

AMY

(2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2yCIwmNuLE

(What does the trailer tell you? Primitive spectator response)

COMPONENT 2: SECTION B
DOCUMENTARY FILM



AREAS FOR STUDY

- ◆ FILM FORM
- ◆ MEANING AND RESPONSE (INCLUDING REPRESENTATION)
- ◆ CONTEXTS
- ◆ CRITICAL DEBATES
- ◆ FILMMAKERS' THEORIES



Best scenes – you need close textual analysis

- ◆ Recording booth scene
- ◆ Addiction to crack cocaine
- ◆ Blake scene
- ◆ Dad/Mitch – camera crew scene/Jamaica
- ◆ Amy's 'death' scene

What worries me (only a bit) about the documentary section.....😊

- 🟢 It's only a 30 minute question for 20 marks so you have to get it right (as with other sections) but....Documentary is a different 'animal' – questions are not normally simply about film form
- 🟢 They can ask you to refer to Filmmaker Theories or the impact of Digital Technology for example but you do get a **choice of two questions** (see next slide for sample questions)
- 🟢 Other areas that could come up (not on the SAMS) can be on the whole idea of **documentary 'truth' and mediation** or the **impact of documentary form on the spectator**



Several narrative levels – innovative approach requiring almost a montage editing approach

- ◆ Stock archive footage (news sources)
- ◆ Unseen footage released by friends and family
- ◆ Use of still image (juxtaposition important with a lack of traditional narrative voice over)
- ◆ Captioned present day indirect interviews
- ◆ Footage of aerial shots (London locations)

Example Questions: 30 min, 20 mark question

“Documentaries are unreliable narrators of past events”. Discuss this in relation to examples from the documentary film you have studied.

“The power of a documentary film relies on techniques that make it feel as real and as truthful as possible”. Discuss this in relation to examples from the documentary film you have studied,

Apply one filmmaker’s theory of documentary you have studied to your chosen documentary. How does it increase your understanding of the film?

With reference to the film you have studied, how far can different kinds of documentaries offer different kinds of spectator experience?

What is the impact of digital technology on the documentary genre?

Eduqas prescribed filmmakers' theory 1

- ◆ **KIM LONGINOTTO** – works well with Amy: links to watching a fiction film (Kapadia true fiction technique). Finding characters you identify with
- ◆ Her films highlight female victims of oppression and have female central protagonists
- ◆ No traditional narrative voice over reinforces a fiction film tradition

