



HE NAMED ME MALALA (1:28, 2015)

The story of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai. As a young girl Malala begins sharing with a reporter the story of how the Taliban is taking away freedoms, bit by bit. Eventually, she becomes more vocal in her city about girls' receiving an education, a belief and position that places her on a collision course with the Taliban.

Peter Bradshaw (5 Nov 2015, The Guardian):

The "he" of the title is Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Pakistan's teenage Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai. He named her after the Afghan folk heroine Malalai—a Joan of Arc figure who rallied Pash-tun fighters against the British in 1880. So perhaps defiance was her birthright.

Part of the many pleasures of Davis Guggenheim's outstanding documentary tribute is the light it casts on her relationship with her father, as well as on the nuances of history, on the British, on the question of who the oppressors are now. Moral courage and moral heroism are rare enough, but Malala Yousafzai's story is especially moving. As a 15-year-old in northwest Pakistan's Swat Valley, she had been a precocious campaigner for the right of girls to be educated; the grotesque bullies of the Taliban boarded her school bus and shot her in the head—grown men with guns against unarmed schoolgirls. She survived, was airlifted to the UK with her family where, after a number of operations, she made a remarkable recovery, mastered English, and continued her staggeringly ambitious, now global campaign. She is as yet only 18.

The film is incidentally valuable in showing that her campaigning identity did not begin with being shot, like some comic-book superheroine. What will she not achieve? She has the natural leadership and presence of a young Aung Sun Suu Kyi; I found myself thinking of Samira Makhmalbaf's 2003 film *At Five in the Afternoon*, about a young woman's plan to be president of Afghanistan. Here is someone who has taken a bullet for values that she believes in. No squeamish cultural relativism: women's education is a must in Muslim countries, non-Muslim countries, everywhere, non-negotiable. Guggenheim's film is inspiring.

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