

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Susan Smith Nash, Ph.D.

EMILIO FERNANDEZ (1904-1986)



BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Emilio Fernández (1904 – 1986) was a prolific writer, director, and actor who, when working with the gifted cinematographer, Gabriel Figueroa, created films in the “Golden Age” of Mexican cinema captured the heart and spirit of the Mexican Revolution and exposed the heartache, cruelty, and oppression endured by those historically left out of power and privilege in Mexican society. His films fight injustice and depict the oppressed with a great deal of compassion and honesty. They also capture the spirit of Mexican identity and imbue the viewers with a sense of pride for being Mexican, for Mexican traditions, and above all, for being mestizo (rather than “casta” or white). Respect for indigenous people, traditions, and heritage pervades his films, as does a stunning appreciation of the skies, seas, volcanoes, mountains, and overall panorama of Mexico.

Emilio Fernandez was born in Sabinas, Coahuila, Mexico, on March 26, 1904, to a family that had played an active role in the Mexican Revolution. His father had been a general in the revolutionary army, while his mother was an Indian from the Kickapoo tribe. Following in his father’s footsteps, Fernandez enlisted in the Mexican Revolution, and also entered the Mexican Military Academy. After participation in a failed insurrection led to his fleeing Mexico, Fernandez found himself in Los Angeles, where he found employment in Hollywood, first as a worker, and then as an extra and stunt double. As he became more involved in films, first through acting and then by directing, he was deeply influenced by the Soviet film director, Sergei Eisenstein, who had filmed in Mexico (*Que viva México!*) and who used a style that incorporated local traditions, peoples, and an interplay of light and dark.

In 1943, Fernández formed a core team that would stay together for many years and create some of the most successful films in Mexican cinema. The team consisted of Emilio Fernández (director), Mauricio Magdaleno (writer), Gabriel Figueroa (photographer), Dolores del Río and Pedro Armendáriz (actors), and their first film was the award-winning *Flor Silvestre* which also signified the debut in Mexican cinema for Dolores del Río. His next film, *María Candelaria* (1944), is often considered his greatest, and it earned the Palm d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival, along with Gabriel Figueroa.

His films with the team tackled issues of race prejudice, social inequality, injustice, exploitation, and greed, and they garnered critical acclaim as well as box office success. Films such as *The Pearl* (an adaptation of the John Steinbeck novel) were as notable for the stunning cinematography as the acting. The films of Fernández were at their height in the 1940s through the mid-1950s. He won international recognition as well as Mexico’s highest awards for *La Perla* (1945), *Enamorada* (1946), *Río Escondido*

(1947), *Pueblerina* (1948), *Salon Mexico* (1950), *La Red* (aka *Rossana*) (1953), *An Appointment with Love* (1958), and later, even as his directorial output declined and his acting intensified, in *Pueblito* (1962), *Wounded Dove* (1963), *La Choca* (*The Crash*) (1974). However, by the 60s, his style had been coopted by directors such as Luis Buñuel and John Huston. Instead of continuing to direct, Fernández focused on acting, where he was an almost ubiquitous presence in Westerns films featuring Mexican history.

In short, Fernández dramatized people in impossible situations, trapped by social hierarchies, severe conditions of nature, racial prejudice, gender, or their own hearts. His willingness to recreate their suffering at the hands of sadistic and greedy people, empowered by corruption, exposed situations written about but rarely artistically rendered. Together with brilliant cinematography, his films were considered to be powerful forces for change, designed to inspire protest and revolution.

In retrospect, however, the graphic depictions of sadism, torture, rape, executions, drowning, and beatings, particularly when examining Fernández's oeuvre as a whole, may seem gratuitously sensational, designed simply to elicit deep emotions of shock and horror. Since there is no clear way out of oppression except for individuals to escape with their lives as individuals or nuclear families, there is still a sense that the besieged communities are resolutely doomed and that there is no way out for the endangered indigenous, the tenant farmers, or the poor. The worldview of Fernández is, in that sense, ultimately nihilistic, and the underpinning philosophy is that of existential stoicism. In fact, one could point to Fernández as a master of existentialism in film and although there is often a fight between good and evil in the films, there is no sense of transcendence or romantic self-overcoming. Instead, the characters display deeply human flaws and desires, set in a context of ineluctable change and eventual extinction of which they are valiant and passionate fighters.

As time went on, Fernández spent more time acting and less time directing. His personal life became even more tumultuous while he did receive many accolades for his life's work.

He died in 1986 at the age of 82. His death left a void in Mexican cinema, as he had a total of 129 films to his name, either as director, actor, or writer.

ACCLAIMED FILMS

| | | |
|------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1942 | <u>Flor Silvestre</u> | Wild Flower |
| 1943 | <u>María Candelaria</u> (aka <i>Xochimilco</i>) | Portrait of Maria |
| 1944 | <u>Bugambilia</u> | Bugambilia |
| 1945 | <u>La perla</u> | The Pearl |
| 1945 | Pepita Jiménez | |
| 1946 | <u>Enamorada</u> | In Love |
| 1948 | <u>Maclovía</u> | Maclovía (aka <i>Damn Beauty</i>) |
| 1948 | <u>Pueblerina</u> | Small Town Girl |
| 1949 | <u>La Malquerida</u> | A Woman without Love |
| 1950 | <u>Salón México</u> | Mexico Lounge |
| 1951 | Victimas del Pecado (Victims of Sin) | |
| 1952 | Siempre Tuya | |
| 1953 | <u>La Red</u> (aka <i>Rossana</i>) | |

| | | |
|------|--|--------------------|
| 1954 | Rebellion of the Hanged | Mexico |
| 1962 | Pueblito https://youtu.be/Y6kjAWaHfAY | |
| 1963 | Wounded Dove / Paloma Herida | Mexico - Guatemala |

THEMES IN THE WORK OF EMILIO FERNANDEZ

The extermination of indigenous communities:

Wounded Dove (1963): The film is extremely violent and difficult to watch because of the sadistic and cruel behavior of Danilo and his gang, who immediately seize resources and force the villagers to work for them to construct the kinds of infrastructure and buildings that they consider to be “civilization.” Literally every aspect of the indigenous villagers’ traditional way of life is destroyed. First, they are forced from their homes, and the family units destroyed. They are forced to work manual labor and any money they might earn is spent at Danilo’s cantina, where the indigenous people are forced to drink alcohol to the point of near fatal inebriation. Instead of playing the flutes and singing their traditional songs, Danilo brings in a record player that plays discordant American rockabilly music, and instead of wearing traditional embroidered huipiles, the outsiders (the prostitutes) wear tight-fitting pants or short poodle skirts. The parallels between the arrival of Danilo and his gang, and the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 1500s are inescapable.

Maclovia (1949): Since the arrival of the Europeans in what is now Mexico, and the subsequent colonization, the Indians have been subject not only to physical extermination, but a subjugation connected with a loss of position in society. They are now the underclass and the “other,” and from the Purépecha’s view, the only defense is isolation. The Purépecha Indians who live in Jinitzio in the middle of Lake Pátzcuaro in Michoacan have preserved their distinctive culture and lifestyle by isolating themselves in the island and blocking the departure of anyone. They expressly forbid that a person leave. If they try, or even express an intent to leave, their traditions maintain that they must be condemned to be stoned to death. The traditions seem harsh, but they are trying to protect themselves from the dominant class that controls resources and access to education, wealth, and the tools of survival. The fact that the Purépecha are considered less than human is clearly revealed by the behavior of Sargento García. Their oppression is remarked upon by the schoolmaster, Don Justo, who does his best to restore human dignity to the Purépecha Indians.

Revolution:

Flor Silvestre (1943): By the time the Mexican Revolution reached the doorsteps of Jose Luis Castro’s doorstep along with the Spanish flu, the Revolution had already been in swing since 1910. It broke out primarily in response to the 30-year Porfirio Diaz dictatorship which, in the early years had led to foreign investment in industry and infrastructure in Mexico, which appeared at first to be a great boon, but later revealed itself to consist of Ponzi-type stock schemes, the plundering of natural resources (with payments to prominent Mexican families), and hand-in-glove relationships with vital industries resulting in family monopolies over certain industries in certain regions. The same basic structure seems to persist in the “territory control” of different informal businesses, including drug production and trafficking and human trafficking. There were many separate revolutionary groups in the Mexican Revolution and they worked in different regions. The most well-known were the Zapatistas and the Villistas, although there were numerous. All had the same objective: to overthrow the government of Porfirio Diaz and then restore economic access, primarily through land and resources reform. For most revolutionaries putting their lives on the line, this generally translated to the very palpable and tangible break-up of the immense land-holdings by single families, the “hacendados.” It was deemed unfair that individual families could control blocks of land that were the size of entire states. In “Flor Silvestre,” the Castro family had the hacendado, and they considered themselves to be the rightful owners. The revolutionaries begged to differ, and they ferociously expressed their desire to break up the big blocks of land and to make it possible to allow all Mexicans to own land. After Porfirio Diaz was overthrown, the presidency of Venustiano Carranza and later of Alvaro Obregon focused primarily on land reform. The values and goals of the Mexican Revolution are echoed in Esperanza’s prologue as she states that there is nothing more intense than an individual’s

love for the land, and their sense of blood connection to it. Such sentiments are echoed throughout, and even those who may not necessarily benefit from maintaining the “ancien regime” (the workers on the hacienda) find themselves being loyal to their employers, even if when not beneficial to them in the long run. Also, in marrying into the hacendado system (a relict of the Spanish latifundista system), she is betraying the interests of her people (by race, caste, and social hierarchy). It is surprising that the revolutionary forces and the mob of people who assembled to see Jose Luis executed by firing squad, did not cheer her on as she offered to have herself shot with her husband.

