

CLANDESTINE CHILDHOOD

Discussion Guide

1. CLANDESTINE CHILDHOOD could be called a coming-of-age film. The movie centers on Juan/Ernesto's story, his relationship with his parents, with his peers, etc. And yet, unlike other coming-of-age films, CLANDESTINE CHILDHOOD has strongly political settings and themes. Director Benjamín Ávila describes this balance: "I wanted to draw upon my childhood memories to make a film about first love taking place during the last military dictatorship of Argentina." Discuss how he uses this political backdrop, while emphasizing the humanistic aspects of his tale.
2. One of the defining stylistic features of CLANDESTINE CHILDHOOD is its usage of animation/illustration. What role does this play in the film, practically or symbolically? How is our experience or understanding of the events of the film changed by these interjections?
3. We are shown real-life family photos over the end credits, from the director's personal experience growing up in Argentina during the Dirty War. Do you see the film differently knowing that it is something of a memoir?
4. Benjamín Ávila said, in his director's statement, that he "wanted to talk about militancy at that time, an unknown universe for many, where fear ran alongside joy, love and passion." Juan/Ernesto's family members are militants, fighting for a cause they believe is just and necessary. Discuss your ethical understanding of the idea of raising a child in this context.