

What Do We See When We Look at the Sky?

Once upon a modern time in the ancient city of Kutaisi, Georgia, a young pharmacist and a soccer player meet along the banks of the Rioni River — two pairs of shoes walking towards each other, away, and back to each other. No faces revealed yet, only to the pharmacist and the soccer player, solely relying on their intuition and memories to guide their world to let ‘fate do its thing’ and let this modern fairy tale unfold — Lisa and Giorgi are meant to be; however not so easily. Alexandre Koberidze’s *What Do We See When We Look at the Sky?* (2021) is a modern fairytale that aims to remind us what movies can show us, and what we can’t see without them.

Embarking from their first encounter that resembles the tone of Yorgos Lanthimos’ magical realism of *The Lobster* (without the impending sense of doom), a surveillance camera, rain pipes, and the wind warn Lisa (and Giorgi) are to be cursed(!) and wake up in a different body the next day, conspicuously causing a major conflict in this fairytale for the lovebirds to find their way back to each other. “Despite their initial love at first sight, they don’t recognize each other. Shouldn’t true love transcend appearances, though? If they’re really soulmates, right?” (Kenny, 2021). It’s an awful fate, but this is a movie; With the narrator non other than Koberidze himself breaking fourth walls here and there, guiding or even reassuring us that we shouldn’t feel spiteful of what’s happened to Lisa and Giorgi’s fate —

“This is a film that needs the viewer’s surrender.” (Kenny, 2021)

The film runs over the epic time frame of 2 hours and 30 minutes, more suitable for the general audience’s needs for a franchise block buster movie that requires absolutely no critical thinking nor close observation — Koberidze’s sky requires nothing more than what we already have, to see, to listen, and to feel. So what do we see? “We look at the sky itself, of course, the dark and light clouds. We look at rainbows and lightning, smog and smoke, tall trees and taller buildings, soaring birds and buzzing insects, though in practice we don’t often truly look at the world, which means we don’t see it or its everyday wonders, terrors and adventures — which is to this movie’s point.” (Dargis, 2021, p.5). What shapes the film’s beautifully mundane (or mundanely beautiful) world is the little dramas that surround our heroes as their fate allows them to find their way back to each other.

In the midst of a curse children still play in the park, dogs wander off the streets, businessmen hustle for a better (ordinary) future. Lisa and Giorgi aren’t exempt from this ordinariness as well, soon after the realization of their changed appearance (played by different actors), they go about their lives just as they did, even without an answer to *why* this curse had to change their abilities as well. It’s perfectly ordinary, and sometimes perfect in its very ordinariness. “He never comes out and says it, but once the narrative resolves—and it resolves as Koberidze says a certain soccer match related in the movie resolves, in that “everything

happened the way it had to happen”—we might conclude that love could be part of the answer.” (Kenny, 2021). It had to happen this way.