perspectives that helped me understand how identity was shaped historically and why.

Throughout this chapter section, as an outline I used the theoretical perspective and tools used to shape people’s identity and behavior through time. Some authors use topics as outline for presentation. I used time as the directive to outline the dissertation, and never took a topic and described completely. I narrated what was happening at the time of occurrence. For me it made more sense to go through the historical development
of identity at different stages in order to try to understand how people behaved and thought rather than present concepts by topic, without understanding how it developed by historical stage. Yet I also tried to use the topic whenever possible.

Through the colonialism approach, there is enough space to create the self and the other, basically based on the traits of white European settlers in America; everything that was not white, spoke a language that was not Spanish (in the case of Mesoamerica), and had a pagan religion became the other. From this perspective, dominant discourse, ideology, and access to certain resources shaped people’s identity and behavior. Definitely the environment also shaped people’s identity and behavior. Another important aspect related to colonialism had to do with the destruction of their way of life, culture, religion, language, and social structures of the conquered groups. After the military conquest, such conquered groups were assigned to the bottom of the new social hierarchy and society, using criteria based on physical and cultural traits that make the conquered indigenous population the dehumanized other—in many instances becoming property, or slaves, of the dominant group. Colonialism used a few of the identity shaping strategies such as caste, class, gender, profession, race, and sexuality (Dube, 2011) to control and dispossess Native Americans. Language also played an important role in marginalizing people by keeping them ignorant, uninformed, and dispossessed.

The religious conquest during the colonial times was also used to control the indigenous population. Even though there were many ambiguities and uncertainties during the transmission of beliefs, values, and credo, México is still one of the most religious/spiritual countries in the world. The local Catholic beliefs allowed incorporation of some of the Mesoamerican ideas and values, producing a new hybrid religion.
The indigenous population was treated as if they were perpetual children, trapped in the bodies of adults, through a paternalist relationship with all white Europeans including friars. This social practice wronged them forever. The social interactions—for control and dispossession purposes—engineered the indigenous and mestizo populations of colonial México into a condition where they are always unable to be proactive and independent; they were trained to be obedient and docile. (The 20th century’s political system incorporated these local beliefs and social system to perpetuate its control and dispossessing practices. This social role or interaction lasted officially until neoliberalism demanded a new type of citizen.)

Anthropology, history, and religious studies came after colonialism to explain the identity formation and behavior selection; colonialism and subaltern studies should also be included as theoretical lenses for understanding the fluid Mexican identity-shaping process. From the perspective of this eclectic approach, identity could be explained through imagined communities arranged through a geopolitical, relative hierarchy, and specialization that created nation-states, basing their social interactions on different identity shaping strategies such as age, caste, class, gender, nation-state, profession, race, and sexuality (Dube, 2011). Through the social norms or conventions assigned through these different identity shaping strategies, people define who they are, who they are not, and their behavioral choices. The legal system and the ideology behind the sociopolitical and economic systems are also powerful identity and behavior shapers.

Dube (2011) believes that the implications and effects of colonialism over identity and behavior are still present. Dube also considers that there is a transcendental and permanent interaction and influence between race and reason, metropolis and periphery,
and religion and politics (p. 18), as if the sociopolitical system evolves rather than being substituted by something totally new. Therefore, it appears to build on its past and consequently constantly construct and deconstruct identities and behaviors as it best suits it, as time and as context demand it. From this perspective, he argues, the effect of the Eastern culture, imagined if you wish, has impacted modernity and the destiny for every culture and identity… [T]he new understanding of communities, histories, and modernity has challenged the previous [identity] categories-entities. The forces shaping subaltern and postcolonialism identities has brought to the surface the conditions and limits of the states, nations, and citizen both in the western and nonwestern worlds. (Dube, 2011, p. 18 translation mine)

From Dube’s (2011) perspective, it is the interaction between different people within a particular environment, both physical and manmade, what shapes identity and behavior. This understanding is relevant because he is also basing his approach on the identity shaping strategies.

The fundamental presence of not only the protagonist elite and heroes but also marginal and subaltern people shapes all the parties simultaneously by the interactive link of identities through gender and race, caste and class, age and profession, community and sexuality, in the creation of the colonial system of an empire and [later] a nation, by religion and politics, and the state and the citizenship. … Through this approach the understanding of the nation-state and Western world, colonialism and post-colonialism, history and modernity are reevaluated. (Dube, 2011, p. 19 translation mine)
As I have been arguing throughout this study, identity has several levels; some are even shaped due to the groups to which we belong. In my case, for instance, I am male, father, son, husband, brother, friend, foreign-student/student mediator at Nova Southeastern University, Ph. D. Candidate, MBA from the University of Texas at Austin, Licenciado en Administración de Empresas de la Universidad Anahuac del Norte en la Ciudad de México, Mexican, Catholic, born in Chihuahua; who lived in Durango, Puebla, México City, Monterrey, Philadelphia, Austin, San Antonio, San Luis Potosí, and Fort Lauderdale; and so on. From this perspective, identity can be thought of as a continuation from the individual to the collectivity.

Collective identity is the result of our involvement with a particular group (relative to others), the groups to which we belong, and the group’s ideology, interactions, history, symbolism, and rituals: all of which are interiorized and translated into behavior in the form of “beliefs, norms, and values that constitute the distinctive features of such group” (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011, p. 172 translation mine). The more engaged one is with a particular group, the more loyal one is to that particular group, relative to other groups. Under such conditions, people also display the featured characteristics of such group. Each of these adopted identities or roles have different behavioral norms and standards, and therefore, there are several norms and standards at play at any time (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011). Likewise, the closer people are to the group’s nucleus, the more social representations appear to be consistent and homogeneous while at the periphery such representations appear to be heterogeneous and elastic (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011).
On the other hand, whatever links us (physical, behavioral, values, cultural practices, and otherwise) to a particular group also separates us from other groups because identity is also our ability to recognize ourselves and be recognized by others. Yet, the way we see ourselves and others is due to the political, religious, and social conditions and experiences lived in the family, which will also have important influence over the identity development (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011).

In general terms and according to the current dominant discourse, we live in a dual world. People, therefore, cannot be male and female at the same time; it has to be one or the other. From the dominant discourse perspective, there cannot be any other option. The same applies to people’s race and ethnicity. According to the establishment, no one can bear two races and ethnicities at the same time. It is important to notice that this is a social construct because nature does not construct nor limit sexual behavior, race, or ethnicity. There are other identity shaping strategies that allow individuals to belong to several groups at the same time. This does not apply to all groups; for instance, certain countries allow their citizens to have several nationalities while others only allow one. Class belongs to the latter category; individuals either belong to a particular class or they do not. Another example might be working for competing companies that might be considered unethical, while unrelated enterprises might allow individuals to have part-time workers that labor somewhere else.

From my perspective, identity shaping is a social construct in which power is an important element because people otherwise would behave as they pleased and not as society commands. At a more basic level, people’s identity is shaped within four borders. First, it has to do with how do I identify myself, and second, how others identify me. The
third is the differences that I see in others, and finally, the differences that others see in me (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011). It is within this matrix that identity is constantly evolving and developing. The identity shaping strategies are the perspectives used to see ourselves and others for this endeavor. Identity shaping is a life-long process characterized by its dynamism and constant struggles. Identity shaping strategies are sorted by the sociopolitical and economic system in place so people become citizens of a nation-state, yet at the same time members of a professional organization, social class, or religious group, and so on. Identity shaping is done, as previously established, with the purpose to control the population, while marginalizing and dispossessing them.

The assimilated identities had to do with the collectivities individuals belong to and their personal traits, where one identity becomes the beginning of the other one. The identities form vital elements in the daily production and reproduction of social life. The identities depend on attitudes and imaginations, norms and practices, and rituals and dispositions that simultaneously and symbolically structure substantive structured yet fluid identities. It is through this process where the individuals find the required resources to perceive, experiment, and express themselves within the social relations of the groups/classes/communities/gender. (Dube, 2011, p. 19 translation mine)

In a dual world, as constructed by the establishment, everything of course has to be divided by sex and gender. Yet, social structures evolve as humans and technology do. Power, history, dominant and subaltern discourses, along with concepts of metropolis and periphery are also working concepts for the shaping of identity; empire, globalization, modernity, and nation-state are also part of the identity/behavior recipe (Dube, 2011).
Identities, too, are defined by the historic relations that produce and reproduce the obtaining and consumption patterns, empire and modernity, and nation and globalization concepts held. Such identities are critically measured by changing configurations of gender, caste, race and age, profession, and sexuality. Such relations and configurations are based on power relations and involve diverse interpretations of domination and subordination, negotiations, and challenges of authority in different realms. The shaped identities are both dominant and subaltern due to the contradictory processes and the application of hegemonic power. (Dube, 2011, pp. 19-20 translation mine)

This gender-based identity shaping process is socially motivated. This historic determinant has been impacted as well by globalization, but there are still old traditions shaping our identity, especially in the periphery.

Individuals interiorize norms and socially established values about how males and females should behave through social interactions, yet such identities continue evolving according to the surrounding context. By the means of adaptation and re-adaptation processes people negotiate their generic identity, interpreting and reinterpreting old and new social norms and values that determine the behavior of both females and males. (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011, p. 172 translation mine)

Everything in life is socially negotiated, and as I have been arguing, even identity and behavior. To make things more complicated, there are even socially accepted standards for performance. Such standards represent the social expectations about what good performance is for every role we take as social individuals, including how a good
mother or father should behave, among many other roles that include professional roles as well. Yet it is society—not the disputing individuals—that determines what an appropriate solution to the conflict at hand is—based on a unilaterally established social standard—because, some might argue, the conflict can disrupt social harmony and the socially approved and designed interactions (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011).

The traditional indigenous relationship between a man and a woman, or noviazgo in Spanish, which culminates with the formal engagement, or compromiso in Spanish, before the actual marriage, has dramatically changed due to financial constraints and the newer social practices shaped by the capitalism, globalization, and neoliberalism requirements (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011). Among other factors, in many ways, this social commitment currently resembles a financial transaction when the dowry is exchanged for the girlfriend’s living with and cooking for the boyfriend. Yet, the marriage is not consummated through sex exclusively, but through a complementary arrangement between husband and wife and based on mutual trust: the husband has the role of provider and must be a skilled person in charge of the household while the wife must obey him, take care of him, his children, and their household (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011). What is believed to be the Mesoamerican traditional family structure from this perspective is an:

- economic unit of collaboration, socialization, and interaction where a clear labor division by gender can be observed. The men in a family own and jointly work their land while women collaborate with the household chores and take care of the children. The behavior of the family members is determined mainly by sex and age. Women and older girls take care of the children, cooking, weaving, laundry
washing, and carrying the firewood and water. When men and older boys were at home, they rested, worked on the family parcel, visited family members, discussed public matters, or went to the market to buy or sell products. …

[Furthermore,] families were cohesive by a series of economic and social relations that basically made it impossible for the individuals to live outside such structure because men were responsible for building their house while women manufactured cloth, men brought the food, and women prepared it. (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011, pp. 190-191 translation mine)

The noviazgo originally was a practice designed to boost the bride’s social status and allow the parties to be able to come in contact with each other. This transaction was an agreement between both families to help the new couple and to guarantee that the bride and groom will have enough financial resources to live according to their families’ expectations and social status. Now the parties or novios, due to the financial constraints and the fact that they are able to socially interact with each other, in many cases run away and comeback when she is pregnant and her parents have nothing to object to anymore. Currently, however, the families of the novios do not have the strength that they used to have some time ago, controlling and shaping the couple’s behavior, and women are losing some of the social support that they had in the past. More importantly, even though there currently is role flexibility, because public discourse is encouraging sexual equality, men are doing more household related work, and the couple acts more collaboratively and complementary; the basic marriage structure is still based on the command/obey complementary duality and that is how marriages are represented (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011) by media in general and films specifically.
Men are still represented as if they should be commanding women while women are represented as if they should be obeying men. For that reason, we can say that the gender-based identity is still the [operational] central system shaping people’s identity and what has been transformed is the periphery system of gender roles, by the context in which its norms are applied to the communities and by the influence of the social discourses. By the adaptation of new dominant discourses, it is possible to renovate marriage’s behavioral models – without significantly altering the underlying power structures that define and guide the representations and practices of how men and women should be and act. (Adonon-Viveros & Asakura, 2011, p. 195 translation mine)

In the selected films, the male hero is the provider and the person in charge. The female heroine once married obeys her husband and takes care of him and their home, including all that lives in the same household. They have a complementary relationship based on their gender roles that has changed with the new discourses of equality. It is through this relationship that the parties also shape their identities.

Yet, such relationships were and still are paternalistic and based on gender roles. The fathers of the engaged parties are still responsible for encouraging certain behavior from the couple. Not long ago, the novios had to obey their elders, especially their family members. The social authorities also play a role at guiding the couple about the adequate relational patterns, especially in the indigenous communities. And we saw that in the selected films, men are to command and become the providers while women are to obey and be responsible for the household. The social support of families is still there both in reality and in the films, but the family-in-law is as if it did not exist for guiding purposes
in *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario*, while in *Amores Perros* the mother-in-law tells the female heroine, Susana, what should be the appropriate behavior with her brother-in-law. Furthermore, Susana’s mother was an alcoholic, and therefore, could not be trusted to take care of the baby.

Identities and behavior are always fluid, always adapting to the ever-changing context and environment. “Identities and behavior react to the symbolic imagery and the social practices. Since human relations, social processes, and the physical environment are constantly changing, transformation and differentiation are the essence of identities” (Dube, 2011, p. 20 translation mine).

Colonialism, first, and then the empire shaped the identities of both colonizers and the colonized. The friars played an important role shaping the identity and behavior of the indigenous and mestizo populations during the colonial era. Even before the independence war, the rebellious elite that won the country’s independence did it in an attempt to differentiate themselves from those that were born in Spain. The Spanish friars taught the indigenous population everything required to become a professional Spanish citizen; the rebellious elite taught the local population what it meant to become and be a Mexican, mainly during the 20th century, but also during the 18th and 19th centuries.

We saw during the colonial period how people portrayed different identities and behavior depending on where they were from and what they wanted to accomplish. We saw, for instance, how different the identities and behavior of the Spanish citizens were, depending on where they were born: Spain or in New Spain. Furthermore, Dube (2011) talks superficially about how the imperialist elite deliberately and differently shaped the people and behavior of people depending on where they lived: metropolis or periphery.
Depending on the empire, we could be talking about either a colony but also about local cities far from the centralized capital of an empire. Regardless of the context, identity and behavior are shaped by the interaction of people with different social roles, one of which is significantly higher—as in the case of a colonizer and a colonized, or a capitalist and a disfranchised. Nonetheless, all the involved parties at the interaction are mutually shaped by the association and their complementary roles through the identity shaping strategies. The environment, both physical and manmade, has also been a determinant factor shaping identity and behavior.

The context of the colony affected the empire, but it was also a factor to be considered the other way around, as it did the related parties in a social interaction. For instance, most Latin American countries, including México, secured their independence from Spain basically at the same time, the 1800s. After the United States got their independence from Great Britain in 1776, the citizens of the Spanish colonies in America revolted when Spain was considered to be too weak to defend its colonies against such armed independence movements. Spain was considered weak when it was either governed by a French king or when the Spanish monarchs who took control back were considered morally flawed or were unable to defend the interests of the European local elite. The inherent local context of Spain was used as an excuse for starting the independence wars throughout Latin America.

The religious component of identity and behavior is also clear, especially during certain historic periods, mainly because religion has been part of humankind’s behavior for thousands of years, though in different degrees. Interestingly enough, the Mexican independence war was initiated by Catholic priests, which had a presence and leadership
throughout this entire liberating endeavor probably because Catholic priests were also significantly more educated than the rest of the population. Yet, ironically enough, the Catholic Church, after the independence war, basically lost all its power and possessions, including those of the indigenous population.

Religion, along with the way a society practices it, is an important identity shaping strategy, especially when configuring ethnic identity because religion defines the local understanding of cosmology and the symbolic construction of the universe for both the collective and individual identity (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011). By describing the universe, locating each of us hierarchically within the universe, considering ethnic categories, and specifying appropriate and inappropriate behavior, individuals and groups know both their rights and responsibilities, shaping their identity according to such context. Religion even determines the penalties for trespasses against the socially approved behavior and the appropriate way to contact God (to ask for forgiveness or gain His approval) and ask for favors. Religious values and considerations also shape culture, which also plays a role in shaping the local understanding of how the universe is organized, the people’s place within it, religious practices and ritual, and regularly keeping/transmitting knowledge, thus, shaping the individual and collective identities.

Unable to continue with its social charities and education after the independence war, due to the fact that the Catholic Church lost its properties and power because of governmental actions, the identity and behavior of the Mexican population was negatively affected by what happened and continued to happen in the country, but also abroad. War, destruction, riots, looting, and massacres where the characteristics of the times. Furthermore, the indigenous population was unable to continue studying and
practicing a profession. The government’s seizures and its lack of publicly offered education to most forced millions into ignorance and, therefore, poverty.

The indigenous population—considered to be perpetual children according to those in power—who needed permanent adult supervision and guidance from the white monks, became blood thirsty savages during and after the independence war; this was precisely as the local indigenous population was depicted by the first Spaniard invaders and conquerors basically 300 hundred years before in describing their human sacrifice practices. By the 20th century those same uneducated, dispossessed, and marginalized populations, along with the mestizo population, were by then in power, and after the so-called “cultural revolution”, continued engineering obedient and docile people – but only in the presence of a strong sociopolitical system that would enforce the “law” and a status quo of peace and civility. Those same people, at the beginning of the 21st century faced their greatest challenge ever, becoming proactive and independent. But now, it would be in the presence of a reduced state, which many claim is a failing state due to the neoliberal requirements imposed.

As the Catholic Church lost its grip over its Mexican colony and its assets, political practices, in a way, took over the identity and behavior of the people. This is particularly the case because political practices also established appropriate and inappropriate behavior and identity. Governmental actions also shaped the environment and context. Rituals, indoctrination, dominant discourse and ideological thought, and science—instead of God—were used and abused to control the population for marginalizing and dispossessing purposes, in order to create and sustain a new status quo. Permissible power demonstrations, art, history, literature, knowledge, production, barter
and consumption mechanisms, inequity, and culture along with the permitted reproductions of classes, gender, sexuality and desire, social structures, life styles, and race/ethnicity shaped the environment, regardless if it was the metropolis or the periphery. It was through these perspectives and the decreasing interaction between religion and politics that the nation-states were born and shaped, and therefore, identities and behaviors were shaped and reshaped as well, to comply with the new sociopolitical system requirements. Even though it is officially forbidden, religion provided the afterlife goals to be traded for acceptable behavior that both religion and politics, through law and other regulations, defined as acceptable. Currently religion is legal and still available for those individuals and groups that demand it, but it is politically accepted and mainly used for private purposes and in many cases is a hollow meaningless ritual or practice, without any real affectation of public behavior.

Probably the most relevant aspect about religion, related to conflict resolution, is that religion has been historically used to legitimize the political-economic structures (Berta, 1986; Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011), and some conquest wars in the name of evangelization. It has also been used as a control tool, via appropriate behavior exchanged for a future reward in the afterlife, for such structures. Officially considered inappropriate behavior is deemed illegal and dealt with accordingly.

After the Mexican independence, from the 1820s to the 1930s, the Catholic Church not only lost its local properties and power, but the state also criminalized its practices. Furthermore, the Catholic Church also lost the religious monopoly that it had for over 300 years in México, but these circumstances were also happening throughout Europe. By the 1850s and 1860s, other religions were allowed and sometimes even
encouraged by the President Juárez Administration in order to change the identity and behavior of the masses.

The then accepted religions required a different code of conduct and morale from their believers, necessary to incorporate the population into the modern economy, which the Protestantism’s capital was backing up in México (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011). Since many of the values and beliefs of both Catholicism and Christianity were similar, but applied differently, therefore changing and even enlarging the previous religious meaning opened new identity options for the population; yet Protestantism offered ethical values that were reinforced by the use of a new paradigm, everyday actions, the market, and Western modernity (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011).

More specifically and related to the film analysis, the selected films transmitted messages to its audience about identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts, yet most films do, even though it has always been said that films only depict a social reality. It is important to notice that films’ messages are not static. As we live in a dynamic environment, film’s messages change, from little to much, over time, according to the targeted audience and culture. México’s films and messages were not the exception. Depending on the period, and specific to the research, agricultural, industrial, or neoliberal, the film’s messages changed, but the messages for the first two periods were similar. The messages displayed at the neoliberal period have changed importantly, relative to the messages transmitted in the previous two periods.

Throughout the research it became obvious that people in México do not read as much as people do in other countries. México is not known for being a country where people, in general, are very educated and read much. There are historical reasons that
explain it. People in México watch TV and films, more than they read. This is not, however, even across all social segments. Middle and higher classes read more and speak more than one international language. Some of the members of these social groups have studied abroad. There is even an intellectual sector that has been influential on the national life. The masses, on the other hand, were not taught to love reading and school but rather the opposite. There are sectors in México that might not even speak Spanish but speak at least one indigenous language. The reading and academic proficiency of the indigenous communities is even lower than the national average. This is relevant to the study because films are used to indoctrinate and provide identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts to the masses. Higher classes’ members read books, and other strategies are used to control those individuals.

Films encouraged specific identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts by assigning to the film’s hero, who was portrayed positively with desirable social traits, who was very popular with the opposite sex, and who had a morale or ethic that would sustain the current status quo. Yet, at the same time the films allowed the marginalization and dispossession of the masses. The film hero was always a man, and therefore, passed patriarchal values, goals, and ways of life.

The films started by providing a social description of the local context. Both in Nosotros los Pobres and Macario, the presented society was a happy, functional, harmonious society, where bad things happened but were usually caused by members of other social groups. The main characters were complete and did not need any development to be a role model. In Amores Perros, the presented society was violent, dysfunctional, and discordant, where people destroyed themselves and those around
them, through their own behavior, except for Chivo. The main characters of the film were not fully developed but rather needed to touch bottom and then be able to reconstruct themselves. Chivo was the only film’s character that had touched bottom and wanted to re-take his place in society, mainly as father, protecting the daughter that he abandoned many years before.

In these types of films, the hero was considered good whenever he performed socially approved actions or behavior. In this context, socially approved actions or behavior means that it creates or sustains a status quo. In *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario*, the main characters were considered good when they cared for their families, were the head of the family, were the family providers to the point where the basic needs were met, had a job, were popular with both friends and women, were some sort of leader in their communities, were good at fist-fighting, were good Catholics and applied to their public and private life the gospel teachings, and especially, were more concerned through their behavior about their eternal life and wellbeing than about the current life hardships. Finally, the hero had to present the right values and morale, both privately and publically. The hero would not steal nor lie, respect the police, would not attempt against the status quo and/or the Mexican government, were not selfish, must worthily endure life’s hardships, and would always do the right thing (or most of the time), among other considerations. For *Amores Perros*, the character had to show agency and pursue his desires that included women and money. Power was not shown as such, but as business decisions, separating the individual from his actions and trying to avoid accountability. The main characters in *Amores Perros* were not complete; they were in the process of destroying themselves to be able to develop themselves. A good character, from the
film’s perspective, was the one that destroyed himself and family, paid his dues, and found a way to be reintegrated into society.

There were four types of rewards, according to the three selected films, for the main characters. For the Nosotros los Pobres and Macario characters, the reward for their hardships was eternal life in heaven, without any constraint. However, for Pepe el Toro there was also a girlfriend and Macario had a wife and children. In Amores Perros, the main reward for the three main characters, one from each of the stories, was a woman. For Octavio, it was Susana, his sister-in-law. For Daniel, it was Valeria, his new love. Finally, for Chivo, it was Maru, his daughter that he abandoned many years when she was a baby. The less obvious reward for the main characters in the same film was to be able to positively reconstruct themselves and be reintegrated into society, after they destroyed themselves and their families. Finally, and closely linked to the women and desired redemption, there were roles that the main character wanted to pursue. Octavio wanted to be husband, father, and provider. Daniel wanted to be linked to Valeria’s ethnic group and the husband of a beautiful European. Chivo wanted to be a father.

In all three films, most of the suggested behavioral cues for the audience were encouraged through the use of gender roles, for both men and women. The films showed both the right and wrong behaviors, and the penalties for the parties that transgressed the social rules. Both men and women saw how the films portray “good men and women.” The films also depicted what happened to bad people and to people that behave badly. Sexuality for women, for instance, was more restricted in the agricultural and industrial periods than it was in the neoliberal period but always had negative connotations if done outside marriage. Bad people and those that behaved badly paid dearly while alive and
eternally while in hell according to *Nosotros los Pobres* and *Macario*. For *Amores Perros*, bad deeds were paid through the destruction and death of the dear ones, or personally due to a horrific disease or accident. It is interesting to notice that most of the constraining behavior related to women rather than to men, and men and women had different standards for the same behavior.

During the agricultural and industrial periods, religiosity gave the desired background to control the masses. The films showed their audiences that people should trade hardships in the current lives for heaven. During the neoliberal period, money and women were the ultimate motivators. Religion in this period was nothing more than a shallow, private ritual that had no significance for the public behavior.

Education was characterized as evil because it made people act badly. This was especially the case in the agricultural and industrial periods. Knowledge gave the tools to dispossess those that lacked it but at the same time gave them reasons to stop trading future rewards in heaven for hardships. Knowledge or science was traded for God and faith. Wealth accumulation became important, even a life’s goal. Social classes gave meaning and perspective to why to behave in a certain way. The more people knew, the worse they behaved towards their fellow human beings. In the neoliberal period, education appeared to have no real significance in peoples’ lives. Only one of the main characters, of the three stories, performed in a ritualized manner religiously-based practices but killed and seduced his brother’s wife. Chivo, on the other hand, believed God was at blame for his hardships but then, according to the film, he realized that he was responsible for what happened to him and only he could change his life. If God existed, according to the film, He left humans alone to construct their destiny and who
they became. Science provided new values and criteria about how to live “a productive and meaningful life.” Even though there was technical knowhow, it appeared that the main characters of the three stories were not educated; their behavior was not that of educated people, but that of savage, primitive, unconscious of the consequences of their actions, and shallow individuals.

As previously mentioned, the masses consumed more media and films than the rest of the higher social classes, which also consumed books. For that reason, films depicted the masses but at the same time encouraged a socially approved behavior. Certain kinds of poor people are positively portrayed while others are not. Those that are positively portrayed have the socially approved traits, values, and behavior, as previously described. The rest of the social groups were negatively portrayed. For instance, rich people were portrayed as shallow and unconscious of their actions. Educated people and the clergy were portrayed as evil. Finally, poor people are usually depicted positively, unless they lacked the socially approved and assigned traits, values, and behavior. In the agricultural and industrial periods, poverty was a requirement, along with socially approved behavior, to gain access to heaven. In the neoliberal periods, poverty and positive social development was what was needed to redeem themselves.

In the 1970s México invested heavily in its oil capabilities but in the 1980s the oil prices declined drastically. In addition, in September 1985 there was a strong earthquake that severely damaged México City. The country accessed credit lines with non-financial covenants in order to reconstruct after the damage. Due to those non-financial covenants, the Mexican government was forced to open up the economy. That is why President
Salinas-de-Gortari amended the constitution, and NAFTA became effective in January 1994 when the Chiapas uprising started.

NAFTA required a new type of citizen and a new relationship between the government and Mexicans in order to secure the Mexican market. That is reason why the films’ messages changed in the neoliberal period. Mexicans needed to be independent, financially and otherwise, and proactive.

**Findings**

In order to succeed in an intellectually, economically, and politically controlled system, such as México, one has to develop a sense of inner direction and empowerment, where critical thinking is a vital requirement. Without such a compass, individuals would only be shaped to sustain the local status quo, benefiting others, and not to individually or collectively aim at changing the environment to benefit from such actions. Yet, the power hierarchy in such a patriarchal system shapes and controls the masses’ identity and behavior through different strategies, methods, and/or institutions. One of the most powerful and successful identity shaping strategies is film making due to the embedded messages and relational patterns shown. Identity and behavior can be manipulated to benefit the elite group and sustain the status quo, through different complementary mechanisms or the identity shaping strategies.

The purpose of this study was to understand how film transmits messages about identity, behavior, role-identification, values, and life scripts, using films from the agricultural, industrial, and neo-liberal periods in México. Even though I thought that the embedded messages of these three periods were going to be different, the messages for
the agricultural and industrial periods were basically the same. The chosen film for the neoliberal period did convey a different message to its audience, as we saw.

The specific goals of the research were: First, to understand how the socio-political-economic-production changing-context is portrayed through films, seen from the perspective of the identity shaping strategies. We saw that the films’ characters portray the so-called right approach to social interactions, according to social norms that change through time. Second, I wanted to become consciously aware of the messages transmitted. The messages were both verbal and nonverbal mainly, yet there were also “divine” manifestations that punished the wrongdoers. In the neoliberal period, the message was that people must be redeemed of their own weakness, through pain, learning, and poverty. Third, I wanted to become aware of the messages that are aimed to sustain the status quo and/or that can potentially be internalized and constrain agency. The portrayed social interactions depicted how the lower class individuals should behave among themselves and with others individuals belonging to upper social classes, in the agricultural and industrial period. In the neoliberal film, the characters portrayed social interactions that allowed them to survive and be redeemed with the desired social roles. Fourth, I aimed to understand the individual’s identity creation process, which I accomplished through the literature review. People replicate what they see and/or are forced to behave in such way, especially in the presence of ideology and indoctrination, religious or otherwise. Fifth, I was hoping to understand the process by which films shape individual identity, role-identification, values, and life scripts that the selected movies depict. Films aim at a specific social group and depict it positively, relative to other groups, and portray their “right” social interactions, rules, and values. Finally, I sought to
produce a model that could be applied to other media and the education system to evaluate and corroborate if the individual’s identity and behavior shaping, the assignment of role-identification, and the transmission of values and life scripts are achieved as they are through film. The suggested model embedded both the life cycle and the identity shaping strategies, explaining the reasons behind it through the identity shaping strategies.

The dissertation was supported by ten Research Questions. The first one dealt with: how do films reflect changes in the socio/economic/political systems in México? The selected movies did not show social change; they portrayed a snapshot of the state of affairs during the periods they were shown for the audience to see. The selected films portrayed acceptable social interactions during the different time periods.

The second research question was: how is social change shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? It was not. The selected films portrayed what were the desirable social interactions during such periods. Change was not addressed at all. The films depicted the lives of the main characters, and their families along with others, in a specific status quo.

The third research question was: how is ideology shown in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? The ideology was hidden behind religious/redeeming motives because basically all Mexicans are either religious—during the agricultural and industrial periods—or spiritual more recently. The Catholic behavior was shown as desirable with rewards in the current and next lives. For the neoliberal period redemption and desired social roles were the human goal. Yet, most rewards were symbolical and never material. Unapproved social behavior was also portrayed and
punished in the selected films. Ideology was also depicted through the roles, behaviors, and the hardships the characters played and acted. Some roles and behaviors were deemed as positive and good while others as negative and evil—many times veiled through class, gender, education, ethnicity, age, and so on. Media definitely plays a role in trying to sustain the status quo by assigning a virtuosity/evil tag depending on the behavior that the system requires from their citizens.

The fourth research question asked: how was agency portrayed and constrained in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? As explained in the third research question, the Catholic behavior was shown as desirable with rewards in the current and next lives. For the neoliberal period, redemption and specific roles were the ultimate motivators. This highly encouraged behavior did not allowed much space for agency because people were expected to act in a certain way and ideology and indoctrination prevented it; therefore, agency was definitely constricted through religious and redemption values and rituals. Also, unapproved social behavior was also portrayed and punished in the selected films. In the neoliberal film, however, agency is not constrained as much probably because the religiosity is expressed differently and people are merely trying to survive and redeem themselves. Religiosity is portrayed as an empty ritual without any impact on public and private behavior. Structural barriers also constrain options and interactions for the parties.

The fifth research question asked: how are caste, class, education, ethnicity, gender, kinship, lineage, nationalism, race, and/or societal roles portrayed in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? All these identity shaping strategies are addressed in the selected films. Gender roles were the most used identity
shaping strategy. The mestizo race is shown but a lighter version is deemed as better. Through the interactions that the different characters portray, the socially approved behaviors and norms are for the audience to see and replicate. Socially desired behavior is linked to present and future rewards, including redemption and obtaining certain desirable roles. On the other hand, negatively associated behavior is also portrayed and tied to its punishments, including self-destruction, death of family members, or accidents. Ideology tints positively or negatively each identity shaping strategy, behavior, and values.

The presented behaviors also stereotype how these relationships should be. For instance, the rich are supposed to be taking advantage of the poor much like the educated do with the ignorant; good people are hard-working, good, and take care of their own; and mothers-in-law have bad relationships with their daughters-in-law are some of the behaviors that the audience is supposed to replicate. All these stereotypes are used in order to avoid social conflict, control the population, and sustain the status quo.

According to the films, certain vices are socially accepted as coping mechanisms of the affected parties due to their reality. And religion is portrayed as not useful or even evil to people in their everyday lives in the industrial and neoliberal periods.

The sixth research question asked: was identity and identity-change portrayed individually or as part of a larger social context in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? As previously mentioned, identity changes were not addressed by the selected films, yet there are films that address this topic. However, the Amores Perros’ characters were in transition, from the identity perspective, from bad to worse and Chivo from worse to better.
The seventh research question addressed: how are values and life scripts shown or transmitted in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? As explained before, social interactions are deemed either positive or negative and tied to a reward, punishment, and redemption. Other behaviors are considered to be required—especially when dealing with the police or military personnel, whose performance is always portrayed as highly efficient. People must always obey authority, including the police. Corruption and, therefore, accountability through the different periods are portrayed in the different selected films as growing and reducing. For the characters in the neoliberal film, corruption was socially allowed and even normal.

The eighth research question was: how can Marxist theory help explain the identity change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? The selected films portray masters and servants or disfranchised, where financial capital and education are the obvious polarizing factors. The world is seen as zero-sum, where whatever is shared is at the expense of the disfranchised, and money was the only real satisfactory thing—non-material rewards are only for the poor and ignorant. The complementary yet polarizing roles of the master and servants are what keep the system running efficiently. A different identity and behavior would be in detriment of the status quo.

The ninth research question was: how can Galtung’s Structural Theory of Imperialism help explain the social interactions and change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? This theory was useful in conceptualizing the structural barriers that separate people in the selected films. People were physically separated in the films mainly by class; only under certain conditions or
accidents would people from different classes meet. Galtung also talked about how people associate with each other, creating harmony and disharmony of interests and as we saw in the films, for instance, how rich and dishonest people associate. The concepts of center and periphery were also useful because the farther away people were from the center, the poorer they were. Galtung also talks about the different identities of people required in efficient systems and how they are dependent on each other. Finally, Galtung shows different types of imperial domination acting and reinforcing each other, similar to how the identity shaping strategies do.