What it means to be Mexican:

Flor Silvestre (1943): The film is, in many ways, a celebration of what it means to be Mexican with traditions that extend across social class, but which are embraced and internalized on a very deep level by the mestizos and the coyote class. Mexican music and traditions are celebrated in the film in a way that is seamless and forms the underlying sentimental texture of the film. The songs in the film are particularly touching, if at times intellectually discordant. At the hacienda rodeo, a singer belts out a joyous ranchera, while being accompanied by a mariachi band. After Esperanza falls into unconsciousness after being lectured by Dona Clara about the refusal to mix classes (and races), Jose Luis is shown with a small musical entourage as he makes his way across the vast valleys and chapparal. They sing “Flor Silvestre / Wild Flower” in a way that both celebrates the love of two people and the love of nature and the land of one’s origins. In the most intellectually jarring scene, a partially undressed group of musicians sing a soft Mexican melody as they are surrounded by the fruits of violent, revolutionary debauchery: broken glass, empty alcohol bottles, burned furniture, and looted treasures. Framed in terms of comparative literature, the scene reminds one of the Chartist movement in the 1830s and 40s in England, when striking factory workers and miners invade, loot, and burn the country houses of the wealthy in Benjamin Disraeli’s classic social novel, *Sybil, Or, the Two Nations*. It seems very weird to hear such soft, soothing lullaby-type music after an orgy of ecstatic destruction. Other aspects of Mexican culture in *Flor Silvestre* include the horsemanship in the rodeo, the charro and the rope tricks, the elaborately embroidered blouse worn by Esperanza, and the enormously wide sombreros worn by the men. It must also be noted that the photography by Gabriel Figueroa emphasizes the nature of the Mexican landscape, with the vast valleys, the volcanic peaks, and the rugged mountains.

Greed:

The Pearl (1947): The discovery of the pearl ignites the greed in almost all the individuals in the film. First, when Quino sees the size of the pearl, he seems almost possessed by demons as he laughs maniacally. When the Doctor learns of the pearl, he wants to own it, and is suddenly willing to speak to an indigenous couple. The priest would like to have a contribution to charity and the church, and the pearl dealers try to swindle Quino. Juana looks at the pearl as an evil curse, and it does seem to warp everyone it touches. The people in the village are both greedy and envious, which causes divisiveness in the village.

Wounded Dove (1963): The motivation to take the lands and to force the communities to do their bidding seems to be simply an act of greed. It is hard to understand any other motive, except that of wanting to have what others have. Danilo is greedy to the point of wanting to take literally everything that the villagers own. Even what little he pays them for their labor is spent in the horrible cantina / bar that he owns.

Jealousy:

Rossana (1952): The driving force between Antonio and José Luis is a primal jealousy. After the failed bank robbery, José Luis is considered to be either dead or in jail. Antonio promised his partner in crime and only friend that that he would take care of his girlfriend. Little did he know that it would lead to a deep-seated jealousy that would be very destructive to the cruel and violent Antonio. The theme of jealousy is played out in a series of closeups and also in different types of montage, namely the tonal montage and the metrical, which juxtapose the closeups of the three, painting love triangle.

Nature:

Rossana (1952): The sea, with all its changes, ranging from raging, crashing surf on to the cliffs, to a smooth, sparkling surface perfect for swimming, holds up a mirror to the emotional state of the protagonists, and also foreshadows what will happen to them. The sea scenes are repeated, and serve

as bookends to episodes, as they mark transitions and closures. In addition to the scenes of the surf and the beach, there are many point of view shots that incorporate the sky, which positions the individuals as silhouettes, playing out their lives in a vast stage.

Sexual attraction: Th

Rossana (1952): e film is remarkable in its use of visual narrative to depict a growing sexual energy that seethes just beneath the surface, but is never enacted carnally by the characters. The two most remarkable scenes involve the growing intensity of sexual energy between José Luis and Rossana. First, when Rossana takes José Luis's shirt and washes it in the stream, her movements are sensual and very suggestive. Next, when José Luis uses a giant wooden pestle (heavy log-like tool with a rounded end) to crush corn in the mortar (the repository), his rhythmic, repeated thrusts and his sweat-soaked body are extremely sexually suggestive.

Outsider:

Rossana (1952): As criminals on the lam, the two would-be bank robber friends are focused on two things: survival and Rossana. They are violent and ruthless, and even though José Luis may be more sympathetic, one cannot forget that he shot, wounded, and killed lawmen looking for him, and also security guards at the bank. The three are outsiders in a remote fishing village that is in and of itself far outside the mainstream life. The result is a microcosm that enables archetypal dramas to play out without interference or distractions from the outside world.

Cruelty:

Wounded Dove (1963): There is both psychological and physical cruelty in *Paloma Herida*. The physical cruelty is overt and unmistakable -- he takes people's homes, has them whipped or even murdered when they cross him, and violates the women. The psychological cruelty involves destroying the beliefs, invalidating their traditions and customs, and forcing the people to witness harmful, depraved acts against their loved one.

Violence against women:

Wounded Dove (1963): The violence against women takes many forms. Danilo badgers Paloma, but then pretends to be in favor of her wedding to Esteban, all the while planning to have his way with her and sexually assault her. The prostitutes represent what happens to women who are the victims of repeated sexual assaults and encounters. They move about like zombies, and do not seem to have any agency or self-determination whatsoever, and are simply forced to do the bidding of men with power. The violence against them is psychological as well as physical, and both flow from a deep lack of respect toward women.

Critique of modernity and "civilization":

Wounded Dove (1963): (Throughout the film is an implicit critique of the concepts of "progress," "modernity," and "civilization" as defined by the non-indigenous people, which are the urban mestizo or white Mexicans who arrive at the little traditional village of fishermen living on the shores of Lake Atitlan. At the beginning of the film, the traditional life of the descendants of the Maya is shown to be tranquil, peaceful, and in harmony with nature and with each other. There is no need for authority or local laws - they simply follow their traditional roles, and they maintain a sustainable lifestyle. Their music is soothing and natural, played with wooden flutes and ocarinas, and their voices are soft, mellifluous, and kind. When Danilo claims he is bringing "civilization" to the villagers, what he is bringing in reality is the eradication of a culture and its people, and he does so in a way that will leave generational scars on any survivors. There seems to be no way for the two cultures to co-exist. The "modern" destroys all it has contact with, and it is unstoppable as long as there are greedy, megalomaniacal leaders in the world.

Love:

Flor Silvestre (1943): At a very basic level, this is a love story about a love between individuals who are in social categories that makes a marriage a social taboo because it could disrupt the social order, in just the way that revolution is upending the social system in Mexico at the time of the story. The story does not tell us how Esperanza and Jose Luis meet, but their paths crossed and they fell in love. Their idea of

love is framed by traditional gender roles: Esperanza is modest, tends to the house, and after they are married, gives birth and takes care of the child, all in a very sacrificial manner. Jose Luis takes the lead in the love, and insists that they continue and marry, even though Esperanza tells him on more than one occasion that the family will never approve, and Jose Luis will lose his place in his family. Jose Luis persists, and in doing so, later recognizes he is a “disobedient” son, and his forbidden love for Esperanza results in consequences: first, he is unable to protect his father and mother from the revolutionaries (having in fact sided with them); and vexed position in society – first as a privileged son, joining forces with the revolutionaries, and then later, trying to avenge the death of his father, results in his death by firing squad by the revolutionaries. It is worth noting that many of the revolutionaries were in fact from the wealthy classes. One who comes to mind is Simon Bolivar, who was born into a wealthy Caracas (Venezuela) family, and was exposed to Enlightenment philosophy when he went to Spain to study at the age of 16. Esperanza is true and faithful to her love for Jose Luis, and she never begs him not to fight. Her love for him is so intense that she stands in front of the firing squad with him, willing to sacrifice herself (and presumably the infant son) to avoid separation from Jose Luis. Dona Clara is likewise loyal; she throws herself on the grave of her husband, Don Francisco, the patron and owner of the huge hacienda. Because he was so cruel and such a stickler for social hierarchy, one has to wonder if her love for him and devastation at the loss, was about her loss of status and identity.

