

“Roberto Nanni”

by Filippo D'Angelo

from “L'Unità”, Italian national newspaper

Why a video interview with Derek Jarman?

“Because I wanted to make his voice public”.

Roberto Nanni, the author of *“Love Conquers All. Conversation with Derek Jarman”*, shot over four days last July in Rome, lays his cards on the table. Above all, his film, awarded by both the jury and the audience at the last Turin Film Festival, is an extraordinary documentary about a voice.

The deep, full voice, seemingly liberated from the body and returned to its physicality through a slight reverberation effect, yet equally highlighted by coughs and frequent laughter, belongs to a man who, facing the camera and microphone, weaves inexhaustible memories, opinions and feelings: the childhood in Italy and its films, HIV-positive and the love for painting, John Mayor and Bosnia, homosexuality and the Catholic Church (*“...a truly illiberal organization”*).

It's called a “conversation”, but in reality, only Jarman speaks. The author explains:

“I didn't want to interrupt the flow of his words, so in the editing, I reduced my interventions to a couple”.

But, of course, *“Love Conquers All. Conversation with Derek Jarman”* is also a film about a body.

Never shown in its entirety, rather dissected—an ear, a hand, the forehead, an eye—and rendered unrecognizable by continuous image manipulations or transformed into a set of points from overly close shots. In Nanni's scope there is the sclerotic model of the television interview, “News” style, too flat to be able to communicate reality.

And instead here, although elusive, the body of the author of *Caravaggio* acquires authenticity and concreteness, because to see better it is necessary to create obstacles to the eye, confuse the outlines of things, or even lose sight, like Jarman himself in the last months of his life.

The thirty-four-year-old Bolognese filmmaker, active for fifteen years in music and research video, reveals this profound creative affinity he shares with Jarman, in what he defines as:

“An experimentation never for its own sake, always tied to a very strong and precise content, capable of escaping the ghetto of incommunicability to confront the narrative dimension”.

And Jarman's taste for stylistic contamination refers to the mixture of technical supports (16 mm, Super 8 mm, Video, analogue and digital sound: all transferred to Betacam).

Because one of his teachings, in addition to the idea of cinema as a team work, is undoubtedly his flexibility, the ability to work with any tools, always going forward and in any case, without being influenced by economic difficulties.

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Because one of his teachings, besides the idea of cinema as teamwork, is undoubtedly his flexibility, the ability to work with any means, always pushing forward regardless of economic difficulties.

Beyond this, it's beautiful and moving to hear a man speaking without shame, with levety and irony, talking about the virus that would kill him in a few months or about Italy immediately after the war, where at five years old, accompanying his father, a senior officer in the British army, he was among the judges of Kappler (Nazist war criminal, ed.) and he came to live, first in Salò and then in Rome in 1947, “...populated only by priests on bicycles...” lodged in the requisitioned home of Ciano, “a Mussolini uncle... or perhaps his brother”. Sweet memories, these, full of sun and flowers, to contrast with the "horrible" image of England during the war.

But that childhood encounter with the atmosphere of fascism - Nanni suggests - certainly underlies his obsessive fear of power perceived as a tool of economic and sexual repression. The title of my film is inspired by a Caravaggio painting, "Amor Vittorioso," much loved by Jarman and cited at the beginning of "The Last of England".

But the reference is also to the barriers that he, as a man, has been able to overcome and to the battles he has been able to win, after all also the one against AIDS.

“Love Conquers All. Conversation with Derek Jarman” has already been sold in Germany (Zdf) and Canada.

Negotiations are underway with Channel 4, La Sept and with a Japanese distribution.

And in Italy?

Nothing for now.

Filippo D'Angelo

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