

Everyone is a critic

by Shelley Galliah

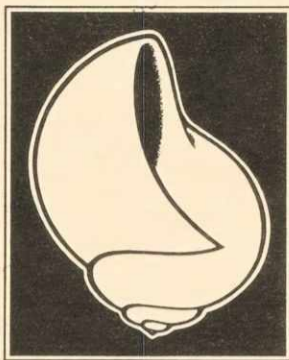
The 1988 Atlantic Film Festival concluded its program with a workshop celebrating film critics. Five critics, including Halifax's Lindsay Brown of the Daily News and Jay Scott of the Toronto Globe and Mail, formed the panel. They discussed their jobs, Canadian film, and the national entertainment media.

The function of the critic was questioned, and all the panelists agreed that the critic mediates between the art form and the public. However, Brown commented that in a decade of reviewing movies, she has observed the critique "overused, as a device to display wit and accuracy; and

underused, in providing only plot synopses."

The panel admitted that there exists a difference in attitude between Canadian and American film critics. They said the Canadian position is self-conscious, born of a Canadian market glutted with American culture. They pointed out that the national product — often the marginal, underground art film — is an endangered species in a greatly underrated industry. They said this means critics must be constantly aware of their power to make or break an emerging Canadian film.

The restrictions imposed on the critic were also considered at the workshop. According to the panel, the entertainment field greets expertise suspiciously. In the film critic, the public simultaneously wants a person of knowledge and a person on the



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street. The public wants to respect the critic's evaluation but identify and accept its own views as well. This is almost impossible to accomplish.

It was also decided that critics still possess the right to their own opinion; a critic should not be too lenient in reviewing a film. The final product is judged and it is irrelevant to speculate what the film could have been. Similarly, although the audience's reaction to the film may be an indication of its commercial success, it does not alter the work's technical evaluation. Despite all, a critic's evaluation is still her or his own.

NSCAD's heyday put on film

by Edward Fobes

Sketchy and cheeky documentaries are a rarity in the Atlantic film scene. This is what everyone saw on October 12 after filing into Wormwoods Dog and Monkey Cinema for *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art* by filmmaker Bill MacGillivray.

An arty and conceptual film about the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), it consisted of sarcastic little snippets of interviews with college alumni and other interested parties. These served to create a tongue-in-cheek atmosphere and gave the viewer a dispassionate view of the school. The wistful bitterness of

the interview subjects created the impression that the school, once the world's trend setter, is now very much a declining power.

Examples of students' work during the school's heyday in the mid-seventies were strategically thrown in. Some were interesting and provocative; others were a bit too conceptual for the layman.

Personally, I was left confused by the end of the film as to what the director was really trying to accomplish. It was only hours afterward when I broke into peals of laughter at the truly biting sarcastic humour that was the film's triumph.

Dear Brutus ...

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their ways back to Lob's house and realize that even after having been given a second chance, most of them have failed to achieve their dreams. Worse yet, they realize that their own flaws, and not fate, are responsible for their unhappiness.

Through this play, Barrie manages to make a more concrete statement about the human con-

dition than many philosophers accomplish in a lifetime of intricate hair-splitting. Lob is the catalyst, the guests pathetic pawns, and the enchanted wood the device of disillusionment.

In the past, *Dear Brutus* has been an exhilarating theatrical experience. Its strength lies in the fact that the audience enters the wood along with the protagonists; hence the characters' disillusionment is felt as much by the audience as by the characters themselves.

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