



Il Sole Dentro

The Bright Light

Synopsis

It's the story of a long journey, the one of Yaguine and Fodè, two Guinean teenagers who have written on behalf of all children and young Africans a letter addressed "To their Excellencies the members and leaders of Europe". In the letter the two guys are asking for help for schools, food, health care, "... as your children that you love like life ...". With the letter in his pocket, Yaguine and Fodè hide in the truck compartment of a plane to Brussels, so begins their remarkable journey of hope. This travel cross with the story of another trip, this time from Europe to Africa, which occurred ten years later, made by two other teenagers and a balloon.

Directed by: Paolo Bianchini

Cast: Angela Finocchiaro, Francesco Salvi, Diego Bianchi, Gaetano Fresa, Fallou Cama

Country: Italy

Running time: 100'

Year: 2012

Genre: Drama



Film Analysis



One of the most prominent characteristics of “Il Sole Dentro,” and one that makes this film an important educational tool, is the fact that it offers many topics for debates, conveying key messages and values, but primarily entertaining and captivating the children. During a screening at the Giffoni Festival (in July 2012), one of the most prestigious children’s festivals in the world, with an audience of 830 spectators aged 10-13, it was possible to see that the children were never bored while watching it. In fact, they followed the film with rapt attention, from start to finish. Following the screening, a discussion was moderated during which the children were able to debate animatedly and delve into the various issues raised by the film.

The film weaves together two different stories, whose connection is revealed only later in the story: this allows the filmmakers to maintain a constant dramatic tension and keep audiences captivated with a

sustained suspenseful thread.

Both stories are treated delicately and sensibly, without ever falling back on trite clichés. The presence of brilliant actors like Angela Finocchiaro, Giobbe Covatta, Francesco Salvi and Diego Bianchi ensures that the film flows pleasantly, alternating pensive instances with moments of pure, unmitigated fun. The directing style is streamlined, with no needless frills and mannerisms. It centers on the stories, the places where the film was shot (Puglia – Tunisian desert – Guinea Konakry) and on the actors’ voices, particularly the four main kids, who were directed with sensitivity and majesty by Paolo Bianchini, whose tireless work with children and their rights was instrumental in his nomination as UNICEF ambassador.

Through the film’s images, viewers can discover endless swaths of the Sahara desert and enter into the homes of Yaguine and Fodè and meet their real parents. The film’s ending, despite the tragic death of Yaguine and Fodè, leaves a message of hope for the future, a feeling that there is a chance to change things and a feeling of joy and serenity that stays with the viewer for a long time.



Themes

The themes and the starting points for discussions offered by the film are the following:

- The journey as a discovery of the self and others
- The rights and opportunities available to children and adolescents to live in a “better world”
- Friendship as a way to overcome barriers and differences
- Africa and the problems faced by African children
- The differences and similarities between Italian and African children
- Reasons to emigrate and difficulties in emigrating
- Education and hard work as tools to improve your country and your existence
- Soccer and sports as means to come together, grow and help each other



Recommended Ages

The narrative simplicity, the total absence of violent images or images that could upset children, the power and universality of the topics discussed and the discussion points make the film suitable for children of all ages.



Topics for Reflection

- 1) What does the title “The sun inside” refer to?
- 2) What led Yaguinè and Fodè to write their letter to the European Parliament and what is the status of African children?
- 3) Where is Guinea and what is its history and its socio-political situation?
- 4) The film shows Yaguine and Fodè’s real parents and their homes. What topics of discussion arise when watching the faces of the parents and their humble homes? How different are they from our lives?
- 5) In their letter, Yaguine and Fodè ask if they can study. What is the value of study and culture? What does it mean for a country to be culturally backwards?
- 6) Rocco and Thabo leave from Bari and reach central Africa on foot through the desert. What is their route?
- 7) In the desert Rocco and Thabo meet various people: the radio talk show host, the nomad, the migrants, Padre X. What do they represent?
- 8) The figure of Padre X is enigmatic and mysterious. What is the value and symbolism of the kites that he flies in the sky?
- 9) Chiara, played by Angela Finocchiaro, is a woman who decided to abandon the comfort of her life to move to Africa and coach a small soccer team. What are the reasons for her choice? Did leaving behind many material possessions make her more happy or unhappy?
- 10) The consul, played by Diego Bianchi, is a fun and enjoyable character. What is his role in the film?
- 11) Many Italians like Chiara, the consul, and the UNICEF representative, are working abroad on humanitarian or diplomatic missions. What are their roles and activities?



- 12) What led Thabo and his family to make him leave with the alleged attorney? What hopes and dreams did they have for the future? What is the trade of baby soccer players? What other forms of exploitation exist in poorer countries? (baby soldiers, etc.).



The Letter from Yaguine and Fode



Donc si vous voyez que nous nous sacrifions et que nous perdons notre vie, c'est parce qu'on souffre trop en Afrique et qu'on a besoin de vous à lutter contre la pauvreté et mettre fin la guerre en Afrique. Néanmoins nous voulons étudier, et nous vous demandons de nous aider à étudier pour être comme vous en Afrique.

Enfin : nous vous en supplions de nous écouter très très fort d'oser vous écrire cette lettre en tant que nous, les grands personnages que nous devons beaucoup de respect. Et n'oubliez pas que c'est à vous nous devons pardonner la faiblesse de notre force en Afrique. :-

Écrit par deux enfants guinéens
Yaguine Koïta et Fodé Tounkara.

Original letter from Yaguine and Fode

To Your Excellencies the European members and leaders.

We have the honour, the pleasure and the great trust of writing to you this letter to talk to you about our journey and the suffering of us children and adolescents of Africa.

But first of all, we present to you our most exquisite and respectful greetings, because you are our support and our help. Please support us in Africa, you are the ones we must turn to for help; we implore you for the love of your beautiful continent, for the feeling towards your peoples, your families and especially for the love towards your children whom you love as much as life itself...

Dear members and leaders of Europe, we invoke your solidarity and kindness in asking for help for Africa.

Help us, we are suffering enormously in Africa. Help us, we have problems and children have no rights... we Africans, and especially we the African children and youth, ask you to create a great organization useful for Africa, so that it can progress. If you see that we sacrifice ourselves and risk our lives, it's because we are suffering too much in Africa and we need you to fight poverty and put an end to war in Africa. In spite of this we want to study, we ask you to help us and study in order to be like you...

Finally, we beg you to forgive us for daring to write to you this letter, since you are adults to whom we owe much respect...

Yaguine and Fodè, two Guinean children.

