

SHORT FILM REVIEWS

quicken... bringing to life... Or call it love: not love of man or woman or home or country or any material thing, but love without an object... intransitive love." A full understanding of Milne's words and

works cannot be acquired from an hour-long film. But *A Path of his Own* serves as a valuable introduction — perhaps the most a cinematic study of art can hope to do.

Gerry Flahive



Fine and Mann's larger-than-life characters playing poker in *The Only Game In Town* — certainly the only one with Plasticine puppets

Only Game In Town

p. sc, d, ed. David Fine, Ron Mann voice artists Izzy Manhiem, David Fine, Bob Lord, Joe Frost, col. 16mm, running time 7 1/2 min., dist. International Telefilm.

The Only Game in Town, by two young Toronto filmmakers, Ron Mann and David Fine, is an animated short featuring four Plasticine puppets engaged in a game of poker.

The story pits Michael, a bored, reluctant young card player, against three veteran poker players who want him to "join the club," and learn some of the unspoken rules of the game — how to cheat at poker and get away with it.

One of the veterans is Michael's father, and the card game quickly turns into a metaphor about the struggle between the generations.

Michael, who complains he is always losing, is advised to keep playing and get more experience. "Just look at us," admonishes one of the veterans. "We've worked damn hard to get where we are. We're mighty proud of it. You can't come here and expect to win just like that."

After one particular round, the owner

of the deck of cards is declared the winner even though Michael has the best hand. "It doesn't matter," he is told. "It's his deck."

When Michael declares that what he really wants to play is "Fish," one of his father's pals sneers. "Your son wants to be a bum."

Finally, after hearing about the need to respect "the foundations that this country was built on" (namely, poker), Michael walks out. The veterans pause briefly — "The kid's throwing his life away," says one — then resume their game.

Although the seven-and-a-half-minute format doesn't allow much time for character development, and consequently the characterization is somewhat flat and stereotyped, the arguments are clear and succinct. The tight script is a pleasure to follow.

And the quality of the Plasticine puppet animation is especially impressive, their gestures and movements aptly and subtly caricatured — a barely perceptible nod of the head, or a raised Plasticine eyebrow conveying volumes about the relationships portrayed in this thoroughly enjoyable little film. One looks forward to seeing more of David Fine's and Ron Mann's future work.

Jaan Pill

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