Aloft

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Abstract
This is a film review of Aloft (2014) directed by Claudia Llosa.

Author Notes
William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).

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This is a film about love, art (or ritual), belief, nature and healing. For many people these are the elements that make up religion--not any particular religion, but religion in general. Religions might be more than these elements, but these elements are seen as core elements.

Much of the movie is set against a stark, bleak, arctic background that denies the movie the sentimentality of a Hollywood movie happy ending. We are meant to take the movie and its themes seriously. The ending is positive, but not exactly happy. The ending affirms the message of the film that love, belief, nature, and art do influence healing--sometimes in ways that seem quite mysterious.
The movie is filled with suspense from start to finish. The suspense stems from a variety of situations, but it reflects the suspense that the audience feels regarding religion and healing. There is resolution—we are not left with French ambiguity—but that resolution makes no promises.

The movie is brilliantly cast. In a role that cries out for overacting, Jennifer Connelly resists the temptation and her performance makes this movie possible.

The title of the film refers to the son's hawk, a hawk that soars (aloft) throughout the film. A star in its own right, the hawk represents both nature and what lies beyond. The hawk's appearance is mesmerizing and it draws us into the film in an unusual way.

For those who are interested in a broader view of religion and the connection between religion and healing, this will be a terrific film to see.