

A film about existential worries, evil, fear of the future and the meaning of life in an absurd world.

## South of Hope Street

A philosophical feature film about absurdism

In SOHS, the evil and the eerie have come into this world.

**It is about the collision of evil**, as it can only arise in human thinking, and is expressed in the feature film through the cult of the 'Black Shoes', **with the primal force of the universe**, an 'unreasoning nature' that human reason and science cannot fathom (and never will), which is at the same time a source of life and a danger to life.

In this unfathomable universe, on our earth, people are discovering in the near future an unknown, additional moon that signifies an irreversible turning point, a tipping point, turning the familiar world upside down, heralding a different, unknown, habitat-altering future.

For proponents of the modern **order** of society, which is the idea of a consumer society seduced by financial institutions that pretends to know what is beautiful, good, and true, the extra moon means one thing: a menace to be fought by any means necessary. The upholders of this order, symbolized in the film by Lieutenant Winthrop, played by William Baldwin, do everything in their power to maintain a poisoned peace, with false truths inventing a new truth so that people can live on *carefree* in their simplicity.

The Lieutenant cuts off the earth from the universe with a fearsome, protective wall. He manipulates, misinforms, distributes corrective drugs, kills opponents and unites the country via a patriotic war. The evil keeper compels man, mind and reason to protect the rotten construction of consumer society, and of the nation state, from its impending decay.

Denise, the protagonist in the film, asks the question of meaning in this paradoxical, meaningless world. She has a radical desire to commit suicide and yet she is still looking for a bearable way to live her life. As a single woman who has lost her place in society, penniless, jobless, homeless and disillusioned with the hedonistic, blinded society, she searches for the will to live, for her pursuit to happiness.

In SOHS, Denise is a supplicant, a vagabond driven by fate, as in a small boat in the middle of a stormy sea. On her quest for meaning and happiness, she stumbles upon a diverse cast of characters.

There's *Xenia*, a narcissistic artist of the moneyed nobility who runs in bohemian life and grants Denise a few overnight stays. Xenia practices extravagant art for self-expression, without reflection, without morality, without talent. She is an insensitive echo chamber of the increasingly evil order.

There are the two *clown actors*, addicted to recognition, jealous, hungry for a career, busy and capable of anything. For them there are no friends, only opportunities. Solely concerned with their own advantages, they cooperate with the evil order.

There is *Patrick*, a businessman suffering from congenital deformity, a pragmatist who, despite his physical disadvantages, tries to earn a place in life through work.

There is the poet *Tom*, played by Judd Nelson, an independent thinker who sees in the new moon not the end but a new beginning, the purification of truth, even a renaissance, the hope of salvation. Denise is attracted to Tom. He is steadfast, a missionary of his knowledge, ready to be martyred for his truth.

There's *Andrey*, a war sage, a teenager who unquestioningly worships his father and wants to follow in his military footsteps at all costs. Andrey is a romantic patriot, disabled and therefore unfit for service. And yet he is recruited, as cannon fodder.

There are the *Rebels*. A community of those who suffer from the evil order and feel threatened, who dare to say 'no' and revolt. Their path leads to solidarity, to a hiding place in the forest. But the mutual fate does not mean they agree on their methods. While one faction, led by *Benjamin*, played by Michael Madsen, advocates armed insurrection, the faction around the pacifist *Prof. Mele* wants to fight the enemy with scientific methods.

And finally, there is *Tarik*, a middle eastern student who doesn't judge but does what is right, who is open to everything, the magical, the knowledge based and the unimaginable, who takes life and fate as it comes, does not need a leader, but uses his mind and responsibility.

Denise observes, reflects and is torn between the wondrous planetary change and the contradictory order she must fit into to continue to exist. The absurdity makes her despair.

Only a key experience shows her the way out. In heroic defiance, she takes a daring step. She dares to destroy a neuralgic point in the existing, evil order and then realizes that the world has changed for the better. **She takes responsibility.** Instead of being driven by the circumstances, she grabs life as it is given to her and helps shape it. That fills her with happiness. She recognizes the source of her life in the absurd. It is not conformity or hope that leads to her happiness in an inexplicable world, but acceptance of her despair which leads to action ... responsible action!