Finally, the tenth research question was: how can Erickson’s Psychiatric Techniques help explain the social change as incorporated in Mexican films from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods? Films might be considered metaphoric suggestions and, as such, they are definitely outside the awareness of the main audience. I have established that films are cathartic, through laughing and crying. But that is not all films might do to their audiences. Through the plot, the filmmakers are simply suggesting potential behaviors that are important to the establishment, much in the same way therapists “encourage” their patients to behave. “A therapist prefers that a patient initiate new behavior himself and choose his own direction in life. Yet at the same time, the therapist wants the patient to change within the framework the therapist considers important” (Haley, 1973, p. 25).

But the similarities between films and psychiatric technique do not end there. Films throw to their audiences certain behaviors considered desirable in searching for a behavior change in other activities, in the same way a psychiatrist would suggest some activities designed to change other behaviors. For instance, when dealing with marriage
problems, Erickson would overtly suggest certain actions but covertly others, outside the awareness of the couple.

As a typical example, if Erickson is dealing with a married couple who have a conflict over sexual relations and would rather not discuss it directly, he will approach the problem metaphorically. He will choose some aspect of their lives that is analogous to sexual relations and change that as a way of changing the sexual behavior. He might, for example, talk to them about having dinner together and draw them out on their preferences. He will discuss with them how the wife likes appetizers before dinner, while the husband prefers to dive right into the meat and potatoes. Or the wife might prefer a quiet and leisurely dinner, while the husband, who is quick and direct, just wants the meal over with. If the couple begin to connect what they are saying with sexual relations, Erickson will “drift rapidly” away to other topics, and then he will return to the analogy. He might end such a conversation with a directive that the couple arranges a pleasant dinner on a particular evening that is satisfactory to both of them. When successful, this approach shifts the couple from a more pleasant dinner to more pleasant sexual relations without being aware that he has deliberately set this goal. (Haley, 1973, pp. 27-28)

The way the characters are presented to the audience is important because characters must appear desirable, so that the audience would like to replicate his or her behavior, as well as be and behave like them. That is where ideology and indoctrination comes in, encouraging change in the form of a desired, “officially approved” identity and behavior that will sustain the status quo. “Unlikely psychodynamically oriented
therapists, who make interpretations to bring out negative feelings and hostile behavior, Erickson relabels what people do in a positive way to encourage change” (Haley, 1973, p. 34).

Focusing on the negative aspects of the situation is not uncommon and films do it through the use of crying cathartic plots. This approach is usually considered for “improving” behavior. What filmmakers do is to focus on the positive, enlarging it. He does not minimize difficulties, but he will find in the difficulties some aspect of them that can be used to improve the functioning of the person or his family. Rather than assuming there is something hostile in the unconscious that must be brought out, he assumes there are positive forces that need to be freed for the person’s further development. (Haley, 1973, p. 34)

The selected Mexican films, especially Nosotros los Pobres and Macario, aimed at the positive and kindness of the Mexicans, but also at their docility and religiosity. Amores Perros also considered that there is good in Mexicans, but the negative had to be addressed before the good could come out. Filmmakers do know their audience, including their belief system. That is why they focus so much on religion and immaterial rewards; it is like seeding. “Erickson likes to ‘seed’ or establish certain ideas and later build on them” (Haley, 1973, p. 34). There are other similarities, but I believe enough has been said to accept that films might change the identity and behavior of their audiences.

Writing history is a task reserved exclusively for the rich and powerful—for the conquerors mainly. The official history is seldom an accurate recollection of what happened and is not told similarly to all audiences. These inconsistencies describe the political nature of history, most definitely questioning its accuracy, and are definitely
aimed at shaping the identity of different groups and individuals (Dube, 2011) and their understanding of what really happened and why. How we understand our history, where we are coming from, definitely has implications over our identity and behavior.

“History’s expressions are full of meaning-forming and authority-defining processes, always including all sort of conflicts that have effects over identity and subalternity” (Dube, 2008, p. 27 translation mine). According to same source, history has three interconnected layers. The first one has to do with its symbolic meaning, capturing in different ways the imagination of dissimilar groups and working through diverse contexts and ways of life, in order to shape in a hierarchal manner identities and behaviors of diverse populations for the purpose of sustaining a specific status quo. Secondly, history is also negotiated for diverse social identities, in addition to depicting external situations and local events. Finally, history provides the impression of progress, framed by Western thought, deceitfully giving the sense of positive movement and positioning México almost sideways among modern nations (p. 26). As there are unauthorized gospels, there are unauthorized histories, identities, and behaviors because all of those discourage a specific status quo.

The never-ending historical process of shaping identity and behavior has produced and reproduced our temporal, for now, yet current social structures and norms through the complementary meanings assigned by the individuals involved, via the unilateral use of power and the identity shaping strategies. This process provides stability—not political balance—between the government and its people’s needs, based on their repeatedly created memories and the critical historical events in their history, all of which is internalized and acted upon based on the local notions of class, community,
empire, gender, globalization, law, modernity, nationalism, nation-state, profession, property, race, and religion among others (Dube, 2011).

Recently, however, the concept of community has been enlarged and is more inclusive. It is through the identity shaping strategies and the use of power that identity and behavior patterns are established, as previously stated. It is also where the notions of nationalism and culture are defined, and redefined, in an attempt to permanently create an imagined community. Ideology, pedagogy, and the dominant discourse also play an important role in shaping people’s roles, ideas, and expectations both for individuals and the different social groups. This historical, yet constant and permanent, struggle has opened some social and political spaces for some minority groups under certain identity-related conditions. The social spaces are basically considered human rights; as such spaces are opened and secured. As minorities, including the middle class, gained relative social strength, they were able to also shape the country, accumulate more rights, and change their identity and behavior according to their new role.

As this happened, the accepted concepts of identity, behavior, and nationalism changed in order to incorporate the vision of the new social groups incorporated, portraying their belief system, ethnicity, idiosyncrasy, social roles and interactions, values, expectations, desires, culture, education level, and fears, among many others. After the independence war but especially during the 1910 revolution, ethnicity became the driving force for identity and culture. Most of the population was considered mestizo. Certainly this created an anti-colonialism sentiment, creating the basis for the new nation, providing the values and ideals for founding México out of a Spanish colony and without the French intervention. Yet, there were enough sentiments for using the ethnic roots of
the population for differentiating American and European Spaniards before the independence war. Prior to the independence struggle, these concepts where never presented openly; after the independence, among many things, gender rules changed and women had their social function modified, as we saw the Adelitas charging armed along with their men during the 1910 Mexican Revolution, as the Aztec women fought against the invading Spaniards.

The indigenous and ethnic ways of life were also openly portrayed as desirable and a reality of the forming nation. Artists and authors of all disciplines portrayed the new racial/ethnic standard. The official standard became the Mestizo, no longer the white-man’s standard. Some of the Mesoamerican practices were renewed in the new society while at the same time some of the cultural and behavioral traits of the different indigenous groups were officially eliminated, aiming to create an imagined homogeneous indigenous population with the right mixture of traits to sustain the status quo. The national heroes and founding fathers of the nation were officially selected and upheld. The interests of the white Spaniards born in America along their indigenous and mestizo allies became, for some time, the driving force and structure of what was going to become México. All these ideas and values have shaped the structures of the Mexican government and its relationship with its citizens. And therefore, the identity and behavior of the Mexican people were molded, as it was for other nations.

Pedagogies, performance, and the nation-state practices (and the identities they generate) have critically surfaced at the academic work centered on the daily patterns and identifications of these concepts and entities. Such dissimilar yet linked emphasis have clarified through the context and changing environment,
due to the agendas and aspirations that were defined, the nationalisms, and since the nation-states have articulated wide and varied historical practices, disciplinary power, and [their own yet different] national identities. (Dube, 2011, p. 32 translation mine)

Trauma also generates negative behavioral practices. For the Aztecs, when the Spaniards invaded and conquered México, the world was about to end for many and for their cultures it did. Surviving and adapting to the new culture was both traumatic and difficult because they did not even speak Spanish. Furthermore, the conquest of México created malinchtismo, which literally speaking is the love for foreign things and individuals over those that are local, including the love and desire for a foreign culture, over their own. It is based on the belief that any foreign item, ritual, or habit is far better than the similar in their own native culture, simply because it is foreign. The problem with malinchtismo is that it usually goes beyond that of market preferences or shopping habits. Malinchtismo is slowly but surely eroding the cultural identities of the indigenous population in México, and which to some extent also permeates to the mestizo population. Malinchtismo in this context is linked to racism and other harming stereotypes. Under such conditions, the main characters of the selected films were portrayed as fairer skinned, relative to the rest of the population. Because of such practices, some individuals/groups might harm their own culture. This translated for some into assuming a derogatory or harmful social role. This role-complementation duality would eventually lead a person to an extreme of the ideal of either racial superiority, or a bleak and dismal self-esteem (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011).
Scientists of the relevant fields also categorized identities into positive and negative identities. The negative identities are those that are based on self-hate and self-rejection practices of any kind. Some even unconsciously destroy themselves and their dear ones. Malinchismo is the local practice of negative identities, subordination, and a trait shared by many other conquered cultures. Guilt and always expecting the worst are other social practices that also hurt Mexicans. It is based on physical traits mainly but it also includes local cultural behaviors, practices, and preferences. While there is no agreement about the causes of the negative identities, some relate them to a development-disequilibrium of the identity process itself, while others link it to the oppressor-victim duality and the use of power (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011).

The challenging aspect of ethnic identity, and of every collective identity, is that it requires a collective effort to sustain it. This is particularly challenging in the presence of foreign parties. Sustaining the ethnic identity requires collective loyalty (Lara-Padilla & Vera-Pérez, 2011). The current, modern identity’s attributes are structured over the previous ones, yet the Western influences are aiming for the homogenization of identity and behavior globally. “It is precisely through these procedures, that empires, nations, and globalization are molded, structured, and sutured” (Dube, 2011, p. 33 translation mine).

As previously stated, identity is shaped by complementary social relations through power, difference, authority, and subordination, mixed through culture, gender, social class, status, political associations, and other identity shaping strategies (Dube, 2011). But for other identity theorists, basically sociologists, identity is nothing more than a social construction aimed at reducing social complexity, allowing the involved
parties to establish expectations while jointly defining/creating the social situation based on their assigned identities, both personal and social (Galindo, 2011, p. 60).

Now switching from collective to individual identity, is important to emphasize the role of our body in shaping our identity. Our body is another important identity shaper. Through it we are able to perceive and feel the world. Yet, it is through its similarities and differences, relative to others, that humans shape their identities and eventually their behavior, based on their body and its performance relative to others. Through it we have desires and aversions of all sorts, including sexual inclinations; because of it we have needs too. Personal identity is mostly defined by the physical characteristics of the individuals and what differentiates them within a group, such as their DNA; body characteristics; face; fingerprints; eyes, hair, and skin color; racial and sexual attributes; and voice, among others.

Unfortunately, this shaping process is not society-free. Society not only tells us what we are, or should be, but also what we must do through the gender-based roles. Society also tells us what sex we should be attracted to and to what sex we should not be. Science or the so-called knowledge, traditions, social norms, groups’ ideologies and roles, the hegemonic academic system, indoctrination, media’s shaping public opinion according to certain agendas, and other similar mechanisms attempt to shape our identity and behavior. Social identity is established mainly by the individuals’ social functions or role, but it also takes into consideration their personal identity. Group belonging shapes identity and behavior due to the role played and the relative position the individual has within the group, among other reasons. It is believed that the group’s reputation also influences the members’ identity (Galindo, 2011). Gender-related identity is considered
within the social identity, as is the individuals’ professional affiliation. Nationality and other group memberships are also considered within the social identity of the individuals. Most of the groups or organizations to which individuals belong provide an ideology that contributes to shaping the individuals’ identity and behavior, especially religious and educational institutions, yet class and profession also provide ideological values and codes of behavior. Furthermore, the mission of most current institutions is specialized, a fact that also shapes our perception and identity. By creating the social situation, people create themselves. Finally, a third type of identity is the “I identity” that only takes into consideration personal expectations—no social expectations or other individuals’ (Galindo, 2011).

Gender assignation is a fundamental component of our core identity since, in most cases, we conceptualize ourselves as either men or women (Serret, 2011), yet the male-female duality is a relatively new concept. It is also important to remember that even though most human societies have feminine-masculine functions and attributes based on the sex of their members, those concepts and practices are not universal across cultures. This basically means that there are not universal concepts of what it means to be a man or a woman, but there are only dramatically different local concepts of what their proper behavior entails.

According to the ancient Greeks, in particular Aristotle, humans have a basic essence and the mission in life was to live according to it. Therefore, our identity and behavior should be aimed at that particular mission. Aristotle also believed that the human species presented only one sex with two manifestations, males and females (Serret, 2011). This understanding of humankind allowed more sexual alternatives that
were socially acceptable than we currently have. They had a totally different understanding of gender roles and human sexuality. Their identity and behavior was, therefore, also different. We have to remember the Romans and the Greeks of 2,000 to 3,000 years ago. According to the same Greeks, the male manifestation was perfect and finished while the female manifestation was an imperfect work in progress (Serret, 2011).

The idea that the human species had two different sexes, instead of only one with two manifestations, began circulating by the end of 18th century in Western Europe and the United States, yet the vulnerability of women remains constant (Serret, 2011). The current understanding of the two-sex species imagines that the roles and attributes assigned to each sex and gender are natural, have been and will be eternal, and are universal, but that is not the case. This approach to gender roles and sexuality was aimed at making men equal exclusively; not men and women. The ideology behind this approach aimed at controlling male behavior and used sex as the basis for allowing males to have the same rights (economic, legal, political, and social), while continuing to uphold the submission of women (for which a domesticated woman was needed at home to fulfill her duties as daughter, wife, and mother) (Serret, 2011).

In the two-sex world understanding, men are assigned mainly to the public domain, while women are located at the private space. Men are conceived as autonomous, brave, intelligent, morally superior (relative to women), protagonists, separated from their animal side and nature; women, on the other side, are depicted as not ready for men’s roles and as men-destroyers, developing slower than men even if it is the other way around, and not transformed as much as men (relative to the embryo) and, therefore, are less developed than men (Serret, 2011).
Infractions against the social norms for sexuality and their gender functions are considered wrong and acted upon, sometimes severely, and might include psychological resources or corporal penalties, even death by homophobic individuals and social groups. Other social tools used to shape two-sex individuals to comply with the sociopolitical system in place were androcentrism, biological essentialism, and gender polarization (Bem, 1993). This two-sex approach to the human species has been accomplished by the use of hegemonic science shaping the understanding of human nature and constraining the possibilities and choices of every sex, and then applying the constraints not only to social functions but also to sexual desires. Many sexual preferences and desires that previous cultures had for centuries or even thousands of years ago are not socially available anymore; for instance, homosexuality is formally, socially banned currently, yet that is starting to change in certain countries for political reasons. However, the core identity based on a male-female duality taking into consideration desire, gender, and sex actually creates the conditions for a third sex: those that do not comply with the social norms in relation to the socially approved sexuality. There is also the transgender population that goes through surgery and hormone treatments to change their sex. It is undeniable that the gendered approach to understanding identity—both individually and socially—and behavior was very successful for controlling purposes.

Since we live in a social world, characterized by interactions, each situation is, therefore, the outcome of the parties and how they interacted—based on who they are, what they want, and how they define the situation. That is the paradigm we currently live in. Once identity is established for all the involved parties, along with their rights and obligations, as a complexity reducer theorists analyze the social interaction, its
organization, and operation system; from this perspective, identity has a salient characteristic or true essence, which molds or shapes our behavior in different environments and contexts (Galindo, 2011). A somehow specified performance or adherence to a specific role is expected from a determined individual because that is his or her identity. However, under these circumstances the involved parties make many assumptions and problems might arise, as we will see below.

This approach to understanding identity is important because social encounters have a vast array of potential outcomes, both positive and negative for at least one of the involved parties (since in México the law application might be partial), and definitely humans want to avoid the negative outcomes or contingencies. It is even desirable to obtain only the better positive outcomes. Communication, practical understanding of the situation and technology are some of the tools used to constrain the potential negative outcomes of any social situation for any party. However, it is important to notice that the most effective tool is communication because it can best reduce the potential negative outcomes of most social interactions. For this reason, therefore, society is conceptualized exclusively, according to the perspective of these theorists, as a communication system. Everything social, including individuals, institutions, and even technology, is conceptualized as communication too; everything that is not social is defined as an unmarked space (Galindo, 2011). Social systems, according to this theory, are joined structurally through the personal meaning assigned to the language used, pursuing the reduction of negative outcomes. Yet, language has a symbolic meaning too making communication challenging. But the main weakness of reality under this theoretical lens has to do with deception or the inability to deliver as promised by the generated
expectations, including not having the identity the involved parties claim to have. That is why when in doubt, society has generated the required mechanisms to confirm peoples’ identities and maintain social order (Galindo, 2011).

The individuals’ identities have to be displayed and approved socially; that is why some scientists talk about virtual and practical identities. Even if initially, at every social interaction, identity is considered and taken as a complexity reducer, during the actual performance social expectations must be met. If social expectations are not met, such identities have to be renegotiated and changed. Living in poverty and harsh conditions, many Mexicans use “masks” to try to pass as someone else, complicating the interaction and the outcome. There are also other financial and legal consequences for those who take identities that do not actually belong to them or perform poorly. This is really important because the selected identity actually defines the situation in the current paradigm. Parties at social interactions are active participants trying to achieve specific outcomes. Social interactions are never random. People would act completely differently at a social interaction if they were, for instance, with a priest, doctor, lawyer, professor, athlete, or a friend. Getting undressed in front of a doctor would be acceptable, under certain circumstances, but never in front of a priest, colleague, or a professor, according to social norms. Defining certain situations can be really fast while defining others takes longer depending on if we know exactly who we are dealing with or when we find out who is establishing the situation with us, because people have complementary social roles.

As previously argued, México currently is basically a mestizo country, and to a lesser degree an indigenous country, ethnically speaking from the anthropological
perspective of identity. For centuries now, Mexicans have proudly looked back at our Mesoamerican roots; Mexicans believe that they are the descendants of their indigenous heroes that bravely fought the white invaders, as they were indoctrinated. Aztec blood still flows throughout their veins, but also Spanish blood. Their mestizo heroes courageously obtained independence from Spain and fought the French and American invaders during the nineteen century. Mexicans all share the same culture, history, language, perception of the world, and religion. That commonality, that imagined common ancestry, is what has kept the country cohesive, and that is what created Mexican communal/national identity. Yet, these ethnic characterizations of identity have changed throughout time.

The 19th century was decisive for México. They won their independence from Spain after a bloody war. They were able to successfully repel the French invaders—keeping México for Mexicans. Yet against the American invaders, Mexicans were only able to secure basically half of our territory but lost the other half. During that time, México as an independent nation with a base established to become a republic. Mexicans also have to remember that during this century (1820s to 1920s), while there was an internal, destructive, and bloody struggle over power and resources, there was also a steep international competition to attract investors, along with their investment, and the selection-criteria was the country’s use of “reason, history, and science as means to create a homogeneous entity capable of constant progress” (Araujo-Pardo, 2011, p. 129).

Early in the 20th century, the Mexican elite engineered the national identity and provided the basis for Mexican nationalism. At the time, México was an immense territory inhabited by ethnically and racially diverse social groups. By the end of the
same century, México had created its new ‘official’ history and the country was supposed to be a culturally diverse and plural nation because according to international standards, of the time, nation-states had to “protect and guarantee different ways of life and their meaning-assignment visions of the world” (Araujo-Pardo, 2011, p. 130). Ethnicity was no longer the cohesive factor among the imagined/engineered Mexicans.

Indigenous exaltation was extremely important during the 1910 Mexican Revolution, at the beginning of the 20th century, for that reason Indigenous politics were incorporated in order to include this segment of the population into the country’s revolutionary agenda. Yet at the same time, the indigenous community became the marginalized and dispossessed ‘other’ because they were considered primitive and responsible for being unable to protect the nation against the foreign invaders. The indigenous communities also represented older times that needed to be left behind and modernized, as well as updated with the world. The indigenous languages and cultural diversity were also factors that played a role against such communities and their real assimilation. The innumerable independent indigenous communities needed to be homogenized too so a unique, monolithic, and all-encompassing national identity could be offered to the Mexican population, instead of the many identities that existed in México at the time. It was this artificially constructed yet fake homogeneity that marginalized and dispossessed the indigenous communities in México (Araujo-Pardo, 2011). The shared Mesoamerican roots, independence from Spain, and the 1910 Revolution heroes became exclusively the basis of both our Mexican myths and publically carried out traditions.
During the beginning of the 20th century, once the PRI\(^4\) consolidated its power, the Mexican history was analyzed and part of it became the official history. Books and novels (allowed and otherwise), cultural representations, heroes, foes, holidays, nationalism, practices, rituals, social links, traditions, traitors, and even films—everything was sorted out and became official. Accuracy was not the issue; the issue was to be part of a group to which their members would be proud of belonging. External events and pressures were also officially ‘explained’ and given a specific meaning. The past was established to give sense to the present, in order to have a direction for the future (Araujo-Pardo, 2011). The nation was created along with its ‘mexicanness.’ Mexicans then knew what it meant to be Mexican, where they come from, and what we had endured. If México had a different history, instead of the conformed memory, most likely they would have a different identity and behavior.

Araujo-Pardo (2011) quoting Florescano described the Mexican history this way:

The Mexican history is the outcome of the confrontation of some groups against others; of the affirmations and negations that each group used to describe itself and the others; of the determination of some [social] sectors to impose others their version of the past; of the decision of many indigenous and peasant communities to maintain their own identity. (p. 133 translation mine)

Using this definition of history, the history of México, and many other countries do it as well, is not actually the history but a history where the official version of it becomes dominant—subordinating many others—and therefore, shaping the understanding of what happened and why for the whole country. When changes are

\(^4\) Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
necessary, on top of the official history, the current, dominant, and officially required variations are attached. Similarly, the national institutions and laws, and its political practices along with the economic, sociopolitical, and cultural dynamics and ideology required to sustain the nation-state and the current status quo are also attached to the official history.

However, not all groups remember the events as officially described; for them the nation had a different past and should have a different history too, and therefore, these groups require and do have a different identity and behavior. These groups aim for a different future too. The status quo and real historical contribution of these groups must be incorporated into the official history accurately, granting them the right to self-determination because as minorities they usually had none. Nations in general do not like to deal with minorities and like to show an imagined homogenous popular culture or identity. In the Mexican case, the indigenous and peasant communities have been complaining about this abuse for decades because for centuries they have been excluded from the colonial and now national agenda, given that they do not fit in a modern country as previously explained. These communities, even though publicly and officially praised, had to endure becoming Mexicans in detriment of losing their own identity and culture, and for that reason they might be at the brink of indigenous/cultural extinction, and others, as the Tarahumaras, are literally at the brink of extinction. Cultural or identity-based differentiation is definitely something that nation-states discourage through many means, including illegal, immoral, and unethical tactics because the elite in power want to be perceived differently by other elites. State terrorism in the Mexican case is sometimes veiled reality.
Unfortunately for nation-states, cultural and identity-based differentiation is a
global reality that needs to be addressed and incorporated into the national agenda, which
needs to be reshaped for this reason too, usually somehow incorporating the marginalized
and dispossessed minorities. In the current world, nations cannot be isolated, like in the
past, and nations are forced to engineer the identity and behavior of their populations in
order to fulfill the assigned functions. Anthropologists have proven the existence of
multiple identities, a fact that discourages the idea of a national identity or culture, and
encourages thinking in terms of multiple identities, such as athletes, being from a
particular city; belonging to a certain age, social class, minority social group, or
institution; county or a particular region, sexual orientation, indigenous, peasants,
professionals, students, and women, (Araujo-Pardo, 2011), just to mention a few
examples.

Yet, acknowledging diversity creates problems for nation-states because countries
were supposed to be homogeneous and cohesive, and have only one official history and
memory. Diversity challenges all that for nation-states, for instance, their cohesion degree
and viability, ideas of common development, and the disguise that all social groups are
impacted in the same way. The concept of imagined communities is also challenged
under these conditions. Through its multiple formats, the media has historically printed,
shown, and broadcasted a unified national history/memory unless a specific
history/memory is required (Araujo-Pardo, 2011). However, this practice has been
selectively changing recently by showing what is actually happening to the minority
groups, but without actually and accurately explaining why. Furthermore, at the same
time technology changed the perception of the world and its different players and their
links. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that human beings must at least feel they belong to a meaningful group.

After achieving its independence from Spain, what became México was actually a fragmented territory, integrated by many social groups, but mainly indigenous, independent communities (based on the number of people living there). There was not a unified language at the time. From the 1810s through 1920s México was a lawless country in flames and covered by blood, with temporal exceptions in a handful of its main cities, which included its capital. Yet, even outside such cities, insecurity and death were always present. During this chaotic century, there were additionally two foreign invasions, and México lost basically half of its territory to the United States. This death and destruction severely polarized the population; there was no social cohesion whatsoever. México only existed on paper and maps, yet there was no unified territory and its population did not know what being Mexican actually meant. Spanish was not spoken but in a limited number of cities and towns. These chaotic circumstances also prevented political and economic stability.

Ideology and nationalism became the cohesive strategy for México, especially during the 1920s to the 1940s. The establishment needed the masses to create and consolidate the new status quo in order to fight those that opposed the establishment. The selected ideological base produced an educational system that would disseminate an official history of the country and establish the allowed social interactions. It would also determine how people should behave. This dominant discourse, backed up by national policies, praised the indigenous factor/background of the national identity while at the same time officially encouraged their assimilation into the nation so they could actually
benefit and—from that particular perspective—evolve from their primitive status. Yet this never actually happened. The outcome of these endeavors produced an imagined national identity and a country. This was achieved through education/ideology massive-distribution efforts and some artistic and cultural productions, which included film, literature, radio, and the printed press all of which presented the perspective of the urban elite about the indigenous identity (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011). This approach to identity was from top to bottom. Film played an essential role presenting the approved narratives for particular segments of the population. In the case of the indigenous populations, film denounced, through its narrative, both their marginalization and dispossession circumstances, while at the same time their primitive and barbaric backwardness (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011).

Because the Mexican film directors also saw the international market as potential market for their films, they had to produce films that would attract the foreign audiences as well, giving the indigenous community a stereotyped identity, which included the physical features of the casted actors (usually the main characters have whiter skin and descend from European ancestors while secondary characters have darker skin and look indigenous), their acting performance, the scene sequence (building up and presenting the disputants), and the special effects (usually depicting God or religion over natural activities or what the camera focuses on slowly or rapidly blurs or adding luminosity to some character while darkening others); it is through the special effects that many of the myths were born and race/morality superiority were established (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011). The ideological perception and background were other important decisions that the film
directors made while filming, most likely taking into consideration the governmental subsidies received.

Local identity and behavior were impacted by the films’ representations, yet this incorrect representation of the indigenous identity and behavior also negatively impacted how these communities were imagined abroad (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011). Usually indigenous communities were represented as homogeneously primitive and barbaric groups that severely punished those that breached their laws, especially women who were sexually active outside the social norm. The main characters, usually a couple, were depicted as civilized, good, religiously-bound, and pure trying to do the right thing yet challenged by their own behavioral weaknesses, as well as lack of education and know-how. Further, many of them were stereotyped as gender-driven, and by the structural violence they lived in.

Acculturation was additionally needed to establish México and become Mexican in the 1920s through the 1930s. México and Mexicaness were social constructs required to create a new nation-state and to establish a new status quo. In an indigenous México, lighter-skinned mestizos were meant to be the new myths or superheroes: the new social standard. During this period, the heroes were a virtuoso couple, idolized through certain ideology in films because they were socially engineered to represent civility, functionality, progress, morality and the right values, new social interactions previously discouraged, a new physical standard (non-European and non-indigenous yet whiter skin was, and still is, desired), a new approved behavior, a profession that allowed him to be his family’s provider, and new identity: Mexican. Acculturation was still needed from the 1940s through the 1960s because México transitioned from a rural economy to an
industry-driven economy and because the people were migrating to the cities, mainly México City, from the rural areas mostly but also from smaller cities.

Of course there were voices that were not incorporated into the dominant discourse that banned acculturation and incorporation and demanded independence (social, economic, cultural), multiple identities, and to be part of the national agenda. Unfortunately, those voices were not able to alter the official agenda, change the media discourse, and convince people that stereotyping the indigenous communities was not scientifically sound but was rather based on structural barriers and greed. Those same voices were neither able to prove that the indigenous depiction was a top-down social construction of the time rather than also incorporating the bottom-up social perspective. The bottom-up perspective was the one that would socially share the needs and wants of the indigenous communities. The media perceptions of the indigenous communities have not changed. They are still depicted as primitive people that behave homogeneously as savages and could never change their evil ways; yet not enough people sufficiently cared to take a closer look at their actual situation which involved structural barriers and several different ethnic indigenous groups. Films followed the official directives and discourse, and presented the indios and pelados as part of a homogenous group (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011). Only the main characters and those close to them were differentiated from what was presented as a homogenous group.

Mexican films normally used both crying and laughter to trigger social catharsis that did not threaten the status quo. I focused on melodramas as previously justified, but also because most indigenous films used the same genre (Arroyo-Quiroz, 2011) to represent the structural violence that most Mexicans had to endure historically. Such
groups have done it obediently and silently, without losing their souls from the eternal heaven that religion promised them, because films presented good and bad behavior to their audiences. This new perception shifted the audience’s identity and behavior, as Erickson suggested. The approved behavior was never socially punished in the selected films, yet the characters had to endure hardships and emulate Jesus Christ’s tests. Implied in two of the selected films, Nosotros los Pobres and Macario, the judicial system or someone always finds a way to correct the situation of the wrongly accused victims because God would always find a way to correct the situation and reward good people, both here on earth and in heaven. These types of films used gender as an identity shaping strategy visually depicting the right and wrong behavior for both men and women. Ideology was the lens through which such behavior was evaluated. The religious or spiritual factor for both identity and behavior was always present in the selected films, yet in Amores Perros religiosity is depicted only a useless private ritual or something actually resulting from guilt. Nonetheless, the film suggested to its audience that people had to learn the right way through pain, poverty, and self-destruction. According to this film, people’s objective should be to be reincorporated into society after paying their dues and redeeming themselves.

The idea of dominated groups is not new and the reason behind it is clear. The economic wellbeing of some privileged groups depends on it, especially in a zero-sum world. Therefore, such structural violence is neither random nor natural. In the Mexican case, it has been mainly the indigenous population who benefitted from the mestizo population after the independence and during the first half of the 20th century. (The same applies to Latin America relative to the United States, even though there are additional,
similar examples throughout the world.) Having communities of educated, independent, and self-determined indigenous citizens with equal rights (economic, legal, and otherwise), and full social integration with access to resources including health-related and others, has been difficult to achieve, especially in México. But it is required by NAFTA’s new status quo and according to the new role of governments. However, diversity and inclusion under such circumstances are not part of the national agenda, even though the official discourse gives the impression that they are. México, as a whole, is gradually losing the cultural heritage associated with such communities. In addition to the deprivation these communities have gone through, the relational identity-shaping process always requires a master and many servants shaping the identity and behavior of such communities, escalating and reinforcing poverty cycles for the masses.

From the perspective of the nation-state, its population or citizens must have an identity and behavior, and express their nationalism in a way that differentiates those individuals from those of a different nation-state and among themselves. This is how people are allocated into groups, assigned resources accordingly, controlled, marginalized, dispossessed, and differentiated. Through the assigned identity, individuals provide meaning to their lives and situation, relate to others in their real or imagined group or situation, and establish emotional and affectionate investments (Pérez-Pérez, 2011). Some nation-states even encourage a political identity, while others discourage it. Nation-states also become omnipresent structures that totally control the life of their citizens, through both positive and negative reinforcements, but also through separating people through real or imaginary traits and/or behavior. There are all sorts of institutions that deal with all sorts of people in order better control all types of individuals.
Nation-states shape the identity and behavior of their population through the creation of the national identity that is loaded with the political vision of how, in general terms, that particular people should be and act, assigning them qualities, attributes, nuances relative to others, and certain idiosyncrasies—literally creating a real and a mythological population (Pérez-Pérez, 2011). Media in general but films in particular are successful in elevating to myth constructed role models that would create or sustain a status quo. Since the mythological population also carries out a specific role, a standard of performance is set for the real population. The mythical population disseminates the belief systems (at least the most important traits) that the real population has and shares the required behavioral patterns to sustain the status quo. The mythological population is created in history books, media including film, dominant discourse, the education system, religion, and so on, in order to entertain and control the population. Even businesses in advertising campaigns create their own standard of beauty or way of life for a specific target audience, for instance, to encourage consumption.

However, currently—but for about 40 years now—nation-states are also being impacted by globalization, which is the force that alters, among many other things, the sociopolitical, cultural, military, and economic organization, loyalties, and structures of society, including for instance, governmental, industrial, international relations, labor, and sovereignty practices. Previously the physical environment or territory played a vital role establishing identity, belonging, delimiting power, and resources. Technology made the world smaller and that changed forever; the local environment is no longer the only identity shaper. Power management, style of those in power, and type of government,
along with the creation of sociopolitical structures also helped shape identity and behavior, but globalization has been changing that.

Globalization has changed the traditional way of doing politics within a territory by linking local, regional, and globalized power structures into a mixed arrangement; the economic power has a saying about politics too. Some of the clearer effects of globalization are the growing wealth concentration, media impact, migration, and deregulated trade; it also fosters political and economic power concentration. Globalization takes advantage by creating new alliances; altering the social tissue, context, and the status quo; assigning new hierarchies and rules that only benefit some, therefore creating new inequalities and associations, and excluding most from its benefits. Globalization, in many instances, also threatens the self-determination of certain groups. This process of globalization is also modifying and providing a new perspective to the history of nation-states; it is, therefore, also impacting the current construction of individual and national identities and behavior (Pérez-Pérez, 2011).

