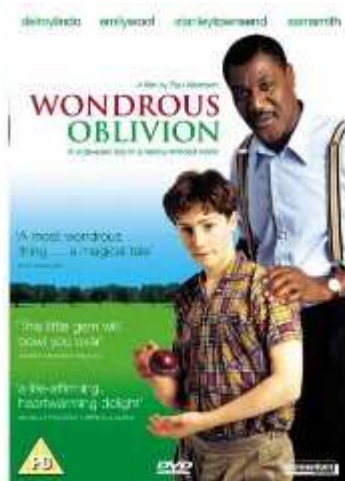


Wondrous Oblivion



Artistic File

Sam Smith – David Wiseman
Delroy Lindo- Dennis Samuels
Emily Woof- Ruth Wiseman
Stanley Townsend – Victor Wiseman
Angela Winter – Grace Samuels
Leonne Elliott – Judy Samuels
Naomi Simpson – Dorothy Samuels
Jo Stone-Fewings - Mr. Pugh
Gary McDonald – Garry Sobers

Technical File

Directed by	<u>Paul Morrison</u>
Produced by	<u>Jonny Persey</u>
Written by	Paul Morrison
Starring	<u>Sam Smith</u> <u>Delroy Lindo</u>
Distributed by	<u>Momentum Pictures</u>
Release date(s)	<u>2003</u>
Running time	106 min.
Country	<u>U.K.</u>

Germany

English

Language Hebrew

Sinopsis

Sam Smith stars as David Wiseman, a young Jewish boy in the London of the 1960's who dreams of becoming a great cricket player even though he has been rejected by his coach so far for being the worst player in the school. His parents, a Jewish family emigrated from Germany, struggle to find a place of their own in the prejudiced working-class neighbourhood in which they live. Their neighbours will become more friendly to them when The Samuels, a Jamaican family, move in next door. David is astonished and delighted when he observes his new neighbours have installed a cricket pitch in their backyard. Soon, and against his worried parents' gaze, David starts to spend a lot of time with Dennis Samuels and his daughter Judy and is able, thanks to them, to improve his cricket notoriously. At the same time Ruth, his mother, gradually starts a friendship with Dennis, while the rest of the neighbours become increasingly hostile. In all this process, David grows up and learns many things about the others around him and about himself.



The director

Paul Morrison was born in London in 1944. He has a long career as director, producer and scriptwriter both in films and TV. He also works as a psychotherapist. He has directed mainly documentaries in which he has dealt repeatedly with the issues of racism, specifically the Jewish experience in the UK, art and sexuality. His film about racism for young people *Divide and Rule-Never!* won the first award in the Oberhausen cinema festival. His film *Solomon and Gaenor* was nominated for the non-English Oscar award in 2000 and won the BAFTA to the best film in 2001. In this film he deals with the racial tension in a Welsh village through the love story between a Jewish young man and a coal miner's daughter. In 2008 he directs *Little Ashes*, a film which explores the relationship between Lorca and Dalí.

Commentary

This film deals with the topic of racial conflict in a warm and optimistic way, taking us into a decade which, being somewhat far in time, lends the film the atmosphere of a tale, with stereotyped and quite simple characters that nevertheless have the quality of seeming close and credible; the situations are predictable and develop into a sweetened happy ending but all this works nicely as an approach to the conflict through the eyes of a child. It allows us to see how the young boy learns and grows up and leads us by the hand in a process that can be well understood by the younger ones. The conflict, the discrimination, the injustice are obviously depicted and are easily identifiable. For this reason, the film seems to offer a good opportunity to expose the students to an initial approach to the cultural and racial conflicts which come up in a multicultural society even though the situations that make up our students' reality are different and it should

be our task to make them aware of the similarities with what they are able to observe or suffer in their surroundings.

Wondrous Oblivion

Pedagogical proposals

A) Proposals of research on the context

This activity could be carried out in the areas of Language/ Social Studies/Religion/Civic Education.

After the viewing of the film the class is divided in groups. Each group will carry out a research work on one of these topics and then will expose it to the rest of the class. The exposition may be helped by the use of visual aids such as posters, power point presentations, etc.

Cricket

- What is cricket?
 - Rules
 - Equipment
 - Countries or cultures in which it is practised
- Think of other sports that are played in your country. Where do they come from? Who practises them?

History. Historical background (There will be a group for each family)

- The Wisemans are Jews coming from Germany
 - Why are they in UK?
 - What happened in Germany?
 - Cultural features of Jewish people
- The Samuels are a Jamaican family
 - Why are they in UK?
 - What is their story?
 - Jamaican cultural features
- What legacy have these cultures left in UK? What have they brought with them? (Music, culture, art, celebrations, etc)
- Think about other cultures different from our own that exist in your country. What have they brought? How have they enriched society?

