

Graduate student responses to the documentary modes in *Justine*, and the ethical responsibility of the filmmaker

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Duration of video clip: 2 minutes and 47 seconds

I showed *Justine* to graduate students in the academic program I teach in that School of Media Studies at The New School. Some of my students are aspiring filmmakers, others are just interested in the documentary form and I found it was a very interesting discussion. The questions that arose had to do with the decision to have the family only included as spokespersons at the end, and a few people and in the beginning of the discussion wondered why they were there at all, because they so liked the observational camera and the single-minded focus on Justine in her environment. And others were really pleased to have them segregated, to have the opportunity to experience Justine without anybody as mediator apart from the camera, and then to meet the people in her life and to who they've seen already in the film but to have them speaking about their relationship and they very much liked that that both elements were there and that that the majority of the film consisted of this extraordinary invitation into Justine's life. I still don't know why it was that of all the films that I showed it was one of the most popular, and I showed some terrific films from around the globe. But I think it was very touching to young people in their early 20s who had a feeling for her and her life, whether they were siblings of of family members who also had challenges, not necessarily Justine's or because they identified with the problems of growing up, so I think there was a little bit of that, but certainly those who are thinking themselves about what their ethical responsibility is when they pick up a camera that it was inspiring to think that you could take that resolve in honour the subject in a way that allowed for two very different experiences of her to emerge in a film so we had a great discussion around the film.