



1 <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2007/02/apocalypto.html>

2 **February 7, 2007 | Commentary**

3 **'Apocalypto' a distorted view of Maya history**

4 *Mel Gibson's latest film, Apocalypto, tells a story set in pre-Columbian Central*
5 *America, with the Mayan Empire in decline. Villagers who survived a savage attack*
6 *are taken by their captors through the jungle to the central Mayan city. Among the*
7 *villagers is Jaguar Paw, who has hidden his wife and child from the attackers with a*
8 *promise that he will return for them. Although the film has been nominated for three*
9 *Academy Awards - in makeup, sound editing and sound mixing - it has received*
10 *mixed reviews from critics and scholars.*

11 *The following editorial was written by Mary Weismantel, professor of*
12 *anthropology, and Cynthia Robin, associate professor of anthropology. It originally*
13 *appeared Dec. 17, 2006, in the Chicago Tribune.*

14 • •

15 The promotion for Mel Gibson's new film, "Apocalypto," points out
16 all of its realistic touches: It was shot on location in Mexico, it stars
17 Native American actors and its dialogue is not in English but Yucatec
18 Maya.

19 Movie reviewers, however, have noted the film's inaccuracies,
20 though at the same time they have granted the director considerable
21 latitude with a common plea from the movie world: It's just
22 entertainment.

23 The inaccuracies have sparked protests by Native Americans - in the
24 United States, Mexico and Guatemala - as well as by researchers who
25 study the ancient Maya, all outraged by the film's portrayal of the
26 Maya as violent and depraved.

27 True, a movie is a fictional account that, in most cases, places the
28 drama ahead of the historical verisimilitude. But the distorted story of
29 the Maya is likely the only exposure a generation of moviegoers will
30 get to the ancient civilization, and the film does the Maya a disservice.

31 As researchers who have spent our lives studying and teaching about
32 the Maya, we cannot help but be disappointed, and even outraged, by
33 the movie. Consider all the violence in the movie; though the Maya
34 practiced warfare and treated their prisoners harshly, the depiction of
35 wall paintings of blue-painted and decapitated prisoners is just wrong.

36 Stereotypes of bloodthirsty savagery and moral degeneracy have
37 been used to vilify indigenous peoples for 500 years - by every
38 government that has sought to justify the denial of civil rights to native
39 peoples.

40 During the first 200 years after the Spanish conquest of the New

41 World - beginning in the 1500s - an estimated 75 million indigenous
42 people were killed. But the genocide of Maya peoples is not merely a
43 thing of the past. Some 200,000 Maya were killed in Guatemala's 36-
44 year civil war, which ended only a decade ago.

45 These "entertaining" images affect ordinary people too. Native
46 Americans - like African-Americans, gays and lesbians - are at
47 constant risk of hate crimes.

48 The ancient Maya were a great civilization. They had important
49 inventions and made many advances, such as in higher mathematics.
50 They figured out the concept of zero, for instance, putting them in the
51 same league as the Chinese and Arabs.

52 Gibson's film comes at an exciting time for the native peoples of the
53 Americas. Indigenous political movements across North and South
54 America are fighting for civil rights and cultural recognition, not
55 unlike African-Americans in the 1960s.

56 These movements take pride in their ancient civilizations. But
57 participants of white backlash movements, some of which have ties to
58 neo-Nazis, love to talk about how those ancient civilizations were
59 degenerate, disgusting and violent.

60 Gibson's film portrays the ancient Maya not only as bloodthirsty and
61 immoral but utterly evil. Having Americans and Mexicans of native
62 heritage play such roles and speak in a language still spoken by more
63 than 700,000 Yucatec Maya in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize sends a
64 dangerous message by asking them to portray their own ancestors as
65 evil.

66 The U.S., Mexico and Guatemala are predominantly Christian
67 nations but have a vibrant religious pluralism. Native Americans are
68 predominantly Christian but find inspiration in their ancestors'
69 traditions.

70 Many others seek out these traditions as well. Tourists travel to
71 Maya sites such as Chichen Itza, read books about Maya calendric
72 systems and even attend ceremonies led by modern-day Maya
73 shamans. They find inspiration in great religious traditions that deserve
74 a better representation than they receive in "Apocalypto."