Globalization has been directly and indirectly impacting our life, along with technological developments. Nation-states’ borders and traditional loyalties, social classes’ specifications, countries’ bases and number, cultural definitions and scope, economic options, education’s curricula, ethnic alternatives, geopolitics, heroes’ attributes, ideology, access to resources (including money, myths, nationalism, political, production, security at all levels national, regional, and global), social interactions and institutions’ scope, roles definitions, and religious understanding of reality has been impacted and altered by this dynamic, all-encompassing, and wave-like force, and therefore, our identity and behavior along with it because as reality changes so must we.
The identity shaping strategies have embedded their relational patterns, rules, and ideology into social interactions historically, but basically from when we are born until we die. Such social constructs depict proper and improper behavior and, therefore, identity. For instance, class fosters wealth accumulation, thus marrying down is not accepted, and neither is doing business outside the group, under normal conditions. Race does not allow interracial sexual relations for the sake of blood purity. Ethnicity focuses on certain physical characteristics, but also on particular social interaction patterns, shared languages, and religions, for instance. Patriarchy assigns roles to people according to sex, including gender definitions, and distributes resources according to the “generally accepted” hierarchy established. Language uses dominant discourse to describe the environment and how things are and should be. The educational system provides an ideology and theoretical lenses, too, to see the environment. Religion and civil rules and political practices delimit appropriate and inappropriate behavior, along with punishments for deviations. Rewards and punishments are constantly being administered and evaluated by social actors. The identity shaping mechanisms sometimes have been used to manipulate the masses to accomplish something, like invading/conquering a region in the name of God (transferring resources, wealth, power, and rights), or wiping out a targeted group. Science suffered tremendously to Christianity because it was about faith—not knowledge—and control. Now it is the other way around.

This final part of the section applies exclusively to the Mexican case. In a way, it offers a complementary explanation. Now that I have covered how identity and behavior were shaped, I would like to explain why and some additional details. The why will become obvious but Roger Bartra (1986) explains it very eloquently.
There are old and strange psychological and cultural forces that draw borders that separate us from the others. These subtle forces, submitted to the inclemency of the economic and political swaying, are nevertheless responsible for the opacity of a national phenomenon. Among others things, this hidden opacity veils the deep motives by which men tolerate a system of domination and with their patience they imprint a seal of legitimacy to the injustice, inequality, and exploitation. (Bartra, 1986, p. 13 translation mine)

The Mesoamerican civilizations, including the Aztec empire, were extremely religious societies. Even their human sacrifice practices had a religious and spiritual base, which was somehow related to Catholicism’s values as we saw in the relevant theoretical section. Their complete understanding of the universe was religiously based, including their social organization and interactions. For the Mesoamerican cultures, the world was about to end for the fifth time, and blood shedding was important and required in order to gain some time, because for them blood shedding was the vital element required for the universe to continue growing and fertility for their land and endeavors. Aztecs’ barbaric rituals appalled the Spaniard conquerors who at the time of the conquest were unable to see beyond the blood shedding and only needed an excuse to destroy a culture that they did not understand. Controlling, marginalizing, and dispossessing the indigenous populations was what was required to have access to their valuable resources. It was also Spain’s way of accessing abundant resources, because the English did it differently when they colonized what is currently known as the United States. Mexican religious fervor is still impressive, especially relative to other countries, even though according to Castañoeda (2011) Mexicans are now more spiritual than religious.
Malinshismo is probably one of the most enduring effects of the Spanish conquest over the Mesoamerican cultures, particularly in México. Its traumatic effects are still present. This term describes the generalized social preference for foreign people and goods over the local substitute. This was the result of not only the defeat suffered as a result of the Spanish invaders, the cultural annihilation of the Mesoamerican civilizations, or the annihilation of most of their population, but also as the direct result of some important Aztec warriors acting against their code of honor and bravery, scarily fleeing and leaving the defenseless population at the mercy of the invading Spaniards. Women, at the time, had to became warriors to defend their population and culture because some of their male counterparts were simply too afraid and fled. This effect is, prior to the 20th century’s indoctrination and acculturation effects, set in motion to control the local population through the use of roles and other class structures that produce identity and behavior shaping. This effect is translated into a sense of inferiority especially in the presence of a foreigner or an authority figure. Malinchismo is still practiced in the 21st century México, particularly against indigenous and uneducated communities: the indio and the pelado.

During the colonial era, the indigenous populations, mainly but also to a degree the mestizos, were paternally treated as life-long infants without the right or will to assert and defend themselves against the oppressing Spaniards, including their possessions and to a degree their families. During the colonial times, such populations required protection against the predatory practices of the Spaniards. The Spanish Crown designated friars to defend the indigenous population and their rights, to teach them the traits of a profession and Spanish, to Christianize them, and to make them Spanish
citizens. Religion in this case, became the constraining and limiting hedge of their allowed identity and behavior. Guilt, Spanish intimidation tactics, and the inquisition were the most common answer for trespassers. This paternalistic relation also hurt the indigenous and mestizo populations because they were conditioned to be obedient, docile, and even rely on an authority figure to tell them what to do and try to fulfill their needs, as long they were obedient and docile.

The military conquest was not the only one that the Native Americans had to endure. During the religious conquest, which took place during the colonial era, the indigenous and mestizo populations had to assimilate Catholic values and practices. This happened after the military conquest. It is important to notice that the Christian practices and values adopted some of the beliefs of the Mesoamerican cultures due basically to bad translations, assumptions, and lack of understanding of the indigenous cosmology and culture. This process was similar to what Christianity endured when it became the official religion of the Roman Empire, accommodating all the Roman gods and demigods.

Catholicism became a hybrid religion—at least locally. For instance, the after-death beliefs and some other Mesoamerican cosmology traits that were transferred to the saints, which kept their protection capabilities for a certain profession and/or locality, are now part of local belief systems. The Virgin Mary figure that for the indigenous mythology was Tonantzin and who was the revered mother or mother earth, also kept many of the Mesoamerican performance traits, along with the place for homage because the current Virgen de Guadalupe Chapel is where the Tonantzin temple used to be. Many local people believe in reincarnation and ghosts. These are only a few examples of why the Mexican people, through religion, have a different understanding of the universe and
reality—one of which is that God, master of the universe, literally has His own hierarchical structure both in heaven and earth, according to Catholic teachings. It is that different understanding that also shapes Mexican identity and behavior and more importantly, for the purposes of my research, the political system and its practices because the establishment based the system on the traits of its people.

The concepts of México and Mexicanness are relatively new; they are not even two hundred years old mainly because México was officially a Spanish colony until 1821. Furthermore, Mexicans were taught to be Mexican initially in the 1920s and 1930s. White Spaniards born in Europe and in America used these concepts to differentiate themselves not only because their identity and behavior was radically different, as I discussed in the relevant theoretical section, but also because of their Mexicanness, or in this context their place of birth, determined in a constrained form their access to resources. Maximiliano de Absburgo was the first person to internationally and officially use the word México in the 1860s as the name of the country, after being appointed by Napoleón III, as the Mexican emperor. During this period, we cannot blame any of the identity shaping strategies mentioned because none of them—individually or collectively—explained why white people who were raised and indoctrinated in the same way but in different countries behaved so differently. This applies within America and between America and Europe. The indigenous and mestizo Mexican populations at the time were treated differently and, therefore, exhibited a different identity and behavior.

What makes people different, then and now, is the environment and how both individuals and groups relate to it. An additional identity and behavior shaper is the fact that those that came originally to America were looking for a place where none of the old
ways would constrain them—economically, socially, and politically. America was a far richer and larger territory than Europe and that influenced the way peoples saw themselves and, therefore, their behavior.

Furthermore, America, and in particular México, was intended to become a far better place than everything and everywhere else, religiously and economically, mainly since the American and Mexican conquests were the outcome of individuals’ actions and not of the Spanish Crown. The Spanish crown was only willing to risk a determined amount of money in such a risky venture because at the time people believed that the earth was flat. Therefore, the Catholic kings invited investors in order to cap their investment. They then drafted an agreement that specified who would invest what and how the venture’s proceeds, if any, would be distributed. These investors were looking for a better place than where they were coming from, and therefore, they were willing to risk everything, including their lives, to create it. In the Mexican case, the real conqueror was Hernán Cortés, not the so called Catholic king and queen.

The Spanish Crown, along with the Catholic Church, managed New Spain or México for approximately three centuries. Part of the problem in México, at least, was that the Spanish Crown wanted to replicate everything in America as it was done in Europe. In particular, for the conquistadores, they received a reward, or encomienda, for their rendered services to the Spanish Crown, that ended with the life of the beholder, in most cases, and therefore it could not be passed on or given in inheritance. The Spanish Crown was only willing to grant temporal access to resources to its conquerors and soldiers; signaling that the new world was going to be a copy of the old one.
Moreover, European and American white Spaniards in La Nueva España, as it was known in Spain, had different and disproportional access to resources. Spaniards born in Europe were privileged over those born in America during the colonial era. Mestizos and Indians were at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid. There was neither space nor social mobility in Europe to fulfill the dreams and aspirations of the conquerors and their soldiers. White American Spaniards used their Mesoamerican roots and identity to justify their otherness and deviant behavior relative to that of the European Spaniards living in La Nueva España territory. However, this only applied to a small portion of the local population since they represented approximately five percent of the population; the Indian and the mestizo population of México were not directly affected by such dreams and expectations, or with their relationship with the environment because for them it has never changed, if they were not alive during the invasion and conquest.

After the independence from Spain, the former Spaniard colony that eventually became known as México experienced a bloody quest for power and resources that lasted approximately a century, from 1810 to the 1920s. Hate for the European Spaniards, retribution killings from both sides of the bloody struggle, Mexican and Spaniard forces, and destruction of the country’s substructure were the traits of the times. The only important skill of the time was survival. Education was no longer important. During this time too, the French and American armies invaded the country, and México was basically stripped of half of its territory by the Americans; Mexican defeated the French invaders.

During this time, the violent identity and behavior of the Mexicans surfaced again—probably from their bloody Mesoamerican roots. Violence was a useful mechanism needed for survival not only because it was needed to survive in a century
characterized by violence, death, and destruction, but also because looting was an Aztec socially-allowed practice during certain situations, especially when sociopolitical and economic systems collapse. Losing half of the territory to the Americans negatively impacted the Mexican identity because of the loss itself and the embarrassment due to the fact that México was far richer and stronger than its neighbor to the north. Nonetheless, basically all of its resources were shipped to Spain during the colonial era. After independence from Spain, the indigenous and mestizo populations were lured by the insurgents to also become also real citizens (not second class, inferior) if they were to fight for their rights, but this was only a manipulation in an attempt to obtain fighters for and against the American, French, and Spanish forces, in theory at least.

During this time, government officials started attacking the Catholic Church because it represented the previous status quo and because it provided a framework for identity and behavior for the masses. Religion offered a different paradigm, relative to what the independence warriors offered to the masses. Religious values represented a brotherly solidarity and a framework that encouraged a behavior that would provide access to heaven to those that “followed” Jesus Christ’s example and lived according to the gospels. The Catholic Church also educated the masses, promoting a different ideology, and defended them against the new establishment’s abuses; it became the conscience of the masses. Government officials also did it because the Catholic Church had the needed resources to fight both Mexicans and foreigners. Several times but mainly during the Juárez and Elias-Calles administrations, the Catholic Church assets were seized by government officials, and it became a crime to practice the Catholic religion within the Mexican territory. Most priests were expelled, but some hid in the mountains.
As a result of these actions, the Mexican masses were unable to continue studying and lost their opportunity to learn a profession, be adequately assimilated, and profit from the country’s development and solidarity institutions which were forced to close, such as the hospitals and orphanages which were run by the Catholic Church up until then. However, the seized assets never got to the nation’s patrimony due to corruption practices at the highest levels.

The constitution of the time, 1857, never upheld and legalized either the behavior or the desires (including their religiosity) of the masses; on the contrary, it criminalized their Catholic practices and beliefs. Catholics were harassed especially on their way to mass or at church, even though over ninety percent of the Mexican population was and still is Catholic. There were even some killings while people were attending mass at the time.

It is rather unfortunate that the government’s actions against the Catholic Church, as identity and behavior motivators through religion, values, and education capabilities, were upheld and produced a constitution that provided the basis for creating an uneducated and secular majority of the population: the indio and the pelado. This strategy was aimed at better controlling and manipulating the population, especially when there was no system in place and the opposing individuals were struggling over power and resources. The masses’ aid was vital especially during the French invasion, which was repelled, but not so much against the Americans that kept half of the Mexican territory. However, the involvement of the masses did not end there; they took sides and took up arms for and against the struggling Mexican parties of those violent times. Throughout
human history, its population is embedded in the value of a country, which results in rich elite groups.

This particular constitution upheld the rights of a few top officials but denied the desires and belief system of basically all. It delimited the allowed behavior for most of the population while it put above the law a very few—basically the presidents, and their immediate family, and some of their closest associates. The newly created status quo also allowed the conditions for the powerful to take over the country. This constitution literally created two types of citizens. The state used all of its power to control, marginalize, and dispossess the population: the Porfirio Díaz administration was a good example of how this was accomplished and what happened when people had enough. The population eventually took up arms and overthrew the dictator. Unfortunately, the situation has not changed much since that time. The recent Mexican ex-presidents are extremely wealthy while half of the Mexican population lives in poverty and extreme poverty.

Between violence, death, foreign invasions, the masses’ poverty, governmental corruption, social polarization, and substructure destruction, but without religion and education, Mexicans received the 20th century. The 1910 Mexican revolution against the seventh reelection of Porfirio Díaz and the Cristero War were still to come over the next 30 years. A new sociopolitical and economic system was slowly being set in place, and México was about to be born for Mexicans, yet with so many different ethnicities, languages, and cultures.

The Mexican national identity and behavior was about to be created too. However, the country belonged to a tiny elite group, so the rest of the population had to
receive the assigned identity and then act accordingly. The 1917 constitution totally changed the environment, criminalized Catholic religious practices even more, and allowed the government to be able to do anything for the ruling elite.

Initially, the Mexican government, at the beginning of the 20th century, through the manipulation of the education system and its curricula and socialist indoctrination, created the Mexican national identity out of many different ethnic groups, whose languages were also dissimilar. Religious values and real education were, as expected, not part of the recipe for shaping the Mexican citizens. Governmental officials, and those assigned to the task—including intellectuals, academics, and writers—deconstructed the main common traits, including their belief system and religion, of all the ethnic groups living within the Mexican territory. Government officials manipulated those traits in order to justify the new sociopolitical system and be able to control the population (Bartra, 1986). Most likely the most representative trait of all those decedents of Mesoamerican cultures was their religiosity that was degraded and depredated to a meaningless private ritual—not even public. Public religious demonstrations in México are not accepted even today, especially in the political realm. The religious trait was so important then at shaping the identity and behavior because it delimits the allowed identity and behavior and establishes the forbidden ones.

Illiteracy was also an issue especially relevant then because even though Spanish was the official language, there were many indigenous languages in México; Spanish was spoken only by a minority at the time of the conquest. The selected strategy taught Spanish first and then taught the selected educational curricula. That was especially the case because only a tiny minority group was able to read and write Spanish at the time.
During the conquest and colony periods, the indigenous codes were almost totally destroyed, erasing their culture and way of life forever forcing the masses to live in a reality that they did not understand. Furthermore, the population was disseminated throughout the whole territory; there were only a few cities, the rest were only small groups of houses randomly distributed in what used to be Mesoamerica; making it very difficult to send a teacher that only spoke Spanish but not the indigenous languages. It was in the main cities and México City where the indoctrination and subpar education strategy began. This strategy and malinchismo were responsible for the otherness assigned to the indigenous groups; this is a racist practice extensively held in the Mexican population even today.

Furthermore, film shows started in towns or cities where Spanish was the main language spoken. Film was initially used by the Mexican government to show what was happening in the revolutionary front, to justify the Mexican Revolution abuses and excesses and propagate its ideology to the Mexican masses. Yet, film also helped bridge and solve some of the mentioned problems because it showed images describing social interactions. Film too conveyed an ideology across different ethnicities and indigenous languages, mainly through depicting a proud male hero, value-filled, and funny or tear-full cathartic social interactions. Film was the device used to describe the “right” approach to social interactions and the allowable social patterns, as well as presented in a positive perspective the “rewards” of doing it. Films also presented the “wrong” social interactions: drug-induced behavior, violence, and gender traits or stereotyping. Everything, of course, was portrayed with an evaluative ideology.
Films presented the male hero in a positive way and everybody else negatively, but by using different scales and lenses; at the end of the scale were the educated people, because they lost their humanity and used knowledge to get ahead hurting those that stand in their way. Educated people were followed by the rich because they only cared about money and were selfish. Other characters were also portrayed as evil but only some of them belonged to the same social class, as the hero did. Policemen in the older film, Nosotros los Pobres, were portrayed as nice, well-intentioned, even respectful, which demanded obedience from the people; policemen were with a role, guiding and controlling people. In Macario, the armed sector of the sociopolitical system was portrayed as merely doing their job, commanded by either corrupt institutions (the Catholic Church) and/or selfish interests (trying to save a dying son). In Amores Perros policemen were portrayed as corrupt but efficient at their job when they wanted to be. Women, in general were also negatively impacted and constrained by their alleged nature and gender roles assigned to them and the used ideology.

The male hero is very popular with women; women were always fighting for his affections. This character always does what is “right” because that is what society is expecting of him and it is the right thing to do. His values, religious and otherwise, shape both his identity and behavior. Without that particular behavior, he would not be considered a responsible adult and a desired citizen. Yet, depending on the circumstances, he has to be obedient, docile, law abiding with exceptional values, take care of him and his family financially and otherwise, and be very respectful. Under certain occasions the hero fights within his social class exclusively. Since social classes are to be separated by the environment, fighting across social classes should not happen
unless by accident. The male hero is portrayed as an uneducated, hardworking, yet intelligent good man that accomplishes as much as possible since destiny plotted against him. It does not matter how much he tries, he will be tested—just as Jesus Christ was. After each single test, the hero will do the right thing. But in the end, he will be rewarded; all his sacrifices will make sense both in earth and heaven. That is how life is supposed to be lived and made sense of.

The relationship between the normal and paranormal, or divine, is definitely presented in the selected films, especially during the agricultural and industrial periods, but as karma during the neoliberal period. The relationship between these two realms is portrayed as natural and normal. During the agricultural and industrial periods, films portray God and His justice system among men as something normal and natural. God and His supernormal actions and designs have profound implications for mankind based on behavior; good people should get rewarded for their hardships, especially in the next life, and bad people are penalized now but also at the afterlife, as was implied.

Unfortunately, due to government actions, the religiosity of the Mexican people, which translated into good public behavior, was lost. Recently Mexicans appear to be more spiritual than religious (Castañeda, 2011), but their religious public behavior is only ritualized; it has nothing to do with Christian solidarity behavior that is only practiced privately, if at all and to a lot lesser degree, because in most cases it is a meaningless ritual. The Mesoamerican roots and the lack of education and values have made an important segment of the population violent (yet at the same time obedient and docile), because this is the behavior that has been practiced for many generations and was
required to survive. This was the type of engineered citizen that the system required and allowed the PRI to be the hegemonic power that was in office for over 70 years.

Another common factor among the analyzed films had to with the space given to agency. The heroes were portrayed successfully defending themselves against others in the same class or group. But the films never covered the fact that the heroes were not acting in their best interests and even destroying themselves. In relation to other characters belonging to other classes or groups, he was obedient and docile, especially to the police. The hero’s identity and behavior was only shining within his group, but when he comes in contact with others, the divine order will protect him (*Nosotros los Pobres*, *Macario*, and *Amores Perros*). The only exception was the redeemed hero in *Amores Perros* who robbed money from the people, both poor and rich, did not fulfill a killing contract, and kidnapped one of them, but taught the rich guys his life relational philosophy which he learned from a dog. In other words, people do what they can to survive, otherwise good and evil are relative terms, except when killing someone. In *Amores Perros* learning and becoming better was what was important in life, even after destroying himself and others.

The identity shaping strategies appear to be working together and reinforcing each other. They all tell us who we should be and how to behave. The identity shaping strategies even outline the wrong identities and behaviors; each one presents a behavioral and performance standard. The identity shaping strategies assign people to roles with which they are to identify and behave accordingly. These assigned roles also determine their relative importance within the system or society, and usually what people will be able to accomplish in life due to structural constrains. Social mobility in México, in
general terms, is difficult to accomplish. Through these means is how structural violence is accomplished. The films’ heroes do not accomplish much in life from the economic and professional perspectives but were presented as popular and loved, always doing the right thing and with the right meaning of life and the afterlife (or at least on the right path to learn and redeem himself).

However, values change over time, as expected, and violence is now in vogue once again. Violence is allowed and contained as long it does not permeate to the whole country. The 50,000 to 70,000 deaths related to fighting drug lords is an acceptable price according to President Calderón Hinojosa—much of those deaths happened on the northern border and wherever drug traffickers operate, during his six-year administration. President Peña Nieto had the same official record in his first year in office. However, domestic violence, between brothers and husband and wife, is now portrayed as socially tolerated, but rich individuals are taught to learn and know better from a kidnapper/thief in the *Amores Perros* film.

Working in the informal or clandestine sector of the economy is also portrayed in the neoliberal period as currently, socially permitted, even if it means dog fighting or being a thief, kidnapper, and/or an assassin. Social mobility according to the neoliberal film, *Amores Perros*, can only be achieved that way. Religiosity in the same period and film is portrayed as a meaningless private ritual without any actual effect on private and public behavior, like cheating on your husband with your brother-in-law, armed robbery, hurting animals, killing rivals, being a terrorist, or being a corrupt cop. From the film’s perspective everything is about learning and redeeming yourself. Likewise, poverty is necessary to the learning/redeeming process.
All these traits and ideas make Mexicans a social hybrid. Roger Bartra (1986) described the citizens of México as hybrids. Mexicans, according to Bartra (1986), lived in the past when their Mesoamerican roots made them noble and lords of their destiny. The present and future perspectives do not bring positive identities and behaviors for most Mexicans who are constantly looking at the past to see what their identity and behavior should be, instead of looking at the future where the world is going. Sadly enough, many of the historical heroes are just myths, and were invented with the purpose of creating a proud nationalism and love for an imagined society and culture, as well as to keep them entertained, pursuing heaven and not their rights and needs on earth. Moreover, current Mexicans need to reconcile with their past, according to Bartra (1986), because they feel ashamed for losing Mesoamerica, the lost paradise. Mesoamerica also represents the rural México that was destroyed by industrialism which the indio and the pelado were unable to save, reenacting a violent circle of degradation and poverty.

Religiosity or spirituality is another major component of the Mexicans identity and behavior. Religious practices for Mexicans have their origins in Mesoamerica, but Aztec heroes are still part of the Mexican contemporary mythology. Catholic friars during the colonial period also shaped the identity and behavior of all those living in New Spain through religion but now under the Catholic values. During the dark century that went from the Independence War to the 1920s, Mexicans missed their religious practices and had to go to war to get them back (the Cristero War). Unfortunately, most of what took 300 years to accomplish during the colonial era, shaping the identity and behavior of the masses, was lost during the mentioned century. Most of what was lost (basically the catholic way of life and behavior) is still the current concept of religious values and
behavior is which is practiced only in a ritualistic form—it does not permeate into public open behavior. Religiosity or spirituality for many Mexicans does not translate into a specific Christian behavior any more, as it did in the past. Mesoamerican practices, a potentially failing state, and lack of religiosity might foster violence, especially in a country where the war against drug trafficking has produced far too many deaths during President Calderón Hinojosa’s constitutional term and President Peña Nieto has been using the same strategy with the same results.

Another Mexican common trait is the inability or unwillingness of the masses to show their true identity and behavior. That is, the Mexican masses are unable to individually show in public who they actually are, how they actually feel, and how they would like to behave openly. Mexicans are forced to use masks (Paz, 2000), veiling their true self and intimate desires. In their world, that was not allowed. This, at least recently, started with a constitution almost a century ago (1917), which made illegal the way most Mexicans behaved and wanted to be at the time. The 1917 constitution was legally and formally upheld, but most disliked it and were unable to prevent its upholding. Even though many things have been reversed, a prior identity and behavior (the ones engineered by the Catholic Church during the colonial days), are lost forever; Mexicans are more spiritual than religious and Catholic values and practices are nothing but a meaningless ritual, especially for political reasons. For many Mexicans, the current constitution does not legitimize their desired way of life. Even though the constitution remains upheld, the judicial power does not enforce it as it should, legally speaking. The 1994 Chiapas Rebellion was a direct reaction against how some Mexicans were forced to
live both materially and spiritually—against their desires and because the most recent constitutional changes take away from them the land that allows them to survive.

Mexicans still believe that their identity and behavior define who they are and how they should behave. Identity and behavior are for them all encompassing; they do not understand identity and behavior merely as role defined or work related. For centuries, for many Mexicans their profession was part of their identity and what shaped their behavior. For them, their profession gave them ethical codes and performance standards. It was their profession that shaped them, and it was delimited by religious practices, values, and other identity shaping strategies. When Mexican people are out of their role they still live and behave according to their identity and learned behavior, their true nature or essence. Some Mexicans still have trouble behaving differently when they are within a role and when they are not in a role. These Mexicans would have a very difficult time saying that they are not the result of their job or profession because for many generations professions were taught from fathers to their descendants and that is all they know how to do and how they relate to their environment. Mexicans are who they are regardless of their current job, or lack of it, and try to act accordingly. Yet, the context constrains options, especially when people have a family to feed and provide for.

Currently in México, due to financial constraints, many children are forced to leave school and help their parents, working with them or obtaining money, even though the Solidarity Program literally pays the disfranchised parents to maintain their children in school. This situation maintains the nuclear family as the relevant group throughout several stages of the life cycle, for identity and behavior, as an important identity shaping strategy. For this reason education might not be as relevant as family. Furthermore,
culture also encourages larger and extended families living together or close by; the economic constraints also encourage the same behavior. Social and geographic mobility are difficult to achieve for most. It is under these conditions that profession and identity are linked even more, and the children replicate the identity and behavior of the parents.

Furthermore, most Mexicans are still unable to understand and profit from the globalization process. This process is basically designed to eliminate cultural and relational differences and homogenize humankind. Even though the most recent constitutional change (during the 1990s), in particular the one that upheld neoliberalism, requires Mexicans to be proactive and self-determined, yet obedience and docility are difficult to overcome after centuries of practicing them. Being proactive and independent is not a matter of going to school exclusively; it is a matter of being responsible financially, as well as intellectually independent and secure. Yet, half of the Mexican population lives in poverty and extreme poverty. The neoliberal constitutional reform altered forever the relationship that the people had with the government and among themselves; for basically five centuries there was a paternalistic relationship between those in power and the people. This paternalistic relationship was erased by a constitutional reform, at least in theory.

Now that neoliberalism is a reality throughout Latin America, a new identity and behavior is required from the people. This fact is negatively impacting the relationship that the people had with their governments for a long time, altering it forever, forcing the people to become proactive and independent when in the past the masses were passive, obedient, and docile. Another negative impact of the neoliberal policies related to the role of the government. Governments from this perspective are only responsible for providing
a stable and secure environment for markets, which their proponents hope will take care of the social needs. Small governments cannot provide security for everybody within their territories and eventually producing, in many instances, failed states.

Language is another important identity shaping strategy. We all know the power of official discourse; we all have felt it one way or another. All social groups and institutions have it, including teaching institutions. We all know how language discourages some actions while encouraging others. We all have heard about how the same violent actions are depicted and evaluated differently, depending on whom is the party behind it: terrorism or the application of the law and freedom fighters or social justice. We all know how the use of certain words, like disfranchised, assigns no blame and brings into meaning the idea of a sad natural situation in which no one is at fault but fate or acts of God. No accountability is also another trait of official political discourse, and the use of specific language allows it.

Family is the initial identity shaping strategy. Our parents shape our identity and behavior according to their experiences and what they think is normal and good, most likely replicating the same socially approved behavior throughout all of our lives, even as adults, because we continue emulating consciously or unconsciously their example and relational patterns. Children assume as natural and universal what they see at home. Our parents are the first ones to teach us right from wrong; they permanently shape our identity and behavior. The Mexican relationship between parents and their children goes beyond the 18-20 years of age, as in the United States. Furthermore, children at young ages seldom question their parents, and their influence is usually not totally gone ever. As
children grow, they go to other institutions or identity shaping strategies that will continue molding their identity and behavior.

The Mexican education system is the indoctrination institution of excellence used by the Mexican government, and by every country in the world, similar to what religion used to be during the colonial period. It is where the local history is transformed into a myth, where heroes are created rightly and wrongly because every country must have enough heroes to attract convinced followers. Such heroes must depict and convey the so-called right social traits: those required to sustain the status quo. All those heroes, real and make believe, shape nationalism’s values and social structure. The idea is to encourage the masses to belong to this imaginary community and behave as such, to feel proud to be a Mexican and not to question the system or be in its way. In addition, in elementary school, both private and public, on Mondays there is always a speech that aims at shaping the ideas and behaviors of young minds, and encourages a nationalist perspective, similar to the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance practiced in the United States.

Moreover, the Mexican masses were led to believe that education and knowledge per se make people evil and that it is through social networking and hard work that social mobility is achieved. Education and wealth corrupt people according to these ideas, because people do not do what is right but what makes them rich. Class even fosters more certain ideas about money, behavior tied to wealth accrual, and group belonging. Class membership usually fosters wealth accrual and, therefore, discourages all those social associations that produce the dilution of wealth concentration.
Intellectual and elite groups are constantly disseminating these types of ideas among the masses, embedding them in the masses’ belief system and practices. These sort of ideas polarized the social struggles more, but without a real and overt conflict; the struggle is fought through approved and disapproved ideas, beliefs, identities, and behaviors rather than with arms and violently. Many are also too afraid of a violent and bloody struggle similar to what happened from the 1810s to the 1930s. However, as mentioned before, chaos has also been used historically for profit, taking advantage of the weaker parties when systems collapse. Yet, the behavior demanded from the rightly indoctrinated masses would not allow it. People wanted to do the right thing, according to their given belief system, and received indoctrination.

Especially since the year 2000, starting with the Fox Administration, due to the new identity and behavioral requirements of neoliberalism enacted by the constitutional changes during the Salinas de Gortari Administration, the Mexican government began heavily investing in education. The Fox Administration invested 6.4% of the 2004 PIB, significantly higher than the previous administrations. During the Zedillo-Ponce-de León Administration there was not an important additional investment in education. However, it is important to remember that starting in January 1994 (when NAFTA became effective), the Mexican government started fighting the Chiapas insurrection. Furthermore, the investment in education was not immediate because there was huge financial crisis in México at the beginning of the Zedillo administration, due to an important devaluation of the Mexican Peso, which resulted mainly from the political chaos that the country lived during the Salinas-de-Gortari administration, that included

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5 This is GDP or gross domestic product.
the violent death of several important political figures, including the PRI presidential candidate.

I am not aware of other potential causes for this unjustified and important delay. Unfortunately, the educational results were not as expected; indeed, they were far from it. Even though the investment in education is significantly higher than in the past, the results are the same. There is no significant better performance, especially in math. President Calderón-Hinojosa basically used the same approach that President Fox used and essentially obtained the same results. Part of the problem is the corruption associated with the teachers’ union, because not all of the money was used to train teachers and educate the students. Another reason is that teachers are not accountable for the students’ learning but exclusively for their voting power swinging presidential elections.

Education had always been an identity and behavior shaper but it is now forced by the neoliberal constitutional reform and sociopolitical and economic system. The new neoliberal system requires being proactive and independent, both mentally and financially, and this can only be achieved through education. Docile and obedient people are not what the new sociopolitical and economic system requires, as it did in the past. Such traits allowed the old system to develop and the PRI to obtain a hegemonic political position for 70 years. Then from 2000 to 2012 the PAN political party led the country. The PRI won the 2012 presidential elections through a process characterized by illegality, yet the federal institution in charge of the elections declared the results legal, regardless of the innumerable and important illegal acts.

This new context will require new identity and behavioral changes that will take time to become the automatic identity and behavior of the masses; these types of changes
are not short term. Older generations are really struggling with the required change from obedient and docile to proactive and independent, while younger generations lack the knowledge or education necessary to become financially and intellectually independent. This is creating an additional poverty cycle.

To make things tougher, global businesses do not need well-trained masses. Global businesses require a very talented tiny management group; a small but strong computerized production and management system; and cheap, easily exchangeable, minimally trained blue collar labor. For instance, AT&T and Comcast address their American consumers concerns, complaints, or technical-support requests through people actually living in México, El Salvador, the Philippines, or India—in both English and Spanish. The same applies to other languages as well.

In México the situation is basically the same. There is a small, extremely well-trained group that controls the whole country with a robust but relatively small management system that enforces the received instructions and controls the population. The Mexican blue collar labor does not have many options locally and that is why there is an incentive to migrate to the north, and as mentioned, half of the population lives in poverty and extreme poverty.

The knowledge/education that the Mexican masses receive is not topnotch; actually it is the opposite. Approximately two percent of the Mexican population holds a bachelor’s degree. Masters and doctoral degrees are even scarcer. According to Vargas-Llosa (2005) education or knowledge in Latin America is neither encouraged nor paid for; ignorant and starving people are easier to control. That is the logic behind it. There is a differentiated access to knowledge, however, in México. Locally is about private and
public schools. Locally private schools are significantly better than public. Those lucky few that are able to study abroad face educational options, many of which will not solve their personal situation or what the country requires due to business practices that foster dependency on foreigner supply.

Another trait of the masses has to do with the obedience they show to the authority. There is not a better way to control someone than by letting that person control his or her self through all the identity shaping strategies. The problem here is that the authority is corrupt and not accountable, and the masses are learning that it is possible. Many of them do not even remember the horrors of the century of blood and destruction that ended with the 1910-1920 revolution and Cristero War. This obedience goes beyond professional and/or affective reasons; it is based on the traits given to authority, based on the local mythology. Films only presented the hero’s obedience to police or the effectiveness of those in authority dealing with unwanted identity and behavior. This is in many cases translated into an automatic, authorized behavior. In reality, fear of the police is also another important motivator to behave as deemed appropriately by those in power.

This type of hybridism creates problems because it does not allow Mexicans jointly, as a country, to successfully compete. Castañeda (2011) describes the main Mexican traits that do not allow them to successfully compete jointly: individualists permanently avoiding collective actions; conflict-avoiders; respect of forms and appearances; always veiling personal emotions, interests, ambitions, and aspirations; tendency to feel the ‘victim’, especially to foreigners; scorn for the law; tradition admiration; and corruption generators (pp. 20-22). Yet for me, religiosity is the main characteristic of the population.
The theoretical lenses were very useful to see how people were categorized, kept apart, and identifying the means to achieve it. Marxism presented the effects of the marginalization and dispossession product of the categorization and indoctrination. Foucault also described the separation of individuals into groups and the categorization of people to define identity and behavior with the purpose of controlling each and every group. Each group sees a different environment due to the substructure and resources assigned to each group. Furthermore, each group on many occasions lived separately according to their financial means, a situation that reinforces the identity and behavior of the group. These theoretical lenses proved very useful to understand the effects of shaping the identity and behavior of the individuals and the national identity as well.

The relevance of the identity shaping strategies varies according to the life cycle of the individual and the relevant group at each time. For small children the relevant group is the family. Within this group, the identity and behavior are those allowed by the parents or the patriarch/matriarch of the group. When the children go to school, indoctrination activities, teachers, and peers add to the ideas, values, identities, and behaviors available. Later in life, individuals are also assigned a role with gender specific functions by each group they belong to. According to the relevant theories, transitions encourage conflict within the group but also mean a greater array of options for the individuals to choose from in their identity and behavior repertoire. Class, for instance, also reinforces the other identity shaping strategies because it too defines and approves the right identity and behavior.