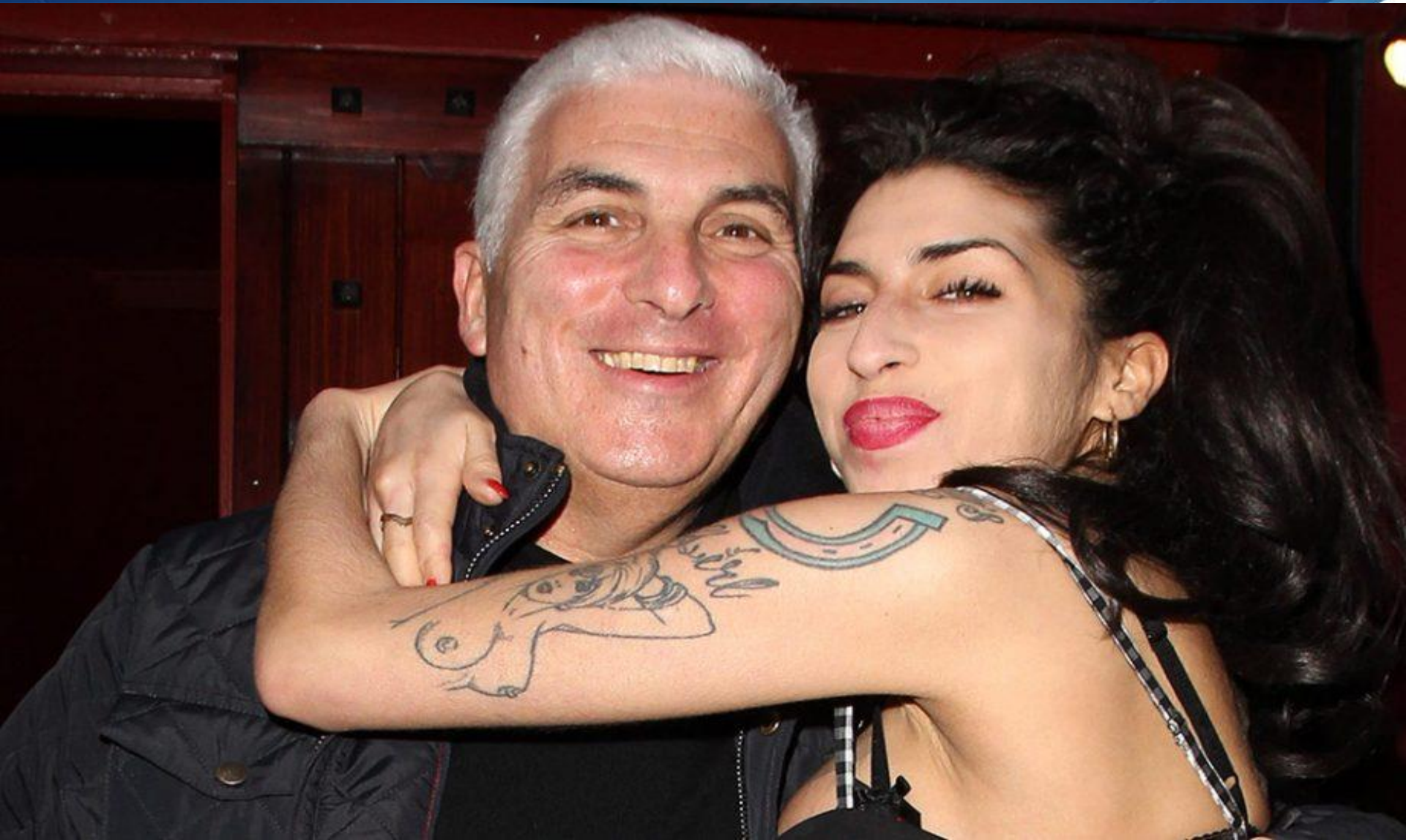
Music icon – Amy Winehouse is represented in diverse ways in the documentary but also framed as a victim (see Longinotto)



Eduqas prescribed filmmakers' theory 2

- ◆ **PETER WATKINS** - again can be applied to Amy: both he and Kapadia stylistically broke new ground in the form, Watkins challenging notions of mainstream documentary with docudrama
- ◆ Pioneer of docu-drama (think Kapadia's 'true fiction')
- ◆ Interested in interaction, the media and the role of the spectator

Emotive representations – Daddy's girl



Other Filmmaker Theories 1 – John Grierson

“The creative treatment of actuality” as a starting point – promoting a set of values linked the heroism of ordinary people. Socially focused documentary, often as ideological propaganda e.g. *Nightmail* (1936) or *Housing Problems* (1935) or *Churchill’s Island* (1941) produced by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

Other Filmmaker Theories 2 – D.A. Pennebaker

- ◆ Pioneer of Direct Cinema movement (linking with Cinema Verite, influenced by Kino-Eye). A movement which used early portable lightweight hand held cameras to record ‘documentary truth’, often without narrative voice over and without leading the audience into a preferred reading through POV and mediation. Direct cinema questioned cinema and realism (linking with the role of the spectator to be ‘entertained’ in a cinema). Key text: *Primary* (1960) and *Don’t Look Back* (1965)

Conventional documentary genre tropes

Which one's apply to Amy?

- ◆ Hand held camera – realism and ‘truth’
- ◆ Narrative voice over – preferred readings
- ◆ Intercutting with archive footage – non linear. Investigative narrative building a picture. Vox pops and interviews, use of conflict
- ◆ POV, mediation and subjectivity - exploration of themes and issues
- ◆ Informing, educating and entertaining the audience – voyeurism
- ◆ Use of hyper real stereotyping – audience identification

Bill Nichols – which ones apply to Amy?

