

21A.441

Study Questions: "The Mission"

How does the depiction of missionization differ from the article by Sweet? In what ways does Sweet directly contradict the film? What elements of missionization discussed by Sweet are ignored/hidden/euphemized/glossed over?

How is the process of conversion depicted and symbolized? What according to the film are the motivations of the Indians for converting?

How are the Indians portrayed? How much do we learn about them and their culture? How does the film show/symbolize that the Indians are good/worthy? Who stands for the Indians as a whole? Is there something in the way they are portrayed that modern-day Indians might object to?

How are the priests portrayed? How much does the film embrace the way Jesuits see themselves? What is the importance of humility? Of martyrdom?

What is the symbolic importance of the landscape, especially the falls of Iguazú? Of music? Architecture?

What does the film take for granted about the relative value of Indian and White culture? Of hierarchy versus equality?

How does the film deal with the question of violence? Is it consistent? How does it compare with the treatment of themes like violence/resistance/standing up for oneself in other films such as "High Noon"?

Do the filmmakers have a bias against Latin Americans?

Films, like books, often have a subtext, i.e. they may be about some events or themes other than their obvious subject. What late 20th century conflicts and events might "The Mission" be about in addition to 18th century Paraguay?