Maclovía (1948) José María and Maclovía are in love with each other, and their love is capable of withstanding any impediment or barrier. Tata Macrario loves his only daughter and wants to protect her. Don Justo has a deep and abiding love for his students and the community at large. There is also the love that the community and the indigenous Purépechas have for their beliefs and traditions. Sargento García “loves” Maclovía, but it is lust, not love. In fact, Sargento García has such reprehensible qualities that it is doubtful that he is even capable of wholesome, sincere love. Each of these types of love forms a part of the plot and also of the film itself, which is shot in such a way as to engender in the viewer an appreciation for the beauty of Pátzcuaro and the island of Jinitzio, with its characteristic “butterfly” fishing nets and the beautiful artisan items – embroidery, pottery, hand-tatted lace, woven belts and rebozos, hand-carved items in the local church, the butterfly-shaped fishing nets, and more. Love is what binds the community together, and it is what makes José María capable of overcoming a natural reticence in order to learn to read and write. When José María, Maclovía, and Tata Macrario overcome the challenges that created by the community traditions (the man must have a boat and a business), and by the rapacious and lascivious Sargento García, the film conveys a message that love is powerful and that it could even be an antidote to systemic racism.

Pepita Jimenez (1949): The theme of forbidden love is central to *Pepita Jimenez*. In some cases, forbidden love means that the quest for it is all the sweeter, but in this case, it brings to the surface a number of moral dilemmas and inner conflicts. The love that is forbidden is one that is not allowed in a closed society dominated by two equally powerful forces: the patriarchal structure of society and family, and the rigid social hierarchy of the Catholic Church which is the ultimate arbiter of marriage and social norms. The love that Pepita feels for Luis is forbidden because she is to be betrothed to Don Pedro. The blood relation makes it doubly prohibited. As a seminarian, Luis is prohibited from even thinking about love or marriage.

Enamorada (1946): Love conquers all. In *Enamorada*, the “taming of the shrew” energies are triggered by beauty and passion, which is immediately taken to be love. José Juan is intrigued and more than a little titillated by Beatriz’s indignant response to his impudence – the fact she slaps him and embarrasses him in front of his companions is at least a sign of profound emotional engagement on the part of a mesmerizingly beautiful woman. The true love in this film is exhibited by Beatriz for her father, and also in Padre Sierra for the Church.

La Malquerida (1949): While everyone seems to be professing love to each other, it becomes clear that the love that Raimunda had for Esteban was simply passion, and what Esteban possessed for Acacia was illicit lust, which he blamed on her, when he told Raimunda that Acacia was the “demonio” (demon). What Acacia held for Esteban alternated between love and hatred. At the end of the day, the only true love was seen within the true family members: the love that Don Eusebio and Dona Mercedes had for their son, Faustino, and the love of Raimunda for her daughter, Acacia.

Pueblerina (1949) - The love that Aurelio and Paloma have for each other is intense and filled with dedication and self-sacrifice. The self-sacrifice is one element, but it is the intense compassion that Aurelio has for Paloma, and his commitment to her that makes the love special. Gabriel Figueroa captures the emotions in his close-ups of Aurelio's face, and the depiction of his gentle treatment of her. There are many close-ups, and they are not rushed, but instead give the viewer time to absorb the tragic story, and to feel a deep identification and compassion as well. The love that Paloma has for her son, despite the fact that he was the product of rape and that his father is a selfish, cruel man, is equally touching. The fact that Aurelio is able to love Felipe like a son and even refer to him as "hijito" is another testimony to love.

Rossana (1952): Rossana confesses to Antonio that she always loved José Luis and in fact, had never stopped loving him, even after she thought he was gone forever, and despite the fact she was living with Antonio. Her confession sparks a vicious response in Antonio and he smacks Rosanna to the floor. José Luis finds Antonio in the little fishing village not only because Antonio is his partner in crime, but because he loves Rossana. He is respectful of Antonio's place and does not approach Rossana. He does, however, exchange long looks; for example, as she is washing his shirt.

Doomed Love:

Bugambilia (1945) - Although Ricardo leaves Guanajuato and finds another mine and becomes wealthy, even achieving the respected and admired status of charro, he is not accepted as a suitor by Amalia's father, who has chosen the young, easily led Luis Felipe to be her husband. The reasons are ostensibly because of social class and the notion that once you're born into a certain class, you stay there. However, there is also a more insidious side of class exclusions and exclusivity, and that has to do with the ultimately incestuous nature of class and hierarchy. The monarchies were notoriously inbred, particularly in the case of the Spanish – so much so that the classic Spanish method of pronouncing consonants actually had its origin in the "Hapsburg jaw," a congenital deformity that made it difficult for the tongue, palate and other parts of the mouth to place them in proper positions for certain sounds. Don Fernando is controlling of every aspect of Amalia's life, and any attempt she makes to break free will mean that she will escape his powerful influence. There are many suggestions of incest in the film; not so overt as to offend the public, but certainly clear enough to suggest the psychological torment. The interiority of the spaces and the close looks and gazes, the absent mother (making Amalia the proxy), and the heightened state of anxiety and tension (heightened by Dolores del Rio's frenetic overacting and attempts to look a "girlish" 41 (her actual age when filming the movie). The more impossible the love the more it is desired. The fact that Don Fernando so harshly opposes the idea of a marriage between his daughter, Amalia, and the lowly Ricardo Rojas, makes the star-crossed love all the more desirable, with the requisite elements of a romantic love of gothic intensity: desire, death, rigid social hierarchy, and the inevitability of tragedy, which alludes to archetypal notions of fate, a desire for a transcendent love (unity of souls) which ultimately will be ruptured (rapturous unity is too rarified and beautiful for our world).

Devotion:

Forever Yours (1952): Soledad exhibits all the qualities that are considered desirable in a good Mexican woman. Above all, she is devoted to her husband, even overlooking the fact that he wanted her to stay behind as he left her to seek work, that he could not hold down a job in Mexico City, and that entered into an affair with another woman once he was successful. In each case, Soledad found excuses for him, and in the last situation, she blamed the other woman, rather than Ramon's own choices for his atrocious behavior. After he is shot by Mirta's jealous boyfriend, Ramon recovers, thanks to the fact that Soledad stays solidly by his side.

Sacrifice:

Pueblerina (1949) - When Aurelio was sent to prison on trumped up charges, he sacrificed himself for the woman he loved. He returned to the pueblo with the goal of marrying her and starting a new life. He was willing to sacrifice everything he owned and everything he was in order to right the wrong that had occurred. Even as she spurned his offers of help at first, he persisted.

Maria Candelaria (1944): With Maria Candelaria the verge of dying, a desperate Lorenzo Rafael breaks into a store and steals medicine (quinine) and a wedding dress for her. He sacrifices his freedom in order to save his fiancée, and to help her achieve her dream.

Victims of Sin (1951): Violeta sacrifices a good job, income, safety, secure lodging, dignity, and stability all so that she can provide for little Juanito. Rosa also makes a sacrifice, but hers is tantamount to human sacrifice as she literally places Juanito in the trash after Rodolfo suggests it and even shows her which trash can to use. Rosa is sacrificing herself as well, but it is a terrible sacrifice, more like immolation of the self, to demean and degrade herself in her abject dependency on Rodolfo.

Gossip and Rumor-Mongering

Maria Candelaria (1944): Lupe, one of the sniping, gossipy townswomen, sees the painter's completed work and tells everyone about the fact that it is of Maria Candelaria, and the body is unclothed. She reminds the townspeople that Maria Candelaria is the daughter of a prostitute. So, they claim the picture is bringing shame on the village. So, they find Maria Candelaria, chase her through the streets, and then stone her to death.

Exploitation:

Maria Candelaria (1944): The artist acts in his own selfish interests and exploits Maria Candelaria. When she refuses to pose in the nude, he finishes the canvas, not with a modestly clad woman in embroidered finery, but with a different model's nude body.

Maclovia (1949): Power and agency differentials characterize the film. The first is exhibited by the patriarchal control that Maclovia's father has over her and in fact over the town. As the head or "cacique" (mayor / chief) of the town, he has more influence than others, and is able to maintain authority. Other sources of power in the town are the priest, who carries a great deal of weight in the community as well as the Catholic Church, and then Don Justo, the kindly schoolmaster who enforces discipline in the classroom and also rewards effort and positive attitudes. The most pronounced power differential is, by far, the difference of power between the Mexican government (and the army) and the indigenous people. Although there is some talk about how all citizens of Mexico are "brethren," this is not an attitude that is shared by all. In particular, Sargento García treats the Purépecha people with cruelty, condescension, and a kind of gluttonous appetite for anything he sees that pleases him. He behaves as though anything he wants can and should be his. This attitude is, unfortunately, one that was passed down over time, and his rank gives him the belief that he can simply take anything he wants. When he enters Tata Macrario's home, García sits down, leans back in the chair, and puts his feet up on the furniture in a disgusting attitude of ownership. He then tells Tata Macrario that the house is pretty, and that he had always thought it would be nice to have one – implying that if he wants, he can simply snatch ownership away from Tata Macrario. García abuses his power with respect to Maclovia, and he also abuses his power with José María when he walks to his expensive new boat and pumps it full of bullets, causing it to sink.