Every single identity shaping strategy defines right and wrong identities and behaviors. It also defines membership criteria and otherness. The identity shaping
strategies reinforce each other likewise. Each identity shaping strategy is also primarily aimed to search for otherness rather than focusing on similarities. It is about not letting other people belong because belonging to a particular group means having access to resources and to a particular environment. The overall effect of the identity shaping strategies is to confine people to an environment and a role. Such barriers determine access to resources and the relative importance of people within the group and the overall sociopolitical system. All the standards and norms of the identity shaping strategies are internalized, and individuals create a role model or mythological self which is the essence of the individual that shapes his/her behavior and becomes his/her lenses to see and understand the world.

Film is a great tool for transmitting identity and behavior pro forma values and criteria. As I described above and in the relevant sections, the films’ characters tell the masses how to behave and what the right identity and behavior is.

**Implications**

Identity and behavior can be shaped using—any, some, and all, independently or in a coordinated fashion—the identity shaping strategies or through other social mechanisms. For other theorists, power is what actually is needed to accomplish such a goal. But regardless of how it is achieved, the identity shaping strategies can also be used to create financial certainty and constrain others by homogenizing the social rules that control social life. But by doing so, people have to accept the assigned identity and behave according to such rules. When people accept the assigned identity provided by such social rules, control, marginalization, and dispossession have been achieved, especially when people are entertained, not really looking at what is actually happening,
pursuing a dream that is not such, trading current satisfaction for heaven or learning what life is all about, consuming beyond their means, or acting as if they were someone that they are not.

Acting irrationally in relation to the environment and context assures poverty circles of all types, even if society encourages such behavior, or should I say especially when that happens. There is nothing worse than doing, for a long time, something that you do not enjoy, or even worse something you dislike. Even repetitive, meaningless jobs are hard to endure because such jobs do not add or teach anything. Such types of jobs produce dissatisfaction that permeate to all others aspects of life. Marx believed that the available jobs under capitalism took creativity away from labor, and creativity for Marx was a must that labor must enjoy.

Furthermore, when people are in a role, their performance must meet the standard set for it. Under such conditions, performing up to the standard is even more challenging because labor must not only reach both qualitative and quantitative standards assigned to his role but also social standards, which means they must become role models for those that watch them. Roles also have embedded the relative importance of the person in the system. By doing so, the position holder becomes trapped in that particular role; he or she will be treated accordingly, but most importantly he or she will be held responsible for the expected performance.

Nature’s options are not only binary. Gender roles do not fulfill all; there are many options that are not currently available due to the duality enforced. Additionally, for those that accept most of such roles, not all of the roles are satisfactory and many might be constraining. Current gender options discriminate against many, paying less for
the same job and performance when the gender standard is not met which benefits the establishment exclusively. The excuse might vary but the outcome is always the same: men should perform certain tasks and women others. There are, of course, some exceptions.

As paradigms shift, the masses continued to be entertained so the elite groups can continue controlling, marginalizing, and dispossessing them. First it was about God, now it is about gold and what it can buy. For some, however, life should not be about material pursuits. If people do not have a clear understanding about the real purpose of life, there is the risk of living a meaningless life. However, life requires material things and for that reason pursuing one’s own interests is important, even if society says that that is not as important as something else or that it should be swapped for eternal life. That is why some of the available identities and behaviors are self-destructive or can hurt others, so regardless if people are alive to learn, hurting the self and others should not be an option.

Identity and behavior shaping do not allow the masses to fulfill their own needs. That is especially the case when people act against their nature or essence. Most people in the world are having trouble fulfilling the physiological needs. Moreover, most jobs globally available might only satisfy the lower human needs. Usually the love, affection, and belongingness needs are closely linked and impacted somehow by financial conditions, negatively impacting the masses because most relationships have an important financial element embedded. Therefore, in most cases the esteem and self-actualization needs are only reserved for elite members, or those that exceptionally sustain the status quo. These conditions assure financial and emotional poverty for most.
Wasted lives pursuing assigned dreams while constraining personal essence should not be what life is about.

Policy

The Mexican identity is currently, as always has been, experiencing significant attacks. Such attacks come from several fronts: NAFTA, drug related problems, and poverty being the most obvious. In relation to NAFTA, it has three main effects. The first effect has to do with forcing the people to become both proactive and independent, mainly financially and intellectually. (This is a requirement of the sociopolitical and economic system that a constitutional change upheld and which was formalized during the Salinas-de-Gortari administration [1988-1994]. Yet for generations, mainly the masses have been obedient and docile and that is why this transition has proved difficult for older generations especially, yet younger generations are not better off.) Furthermore, it is important to remember that since the Mexican government has been reduced both in its size and scope, due to neoliberal requirements, the relevant environment changed once again in México. For this reason, the Mexican government has been importantly reducing its involvement in social issues, and therefore, ending at least 500 years of colonial and governmental paternalism. The governmental ability to adequately control the entire Mexican territory has also suffered as well.

Secondly, the additional educational requirements of the last few administrations have not yet paid off. The Mexican masses have not been significantly better educated. This little additional education has not provided the required financial and intellectual independence that NAFTA requires in México. Furthermore, this national educational quest has not been achieved partly because of the teachers’ union corruption, corruption
in general, local macroeconomic policies, business practices, some local practices and ideas that deter knowledge, and other causes.

The third effect of NAFTA is poverty due to the macroeconomic policies set in place. The end result has been that approximately 50% of the Mexican population lives in poverty or extreme poverty. Constrained access to resources and forced migration, both locally and internationally, has also had important effects over the identity and behavior of the Mexican masses. In addition to the identity and behavioral effects, the Mexican masses have not been able to fulfill their most basic human needs, without life-long prospects of changing that legally. Both education and structural barriers compound the constraining effects over most of the population.

The Mexican identity is also becoming violent. This is mainly due to the drug trafficking and selling, including territorial-market control wars among drug kingpins. This has been happening throughout the country but mainly on the northern border (with the United States) and certain states, like Michoacán and Sinaloa. Yet, the whole territory has been affected. The average drug-related deaths in the country average 5,000 to 10,000 per year since 2006, depending on the source. This situation is actually a war, where the local population has been taken hostage and endured tremendous hardships and human loses. Lack of education and solidarity values, along with access to drug-related resources have forced many to pursue a quick death rather than life-long starvation. This is happening throughout the Mexican territory, yet the government has only been successful securing certain parts of the territory, in particular the capital and surrounding area.

What is going to happen to the Mexican National identity is difficult to predict because it depends on if the Mexican government actually secures and controls the
national territory and adequately provides access to resources to the masses. Social polarization and breakdown is both evident and dysfunctional. But the Mexican situation is impacted by the socioeconomic reality of the world, mainly the United States and Western Europe. If the masses do not meet their minimal requirements, social turmoil is not farfetched. The national identity, their socioeconomic reality, their lack of socio-religious values, and negative perspectives might encourage social unrest and even violence. This is what is already happening in the country. On the other hand, if the context changes and important social changes take place, the national identity and behavior can potentially be appeased. This, though, will take more than dominant discourse and meaningless goods and services. Alleged progress and entertainment will not be enough either. People need to actually fulfill their needs and be able to provide for the future.

The policy related to identity and behavior shaping should include both things to do and things to avoid. Shaping people’s identity and behavior should not be allowed, especially for control, marginalization, and dispossession purposes. Under such circumstances, the masses would never experience a complete, rich, fulfilling life. Furthermore, under the current conditions, the masses only are allowed to experience poverty in all its realms: financial, intellectual, and emotional.

In most cases, films present the masses with an environment that looks closely like the actual one but the required performance hurts them in the actual environment. So, when films encourage the masses to act in a specific way, and even if the masses’ performance is natural according to their essence and traits, in the real environment such noble performance would negatively impact them.
Furthermore, humanity has to stop living in a zero-sum world. If all human beings are allowed to fully develop, many lives would not be wasted, and therefore, more richness would be created to be shared by everybody. For instance, we do not live in a world with insufficient resources, even if media and some films present it like that. We live in a world where such resources are highly concentrated in few hands, both locally and globally. For this reason, the environment should always be described as it is and performance’s outcome should never be veiled for someone else’s benefit.

Structural barriers should neither be used to constrain people’s identity and behavior. This is done by creating significantly different environments and assigning people to each of them. In such environments the access to resources and the rules are different. Such structural barriers should not constrain human development, especially in a way that the victim is blamed for what the system is actually and deliberately doing. Poor people are deliberately kept ignorant, and therefore, poor too. Stereotyping and racism should also be avoided at all costs.

Media in general and film in particular, should be used neutrally to objectively depict the environment and context. Media should not be used to manipulate public opinion and pursue a particular way of life or a desired performance. We have to remember, diversity enriches people in general and should be encouraged. Additionally, media and film should not be used to manipulate identity and behavior.

It is essential to empower those that need it because they have been affected by identity and behavior manipulation, and have been controlled, marginalized, and dispossessed. It would be great if someone would explain how the world really works so they can understand the reasons behind their circumstances. But in the meantime, one of
the best ways to accomplish this is through education. The masses and the elite should be educated in the same way with the same knowledge. Structural barriers are responsible for the different performance, not lack of competence. Furthermore, education should not be assigned fixed curricula but rather something specifically tailored, as well, to the students’ needs.

Gender roles should be more inclusive and replicate the population’s needs and desires. The limit should not harm others and be self-destruction. Social interactions should be altered to enrich the individuals’ lives rather than constrain them to sustain a status quo. Sexual orientation, as well, should not be a criteria used to stigmatize anyone and isolate him or her. Roles should not be assigned based on sex but on interest and/or performance. In other words, roles should be awarded to those that want them and/or to those who are good at it. This should be, of course, regardless of the sex of the role-aspirant. Social and professional requirements need to be fulfilled only by those that would like to do it and/or excel at it, including household duties. Social and professional promotions should take into consideration both desire and performance.

Gender definitions should be established by the individuals alone and not by society. People should define who they should be and want to be without social pressure. Society should neither define what is proper and improper directly nor through ideologies and other identity shaping strategies. Identity definition should be a natural phenomenon where ideology, conditioning, religion, education system, and all the other identity shaping strategies should not be involved. Individuals should have the right and option to really define who they need to be, how they want to behave, and who they want to be with. Currently, society trains and indoctrinates both men and women to fulfill society’s
needs and requirements. This is done in such a way that society works adequately and certain groups are benefited. However, certain individuals’ behaviors are constrained because in many cases the desired options, in other societies and/or times, are or were available and perfectly accepted socially, like when the Greeks and Romans a few thousand years ago.

Public and private realms should be accessible to all that would like to be part of such realms, regardless of their sex. Women should not be forced to stay at home if they do not want to and men should also be responsible for house chores, and therefore, should also be trained for such purposes. At home, it should not matter who does what, as long as what needs to be done is actually done in a loving and nurturing way.

Every individual, each social group, and every society should have the right to define the roles that are aligned with their desires and that of their members. The only constraint should be that the needs of all the individuals and members are adequately fulfilled. Most likely role definitions will differ between individuals, social groups, and society; as it is happening today.

Society has to change in order to address the people’s needs. Diversity and sharing have to be part of that social change. People have to learn to go past differences and see common needs and desires. Social interactions should be functional and harmonious. If that is not the case, that should be corrected so that disfunctionality and disharmony are rectified in a way that a cohesive society could exit, and not only be imagined. Social interactions should also encourage a more organic relation with the environment, with fair and equal life conditions for everybody.
In relation to ethnicity, behavioral differences should never be used to establish hierarchies and distribute resources, not even when linked to religion with the purpose of establishing and justifying sociopolitical and economic structures. Ethnicity is an important force against homogeneity and cohesive, imagined societies.

Diversity needs to be addressed differently. Society needs to stop looking at physiological and behavioral trait differences and start focusing on human needs and behavioral motivations. This will prove that we are all the same. This will demonstrate that in general terms, we want to satisfy our same human needs, though differently.

The education system and media should be the most obvious mechanisms to achieve this goal. Yet, both mechanisms have to be controlled and audited to ensure goal achievement.

Religion is an important identity shaping strategy because for thousands of years people have believed in something greater than themselves and which they did not understand. Furthermore, religion is an ideology in itself that establishes hierarchies, ways of life, and adequate behavior. It, additionally, provides meaning to hardships, dispossession, and hopelessness.

I believe the social role of religion should be to get the people closer to God; help them understand Him, as well as His ways and designs. Religious institutions should never compromise their role in an attempt to control the population for the benefit of an elite group. For this reason, religiously approved behaviors should not be used for marginalizing, dispossessing, and controlling purposes. It should not be used to legitimate sociopolitical and economic structures or conquest wars.
Religiously based behavior might be encouraged and used for social solidarity. Functional and harmonious social relations can be enriched. There are some religious values that might be socially correct even currently when religious behavior is only an empty, meaningless ritual.

Finally, media should never exploit the masses’ belief system. It should not try to influence and manipulate public opinion to benefit of the ruling elite. It should focus on informing and describing, even entertaining, but not for controlling, dispossessing, and marginalizing purposes.

Limitations

The limitations to my research had to do with the type of methodology used. For many academics phenomenology would have been a better fit in order to understand the inner process for selecting a particular identity and behavior. Yet, since identity shaping is an unconscious process, I chose narrative description. Nonetheless, hearing what people think and feel about this process would have been both enriching and complementary.

I only analyzed a film from the rural, industrial, and neoliberal periods, for a total of three films. The messages from the rural and industrial periods were similar. However, the film from the neoliberal period presented different messages and environment. Probably an additional film from the same period would have produced saturation.

Additional Research

More research has to be done in relation to the effects of media over identity and behavior, because there is not enough and people assume that identity shaping and behavioral choices are independent of the media messages, but as this research has
proven that appreciation is incorrect. Media and film in particular have profound effects over identity and behavior, especially with children and young adults. Furthermore, there is basically no research about this topic, especially about Latin America. The same research can also be performed for television and print media. Most likely the target audiences would be different. A phenomenological research would potentially be a great tool to determine how media messages and values transmitted have effects over identity and behavior.
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Appendix A: English Transcript of Nosotros los Pobres

Main Characters

1. Pepe “El Toro” (the Bull)
2. Chachita
3. The Consumptive (Yolanda)
4. The Romantic (Celia)
5. Don Pilar (The Romantic’s Dad)
6. Lawyer Montes
7. The Sleepless
8. The Paralytic
9. La Tostada
10. La Guayaba
11. Topillos
12. Planillas
13. Others

Dialogue

Producer’s Warning: In this story you will find raw phrases and situations …
But I appeal to your open mind, since my intention …
Has been to portrait a faithful picture of the people …
Who live in the poor neighborhoods (vecindades) where …
Side by side with the seven deadly sins …
Grows virtue and kindness and the greatest of all heroisms: poverty!
People from the city slums …
Constantly struggling with destiny …
Take their strength from puns and nicknames.
My effort is for all those simple and good people …
Whose only sin was to have been poor.
Here we go!

Group of people: Laughing is so nice, loving is so nice…living is so nice, and women.

Topillos: That itch in my heart is so nice.
Tostada: This sensation is so nice, nothing to discuss woman!
Planillas: This plate with beans and a good loaf of bread.
Guayaba: The highball [an alcoholic beverage] is so nice, nothing to discuss, woman.

Group of people: Nothing to discuss woman!
Pepe: Women are so very beautiful… when they really love us… but man, when they fight… their moms should stand them… nothing to discuss, woman!

The Romantic: Singing is so nice at a loved one’s lips…when they know how to woo.

Drunken man: Nothing to discuss, woman!
The Romantic: Soap is so nice, it painted me so nicely.
Chachita: Hurry, Baby, go to dad.
Drunken man: Nothing to discuss, woman!
A man: Parties are so nice when you are with good friends…but if someone gets cold feet... nothing to discuss woman!
Group of people: Nothing to discuss woman!
Pepe: I was born a lowlife, yes sir….but I like it, what the hell! Come on, be brave my friend… its worse when you are a coward…nothing to discuss woman!
Chachita: If you must work in order to get food…you shouldn’t play hard to get.
Guayaba: Nothing to discuss, woman! I’m more beautiful than you.
Tostada: But more stupid than me
Topillos: You are both so mean!
Drunken man: Nothing to discuss woman!
Pepe: Mr. Bread Maker your bread is so cheap… it makes my heart pump… that is a song! The milkman is delivering his bottles. Be careful don’t slip!
Everyone: He did slip.
Pepe: Oh, women are so very beautiful…when they really love us… but man when they fight… their moms should stand them.
Everyone: Nothing to discuss woman!

A lady: Here Chachita, for the washing.
Chachita: Thank you. Would you like an orange? (Turning to her dad, Pepe)
Pepe: Don’t change the subject! You know I don’t like you washing other people’s stuff.
Chachita: Come on, dad… it was just a dozen.
Pepe: Even if it was just a handkerchief! People talk. They’ll think I can’t provide for you.
Chachita: Well, well… don’t get cranky.
Pepe: Don’t call me cranky.
Chachita: Well… loon.
Pepe: Well that’s enough. Be quiet.
Chachita: Okay Forgotten
Pepe: Forgotten.

Topillos: Tostada!
Planillas: Guayaba!
Topillos: Ladies! Go home!
Planillas: Go and do what is suitable for your gender.
Topillos: Ladies! Ladies… go home!
Tostada: Home? What home?
Guayaba: Home… run [drowning the suffering – they are playing with the sound of the words in Spanish that mean something totally different], I guess. Do you want a drink?
Tostada: Sure thing!

Topillos: Look! What beautiful furniture!
Planillas: It should be for a worthy bride, shouldn’t it?
Chachita: Go ahead, then! Get one done for your girl [meaning woman].
Planillas: No, the straw sleeping mat is enough for Guayaba to scream.
Topillos: That’s right.
Planillas: Hey, Topillos…
Topillos: What, Planillas?
Planillas: Get it for Tostada. Won’t you?
Topillos: Come on! She’d fall from the bed! I’m just teaching her how to scream on a cot…and I have to tie her up, she gets convulsions.
Planillas: Come on!
Chachita: Your sticks are ready. Take them with you.
Planillas: Chachita, how much will you charge for them?
Chachita: Make it …. 30.
Topillos: 30?! Torito… (Turning to her dad, Pepe el Toro.)
Pepe: What’s up?
Topillos: She wants 30 for those sticks.
Pepe: So it be, man. She’s the manager. She washes our clothes and she irons.
Topillos: She charges 30 and we feel like dying.
Planillas: We’re so stupid!
Topillos: Come on. We’ll be right back. We’ll just take a leak.
Planillas: We won’t be long.
Pepe: Go ahead.
Planillas: Excuse us.
Topillos: Come on, man!

Pepe: What is it? (Turning to little boy)
Little boy: I don’t want to go in because Chachita is jealous…and if she finds out that I am playing cupid… she’ll be upset.
Pepe: Why cupid?
Little boy: My sister told me, to tell you…that you have a call from one of your girls.
Pepe: For me?
Little Boy: So, she said “Go and tell that Don Juan Tenorio carpenter…one of his girls is calling.” Wow, Juan Tenorio!
Pepe: Don’t call me that, brat, or I’ll kick your teeth out!
Little Boy: Yeah right, you’re so cranky. Hey, Torito! Lend me your lucky charm so I can get some chicks too!
Chachita: Here’s your lucky charm! BAH!

Bartender: What else do you want?
Tostada: Two 3 peso sours [alcoholic beverage] more.
Guayaba: No, Tostada… No, Tostada. She should pour [a] tour [of] 2 pesos drinks, they’ll last longer.
Tostada: Look Guayaba…
Guayaba: What?
Tostada: When I ask for something, don’t contradict me. Okay?
Guayaba: Alright.
Tostada: Three 2 pesos [drinks]?
Guayaba: Okay.
Tostada: (Turning to bartender) Then pour four 3 pesos [drinks] each.
Guayaba: The bill is for her.
Tostada: Look! She poured them already!
Pepe: Do I have a call? (Asking bartender)
Bartender: Yes…
Pepe: Don’t call me “Juan Tenorio”! (Turning to the little boy).
Little boy: Oh, you’re so touchy.
Pepe: Hello? (Talking into the telephone) They need you over there.
(Turning to the bartender.)
Bartender: Thank you.
Pepe: Yes Miss? (Talking into phone) Oh…. Yolanda!
Guayaba and Tostada: Yolanda…..!
Pepe: I have nothing to talk to you about. Think whatever you want. I couldn’t care less. That’s the way it is, you wanted it so. Why don’t you find your husband and tell him?
Guayaba and Tostada: Her husband…..!
Pepe: Don’t be so brave. (Talking into phone.) Yes, many things are easy to say on the phone. Well Yolanda, you know me! Even if you don’t agree! What the hell?
Bartender: Don’t worry, Torito, it was loose already.
Pepe: I’ll put some plaster to put it back.
Bartender: Oh…
Pepe: What? I was forgetting…
Bartender: It’s nothing. You know you could live here and pay no rent.
Pepe: Well, thanks.
Bartender: Oh, Torito…Remember the cross I asked you for?
Pepe: Don’t worry babe.
Guayaba: Yolanda?
Tostada: Yolanda. This one is the tenth, I think.

Plantillas: Man! What’s going on with these nuts?
Topillos: He asks, does she love him very much. A lot! Last night she
dreamt of him. He did too. Tell me how it was, she asked. I can’t
tell you, he responded. She wants him to sing her a song.

Pepe: Here it goes.

Topillos: Here it goes!

Plantillas: Let it come!

Topillos: It will!

Pepe: My sweet love…I am craving…for a kiss…to be lit in the heat…of
our huge love…my love. I want to be…one single being…one
being with you. I want to see you…in love…so I can dream. In the
sweet sensation…of a biting kiss…I would like…my sweet
love…to tell you about my passion…for you. Partners in
good…and wrong…not even years…will be too heavy for us. My
sweet love…you will be…my love (Singing to The Romantic.).

Romantic: Come on! Don’t hit me! (Turning to her steep father.)

Romantic’s dad: Look at what you did while you were flirting! The eggs are on the
floor and you’re frying the eggshells!

Romantic: What do you care?

Romantic’s dad: Don’t talk back to me or I’ll slap you!

Romantic: Go ahead!

Romantic’s dad: I care because your nonsense is affecting us all. We can’t afford to
buy more eggs! They’re not free!

Romantic: I’ll buy them, what the hell.

Romantic’s mom: Don’t talk like that to you dad.

Romantic: Stepfather.

Romantic’s mom: Respect him.

Romantic: He shouldn’t mess with me.

Romantic’s dad: I shouldn’t? You know I…

Romantic: Okay, cut it. I’ll get some errands; I don’t want to fight with
junkies.

Romantic’s mom: Daughter, please…!

Romantic’s dad: Junkies! You’ll see. What if I am a junkie? You need to have
some vices…

Romantic’s mom: Calm down.

Romantic’s dad: Why telling me?

Sleepless: Hi Torito. How are you?

Pepe: Fine. You got up early today.

Sleepless: I haven’t been to bed.

Pepe: Oh, you work very hard. Excuse me.

Sleepless: Are you telling me to leave? Great! That’s what I get for being
bitchy.

Pepe: I’m not telling you to leave, but…

Sleepless: Oh, are you afraid she’ll hit you?

Pepe: It’s because of the girl. I don’t mind talking to you. I am a man.
Sleepless: Nice medal. Can I have it?
Pepe: Neither you nor anyone! It’s a gift from my mom. Hey! You got it loose!
Sleepless: I’m sorry! I’ll put it back on. Oh, I can’t! I can’t…
Pepe: Come on! Be still!
Sleepless: I can’t…
Chachita: Excuse me…. excuse me…excuse me… excuse me…excuse me!
Sleepless: That’s enough, kid!
Man 2: At your service (Talking to The Sleepless).
Sleepless: What?
Pepe: Where is the plaster I told you to get? (Talking to Chachita)
Chachita: On the workbench, can’t you see it?
Pepe: What’s wrong with you? Answer, what is it? What’s wrong with you? I am talking to you!
Chachita: Nothing. I didn’t like seeing that The Sleepless… was embracing you.
Pepe: Answer me when I’m talking to you! You made me do something stupid! And she wasn’t embracing me; she was putting my medal on!
Chachita: I can’t discuss, you win…but I saw her embracing you!
Pepe: You saw wrong!
Chachita: She was biting your ears!
Pepe: That’s enough! Forgotten.
Chachita: Forgotten.

Sleepless: Hello, sister [meaning sis or girlfriends]. (Talking to the Romantic)
Romantic: You were at the carpenter’s right?
Sleepless: Yes, I wanted to see if you were there.
Romantic: You know Torito, (Pepe) doesn’t like me being near you.
Sleepless: Oh… You’re ashamed to be my friend.
Romantic: I’m not ashamed, but…
Sleepless: Did the junkie hit you again? You should leave that house! Look, that’s Lawyer Montes.
Romantic: Yes…lately he’s become my shadow.
Sleepless: He has more money than a thief.
Romantic: Come on.

Topillos: Hey! I think someone’s messing with Torito’s woman!
Planillas: At least they’re fooling him!
Topillos: Women are like that!
Romantic: (Talking to the Sleepless) No, I can’t leave home. I don’t want to leave mom alone with that man. Even when I’m there he’s constantly beating her! If I left, he’d kill her.
Sleepless: What did your mom see in him?
Romantic: Love…sis. She’s really in love with that guy.
Sleepless: Well the problem is hers, not yours.
Romantic: It’s mine too.
Sleepless: Como on! Are you in love with your step dad too?
Romantic: No way! But I love Torito…
Sleepless: Your case is hopeless. Don’t tell him I told you…but I saw him talking to a girl who has a birthmark here. You’d get in a big mess! Imagine! You’d have to deal with his mother! And she’s such a pain the ass!
Romantic: Love can deal with anything, sis. Well, you go ahead so they don’t see us together.
Sleepless: Yeah, right as if you could pervert me…
Man 3: Some charity for the love of Christ.
Sleepless: I have nothing today, blind man.
Man 3: Oh, it’s you, Miss!
Sleepless: Thank you, anyway.

Lady2: Chachita…
Chachita: Coming.
Lady2: I don’t want to bother you, but it’s time to pay the rent.
Chachita: Hold on a second. The one with the bills is too poor. And the one with cents…is even worse. No, it’s not enough. Mrs, its only 3 pesos short, but The Sleepless wants me to wash her clothes. As soon as I have the money I’ll give it to you.
Lady2: Ok, Chachita.
Chachita: Just don’t tell my dad, keep it to yourself.
Lady2: I know, girl, I know.

Little Boy: My sister told me to tell you not to forget her cross. (Talking to Pepe)
Pepe: (Turning to Chachita) Chachita…
Chachita: What’s up?
Pepe: Where are the 1.5 nails?
Chachita: The ones for the cross?
Little Boy: Yes, tomorrow is Dead People’s Day…and we wanted to take it to the graveyard.
Pepe: Tell your sister not to worry.
Little Boy: Yes. Hey, your namesake will be on the theater today.
Pepe: What namesake?
Pepe: This brat…!
Chachita: (Turning to her dad) Hey, at what time are we going to visit mom’s grave?
Pepe: No, I won’t be able to go with you. We can’t leave grandma alone.
Chachita: Then, can I ask the Romantic to go with me?
Pepe: Okay, let’s see if she has a chance.
Chachita: This time I will take her lot’s of flowers! I have 1.50 pesos.
Pepe: Fine.
Chachita: Roses were her favorite flowers, right?
Pepe: Um, hu.
Chachita: Hey daddy, tell me what mom was like.
Pepe: I’ve told you a million times!
Chachita: But I like to hear you talk about her. What were her eyes like?
Pepe: Just like yours. Her eyes were clean…kind…immensely sweet.
Chachita: Was her hair like mine?
Pepe: She would have loved you so much…but… she didn’t have a chance to meet you. She was a saint, that woman.
Chachita: You must have loved her really bad, didn’t you?
Pepe: With all my heart.
Chachita: Tell me, dad…why do good moms die?
Pepe: That’s what I wonder. Why do they die?
Chachita: What a pity… I have never even seen a picture of her.
Pepe: She never liked to have pictures of her taken.
Chachita: But don’t get sad, dad. Don’t you say she’s taking care of us from Heaven? Don’t you say everything here reminds you of her? It’s just as if she was alive. Sometimes I feel as if she was by my side. Dad… you will never bring another woman here…to take mom’s place, will you?
Pepe: What a thing to say, Chachita! The things that happen, mother! (Turning to The Paralytic, his mother) But you know I’ve never been good at forgiving.

Drunken Man: Hi Chachita. What’s wrong, Chachita?
Chachita: Tomorrow will be Dead People’s Day.
Drunken Man: But… don’t get like that. If our good Lord wanted to take her to Heaven…only He knows why he did it, and we shouldn’t complain…because she’s looking at you from up there…and if she sees you’re suffering, she’ll be sad too.
Chachita: I really feel like crying.
Drunken Man: Cry, then. Blessed are the eyes that can dry…because when tears have dried…they burn in your heart. Cry until you feel better…but don’t shed tears of despair and madness. Cry…because this is a valley of tears. Cry because your sadness becomes your tears…and God says: “Blessed are those who cry… for they shall be consoled.”
Pepe: Hello, my romantic one.
Romantic: Let me hide in here. If my stepfather sees me there will be a big mess.
Pepe: Have you come to give me a hug kiss?
Romantic: I came to tell you not to be a big flirt. I heard someone called Yolanda phoned you. Who is that?
Pepe: Look, if you really love me, pay no need to gossip. My Chorreada is so cute...
Romantic: Come on…don’t you dare kiss me.
Pepe: Of course not! That thought wouldn’t cross my mind!
Little Boy: Come over here!
Pepe: Hold on a minute. (Talking to The Romantic) Where is she?
(Turning to Little Boy).
Little Boy: Right at the corner.
Pepe: Okay, here.
Little boy: Thanks, man.
Pepe: I’ll be right back. (Talking to The Romantic.) Someone is looking for me.
Romantic’s Dad: What are you doing at this wood-worker’s house? Back to study!
Romantic: I want to go because I want to…not because you say so.
Romantic’s Dad: Come on, you girl!

Yolanda: Pepe…
Pepe: What do you want this time?
Yolanda: Don’t treat me that way, I ‘m tired of it. Everyone treats me badly I’m tired of it.
Pepe: You’ve cheated on everyone.
Yolanda: You know I haven’t.
Pepe: I don’t. You should find that bastard, your husband.
Yolanda: I can ask you to forgive me, but that lowlife…
Pepe: Was that all?
Yolanda: No. I wanted to ask you…
Pepe: She died.
Yolanda: Pepe!
Pepe: I said she died. See you.
Yolanda: I’ll do something foolish.
Pepe: Don’t do anything more. Enough!
Yolanda: You’ll regret this! Pepe!

Romantic’s Dad: “There is no love as loving…as people in love’s love.” I imagined. You senseless romantic. You’ll never get it …until I break your mouth!
Romantic: Let’s fight, then.
Romantic’s Dad: Shut up! Don’t talk back to me. It’s time for you to work we won’t support you forever.
Romantic: You don’t support me!
Romantic’s Dad: Shut up or I’ll show you a good beating.
Romantic: Yeah…
Romantic’s Mom: Please, be quiet. (Talking to the Romantic.)

Topillos: That’s my Pepe “El Toro”
Planillas: That’s my… That’s my friend.
Topillos: Don’t say that we like gossip…but this morning on the way back…from leaving some baskets at the market…as we walked by a stand… Should I tell him?
Planillas: Tell it to him.
Topillos: Okay. This morning, you know we took the baskets…and on the way back from the market, we… I’d rather not tell him. (Talking to Planillas)
Pepe: Enough is enough! You’ve made me do something stupid. You’ll have to tell me.
Topillos: Well you’ll tell him man. (Talking to Planillas)
Planillas: Well, you see, my friend…that there is some guy…who has his eyes set on The Romantic.
Topillos: And the worst part is…he drives a really nice Lincoln.
Pepe: Did she pay heed to him?
Topillos: Not to him, but she did take a look at the Lincoln. Women are just like Judas… There he is!
Planillas: That’s him!
Topillos: That’s him!
Pepe: (Turning to Lawyer Montes) Do you need anything? Did you lose something?
Lawyer Montes: I’m looking for a carpenter, are you him?
Pepe: I am Pepe “El Toro”
Lawyer Montes: And I am Lawyer Montes. I hear you were very good at carving. I want to make a little bar for my house. Can you come to my office tomorrow? This is my address.
Pepe: Okay.
Lawyer Montes: Good Afternoon.
Pepe: Good Afternoon.

Romantic: Honestly, this isn’t life anymore. It’s all quarrels and problems. It’s a mess.
Sleepless: If I were you, I’d break up with Pepe. If I married a widower, the dead wife would haunt me. And if she really loved him…it’s certain you’d see her ghost.
Romantic: Be quiet, Chachita’s coming.
Chachita: Your clothes. (Talking to The Sleepless)
Sleepless: Thank you Chachita.
Chachita: Can we talk outside? (Turning to the Romantic)
Sleepless: Well, see you (talking to the Romantic) I don’t like listening to nonsense (talking to Chachita).
Chachita: Hey, sis, I would like you to come to the graveyard with me…to take my mother flowers.
Romantic: Graveyard? No…I have no time. I have to go to my shorthand class.
Chachita: It will be okay if you skip it one day.
Romantic: No…Well, the truth is I don’t like graveyards.
Chachita: Fine… I thought we were friends.
Romantic: We are but…
Chachita: No discussion, girl, you win. Anyway, that’s all.
Romantic: Okay. Don’t tell I’m scared.
Chachita: Thank you!

Guayaba: Just as I hear it, I tell it.
Tostada: What are you talking about?
Guayaba: I heard that Pepe killed Chachita’s mom…and so she died.
Tostada: Come on!
Guayaba: No, I swear I heard it. You saw her?
Tostada: No…but when you die, sis…you die just once and for all, like this…and you’ve kicked the bucket. Hey, sis…
Guayaba: What is it?
Tostada: I think Pepe’s life…is really, and I mean really…really obscure.
Guayaba: You think so?
Tostada: Of course it is. It wouldn’t sound so odd…that he should have murdered that poor woman. One of these days…he may murder the girl as well! He is insane! Insane!
Guayaba: But…
Chachita: Liars! My mom was a holy woman! She died on childbirth! My dad loved her a lot. Do you hear me, you fools? Viper tongues!
Tostada: I suspect that we blew it this time.
Guayaba: But don’t worry… (Talking to Tostada) Don’t…don’t worry. (Turning to Chachita) Look, Chachita…don’t listen to Tostada. She has such a big mouth! Besides, She’s never reasonable. You see? That what I was telling her…that your mother was a saint…a saint, really. (Talking to Tostada) I’ve fixed it, sis! But the truth is, if Pepe asked me to marry him…
Tostada: Would you marry him?
Guayaba: Me? Marry? He’s insane, sis.
Tostada: Insane.
Guayaba: So insane. Well, why don’t we get the next to last drink?
Tostada: No!
Guayaba: Will you play hard to get?
Tostada: I’m not going!
Guayaba: Don’t get like that! Why aren’t you going?
Tostada: Because when I say no, it means no.
Guayaba: Really?
Tostada: Really!
Guayaba: You piss me off! I don’t have to deal with drunks!
Tostada: Now I’m going.
Guayaba: No, you’re not
Tostada: I am
Guayaba: Okay, we stay.
Tostada: Hey, sis...
Guayaba: What is it?
Tostada: Is Pepe your type?
Guayaba: No. I’ve never liked him.
Tostada: Really?
Guayaba: And you? You do like him! Stop that or I’ll tell Topillos…and he’ll beat you. Let’s have the next to last drink! The next to last!