1. **Poetic** – subjective, biased emotive tone or mood created e.g. non linear archive footage, juxtaposition....
2. **Expository** – authoritative (voice over), POV speaking directly to audience, preferred readings linked with poetic
3. **Participatory** – filmmaker involvement as protagonist
4. **Observational** – uninterrupted hand held e.g. Direct Cinema/Cinema Verite. More documentary objectivity
5. **Reflexive** – shows mechanisms of doc. making
6. **Performative** – personal view, ‘take-over’ of the lens. Key difference to participatory, POV is crucial to the doc. maker

Arguable Amy poetic and performative

A HEART-BREAKING

JOURNEY

A GROUND-BREAKING

MOTION PICTURE

GET TICKETS



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

NOW PLAYING

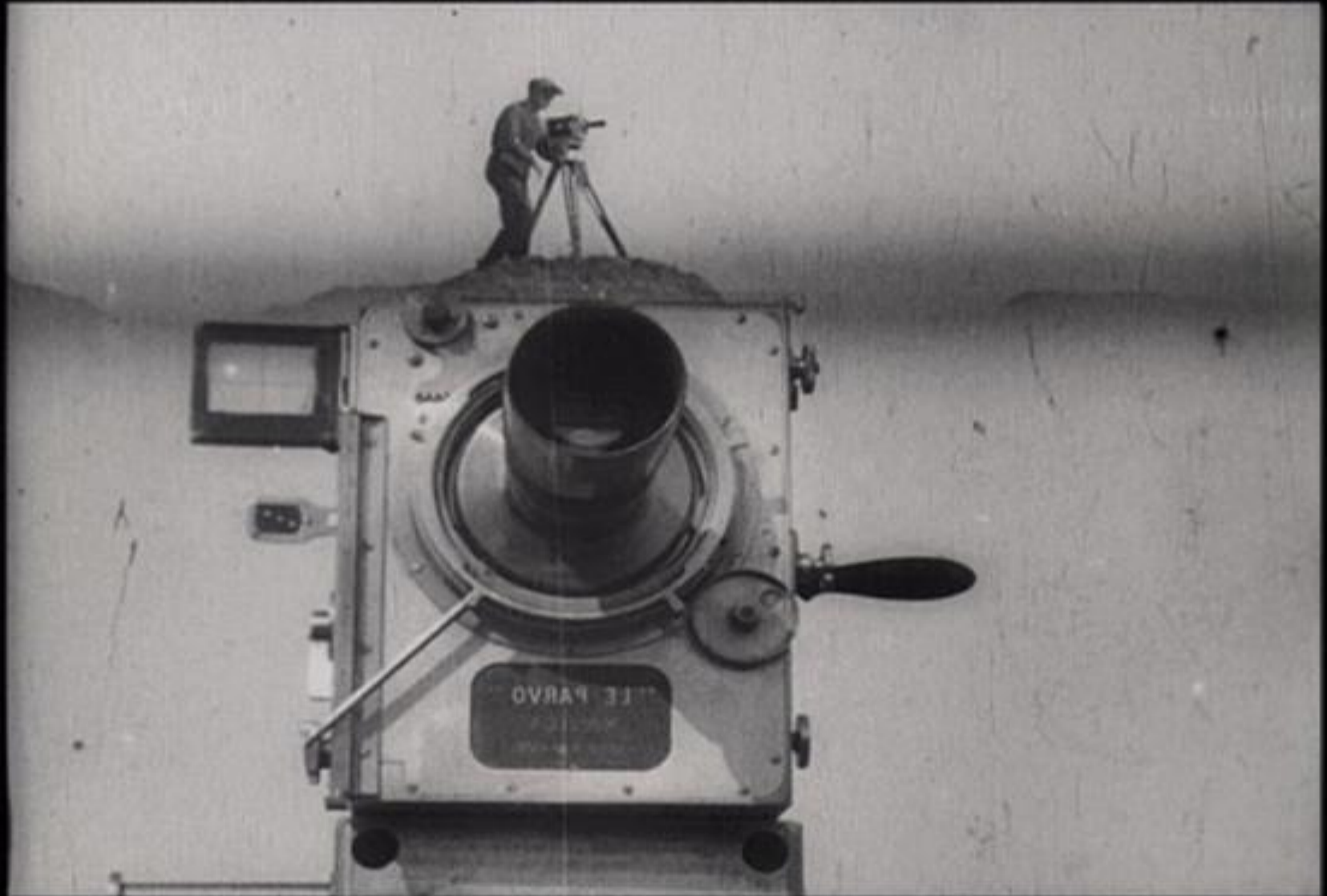
AMY

ENTER

AN A24 RELEASE GLOBE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS AN ON THE CORNER FILM 'AMY' DIRECTED BY ASH KAPRODIA PRODUCED BY JAMES GAY-REES
EDITED BY CHRIS KING ARCHIVE PRODUCER PAUL BELL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID JOSEPH ADAM GARDNER PRODUCED BY GEORGE PANKI ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ANTONIO PINTO
R FOR LANGUAGE AND SOME DRUG USE
ON THE CORNER Globe amy-movie.com @amythemovie A24