75 • • •

76 *Mary Weismantel has published two books about contemporary indigenous*
77 *peoples of South America. Cynthia Robin is an archeologist of the ancient*
78 *Maya.*

1 <http://www.lansinglowdown.com/index.php/article/480>

2 'Apocalypto' teaches violent history lesson

3 Published on December 06, 2006.

4 By Roger Moore

5 The Orlando Sentinel

6

7 (MCT) Mel Gibson's "Apocalypto" passes the only movie test that's
8 important. It's the "I'd pay to see that" test.

9 Gibson's latest history lesson is a parable about ignorance,
10 environmental degradation, senseless sacrifice and religious fanaticism.
11 He's made a big film about the collapse of Mayan civilization, but he's
12 talking about our own.

13 Knowing as much as we know about Gibson's beliefs, the movie feels
14 like strained Catholic prophecy. The way he depicts the Mayans - savage,
15 superstitious and doomed - he suggests that maybe Catholic Spain did
16 them a favor by enslaving and wiping them out to - ahem - convert them.

17 "Apocalypto" begins with a lengthy peek at the jungle world of a tribe
18 of hunter-gatherers.

19 A chance encounter with other primitives is a warning. They're
20 fleeing because their lands were "ravaged." Jaguar Paw (Rudy
21 Youngblood) wants to know by whom, where and when. But his "wise"
22 father, Flint Sky (Morris Birdyellowhead) counsels, keeping what they've
23 seen to themselves.

24 The Maya, we see, are in decline. Plague, deforestation, war,
25 pestilence and over-population have made them frantic to sacrifice more
26 and more captives to the gods they are sure they have lost favor with.

27 Gibson, an actor-director with a lengthy rap sheet of sado-masochistic
28 violence, spares no grisly image - from still-beating hearts snatched from
29 victims to sucking chest wounds, impalings and a graphic jaguar mauling.

30 For all its texture (the actors speak Yucatec Maya, with subtitles) and
31 "message," "Apocalypto" is a stunningly simple picture. Gibson cuts, in
32 classic cliffhanger style, between Jaguar Paw's quest and his wife and
33 child's struggle to stay alive long enough to be rescued.

34 At least if mainstream Hollywood ever really does turn its back on
35 him, Gibson will always have a job doing "Hostel" and "Saw" sequels.

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37 Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

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38 <http://www.cinematical.com/2006/12/11/what-apocalypto-got-wrong-a-whole-lot/>

39 What Apocalypto Got Wrong: A Whole Lot

40

41 by Scott Weinberg Dec 11th 2006 // 8:31PM

42

43 While I (unlike Mr. James Rocchi) managed to enjoy Mel Gibson's
44 Apocalpyto as a piece of exotic-yet-semi-standard action/adventure
45 epic lunacy, I didn't give the flick much thought where "historical
46 accuracy" was concerned. My default position is this: Filmmakers
47 make stuff up all the time, and if you think the phrase "based on actual
48 events" means you're getting even half of the straight facts, well, you
49 might be a little bit gullible. If someone had cornered me and asked
50 "How accurate do you think Apocalypto was, as far as the ancient
51 Mayan culture goes?" I'd have said "Hmph, I dunno. Semi-accurate?"

52 Well, now it sure looks like I'm the gullible one, because according
53 to one University of Texas professor, Mel Gibson's Apocalypto is a
54 big fat pack of Apoca-lip service. Based upon what I just read in this
55 excellent interview piece by Chris Garcia, UT art history professor
56 Julia Guernsey is ... well, she's pretty pissed off.

57 "I hate it. I despise it. I think it's despicable," is what the prof had
58 to say regarding the film's lack of historical accuracy before going on
59 to explain where Mel Gibson deviated from reality -- and why. Murals,
60 human sacrifices, geography, cultural attitudes, hell, even the basic
61 timeline has been monkeyed with to no end: "It would be as though
62 somebody did a movie on our American culture and they had
63 Madonna and Marilyn Monroe riding in a car together, or they had a
64 meeting of George Bush, Teddy Roosevelt and George Washington
65 because why not condense a couple hundred or a couple thousand
66 years?" Yowch.

67 Ms. Guernsey seems to make a whole lot of fascinating points here,
68 and her main irritant is a particularly valid one: "What is scary is that
69 people will leave the movie thinking that because the characters were
70 speaking Mayan there is an air of authenticity."

