

Ancestral Land

Directed by Gabriel Bissonnette

- TMFF CRITIQUE REVIEW -

CRITIQUE TAGLINE:

“An ecological parable inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien.”

SYNOPSIS

In a magical forest, a man's greed can compromise the balance of nature. Who will win?

COMMENT ON THE IDEA

The short film has a rather simple construction, focusing on two characters between whom there is no dialogue. The project has, to a certain extent, the appearance of a narrative music video whose mysterious atmosphere is inspired by the fantasy genre. However, although the idea from which the director starts uses Nordic mythological characters (the elves), the short film tries to capture a timeless metaphor about the disastrous consequences of greed. At the same time, many viewers can see in this project, beyond the similarities with famous fictional universes such as “The Lord of the Rings”, an ecological parable about the effects of nature destruction. This message is up to date but perhaps not very original or well-explored in the parameters of such a short project to be truly memorable.

The idea is **Good + (plus Good)**.

STORY AND SCRIPT OVERVIEW

Being built, rather, like a brief parable with a precise message, the short film does not propose a more complex interaction between the protagonists. In fact, the script focuses on two characters who illustrate two general typologies, lacking in-depth features. On the one hand, there is the man – dominated by destructive instincts (symbolised by the metaphor of the axe); on the other hand, there is the elf – the protective spirit of the trees, a kind of personification of nature. The similarities with “The Lord of the Rings” can go further – the human character seems inspired by Smeagol / Gollum, while the axe in the script exudes the same fascination as the ring from J.R.R. Tolkien's novels. Apart from these characteristics, there are no other traits that give more concrete psychology to the characters. The script thus depicts a limited spectrum of human nature, inviting readers / viewers to a brief moment of reflection on the dehumanization of people blinded by mercantilism.

The story and the script both get a **Good**.

ACTORS AND ACTING

Although they are not in front of a more challenging script, the two actors convincingly embody the two typologies mentioned above.

Actors' work is **Very Good**.

DIALOGUE

The succinct action depicted by the script is based exclusively on nonverbal language.

Dialogue is **Irrelevant**.

CINEMATOGRAPHY & EDITING

Despite the risks that the creator of this short film takes when approaching a not very ambitious script, cinematography and editing are by far the most successful components of the whole project. The lack of dialogue is thus offset by several editing strategies that capture the emotional transitions of the main character (close-ups, slow-motion frames, change of chromatic

registers), while the suggestiveness of certain details and the cohesion of the image and music convincingly coagulate an enchanting atmosphere. All these strategies, to which are added the costumes and special effects, give substance to this short film very similar to a narrative music video, proving the talent of the creative team.

Cinematography and Editing both get a **Very Good**.

MUSIC

Being present throughout the entire short film, instrumental music respects the cinematic progression of the project, illustrating, by alternating high and low registers, the evolution of the characters.

Music is **Very Good**.

DIRECTOR'S VISION

Gabriel Bissonnette is a director who seems to master the technique of making music videos. Obviously, it's risky to say that this short film is such a project, but at the same time, it's just as risky to say that this short film has bigger ambitions. In other words, it is clear that we are in front of a talented director, but this project has not proved to us his true artistic potential.

FILM ENDING AND ARRAY OF MEANINGS

Ancestral Land is an ecological parable inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's novels while depicting the degree of recklessness and dehumanization of those who destroy the fragile balance between humans and nature.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Ancestral Land is a short film similar to a music video on the disastrous effects of human greed. Through this fantasy parable, Gabriel Bissonnette proves that he is a director with potential, but the relatively limited stakes of his project make us believe that he is capable of more than that.

Reviewed by Andrei C. Șerban

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