

THE SILENCE OF GREEN - a Requiem ?

Pictures of a medieval England



The Silence of Green (...) proposes an elegy, a requiem expressing the state of utter confusion of a disaster-stricken industry, making a political indictment in the form of a poetic essay. (...)

Andreas Horvath composes a veritable liturgy in memory of these animals and farmers who, without anyone realising it, were sacrificed on the altar of a planned economy.

- Bertrand Bacqué

How do you deal with a catastrophe like this? The question is inevitable for a filmmaker confronted with the slaughter of probably 6 to 9 million animals.

What struck me most when I arrived in North Yorkshire was the "medieval aspect". It was as if plunging into a world yet untouched by enlightenment: a brutal government had lost any sensibility in dealing with humans and animals. This and the fact that the atrocities hardly got reported, turned responsible citizens into powerless victims, individual farmers into a uniform praying community. Almost like a medieval group of anonymous church-goers locals were seeking answers in conspiracy theories and comfort in religious transfiguration.

North Yorkshire is not the end of the world. The area depicted in the film is less than an hour's drive from industrial centers like Manchester or Leeds. Yet, coming to North Yorkshire in May 2001 was like entering a different world at a different time.

Precisely this anachronism is the main concern of the film. For almost a year the English countryside had been a world turned upside down. THE SILENCE OF GREEN tries to recapture the dark and irrational atmosphere which predominated (if not partly caused) this period.

What is a suitable form for an account of such a turmoil? THE SILENCE OF GREEN is a documentary, but the style is clearly impressionistic, not - as is common in the documentary genre - naturalistic. The film tries to *recreate* the irrational world it is talking about, rather than *describing* it.

- Andreas Horvath