71 That last quote leads me to believe that maybe, hey, I did nail this
72 movie when I first saw it. I called it "a harsh and intense action flick
73 with a splash of exotic paint to make it seem deeper." Needless to say,
74 history professors will not be placing Apocalypto on their syllabi
75 anytime real soon.

1 <http://www.austin360.com/movies/content/shared/movies/stories/2006>
2 /12/history.html

3 **'Apocalypto' is an insult to Maya culture,** 4 **one expert says**

5 **A history professor explains where Mel Gibson got it**
6 **very, very wrong**

7 By [Chris Garcia](#)

8 AMERICAN-STATESMAN FILM WRITER

9 Wednesday, December 06, 2006

10 As we stagger out of a sneak peek of Mel Gibson's Maya historical
11 thriller "Apocalypto," Julia Guernsey is visibly shaken. She's upset and
12 not a little angry. She barely can contain her disgust, but she also can
13 barely speak. I'm a little worried.

14 Guernsey is an assistant professor in the Department of Art and Art
15 History at the University of Texas. Given her emphasis on pre-
16 Columbian Mesoamerican art and culture, we invited Guernsey along
17 to the preview last week so she could illuminate where Gibson got his
18 history right and where he got it wrong.

19 The upshot: Boy, did he ever get it wrong.

20 Caution: The following interview with Guernsey contains spoilers.

21 **Austin American-Statesman: You looked truly disturbed after the**
22 **movie.**

23 **Julia Guernsey:** My first reaction was to the extraordinary, gratuitous
24 violence. And the ending with the arrival of the Spanish
25 (conquistadors) underscored the film's message that this culture is
26 doomed because of its own brutality. The implied message is that it's
27 Christianity that saves these brutal savages. I think that's part of
28 Gibson's agenda, sort of, "We got the Jews last time (in 'The Passion
29 of the Christ'), now we'll get the Maya." And to highlight that point

30 there's a lot of really offensive racial stereotyping. They're shown as
31 these extremely barbaric people, when in fact, the Maya were a very
32 sophisticated culture.

33 **Yet he goes out of his way in the first third of the movie to depict**
34 **how peaceful and human at least some of them are.**

35 Yes, they're shown as wonderful, but ignorant. They're wonderful and
36 they get along great and they've got this rip-roaring humor, but they
37 don't know what's going on a day and a half's walk away, where this
38 *massive* city, this metropolis, is being constructed. They haven't gotten
39 wind of that because they are in their forest, the forest of their fathers,
40 the forest of their sons. I can feel my heart beating faster talking about
41 this.

42 **You just hate this movie.**

43 I hate it. I despise it. I think it's despicable. It's offensive to Maya
44 people. It's offensive to those of us who try to teach cultural sensitivity
45 and alternative world views that might not match our own 21st-century
46 Western ones but are nonetheless valid.

47 **What were you hoping for going into the movie?**

48 I thought it would highlight some of the achievements of the Maya,
49 but none of them is presented. They show some buildings but they
50 don't talk about them. You get glimpses of some art, but it's
51 overwhelmed by the non-stop violence.

52 **What are inaccuracies you noticed?**

53 For one thing, the characters walk through a tunnel-like space and it's
54 covered in wall murals. I'm nitpicking and it would mean nothing to
55 most people, but it's a reconstruction of some murals that were just
56 discovered in the past few years. They're from the site of San Bartolo
57 in the Maya region (of Guatemala). Some pieces of it are copied
58 exactly from the mural, but part of it is this gory scene of an individual
59 holding a severed human head with blood flowing out of it. That's not

60 in the mural! That's just Gibson on his violence kick. Plus, the murals
61 are Late Pre-Classic, dating to about 100 B.C., making it very
62 problematic that these people were walking through murals dating
63 from 100 B.C. and then we have the arrival of the Spanish, which was
64 in the 16th century. That's like 1,700 years apart.

65 **Couldn't they just be walking through an ancient area?**

66 You could argue that, except that the film presents an inaccurate
67 hodge-podge of architecture. Some of it looked like Tikal Classic
68 Maya, 800 A.D. Some looked Puuc, which is closer to 1000 or 1100
69 A.D. These are very different regions. It's like the difference between
70 Texas and Delaware. It also looked like they were borrowing from El
71 Mirador, this Pre-Classic metropolis that flourished around the year 0
72 A.D. It would be as though somebody did a movie on our American
73 culture and they had Madonna and Marilyn Monroe riding in a car
74 together, or they had a meeting of George Bush, Teddy Roosevelt and
75 George Washington because why not condense a couple hundred or a
76 couple thousand years? We would be appalled. We take our culture
77 seriously. We demand historical specificity, something completely
78 lacking here. Gibson had a responsibility to know better. He was
79 consulting experts who should have told him.