Lady 3: Daughter…Are you a friend of my girl’s?
Chachita: What girl?
Lady 3: My daughter Elvira, who is buried here.
Chachita: No, my mother is here.
Lady 3: No, girl, look.
Chachita: Why isn’t my mother buried there? You’ve lied to me! (Talking to Pepe).
Pepe: You must have picked the wrong grave.
Chachita: Then take me to where she’s buried!
Pepe: Not today, girl. I’ll take you some other day.
Chachita: Don’t you want me to take her flowers? Dear mommy…
Pepe: I told you I’ll take you some other day! You must have been to another grave.
(Turning to The Romantic.)
Romantic: No, Pepe. There’s something you won’t tell us. That’s not Chachita’s mother’s grave, is it?
Pepe: No.
Romantic: Where is she buried, then?
Pepe: I can’t tell you.
Romantic: You see? You don’t dare. You don’t dare because….
Pepe: Because what? What were you going to say?
Romantic: Let me go.
Pepe: What, Celia? (The Romantic) What are you thinking?
Romantic (Celia): Maybe…maybe what people say is true. That something terrible happened to Chachita’s mom. That you killed her. Say it isn’t so!
That those terrible things I’m thinking…are not true. I love you so much, Pepe.

Pepe: Trust … me. I can’t tell you…but trust … me, please.
Romantic: It’s just that I love you so much, Torito!
Pepe: Not half as much as I love you.
Romantic: I’ve heard so many things about you…
Pepe: Come on, stop that. Come on; let me see your eyes. Aren’t you ashamed? Such a big girl, crying. Come one, give me one huge kiss.

Chachita: And you call yourself my friend… (Talking to the Romantic)
Pepe: Go (Talking to The Romantic).
Chachita: And I used to defend you! I used to say you were the greatest dad on Earth! You have no soul, no respect, no love! You are mean…
Pepe: Chachita! Daughter!
Chachita: I don’t want to be your daughter! You told me no one would stain my mother’s house. Is this how you respect her sacred memory? And today! This is how you respect her worth!

Pepe: Chachita, don’t talk like that!
Chachita: Yes! I’ve been praying on a grave that’s not my mom’s! What did you do to her? What did you do to my mom? You’re not telling me. I’m glad she’s dead so she can’t see what I see. I’d like to be old so I could make you suffer…and hurt you! I was saving for you every cent I earned. If I saw you dying now I wouldn’t care…because now I believe what people say! - That you killed my mom!

Pepe: Chachita!
Chachita: That it was you who killed her!
Pepe: Daughter!
Chachita: Yes! You killed her!
Pepe: Quiet!
Chachita: You killed her!
Pepe: Quiet!
Chachita: No…No! Don’t do that, dad! Forgive me! Don’t do that! How could you believe I meant that?

A man: Come on, guys, you’ll wake up the whole neighborhood.
Pepe: What’s up, people?
Planillas: Hi Pepe. We came to sing the “Mananitas” for Chachita’s. We are all ready.
Pepe: Gee, guys…I wouldn’t want to do that.
Group of men: Why not?
Pepe: So many stupid things have happened…I don’t know if we should sing for her…or let the girl rest.
Planillas: No!
Group of men: Come on!
Topillos: You don’t know how…hopefully…and faithfully…your girl is waiting for this day. She has promised penance to all of the celestial court…for us not to miss. Hey, Torito…how is your voice doing?
Pepe: If you will help me, let’s try it.
Group of men: Okay!
Pepe: Let’s walk through the neighborhood.
Group of men: Okay.
Planillas: Hey, man, why don’t you walk through here…and open that door for us to save our feet [and wallets since they do not want to walk nor pay for using the entrance]? 
Group of men: Yeah!
Pepe: I don’t want the door woman to scold us. Let’s knock.
Man 4: Hey, man, what happened to your hand?
Pepe: Nothing. I hit it with the hammer.
Topillos: With the hammer?
Man 3: Yeah, right! Sure, it was a sledgehammer!
Men 5: Are you left handed?
Pepe: That’s enough! Forgotten!
Policeman: What is it here? Did you steal music, or what?
Man 4: Do we look like thieves?
Policeman: Not thieves…murderers!
Pepe: Come on! We’ll sing the “Mananitas” for my daughter’s birthday.
Policeman: Oh, Ok.
Everyone: Good Morning. Good Morning.

Door woman: Who will pay?
Planillas: They’ll pay you back there.
Man 2: They’ll pay you.
Man 3: He’ll pay you.
Man 5: They’ll pay you back there.
Man 4: Back there…
A man: The last one will pay.
Topillos: Good morning: charge it to our account.
Door woman: You always do that, Topillos!
Tostada: Let us in!
Guayaba: Let us in! It’s us!
Door woman: What is it?
Tostada: It’s us!

Policeman: Are you still here?
Yolanda: Good evening…
Policeman: Come on, beat it or I’ll take you to the precinct.
Yolanda: No. I’m waiting. Waiting…
Policeman: Waiting… Waiting. Don’t give me that I’m in “love” look!
Yolanda: In love…
Policeman: Well, that’s enough. You need to go to sleep.
Yolanda: No.
Policeman: If I don’t take you the police car will…and I’ll be compromised. Come on…come on. Come on!

Group of men singing: “Las Mananitas….that King David used to sing. For pretty girls…we sing them this way: Wake up, my dear, wake up…look, it’s dawn already. The birds are already singing…and the moon has gone away. I’d like to be a little sun…to come through your window…and say “Good morning.” to you…while you’re lying in bed. It is dawning…the light of day has fallen on us. Get up already, Chachita…look, it is day already.

Pepe singing: Get up, my little daughter…you will see your street sprinkled…with tears from my eyes…that I cried this daybreak.

Tostada & Guayaba: We’ve sung and sung so much…that our throat is sore…because we haven’t been offered…the kind of water that makes us dizzy.

Topillos & Planillas: Let us know if you’re not coming out…so we don’t stand here waiting…or throw buckets of water to us…because we came to serenade you.

Chachita: Thank you very much, people…I just have one heart. But even though we are very poor…I offer you my home.

Pepe: Chachita, the best of girls…that this world has ever met.

Chachita: My old man is so sweet…there is no other like him.

Group of men & Yolanda: Wake up, my dear, wake up…look, it’s dawn already…the birds are already singing…and the moon has gone away.

Group of men: Hurray, Chachita! Hurray!

Pepe: My dear daughter, on behalf of your holy mother…who is in Heaven and mine, get this.

Group of men: Hurray, Chachita! Open it! Open it!

Pepe: I hope she’ll keep the change [coins] so it can be full of cents…and she can have what she deserves.

Topillos: She can keep a lot of money in there.

Pepe: Do you like it?

Chachita: It’s cool! When did you make it? I never saw you. You’re so tricky!

Man 5: Chachita, you haven’t told us what happened to your mouth.

Chachita: I…I hit myself with a hammer.

Man 6: With the same hammer?

Man 5: An epidemic, right?
Guayaba: Oh Ma’am…you’re “cripped”.
Tostada: “Crippled”
Guayaba: “Crippled” Don’t you see she can’t walk?
Tostada: But she talks.
Guayaba: She doesn’t!
Tostada: But she sees.
Guayaba: She doesn’t see, either.
Tostada: But she hears.
Guayaba: She doesn’t hear!
Tostada: I’m telling you she does!
Guayaba: You don’t, do you? (Talking to the Paralytic)
Tostada: Wait a second. Ma’am…Ma’am… Hello!
Guayaba: Who am I speaking to?
Tostada: It’s not working.
Guayaba: It’s busy. These telephone things don’t work.

Drunken man: I always say, “Better late, than never” I’m sorry, but they just gave it to me at the bakery. Chachita…excuse me for the inscription…but all my heart is in it.
Chachita: Thank you!
Drunken man: You are welcome, Chachita.
Topillos: You should have brought one for each one of us!
Group of men: Yes!
Drunken man: Sure! I am so rich…I Here, Chachita.
Chachita: They smell so nice! Right? (Asking Pepe)
Man 3: Like a hot bun!
Topillos: Hey, family!
Planillas: We’re here! We said we would get it…and we did.
Topillos: Be quiet! We’re quiet already.
Planillas: Quiet! Didn’t you hear? Okay, forgotten. In this beautiful day…this child’s birthday…I went with this stinky man…to get the meals.
Topillos: Hey, haven’t Guayaba and Tostada come here?
Man 4: They are over there, with the old lady.
Topillos: But why did you let them go in?
Man 4: Why?
Planillas: They’ll fall on top of her like the other time.
Topillos: Don’t you see their brain is no good?
Man 4: Were they dropped as babies?
Topillos: No, they dropped dead drunk.
Man 4: That’s their usual status.

Tostada: Come on, let’s go for a walk.
Guayaba: No, not a walk. Let her try by herself.
Tostada: Herself.
Guayaba: Let’s see.
Topillos: Holy cow! What are these two women doing?
Tostada: We’ll take her for a walk.
Planillas: No walks! Come on!
Topillos: Go home! Out!
Planillas: Don’t make her stand or she’ll bend!
Topillos: Come on!

Romantic: Congratulations, Chachita. I brought you this.
Chachita: I don’t need anything.
Pepe: Chachita…
Chachita: Is it an order?
Pepe: Yes.
Chachita: No discussion, then. You win again [here there is no discussion because Chachita knows that Pepe can hit her again] (Talking to the Pepe.)

Planillas: Look! There’s the fine mass wine here! [here it means that Planillas does not know how to read, since he confused two words that are written in Spanish almost alike: misa and mesa].
Topillos: You mean table wine, not mass wine!

Yolanda: Pepe…
Pepe: Yolanda! What are you doing?
Yolanda: I came to…
Pepe: Quiet! Come this way.
Yolanda: I came to tell you that I’m leaving. I’m here to say good-bye. I’ll never bother you again.
Pepe: Are you leaving Mexico? […] That again! [Meaning that she is drunk.]
Yolanda: Don’t get mad.
Pepe: Aren’t you ashamed to be like that? [Probably thinking that she might commit suicide.]
Yolanda: I’m terribly ashamed. Forgive me. Last night I tried to get drowned…to get dumb with wine, to get dizzy with music…but I couldn’t. The ice coldness of your contempt is killing me. Always contempt! I don’t deserve that.
Pepe: Weren’t you leaving Mexico?
Yolanda: I’m leaving this life. No one cares, anyway. Say good-bye.
Pepe: What nonsense are you thinking?
Romantic: Don’t be ungrateful, girl. (Talking to Chachita.) I really love you. You’re my best friend.
Chachita: Friend… You don’t do to a friend what you did to me. You don’t understand my old man is all I have in life.
Romantic: No matter how much you love him, you can’t love him like I do.
Chachita: You have no right to love him! I do, because he’s my dad.
Romantic: Just let us get married. I’ll take care of you loving you as a friend…as a sister…loving you as a mother.
Chachita: Don’t make me laugh.
Romantic: We’ll take care of your sick grandma together, struggle together. Give me a little corner at your home, Chachita…to take care of Pepe…to watch over him…
Chachita: No! My only pride is watching over him! Why do you want to steal what’s mine? You suffer with your stepfather, right?
Romantic: A lot.
Chachita: And you want a stepmother for me? You call yourself my friend?
Romantic: I’d be different!
Chachita: No, that’s what you say…and every step mom and step dad must say that.
Romantic: Then you’re afraid of suffering…and to the hell with me, Pepe, and the poor Paralytic.
Chachita: I want women like you not to offer yourselves to dad! Woman like you with no dignity…that won’t leave my dad alone! Because if he wanted someone else…to take my mother’s sacred place…if he told me that himself…no discussion, then. That day I’d leave somewhere because I can’t see anyone staining my dead mom’s home. But as long as he says nothing…I’ll slap and kill anyone offering herself to him! Even if I go to jail! Listen carefully. If I see you with him again…I don’t care that you’re tall…
Romantic: You’ll do nothing! Not you nor anyone! I love Toro. And when a woman like me wants a male…no stupid girl will take him away from her! For the record, I came to beg you…to talk to you as a friend, to make you see the truth. But what do you know? Right now I’ll tell Pepe to tell you!
Yolanda: I love you very much, Pepe… You have no right… what you do to me isn’t fair…Pepe no…
Pepe: This can’t be anymore. Go your way and stay out of my life. I’ll be damned! They saw us!
Yolanda: What do I care? I want you to forgive me.
Pepe: I do but wait here.
Yolanda: I’ll wait here…
Romantic: Who is that woman?
Pepe: You must not know,
Romantic: Why do you defend her? Who is she? I thought you were base and mean, but you’re even worse. You don’t even respect your daughter’s birthday!

Pepe: (Turning to Chachita.) Chachita, go and wait on the gang. Go, I said! [Here again the threat of violence.]

Romantic: You didn’t want your daughter to listen…but she saw you, and that’s worse. You are so cynical…At your own home! And I was defending you, fighting for your love…which is trash. But what could be expected from you? What I have taken beatings and insults…from my stepfather for? There were rumors. They said you had other women. I didn’t want to listen, because I thought you were good. I wanted you to be good. But…

Pepe: Celia, don’t talk like that…you may regret it.

Romantic: I do regret loving you! You can’t deny it; you locked that woman over there.

Pepe: There is nothing between us! Nothing!

Romantic: That’s why there’s lipstick all over your face. You don’t need to tell me who she is. I know she is a bitch.

Pepe: Shut up!

Romantic: You see? Why are you defending her? Why don’t you want me to slap her?

Pepe: Celia, please…

Romantic: Who is she?

Pepe: If I tell you… we’re over.

Romantic: Let it be over! Who is she? Who is that bitch?

Pepe: That bitch…is my sister. And now what?

Romantic: Your sister…

Pepe: Yes, my sister! She is to blame for my mother being a paralytic. But you had to know, didn’t you. You couldn’t respect this I kept inside me…because it burnt my soul.

Romantic: Pepe…

Pepe: I asked you to trust me… now leave!

Romantic: Forgive me, Pepe.

Pepe: Beat it!

Little Boy: Lawyer Montes is asking whether you’ll go or not. Hey! Don’t make a pass on me! I’m just a kid! (Turning to Yolanda.)

Guayaba: Let the show begin.

Tostada: May I say something partner?

Guayaba: Go ahead, partner. Order, please!

Tostada: What order, partner?

Guayaba: Don’t over-exploit our resources!

Tostada: I did, partner…

Guayaba: Oh, man.

Tostada: There is not one single drop left.
Guayaba: I noticed!
Tostada: Hey!
Guayaba: What?
Tostada: That’s why you got drunk.
Guayaba: Who?
Tostada: You.
Guayaba: Does it show?
Tostada: Does it? Of course it shows.
Guayaba: You have such a big mouth, I swear!
Tostada: What did you say?
Guayaba: A big mouth!
Tostada: You said I have a big mouth?
Guayaba: Why are you laughing?
Tostada: I’m crying.
Guayaba: Oh! Are you? Poor girl! Come on…Don’t cry!

Man 6: Hey! What about a large bottle?
Planillas: Guayaba took that one.
Topillos: No, it was Tostada, she’s a worse wino.
Policeman: Quiet! Nobody moves! Are these the guys, ma’am? (Turning to Lady 3.)
Lady 3: Oh, you…! You’ve eaten everything I had for the debutante party!
Policeman: Ma’am…
Lady 3: Thieves!
Policeman: Ma’am, hold on! This is not how things are done! What happened?
Planillas: Look Mr. Postman…
Policeman: I am not a postman!
Planillas: Well, teacher.
Policeman: Not that, either!
Planillas: Well, whatever. Look, this lady told me “Run with this basket, it’s for a party.” And I did, as fast as I could…but my friend here is a little big.
Topillos: When we turned around she was no longer there. And since she said we should take it to a party…I thought she meant Chachita’s and I brought it here…but here it is.
Lady 3: You thief…

Lawyer Montes: How much will you need? All 400 pesos?
Pepe: For the wood, yes, sir. And just give me 25 that I need for medicine.
Lawyer Montes: Miss, my checkbook, please (Talking to Lady 4).
Pepe: You’ll give me a check? I’d rather have it in cash.
Lawyer Montes: Why?
Pepe: It means a series of difficulties. Since they see us poor, no one wants to authorize it…and I’d rather not do something stupid [meaning that the way people see you they will treat you; if they see you poor they will make your life even more difficult].

Lawyer Montes: You are right.

Policeman: Okay! Okay! That’s enough! You are all shameless loaders [Meaning people that do not work and society has to provide for them]!

Man7: No, sir, we’re not loaders.

Man8: We are the “Sing[-]out[-]loud” Trio

Man9: Sure, boss”

Policeman: Oh, “Singoutloud” Trio, you say? We were looking for you. You have a pending issue with the police.

Man8: No, what?

Policeman: Yes, sir! You hit some of our partners with your guitars.

Man 7: It was an irrational phase, boss.

Policeman: Was it? Well, to avoid those phases, you’ll come with me.

Man 9: You want to hear a song, boss?

Policeman: Songs, my ass! Don’t be a clown! You’ll come to the police station. Now. Come on.

Men 7: Careful!

Romantic’s Dad: See? Those are your sweetheart’s friends. I’m sorry they didn’t get him too.

Romantic: That’s not easy. No one has laid a hand on Torito.

Chachita: Saint Tadeo, Saint Rosa de Caspio…impossible causes advocate, help them please. Oh, Saint Nicolas de Bari…No, he’s for the Lottery. Oh, Saint Dimas, good thief…don’t let them go to jail!

Little Boy: Hey, man…

Pepe: What’s up?

Little Boy: They took all of your friends from your band.

Pepe: What band?

Chachita: The police took everyone. The cops got them because of that stuff.

Pepe: What stuff?

Chachita: The basket they brought with bottles, food, and stuff. They had it stolen, imagine.

Pepe: Poor guys… Here, put this in your piggy bank. It’s 400 pesos for a job. But now the profit will go to bail everyone out of jail.

Damn….
Chachita: You’re so good, dad.
Pepe: I’ll go get the medicine for grandma. If they bring the wood, pay them. Or not. Better tell them to wait for me. I’ll just go to the drugstore.
Chachita: What are you doing here? (Speaking to Little Boy.) Beat it!
Little Boy: Watch it, girl!

Chachita: Look, grandma! Its 400 pesos. At least 25 from here are for your shots. I’ll have to buy a candle for each saint. God knows who did this miracle for us. Whoever did it was great…and we should thank him, right grandma? Well, start praying to thank them…while I wash these clothes, will you?
Man 10: Newspaper! For those who can’t read! Hey, Torito! Jesus! How can they leave the shop unattended? Hi, ma’am. How are you doing? Well, see you. Newspaper! Newspaper! For those who can’t read!
Romantic’s Dad: This one has not been canonized yet. But this miracle will turn him into a saint!

Chachita: Howdy? What are you doing in my house? Isn’t there that huge front door? Do you like my home for a gate?
Man 10: Nothing, I went by and it was unattended. Don’t be like that! You’ll be robbed one of these days! Look, I brought you a present.
Chachita: This is so cool, man! Thank you very much!
Man 10: Well, see you. And don’t leave your place unattended.

Romantic: Pepe… Torito…
Sleepless: What is it, sis?
Romantic: He does not love me anymore. And I am to blame for that.
Sleepless: You? Why?
Romantic: I can’t tell you.
Sleepless: You don’t have to tell me. They’re all the same! They forget you as soon as they get what they want.
Romantic: But he hasn’t got anything!
Sleepless: And so? I don’t get it woman!
Romantic: Well, I’m going to my class.

Chachita: I’ve seen her very nervous. Look at her, she’s damp with sweat!
Doctor: Is she afraid of shots?
Pepe: It’s not like it’s her first time. Don’t be foolish. God willing, you’ll get better.
Chachita: Don’t get like that, grandma. It has never hurt you. I can get a shot first if you want.
Pepe: Stop opening your eyes so wildly (Talking to his mom, The Paralytic.) Man! This is the first time a shot gets you like this.
Chachita: Maybe this one is hurting…right, baby?
Man 11: Boss, the wood is here. We almost didn’t make it, but we did. We promised and we did.
Pepe: Okay, put the wood against the wall.
Man 11: Yes, boss.
Pepe: Come on, have something to eat.
Man 11: Really, boss?
Pepe: Sure.

Romantic: Hey! Are you following me?
Lawyer Montes: I heard you were looking…for a job. I’m a lawyer and I need a secretary.
Romantic: I’m not done studying yet.
Lawyer Montes: There’s no need. You’re friend says you’re very smart. I can give you a good salary. You could have a much better life.
Romantic: I like the way I live.
Lawyer Montes: Fine. If you ever need a job, I’m at your service. Here’s my business card. Take it.
Romantic: I can’t take anything from you. My boyfriend would go nuts.
Lawyer Montes: I don’t think so. Things aren’t the way one thinks. Good-bye.
Yolanda: (Talking to the Romantic.) No, girl. Don’t do that. He who gives you his name like that deserves you not. He can give you his name, but not like that.
Romantic: Please, don’t tell Pepe. I took the card without thinking, but I swear...
Yolanda: It doesn’t matter. We women sometimes betray in our thoughts…but they, thoughtlessly, betray us once and again. You know who I am, don’t you?
Romantic: Yes. Pepe’s sister.
Yolanda: No. I was Pepe’s sister…but now he wants nothing to do with me. And he loved me so much…I was his pet. He was so proud to walk around with me. But when he knew…Don’t ever hurt Pepe “El Toro”, he can’t forgive.
Romantic: Then…I’ve lost him forever.
Yolanda: What did you do to him? So, that lawyer and you…?
Romantic: No, not that!
Yolanda: So? We are all the same.

Man 11: Here’s the bill.
Pepe: Hold your reins [meaning hold your horses], man! How much is it?
Man 11: 335 pesos boss.
Pepe: Fine, I’ll be right back. Chachita, give me the money. (Turning to Chachita.)
Chachita: I’m coming, dad.
Pepe: Is it still hurting very much, old lady? Come on, you’ll get better.
Don’t worry. (Talking to the Paralytic.)
Chachita: Dad…didn’t you take the money?
Pepe: No.
Man 11: Ready, Boss?
Pepe: Wait! (Turning to Chachita) Chachita, if you hid that money I’d be in debt forever.
Chachita: Man! How could you think so!
Pepe: Maybe you are scaring me out of spite. You want to scare me, don’t you? Okay, I’m scared. Give me the money.
Chachita: No, dad, this is real.
Man 11: What is it, boss?
Pepe: I’m coming! (Turning to Chachita.) Chachita, think, please!
Chachita: I left it here…or did I leave it with grandma?
Pepe: Grandma, did you see who took it? Did you? Why can’t you speak, for Christ’s sake?
Chachita: Saint Ciro, don’t let us find it, don’t let us find it!
Pepe: What do you mean?
Chachita: You ask Saint Ciro for the opposite of what you want.
Man 12: Boss, it’s getting late; and we have other things to do.
Pepe: I’m coming. Take the wood with you. (Talking to Man 11)
Man 11: What? With us?
Pepe: Yes, but don’t worry, I’ll give you some money for a drink.
Man 11: Didn’t you get the money, boss?
Pepe: I didn’t.
Chachita: I put it there, dad. Why did I put it there?
Pepe: No one is to blame, baby. This had never happened to us.
Chachita: Grandma, did someone come in? (Turning to the Paralytic.) Did you see who took the money? Was it the Door Woman? Did Guayaba take the money? Was it Tostada?
Man 11: The truck is ready to go, boss.
Pepe: Coming!
Chachita: (Talking to the Paralytic) Please, remember, grandma. Remember!
Pepe: Here, boys. For a drink.
Man 11 & Man 12: Thanks, Boss.
Pepe: I’m in deep…
Man 11: Let’s go!

Man 10: Newspaper! For those who can’t read! Newspapers!
Chachita: Him! Dad, it was him. He even told me the store was unattended.
Pepe: Why was it unattended?
Chachita: I was washing clothes.
Pepe: Badly done.
Chachita: Yes, you tell me now it is too late.
Man 10: Hi, Torito. Don’t leave the shop unattended. Someone will steal your tools.
Pepe: Hey, we have always been good friends. You’ve shown me that you’re loyal.
Man 10: What is it, man?
Pepe: Give me that money back.
Man 10: What money? I have no money.
Pepe: Come on! The money you stole!
Man 10: I didn’t steal anything, man! I can give you what I have for the bus tickets to the States. I’d never steal from you, man. I love you as if you were my brother. When you were hurt and no one would donate blood…I did. And I felt terrible, with the fainting, and all. But anyway, if you think I stole from you…then kill me, don’t just offend me.
Pepe: I’m sorry, man… it’s just that I’ll be in trouble for all my life. Do you know what 400 pesos is?
Man 10: Whose, Torito?
Pepe: Lawyer Montes.
Man 10: Man, that bastard! And a lawyer! When I delivered the newspaper for him…once he almost jailed me…just because the carton section was missing.
Pepe: I don’t even know what to do, man.
Man 10: I’ve got a plan, man.
Pepe: What?
Man 10: Run to the US with my illegal card.
Pepe: No. What about my old woman? And Chachita?
Man: If you can’t come back, man, I’ll look after them.
Pepe: No, I have to pay for that money…even if I have to beg.
Man 10: Hey, Man! You know? I remembered…I know I woman who lends money. Do you want to see her?
Pepe: Let’s go!

Lady 5: 400 pesos, right, handsome? If I was 20 years younger…you wouldn’t have to ask for 400 pesos.
Man 10: Come on!
Lady 5: It’s something, huh? Something…400 pesos. Good one, huh?
Pepe: Yes, miracle maker. My mother gave it to me.
Lady 5: An 18 k miracle. How much is it?
Pepe: It’s not for sale. My mother gave it to me when I was I boy…and I’d never part with it.
Lady 5: Fine. Well, do you know my interest rate?
Pepe: No.
Lady 5: Forty per cent.
Pepe: Total?
Lady 5: No…monthly.
Pepe: Forty per cent a month…Well, it’s okay, ma’am.
Lady 5: What will be the guarantee? Just to get things clear.
Pepe: Well, I have a small carpenter’s shop.
Lady 5: How much is it worth?
Pepe: I think… some 250 pesos in tools, plus the renown [meaning the worth of the carpentry due to his past performance.]
Lady 5: No…there’s no deal. But if you get a friend to sign a draft for you…someone wealthy, of course…So… go and get that signature, huh? And if you have some free time, come by. I have a little…wood job that needs to be done. Oh, but give me a fair price. You see, I’m a poor woman who struggles by herself.
Man 13: Ma’am…
Lady 5: I’m sorry. This lady is my last client. I’m tired and I have no money left.
Lady 6: I just wanted to ask you, ma’am…Can I bring you the brooch this afternoon?
Lady 5: Didn’t you bring it? I’ll wait for you this afternoon.

Pepe: Who would sign for me? A signature…A signature…

Man 14: Hey, the consumptive is there. Go get … [rid of her].
Man 15: Mr. Morales didn’t let you.
Man 14: Try. Don’t you see she’s really stubborn?
Man 15: I know she’ll get protection.
Man 14: Ma’am the boss isn’t here. (Turning to Yolanda.)
Yolanda: He isn’t? I’ll wait for him.
Man 14: But ma’am…

Pepe: Excuse me, sir. Mr. Antonio Morales?
Mr. Morales: Hello! Hi, Torito. Long time, no see! (Turning to Man 10) You ended up selling periodicals. You used to cut classes periodically. Great joke, isn’t it? But don’t worry, many have started from there… and they’ve become great men. (Turning back to Torito.) You only attended school for a year, right?
Pepe: Yes, my mother’s illness forced me to work…since I was very young.
Man 10: The Gorilla studied there. Pepe fought him once to defend you, remember?
Mr. Montes: It was more than once! I’ll always thank you Torito.
Pepe: Never mind.
Man 16:  Mr. Morales…
Mr. Morales:  Sixty thousand pesos! Why?
Man 16:  The architect’s fee.
Mr. Morales:  Oh, yes. He built my home.
Pepe:  Lucky you, you finished school.
Mr. Morales:  Right. Well, what is the reason for your visit?
Pepe:  You know? I need your signature to get a loan.
Mr. Morales:  My signature?
Man 10:  Come on, don’t play dumb. You’ll get a soul out of limbo.
Mr. Morales:  I don’t think you know how business works, but…my signature alone is worthless. This is a society, and…
Mr. Morales:  Well, see you.
Man 10:  Let’s go.

Yolanda:  Good morning.
Mr. Morales:  What are you doing here? Don’t mistake an affair for something else. We had drunk too much…and I won’t stand seeing you here every day.
Yolanda:  Okay, I won’t bother you anymore.
Mr. Morales:  Here’s 5 pesos. They may come in handy. If you ever come back, I’ll call the consumption hospital.
Man 17:  Mr. Morales…
Pepe:  Don’t talk to women like that, bastard!
Mr. Morales:  No, Pepe, no! No, Pepe, no!
Man 10:  They both fell. Well, is someone missing? We’re leaving. Right, Pepe? Pepe! Damn, man! They fooled that poor bitch! They left her with nothing…
Pepe:  Shut up!
Man 10:  Come on, it’s not like she’s your sister! Don’t be upset, man. Let’s see Chencho at the workshop.

Man 18:  Hey, Yola. What’s up?
Yolanda:  I feel really bad.
Man 18:  Then go and get some rest. Want a ride home?
Yolanda:  Home? What home? No, I’m leaving Mexico. I can’t stand it anymore. Can you give me a ride to my brother’s? You know…Pepe “El Toro”. I want to see my mother. Ask her to forgive me. Say good-bye to her.
Man 18:  Come on in. That’s what friends are for.
Yolanda:  Wait for me. I won’t be long.

Lawyer Montes:  Go ahead, Miss.
Romantic: Hey! Stop following me!
Lawyer Montes: I’m not following you, Miss. I’m here to see the carpenter.
(Turning to Chachita) Girl… I’m Lawyer Montes. Is my wood here already?
Chachita: Yes.
Little Boy: But they took it back.
Lawyer Montes: What?
Chachita: They took it because it was knotty. But dad went there to pick it personally.
Lawyer Montes: You see? (Talking to Celia.) Careful! What’s wrong, Miss?
(Turning to Yolanda.)
Romantic: Can’t you see she fainted? This way. This way.
Sleepless: What happened?
Lawyer Montes: It seems that she fainted. Let her rest a little. Excuse me.
Chachita: What is this?
Romantic’s Mom: Celia!
Romantic: She’s very sick.
Chachita: Why don’t you take her home?
Romantic’s Mom: Celia!
Romantic: Let her rest a little, she’s better.
Chachita: But don’t leave her here!
Sleepless: Why don’t we call a hospital to come and pick her up?
Celia: No… not that.
Chachita: Now you are fond of this woman? Weren’t you mad at her because she kissed dad?
Romantic: Well it’s your problem if you tell her to go. Have to go.
Sleepless: Sorry I can’t help you I was on the way out.
Chachita: This is so great!
Sleepless: (Talking to The Romantic) Why didn’t you want us to call the hospital?
Romantic: Because she’s Chachita’s aunt.
Sleepless: Pepe’s sister?
Romantic: Yes.
Sleepless: Shocks!
Romantic’s Mom: Celia!
Romantic’s Mom: Celia!
Romantic: I’m coming!

Chachita: Your fainting doesn’t count, I know what you want. Come on; leave before my father comes back. We’ll fight.
Yolanda: Okay don’t be mad.
Chachita: Come on! Beat it! Beat it!
Yolanda: Can I have some water?
Chachita: Come on! Don’t come to my grandma telling stories! She doesn’t know about these things. If you want to go make a scene, go elsewhere.
Yolanda: (Talking to The Paralytic) Forgive me.
Chachita: I forgive you, but leave. Here’s your water. Grandma, don’t cry.
(Turning to Yolanda) You see? You only bring pain, you bitch. You are making my grandmother shed her tears. Don’t cry old lady.
Yolanda: (Talking to the Paralytic) Don’t cry. Your tears are curses in my life.
Chachita: Look, you’re insane. What do her tears have to do with your life? Beat it…my dad won’t be long.
Yolanda: (Talking to the Paralytic) Good-bye.
Chachita: Walking…walking…Don’t make a scene, come on… leave. Go and faint somewhere else. Come on.

Pepe: That’s what friends are for…
Man 10: I feel like kicking their ass. Well, Pepito, I have to go. See you.
Pepe: Good-bye, man.
Man 18: Can we talk for a second?
Pepe: Talk about what?
Man 18: About money. Interested?
Pepe: Interested.
Man 18: Come in. How much did you ask the usurer for?
Pepe: 400 pesos.
Man 18: And the guy who was with you…is he loyal? He could be very useful.
Pepe: Useful for what?
Man 18: Just don’t ask. Is he loyal or not?
Pepe: He’s brave, but he’ll go to the States to work. His train leaves to work today at 20:20.
Man 18: Pity. Can we speak frankly?
Pepe: Shoot.
Man 18: Did you see how much money that woman had on her closet?
Pepe: Bunches of thousands. Lot’s of them.
Man 18: And so?
Pepe: She said she wanted a carpenter, didn’t she? My friends and I just want someone to let us in. You can just pretend to go out to buy something…pretend to forget to lock the door…then we go in…and 5,000 are for you.
Man 18: 5,000 pesos?
Pepe: Straight to your pocket.
Pepe: I’m not in.
Man 18: Anyway…Be careful not to say a thing.
Pepe: As long as you stay out of my life…this never happened.
Man 18: Easy.
Man 19: What’s wrong with you?
Pepe: I’m charging 15 because I need the money to buy a shot. It’s a medicine that’s doing my mom good.

Lady 5: You should sell me that medal, then. I’ll give you forty pesos. Sell it to me and you’ll be better off.

Pepe: No, ma’am…

Lady 5: I’ll pay you 15 if you fix the other room’s floor…the window’s sill and a broken sofa.

Pepe: Okay, ma’am. Please take care of my tools for a minute. I’ll just buy nails to fix the floor.

