

"I bambini Sanno" (Children Know) at NYU

Gero Salamone (June 09, 2015)



“Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them”. This is how “Children know” begins, with the lines from Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince*. The documentary by Walter Veltroni was presented in New York on Wednesday June 3rd at NYU’s Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò.

The lights in the room suddenly turn off as an introspective but also entertaining documentary, starring children ages eight to thirteen getting interviewed by the author, [Walter Veltroni](#) [2], on specific themes such as: love, religion, life, homosexuality. Thirty-nine children chosen from all over Italy, coming from diverse social backgrounds.

The audience’s silence is regularly broken by smiles and applause as a giant screen projects the faces of these children and their statements on how today’s world is perceived through their eyes, with simplicity and typical elements of surprise.

It could be that the author, the multifaceted Walter Veltroni, is himself trying to find answers to the more complex questions of life, because it’s from the simple answers of children that great teachings



can be drawn for adults, who are often too caught up in observing them to really pay attention to what they say.

The complexity of existential themes that melt like snow in the sun when exposed the simple thought process of these children from all over Italy, whose different social backgrounds bring forth different opinions. Diversity is therefore understood by the author as a starting point for the construction of a better society. Everyone has their own story, their own take on the world.

All these are questions that were deconstructed at the end of the projection of the documentary in a debate with the author, with Professor Stefano Albertini (NYU), and with [Antonio Monda](#) [3] (Director of the Rome Film Festival).

On such an occasion, Walter Veltroni had the opportunity to explain how the documentary was born to give a voice to children at an existential stage in life, between ages eight and thirteen, at which it's important to know their thoughts on the important things in life. It's at that stage of life, the author continues, that people's characters take shape, influenced by any external factor; in that short period of time children ask themselves seemingly simple but actually complex questions, through which it's also possible to describe the country's social complexity.

The thoughts of children, not as mere "flatus vocis", but as essential views and perspectives on themes that contribute to the construction of our society: to understand what we were and what we will be.

The documentary "Children know" ("I bambini sanno"), produced by [Sky](#) [4] and distributed by [BIM](#) [5], came out on April 23rd in all theatres, ranking 15th in its category.

A great result, rewarding the author's versatility, and serving as a great follow-up to his last documentary titled "[Quando c'era Berlinguer](#) [6]" (When there was Berlinguer), in which he told the political story of the then leader of the communist party Enrico Berlinguer.

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Links

[1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/veltronibambinisanno1433946084.jpg>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Veltroni

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Monda

[4] <http://www.sky.com/>

[5] <http://www.bimfilm.com/>

[6] <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3607688/>