

Royal Hunt of the Sun
English 4300: Violence in Film &
Literature
Dr. Thompson
Maymester 2009

Royal Hunt of the Sun (1969)

- Peter Shaffer wrote the original play in 1964.
- Peru and Inca Civilization.
- Film characterization of the Inca: not necessarily primitivism.
 - Atahualpa is not a free, uninhibited, being; he's not presented as being in a more innocent state of nature.
- Transparency: film reflects on morality, religious belief, religious dogma, religious practice; it reflects on conquest, leadership, age, youth, greed, friendship.
- Chiaroscuro morality: it contrasts two moralities more than it contrasts actual civilizations.

Mise-en-scène and theme.

- Film techniques used to intensify moral chiaroscuro:
 - Costume drama with real historical characters.
 - The diegesis is not historically precise, not focused on accuracy.
 - Real events & characters: Pizarro, DeSoto, and Atahualpa.
 - Duality of Language: slur dubbing effect shifts Incan to English (non-diegetic) contrasts with use of diegetic language and translation.
 - Creates possibility of understanding between characters that may or may not occur, does and does not occur.
 - Violent extra-diegetic music contrasted to diegetic music when Atahualpa sings.
 - Use of intra-diegetic interior monologue.
 - Pizarro's interior thoughts focus viewer attention on his internal experience, his perceptions. These contrast to his spoken words, actions, and their consequences.
 - Creates double privileging: audience, too, questions morality, Christian practice v. belief, etc.
 - Shot / reverse angle shots: Atahualpa & Pizarro converse.
 - Use of extreme long shots, long shots, medium long shots.
- What does Pizarro want? Is it "just" gold or does he seek something more?

Joseph Campbell's Monomyth Structure

- Hero lured from ordinary world.
- Carried away or voluntarily proceeds to the "threshold of adventure."
 - Encounters a "shadow" presence that guards the passage.
 - Enters alive or dead the "kingdom of the dark."
- Hero journeys through a "world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces."
- Experiences "supreme ordeal" at the nadir & receives "reward."
- Hero must work to return to ordinary world.
 - If blessed, will be helped.
- Threshold Crossing: returns to ordinary world with "reward" that will replenish that world or restore it.



Cambell's Monomyth Structure--based on Jungian archetypes