Lady 5: Oh! Don’t forget to lock the portico’s door.

Lady 6: It was him, gentlemen! I saw him! I saw him!

Man 20: That’s enough, ma’am

Lawyer Montes: Did you hear your honor? Of course, the fairy tale told by the accused…can’t convince anyone. A guy who invited him to a robbery. The accused doesn’t know his name nor where he is. I don’t think a thief would confide in any stranger…and invite him to a theft. However, that scarecrow, that innocent thief…broke in to steal…oh…but he only committed murder. Murder seemed more profitable than stealing…having so much cash at hand! (Turning to Pepe.) Right, sir?

Pepe: I’m telling you, I heard a noise when I went back.

Lawyer Montes: There were mice in the house.

Pepe: No, it was someone running away. I’m sure they had no time to steal anything.

Lawyer Montes: But they waited for you to compromise you…and put a bloody knife in your hand to condemn you! Such a talented murder.

Pepe: No, sir, the lady was alive and moaning when I got there. That’s why I took out the knife she had on her back.

Lawyer Montes: Your Honor…this is a vulgar thief hiding behind an honest job…to commit the worst crimes…to con innocent people who open their homes to him…thinking he’s a decent carpenter. Tell me, I was one of his victims. (Talking to Pepe.) Where is my money?

Pepe: I told you, I was robbed.

Lawyer Montes: Yeah, we were all born yesterday. Your Honor, it’s obvious that Pepe “El Toro” is a thief…a despicable murderer!

Chachita: No! My dad is not a murderer! My dad is not a thief! You are the thieves taking him away from me, being innocent! My dad is good! He is good! (Turning to Pepe) Dad is a good man, right? Tell them it wasn’t you! Right, dad? It wasn’t you!

The Judge: Take the girl away.

Chachita: No! I want to be with my dad! No! No! I want to be with my dad! Let me go! No!

Pepe: I am not a murderer! I didn’t kill her! Chachita! I didn’t kill her.
Romantic: Mom, now I understand why you love Mr. Pilar. I don’t care that Pepe is a murderer…I don’t care that he’s mean…I love him.

Romantic’s Mom: What will you do, baby?
Romantic: A lawyer has been flirting with me…and I’m willing to…do anything to save Pepe.

Lawyer Montes: Nothing here is worth a thing. My 400 pesos are gone. Well, I’m leaving. See you later at the office. See the truck off, it’s paid for.

Man 21: That’s fine, sir. Well, what do you say? (Turning to Man 22)
Man 22: What?
Man 21: Do we seize on our own?
Man 22: But…that’s illegal.
Man 21: What can these illiterate know about the law?
Man 22: Okay, let’s do it.
Man 21: Guys, carry everything on the truck, come on.

Little Boy: Chachita! Chachita! Some guys are emptying your house!

Chachita: What?
Little Boy: They’re taking everything!

Chachita: Thank you.

Man 22: Come on, carry that.

Chachita: What are you doing, sir?

Man 21: We are recovering what your dad stole from Mr. Montes. Let’s go.

Man 22: Let’s go.

Man 21: You know, guys, take everything.

Man 23: Yes, boss. I think that’s everything. Take the bundle.

Man 24: Let’s move the lady first.

Man 23: Okay

Chachita: No! Not her chair! Please! Take anything but her chair!

Man 24: Stop it!

Chachita: No! Not her chair! She’s paralytic! Please, no! No! No! Please don’t!

Man 23: Move her.

Chachita: Please, don’t hurt her!

Man 24: Come on!

Man 23: Step aside.

Chachita: Be careful, she’s paralytic! Please! Be very careful!

Man 24: Let’s go. It’s late.

Chachita: Don’t worry, grandma. Those bastards took everything…but I’ll buy everything back. I’ll work harder and we’ll bail dad out of jail.

Man 23: Come on, the bundle. And you, brat, give me that.

Chachita: No, please, not these! No! No! It was a gift from dad! Please, don’t

Man 24: Go and take care of your grandma.

Chachita: Grandma…
Man 25: “Canta Recio” Trio, come to the director’s office. You’ll be released tomorrow. Topillos and Planillas are released.

Pepe: Didn’t you hear?
Planillas: We rather stay here with you.
Topillos: Yes, man
Pepe: Don’t be stupid! If you can go, go.
Planillas: If you say so, man.
Topillos: Come on. Let’s get dressed.
Planillas: You mean get undressed.

Chachita: My poor grandma…Why has God forsaken us? Aren’t we, the poor, his children too? Is God only for rich people? We don’t harm anyone…why do these things happen to us?

Romantic: Chachita…I want you to forgive me.
Chachita: You forgive me. This time I really have nothing left. My dad will be in jail for many years.

Romantic: Do not despair. I’ll ask my step father if we can take your grandma home.

Romantic’s Dad: Sure. She can take her. It can be said that an honest man denies his roof…to a needy woman.

Chachita: Thank you, Mr. Pilar!
Romantic’s Dad: Well, girl, at least you are grateful. Unlike others…

Man 26: Fresh shipment, out!
Man 27: Hey! We’re not equal!
Man 28: Where to?
Man 27: Oh, no!
Man 28: What are you doing here?
Man 27: I work for the Government.
Man 28: Where were you in here?
Man 27: I had my own salary
Topillos: He had his own salary!
Planillas: Did you offer a “bri”?
Man 27: A “bri”?
Topillos: A bribe, man! Come on!
Man 27: Don’t be like that!
Man 28: Your watch!
Man 27: Don’t push it.
Man 28: Your watch!
Man 27: Oh, okay…
Man 28: Take it off…Come on.
Man 27: You’re so mean.
Man 28: Hurry!
Man 27: But, sir…
Man 28: Take your coat off!
Man 27: Okay.
Man 28: You won’t be needing it. Beat it, come on!
Pepe: Thanks, man.
Romantic’s Letter: My life is no life anymore. No one sings to me. I no longer have your kisses. No one calls me Chorreada anymore. If I knew you had forgiven me…but this doubt is killing me. Torito, darling, I know the fault was mine…because I was too jealous…but that shows how much I love you. I’ll visit you tomorrow. You won’t be as mean as to reject me, will you? Your Chorreada…Celia
Group of men singing: They say I’m a robber, a burglar…that I’m a thief. I won’t deny it, my fellows…but if I should say the truth…it wasn’t the lack of money…it was lack of education.
Pepe: Howdy.
Man 30: You have a visit. [I am visiting.]
Pepe: Are you looking for something?
Romantic’s Mom: What are you looking for?
Romantic’s Dad: Brown sugar, I got it.
Romantic’s Mom: Stop smoking, Pilar!
Romantic’s Dad: I won’t smoke, I just want something sweet. (Turning to Chachita) Are you comfortable?
Chachita: At least I don’t feel as lonely being with you.
Romantic’s Dad: Chachita: Now, Chachita, you’ll open the portico. Careful with the money. I like honest people.
Romantic: No I’ll go. She must look after her grandma.
Romantic’s Dad: No, daughter. Chachita does not want to become a burden…do you?
Chachita: No, sir. I’ll do what ever I [can] to help. It’s enough for you to have taken grandma in.
Romantic’s Mom: Pilar, the girl doesn’t need to do that. I’ll keep on opening the door.
Romantic’s Dad: Are you insane we got ourselves a maid! Instead of salary she’ll have food for her…and her sick grandma. What more?
Man 31: Del Toro…Del Toro… Pepe Del Toro. Pepe Del Toro can’t come out, he’s confined.
Chachita: What’s that?
Man 31: It’s a punishment cell for those who can’t be corrected.
Romantic: Can you deliver this to him?
Man 31: Okay, leave it here.
Romantic’s Dad: Why are you staring at me, you bitch? Close your eyes! Close your eyes! Close them now! Close your eyes!
Romantic’s Mom: No, Pilar! No!
Romantic’s Dad: Close your eyes or I’ll kill you!
Romantic’s Mom: Pilar, please, what are you doing?
Romantic’s Dad: What? What? (Turning to the Paralytic) Close your eyes, you bitch! Close them! Close them! Close them!
Romantic: No, Pilar!
Romantic’s Dad: Damn you! Close them! Close them! Close them!
Chachita: Grandma…Grandma…

Man 32: Next time you won’t be there for 3 hours, but 12! I see you’ve become fond of confinement. Fine, you’ll sleep in here now. (Turning to Planillas and Topillos.) Out of here!
Planillas: Hey, man!
Topillos: Oh, you’re so powerful!
Planillas: So brave!
Topillos: You are like busses…Noisy but not fast to run!
Planillas: You hear that? That’s Toro. Pepe! Where are you?
Pepe: In confinement!
Topillos: Oh, he can’t be corrected!
Pepe: What’s up? Why are you still here?
Topillos: We were out already, but this ass…we were by the door…and he was cut with the guard’s gun.
Planillas: But it was a mistake!
Pepe: Mistake? You’re so stupid!
Man 32: Come on, to confinement! (Talking to Planillas and Topillos.)

Group of men singing: My sweet love…to tell you about my passion for you. Partners in good and wrong…not even years will be too heavy for us. My sweet love, you will be…my love.
Romantic singing: My sweet love…I am craving…for a kiss…to be lit in the heat…of our huge love…my love.
Pepe singing: I want to be…one single being…one being with you.
Romantic singing: I want to see you…in love…so I can dream.
Romantic & Pepe singing: In sweet sensation…of a biting kiss…I would like…my sweet love…to tell you about my passion…for you.
Pepe singing: Partners in good…and wrong…
Chachita singing: Not even years…will be too heavy for us.
The Romantic singing: My sweet love…you will be…my love.

Romantic: Why did you do that, Chachita? Yes. To the hospital? I must let Pepe know right away. See you.
Guayaba: Excuse me for interrupting. I didn’t mean to hear you…while you were on the phone…I heard the word “hospital”. Is Chachita sick?
Romantic: Yes…her grandma is at the hospital, very ill.
Guayaba: Hey, sis! Tostada!
Tostada: What is it?
Guayaba: Chachita’s grandma is at the hospital, very sick!
Tostada: I told you! That’s no good…
Guayaba: Drunk? Drunk, but very high class, you know?
Romantic: Lawyer Montes? It’s Celia. Do you still need a secretary? Yes, sir. I understand…Yes. That won’t happen again. I’ll go and see you right away. Willing to do anything.
Tostada: You see? Willing…to do anything!
Guayaba: Anything!

Romantic: Pepe…
Pepe: I got your letter.
Romantic: Forget about that. Your mom is at the hospital, very sick.
Pepe: Sell the tools. Those few cents may be of some use. Please, do whatever you can for her.
Romantic: Okay, Pepe. I think I can do something for her and for you. Even if this is the last time you and I meet.
Pepe: Why is that?
Romantic: We both must take our own way. You will be free…but don’t ever look for me. Pepe…remember me from time to time.
Pepe: Celia, what are you up to? I don’t understand you.
Romantic: This means that…
Man 32: Visits make a line! We’ll call the roll!
Pepe: Celia! Explain it to me, please.
Romantic: Good-bye, Pepe! Good-bye forever!
Man 32: Prisoners! Make a line! Prisoners! Make a line!

Man 33: What happened man?
Pepe: They wouldn’t let me. I told them that my mother was dying…and they said it was an excuse.
Man 33: And so?
Pepe: I thought of something. But if you help me, you may get compromised.
Man 33: Just tell us what to do.
Man 34: Sure

Yolanda: And that girl was born. I thought she was a curse in my life. Because of stupid pride…I never told anything to the girl’s father.
I didn’t want to give him the joy of seeing my daughter. I wanted revenge. But before I sank in shamelessness and vice…I left my little daughter with my brother Pepe. He has always taken care of her as if he was her real father. It was my fault that my mother…became a paralytic.

Man 35: Do you know where Chachita’s father is?
Yolanda: Here are her father’s papers…and his business card.
Man 35: Mr. Manuel de la Colina y Barcena.
Yolanda: No. Just a man, like any other. But…since I …since I am leaving…I’d like to see my daughter for the last time…hold her in my arms…and give her with my last breath…all the motherly love I denied her in my life.

Man 34: Come on! Ready?
Pepe: My clothes!
Topillos: The dangerous part will be leaping. If the box breaks or is opened…you’ll be hurt really bad.
Planillas: They may send you to Alcatraz.
Pepe: I’ll have a chance to travel!
Man 36: Next one!
Man 34: Don’t push me! I’m a decent person! Hi, boys.
Man 37 & 38: Hi.
Man 34: Don’t be humiliated!
Man 39: Hello, man.
Man 34: Hi.
Pepe: Thank you, guys.
Topillos: Good night.

Man 39: Are you going to visit, or for a holiday?
Man 34: Your asking offends me. Don’t you see? I’m here for a short sentence.
Man 39: Tell me, how have you been?
Man 34: I had become honest…
Man 39: Honest? You?
Man 34: Why not, man? I had even got two gorgeous babes. One of them helped me at the bus…and I pimped the other one.
Man 39: Great.

Man 32: Keep this one. It will go with the next shipment.
Planillas: Boss, it think it can still make it. We need room here.
Topillos: Right!
Man 32: I said it will stay.
Man 36: There’s room for one more.
Planillas: You hear that boss? There is room for one more. Topillos room for one more!
Man 32: What’s this fuss all about? Take it! Up!
Topillos: Careful, man.
Man 32: Hey! Where is Pepe “El Toro”?
Planillas: Pepe?
Man 32: Where is Pepe “El Toro”?
Man 36: Throw it! See you later, guys!

Romantic: I have no other option. I love my boyfriend with all my heart. If I must lose him to free him…I don’t mind. Save him, sir!
Lawyer Montes: No, girl, you are wrong. I made love to you as a man, not as an official. Love…I’ve never believed in it. I’ve always had to pay for it. But know I see it’s real…sincere. If a woman like you can renounce love…for love itself…love does exist…and you, the poor are happy…because you have love.
Romantic: Then you will help my Pepe.
Lawyer Montes: Pepe “El Toro” is lost there is too much against him. Not even the best advocate could prove his innocence.
Romantic: But he isn’t guilty, I’m sure!
Lawyer Montes: Love makes us blind. That’s the truth. I am sorry, but I can do nothing for him. However…Take as much as you need. No strings attached. I swear.
Romantic: Thank you very much, sir. The only thing I want is to save Pepe.

Chachita: My grandma is dying! My grandma is dying!
Lady 7: This is a hopeless case. We’ve done everything in our hands.
Chachita: Don’t you feel compassion for her?
Lady 7: Okay, I’ll go get a doctor. (Turning to Doctor.) … Doctor, what can we do for the paralytic?
Doctor: Nothing. She won’t make to the night.

Man 35: I couldn’t find her. She doesn’t live there anymore.

Chachita: Grandma. Grandma! Miss, please come see my grandma! Doctor, be merciful! My grandma is dying! She has told me through her eyes! (Turning to Yolanda.) It had to be you! They’re taking care of you and letting my grandma die! Die! I don’t ever want to see you again! (Talking to Doctor.) Doctor, come and see my grandma!
Doctor: Take this girl away.
Chachita: No! Why do you treat us like this? I hate you! I hate you! Die! Die!
Pepe: Shut up, Chachita!
Chachita: Dad! They are letting grandma die and it’s her fault!
Pepe: Shut up! That woman…is your mother.
Yolanda: Forgive me, Chachita. Call me just once…“mom”.
Chachita: Mom! Don’t die, mommy! Don’t die! Forgive me. I didn’t know you were my mother! Why did you never tell me? Dear mommy…Why did you never tell me? Why did you die when I found you? Don’t die, mommy! Don’t die!

Pepe: Let me stay for a minute. My old woman just died.
Lady 7: Ask to be given her body…for her not to be buried at the common grave.

Man 35: Chachita…you have finally met your mother. May God have forgiven her. Now, take these papers…this business card…and tell Pepe to take you with your father. You will live like a queen. You will have everything.
Chachita: I have no father…but Pepe “El Toro” (Turning to Pepe.) Dad!
Pepe: My, girl.
Romantic: Pepe…forget what I told you. I will wait for you forever.
Pepe: Take my medal…and buy a coffin for my mother.

Man 32: Confinement!
Pepe: Open up!
Man 39: It’s Pepe “El Toro”
Man 34: Hold on. We’ll kick his ass when he’s in confinement.
Pepe: Open up!
Man 34: Shut up, you toon!
Pepe: What’s up? Don’t you owe me?
Man 34: I’m tired of you, man.
Man 39: You think you’re so brave, don’t you?
Man 34: This will teach you. I told you to keep quiet about the usurer.
Pepe: As long as you stayed out of my life, bastard!
Man 34: Right now you’ll join her, then.
Man 40: Guard!
Man 32: What is it?
Man 40: There’s a quarrel in confinement!
Man 32: It’s locked from the inside. Open up!
Man 34: This will keep you quiet forever! Forever you hear me?
Man 32: Pepe! Pepe! Let him go! Let him go! Don’t be stupid! Don’t attack him.
Pepe: Now you will talk. Tell me who killed her? You did, didn’t you? Tell them I am not a murderer! Speak!

Man 32: Let him go! Let him go, or I’ll shoot you!

Pepe: Who killed her? You did, didn’t you? You did! Confess! You are the murderer! Confess, you bastard! You tell them! Who killed her?

Man 32: Let him go! Shoot them!

Pepe: Tell them I’m innocent!

Man 32: I can’t they are against the wall!

Pepe: Scream to them that you are the murderer!

Man 32: Where’s that riffle?

Man 39: Here!

Pepe: Tell them!

Man 32: Kill him!

Pepe: Confess!

Man 34: No! No! Please! No!

Pepe: Confess, you bastard!

Man 32: Let him go, Pepe!

Man 34: No! I am the murderer! I killed the usurer! Pepe “El Toro” didn’t! Stop it, please! Pepe “El Toro” is innocent!

Guayaba: Jesus! Such is life. Yesterday you were alive…and today you’ve kicked the bucket.

Tostada: Such is life. Look, they got married just a year ago…and boom! They already have a kid!

Topillos: We must make up the losses.

Planillas: And lose those who made up!

Pepe: Hey! Look what my son did!

Romantic: Oh, this is Torito…

Lady 3: Girl, are you mistaken again?

Chachita: No, madam. Now I do have a grave to cry on.

Pepe: Come on, Chachita!

Chachita: I’m coming!

One suffers but learns!!

The End
Appendix B: English Transcript of Macario

Macario

The "Day of the Dead" is celebrated in Mexico in a unique way, because Mexicans have a strange deeply-rooted understanding of death. [Mexicans] make toys in the shape of skeletons, bread in the shape of cadavers[,] and skulls of sugar and chocolate. On this day they place "offerings" of flowers and food in their homes for their [dead] family and relatives to eat and drink. This Cult of the Dead dates back 8,000 years to the indigenous peoples of Mexico, but during the 16th and 17th centuries their customs and beliefs were mixed with those of Christianity, so nowadays, their rites and practices are a combination of both cultures.

Daughter 1: Who is that candle for?
Macario’s wife: It’s for your godmother Rosa. May she rest in peace! She was always very good to us.

Daughter 2: And you’re not going to light a candle for papa?
Macario’s wife: No, my child. Your father is alive, thank God. The candles are only for the dead.

Daughter 1: At Mr. Narciso’s house they’re setting up a large offering...
Macario’s wife: As usual...They’re so pretentious [and pretending to have something that they really do not], even with the dead. We aren’t. This is what we eat and this is what our dead eat.

Woman 1: You’re back already, Macario?
Macario: Yes, I’m back.
Woman 1: Here take these flowers to your wife, for your offering.
Macario: Thank you. Have a nice day.
Woman 1: Have a nice day, Macario.
Son 1: Papa is coming!
Daughter 1: What did you bring to us?
Macario: Later, later. I brought nice things. Children, what are you doing?
Son 2: Papa! Papa!
Son 3: Give me one, give me one.
Macario: Easy, easy ... I brought lots of things for everybody. The baby first. There you are.
Son 1: Me, me.
Macario: A little bird.
Daughter 1: It’s so nice!
Son 3: Is it to eat?
Macario: Not at all.
Daughter 1: Look, it’s so nice.
Macario:  
Our Father, who art in heaven, we thank you for our food today. May we have it tomorrow. In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Son 1:  
I have finished, mom.

Daughter 1:  
That’s not true. His mouth is still full!

Son 1:  
I want more. I want more.

Son 2:  
So do I.

Daughter 1:  
Can I have more?

Daughter 2:  
Me too.

Son 3:  
Give me more.

Daughter 1:  
Please give some more?

Son 2:  
Eh, look! Come here, it’s so beautiful!

Son 1:  
What a lot of food!

Daughter 1:  
The dead are going to eat all of that?

Son 1:  
If I die, can I come to eat here?

Macario’s wife:  
No, only the rich dead people eat here. Our dead eat from our offerings.

Son 1:  
Then, I’d better not come.

Son 2:  
Mom, can we go and look at the stands?

Macario’s wife:  
Yes my children, you can go, but behave. I’ll be with you in a moment.

Daughter 1:  
Mom, if they don’t behave, shall I hit them?

Macario’s wife:  
No, don’t do that. Good morning Chona. Good morning. It’s 3 reals.

Chona:  
And why is it so much?

Macario’s wife:  
They sent me many lace shirts from Mr. Ramiro. I charge more for those.

Chona:  
You always find a way to overcharge. I’ll see what Doña Eulalia says.

Macario’s wife:  
Hey, tell her not to forget my holiday tip.

Chona:  
Doña Eulalia was saying a moment ago that the dead shouldn’t be a pretext for asking for money. I’ll ask her anyway.

Macario:  
Good morning.

Men 1:  
How is it going Macario? Come in. The boss is here.

Boss:  
How are you doing Macario? Wait a second. Because today the dead are giving us a lot of work. So many candles, eh? As you can see, they’re not enough for today. [Those for the] dead are more than what I have here. Aren’t you going to buy yours? They’re cheaper for you.

Macario:  
No, thank you.
Boss: That’s not good, Macario. You’ve got to have more consideration for the dead, because we spend more time dead than alive. Anyway, in this life, we are all born to die. What do we earn here? Some pleasure, and sometimes, not even that. Lots of work, lots of sufferings. When we’re born, we’re carrying our death hidden in the liver or in the stomach or here in the heart, that one day will beat no more. It can also be outside sitting under a tree that hasn’t grown yet but that will fall on you when you’re old.

Boss: When we’re born, we’re carrying our death hidden in the liver or in the stomach or here, in the heart that one day will beat no more. It can also be outside sitting under a tree that hasn’t grown yet but that will fall on you when you’re old.

Daughter 1: Papa, look at my skull.
Son 1: Papa, I want one too.
Son 2: Can you buy me that big one?
Daughter 2: I want one too, Papa.
Son 3: I want many!
Macario’s wife: I will buy them for you. They gave me my holiday tip.
Macario: Wait for me at the cloister. I’m going to deliver the firewood to the bakery.
Son 1: I prefer a sweet roll.
Son 2: I want this one. This one is better.
Macario’s wife: You want too many things.
Son 1: I prefer this one.
Macario’s wife: Choose whatever you want.

Macario: Good morning.
Baker: How’s it going Macario?
Woman: Excuse me Señor Alfredo it’s very late and I haven’t got my bread yet! My poor dead relatives have been waiting since very early this morning.
Baker: It’s delayed, please excuse us. But we have a very special order from Don Ramiro.
Woman: From Don Ramiro...who else could it be? He’s got his own oven, so he has tasty home bread.
Baker: But his oven has fallen apart so he brought six turkeys to be cooked. He has important guests.
Woman: So my bread will never be ready!
Baker: It’ll be ready later. You have my word.
Woman: Ok.
Chona: What do you think of our turkeys, my friend?
Woman 3: Our? Are they yours too?
Chona: You’ll see, those of us who work for Don Ramiro, eat the same food as him. We have very important guests today. Do you know who is coming? The Canon Don Cristino Alatriste.

Woman 3: Who is he?
Chona: You don’t know him? That’s outrageous! He’s...er...er... Be careful, you’re going to spill the sauce.
Baker: Put it back in! Are going to give us the wood for free today? What happens to him? He didn’t even ask for his holiday tip.

Chona: Be careful! Be very careful not to drop them or you’ll have to pay for them.

Macario: Don’t finish them. Leave me one. Leave one for me!
Macario’s wife: What’s wrong Macario?
Macario: Nothing. Go back to sleep.

Macario’s wife: Macario ... Macario, aren’t you going to eat anything? The children have already eaten yours. But I saved a little when I noticed you weren’t having lunch. If you don’t go, they’ll eat that as well.
Macario: Let them eat it!
Macario’s wife: Aren’t you hungry?
Macario: Hungry ... Hungry ... I haven’t felt anything else but hunger my whole life. Like you. Like my children. I have never thought of anything else but eating. We’ve been starving all of our lives. You saw those turkeys yesterday. I’m not going to slowly starve to death any more. I’m going to die once and for all. I will never eat again until I can eat a whole turkey all by myself, without sharing it with anyone. Without having to put up with hunger so that the others can eat. Even though the others are my own children. I want to eat by myself. All for me. All of it, and if not, I will never eat again. I want to be full[,not hungry with the taste of turkey in my mouth. [N]ot wanting to eat another piece. Give the kids what you saved for me, because I’m never going to eat again.

Macario’s wife: Here, Macario. Come on Macario, take it.
Macario: Give it to the children.
Son 3: Me first.
Son 2: Me!
Macario: Give it to the youngest one first.

Chona: You wait here.
Don Ramiro’s wife: Hasn’t Chona explained to you how I like the skirts done? Look at this! This is impossible!
Macario’s wife: I ran out of starch, and at the moment I have no money to buy any more.
Don Ramiro’s wife: Don’t expect me to pay for them like this. Take them with you and bring them back as they should be.

Children playing: Mariquita, the last one will go and see if they live or die, to run away! She’s dead! Run! Mariquita, the last one will go and see if they live or die, to run away! He’s warm. You turn around, and run this way and you see Milano eating parsley...he’s not here, he’s in his place...the rose is coming up and the carnation is fading away...She’s dead!

Macario’s wife: Macario! Here. You said you wanted one just for yourself. I understand, Macario. I have also wanted something only for myself that I didn’t want to share with anyone. Not even with you. But leave quickly. Because if the children see it, they will ask for some, won’t they? Come on...Come on, Macario...Take it away with you now.

Devil: Hey friend...the turkey you’re about to eat looks so good. Are you going to invite me to have a little bit?
Macario: I’m not your friend. And I’m not going to share any of it with you.
Devil: Hey my friend that animal looks so tasty...Let’s make a deal. If you give me one leg of that turkey, nothing else...I’ll give you my silver spurs.
Macario: Why would I want spurs? I don’t even have a horse.
Devil: Well...I can give you some other thing. Do you see the buttons on my trousers? They are made of gold. If you give me a slice of the breast...just a small slice of the breast...I’ll give you these coins.
Macario: And what am I going to do with them? If I went to exchange them, they’d think me a thief and cut off my hand. A person like me doesn’t pay with gold coins. Go away, leave me alone!
Devil: Well Macario, I’ll give you a much better deal. If you give me a wing ... just a single wing ... I’ll give you this whole forest. All these trees will be yours. What do you say?

Macario: What good would it do me if I were the owner? Just as I do now, I’d have to cut, carry and sell the wood. Besides, you cannot give me this forest, because it’s not yours. It belongs to God, our Lord.

God: Sir, can you spare me something?
Macario: You, sir you want a piece?
God: Just a small piece. That is if you would give it to me.
Macario: Why, sir? Why? You’re not interested in this little piece. You’re interested in a gesture of good will ... a good deed ... You know that I have never wanted anything only for myself in my whole life. So, this desire ... for you it’s a dead animal. It’s just an excuse for me to be good. But for me, it’s everything. All the hunger of my life. All that I have given. All that I have never received. Forgive me. I know that you can forgive me if you want. I don’t want to share it with you. I don’t want to. But if you really want a little piece...

Death: Friend, all that turkey is just for you? I’m very hungry. I’ve been hungry for quite a long time. It’s been thousands of years since I last ate. Can you share a little bit with me?
Macario: I knew that this couldn’t be true. It was too much to ask. I’m going to share it with you. I’m going to cut it in half. Pick the one that you prefer.
Death: Thank you very much.
Macario: Some water?
Death: No, thanks. … Very tasty! I can affirm that your wife is an excellent cook. Would you mind if we chatted for a while? I speak to men so rarely.
Macario: Rarely.
Death: We meet for an instant and there’s really nothing to say nor time to say it in. [C]an I ask you something? Why did you share with me? Because you were very hungry. It was quite clear. Hungrier than I have ever been.
Death: And that’s why you shared with me?
Macario: Well, yes. Mainly because of that.
Death: And the first man who asked you ... Why didn’t you share with him?
Macario: With him? Of course not! He tried to trick me. Above all, if I didn’t share with my children or with my wife, do you
think that some spurs or some coins would be worth more than the satisfaction of my family?

Death: You know ... and the second man? Why didn’t you invite him?

Macario: He’s the owner of everything that exists ... of me, of you...of everything. He only cared about me doing a good deed. And after sharing with him, I’d have run away full of repentance ... about not having shared with my family, and not having eaten anything myself.

Death: And me, why did you share with me? You said that it was mainly because of my hunger. Or was there another reason?

Macario: The truth is ... when I saw you I thought I didn’t have enough time left for even one single bite. When you appear, you don’t give any time to do anything. Then I thought that if I gave you a half and we ate at the same time ... while you ate, I’d eat too.

Death: You have shared food with me, You have kept me company ... and you have even made me laugh a little. So I’m indebted to you and I’m going to reward you. For your sharing with me, I am going to pay you such a high price, something you never would have dreamt. Now empty your gourd. Give it to me. Macario, this water can cure any illness, as long as I myself have no reason to object to curing the person afflicted. I give it to you. Believe this, that no man has ever had the power that I place in your hands. Be careful of how you use it. If you visit a sick man, you will always see me by his side. When I am at the foot of his bed, give him a drop. Just a single drop of the water I have given you. Because that’ll be enough to cure him. But if I’m at the head of the bed, don’t give him anything. He will die. You don’t believe me, do you? It’s all right. Very soon I will give you ... today, you’ll have the chance to believe me.

Macario: Today?

Death: And be careful. Don’t spill a single drop, because I’ll never give you any more. And remember ... If you see me at the foot of the bed, with a drop you’ll give him health. And if I’m at the head of the bed, don’t do anything. That person belongs to me. See you later, Macario. We may not talk again, but we’ll see each other often. And remember, use my gift wisely. And be worthy of my friendship. There he is!

Woman 1: Oh my God, he’s cold. Touch him!
Women 2: Please cover him! He’s already cold. Save him please. Oh my God.
Macario’s wife: My son ... Son. My son.
Woman 2: I saw him walking straight ahead. It looked as if someone were leading him by the hand. And even though I shouted and ran ... His poor mother.
Macario’s wife: My son. Talk to me my son. Talk to me. Talk to me.
Woman 2: We ought to get vulture broth ... It’s very good for things like this.
Woman 3: No way! That’s only good for rabies.
Man 1: Here comes Macario!
Woman 2: Parents can predict things.
Woman 4: Yes, of course.
Woman 5: He’ll only be able to close his eyes. Yes. Oh my God.
Son 1: Papa!
Son 2: Papa!
Son 1: My brother fell into the well.
Macario: Get out! I told you to get out!
Macario’s wife: No Macario!
Macario: Leave me alone with him! Wait for me outside. Please don’t move. Stay right there.
Son 3: Mama, papa’s back! Are you going to serve the food?

Macario: Wait for me at the cloister. I’m going to deliver the firewood to the bakery.
Chona: So here’s the wife of the healer. They told me all about it. They told me all about it.
Macario’s wife: Just things that people make up.
Chona: Where there’s smoke, there’s fire ... Is it true that he only touched him in order to cure him? There are people that have those powers. I know that. But I have never met anyone like that. Tell your husband to cure Doña Eulalia. She’s so ill. She doesn’t yell at me or tell me off any more. She’s really sick. I’ll bring you the dirty clothes in a moment.
Baker: Macario, now we know that you have healing powers ...
Tell me, is it true that you cured your son?
Macario: Just things that people say.
Baker: But why do they say such things?
Macario: There’s all the wood.
Baker: You keep things to yourself, don’t you?

Don Ramiro: Mother, if you save Eulalia ... I promise you a gold medal.
And look, well ... I promise you the medal ... and a little
gold crown for your son, but a small one, eh ... But save her. In the name of the Father ...

Macario’s wife: Macario, someone’s coming.
Don Ramiro: You’re Macario, aren’t you?
Macario: To serve God.
Don Ramiro: You know who I am?
Macario: You are Don Ramiro.
Don Ramiro: I’m rich, Macario. As you know. My wife is ill. I don’t believe in tall tales, but the doctor has done all that he can.
He has covered my wife with suckers ... a hundred leeches sucked her blood, but she her condition is the same. I have been told that you can heal, and I do not believe it. Is it true that you can cure?
Macario: It is true that I can sometimes heal...
Don Ramiro: Come with me to see her. If you cure her, I’ll give you whatever you want.
Macario: Ok. Wait for me there.

Macario: I need for you to leave me alone with her, Don Ramiro.
Don Ramiro: Alone?
Macario: It’s the only way that I can do something.
Doctor: I have to object as a doctor that this man has come to obstruct the work of science.
Don Ramiro: Please doctor! Come with me.
Macario: Don Ramiro! I can cure your wife.
Don Ramiro: And how much are you going to charge me?
Macario: How much do you think her life is worth?
Don Ramiro: Well ... I’ll give you ... I’ll give you ... Ten ounces of gold.
Macario: That’s how much you value your wife’s life?
Don Ramiro: I pay only one ounce to the doctor.
Macario: But I’m going to cure her.
Don Ramiro: And how much do you want?
Macario: I want ... One hundred ounces.
Don Ramiro: One hundred ounces! Ok. I’ll give them to you. But only when she’s completely cured. Do you hear?
Don Ramiro’s wife: What time is it?
Don Ramiro: It’s... it’s the middle of the night, darling.
Don Ramiro’s wife: Why are you awake? I’m very sleepy.
Don Ramiro: You cured her!
Macario: I told you I would.
Don Ramiro: Well ... I’ve got to pay. Of course. We talked about ... It was pretty expensive ...
Macario: Give me ten ounces. That’ll be enough. I don’t want your enmity, I want your gratitude.

Don Ramiro: Here. Here’s your money.

Don Ramiro’s wife: What are you doing, my husband? You haven’t slept all night long.

Don Ramiro: I’m making some business plans. Hey...do you remember who else among our friends is sick? Besides the ones I’m going to name ... Don. Manuel Centeno de la Barrera, Don José Luis Torres Salazar[,] ... Count Francisco de Valderrama.

Macario: Our Father, who art in heaven ... thank you very much for our food today. May we have tomorrow [–] the same! In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Don Ramiro: How nice to see you. Please come in ... I hope your father is not seriously ill.

