

# **Mel Gibson y su visión de América antes de la llegada de los europeos en el cine de Hollywood - Contextual note and research progress Apocalypso.**

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# **Contextual Note and Research Progress: Pre-Columbian America in Hollywood Cinema — A Critical Analysis of Mel Gibson and *Apocalypto***

**Reference Article:** *Mel Gibson y su visión de América antes de la llegada de los europeos en el cine de Hollywood*

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## **1. Presentation and Research Line Framework**

The purpose of this supplementary document is to contextualize the paper *Mel Gibson y su visión de América antes de la llegada de los europeos en el cine de Hollywood* (*Mel Gibson and His Vision of Pre-European America in Hollywood Cinema*) within a broader and sustained line of research focusing on Sociology of Culture, Cultural Studies, and Geopolitical Representations.

Across this corpus of work, we critically examine how the cinematic and discursive productions of the U.S. film industry (Hollywood) construct Latin American subjectivity, history, and space. In the specific case of this study, the analysis centers on the discursive and ideological strategy deployed in the film *Apocalypto* (2006).

Below is a detailed mapping of related publications and research updates, organized topically and chronologically, complete with standard APA (7th edition) bibliographic citations, analytical abstracts, and permanent links (ARK/Handle) for consultation and citation in academic repositories.

## **2. Mapping of Related Works and Research Corpus**

**Research Line:** Sociology of Culture, Cultural Studies, and Geopolitical Representations in Hollywood Cinema.

### **1. Principal Reference Article**

**Title:** Pre-Columbian Representations and Imperialism in Mel Gibson

**APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2019, November 6–8). *Mel Gibson y su visión de América antes de la llegada de los europeos en el cine de Hollywood* [Conference presentation]. 1.er Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Humanas: Humanidades entre pasado y futuro, Escuela de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM), San Martín, Argentina.

- **Personal Profile Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/9> (ARK:  
<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/CRg>)

- **Conference Proceedings Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/1.congreso.internacional.de.ciencias.humanas/1492> (ARK: <https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/eRUe/qmE>)

### **Abstract:**

This paper explores the challenges and potential of the multiple intersections, exchanges, and borrowings between the human sciences and the arts, with a particular emphasis on illuminating how a Hollywood film operates ideologically. We examine Mel Gibson's ideas in *Apocalypto* (2006). Rather than drawing upon accounts that framed Indigenous peoples as "noble savages"—such as those by Bartolomé de las Casas, whose work structured the "Spanish Black Legend"—Gibson turned to chroniclers with opposing viewpoints. Instead of Las Casas, Gibson used sources such as Friar Diego de Landa's *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán* (1566), which detailed native atrocities. Set in the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Spanish, the film depicts free peoples with their own beliefs and cultures being fiercely and bloodily hunted by an expansive, imperial civilization that ultimately annihilates them. The pre-Columbian empire is portrayed as superstitious, decadent, and ridden with guilt. We highlight how Gibson's ideological stance as a filmmaker aligns with the broader relationship between Hollywood and the U.S. Department of State, directly contributing to the dissemination of U.S. imperialist discourse.

## **2. Related Research Works**

### **A. Doctoral Dissertations and Master's Theses (Structural Framework)**

#### **Doctoral Dissertation**

##### **APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2023). *Latinos en Hollywood: sujetos y espacios en el cine de ficción de Hollywood en torno al cambio de siglo* [Doctoral dissertation, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO Argentina)]. FLACSO Institutional Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10469/20723>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/35> (ARK:  
<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/k4M>)

**Abstract:**

This project falls within the field of Sociology of Culture. Specifically, it examines representations of Latin American archetypes (pertaining to both subjects and spaces) in narrative Hollywood feature films from the 1980s, 1990s, and the post-September 11, 2001 (9/11) decade. The technological and cultural power of this industry operates in close alignment with U.S. foreign policy directives. During the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. state was marked by a lack of domestic consensus regarding foreign military interventions—a divide that dissolved following the 9/11 attacks. This research argues that the U.S. government advances its expansionist project through directives issued by its Department of State—carrying political and cultural ramifications—and that Hollywood cinema actively participates in this project, generating impacts that are not merely artistic, aesthetic, and cultural, but also deeply ideological. Furthermore, this study conceptualizes the film director as an *auteur*—a creator endowed with a specific subjectivity and an explicit ideological and political stance. Cinema, particularly industrial commercial cinema, is understood as an arena for ideological debate, negotiation, and contestation. The empirical corpus focuses on classical Hollywood narrative cinema, paying special attention to the substantial presence of Latin American elements within the narrative framework. Consequently, this study aims to identify, interrogate, and explain representations of Latinidad by centering the analysis on archetypes, thereby distinguishing itself from prior research that primarily prioritized stereotypes. By linking the 1980s, 1990s, and post-9/11 periods, the study reveals the network of relationships between archetypal subjects and spaces, prompting an investigation into how Latin American archetypes were redefined during this era and how these shifts correlated with transformations in U.S. foreign policy.

**Master's Thesis Summary****APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2017). *Sujetos y espacios latinoamericanos en películas estadounidenses de ficción en la primera década del siglo XXI* [Master's thesis summary]. *Cuadernos del CEL*, 2(4), 210–218.

