

THE MISSION

What is unusual about the opening shot of this film? How often is it that a character in a film looks directly at the audience and seems to talk to them?

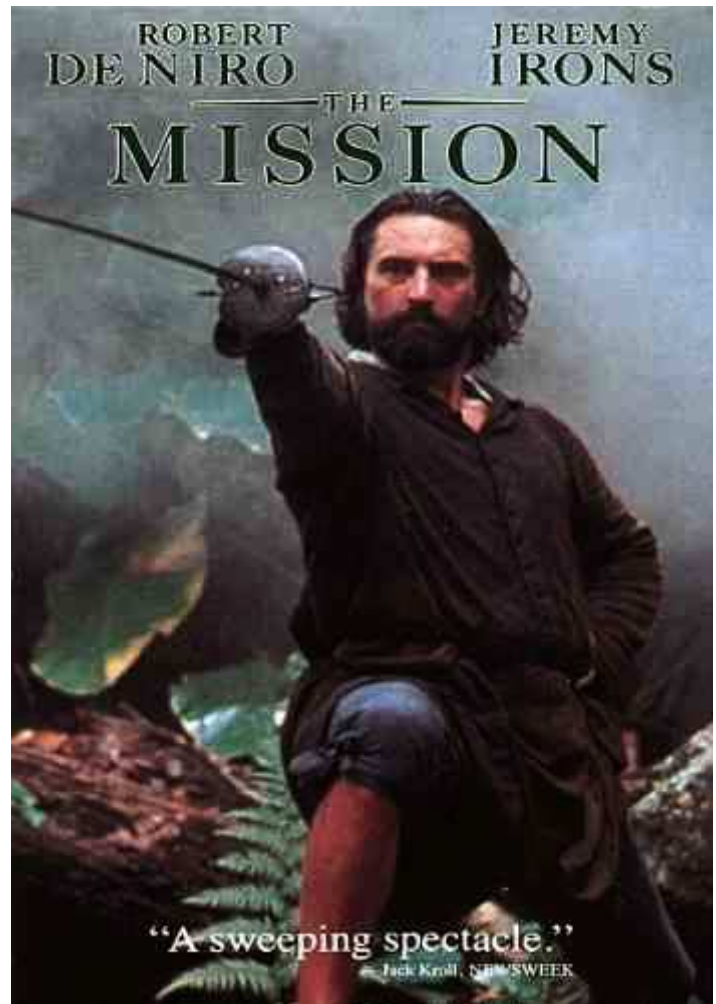
Here is what the character says:

"Your Holiness. The little matter that brought me hereto the furthest edge of your light on earth is now settled. The Indians are once again free to be enslaved by the Spanish and Portuguese settlers"

I don't think that this is hitting the right note. Begin again.

"Your Holiness. I write to you in the year of Our Lord 1758 from the southern continent of the Americas from the town of Ascension in the province of La Plata, two weeks march from the great mission of San Miguel."

At what point in the dialogue does the shot change from the face, looking at the audience into a shot that one might find more usual in a film? Do the two sections of this opening scene set up any conflict? (Think about both what is said and also about what is shown).



What does the 'straight to audience' shot suggest about the words that are being said?

Regarding what will happen in the rest of the film, how do the opening lines of dialogue create another tension, give the audience knowledge that might be denied to other characters in the film?

From this opening scene we then move on firstly to images of the mission itself, followed by a scene where the Indians have crucified a priest.

Look back at the opening scene of the film that you have already talked about. There are a number of conflicts and themes already laid out here.

1. Freedom and Slavery
2. The Church and the Indians
3. Civilisation and Nature

Using these headings and others that you can think of, try to write down under each which scenes from the opening sequence of the film might illustrate each idea.

Thus, under 'Civilisation', you might write:- the mission, children playing the violins, the town.

When you have completed this, then try to predict what the storyline will be about. From the characters that you have been shown, can you say which will fit under which heading? What role will they play in the development of the plot?

With an orchestra, the Jesuits could have subdued the whole continent

...you need so much love, you deserve so much love...

You are a mercenary, a slave trader, you killed your brother - and you loved him, though you chose a strange way of showing it

...for me there is no redemption...

There is no penance hard enough

Do you dare to see it fail?

We are not members of a democracy, we are members of an order

Though I have all faith so that I could move mountains, and have not love, I am nothing, and though I bestow all my goods on the poor, and though I give my body to be buried and have not love it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long and is kind.

Love envieth not. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man I put away childish things.

But now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three, but the greatest of these is Love.

This seeming to create a paradise on Earth, how easily it offends.

Your Holiness is offended because it may distract from that paradise that is to come hereafter.

Their Majesties of Spain and Portugal are offended because the paradise of the poor is seldom pleasing to those who rule over them.

and the settlers here are offended for the same reason.

Yes, but perhaps she doesn't want to go to the streets of Lisbon

There is a radical French group that preaches that doctrine.
It was the doctrine of the Early Christians.

I couldn't help wondering if these Indians would not have preferred it if the sea and wind had not brought any of us to them.

If you are right you will have God's blessing.

If might is right, then Love has no place in the world.
It may be so, it may be so, but I don't have the strength to live in a world like that.

I did what I had to do - given a legitimate purpose

We must work in the world - the world is thus
No, Signor Hontar, thus have we made the world.
Thus have I made it

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.