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The Dispossessed

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The Dispossessed

Abstract

This is a review of the Sundance short film, *The Dispossessed* (2019), directed by Musa Syeed.

Author Notes

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The Dispossessed (2019), dir. Musa Syeed

Musa Syeed's short documentary shows us the work of a traditional faith healer in Kashmir. After years of working at the medical college as a Xerox technician, Hazari Saheb decides to follow in his father's footsteps and becomes a faith healer. Hazari looks at the faces and into the eyes of his patients to see if they are possessed by Jinn. Jinn are supernatural creatures that possess people. They are less than angels, but something more than demons. When people are dispossessed, they are rid of Jinn. Hazari uses rituals and medicines to rid people of Jinn. Hazari says he has so many patients because he does not take money, and because his patients are always cured.

In this film, however, the word "dispossessed" has two meanings. It refers to people who are rid of the Jinn that possessed them, but it also refers to the people living through the conflict in Kashmir. These people have lost their sense of well-being, their dignity, their culture, their

hope. They are the dispossessed. Hazari notes that only a small number of his patients are actually possessed by Jinn. 95% of his patients are suffering from depression. And so, instead of taking something away from the depressed, Hazari's task becomes one of giving depressed people (the dispossessed) something to live for, whether that be hope, self-respect, courage, or understanding. His job as a faith healer may be to rid people of Jinn, but it is also to change the way the depressed people of Kashmir think about the world around them.