Guest: He’s not my father. It’s my grandfather. He feels very ill.

Don Ramiro: But ... and you think he can be cured, of course.

Guest: You praised your doctor so much that ...

Don Ramiro: Yes, but everything has its limit. Of course, it is possible that ... Well, take him out.

Guest: Thank you. Boys! Be careful.

Doctor: He took my job away and gave it to you.

Coffin maker: How tall do you think he is?

Don Ramiro: He needs to be alone. Please.

Guest Grandfather: What are you doing here? Who are you? Who the hell has put me in here? Why isn’t there anyone here from my household? Where the hell is everybody? Why are you looking at me with that stupid face? Get out of here! Get out right now!

MACARIO’S CONSULTATIONS HERE.
DON RAMIRO’S GUEST HOUSE.

Song: Ladies and gentlemen, open your eyes and listen carefully [...] pain, discomfort and groans are over ... discomfort and groan ... ... they come quickly in carriages ... because
everybody is in a rush ... if they want a place to be cured by Macario ... to be cured by Macario. He’s cured many rich people, but at God’s willing ... money worth nothing ... rich people also die, rich people also die. The doctor and the carpenter win ... The widow cries afflicted, she’s going to lose all her money ... she ‘s going to lose all her money. Macario doesn’t allow it, because he’s an honest man ... He gives it back to the widow, and it’s well done ... it’s well done.

Chona: Look at Macario’s wealth. He has more than my boss. Well, not that much more, but you can see the change.
Woman: How much has he paid for these?
Coffin maker: Of course, he cures only rich people!
Woman: That’s not true. Macario cures everybody. And he charges whatever they want to pay. My grandfather had only a pig and that’s all he paid.
Woman 2: That’s true ... I gave him only a dozen eggs ... I would have given him the hen, but he didn’t want her.
Woman 3: He accepted my baby goat. I didn’t have another, and he ate it in a barbecue. But as you can see I’m good as new!
Coffin maker: Not that new!

Macario: Thank you boys.

Doctor: The one on the corner.
Inquisition officer: So this Macario cures miraculously. He’s a sorcerer, isn’t he?
Woman: He’s not a sorcerer. It happens that the Blessed … Virgin helps him ... She tells him how to cure.
Woman 1: No Virgin at all. It’s the Archangel Gabriel. You think Holy Virgin would bother to come? That’s what archangels are for...to run her errands.
Coffin maker: I haven’t smelt incense when Macario passes by. Rather the opposite.
Inquisition officer 2: And what’s the smell? Sulfur?
Coffin maker: No, he smells like a Christian, like sweat.
Inquisition officer: This is all very strange, isn’t it?
Woman 2: The last rites.
Woman 3: The extreme unction. Who is going to die?
Chona: Those rites are for an old lady that arrived yesterday ill. But Macario has already told her that she’s a hopeless case.
Inquisition officer: So he also knows who’s going to die and who isn’t.
Chona: He does. He’s very wise, isn’t he?
Inquisition officer: Fortune-teller!
Coffin maker: Who are those men in black?
Doctor: They’ve been sent by the Holy Office.
Coffin maker: The Inquisition!

Macario’s children: Mama, mama! She’s not here. Let’s go! Mama, mama ...
Chona: This is real wealth. So many things! You’ve been planning well, very well ... You’ve got to have a stock.
Macario’s wife: It wasn’t my idea. It was Macario’s.
Chona: Very well done. Well done. You never know, since God is helping him.
Macario’s wife: Yes. I hope it is God.
Chona: Of course it’s God. Who else?
Macario’s daughters: Mama, mama!
Macario’s wife: I’m here.
Macario’s daughters: Mama, we didn’t find papa or anybody. Help us find him.
Macario’s wife: Yes children. Let’s go. I’ll be back soon, Chona.
Chona: Go on, don’t worry about me.

Macario’s daughter 1: I prefer the other house because we didn’t get lost there.
Macario: Where are you, my wife! Where is everybody?
Macario’s wife: Here.
Macario: Why were you hiding?
Macario’s wife: We weren’t hiding, we got lost.
Macario’s son: Papa, papa!
Macario: Take this. I’m going to visit the sick.

Macario’s daughters: I’m so afraid! Let’s go to mama!
Macario’s son: I’m afraid. We’d better go and be with mama and papa.
Let’s go. Mama, I’m so afraid! Mama!

High official: I’m not opposed to you arresting him and taking him to the capital. I warn you though that Macario has brought wealth and health to this town. There will be a riot to defend him!
Inquisition officer 1: We can wait and ask for more forces. How big could the riot be?
High official: The whole town!
Inquisition officer 1: Even if it were the whole country, we would crush it!
Local priest: Beating and killing people?
Inquisition officer 2: It would appear that that you are not in agreement with the Holy Office.

Local priest: No, no, never ... It’s only that he has only been accused, and someone who is accused can also be innocent.

Doctor: That diabolical man is guilty without a doubt.

Local priest: Diabolical, perhaps ... But the church has never had as many candles ... and alms as it has today.

High official: Well, if you have to arrest him, it would be wise to do so in secret. Take him carefully, by surprise, to avoid a bloodbath.

Macario: Wife! Wife! Keep this. But keep it very safe.

Macario’s wife: What is it?

Macario: It’s our health and that of our children.

Macario’s wife: Macario. Why you have you never told me who taught you how to cure? [W]here you got the water from, all of this. The house and so many things. I’m afraid, Macario.

Macario: Take care of the children ... and the house. Everything else will be taken care of by your husband.

Macario’s wife: Macario ... Why don’t we go back to the other house?

MACARIO’S CONSULTATIONS *WERE* HERE

Soldier: Calmly!

Macario’s wife: Why are you doing this to us?

Soldier: So you’ll learn what authority is. You two keep on searching. Get out! Open it!

Macario’s wife: But sir, what have we done?

Soldier: You are sorcerers, blasphemers and heretics. Open that.

Macario’s wife: But sir, why are you breaking it? Here is the key.

Soldier: The law doesn’t need keys. Come on, open it! Break those bottles.

Inquisition panel member 1: It doesn’t seem sane what you’re saying, Macario. Remember that if this court finds out that you have been lying ... we can get to the truth by means of torture.

Macario: I swear sir that I have told the whole truth.

Inquisition panel member 1: When did you start to heal the sick?

Macario: I have already said so, sir. The first was my son...

Inquisition panel member 1: How did you know how to cure him?

Macario: When you walk in the mountains, one learns what one least expects to learn.
Inquisition panel member 1: If we went to the mountain with you, would we also learn to heal?
Macario: It would depend on Your Worships and not on me what you would learn, sir.
Inquisition panel member 1: Might it not be the Devil who taught you how to heal, Macario?
Macario: No, sir, it’s not the Devil. I’d say that it was most likely God, our Lord.
And maybe even the Blessed Virgin.
Inquisition panel member 1: And how do you know who is going to die and who isn’t? Did you learn that on the mountain too?
Macario: I’d say that I learnt that from the sick themselves. When you practice, there’s no possible mistake.
Inquisition panel member 1: Where do you notice it? In the eyes?
Macario: In the feet and in the head, sir.
Inquisition panel member 1: Officer! Take the prisoner out to wait! We are going to deliberate.
High official: If this man is a charlatan ... the punishment will only be to cut out his tongue ... and pillory him for one week. But if he has made a pact with the devil ... them he shall be tortured and burnt at the stake. That’s why I believe it’s very important to clearly define ... if he’s a charlatan or a sorcerer. To this end, there’s a test that has come to my mind...
Inquisition panel member 1: A test? How does it work?
High official: It’s very simple. Some of our prisoners are ill, aren’t they?
Inquisition panel member 1: True. The blasphemous Jew is dying.
High official: Well, let’s put all the sick in a cell ... and we’ll also put in someone who is very healthy. A soldier or... the executioner himself. The executioner is a fountain of health. And this Macario should be able to tell us what is going to happen to each one. That way we’ll know if he’s either a charlatan or a sorcerer.
Inquisition panel member 1: Very good idea.
High official: Excellent, isn’t it? We can also include the condemned man, who will be executed tomorrow.
Inquisition panel member 2: That’s true. I entrust you to give the orders.

Inquisition panel member 2: Are all the sick ones here?
Soldier: All of them.
Inquisition panel member 2: Well, I have reserved these two beds. One is for the condemned man. Bring him here. You are going to be on the other one.
Executioner: Don’t make me sleep here! I want nothing to do with sorcerers.
Inquisition panel member 2: Come on, don’t be stupid. What can he do to you?
Executioner: If I knew, I wouldn’t be afraid. Please leave me to my job. I only know how to torture and strangle people; and I do that well. If you want, I can fill the sorcerer’s ears with lead[,] ... but I don’t want to be lying here, alone with him.
Inquisition panel member 2: Stop your sobbing! Take that hood off and lie down! Let them know that everything is ready.
Executioner: I’m sweating ... and my heart is beating as if it were going to explode! Please, don’t do this to me!
Inquisition panel member 2: Shut up and obey! You’re shaking, sweating and you’re pale ... That’s good. You look even sicker than the others.
Executioner: Have mercy on me!
Inquisition panel member 2: If you keep on like this, I’ll give you a reason to cry.
High official: It’s the only way his wisdom comes out.
Inquisition panel member 1: We’ll please him. Let’s leave him alone.
Macario: Not this one? And this one who looks so sick, not him either? Not anyone?
Executioner: Anyone what? Anyone what?
Macario: This one, yes. Yes?
Executioner: Me, what? What about me?
Macario: Gentleman, I can now tell you, gentlemen.
Inquisition panel member 1: Well Macario, we’re waiting for your diagnosis. Let’s see the surprise you have for us.
High official: Let’s see.
Macario: Everybody is going to live, except one of them.
Inquisition panel member 1: I’ve already said so! A charlatan! Of course the one who is dying will die.
Macario: Everyone will live, except that one.
Inquisition panel member 1: See who he’s chosen. You have now lost your tongue, Macario.
High official: We won’t need to burn him. Even the condemned man will live?
Inquisition panel member 1: Tell the dying man to get up!
Soldier: He’s dead! His heart stopped beating.
High official: This is really powerful.
Messenger: I bring a pardon from His Excellency. The condemned man will only serve a life sentence.
High official: Pardoned.
Messenger: He’s been given a pardon so he can pray from his cell ... for the health of the son of His Excellency the Viceroy ... who is very ill.
Inquisition panel member 2: This is diabolical. Truly diabolical!
Inquisition panel member 1: There is no doubt that he is a sorcerer.
High official: He knew it all accurately. And it turns out that the dying man was only pretending so as to avoid torture.
Viceroy: It’s strange.
Viceroy’s aid: It’s a miracle, sir.
High official: Miraculous, the Blessed Virgin!
Viceroy: I trust the power of the Holy Office. The works of the Devil are false. That’s what they are, hoaxes.
Viceroy’s wife: My husband ... I’m amazed. They have told me about a miraculous man with powers over life and dead.
Viceroy: You too, my wife? It’s too much! I would have believed it possible from a peasant woman, but ...
Viceroy’s wife: Above all, I’m a mother and I see my son dying.
Viceroy: My lady, Viceroy’s cannot have anything to do with the Devil’s sorcerers. Our prestige is on the line.
Viceroy’s wife: I don’t care about prestige! I care about my son’s life. We must bring that man.
Viceroy: He won’t come.
Viceroy’s wife: Then I’ll go find him in his cell with my son in my arms ... and we’ll see how your prestige is endangered even more.

Prisoner: Oh my God!
Macario’s wife: Macario. Macario, how is it possible that you are in chains? in this cell...
Macario: How did you manage to get in and see me?
Macario’s wife: I took what we had hidden ... and I gave to these people.
Macario: And our children?
Macario’s wife: They are at Chona’s.
Macario’s wife: Do you know...? The soldiers broke into our house ... They destroyed everything ... They spilled your medicine ...
Macario: It doesn’t matter any more.
Macario’s wife: Are they are going to do that to you?
Macario: Well, you see... you mustn’t believe that they are going to burn me. That won’t be true ... Nor that I’m going to be tortured. I am sure that it won’t happen...
Macario’s wife: No, Macario, no.
Soldier: Macario, come with me. The Viceroy’s son is very ill. You’ll have the chance to cure him. If you cure him, you’ll be very lucky. I can see you as the court physician.
Macario: How am I going to cure him if I don’t have any more medicine? You spilled it. If that boy could be saved[,] ... but with what?
Soldier: You’ll find a way. Follow me!
Macario’s wife: Macario ... You called this "our health". I have brought it with me.
Viceroy: Well, what are you waiting for?
Macario: Where is the sick child, sir?
Viceroy: Can’t you hear the mother’s sobbing? Come on, get in at once!
Macario: Excuse me, sir ... I’ve got to see him alone.
Viceroy: As you wish. But remember, you’ll be pardoned if you save him. ... torture and fire if he dies.
Macario: My friend ... This cannot be ... You can’t take this one away ... Don’t you know that I’ll be tortured and burnt if you take him? What are you doing there? Go to the other side! I ask you for this favor remembering that turkey. Go to the other side ... Let him live ... But you got me into this. I didn’t ask for it!
Death: I can do nothing. It’s a Supreme Order.
Macario: Think about my children when they see me burning. And think about me! Still alive, but burning and screaming! Let me cure him. Please, my friend. You have called me friend. ... [S]how me that you are. Let me cure him. Let him live.
Viceroy’s wife: Open the door, please. Is the boy cured? Open the door!
Macario: Help me! Help me!

Devil: How’s it going, Macario? You’re just in time. And as usual, I’m willing to help you. See how mistaken you were about whom you treat to a meal. If I had been the one you treated, none of this would have happened to you. Come, and I’ll show you how to be a big winner. Come on, hurry up!
Macario: I’ve already told you that I don’t want your help! Go away; leave me alone. Enough bad things have already happened to me! And on top of all that, now you!

Macario: Once again it’s you, my Lord ... Don’t let them catch me, my Lord.
God: It’s you who are attracting them, Macario. Your deeds are what is following you ... Don’t run any more and face them. Think about saving that part of you which does not die. Think about yourself. Think about your deeds. Weigh them and judge them.
Macario: I’ve got to get away, my Lord. I’ve got to get away.

Death: Welcome to my cavern, Macario.
Macario: Hide me. They’re coming to get me. Why did you betray me?

Death: I have never betrayed you ... And I’m with you now more than ever. This is a place that no man has ever seen. And there are things here that you must learn. Come. Look Macario. This is mankind ... You can see lives burning quietly ... Sometimes the winds of war blow or the winds of plague ... and lives are extinguished in the thousands randomly ... High ones ... small ones ... straight ones ... twisted ones. Now there is peace. Look at them burning. Each one is made of different wax. Each one is unique. They last according to the material which feeds the flame. Do you see this stub of a candle? This is the life of the Viceroy’s son. You can see it here. A life. See how fragile it is, how precious and how brief it is. Like a butterfly from eternity. And it is with this that you have been playing and doing business, never understanding the significance of the gift I gave you. Look at this flame! The Viceroy’s son is dead now.

Macario: Why did you do that?

Death: It was the time. There is a supreme order. There are laws. There are many things that you do not understand.

Macario: And what about my candle? Tell me where it is. Let me see it. It’s extinguishing!

Death: Yes.

Macario: Aren’t you going to do anything? Are you going to let it go out?

Death: There’s an order, Macario.

Macario: But you can do something! There are many candles that have gone out. Don’t let it go out.

Death: Everything has its end and its place. We can’t do anything.

Macario: Don’t touch it! I know what you’re going to do.

Death: It’s in vain, Macario. Who do you want to escape from? From me? From you? Come back! It’s the moment of rest and judgment. A story ends and another one begins. When the deeds of a man finish it’s because the judgment is going to begin. Macario, don’t run anymore. Why run? Macario, Macario, Macario!

Macario’s wife: Macario! He never comes back this late. Always at sunset. He went out so happily today. Macario! Macario! Macario! Macario!

Man: Here he is!

Macario’s wife: He’s sleeping. Macario. Macario. You were like a child. With your whims. I am so glad to have been able to give
you that pleasure. Life wasn’t easy, Macario. But it was good to have lived it together. Macario. I’m going to make our sons be like you. Good men. He couldn’t even finish his turkey.

The End
Appendix C: English Translation\textsuperscript{6} of \textit{Amores Perros}

I included the characters’ names, their relationships, and a brief description of where the scene is taking place.

Main Characters
Susana: (Ramiro’s Wife and Octavio’s sister-in-law)
Octavio: (Ramiro’s brother and Susana’s brother-in-law)
Ramiro: (Susana’s husband and Octavio’s brother)
Mother: (Ramiro’s and Octavio’s, Susana’s mother-in-law)
Jorge: (Octavio’s friend)
El Jarocho: (Octavio’s contender in dog fighting)
Mauricio: (Dog fighting ring master)
Daniel: (Julieta’s Husband and Valeria’s new love)
Valeria: (Daniel’s new love)
Andrés: (Daniel’s friend)
Julieta: (Daniel’s wife)
El Chivo: (Assassin)
Maru: (El Chivo’s daughter)
Leonardo: (Police commander and Chivo’s friend)

Script
Car chase that ends with a car crash between Octavio and Valeria; the Chivo was walking through the area when it happened.

Jorge: What did you do? What did you...?
Octavio: Nothing!
Jorge: Nothing? Bullshit!
Fuck, he’s bleeding to death.
Octavio: They still coming?
Jorge: They still behind us?
Octavio: I can’t see them.
Jorge: Shit, he’s bleeding a lot.
Octavio: Stop the bleeding.
Jorge: I can’t.
Octavio: Use your finger.
Jorge: There’s too much.
Octavio: Here come those bastards. Faster!
Jorge: Faster!
Octavio: Motherfuckers!
Jorge: Fucking hell!
Octavio: Watch out!

\textsuperscript{6} See: http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/a/amores-perros-script-transcript.html
Shit, he fell.
Octavio: Is he dead?
Jorge: Why did you fuck with those bastards? No
Octavio: Is he dead?
          Answer me!
Jorge: No, but he keeps falling.
He’s bleeding even more!
I’ve covered his wound.
Octavio: Get down!
Jorge: They’ve got a fucking gun! Motherfucker!
          Hurry! Let’s go to Chilaquil’s [house].
Octavio: Motherfucker!
Jorge: Faster.
Octavio: Get down, man.
Jorge: Step on it!
Man 1: The window!
          The window, that’s it!

Movie flashes backwards through time to another location, the dog fighting arena.

**Octavio and Susana Story**
Mauricio: Are you ready?
          What’s your stake?
Jarocho: 10,000.
Mauricio: Okay for 10?
          Let’s go.
          You’re on for 10.
          10’s the stake, señores.
          10 on Pancho, 10 on Turco.
          Heat ‘em up!
          Marks!
          Let them go!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Ramiro’s and Octavio’s house.

Susana: Cofi!
          Cofi! Cofi, come here!
          Fucking dog!
          Hello, señora.
          How’s he been?
Mother: Better. The fever broke.
          Susana, I can’t watch him tomorrow.
Susana: Why?
Mother: I have to help my sister move,
          and go to the market.
Susana: Señora, give me a break!
I have a match final. I'll iron tonight.

Mother: No.
Leave the kid with your mother.

Susana: My mother?
Just this week, then I’ll work it out.

Mother: No.
I raised my children,
Now you raise yours.

Movie flashes forward through time to where Chivo is seen from far away, not saying anything.

Movie flashes forwards to the dog fight arena.

[Crowd cheering kill it.]
Man 2: Go on, Turco!
Mauricio: Do I stop it? He’ll kill him.
Man 2: It’s cool. He’s back on top.
Kill him!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Ramiro’s and Octavio’s.

Octavio: What’s up, Ma?
Mother: Sit down and eat.
Octavio: How’s it going, little dude?
How’s he doing?

Susana: Better.
Octavio: Thank you.
Know what? A baby born in Guadalajara
gets a finger up his ass.

Susana: Why?
Octavio: To see what he’ll be.
If he kicks, he’ll be a soccer player.
If he screams, a mariachi.
And if he laughs, he’ll be a homo.

Susana: What about girls?
Octavio: We finger them until they’re 18.
Mother: Stop bullshitting, Octavio.
Ramiro: Susana?
Susana? Did you bleach my uniform?
Look at it!
And Cofi?
Where is that fucking dog?

Susana: No "hello"...?
Ramiro: Where?
Susana: I don’t know.
Mother: [Enough] sit and eat.
Ramiro: You let him out again, right, bitch?
I always tell you to watch it when you go out!
Octavio: Lay off!
Ramiro: Who asked you?
Octavio: You don’t care about that dog. I feed it.
Ramiro: This is between me and my wife.
Octavio: I’m the one who let him go, so lay off her.
Mother: Keep out of it!
Shut up, please.

Movie flashes forwards through time to the dog fighting arena.

Mauricio: Here’s your dough, less 500 for my cut.
10 victories in a row!
Jarocho: Just luck, fatso.
Mauricio: Cool (The real translation should had been Fuck off).
Jarocho: See you Saturday.
Mauricio: Okay.
What about your fucking dog?
Man 3: Barbecue it if you’d like, shirthead!
Mauricio: Champiñon, move that dog!
Man 4: Fucking dog can’t get enough!
Man 5: Give him to me.
Jarocho: He won’t budge.
Man 3: Sic him on those dogs. That will cool him off.
Jarocho: Good idea.
It’s in the bag.
Jorge: Hey, that’s Octavio’s dog.
Man 6: Exactly.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s room.

Susana: Can I?
Octavio: Yes.
Susana: Thanks for earlier.
Octavio: What?
Susana: That was cool, taking the blame.
Octavio: What happened here?
Susana: It’s nothing.
Octavio: Did Ramiro do this to you?
Susana: Yes, but he didn’t mean it.
Octavio: Didn’t mean it?
Susana: You know what he’s like.
Octavio: Why do you put up with it? He treats you like shit.
Susana: Not always.
Octavio: Are you stupid or just pretending?

Movie flashes forwards through time to where Chivo is getting ready for his next murder, nothing is said.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s room.

Mother: Someone’s here for you.
Octavio: Hang on.
Susana: Uh-huh.
Mother: You know Ramiro doesn’t want Susana in your room.
Octavio: We were watching TV!
Mother: Your brother doesn’t like it, neither do I. It’s the last time, you hear me? The last!
Octavio: What’s up?
Jorge: You won’t believe it.
Octavio: What?
Jorge: Your dog killed Jarocho’s Pancho.
Octavio: What happened?
Jorge: Jarocho sicced Pancho on Cofi, but Cofi saw him coming. He snapped his neck and killed him.
Octavio: Where’s Cofi?
Jorge: Here he comes.
Octavio: Cofi! Here!
Jorge: He’s all right.
Octavio: The other dogs didn’t touch him.
Octavio: It’s okay, huh? It’s cool.
Jarocho: Cool?
Jarocho: It’s not cool at all. Bring Pancho. See what he did?
Jarocho: This dog was worth at least 20,000 pesos.
Octavio: Have him stuffed for your mantel.
Jarocho: Don’t be a smartass, kiddo.
Jarocho: You have two choices. Pay me, or pay me.
Octavio: Why should I pay you?
Jarocho: Want to play with me? Okay.
Octavio: Wait! Why did you set Pancho on him?
Jarocho: Listen, give me your dog, and I’ll forget it.
Octavio: You’re nuts.
Jarocho: Start saving, ‘cause you’re gonna pay.
Jorge: Make Ramiro pay if you’re so cool.
Afraid he’ll kick your ass again?
Jarocho: No way, asshole.
I’m not taking any more shit.
Got it, Octavio?
Let’s go.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Ramiro’s and Octavio’s kitchen

Ramiro: What’s up?
Got a joint?
Mother: Ramiro, I need money.
Ramiro: Don’t got any. Payday’s Friday.
Mother: So what do I do?
The baby needs diapers and formula, and the eggs you eat aren’t free.
Ramiro: Got no money.
Mother: "Got no money."
Octavio: So you got no money?
Ramiro: Are you deaf?
Octavio: Aren’t drugstores good business?
Ramiro: Keep your mouth shut, or else.
Octavio: Asshole!
Ramiro: One word and you’re dead.
Octavio: Being tough won’t make you smart.

Movie flashes forwards through time to where Chivo kills a business man.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Julieta’s car.

Girl 1: Jimena took my headband.
Julieta: Give it back.
Girl 2: It’s my headband!
Girl 1: No, it was a gift.
Girl 2: Liar, I bought it at the store.
Julieta: Give it to her. You never wear it.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Julieta’s house

Girls: I’ll get it!
Girl 1: Hello?
Hello?
Daniel: Who was it?
Girl 1: They hung up.
Julieta: That mute man again? Or that mute woman, maybe?
Daniel: I’ll get it.
Julieta: Hello?
Hello?
Hung up again.
Weird!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s room.

Susana: Can I come in?
Octavio: What’s up?
Susana: You going out?
Octavio: Why?
Susana: No reason.
Octavio: Something wrong?
Susana: I...
Octavio: What happened?
Susana: I’m in trouble. I don’t know what to do.
I’m pregnant again.
Octavio: Shit, Susana, you want another baby already?
Susana: I didn’t want it!
Ramiro is going to kill me.
Octavio: No, he won’t.
Susana: He went nuts once,
Octavio: but he still married you, didn’t he?
Susana: Yes, but I don’t know if I want to stay with him.
I can’t have this baby, Octavio.
Octavio: Are you thinking about an abortion?
Susana: Do you have a better idea?
What the fuck can I do?
Octavio: Come away with me.
Susana: What?
Octavio: Let’s go away.
Far away.
Susana: I’m being serious!
Octavio: So am I.
Susana: Don’t talk shit. Where would we go?
What are you doing, you jerk?
Octavio: Come away with me.

Movie flashes forwards through time to a pharmacy.

Man 4: How many are they?
Ramiro: Six bitches, three dicks.
Ready?
Man 4: Wait.
Ramiro: That fat bitch is going in. I smell cash.
      Ever fucked a fatso like her?
      I have, it’s hot.
Man 4: You have? Who?
Ramiro: Your mother, asshole.
      Someday we’ll do that fucking bank, you’ll see.
Man 4: Keep cool, Tarzan (*Chanoc nuestros héroes son la antítesis de un héroes normal* [Chanoc: Mexican héroes are the antithesis of a normal American hero]).
Ramiro: We’re going big time, man.
      After that fucking bank, I’m out of here.
      It’s not safe around here.
      We’re on, she’s in.
      Everyone down on the floor!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house.

Newspaper: BUSINESSMAN MURDERED MOTIVE UNKNOWN [flips the pages]
MR. EZQUERRA’S WIDOW, MRS. NORMA SAINZ, DIED
FUNERAL AT 10:30 A.M.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Ramiro’s and Susana’s room.

Susana: What’s up?
      Want some dinner?
Ramiro: Look what I brought you.
Susana: Cool!
      No way! For me?
Ramiro: Like it?
      Was a bitch to get it.
Susana: Shh!
      Don’t shout, you’ll wake the baby [up].
Ramiro: Hang on.
      Baldy?
Susana: Don’t wake him.
Ramiro: Why not?
Susana: It was hard to get him to sleep.
Ramiro: I never see him, do I, Baldy?
Susana: He’s been puking all day.
      He’s sick.
      Selfish bastard!
Ramiro: Shut the fuck up. I gave you the Walkman!
      I’m cool to you, but you’re always on my ass!
Susana: The baby, shit!
Shut up!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s house flat roof.

Jorge: Wow, dude... she’s your brother’s woman.
Octavio: Yeah, but I always liked her, even before they met.
Jorge: But he got her first.
Octavio: My ass!
Jorge: But Susana does. You’re playing with fire, man.
Octavio: I can’t stop thinking about her.
Jorge: There’s thousands of bitches. Why do you want to fuck her?
Octavio: I don’t want to fuck her!
Jorge: I want her to leave with me.
Octavio: Yeah? With what money?
Jorge: You’re going to fight him?
Octavio: Where do we get the bet money?
Jorge: You asshole!

Movie flashes through time to Octavio’s room, he is hearing Ramiro and Susana make love and then knocks on their door.

Ramiro: Well?
Octavio: Phone call for Susana.
Ramiro: Who is it?
Octavio: Her mother.
Ramiro: Tell her to fuck off.
Octavio: She says it’s urgent.
Susana: Hello?
    Hello?
    Who was it?
Octavio: Me.
Susana: You’re nuts.
    What’s wrong with you?
    Let go. Let go.
    No, Octavio.
    Not this way.
Octavio: Then how?

Movie flashes forward through time to the dog fighting arena.

Mauricio: This dog looks pretty sad to me.
Jorge: But it killed Jarocho’s dog.
Mauricio: You know this business?
Octavio: More or less.
Mauricio: More or less?
Sargento: Yes.
Mauricio: Sarge, take this dog. Come with me.
This is my business. Zero taxes, zero strikes, zero unions.
Pure hard [honest] cash.
I take a loss now and then.
This is Mac, my best investment.
He’s old, but he can still fight.
I got the van from his winnings.
We can be partners,
with your dog, and my stake money.
We’ll split the profits 50 - 50.
What do you think?
Octavio: Sounds good.
Mauricio: Good.
Good for eight fights, then we’ll see.
Octavio: Fine.
Mauricio: But first, your dog goes a round with Mac.
Octavio: Okay, it will cost you 5,000 win or lose.
Mauricio: Don’t bullshit me.
Octavio: What if your dog kills mine?
Mauricio: And what if mine dies?
Octavio: But I don’t have a van yet.
Mauricio: I’ll give you 2,500. Will that do?
Octavio: Done.
Mauricio: Condom! Bring Mac.
Here’s your take.
Release them on three. Count.
Jorge: One...
two...
three!
Mauricio: That’s enough.
Take your fucking dog.
Sarge!
Come back on Saturday at 12:00.
It’s payback time for Jarocho.

Movie flashes forwards through time to the pharmacy where Ramiro works.

Ramiro: 20 is your change.
Woman 1: Thank you.
Ramiro: Did you find everything you needed?
Octavio: Except rubbers.
Ramiro: You don’t have my size.
Octavio: What the fuck are you doing here?
Ramiro: Where did you get the dough?
Octavio: You don’t have money, but I do.
Ramiro: Stick it up your ass.
I’ll buy my family’s things.
Octavio: Ring me up, or I’ll call the manager.
Ramiro: Asshole, get out or you’re dead.
Octavio: I’m not Susana, you know. You don’t scare me.
Woman 2: What happened?
Ramiro: Nothing, nothing.
Fucking hell!
Good afternoon.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s house.

Octavio: Take it.
Susana: What for?
Octavio: So you can take care of him.
And him.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Julieta’s room.

Daniel: Yes?
Hey, brother, how are you?
I’m very well. No, not much.
Hang on.
I can’t hear anything.
Julieta: Neither can I. Why don’t you leave?
Daniel: What’s up?
I couldn’t get away. Tomorrow, I promise.
I miss you, too.
Don’t call here anymore, Julieta’s suspicious.
No, I’m not angry.
Tomorrow at 11:00.
I love you.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s bathroom.

Octavio: What’s the matter?
Stop!
Stop, man!
Ramiro: Keep out of my business, asshole!

Movie flashes forwards through time to the dog fighting arena.
Mauricio: Here, pal, take this.
Jarocho: What’s up, fatso?
Mauricio: Just hanging, Jarocho.
Jarocho: Why are you playing with girls?
Mauricio: Because they got mean dogs.
Jarocho: You’re betting 15 on it?
Octavio: My dog beats all of yours.
Jarocho: I’m talking to the ringmaster, princess.
So...
15?
Mauricio: Make it 10.
Jarocho: Okay.
Mauricio: Place your bets, señores.
Octavio: Waste him!
Jarocho: Kill him!
Mauricio: Ready?
Let them go!

Movie flashes forwards through time to a cemetery.

Chivo’s sister-in-law: I’ll catch up.
What are you doing here?
Chivo: Taking a stroll.
Chivo’s sister-in-law: Stroll elsewhere.
Don’t mess with us, and especially not her.
Chivo: It’s a free country, isn’t it?
Chivo’s sister-in-law: To her, you’re dead. Don’t forget that.
Chivo: You’re hostile, sister-in-law!

Movie flashes forwards through time to the dog fighting arena.

Jarocho: That’s two you owe me.
Mauricio: Don’t be pissed, Jarochito. Win some, lose some.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Susana’s room.

Susana: What’s up?
Octavio: Here.
It’s yours [ours].
But hide it, or my brother will take it.
Susana: Don’t worry.
Octavio: Got another place to stash it?
Susana: Yes. I put that other money in a case in the closet.
Shh!
The baby’s sleeping!
Octavio: This will be our bank, okay?
Just yours and mine.
Susana: Octavio, you stealing too?
Octavio: No.
This money’s clean [honest], so you’ll come away with me.
Susana: Come away with you?
You still don’t get it, do you?
Octavio: No, you don’t get it.
Jorge has cousins in Juarez. We’ll go there.
We can open a store, we got cash.
It’ll be cool.
Susana: No, I don’t want any more trouble. Can’t you understand?
Understand?
Octavio: Come away with me. [Susana says no with her head]

Movie flashes forwards through time and to many places involving Octavio, Susana, and Ramiro, individually or with each other.

Lyrics:
Golden and growing ripe in my land
I’m ready to fly while my people await
Twigs I go around sowing to see if they sprout
Northern wind, thought and life
I carry St. Peter in my breath and the saliva I spit
Anytime I feel right
And I do it complete and directly
Yes, sir
Yes, sir, Coming, coming, coming, coming
Yes, sir
Wind, caresses, levity and flavor
Yes, sir
Yes, sir, Coming, coming, coming, coming
Yes, sir
Fire, smiles, reality and pain
The ground is present
Waiting, representing, it comes down at night
Singing me to sleep, I’m unconscious
On my belly the seconds pass
Charged, tattooed on my back, soaking wet
Joined to spasms of crying and laughter
I’ve been around, slowly but carefully
Just as slow as the moment that doesn’t end
Just as slow, crossing through the thorns
Tell me what it feels like, tell me what it feels like
Tell me what it feels like, the sweat in your brow
Tell me what it feels like, tell me what it feels like
Tell me what it feels like, the sweat in your brow
Yes, sir
Yes, sir, Coming, coming, coming, coming
Yes, sir
Wind, caresses, levity and flavor
Yes, sir
Yes, sir, Coming, coming, coming, coming
Yes, sir...

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s room.

Octavio: I didn’t say you could come in.
Ramiro: What are you watching?
Octavio: None of your business.
Ramiro: Change that shit. I don’t like it.
Octavio: What do you want?
Ramiro: I heard you’re getting rich with my dog.
Your car is nice.
Octavio: Your dog?
He’s mine.
Ramiro: Don’t talk shit, little brother!
He’s as much mine as yours, so I get half of the winnings.
Anyway, look at him.
 Doesn’t look like you care about him much.
Octavio: I care more than you know.
Give you money? I’m not giving you shit.
Ramiro: It’s simple...
cough it up, or I’ll blow your piggy bank away.
Next time’s for real,
so you better get me my dough.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Maru’s house, where the Chivo is outside.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Susana’s room.