Cultural Appropriation:

Maria Candelaria (1944): The artist's painting of Maria Candelaria in her traditional clothing, celebrated indigenous culture and beauty. At the same time, it reinforces the sense of loss and gives the reins of power to the artist (and also to those who are documenting the issue).

Machismo:

Forever Yours (1952): The success and survival of a family is thought to be the sole responsibility of the male, even though women are the strength and stable elements behind the scenes. The idea of a strong, male "paterfamilias" head of household is an example of macho culture, as is the concept of defending one's honor, and demonstrating one's virility through risk-taking. Machismo shows up in many places in *Forever Yours*, first in the insistence in going alone to work, then in brashly getting into a fight with the boss while drunk and obsessed with the issue of racism, and finally in making a great show of wealth and status by having a luxurious apartment and a blonde "trophy girlfriend." Ramon's machismo clashed with the radio station owner's machismo; the latter's topping Ramon's as he shoots him with a pistol for daring to encroach on his territory (his girlfriend).

Enamorada (1946): The men in the film exhibit Mexican machismo in all its forms: first there is the powerful drive for change in the General of the revolutionaries, followed by the displays of virility in the rather scabrous catcalling a beautiful woman. On the other side, there is the dignified walk into the inevitable as the wealthy face death in front of the rebels' firing squads. Finally, the obsequious and dissembling pleading of the cowardly businessman is shown to be the absolute opposite of machismo, and hence worthy of elimination by whatever means necessary.

Sacrifice:

Salon Mexico (1949): Mercedes is sacrificing her health, safety, and youthful years when she could have found a husband and married him in order to earn money as a dancer for hire, or "taxi-dancer" at a popular dance club. She is regularly humiliated and abused, and yet she does it so that her sister, Beatriz, can have a future that is of a much higher level than Mercedes could ever aspire to.

In addition to the sacrifice that Mercedes makes, Lupe, the decorated and honored policeman seeks to sacrifice his quiet life, his savings, and more in order to marry Mercedes and take her from her situation. He tells her that she is pure gold, who will always remain unchangeably pure, no matter how low her circumstances. Lupe intercedes for Mercedes at key moments, including when she was falsely imprisoned, and when she was unable to meet with her little sister's prospective fiancé.

Roberto, the son of the Director of the school, walks with a cane and a limp after being shot down in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. As a pilot in the Air Force during wartime, he sacrificed his health and security.

Dreams:

Salon Mexico (1949): Mercedes is driven by her dream of a wonderful life for her sister, Beatriz – a life she she has give up on for herself. Her dreams make her sacrifice herself, and also shame herself by lying and stealing from men in order to have the money she needs to pay for Beatriz's room, board, expenses, and clothing.

Roberto has the dream of having a house, a family, and above all, a wife "who is like a fresh spring breeze." When he meets Beatriz, he realizes that she is precisely the woman that he has dreamed of. She is intelligent, pretty, and charming, and she holds strong, core traditional values, as illustrated by her senior speech.

It can be said that Paco has dreams as well, but they are twisted, unwholesome dreams predicated on criminality such as safe-cracking, enslaving women as sex workers for him, and murdering officers of the law.

Heroism:

Salon Mexico (1949): When Beatriz delivered her final senior speech on heroism, she spoke of sacrifice and holding fast to a vision of a higher, better world. She spoke of military battles, but she reserved her highest accolades for mothers who sacrifice for their children. The speech was very moving to the Madame Director, whose own son, Roberto, was a bona fide war hero.

Roberto's heroism in World War II was indisputable, although he claimed it was just a matter of surviving being shot down. Roberto's heroism manifests his patience, valor, and compassion with Beatriz, Lupe, and Mercedes.

Lupe: Lupe is a hero in this film. He intercedes and protects Mercedes, even putting his life in danger when he fought Paco, a much younger man, for his abhorrent treatment of Mercedes. Lupe also finds out that Mercedes has been mistakenly imprisoned and he manages to get her in front of a judge to release her. He also identifies Mercedes' body after she is murdered, but he does not reveal her background.

Ambition:

Forever Yours (1952): Ramon is ambitious in a land where opportunities are limited if not non-existent for the working class. Those who achieve wealth often do so by means of criminal enterprises, or, in the case

of Ramon, through luck and musical talent. In this aspect, the film is not very credible, since Ramon's voice is clearly a classically trained baritone, and he obviously has a great deal of experience and practice working with orchestras, which means he would need to have had years of musical training. Anyone who has been to rural fiestas during saint days and has heard the bands that play in the street knows that they are raucous and out of tune, and not the highly skilled and trained mariachis that were in the radio station. For Ramon to have experience with them was not really possible, and he himself said it was "a dream" to be able to sing rancheras with a mariachi orchestra. The fact he succeeded was a way for the audience to vicariously satisfy their own dreams and ambitions.

Justice::

La Malquerida (1949): El Juez de la Acordada is a person who has been authorized to patrol the roadways of Mexico and to arrest and bring to justice any criminals he encounters. The Juez de la Acordada witnesses what happens with Faustino and in fact, he makes the decision to shoot Faustino and end Faustino's final agonies of dying. The Juez represents the administration of justice, which is to say that he restores equilibrium in the world. The Juez sees what others do not see, and it is a heavy burden. His role invokes images of the tragedies found in Shakespeare or in Ancient Greek tragedies.

Revenge:

La Malquerida (1949): Not only does Don Eusebio seek revenge for the death of his son, Faustino, Acacia also seeks revenge. Her vengeance, however, focuses on Raimunda, her mother. Acacia states that her mother betrayed her father's memory.

Passion::

La Malquerida (1949): Raimunda is passionately in love with Esteban and tells him that she cannot live without him. Esteban, likewise, expresses his passionate desire for her. At the same time, Raimunda's daughter, Acacia, is obsessed with her usurping stepfather. Esteban, despite his protestations of love for Raimunda, is passionately obsessed with Esteban, even going to the extreme of murdering a rival, which he expressed (rather curiously) as killing "for" her.

Women's Roles:

Bugambilia (1945) - Life for Amalia seems, on the surface, to be that of privilege, which would assure her a life of comfort, beauty, and syncretic approbation. Once she was born female, Amalia's main "job" was to prepare herself to be able to attract a husband of high social status, who is also possesses sufficient wherewithal to take care of her and the expected requisite offspring. Amalia must bring fertility to the bargaining table; but in *Bugambilia*, the fertility is implied; beauty is the universally acknowledged proxy for fertility.

Maclovia (1948): Purépecha women have circumscribed roles within their culture, which is evidenced by both Maclovia and Sara. The women support the men – they help carry their supplies to the boats, and they wash the clothes together as they kneel on the rocks on the side of the lake, and they talk to each other. They must obey the paterfamilias, and thus, the male head of the household is the ultimate word and authority. When Tata Macario forbids Maclovia to even look at José María, she must obey. To go against the traditions and rules for conduct could have very serious consequences – even death.

Forever Yours (1952): To an audience of today, seeing Soledad's self-abnegating behavior is not only demeaning but inexplicable. She chases after Ramon even after he tells her to go back home, and she does it not just once, but twice. As everyone wears light-colored clothing, she garbs herself in a long black dress, and long, draping headscarf, which is clearly not only uncomfortable but potentially dangerous in the hot desert. She stays loyal to Ramon even though he gets into drunken brawls and can't keep his employment. Not only that, with this new-found wealth after his stroke of luck and win in the talent show and his success as a radio personality who sings classic Mexican folk songs, Soledad has the resources at her disposal to dress in the same glamorous way that Mirta dresses. However, Soledad continues to wear her hair in braids around her head, and modest dresses, draping herself with a long shawl (rebozo). She looks frumpy from a modern perspective, but perhaps from a contemporary Mexican

perspective, her costuming would have communicated integrity, modesty, and commitment to traditional Mexican values

Pepita Jimenez (1946): Pepita enjoys the attention of men. As a person who is known to be chaste and virtuous, she is also viewed as skilled in the activities that mark her as a member of the elite of her little Andalusian village. She dances well, she wears elegant clothing well, and is a skillful and graceful horsewoman. She loves Luis for his devotion, but also because he has transformed himself into a passionate man who shows self-restraint

Social inequality:

The Pearl (1947): Quino, Juana, and Juanito are indigenous, which, thanks to the colonialization of Spain and the Europeans, places them at the bottom of a rigid social hierarchy. The Doctor (of Spanish descent), treats them with great disdain, as though they were subhuman. Even when he deigns to communicate with them because he wants the pearl, it is not through respect, but through the lens of racism and prejudice. The prejudice is societal, and as such, it keeps the poor at the lowest rung, and in a daily battle to simply find food and shelter. They struggle each day for food and the basic tools to fish and dive for pearls (knife, boat), and there is never any ability to save enough even for shoes for Juana.

