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REVIEW

Divine Forgiveness

Athanasios Karanikolas's *At Home* (*Sto spiti*, 2014)

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A*t Home* is the new film by Athanasios Karanikolas. It portrays a small but rich family in Greece whose Georgian maid, Nadja (Maria Kallimani), has become part of the family in the long period she has lived with them. We are presented with an ideal set-up: Nadja gets along well with them, skillfully expressing the right balance between professionalism and home-comfort. Her employers are comfortable in her presence. She takes care of their only child, 12-year-old Iris, who loves Nadja and asks for her advice about life and school. All set in a beautiful house in the mountains looking over a wide, blue sea. But when Nadja suddenly develops an unexplained weakness and needs to consult doctors who diagnose her with a small neurological problem, her belonging in the family is called into question, and we realize that she is not really part of it at all. The supposedly friendly arrangement falls apart as the couple consider their financial situation in light of this problem, and finally capitalism wins out.

The family, and especially Stephanos, the father, who worries a lot about money, decide they cannot keep paying a maid, and therefore decide not to keep her on. Other characters, such as Nadja's staunch boyfriend, try to convince her to denounce her employees but she refuses to complain. The couple tell her they are moving to another country and cannot afford to take her with them. Although she suspects this is a lie, she initially leaves without question. But after a trip to the hospital, she walks back to their house and sees they now have another maid. This is the most impressive scene of the film, and it reminds us of the adage, "to err is human, to forgive divine". Eva seems angelic in this scene, looking at her old employers with a kind of understanding, they are frantically making excuses but she has a kind of religious calm.

The lighting emphasizes the importance of money by highlighting simple colors and beautiful scenery. The huge double-glass window in the house, look over the sea and the mountains. Stephanos, the husband, lounges on his white bed in blue shorts which matches the color of the iPad he is idly browsing. This film

is not perfect – at times, like the scenery, it’s rather dry-, but in the end it works well and you are left with a feeling of great empathy for all the characters. *At Home* gives a new twist to a story about employee rights, and comes together in the end when the characters part ways.