Toy: "The cock crows..."
Octavio: What’s up, Baldy? Look what I got you!
Look at all this!
Your mom’s going to put it away.
We’re millionaires!
Susana: There’s enough to live on for two years.
Octavio: Come live them with me.
What do you say, eh?
Susana: Why, Octavio?
Octavio: Why what?
Susana: Why do you want to live them with me?
Octavio: You still don’t get it?
Susana: No, I do get it.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Julieta’s daughter’s room, where Daniel says goodbye silently to them.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Mauricio’s kitchen.

Mauricio: Give Jorge something to eat.
I’ve got some business for you.
Jarocho’s got a class A dog.
He wants to fight Cofi.
Jorge: Yeah, right!
Mauricio: He’ll bet 40,000.
Octavio: 40?
You in?
Mauricio: That’s too much for me.
You’re on your own.
Octavio: What about our deal?
Mauricio: The deal was for eight fights. We’ve done 15.
That’s enough. You won, I won, that’s it.
Octavio: Okay.
When does he want to fight?
Mauricio: This Saturday.
He wants it private, at Trujillo’s.
No outside bets, just you and him.
Octavio: All right.
Mauricio: Do I confirm?
Octavio: Okay.
Hey, fatso,
I need you to do me a big favor.

Movie flashes forwards through time and to many places involving Octavio, Susana, and Ramiro, individually or with each other.

Lyrics: A giants’ joust turns the air into natural gas
A wild duel warns me
How close I am of going into an outrageous world
I feel my fragility
Some nightmare running away
With a beast after me
Tell me everything’s a lie
Just a silly dream and nothing more
I’m afraid of enormity
Where nobody hears my voice
Stop the deception
Don’t try to hide
That you’ve never tripped while moving around
Paper monster
I don’t know who I’m up against
Or is there somebody else here?
I believe in the terrible ghosts
Of some strange place
And in my foolishness to make you burst into laughter
In an outrageous world
I feel your fragility
Stop the deception
Don’t try to hide
That you’ve never tripped while moving around
Paper monster
I don’t know who I’m up against...

Movie flashes forwards through time to Susana’s room.

Octavio: How’s the baby?
Octavio: Got a name yet?
Susana: Umm...
if it’s a girl, Susana.
Octavio: And if it’s a boy?
Everything’s ready. We leave Sunday.
But I’m going to need some of the money.
Saturday’s the big one.
Susana: Don’t fight him anymore. We’ve got enough.
Octavio: One last one?
What time is the bus to Juarez?
Susana: It leaves at 12:00.
Ramiro will still be at work.
Octavio: Don’t worry about Ramiro.
He won’t fuck with us anymore, I’m sure.
Are you scared?
Susana: It’s heavy shit.
Octavio: Scared?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Susana’s mother’s house.

Susana: Ma?
Ma?
Ma?
So this is how you take care of the kid?
Shh! What’s wrong?
Now you can stay drunk.
Octavio: What’s up, Ma?
Mother: Do you know what happened to your brother?
       He didn’t come home last night.
Octavio: No idea.
Mother: You don’t know?
       He got beat up bad.
Octavio: He must have pissed off a customer.
Mother: They threatened to kill him.
Octavio: God knows what he’s up to!
Mother: He left with the baby and Susana.
Octavio: Where to?
Mother: I don’t know where.
       Or if they’ll be back.
Octavio: What?
       Goddamn it!
       Motherfucker! And that bitch!

Movie flashes forwards through time to a TV Studio.

TV Host 1: People Today
With us today, someone no man would want to miss...
one of the most beautiful women in Iberian America,
Valeria Amaya!
Valeria: Thank you so much.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s house.

Octavio: I have to find her, damn it!
Jorge: She tricked you. I warned you.
Octavio: It wasn’t her. It was Ramiro, that asshole.
TV Host 1: This is your year.
       You represent "Enchant" in Latin America,
       loads of models envy you...
Octavio: I’ll find her!
       How much you got?
Jorge: 7,000 and you?
Octavio: 10,000.
       I hope Jarocho will go with that.
Jorge: I’ve got 3,000 at home, I’ll loan them to you.
       That woman’s hot!

Movie flashes forwards through time to the TV Studio.
TV Host 2: Is it true you have a new love?
Valeria: Yes, it’s not just a rumor.
In fact, he’s here.
My love!
TV Host 1: Andres Salgado, no less!
Please, have a seat.
TV Host 2: What a lucky guy!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Octavio’s house.

Octavio: Let’s go. Cofi!
TV Host 2: Okay, one more personal question.
Will you two get married?
Valeria: Not right away, but we have a son...
and I brought him.
Richie!
TV Host 2: Isn’t he cute!
TV Host 1: He looks just like Andres!
Andrés: He’s got my white [grey] hair.

Movie flashes Forwards through time to the location where the dog fight will take place.

Jarocho: What’s up? You didn’t back out?
Octavio: As you can see.
Mauricio: You get the 40?
Octavio: I only got 20.
Mauricio: Will that do?
Jarocho: You’re on. Playing for candy!
Mauricio: Sargento, put the dogs in the pool.
Ready!
On your marks!
Release them!
Octavio: You crazy fucker!
Mauricio: Fight’s over!
Octavio: He was winning! Why did you shoot?
Jarocho: It just went off.
Octavio: What’s this shit?
Mauricio: It’s between you and him.
Here’s your money. And yours.
Jorge: This isn’t fair, Mauricio!
Mauricio: Work it out between you.
Jarocho: Don’t be crybabies. That’s the business.
You better scram,
before things heat up.
Complain to your brother. I’ll be waiting for him!
Jorge: Where are you going?
Octavio: Start the car, wait for me.
Jarocho: Forget something, princess?

Movie flashes forwards through time to when the car chase at the beginning of the film starts.

Jorge: What did you do?
Octavio: Nothing!
Jorge: Nothing? Bullshit!
Octavio: Is he dead?
Jorge: No!
Octavio: Why did you fuck with those bastards?

Movie flashes forwards through time to the TV Studio.

TV Host 1: Thanks to Valeria Amaya and Andrés Salgado for being on the show.
Friends, stay with us for more surprises on "People Today."
TV Host 2: Valeria, I thought you were with someone else.
Valeria: Well, now you know.
TV Host 2: So many rumors.
Valeria: People love gossip.
TV man: Laura, 20 seconds!
Valeria: Right, goodbye.
Andrés: What are you doing now?
Valeria: Nothing, why?
Andrés: Have lunch with me.
Valeria: No thanks, Andrés.
Andrés: You would say no to Andrés Salgado?
Valeria: Listen, the show’s over. The show is over.
Andrés: I have a surprise you’ll love.
Valeria: Okay, let’s go.
Andrés: Where are you going?
Valeria: To the restaurant.
Andrés: I said lunch, I didn’t say where.
Valeria: Come in.
Valeria: Did you buy this place?
Andrés: Not exactly.
Valeria: It’s lovely!
Andrés: You like it?
Valeria: Of course!
Andrés: This couch is just like mine.
Andrés: It’s not like yours.
It is yours.
In the bedroom, you’ll find your clothes,
your perfumes...

Valeria: What are you playing at?
Andrés: That’s not all. Look at the view!
        You like it?
Valeria: You’ve gone too far. I’m going.
Andrés: Wait!
        Take the keys to your apartment.
Valeria: What do you mean, my apartment?
Daniel: That’s right, you’re home!
Valeria: Idiots!
Daniel: Darling!
Valeria: What’s this hole?
Daniel: I had enough to buy it, but not to fix it.
Andrés: Okay, enough!
Daniel: You’re jealous.
Valeria: Thanks!
        I’ve never seen you acting so well [to Andrés].
Andrés: You liked it?
Valeria: I love you, too. – Sorry [to Andrés].
        I was joking [to Andrés].
Andrés: Bye!
Valeria: Wow!
Daniel: Thanks.
Andrés: Thanks for the magazine cover.
        Good luck, matador.
Valeria: My love, is it really true?
Daniel: Honey?
Valeria: What?
Daniel: I spoke with Julieta.
Valeria: And?
Daniel: As of today, we’re separated.
Valeria: You’re not lying to me?
Daniel: Starting tonight, we can sleep together.
Valeria: Are you sure about this?
Daniel: I am. Have you changed your mind?
Valeria: I just can’t believe it!

Movie flashes forwards through time to the partner’s office.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Valeria: Darling?
Daniel: Yes?
Valeria: What shall we toast with?
Daniel: Ah, I knew I forgot something.
   Please, keep an eye on the food.
Valeria: You know I can’t fry an egg.
Daniel: You’re my special guest!
Valeria: A guest in my own home?
Daniel: You are the guest. Stay here.
Valeria: Darling...
       Richie!
       Come over here.
Daniel: Hurry back.
Valeria: You bet I will.

Movie flashes forwards through time to instants before the car crash.

Valeria: Corazón...
       Mi corazón
   Corazón... mi corazón
   Richie! Shut up! What’s the matter?
   Corazón...
       Mi corazón...

Movie flashes forwards through time to the hospital where Valeria is being treated.

Daniel and Valeria Story
Dr.: Excuse us.
Daniel: So?
Dr.: It’s hard to diagnose...
   massive blood loss,
   double fractured tibia and fibula,
   open fractured femur...
   the femoral biceps are almost completely severed.
   It’s a miracle she’s alive.
Daniel: Will she make it?
Dr.: I hope so.
Daniel: When can I see her?
Dr.: I don’t know...
   in two days, depending on how she recovers.
   Is there a relative I should notify?
Daniel: Her family’s in Spain. I don’t know if I should tell them.
Dr.: Will you take the responsibility?
Daniel: Thanks, Nacho.
Dr.: No problem.
       My regards to Julieta.
       Sorry, it’s habit.
       Kiss your girls for me.
Daniel: No problem.
Nurse: One, two, three. Don’t tire her out.

Daniel: No.

Valeria: I’ll never play soccer again.

Daniel: Shh! Take it easy.

Valeria: And Richie?

Daniel: He’s fine, he’s at home. Our home...

Valeria: Our home...

Daniel: Huh?

Valeria: Don’t tell my father.

Daniel: Isn’t it time you spoke to him?

Valeria: I don’t want to. He’d say I deserved it.

Daniel: Okay. Don’t worry. Sleep... sleep. I’m here with you.

Movie flashes forward through time to Valeria’s hospital room.

Valeria: Daniel?

Daniel: Huh?

Valeria: Are you awake?

Daniel: What is it?

Valeria: Daniel, I’m scared. Look at me!

Daniel: Don’t worry, they’ll take it off. You’ve been very brave.

Valeria: The truth is... I’m scared to death.

Daniel: You’ll be fine, you’ll see.

Movie flashes forward through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Daniel: Richie, look! Look who’s here! Your mommy is back.

Valeria: Richie!

Daniel: Welcome home, my love!

Valeria: I missed you, my little one.

Daniel: My love!

Valeria: What did you do without me?

Daniel: The first one to blink loses, eh?
Valeria: No!
Daniel: You lose, you lose!
Valeria: What are you doing?
Daniel: I’m examining you.
Valeria: I can’t.
Daniel: Yes, you can.
Valeria: I can’t.
Daniel: Yes, you can.
Valeria: Let’s see how you do it.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Daniel: Sure you’ll be all right?
Valeria: Sure. I’m an expert.
Left... right...
Daniel: What if you need something?
Valeria: I’ve got Richie, don’t I?
Daniel: Whatever you do, stay seated.
Valeria: Even if the earth quakes?
Daniel: Let it crumble.
But you don’t leave that chair!
I’ll be back by 8:00.
Valeria: I’ll be here.
Good luck.
Daniel: I’ll miss you.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Maru’s house, Chivo breaks in and looks at her pictures and steals one.

Movie Flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Valeria: Fetch, sweetheart.
Good. Bring it back.
Good, Richie. You’re a good boy.
Bring me the ball.
Run, run! No, Richie!
Shit! Richie!
Richie, good boy!
Richie?
Richie!
Mommy’s here!
Richie!

Movie flashes forward through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Daniel: It’s me!
Valeria: I’m in the kitchen.
Daniel: How did it go?
From the doctor, so I don’t have to carry you.
How’s my princess?
Valeria: Richie went into the hole.
Daniel: How?
Valeria: He was running after the ball.
Daniel: He’ll get out.
Valeria: That was five hours ago.
Daniel: What can we do?
I know!
Valeria: What are you doing?
Daniel: Chocolates.
He’ll come right out.
Valeria: Wait, I’m coming with you.
Daniel: Here, try the crutches.
Why won’t he come out?
Valeria: He must be stuck down there.
Daniel: Don’t worry about it, he’ll come out.
Richie?
Valeria: I tried that.
I hear noises, but he won’t come out.
Daniel: Don’t worry, he’ll come out.
You want an omelet? I’m hungry.
He’s all right. A bit disoriented, but he’s here,
not stolen, not lost.
He’s here with us, okay?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s bedroom.

Valeria: Daniel...
Daniel?: What?
Valeria: Listen, it’s Richie.
Daniel: Yes, it’s him.
Valeria: So?
Daniel: Wait.
Richie?
Richie?
Richie?
Richie?
Valeria: Daniel?
Daniel: What?
Valeria: Hurry, I think I heard him.
Daniel: Where is he?
Valeria: Help me.
Careful.
He’s under the living room.
Richie, darling...
Richie?
Oh, shit!
That scared me!

Daniel: Hello?
    Hello?
Valeria: Who was it?
Daniel: I don’t know. They hung up.
    Richie?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house, he is curing Cofi.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Valeria: Manuel, bastard!
    Where have you been?
Manuel: Working, dear. How are you?
Valeria: I’m getting there.
Manuel: Take it easy, huh?
Valeria: In a month, if all goes well,
    I’ll be back on the Enchant campaign.
Manuel: Enchant? Forget about that.
Valeria: What do you mean?
Manuel: Listen, the contract with Enchant is finished.
Valeria: They pulled out?
Manuel: What did you expect?
    They hired you when you were well.
    Be realistic, you’re not well.
    When you get well, like before,
    we’ll contact Enchant and it’ll be fine...

Movie flashes through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Valeria: Richie!
    Richie!?
    Jesus, Richie! Shit!
    Son of a bitch!
    Fuck you, Richie!
    Richie!
    Richie!
    My darling? Richie?
    Richie?
    Aah!
Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s office.

Andrés: The title goes higher, and the photo to the left.
Technician: Like that?
Andrés: A bit more.
Daniel: Or raise the photo and bring the text down?
Technician: No, that breaks the harmony.
Secretary: Mr. Estrada, telephone.
Daniel: Tell them I’ll call back later.
Secretary: It seems urgent.
I think it’s your wife.
Daniel: Excuse me.
Julieta, what’s the matter?
Julieta, answer me.
Valeria: I’m not Julieta.
Daniel: Darling! I’m sorry, my secretary... Valeria: What would you say to Julieta?
Daniel: Nothing, it was a mistake.
Valeria: What would you say?
Daniel: I swear.
Valeria: Well?
Daniel: This isn’t like you. What’s wrong?
Valeria? My love?
Valeria: The rats ate Richie.
Daniel: What rats?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Daniel: What happened, honey?
Valeria: There are thousands of rats down there.
Daniel: How do you know?
Valeria: I saw them. I’m sure they ate Richie.
Daniel: Don’t worry.
Rats don’t eat dogs. They would get bitten.
Valeria: But there are thousands of them.
Daniel: We could put out some rat poison.
Valeria: Richie would eat it.
Daniel: We could send a cat down.
Valeria: A cat would fight with Richie.
Daniel: So what the fuck do we do?
I’m sorry, baby, I’m sorry.
Everything will be fine.
Valeria: You’re not in my position.
Look at my leg, it’ll be covered with scars.
Daniel: Plastic surgery has come a long way.
You’ll hardly see any scars...
Valeria: Don’t fucking touch me!
It’s Richie!
Richie!
Richie!
Daniel: He heard you shouting.
Valeria: Richie!
Daniel: It’s him!
Both: Richie!
Richie!
Richie!
Daniel: I know!
Valeria: Where are you going?
Richie!
Daniel: If I make it bigger, he’ll come out.
Valeria: The rats will come out!
Daniel: They didn’t come out before,
I don’t know why they’d come out now.
Valeria: Make the hole as big as you can.
Shit! Richie!
Hello?
Hello? Who’s there?
Fuck your mother!
Who was that, Daniel?
Daniel: No idea.
Valeria: When I used to call, you knew it was me.
So who is it?
Daniel: I don’t know, okay?

Movie flashes through time to the living room.

Daniel: Valeria, what’s the matter?
Valeria: My leg really hurts.
I can’t stand it.
Daniel: We’re going to the hospital.
Valeria: No, I talked to the doctor.
He said it’s normal for it to hurt.
But it feels like it’s going to burst.
Daniel: Did he prescribe anything?
Valeria: Tranquilizers and an anti-inflammatory.
Daniel: What can I do?
Valeria: Hold me.

Movie flashes forwards through time, Valeria is looking at pictures when she was a little girl.
Letter: SEE YOU SOON

Movie flashes forwards through time to the hospital.

Dr.: I’m going to squeeze a little.
Did you walk on it?
Valeria: A little.
Dr.: Got the X-rays?
Well...
you can get dressed, Valeria.
Margarita, help her.
Come, there’s no room here.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s car, returning from the hospital.

Daniel: Want to order take-out, or rent a movie?
Valeria: I’m not in the mood. I feel lousy.
Daniel: You’re going to be fine.
Valeria: Goddamn it! Is that all you can say?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s bedroom.

Valeria: Daniel...
It’s Richie!
He’s whining, listen.
Listen, it’s him!
Get him out.
Daniel: How?
Valeria: Tear up the floor or something!
Daniel: I can’t tear it up. I don’t have the money to fix it...
Valeria: Money doesn’t matter!
Daniel: It does right now.
Valeria: Get him out!
Daniel: He can get himself out!
Valeria: You faggot! You’ve always been selfish!
Daniel: I gave up everything for you!
Valeria: Yeah, your bitchy wife and your stupid daughters!
Daniel: Shut up or I’ll hit you!
Valeria: You piece of shit! - Go fuck yourself!
Daniel: You and that stupid dog!
Valeria: You fucking asshole, drop dead!
Drop dead, fucker!
Fucker!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s kitchen.
Daniel: I’ll be back around 2:00.
Valeria: I don’t care if you never come back.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s office.

Julieta: Hello?
Hello?
Daniel?
Sweetheart?
Sweetheart?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment (night and morning).

Daniel: Valeria, open the door.
Open up, damn it!
Valeria, open up!
Open up, Valeria!
Valeria, please.
I have nothing to apologize for,
but all right, I’m sorry.
Okay now?
Valeria, open up or I’ll do it myself.
On the count of three, I’m breaking it down.
One...
two...
two and a quarter...
two and a half...
two and three-quarters...
shit!
Valeria.
What happened, honey?
Valeria.
Valeria, don’t do this to me, please!
Valeria, we have to...
Valeria!

Movie flashes forwards through time to hospital.

Daniel: How is she?
Dr.: She had severe arterial thrombosis, which affected the tissues.
We should have intervened earlier.
There is a lot of damage.
No blood could get to the muscles.
Daniel: And?
Dr.: Advanced gangrene set in...
and I had to amputate the leg.
I’m sorry, Daniel.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Daniel’s and Valeria’s apartment.

Daniel: Richie!
Richie!
Richie!
Richie!
Richie!
Richie?
Richie!
Richie!
Richie!

Movie flashes forwards through time.

SPACE AVAILABLE

Movie flashes through time to a car with Partner 1 and Leonardo, on their way to Chivo’s house.

**El Chivo and Maru Story**

Partner 1: Hello?
    Yes.
    Tell him 3:00.
    Cancel the other one.
    Bye.

Leonardo: When we get to the house, turn that shit off.
    He hates that crap.

Partner 1: Why do we need 40 sandwiches?
Leonardo: It’s a gift for a friend, okay?
Partner 1: Sure your friend will do a good job?
Leonardo: I told you 20 times he will.
Partner 1: Who is this friend? Is he a cop too?
Leonardo: No, he was locked up for 20 years.
Partner 1: What for?
Leonardo: He was a guerrilla.
Partner 1: Like the Zapatistas?
Leonardo: That’s right, only he was a real son of a bitch.
    He planted a bomb in a mall,
    kidnapped a banker,
    killed cops...
    Turn here.
    He had an army after him, the White Brigade.
You know who got him?
Partner 1: Who?
Leonardo: Me!
I caught him pissing at Sanborn’s Café!
Can you believe that?
Partner 1: Hello?
Leonardo: Nothing. I’ll do the talking.
I’ll transfer it. Bye.
Partner 1: Why not?
Leonardo: It pisses him off.
He was a normal guy, like you and me.
He was a college teacher, and one day, boom!
He dumps his wife and daughter and becomes a guerrilla.
Partner 1: And his family?
Leonardo: What do you think?
They told him to go to hell!
His wife remarried.
I guess his daughter thinks he’s dead.
When he got out of the can, he went fucking nuts.
When I found him, he was a wino.
I felt sorry for him.
I gave him some cash and a place to live.
We even became pals. He started doing jobs for me.
Partner 1: Jobs... like this one?
Leonardo: Yeah.
Partner 1: Why did you do that?
Leonardo: You’ll buy another one!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house.

Leonardo: What’s up, Chivito?
Chivo: What’s up, Leonardo?
You all right?
Leonardo: Met my friend, Gustavo Garfias.
Chivo: Hello, brother. - Pleased to meet you.
Leonardo: This is for you.
Chivo: Great!
Cool.
No chili, no onion. Perfect!
Thanks.
Sit there.
Leonardo: Did you lose your glasses?
Chivo: I stopped using them.
If God wants me to see blurry, I’ll see blurry.
Leonardo: My friend Gustavo needs a favor.
The photograph.
Chivo: I don’t do that anymore.
I told you last time.
Leonardo: Come on.
How are you going to live? On trash?
Chivo: Trash provides, Leonardo.
Really.
Look, a Citizen.
I found it in the dumpster. This, too.
Leonardo: Don’t bullshit me.
You stole it!
Chivo: No, I found it.
Partner 1: The Commander says you are very good.
Chivo: Good at what?
Leonardo: Come on, take it. Don’t fuck around.
Chivo: Who is he?
Partner 1: My partner.
Chivo: What did he do?
Partner 1: He’s cheating me.
Chivo: How much are you paying?
Leonardo: 50 now, 50 after.
Chivo: 100 now, 50 after.
Leonardo: Done?
Partner 1: Okay, but I only have 50 on me.
Chivo: His name?
Partner 1: Luis Miranda Solares.
He lives at 1460 Sierra de Maika.
He works on Montes Urales Street.
Chivo: Real blue collar [todo un proletario], huh!
Leonardo: All right.
Partner 1: Make it look like a robbery.
No people, no trouble...
Chivo: Of course, brother.
No people, no trouble, no shit.

Movie flashes forwards through time linking Chivo in a street where Susana and Ramiro are passing by.

Lyrics: All those who think that life’s unfair
Need to know that it isn’t so
That life is beautiful
You’ve got to live it
Those who think they’re sick and alone
They need to know that it isn’t so
In life no one’s alone
Someone’s always there
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
It’s better to live singing
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
You’ve got to sing your cares away
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
It’s better to live singing
Oh, no need to cry
Life is a carnival
You’ve got to sing your cares away...

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house.

Movie flashes forwards through time to the car crash.

Valeria: Richie! What’s the matter?
Man 1: Help me! The door’s stuck.
Chivo: I’ve got a machete in my cart.
Man 1: Call an ambulance!
Chivo: Hang on.
        Stay calm, stay calm.
Man 1: Move aside.
        What is it?
Chivo: His foot is stuck.
        Calm down!
        Calm down! Careful with his leg.
        Keep still, kid!
Chivo: The other kid?
Man 1: He’s dead already!
        An ambulance! Christ!
Man 2: Calm down, you’ll be right out.
        Open the window. Try to open it!
Man 1: They’re here.
Nurse 1: Keep away! Let him breathe!
        Can you hear me?
        The window! There!
Valeria: Help me, please!
Nurse 1: Lower!
        What’s your name? Can you hear me?
We’ll get you out.
Her leg’s stuck.
Easy! Easy!

Chivo: Hang in there, champ.
What did they do to you?
Hang on, boy.
Good, you’re very brave.
That’s it, champ!
That’s it, boy.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Maru’s house, where she sees Chivo outside waving at her.

Movie flashes forwards through time to a bank.

Ramiro: What the fuck are you doing?
Friend: Putting on my hood!
Ramiro: Why not wear a sign saying “Bank Robber”?
For banks, you don’t wear anything!
Friend: What? Just my stupid face?
You decide.
Hit the floor, you motherfuckers!
This is a stickup!
This is a stickup, assholes!
Everyone on the floor!
What are you looking at?
Right now!
On the floor!
Friend: You, too! I’m talking to you!
Ramiro: Give me your wallet!
Leonardo: Take it yourself.
Ramiro: Don’t look at me!
On the floor!
Policeman: Don’t move, drop the gun!
Get down!
Easy...

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house.

Chivo: Leave him alone.
Lobo, get lost.
Good boy. Very good.
It’s healed.

Movie flashes forwards through time to the partners’ office.
Chivo: What brings you here, Leo?
Leonardo: Just passing by.
   You’re taking your time. It’s been a week.
Chivo: It’s not easy.
Leonardo: It never is, is it?
Chivo: Tell your friend to keep cool. It’ll be done in two days.
Leonardo: I’ve got your word, Chivo?
          I’ve got to go to the bank.

Movie flashes forwards through time to a corner store where Chivo was to kill partner 2.

Boy 1: I watched your car!
Partner 2: Sure...
Boy 2: I was leaning on the car.
Boy 1: No, he went to play soccer!
Partner 2: For both of you.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Ramiro’s wake.

Man 1: My condolences, Doña Concha.
Susana: Are you all right?
Octavio: Not as bad as I was.
          Why did you leave?
Susana: Now’s not the time to talk about it.
Octavio: Then when?
Susana: Ramiro was my husband, wasn’t he?
Octavio: And what about our plans?
Susana: Your plans.
          My grandmother used to say,
          "To make God laugh, tell Him your plans."
Octavio: You wronged me, Susana.
Susana: No, Octavio.
          We were the ones who cheated.
Octavio: But not anymore.
          Come away with me.
Susana: How dare you?
          After everything that’s happened?
          You still don’t get it!
Octavio: Yes, I do.
          God can laugh, but I still have my plans.
          Sunday at 11:00 I leave for Ciudad Juarez.
Susana: You’ve really lost it! Look at you!
Octavio: I don’t give a fuck!
           Now you know everything.
           I’ll wait for you.
           You decide if you want to come.
Do you get me now?

Susana: Ramiro...
the baby’s name will be Ramiro.

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house, Cofi killed all his dogs.

Chivo: Feeling better?
What happened to you?
Flor?
Don’t die on me!
Answer me, baby!
Frijol?
It’s not right, asshole!
Gringuita? My baby?
Hang in there. Hang in there.

Movie flashes forwards through time to a rental video store, where Chivo kidnapes partner 2.

Chivo: Look straight ahead of you.
Don’t look at me.
Open the door. No stupid moves.
Don’t turn around. - Stay cool.
Move aside.
Cuff your left hand.
The right one to the wheel.
Cuff it to the wheel, dickhead!
Start the car.
Let’s go.

Partner 2: What is this? Robbery or kidnapping?
Chivo: Maybe the last day of your life.
I was paid to blow you away, brother.
How about that?
Stand still. On your knees.
On the floor. Your hand.
Sit.
Lean there. Your hand, I said.
Want a drink?
I’ve got rum, water...
or milk.

Partner 2: What will you do to me?
Chivo: What do you want?
Rum, water or milk?

Partner 2: My question couldn’t be clearer.
Chivo: Look, asshole,
I’m offering you a drink.
If you had any sense, 
even a little bit, 
you’d realize I’m not going to kill you 
just now, dickhead. 
Rum, 
water or milk?

Partner 2: Water.  
Chivo: Cheers!

Partner 2: How do I drink it?  
Chivo: I’ll be the waiter, but not your nanny. 
Partner 2: Who paid you to kill me?  
Chivo: Can’t you guess? 
Partner 2: No.  
Chivo: What if I told you it was the chick 
you fuck daily in that motel? 
Partner 2: Marta? 
No. 
It can’t be.  
Chivo: Right. Not her. 
Your wife. 
Partner 2: My wife? 
Chivo: She knows about Marta? 
I don’t know. Does she? 
No, man. It’s not her, either. 
Partner 2: Marta’s husband?  
Chivo: She’s married? I’ll be damned! 
Shit, brother! 
A lot of people want to kill you. 
You know what? 
My dog’s got no name. 
I found him in the street. What would you call him? 
Partner 2: How about "Lost Dog"?  
Chivo: Some imagination! 
You must be in advertising. 
I was thinking, maybe Gustavo... 
Partner 2: Gustavo?  
Chivo: Know any Gustavos? 
Partner 2: My brother.  
Chivo: Gustavo Garfias. 
Partner 2: Gustavo Miranda Garfias. 
He’s my half brother. 
Chivo: Abel, Abel! 
What did you do to deserve a brother like that? 
He said he’s your partner. 
Partner 2: Partner and half-brother. 
Was it him?
Chivo: I don’t know. You tell me.
Partner 2: How much?
Chivo: 5,000 pesos.
Partner 2: Only 5,000 fucking pesos!
Chivo: And...
tickets to the Rolling Stones.
Partner 2: That son of a fucking bitch!
    Why? What did I do to him?
Chivo: Says you’re screwing him.
Partner 2: No fucking way! He’s my brother!
Chivo: Easy, man. That’s what he says.
    Quit yelling or I’ll have to fill you with lead.
    So, what do we call him?
Partner 2: Who cares about your fucking dog?
Chivo: Don’t be rude!
    Masters take after their dogs, you know.
    And... how do I put it?
    If it weren’t for him, you’d be dead.
    Easy, easy.
    I’ll be in my room watching TV.
    If you need anything at all,
    just shout.

Movie flashes forward through time to Chivo’s house, next morning.

Chivo: Good morning.
    What’s up, brother?
    Got a good night’s sleep? [Chivo feeds Partner 2]
    What manners!
Partner 2: What will you do to me?
Chivo: I don’t know. I’m thinking.
Partner 2: If you let me go...
    I’ll make you rich.
    Kill my brother, and I’ll give you anything you want.
Chivo: I don’t need anything. Amazing, huh?
    I have to go. See you later.
Partner 2: I need to go to the bathroom.
Chivo: You already have.
    Look at you!
    You should have told me!
    See you later.
    Watch him for me.

Movie flashes through time or location.

Chivo: Hello? - Got my money?
Did you notice? He wasn’t at work today.

Partner 1: Did you do it?
Chivo: Bring the money to my place in two hours. Don’t keep me waiting.

Movie flashes forward through time to Chivo’s house.

Chivo: Did you lock it, brother? Cars get stolen around here.
Partner 1: This won’t be long, will it?
Here’s what we agreed to.

Chivo: Come in.
Partner 1: I’d better go.
Chivo: Come in.
Partner 1: What’s the matter?
It’s all there.

Chivo: It’s cool. Come with me.
In here.
Have you two met?

Partner 2: This wasn’t the deal.
Chivo: What was the deal?
Partner 2: You were going to... –
Chivo: Going to what, brother?
What!?

Partner 2: That was your job!
Chivo: "Job"?
I misunderstood. You wanted him off the map?
Do it yourself.
He’s all yours, fucking Cain.
Kill him, you faggot, he’s all yours!

Partner 1: I paid you...
I paid you to do it. That was the deal!

Chivo: You’re not going to?
You want me to?
Do I kill him?
Do I kill him? Answer me!
Do I kill him?
Or do I kill you?
Do I kill him?
Do you really want me to?
Fucking faggot!

Movie flashes forwards through time to the bus station.

Bus driver: So, you coming or staying?

Movie flashes forwards through time to Chivo’s house.
Chivo:  
Good morning.
Sleep well?
You must have a lot to chat about.
Pity I can’t stay, it would be fascinating.
But as you might guess, I have to leave town.
That’s how it works.
Make yourselves at home.
I hope you’ll work things out.
What are you looking at?
On the other hand, if talking doesn’t work,
I’ll leave you this to help settle things.
Okay?
I’ll call to see how things went.
Nice jacket.
There’s milk and eggs in the fridge, if you want breakfast.

Partner 2:  
You’re dead, you bastard!

Movie flashes forwards through time to Maru’s house, Chivo is inside leaving a message on the answering machine.

Answering Machine:  
Hello. This is 55 44 58 40.
I can’t take your call right now,
but leave a message and a number,
and I’ll get back to you. Thank you.

Chivo:  
Maru...
my darling...
This is Martin.
Your dad...
your real dad.
You must think this is a sick joke.
For all these years, I’ve been dead to you.
In fact...
I’m a living ghost.
When I saw you last...
you were only two.
Since then, not a day passes
that I don’t think of you.
The afternoon I went away...
I held you very tight.
I took you in my arms...
I begged forgiveness for what I was going to do.
At the time,
I thought there were more important things
than being with you and your mom.
I wanted to set the world right,
and then share it with you.
I failed, as you can see.
I wound up in jail.
Your mother and I agreed she would tell you...
I’d died.
That was my idea, not hers.
I swore to her I’d never try to see you again...
but I couldn’t do it.
I was dying, I was as dead as I could be.
I’ll be back to find you...
once I have the courage to look you in the eyes.
I love you, my little girl.

Movie flashes forwards through time to a car shop.

Mechanic: What’s your dog called?
Chivo: Blackie.
        Shut up, Blackie!
        See you around.
Mechanic  Bye.

End

Final Song

For Luciano, because we are also what we have lost.
A giants’ joust turns the air into natural gas
A wild duel warns me
How close I am of going into an outrageous world
I feel my fragility
Some nightmare running away
With a beast after me
Tell me everything’s a lie
Just a silly dream and nothing more
I’m afraid of enormity
Where nobody hears my voice
Stop the deception
Don’t try to hide
That you’ve never tripped while moving around
Paper monster
I don’t know who I’m up against
Or is there somebody else here?
I believe in the terrible ghosts
Of some strange place
And in my foolishness to make you burst into laughter
In an outrageous world
I feel your fragility
Stop the deception
Don’t try to hide
That you’ve never tripped while moving around
Paper monster
I don’t know who I’m up against
Stop the deception
Don’t try to hide
That you’ve never tripped while moving around
Paper monster
I don’t know who I’m up against
Or is it that maybe there is somebody else here?
Or is it that maybe there is somebody else here?
Or is it that maybe there is somebody else here?

The End