

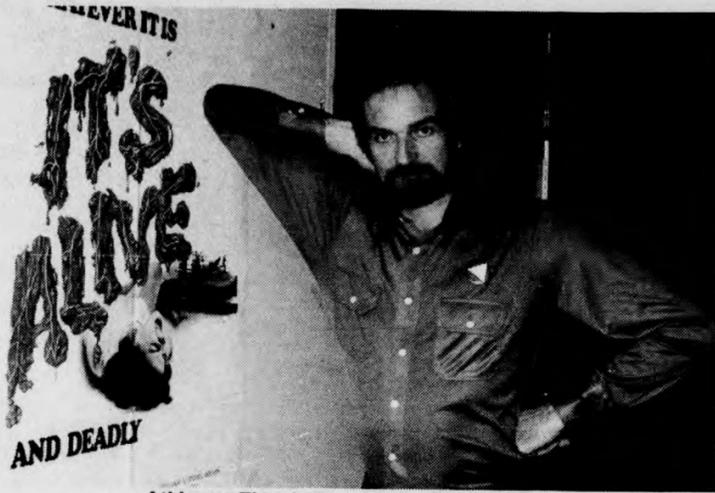
# Film prof Robin Wood: horror films

Story & Photo  
By Lydia Pawlenko

Robin Wood insists that we can no longer be content with talking about film as a beautiful work of art. He has argued that a work of art is not an object for display in a museum case, but an object for use.

A renowned film critic, professor, and also Chairman of Fine Arts at Atkinson College, Robin Wood is an extraordinary man. His bright red office is adorned with select horror film posters of *It's Alive*. A gay lib button is proudly worn on his bright red shirt. He uses care in choosing words. It is frustrating to answer questions in a few sentences. There is so much more he has to say.

"I am interested in examining popular cinema both to look for



Atkinson Fine Arts chairman Robin Wood

artistically significant work, and to study social and cultural trends, particularly in horror films, which seems to be important in the seventies," he explains.

Numerous articles of his have appeared in *Movie* and *Film Comment*. He is also the author of many books, among which are *Hitchcock's Films*, *Ingmar Bergman, the Apu Trilogy* and *Personal Views*.

Professor Wood believes that approaches to film criticism have changed in the seventies, "Critics are far more politicized and politically aware. There is at last a strong and articulate body of Marxist film criticism. This is reflected in my own film criticism. Underlying it is my own com-

mitment to gay and women's liberation as radical movements."

Why the fascination with horror film?

"The common aim of the gay and women's movement is the overthrow of patriarchal ideology, and the essence of the horror films is the challenge of our standard normality," he says.

In his idea he connects two interrelated Freudian theses: that in a society built on monogamy and family there will be an enormous surplus of sexual energy that will have to be repressed; and that what is repressed must always strive to return.

"Popular films are both the personal dreams of their makers and the collective dreams of their

## Bethune symposium spotlights South Africa

By Laura Brown

"What was immediately apparent during my brief visit this summer to Mozambique and South Africa was the factor of dramatic change in the pace of events in Southern Africa," said Atkinson Professor John Saul.

Saul was speaking at last week's Bethune College symposium on *The Transition in Southern Africa* which dealt with the country's changing mood and resistance over the past decade.

According to Saul, the sixties was a decade in which the forces of change internationally and in the country were relatively muted.

But what is clear now in the seventies is that the lull is over and, "the people in South Africa are doing something about their situation and it is important to take their new expression of ongoing initiative very seriously," Saul said.

There is an increasing resistance which is taking its toll as the white oppression is increasing.

"In the course of chatting as widely as I could with the people in South Africa, I can say safely that I met only a very few blacks who hadn't been imprisoned and beaten by the police in the last five or six months," Saul said.

And although this is a very old story in South Africa, Saul added that everyone also suggested to him that this kind of internal terrorism has intensified and moved into new areas.