80 **Were the sacrificial pyramid/temples really like they are in the**
81 **movie?**

82 We have accounts from the Aztecs of such things; it shows up in their
83 mythology. And we have some images from the Maya that suggest that
84 that kind of sacrifice did take place and that they probably did roll the
85 bodies down (the pyramid). Now, the guys in the movie at the bottom
86 catching the bodies with nets? That is crazy. We have no evidence for
87 that. Another thing that was so funny was all that crazy, wild dancing
88 with women's breasts flapping. I was just reading hours before I saw
89 the movie with you a 400-page textbook dedicated to Maya dance, and
90 it talked about how women played no major public role in these
91 ceremonies but much more subtle roles.

92 **Was the depiction of sacrifice — lining victims up as if they're in a**
93 **ticket queue in front of a hysterical public crowd — accurate? That**
94 **was startling.**

95 We have evidence to suggest that there were group sacrifices. But it
96 would probably have been done as a pious act with solemnity. Some of
97 it was probably public spectacle. But I'm suspect of the women
98 gyrating and going into some kind of trance state, as, let's not forget,
99 the world's fastest ever solar eclipse is taking place.

100 **Did it bother you that the movie completely ignores the ancient**
101 **Maya inventions and achievements, such as urban planning,**
102 **writing, mathematics, astronomy and art?**

103 I did hope they would dwell on their achievements. There's this noble
104 savage, 19th-century idea of barbaric savages, and it was like Gibson
105 was rooted in that. All of these advances we've made in understanding
106 their culture were completely forgotten. I think Mel Gibson is the
107 worst thing that's happened to indigenous populations since the arrival
108 of the Spanish. I say that in jest, but what is scary is that people will
109 leave the movie thinking that because the characters were speaking
110 Mayan there is an air of authenticity.

111 **What about the garb and elaborate ornamentation they wear in**
112 **the movie, including bones in their noses?**

113 Some of that is based on images we have that are probably more or
114 less accurate. But again, they played it up in a way to make them seem
115 somehow subhuman. So the costuming just played into the idea of
116 them as real savages, rather than what it was for the Maya, which was
117 an aesthetic display of beauty, just as we take care of our clothing and
118 appearance. The whole thing was wrong. I was looking at the film's
119 trailer, which says, "No one can outrun their destiny." And I thought,
120 "You better run. You better outrun this movie."

121 cgarci@statesman.com; 445-3649



1 <http://www.mail-archive.com/pen-l@sus.csuchico.edu/msg21119.html>

2 <http://www.salon.com/ent/feature/2006/12/15/maya/>

4 **Maya in the Thunderdome**

6 In "Apocalypto," Mel Gibson paints a feverish, childish version of the Maya
7 -- and mangles decades of scholarship about this complex civilization.

9 By Marcello A. Canuto

10 Dec. 15, 2006 |

12 As a scholar of the Maya civilization, I was anxious to see Mel Gibson's
13 portrayal of the Maya in "Apocalypto." Of course, I realize the movie is not a
14 documentary and was mindful of the director's artistic license. I was happy to
15 see that Gibson got some details right, like personal adornment, tools and
16 body decoration. Although the main actors are native North Americans, I
17 applaud Gibson's use of some Maya actors, as well as his decision to have the
18 characters speak in a native Maya language, Yukatek, still heard in Mexico.
19 While these are brave and ambitious choices, they also imply that
20 "Apocalypto" is a sincere depiction of Maya society. In fact, the movie is not
21 an accurate portrayal of the Maya at all; rather, it is a reflection of Gibson's
22 own feverish imagination.

23 <EDIT>

24 This final scene tells us that the movie focuses on Maya society on the
25 eve of Spanish contact in the 16th century. Yet the Maya city portrayed in the
26 movie, central to its plot, dates roughly to the 9th century. This is akin to
27 telling a story about English pilgrims founding the Massachusetts Bay
28 Colony, and showing them living in longhouses described in "Beowulf." In
29 fact, Gibson incorporates Maya images from as far back as 300 B.C.
30 Throughout the movie, these anachronisms make Maya civilization seem
31 timeless, and undermine the idea that the Maya could and did respond to
32 change.

