his own theatres as well. But, in spite of films have been able to reconcile commercial and artistic aspirations. Like the full potential remains untapped.

J. Paul Costabile


Egoyan uses it very effectively with bona fide experimental filmmaking techniques is obvious. At times Open House is too subjective reality. Sub­ jective reality fascinates Egoyan and it forms the core for this film. The young couple, apart, spin different tales of what each other does for a living. Frank hides under a half dozen facades; and the owners of the house are convinced their home used to be a castle. The audience is never told what is real and what is imagined reality. That is the beauty and the flaw of Open House. In his attempt to subdue Egoyan almost loses his audience. In fact, at the critical moment he will lose an attentive audience. The justification for Frank's peculiar behaviour and incompetence is on the screen, but if you are not paying attention you will miss it. Being too obscure is as inexcusable as being too obvious. At times Open House is too obscure.

Combining linear narrative plotting with experimental filmmaking techniques is a dangerous game. As a director, being an experimental filmmaker, at any moment you may slip off. Atom Egoyan's short film Open House is on that tightrope, and the only reason it does not fall into the abyss is due solely to Egoyan's maturing as a filmmaker. The tightrope almost gets the better of Egoyan on many occasions, but his con­ tinued optimism with experimentalism is logical for the story he wishes to tell. His use of highly stylized camera work is boma fide experimental cinema, but Egoyan uses it very effectively to give the audience some much-needed information. The story he tells is paper thin, and like Egoyan's most recent 16 mm shorts Flawed After Grad with Dad and the obscure Pepponchow, the unspoken, unseen motivations of his characters are everywhere. Frank (Ross Fraser), a seemingly incompetent real estate agent, is taking a young married couple (Michael and Maureen, played by Michael Mar­ shall and Sharon Cavanaugh) to see a dilapidated home in downtown Toronto. It is obvious from the beginning that Frank is not going to sell the house, and at the end he does not.

This short story is not what concerns Egoyan. He uses this framework to drape a cast of characters who not only cannot communicate with one another, but there is aggression and hostility hidden just below the surface of each conversation. Open hostility is revealed only once when a man (played by Bruce Bell in a funny/scary cameo) chastises Frank for almost running him over. "You know why you're a stranger?" the man yells through Frank's car window. "It's because you're strange."

A theme Egoyan has used ineffectually before, but is picked up ingeniously in Open House, is subjective reality. Subjective reality fascinates Egoyan and it forms the core for this film. The young couple, apart, spin different tales of what each other does for a living. Frank hides under a half dozen facades; and the owners of the house are convinced their home used to be a castle. The audience is never told what is real and what is imagined reality. That is the beauty and the flaw of Open House. In his attempt to subdue Egoyan almost loses his audience. In fact, at the critical moment he will lose an attentive audience. The justification for Frank's peculiar behaviour and incompetence is on the screen, but if you are not paying attention you will miss it. Being too obscure is as inexcusable as being too obvious. At times Open House is too obscure.

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