Not reflexive like MWAMC



Not like Broomfield



Not like Theroux



CULTURAL CONTEXT

- ◆ BRITISH DOC. CO-PRODUCED BY FILM4 WITH UNIVERSAL MUSIC
- ◆ LOW PRODUCTION VALUES (£2.5M) BUT A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS
- ◆ DIRECTED BY ASI KAPADIA (SENNA/W. TITLE)
- ◆ DISTRIBUTED BY INDIE A24 & ALTITUDE
- ◆ SYNERGY – UNRELEASED/EXISTING MUSIC

CRITICAL SUCCESS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0rJ4JxH1NA> -

Kapadia on preferred readings



BAFTA

BLU-RAY™ + DIGITAL HD

“A MASTERPIECE”

– GQ

**“A REMARKABLE
DOCUMENTARY**

ABOUT AMY WINEHOUSE'S
TRAGICALLY SHORT LIFE”

– VANITY FAIR

**“AN EXTRAORDINARY,
POWERFUL WORK”**

– INDIEWIRE

**“A RUSH OF JOY
AND GRIEF.”**

– VILLAGE VOICE

**“A STAR IS BORN—
ALL OVER AGAIN”**

– THE GUARDIAN

AMY

AMY

SONY
A24
LIONSGATE

FILM FORM AND NARRATIVE 1

- ◆ BASED ON ARCHIVE FOOTAGE AND 100 EDITED INTERVIEWS
- ◆ LINEAR WITH FLASHBACK AS 'NARRATIVE JOURNEY' - *TEENAGE WANNABE TO POP STAR TO DRUG TAKER TO MUSIC ICON*
- ◆ SPECTATOR INTERACTION WITH AMY - 'POSITIONED' USING EMOTIVE REPRESENTATIONS E.G. DAD'S 7 YR. AFFAIR, WALKING OUT WHEN AMY WAS 9 SCENE



FILM FORM AND NARRATIVE 2

- ◆ NO NARRATIVE VOICE OVER
(CHALLENGING DOC. CONVENTION) – USE
OF CAPTIONS POSITION THE SPECTATOR
- ◆ ARGUMENT – CHALLENGES ‘VOICE OF GOD’
EXPOSITORY BILL NICHOLS’ DEFINITION
- ◆ USE OF STILL IMAGES WITH STOCK NEWS
FOOTAGE, UNSEEN AND INTERVIEWS
CREATE A MONTAGE EDITING EFFECT

MEANING AND RESPONSE/CRITICAL DEBATES 1

- ◆ DOCUMENTARY SUBJECTIVITY – NEGATIVE, MEDIATED REPRESENTATION OF MITCH (GAVE PERMISSION BUT OBJECTED TO FILM)
- ◆ KAPADIA DENIES AGENDA – “THERE IS NOTHING THERE (IN THE FILM) THAT ISN’T IN HER LYRICS”
- ◆ OTHER CRITICISM – SPECTATOR VOYEURISM (‘ANOTHER ICON WHO DIED YOUNG’ – PRINCE FILM BEING PLANNED.....)

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE



MEANING AND RESPONSE/CRITICAL DEBATES 2

- ◆ INTERVIEWS SUGGEST EARLY PATRIARCHAL CONTROL BY MITCH – AMY SEEKING APPROVAL FROM HIM (SEE REHAB LYRICS)
- ◆ KAPADIA SUBJECTIVE EPISTEMOLOGIES (WAYS OF TELLING STORIES)
- ◆ SELECTION OF INTERVIEWS AND NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION CRUCIAL TO PRODUCTION OF MEANING E.G. MITCH TURNING UP IN JAMAICA WITH A REALITY TV CREW

SPECTATOR CHALLENGED WITH A RANGE OF RERRESENTATIONS



INCLUDING BEING ASKED TO HAVE AN OPINION