Forever Yours (1952): As in many of Emilio Fernandez's films, Mexican society is exposed to be one where social inequality exists in all locations, despite the promises of independence, revolution, and rebellion against the Catholic church and wealthy landowners. For the working class, education and access to ownership of property is but a distant dream, and they are have almost no real self-determination. In the case of Soledad and Ramon, when the rains came regularly, they could count on subsistence-level existence as workers on a ranch. However, once the crops failed and the owner decided to stop farming, they had nothing. One survival tactic during the 1940s was to apply for a work permit in the United States and to go there to be a "bracero," or laborer or migrant farm worker, thus earning enough money to send home, keeping family members alive. However, the spaces were limited. Another option was to go to the nation's capital, Mexico City, and hope to find work. However, the conditions there were abysmal, making starvation in Zacatecas seem preferable. As Ramon puts it, "you don't know what you had until you've lost it." In addition to a lack of capital, Ramon and Soledad face prejudice to the point of scorn for being rural "rubes" or "hicks" (pueblerinos). The only time having a rural background was helpful was in caring for horses, and then, later, in the knowledge of traditional Mexican songs. Even when Ramon earns money, his social status does not notably improve, and he is still considered a naïve and uneducated outsider, to be exploited and preyed upon.

Pueblerina (1949) - As in many films by Emilio Fernández, social inequality is revealed in a way that makes the audience side for the underdog. The reality of social inequality in rural Mexico meant that it would be very difficult to change the system, particularly since all the inhabitants of the town were dependent in one way or another on the owners of the large hacienda.

Bugambilia (1945) - Although Ricardo leaves Guanajuato and finds another mine and becomes wealthy, even achieving the respected and admired status of charro, he is not accepted as a suitor by Amalia's father, who has chosen the young, easily led Luis Felipe to be her husband. The reasons are ostensibly because of social class and the notion that once you're born into a certain class, you stay there. However, there is also a more insidious side of class exclusions and exclusivity, and that has to do with the ultimately incestuous nature of class and hierarchy. The monarchies were notoriously inbred, particularly in the case of the Spanish – so much so that the classic Spanish method of pronouncing consonants actually had its origin in the "Hapsburg jaw," a congenital deformity that made it difficult for the tongue, palate and other parts of the mouth to place them in proper positions for certain sounds. Don Fernando is controlling of every aspect of Amalia's life, and any attempt she makes to break free will mean that she will escape his powerful influence. There are many suggestions of incest in the film; not so overt as to offend the public, but certainly clear enough to suggest the psychological torment. The interiority of the spaces and the close looks and gazes, the absent mother (making Amalia the proxy), and the heightened state of anxiety and tension (heightened by Dolores del Rio's frenetic overacting and attempts to look a "girlish" 41 (her actual age when filming the movie).

Romance (May-December):

Pepita Jimenez (1946): Juan Valera's 1874 novel is about a young woman who is considered a prize rather than a human being as she is forced into a marriage with the richest, most influential man in town, despite the fact that he is a gluttonous man with boorish manners, and more than 60 years her senior. The film emphasizes this theme by placing the young Pepita next to her older suitors (Don Gumersindo and then Don Pedro), and exaggerating her virginal innocence next to their loud boasting. The film echoes the idea expressed in other films by Emilio Fernandez, that young women are preyed upon and have few defenses against the wishes of their parents and society. When both Don Gumersindo and Don Pedro wax eloquent about their admiration for Pepita's youth, there are echoes of sacrifice, rather than a joyous celebration of a love match.

Shame:

Pueblerina (1949) - Paloma covers her head with a dark scarf, and keeps her face hidden in shame. She tells Aurelio that she feels as though her shame is so deep that it can no longer be remedied. When Aurelio returns, he helps her cast aside her shame, as does the priest who supports her. While the film focuses in on Paloma's sense of shame, it also illustrates how shame works in social systems to subjugate individuals and keep them powerless.

Fate

The Pearl (1947): Quino and Juana are following the tradition of their family in fishing and diving for pearls to provide for their basic needs. They work and use their creativity to shape their own futures. But, they do rely on the random bounty of nature, and in the advent of the workings of fate in the form of an enormously valuable pearl, they are ill-equipped to handle something so disruptive. What could have been a beneficent act of fate was not so, not only because of the value of the pearl and the envy it precipitates, but also the fact that they live within a rigid caste system to which it becomes clear they will never be able to escape. In fact, such a valuable pearl in their possession seems to reveal the cruel accidia of the gods, which is to say that the gods do not protect them, and even the Catholic priest wants to cheat them. Further illustrating the impact of maleficent fate, or random bad luck, is the scorpion's sting. With resources, they could have mitigated the risk, but in their abject poverty and their pariah caste status, they had little wherewithal to ameliorate the situation.

Honor:

Pueblerina (1949) - Deeply linked to shame (or the avoidance of it) is honor and the honor culture. When Julio loses money and his favorite horse in bets to Aurelio, it is not the loss of the money that he resents, but the fact that he has lost face in the community where he and his brother are the top dogs, the hacendados. The very presence of Aurelio is a threat to his honor because he knows of Julio's brutal and ignoble sexual assault, and Julio's refusal to acknowledge responsibility. When Paloma hangs her head in shame when no one attends their wedding ceremony, Aurelio tells her to always keep her head lifted high "sea lo que sea" (no matter what happens). To hold one's head in shame is to not live up to the expectations of honor.

Pepita Jimenez (1946): When Luis challenges the Conde to a duel for insulting Pepita, he is acting in accordance to the strictures of an honor society. When Luis bests the Conde in swordplay, not only is the honor being upheld, but also the skill by which he deftly fights is all-important, as is his honed physique. As in the bullfight, it is not simply the act of killing a bull with a sword that impresses, but the bravery in the face of the valiant and aggressive bull, and his artistry and aesthetic delivery. The quest is to be a caballero, a gentleman. Winning is secondary.

Class differences:

Flor Silvestre (1943): The rigid social hierarchy that was first set in motion by the Spanish colonizers and Catholic Church was so well codified in Mexican society that it was called the "casta" system, and it included 16 different officially recognized racial mixtures. The "casta" system was described in words and also in elaborate paintings that showed how people of the different blends of people might look. Much of the social hierarchy had more to do with the racial blend and your place in the "casta" system than your wealth, although it can be said that the casta was designed to keep the poor as poor as possible, and the "white" or those directly from the Iberian peninsula (the "peninsulares") in control of land, professions, and

business. On the absolute bottom of the class system were the blacks (former slaves) and the indigenous peoples (indios). Jose Luis and his family were not "peninsulares" because they were not direct immigrants from Europe. However, they had never intermarried, and so were pure "white." The need to keep racial purity and the "white" status was paramount in a world where one could lose one's lands, business, and privileged by being shunned for mixing with non-whites. Esperanza is clearly not on the lowest level – she's not indigenous or black – and her grandfather has an adobe home and some sort of business. He does not live as precariously as the indigenous, who tended to live in dirt-floored huts made of sticks and palm leaf roofs, and who earned their daily sustenance through fishing or foraging for fruits and berries and then selling them on the street. The indigenous were completely illiterate and did not have access to medical, educational, or other basic resources. Society tended to completely dehumanize both blacks and Indians, and they considered them animalistic, "savage," "primitive" and people to be shunned and feared. The social hierarchy was quite complicated and the 16 official levels made clear differentiations and showed "blood purity." Jose Luis and his family would be "criollos" which is to say completely European descent. The product of a marriage between an Indian and a Criollo or Peninsular would be "mestizo." The mestizos had some social standing, but Esperanza was completely shunned, as was her father. Her use of indigenous embroidery and native dress makes it fairly clear that she was probably mestizo and Indian, which would make here a "coyote." Coyotes were a rung above the "indios," which would put them in the day laborer group, where they would do the lowest kind of labor on the hacienda. The women "coyotes" would not work in the kitchen as a cook, but would do preparation of the fruits, vegetables, etc., and also split wood and keep the fire going, as well as the most grueling kind of cleanup. For the heir of the hacienda to marry a "coyote" was seen as a social sin. Such a system was shaped around social inequality, eventually there was sufficient social wherewithal to rebel. The indigenous people, blacks, coyotes, etc. were not in a powerful position and could not do much. However, mestizos and others higher on the social hierarchy could join the global wave of overthrowing monarchies and systems that catered to the inbred few. The Mexican Revolution lasted from 1910 to 1920, and based on the fact that the story features people dying quickly of the "peste" (plague), it seems to have taken place in 1918, during the Spanish flu pandemic. The official statistics place the total death from the Spanish flu epidemic in Mexico at 300,000, which is not surprising since civil war (the revolution) would certainly disrupt medical supplies and attention.