Gypsies
Jews
Arabs
Latinamericans
Africans
Other

Religion. In the film we see examples of different religions.

- Which are they and what do you know about them?
- What religions exist in your country? What do you know about them?

B) David ´s process



Individual work of analysis and reflection after the viewing of the film. After this exercise, the students would be ready for a debate in small groups in which they would share their opinions and conclusions and later, with the whole group.

- a) Who is David? Think about:
 - Age
 - Religion
 - Situation
 - Interests
 - Conflicts:
 - ❖ Family
 - ❖ School
- b) Analyze David ´s birthday party scene (This scene would be viewed again to observe the details)
 - Why doesn ´t David let the girl come in?
 - Would you say it ´s discrimination? Why? What do you think are the

reasons?race, social status or for being a girl?

- How do you think she feels?
- How do the girl and her family react after this incident?
- How does David feel when he realices what he has done?
- What does he do to solve it?
- Think about a similar situation you have experienced or observed? How could it have been avoided? How could it be solved?

c) How does David change throughout the film?

What does he learn about:

- cricket
- people
- friendship
- feelings
- the society he lives in
- himself?

Give examples.

How do the things that happen make him change?

Compare David at the beginning of the film and at the end.What differences are there?

C) Racism and discrimination

Warm-up

- ❖ Before viewing. Look at these sentences that appear in the film. Observe who says them and in which situation.

	Who?	When?
<i>We don't mix</i>		
<i>I want to be in the team</i>		
<i>We're here to stay</i>		

What do they refer to? What do you learn from them?

❖ Analyze the scene of the fire



How does each of the characters react?

- a. How does David's father evolve? How does he behave at the beginning? How does he react after? What do you think makes him change? What do you think he considers? How does the fact of being Jewish influence his reaction? Does he feel insecure? Why?
- b. At the end we see the cricket net is installed again. Who has done it? Why?

D) Final Conclusions

This could be set as a written exercise for the students to hand to the teacher or as an oral exposition with a debate following.

- a) With which character do you identify more? Who do you understand better? Have you ever seen yourself in a similar situations as those described in the film?
- b) Do you think there are people or groups of people in your surroundings that could be going through situations of discrimination similar to those in the film? Which ones are they? Where do you stand in these situations? If you were one of the characters in the film, which one would represent where you stand better and why?
- c) Which character would you reject more being? Why?

Other activities

- The students are proposed to carry out a research project with interviews to members of their family or community who are or have been migrants and have them tell their experience. This could include a visit to an association or old people's home. These interviews could be recorded or told by the students with the aid of photos, documents, etc.
- Another proposal is to have the students move the action to present day Spain. What characters would we have? Races? Religions? Sport? What would be the ending?

Wondrous Oblivion

Look in this link:

www.filmajourneytohope.blogspot.com

Find:

a) Information about your school: How many students and teachers are there?

b) How many countries participate in the project?

Find the name of at least two schools and explain where they are

c) Go to the section: Films, then click on “Wondrous Oblivion”, then click on the British flag and see the activity the British students did with the DVD covers.

1. Read the student’s explanation why they decided to do this activity

2. Look in the back of the cover

a) What is PG?

b) How long does the film last?

c) What is the name of the director?

3. This is the original blurb on the back of the DVD cover:

Wondrous Oblivion is a touching, funny and uplifting coming-of-age drama about a young boy’s rite of passage and that wonderful moment in life when you discover that you’re good at something.

Set in 1960s England, it tells the story of a young and innocent David Wiseman, whose journey of discovery begins after a Jamaican family moves in next door. When the neighbours start to make life difficult for the new arrivals, David’s family is caught in the middle, and he has to choose between fitting in and standing up for the new friends who have turned up his world upside down.

4. Choose your favourite cover and explain why

5. With a partner design a cover and rewrite a blurb

Wondrous Oblivion

1. What type of film is it? a) thriller, b) comedy drama, c) animated, d) action

2. Where and when does it take place?

3. Main characters. Describe them (age, interests, occupation,...)
 - David
 - Judy
 - David's mum
 - Mr. Samuels
4. Both families are immigrants in the UK. Where are they from?
 - The Wisemans
 - The Samuels
5. What different religions do you see in the film?
6. How do the neighbours see them?
7. Who is your favourite character?
8. Which character don't you like?
9. Who says these sentences in the film ?
 - We don't mix*
 - I want to be in the team*
 - We're here to stay*

What do they mean by it?
10. Why doesn't David invite Judy to his birthday party? How does she feel?
11. Imagine this situation in Spain in the present: What nationality or religion would the characters be?
12. Do you think in the film we can see examples of:
 - Racism
 - Xenophobia
 - Sexual discrimination
 - intolerance
13. What's your opinion of the film?