While conversing with some of the people in Soweto, it became clear that changes are occurring in the ideological movement as well. The major activities no longer rest with the students alone, but there is a deepening of the ideological perspective in terms of the importance and possibilities of the working class taking action.

"This is a very crucial transformation in South Africa, considering the important role of blacks in the productive process," he said.

Foremost in his observations was the immediate awareness that the war in South Africa is very close to the surface.

"One constantly heard talk of 'our boys on the border'," said Saul.

The threat of war was further

illustrated by the intense activities of the white students vis-a-vis the black population, who are increasingly reinforcing the system of white oppression.

Saul's visit to Mozambique gave him the opportunity to see "what the legacy of a successful struggle looks like."

"The first thing that you sense in Mozambique is that you're in a war zone..... we've had a really understated sense of just how much damage the war has done to Mozambique," he remarked.

According to Saul, there is a necessity to actually draw people actively into the struggle, and to create institutions which are genuinely democratic.

This was further illustrated by a remark by Mozambique's President Machel that, "it is very important for Africans to use Marxism and not let Marxism use them".

The second speaker at the symposium, Professor Cecil Abrahams, is an exile from South Africa and now teaches at Bishop's University in Montreal.

Abrahams began his talk with the assertion that "South Africa is the cancer of Southern Africa which has resulted in many African countries conflicting with themselves. All forces should be amassed there because the day you solve the South African question you will in many ways resolve the problems in Southern Africa."

Abrahams led into his perceptions on the South African issue with a short personal account of life in that country.

He reminded the audience that resistance and transition in the country is not new, contrary to western news media coverage which only deals with situations such as in Soweto and Sharpeville.

But changes will not come about easily, for according to Abrahams, the Afrikaner speaking white population has been indoctrinated into believing that it is impossible for blacks to share in the power and the opportunities of the country.

Abrahams spoke of a recent survey which was taken at a predominately white Afrikaner university. The survey was based on

the assumption that young people throughout the world have changed and are causing transformations in their own societies.

"But the survey brought depressing results that these students were even more backward, even more right-wing, and even more narrow than their grandfathers. And to the man almost, they claimed that before they would share the power with the blacks they would first see to it that they killed themselves and destroyed South Africa," he said.

Abrahams pointed out that the process of regimentation has been much greater since 1948, and that the Afrikaner Nationalist party has been diabolical and systematic in the regimentation and division of the country.

But mounting resistance has also been apparent since 1948, with in-

creasing acts of sabotage and struggle against the government of South Africa.

"Of course, the South African newspapers are not allowed to report these incidents, for the white population must be left believing that their standard of living, which is already the highest in the world, will continue for ever and ever. And so the newspapers must get into line and not report these incidents, which would otherwise panic the liberal, English-speaking white population and get them into the situation where they might challenge their government and ask for change," he maintained.

But the resistance has now taken up again with a new breed of people, many who are training with the African National Congress and who were involved in the Soweto and other uprisings in South Africa in

1976. "It's a new breed of people - they're much younger, more militant, and more uncompromising," he explained.

Abrahams attributes this change to the liberation struggle in the Portuguese colonial territory, and commented that the Frelimo and the MPLA are obviously playing an immense part in the changes which are now happening in South Africa.

According to Abrahams, the struggle does not rest solely with the regime. South Africa is tremendously rich and "probably one of the last extremely rich areas in the world that a colonial power can exploit," he maintained.

As western investments amount in the millions of dollars, their investment will not be easily overturned overnight.



Speakers Cecil Abrahams John Saul and moderator Ato Sekyi-Otu at Bethune symposium.



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Symposium and community resource seminars. Present projects include a crime-prevention seminar for the City of Toronto. If interested, individuals may leave their names, type and year of study, and phone number in the CYSF office.

The Council of the York Student Federation would like to wish all York students a very healthy, happy and safe Christmas, Chanukah and New Year.

Submitted on behalf of the Council,  
David W. Chodikoff  
President, CYSF Inc.