<http://www.celcuadernos.com.ar/upload/pdf/Resumen%20Tesis.%20docx.pdf>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/8> (ARK:

<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/1do>)

**Abstract:**

This paper analyzes the link between Hollywood cinema and imperialism as a mechanism for reproducing power dynamics reconfigured in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, offering a critical perspective on U.S. foreign policy and cultural representations of the Latin American continent at the turn of the century.

**B. Analysis of Historical, Spatial, and Ideological Representations in Film  
Post-9/11 Stereotype Analysis****APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2014, July 29–August 1). *Estereotipos de lo latinoamericano en las producciones de Hollywood* [Conference presentation]. XI Congreso Argentino de Antropología Social, Rosario, Argentina.

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/3> (ARK:  
<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/k4C>)

**Abstract:**

This paper examines a corpus of eight films (2001–2011) to investigate how Latin American subjects and spaces were framed following 9/11: subjects are characterized as dangerous, corrupt, or as "noble savages," while Latin American spaces function primarily as territories for surveillance rather than direct targets of terrorist attack.

**Spatial Exotization of Latin America****APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2022). La exotización hollywoodense de Colombia en la relación civilización-barbarie y el tratamiento de su espacio como jardín-desierto. *Clivajes. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, (17), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.25009/clivajes.v0i17.2734>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/10>

**Abstract:**

This article analyzes processes of exotization and the civilization/barbarism binary as applied to the geographical and cultural construction of Colombian space in U.S. commercial cinema.

**Cold War Cinema and Representations of the Left****APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2019, October 1–4). *Indiana Jones e Irina Spalko: Dos miradas hacia América Latina* [Conference presentation]. XVII Jornadas

Interescuelas/Departamentos de Historia, Universidad Nacional de Catamarca, Catamarca, Argentina. <https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/43> (ARK: <https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/y5e>)

**Abstract:**

This paper analyzes Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008), examining the portrayal of Soviet intellectuals and the political Left through the character of Irina Spalko, while analyzing the projection of Latin American space as a site of ideological dispute.

**C. Studies on Education, Youth, and Autoethnographic Cinema**

**Representation of Latino Youth in the U.S.**

**APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2019, November 13–15). *La representación de las juventudes latinas en el cine de los Estados Unidos* [Conference presentation]. IV Congreso de Jóvenes Medios e Industrias Culturales (JUMIC), Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina. <https://perio.unlp.edu.ar/ojs/index.php/actas/article/view/5759>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/7> (ARK: <https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/fbz>)

**Abstract:**

This study examines the representation of Latino youth in *Stand and Deliver* (1988), focusing on the pedagogical experience of teacher Jaime Escalante and its impact on broader educational policy debates surrounding the Latino community in the U.S.

**Autoethnographic Cinema and Prison Subculture**

**APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2016). Un análisis en torno a *American Me*, de Edward James Olmos. *Revista Transas*. <https://revistatransas.unsam.edu.ar/un-analisis-en-torno-a-american-me-de-edward-james-olmos/>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/20> (ARK: <https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/UXZ>)

**Abstract:**

An analysis of *American Me* (1992), a film exhibiting autoethnographic traits, which explores interracial conflict, gang dynamics, prison life, and parallel power structures in East Los Angeles.

#### **D. Methodological and Institutional Reflections**

##### **Historical Context: Hollywood and the U.S. Department of State**

###### **APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2018, November 19–23). *Cine e imperialismo: Antecedentes y miradas en la relación entre Hollywood y el Departamento de Estado norteamericano* [Conference paper abstract]. 8.<sup>a</sup> Conferencia Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), Buenos Aires, Argentina.

[https://www.clacso.org.ar/conferencia2018/presentacion\\_ponencia.php?ponencia=2018813153622-4335-pi](https://www.clacso.org.ar/conferencia2018/presentacion_ponencia.php?ponencia=2018813153622-4335-pi)

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/55> (ARK:  
<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/n23>)

###### **Abstract:**

This work synthesizes the literature review regarding mutual influences between U.S. foreign policy and industrial Hollywood film production.

##### **Cultural Research Methodology**

###### **APA (7th ed.) Citation:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2023, November 15–17). *Experiencia, preguntas, dificultades y logros en la investigación de producciones culturales de Hollywood* [Conference presentation]. VIII Encuentro Latinoamericano de Metodología de las Ciencias Sociales (ELMECS), Salto, Uruguay.

<http://elmeecs.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/viii-elmeecs/actas/ponencia-240618125758981054>

- **Acta Académica Link:**

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/62> (ARK:  
<https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pQeh/nX6>)

###### **Abstract:**

A methodological reflection on the qualitative and descriptive approach applied to the film corpus in the author's doctoral dissertation, addressing the challenges of analyzing cultural products as carriers of ideological biases.

### **3. Recommended Citation Guide for Researchers**

If referencing this work or its supplementary material in research related to cultural studies, film criticism, or geopolitical discourse analysis, please use the following citation formats:

**To cite the original research paper:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2019, November 6–8). *Mel Gibson y su visión de América antes de la llegada de los europeos en el cine de Hollywood* [Conference presentation]. 1.er Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM), San Martín, Argentina.

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/9>

**To cite this contextual note and general mapping:**

Méndez Mihura, M. X. (2026). *Contextual note and research progress: Pre-Columbian America in Hollywood cinema — A critical analysis of Mel Gibson and Apocalypto* [Supplemental material / Working paper]. Acta Académica Repository.

<https://www.aacademica.org/maria.ximena.mendez.mihura/9>