33 "Apocalypto" opens with a village of Maya hunter-gatherers living in
34 harmony within a tropical forest. While the Eden-like scene makes for great
35 cinematography, it is not supported by archaeological data. To begin with,
36 the Maya were not organized into small hunter-gatherer groups sustained by
37 the jungle's bounty. Starting in the first millennium B.C, Maya society was
38 organized into complex farming villages. By 200 B.C, their landscape was
39 dominated by cities of thousands of people composed of monumental
40 temples, royal palaces and public art. Five centuries later, dozens of royal
41 cities like Tikal and Calakmul were thriving in a region with hundreds of
42 thousands of people. During this time, Maya society was made up of farmers,

43 masons, warriors, scribes, priests, artists, musicians, noble elites and holy
44 lords -- many of whom are not even seen in "Apocalypto."

45 The movie's infamous violence begins when the tribe's idyllic world
46 is shattered by a surprise attack of fierce raiders seeking both captives and
47 slaves to take back to their city. The ensuing carnage leaves little to the
48 imagination. But Gibson forces us to empathize with the ingenuous
49 villagers by juxtaposing their baffled terror with the puerile sadism of
50 their attackers.

51 However, the Maya were hardly babes in the woods. By 300 B.C., the
52 Maya had developed political and economic systems that were regionally
53 integrated. People living in nearby towns, villages or homesteads -- within
54 a day's walk from larger centers -- would venture into the city to sell or
55 buy at the market, pay tribute requirements, witness political spectacles or
56 attend to religious devotions. Therefore, populations that lived near larger
57 centers would have been more substantially aware of activities in these
58 capital cities than the movie implies. The villagers would have understood
59 the threat of raids, battles and wars -- which were a regular part of Maya
60 society.

61 The movie continues with a harrowing march of tears and blood.
62 Captured villagers are led to a "place of stone houses." They witness the
63 felling of the sacred ceiba tree, hear the admonitions of a pestilent infant
64 Oracle and the ravings of a sickly elder, intermingle with a ghostly army
65 of construction laborers, and suffer the degradation of being sold in a
66 slave market. Elites, portrayed as "ugly without silliness," are shown
67 killing the innocent with schoolyard cruelty.

68 These scenes reflect the exploitation of natural resources, violence,
69 social repression, and detached ruling class that archaeologists have
70 proposed as causes for the "Classic Maya collapse" in the 9th and 10th
71 centuries. Although the debate about the collapse continues, the images of
72 a diseased populace in the movie do not fit with the data. Maya cities
73 were likely to have been much healthier than contemporary European
74 ones.

75 <EDIT>

76 Once in the city, some of Gibson's villagers are designated for
77 sacrifice. Slathered in blue body paint, they are led through the central
78 ceremonial precinct of the city. Amid a throng of possessed dancers, they
79 see murals depicting blue-painted figures with their chests cut open. The
80 villagers are led up scaffolds along a pyramid, where a long line of
81 captives are being killed. One by one they are splayed across an altar,
82 their chests cut open and their hearts ripped out by the king. They are then
83 decapitated and their headless bodies flung down the massive frontal
84 staircase to the cheers of the ruck below. Gibson's portrayal of a fervent

85 and orgiastic mob completely violates what we know about Maya propriety
86 in ritual behavior. Many modern Maya rituals, such as processions or
87 prayers, are deliberate and serious affairs.

88 <EDIT>

89 Interestingly, murals recently discovered at San Bartolo in Guatemala
90 depict scenes of auto-sacrifice and animal sacrifice. They reveal gods
91 undertaking rites that bring the world into creation. Gibson cribbed these
92 images for his mural scene but saw fit to alter them to convey a view of the
93 Maya involved in wanton human sacrifice.

94 Human sacrifice was indeed important to Maya society. The Classic
95 period gives us numerous depictions of severed heads, and even of headless
96 bodies flung down staircases. However, in most cases, such sacrifices were
97 of single victims of noble rank whose identity was prominently recorded for
98 posterity, not a mass of unknown farmers. We have evidence of larger mass
99 graves. But in these rare examples, it appears that warfare between
100 competing cities led to the capture and summary execution of enemies. In
101 either case, the victims would not have been anonymous individuals.