Bugambilia (1945) - Although Ricardo leaves Guanajuato and finds another mine and becomes wealthy, even achieving the respected and admired status of charro, he is not accepted as a suitor by Amalia's father, who has chosen the young, easily led Luis Felipe to be her husband. The reasons are ostensibly because of social class and the notion that once you're born into a certain class, you stay there. However, there is also a more insidious side of class exclusions and exclusivity, and that has to do with the ultimately incestuous nature of class and hierarchy. The monarchies were notoriously inbred, particularly in the case of the Spanish – so much so that the classic Spanish method of pronouncing consonants actually had its origin in the "Hapsburg jaw," a congenital deformity that made it difficult for the tongue, palate and other parts of the mouth to place them in proper positions for certain sounds. Don Fernando is controlling of every aspect of Amalia's life, and any attempt she makes to break free will mean that she will escape his powerful influence. There are many suggestions of incest in the film; not so overt as to offend the public, but certainly clear enough to suggest the psychological torment. The interiority of the spaces and the close looks and gazes, the absent mother (making Amalia the proxy), and the heightened state of anxiety and tension (heightened by Dolores del Rio's frenetic overacting and attempts to look a "girlish" 41 (her actual age when filming the movie).

Guanajuato is an ideal location for story of *Bugambilia* because it was one of the first mining towns to be developed by the Spaniards, and was so well established that the Catholic Church even used it as a center of the Inquisition in the 1500s. This historical framing is part of what gives *Bugambilia* its undertones of darkness, cruelty, and intolerance. The class differences between the mine owners, who were registered as "blanco" or "Peninsular," and then the miners who were usually registered as "mestizo" were insuperable. It meant social oblivion to anyone from the elite class who married "down." It was not only a negative for the individual, but for the entire family.

Death:

Bugambilia (1945) - Although Ricardo leaves Guanajuato and finds another mine and becomes wealthy, even achieving the respected and admired status of charro, he is not accepted as a suitor by Amalia's

father, who has chosen the young, easily led Luis Felipe to be her husband. The reasons are ostensibly because of social class and the notion that once you're born into a certain class, you stay there. However, there is also a more insidious side of class exclusions and exclusivity, and that has to do with the ultimately incestuous nature of class and hierarchy. The monarchies were notoriously inbred, particularly in the case of the Spanish – so much so that the classic Spanish method of pronouncing consonants actually had its origin in the “Hapsburg jaw,” a congenital deformity that made it difficult for the tongue, palate and other parts of the mouth to place them in proper positions for certain sounds. Don Fernando is controlling of every aspect of Amalia's life, and any attempt she makes to break free will mean that she will escape his powerful influence. There are many suggestions of incest in the film; not so overt as to offend the public, but certainly clear enough to suggest the psychological torment. The interiority of the spaces and the close looks and gazes, the absent mother (making Amalia the proxy), and the heightened state of anxiety and tension (heightened by Dolores del Rio's frenetic overacting and attempts to look a “girlish” 41 (her actual age when filming the movie). While the story seems at first blush to be about star-crossed lovers and class differences, the cinematography and the music make it clear that the film is really about death, and more specifically, about being buried alive. The film opens with the vibrant Amalia who is imbued with life and vitality, but once one realizes that she is the image of her mother, the suggestion is that it is in reality, the mother's body. The idea is reinforced by the fact that the actress playing Amalia looks about 20 years older than she supposed is. The accident in the mine reinforces the notion of being buried alive and a place where one lives is turned into a mortuary. When Amalia plays the piano (principally Chopin), she is showy and dramatic; the performances and the cinematography evoke a “Phantom of the Opera” sense. Guanajuato's famed mummies are alluded to in *Bugambilia* with the repeated references to being buried alive, and also being dug up after being buried. In Guanajuato, a cholera outbreak in 1833 meant there was no room in the cemeteries. To make room, the dead were removed from their crypts and their remains moved to mortuary which was called an “ossorium” (bone room) if their relatives would not pay an annual fee to maintain their crypt. Because conditions are arid in Guanajuato, many of the dead in their crypts had mummified. The mortuary/ ossorium with the mummified remains became notorious. When Amalia refers to turning her home into a mortuary, she is making a direct reference to the Guanajuato mortuary / ossorium where the mummified people were housed. The final scene in which the camera rises up on the dolly to reveal many other bodies is a direct visual reference to Guanajuato's mummies.

Pride:

Bugambilia (1945) - Although Ricardo leaves Guanajuato and finds another mine and becomes wealthy, even achieving the respected and admired status of charro, he is not accepted as a suitor by Amalia's father, who has chosen the young, easily led Luis Felipe to be her husband. The reasons are ostensibly because of social class and the notion that once you're born into a certain class, you stay there. However, there is also a more insidious side of class exclusions and exclusivity, and that has to do with the ultimately incestuous nature of class and hierarchy. The monarchies were notoriously inbred, particularly in the case of the Spanish – so much so that the classic Spanish method of pronouncing consonants actually had its origin in the “Hapsburg jaw,” a congenital deformity that made it difficult for the tongue, palate and other parts of the mouth to place them in proper positions for certain sounds. Don Fernando is controlling of every aspect of Amalia's life, and any attempt she makes to break free will mean that she will escape his powerful influence. There are many suggestions of incest in the film; not so overt as to offend the public, but certainly clear enough to suggest the psychological torment. The interiority of the spaces and the close looks and gazes, the absent mother (making Amalia the proxy), and the heightened state of anxiety and tension (heightened by Dolores del Rio's frenetic overacting and attempts to look a “girlish” 41 (her actual age when filming the movie).

In a world of rigid social hierarchy, identity is tied to one's place in the social order. Pride is the feeling that one has when there is a destabilization of one's sense of identity and it becomes necessary to defend one's existential, ontological place in the world. How does that happen? The phenomenological manifestations can take shape in the form of prideful encounters (spicy repartee, energetic fencing, appointments at dawn (deadly duels), and mistaken identities).

Enamorada (1946): Both Beatriz and José Juan are extremely proud, and they are quick to defend themselves when they perceive a slight. The products of an honor culture that requires one to defend

oneself, both Beatriz and José Juan put themselves in harm's way, which makes them be perceived as romantic, heroic, passionate and flawed.

Generosity: *Victims of Sin* (1951): Acts of generosity pervade this very dark "cabaretera" film that could never have been made with such graphic honesty in the United States with its Hays Code. The "ficheras" and dancers at Cabaret Changoo contribute their earnings to pay the hospital so they can take little Juanito home. After Rosa puts him in the trash, Violeta generously gives of herself to take care of him. Santiago is a generous provider of safety, refuge, and a home. Later, the Warden of the women's prison describes how Violeta's worry for her son is literally killing her, and advocates for an early release. The prison Director is a kind-hearted man who sees the truth of the argument and is generous in spirit, causing Violeta's sentence to be reduced due to extenuating circumstances. His generosity resulted in Violeta's commuted sentence and her freedom.

Motherhood: *Victims of Sin* (1951): In seeing Rosa's psychological enslavement to an abuser who demanded she choose him over their son, and literally demanded she put the baby in a municipal trash bin, the film asks one fundamental question: What does it mean to be a mother? Violeta has never had a child. Nevertheless, she is willing and able to love him as though he were her son, and never questions how hard she will have to work to keep him fed, clothed, and healthy. She loves little Juanito unconditionally and is very protective.

CHARACTERS

Kind-hearted:

Pueblerina (1949) - Aurelio's only relative, his mother, passed away while he was in prison on a trumped up charge. And yet, she never gave up on him, and entreated him to return to the town. Sadly, she passed away before Aurelio could return. Nevertheless, he took her words to heart, and when approaches the now decrepit house where she lived and Aurelio grew up, he hears her voice in his head, reminding him that of his mother's love, the Earth itself as his ultimate mother, and a deep and abiding respect for women. When Aurelio sees Paloma in the dire circumstances in which she is forced to live, his heart goes out to her and he expresses deep compassion and a desire to help her. When he learns that she became pregnant from the rape and gave birth to a little boy, he does not let that harden his heart. Instead, when he goes to Paloma's small stick shack, he speaks to Felipe in a simple, gentle way.

Victims of Sin (1951): Coming to the rescue of an hours-old baby was an act of selflessness and self-sacrifice inasmuch as it resulted in her being summarily fired from her job. In order to provide food and shelter for the baby, Violeta was compelled to enter into a lower level of sex work than she had been doing in the club, and any earnings from dancing or promoting drink sales were no longer possible. Not only was Violeta compassionate toward Juanito, she also felt compassion for Rosa, Juanito's mother. She shouted at Rosa in order to learn where the baby was, but she could see very clearly that Rosa was unable to psychologically break from the violently toxic relationship she had with him.

Determined:

Pueblerina (1949) - Despite their lack of modern farming equipment, Aurelio works with Paloma and little Felipito to plow the land with a wooden plow, plant the corn and beans, and to harvest, thresh, and bundle the products of the harvest. He is determined to sell the harvest in a neighboring town for a fair price and to build a new house the next year. He has a clear sense of vision and mission and is determined to achieve goals with Aurelia.

Maclovía 1948: José María is determined to do what he can to marry Maclovía, and will not be dissuaded, even when faced with the fact that he is forbidden from even looking at her, and that he cannot be considered until he owns a fishing boat, nets, and a way to earn a living. José María is determined to make a living, and does what he can to buy a boat and to earn a living. When José María shows up in Don Justo's classroom, asking to learn to read and write, he tackles the task with such zeal and dedication that he is one of the top students in little over four months.

