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Berlinale FILM CAPSULE: Spoor (Holland, 2017): Poland

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson.

Agnieszka Holland screened her film, Spoor (Pokor), at the 67th Berlinale, February 12th, 2017. The film is centered around a Stephen King, Misery Chastain-like character, Duszejko, a supposed retired civil engineer. Duszejko is a vigilante at heart who professes to be an astrologist. Holland gives little evidence to Duszejkoâ??s proficiency in either of these areas. Nevertheless, Spoor is a film that catches the eye and attacks the viewerâ??s sensibilities of right and wrong.

The film opens with a narrative voiceover espousing a personâ??s date of birth points to a personâ??s day of death. Somber non-diagetic music accompanies character Duszejkoâ??s enlightening epiphany. The camera, meanwhile reveals a pre-dawn mountain landscape with fog billowing up and the diagetic sounds of birds chirping and dogs barking. A

Photo credit: Robert Paeka

transition is made revealing jeeps rolling up into a small glen where a group of hunters are meeting. A lone jeep is seen leaving as another transition takes the viewer inside a sleeping Duszejkoâ??s home via an extended tracking point-of-view take. Frantic dogs bark rousing Duszejko from a slumbering sleep. Duszejkoâ??s rises, quickly dresses and sets out into the pasture with her beloved dogs. She stretches and raises her arms skyward in a back shot as a new day is dawning. A cut is made to a hen house full of abused, caged foxes and a brute of a man cursing and racking the cages with a metal bar.

Admittedly, Holland sets the tone for what is a wild and wily ride. After her dogs have gone missing, Duszejko sets out to correct a world gone mad (albeit her world). Spoor is set in a rugged region with hunting seasons corresponding with natureâ??s cyclical seasons. Despite her best attempts to thwart the hunting of living creatures including a consultation with the local priest who tells to Duszejko to pray not for the animals or for the hunters but for herself.Spoor is set in a rugged region with hunting seasons corresponding with natureâ??s cyclical seasons and the priest proselytizes man is meant to subdue the animals of the earth At wits end, Duszejko takes matters into her own hands finding a vindication in her supposed astrological indicators and support from an unlikely network like-minded sympathizers. Utilizing flashbacks the truth is revealed in the filmâ??s denouement.

At its core, Spoor is a semi-stylistic film advocating vigilantism to protect the inherent sacredness of our planetâ??s ecological system from a microcosmic perspective. In my opinion, Holland delivers an important message in a very dark manner pitting formal religion and community against purported astrological insight and personal vendetta. Not recommended!

*Featured photo credit: Robert Paeka

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