102 It's true that sacrificial practices among the Maya did change somewhat
103 during the final centuries before the Spanish arrival. Spanish accounts note
104 that some Maya pyramids along the Yucatan coast were covered with blood -
105 - presumably human, though the Spanish never witnessed any of the
106 sacrifices themselves. It is also true that "skull-racks," as seen in the movie,
107 were found at some sites in the Yucatan. However, these were practices
108 adopted by Maya groups very late in their history.

109 But in the movie, our hero is spared from being sacrificed, thanks to a
110 fortuitously timed solar eclipse. The king announces that the eclipse is a good
111 omen -- the gods are sated and require no more human flesh. This raises the
112 problem of what's not in the movie.

113 The prediction of the solar eclipse is the only allusion to one of the more
114 celebrated and important facets of Maya civilization -- their advanced state of
115 knowledge in mathematics, astronomy and geometry. Maya calendrical,
116 astronomical and mathematical systems were so advanced that they could
117 predict eclipses, track Venus as morning and evening star, and compute the
118 annual solstices and equinoxes decades in advance. In fact, the Maya made
119 regular use of the concept of "zero" centuries before Fibonacci introduced it
120 to Europe. Although an emphasis on Maya intellectual achievement would
121 have been appropriate, it would have been inconsistent with the movie's
122 theme of a cruel and savage Maya civilization.

123 In an action scene that springs entirely from Gibson's imagination, our
124 hero is able to escape the city. <EDIT> He flees through the jungle, and with
125 only two pursuers remaining, he bursts out of the forest onto a beach. There,
126 where the land ends and the water begins, both he and his tormentors witness

127 Spanish galleons and rowboats ferrying Spaniards and Christianity to the
128 lands of the Maya. His pursuers, as if in a trance, walk weakly toward the
129 arriving Spaniards. Their pursuit is now irrelevant, as their world is about
130 to end.

131 Again, the historical facts tell a different and more compelling story.
132 Several accounts exist of Spanish expeditions in the early 1500s, sailing
133 from Cuba and making stops along the Yucatan coast for provisions.
134 Invariably these encounters ended badly for the Spaniards. So fierce was
135 the Maya defense of their lands that Cortés avoided much of this coast,
136 choosing to land farther west along what is known today as the coast of
137 Veracruz. The Maya, at the time of the conquest, were intractable and
138 fiercely autonomous. Most villages resisted the Spaniards. In fact, the
139 Spanish conquest of the Maya was a long protracted campaign that some
140 claim goes on to this very day.

141 In "Apocalypto," the arrival of the Spanish signals "a new beginning."
142 Remarkably, the event is portrayed as tranquil, as if the Spaniards are the
143 adults who have finally come to rescue the "littleuns" stranded on the
144 island of William Golding's "Lord of the Flies." In reality, the arrival was
145 anything but serene.

146 Within decades of the first contact with the Spaniards, the Maya
147 would die in the hundreds of thousands as European diseases, colonial
148 exploitation and cruelty took root. In 1552, in the name of Christian piety,
149 Fray Diego de Landa ordered that hundreds of Maya codices, carrying
150 sacred knowledge accumulated over centuries, be burned as works of the
151 devil. If there were ever an apocalypse in the history of the Maya -- and
152 herein lies the ultimate demoralizing irony of the movie -- it would be
153 because of European contact. But in the movie, after two hours of excess,
154 hyperbole and hysteria, the Spaniards represent the arrival of sanity to the
155 Maya world. The tacit paternalism is devastating.

156 After many centuries of misguided and simplistic views of the Maya,
157 recent scholarship has shown the complexity and historical depth of their
158 civilization. In Maya society, as in all civilizations, violence, surfeit and
159 disparity were balanced by accomplishment, restraint and illumination.
160 Gibson's feverish vision of a childish Maya society sacrificing itself to
161 extinction is more than inaccurate, it works against the progress of
162 decades of diligent scholarship to restore to present-day Maya people a
163 heritage of which they are proud, and from which we have much to learn.
164 I can only hope that audiences seeing this movie will be motivated to
165 learn about the Maya -- present and past -- rather than be sated by
166 Gibson's sacrificial offering at the altar of entertainment.

167

168 -- By Marcello A. Canuto