Always Yours: Despite the parched soil and the lack of rain, Ramon is willing to continue farming. However, that is not an option as the owner decides to sell. Ramon then travels to Mexico City where he and Soledad realize that to find enough to eat each day is a full-fledged fight for survival. When Soledad faints from hunger and dehydration, Ramon does whatever he can to find food and work. They work for an abusive woman who pays them in food to clean and do the lowest kind of work in her restaurant. Later, after setbacks, Ramon persists and finally finds work on a horse ranch.

The hero:

Pueblerina (1949) - Aurelio undergoes a hero's journey as he returns from unjust incarceration with the mission to start anew, rebuild, and above all, marry Paloma so that they can be man and wife, and work as a team together to build a dream. The film depicts him as a hero, particularly in his feats of courage, skill, and horsemanship – first with the knife-throwing while on horseback competition, which presages the final horseback duel in the morning sun, as the evil brothers, Julio and Ramiro, set out to murder Aurelio in cold blood in front of Paloma and Felipe. Aurelio is a consummate horseman and marksman, and he prevails, giving a fitting heroic ending to the story.

Enamorada: José Juan Reyes is fighting to give the downtrodden a place in the world, with economic access, dignity, education, and a future for individuals and families. He speaks out against the wealthy landowners and their stranglehold on power and the economy when he explains to cowardly hacendado, Fidel Bernal, that he will execute him. In addition, he explains his views to the man he considers a brother, Padre Rafael Sierra.

Pepita Jimenez: Luis Vargas - what precipitates Luis's doubt and profound questioning of the church, social mores, and rigid hierarchy (which lead to oppression of the weak and the innocent) in his small village in Analucia, Spain, is a deep desire for an ideal world where individuals are respected and have access to opportunities. He is not only idealistic, but passionate, and lives in a world where art, music, and festivities are deeply passionate; the fascination with passion is the obsession with self-discipline to control and brook the seething, intense desires. The gypsies singing and playing the guitar, the fireworks and masks at the Festival of San Juan provide a visual expression and metaphor for this process.

Salon Mexico: Mercedes is a dreamer, and although she has a pragmatic side that allows her to do anything for money, she is idealistic, and she wants a perfect future for her little sister, Beatriz. In her idealism, she often makes philosophical statements. For example, Mercedes tells Beatriz that she loves the cathedral because it extends so far into the sky; it is so large it makes all the problems below it seem very small. In a similar conversation, Mercedes tells Roberto how she loves flying high in the sky, so close to the stars – a pure, unsullied world, so far above the "lodo" (mud). Mercedes is beautiful, but she degrades herself in every possible way for money. Why? We find out really quickly. From her one-room living space (hate to call it an apartment) she transforms herself into a sophisticated businesswoman who most travel – with an ironing board, a mirror, and talent, she emerges with a sophisticated coiffure, a pressed suit and pristine blouse, and an elegant hat. From a 21st century perspective, I'm wondering how she pulls this off. Her lodgings do not seem to have running water, a bathroom, or even a kitchen. But – well, I guess the audience would have known what her lodgings included. Mercedes is beautiful and it seems a shame to do this. Truth is, she could probably marry any time. But, she would not be able to earn (okay "earn" meaning beg, borrow, prostitute oneself, steal) enough to keep her little sister in an exclusive boarding private school in the most exclusive part of Mexico City.

Always Yours: When Ramon Garcia goes to Mexico City, he naively assumes that he'll be able to get work, and that opportunities will abound simply because he's willing to do hard work. Unfortunately, he's one of thousands in the same situation and so there is tremendous competition for the low-level jobs he is qualified for. Desperate, Ramon is an easy mark for left-leaning Communist organizers who decide to build communal living quarters on private property to strip the wealthy of their seemingly unused land. He is not aware that it is against the law and is rounded up and put in jail, one of many pawns whose efforts only made their plight worse. Once he has had luck with singing and has resources, he assumes that his costar, the seductive blonde, Mirta, loves him for himself, and is not scheming to get her hands on his newfound wealth and success.

Courageous:

Victims of Sin (1951): Coming to the rescue of an hours-old baby was an act of selflessness and self-sacrifice inasmuch as it resulted in her being summarily fired from her job. In order to provide food and shelter for the baby, Violeta was compelled to enter into a lower level of sex work than she had been doing in the club, and any earnings from dancing or promoting drink sales were no longer possible.

Compassionate:

Victims of Sin (1951): Not only was Violeta compassionate toward Juanito, she also felt compassion for Rosa, Juanito's mother. She shouted at Rosa in order to learn where the baby was, but she could see very clearly that Rosa was unable to psychologically break from the violently toxic relationship she had with him.

When Violeta is hired by Santiago, she refers to him as "Don Santiago," which would suggest he is the patron of a ranch and of elevated rank. Santiago responds, "There are no "Don's" in La Maquina Loca. We are a democratic organization." He is sensitive to people's need for acceptance and inclusion. He is also sensitive to needs and their feelings, and moves Violeta to tears when he gives her money for the child's welfare upon first meeting her.

Hard-working: To be a fisherman in Lake Pátzcuaro is by definition to be hard-working. However, José María surpasses even that high bar when he dedicates himself to learning to read and write, and also commits himself to buying a boat, fishing gear, and more so he can support a wife (and eventually) children. When José María and Maclovia set out to explore the land beyond the island of Janitzio, they have a high chance of success because they are both hard-working. Knowing her father (and Sara) were trampled to death by a rampaging crowd intent on stoning both Maclovia and José María to death is even more motivation to maintain a hard-working attitude and survive.

Maria Candelaria: As the daughter of a prostitute, living in the same tiny pueblo where the mother lived, Maria Candelaria has a social stain that no amount of virtuous living will wash off. Nevertheless, she endeavors to be good, pure, hard-working and honest, and she upholds the ancient traditions by raising flowers in the chinampas, the floating gardens, of Xochimilco. At heart is the issue of powerlessness, and Maria Candelaria has no power. She is literally delegitimized as a person when she is scorned because her mother was a prostitute, and even the other indigenous women turn on her. Ironically, the painting that the artist made, even as it celebrates indigenous culture and beauty, in reality, reinforces the sense of loss and gives the reins of power to the artist (and also to those who are documenting the issue). Watching what happens to María Candelaria is beyond painful – and, knowing that the same story, writ large, is what happened to all the indigenous, is obvious. However well-intentioned *indigenismo* might be, it does not do anything to restore self-determination

Loyal:

Flor Silvestre (1943): Jose Luis considers him a loyal husband and friend. But, from one perspective, he is infinitely disloyal, a situation that leads to his execution at the end. He loves his family, but, by his own admission is "disobedient" to his father. And yet, values and times have changed, and he can no longer accept the rigid class system that would insist that he marry only another "criollo" of Spanish descent in probably what would be an arranged marriage to a distant (or potentially not so distant) relative, probably a cousin or second-cousin. He considers himself loyal to his friends and wife, but when he avenges his father's death, he opens the door to lose his wife and son. In the end, he is executed; a sad end for a person who tried to be loyal in a world where rapid changes meant mortal conflict no matter what decisions were made.

Pepita Jimenez: Luis Vargas - When we first meet Luis, he is, above all, a dutiful son and seminarian. He will adhere to his duty above all, and show respect. His duty to his father and to the Church start to show erosion when he sees his father mocking Don Gumersindo while literally at the edge of the man's casket, and when he starts to have existential doubts about what his identity and expected duties would be as a priest. Finally, he decides he has a duty to himself, his own values, and a higher vision - one that includes Pepita as his wife.

Maclovía: José María's devotion is demonstrated in several scenes where it is clear that he is following Maclovía and determined to protect her. For example, when Sargento García chases Maclovía with the intent of putting her in a compromising situation, José María pursues him, even at great risk to himself. Later, even after García has shot José María in the shoulder, José María continues to defend Maclovía. When he is jailed for the death of García (who drowned as he was trying to drown José María), José María never wavers in being willing to sacrifice himself for her love and safety.

Wounded Dove: Paloma is loyal not only to her father and fiancé, but also to her community and traditions. Her loyalty is demonstrated in her willingness to defy the orders of Danilo to give up their home, and also to participate in the debauchery at the impromptu dancehall. Paloma is loyal not only to her father and fiancé, but also to her community and traditions. Her loyalty is demonstrated in her willingness to defy the orders of Danilo to give up their home, and also to participate in the debauchery at the impromptu dancehall.

Ambitious:

The Pearl (1947): Quino is ambitious and he dreams of a future for his son that would involve education, a career, and more opportunities. When he finds the enormous pearl, one of his dreams is to make sure that he provides an education for Juanito. He also wants to have a wedding in the church, and to participate in the community in a way that shows that he is no longer a member of a disenfranchised and disavowed group.

Seductive:

Rossana: Rossana wears the same outfit throughout the film, although it does seem that she has a change of blouse, as in later scenes her blouse is not quite as frayed and ragged as at the beginning. She is the quintessential female, and her form evokes the image of Aphrodite rising from the sea on an opened clamshell. Rossana wears a wraparound skirt and a shoulderless peasant blouse that slides down and leaves her shoulders and the top of her chest exposed. She does not wear a bra, and when she swims, her dress and skirt are rendered transparent. She never wears shoes, but instead, walks everywhere barefoot. She might as well be completely nude, and the men respond to her in that way. The women in the village wear modest clothing. It is interesting to note that both José Luis and Antonio wear traditional men's pants, belt, and button-down shirt. Rossana stands out as a sex goddess of sorts.

Greedy:

The Pearl: Before he found the pearl, Quino was content with subsistence-level living. However, with such a valuable pearl in his possession, Quino wants things he has never wanted before, and envisions violence, with rifle. Some of what may seem like greed is simply pragmatism, however. For example, when the people of the town criticize him for not settling for a low price for his pearl, he knows he was right, because they were cheating him.

Victim of macho culture:

Rossana: Rossana is an excellent example of the psychological toll of intimate partner abuse. Several scenes show her being hit very hard by Antonio, but instead of fighting back or leaving, she simply rises up, turns the other cheek, and maintains a stoic expression. She has internalized the sense of being an object and unprotected; when she goes into town, she knows that the men ogle her, and even pose a threat, and yet she urges José Luis to stay back because she does not want any villagers to see her with another man. He does not accede; instead he does follow, and thus is able to intervene when a man runs into the street and accosts her sexually. Rossana is completely dependent on Antonio and is submissive. She prepares the meals, washes the clothes, helps wash and prepare the sponges and corals to market, and then does the work of carrying the two heavy baskets hung from a rod that extends across her shoulders, making her look all the world like a beast of burden; a yoked ox. She has been subjugated and is, in fact, a human beast of burden, except her youth, beauty, and sensuality give her the sense of a flower or butterfly that is both beautiful and free.

Cruel:

Wounded Dove: From the outset, Danilo demonstrates his cruelty and cruel nature in many ways. First, he arrives in town with his group of men and women who consist of violent criminals and prostitutes, and

tells the people he is bringing “civilization” to them, as though the indigenous traditional ways of harmony and self-rule somehow lacked civilization, and he immediately seized the property he wants and compels the people to work from dawn to dusk on building roads and other manual labor. Second, he punishes those who annoy him in very cruel ways, which include hanging people by their wrists, whipping, lashing, humiliating, and finally, murdering. He is sadistic as well as cruel and laughs at the pain and suffering of others.

Macho:

Flor Silvestre (1943): Jose Luis is passionate and exhibits all the traits of a man who is born to privilege in an honor culture. It is the heart of “macho” or hyper-masculine behavior. While this is romantic, and Jose Luis passionately defends the honor of his wife, Esperanza, it is something that makes it almost impossible for him to explain his actions except in actions and broad strokes. He is willing to fight to the death to defend what he believes in, but one hardly knows if he recognizes the larger implications of his choices. For example, situated as it is within the Mexican Revolution, Jose Luis’s decision to marry a woman who is from a mestizo married to an indigenous person (a “coyote”), makes him a brash warrior against the “casta” system, and the rigid social hierarchies. However, he never seems to be aware of the deep philosophical and social ramifications – just wants to love her for who she is. His father rigidly adheres to the social mores. Again with the backdrop of the Revolution, his position is tantamount to a Southern Planter fighting to defend his land and way of life. There is something perverse and evil about it, and that, in and of itself, impugns the notion of machismo itself.

In *La Malquerida*, Esteban looks like the perfect specimen of Mexican honor and masculinity. He is tall, wears a large sombrero, charro-style pants and jacket, and he is a consummate horseman. When he walks, his boots make sonorous heart beats on the floor, which his showy spurs make a clank and drag – almost like chains pulling across the tile. There is, however, a sense of the “carcajada” – the loud, half-taunting, half-rueful weeping laughter in his presence. He is not the natural heir of the grand Hacienda, the Hacienda El Soto. He has married Raimunda, a widow whose husband was the owner of Hacienda El Soto, and whose first child, her adolescent daughter, Acacia, will inherit. Acacia’s name even ties her to the Hacienda El Soto (the Grove); acacias grow in the Mexican grove near an artesian spring, which lies at the heart of the Hacienda El Soto.

La Enamorada: José Juan Reyes exhibits all the macho qualities that the Mexican culture revered at the time. As opposed to the works of Juan Bustillo Oro, Emilio Fernández does not question the values, although he does use them for comedic relief, as in the encounter with Beatriz as she leaves the church, and her lovely face and figure enchant him. He shouts out admiring yet quite impudent phrases to Beatriz, as well as whistling and encouraging his companions to also indulge in harassment. When she slaps him, he does not hit her back (at least not this time), showing his superiority, at least in the eyes of his companions.

Wounded Dove: Danilo announces that he is the new owner of the land around Lake Atitlán, and even the lake itself. He warns the villagers that anyone who defies his authority will be punished and his word is law. People who cross him are summarily whipped, hung by their wrists, or executed. His henchmen obey him, and those who do not are also executed in the same way as the villagers – a rock tied to their feet and thrown into the lake. The prostitutes appear drugged, and simply look at him blankly, chewing gum with open mouths, something that comes across as lewd, taudry, and devoid of morals. They seem to have no emotions except that of fear and mechanical obedience to him.

Proud:

The Pearl: Quino is proud of his heritage and he loves the traditions of his culture. He sings songs passed down from generation to generation, and he dances the traditional dances at the fiesta. He loves the music of the son jarocho, and he follows the traditions of diving for pearls.

La Enamorada: José Juan Reyes exhibits all the macho qualities that the Mexican culture revered at the time. As opposed to the works of Juan Bustillo Oro, Emilio Fernández does not question the values, although he does use them for comedic relief, as in the encounter with Beatriz as she leaves the church, and her lovely face and figure enchant him. He shouts out admiring yet quite impudent phrases to Beatriz,

as well as whistling and encouraging his companions to also indulge in harassment. When she slaps him, he does not hit her back (at least not this time), showing his superiority, at least in the eyes of his companions.

Pepita Jimenez: When Luis Vargas leaps to the defense of Pepita or the memory of Don Gumersindo, he is demonstrating his sense of honor. At the same time, he embraces the superficial trappings of honor in his transformation from a person who could hardly hang onto the back of a donkey, to a stunning horseman, capable of riding an unbroken stallion.

Conflicted:

Flor Silvestre (1943): Jose Luis loves Esperanza, and he also sympathizes with the plight of the disenfranchised, oppressed, and exploited, such as Esperanza's grandfather, Melchor, and also the workers on the ranch. In theory, however, he should not be friends, and should keep his bloodline pure and thus maintain his position in society as one of the upper caste. However, things are not so simple. Jose Luis, is caught in generational / paradigmatic conflict which ultimately burned everyone at that time period in Mexico. While the injustices, social inequality, and lack of economic access of the Porfiriato (the 30 plus years of dictatorship under Porfirio Diaz) needed to be rectified, there is no doubt that the destruction to the people and the economy was profound. The level of infrastructure and economy in 1910, the first year of the Mexican Revolution, were not to be achieved until more than 20 years later, and the worldwide economic depression during the 1930s further flattened the curve of recovery. Ultimately, Jose Luis's situation and inner conflicts lead to his refusal to support his father and protect the hacienda, and later, in avenging his father's death, crime punishable by death.

Racist:

La Malquerida: Honor cultures cloak racism. There is a delicate balance, despite what the alternately stoic and passionate men might try to embody. An honor culture insists on respect and being respected. It lives and dies by maintaining the order of things, and that ineluctable force of "order" emanates out from the family, with the father the paterfamilias, and the oldest son the rightful heir, who must spend his youth grooming himself to preserve and build the patrimony, not only by good stewardship of the property, but also through a prudent and fruitful marriage. This system is the foundational platform upon which all the different aspects of Mexican society rest, with all the complexity of "raza" or "casta" (lineage) to adhere to.

Jealous:

La Malquerida: When Faustino comes at night to visit Acacia, Esteban will have nothing of it. His jealousy takes possession of him. He mounts his black horse and encounters Faustino, who is on a white horse. He shoots Faustino, who falls from his horse and lies on the ground, mortally wounded. Acacia returns to El Soto, Esteban following close behind. Things will never be the same: "I have killed for you, Acacia," he declares. He has unleashed the whirlwind.

Scheming:

Wounded Dove: Danilo is a scheming, conniving person who plots to eliminate barriers to his obtaining what he wants. He wants Paloma, but she is in love with Esteban, a fellow indigenous villager and fisherman. He pretends to be happy about the wedding and offers to pay for a lavish party / reception after the wedding. However, those are not his intentions at all, and he compels one of his henchmen to kill Esteban by knifing him in the back in full view of Paloma. Paloma tells everyone what happened, and Danilo has the killer (who was obeying orders) killed by tying a large rock to his foot and throwing him into the lake. Later, as Fidencio is visiting Esteban's grave, he also kills him, thus eliminating any protection Paloma might have had.