

Films

Wise Blood
Starring Brad Dourif
Directed by John Huston
Playing at the Bijou

Every once in a while a film comes along which embodies the highest qualities of Hollywood art, and yet manages to leave a commercial ripple in its wake.

Wise Blood, directed by John Huston, is such a film.

Huston is a prolific film director, responsible for such renowned productions as *Moby Dick*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, and such Bogart classics as *The African Queen* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

But even with these greats under his belt, it's not surprising that Huston is proclaiming *Wise Blood* to be one of his finest.

Huston's production is a convincing visual replication of Flannery O'Connor's penetrating novel of the same name.

Brad Dourif portrays the fanatical atheist Hazel Motes. In an effort to free his soul from the shackles of religious bondage, Motes undergoes a search for truth through his new-found church, The Church of Christ Without Jesus Christ. But Motes must struggle against the caustic realities of Southern life, permeated with religion.

In affirmation of his lack of religious belief, Motes immerses himself in a sweltering vat of sin, paying homage to Leora Watts, a 200-pound prostitute. This is the beginning of his life-and-death quest for meaning and salvation. Motes is in a world

where dualities of truth and deception, sin and innocence, and sight and blindness play together, hand-in-hand.

Preaching from his pulpit — the hood of a clunker Chevrolet — Motes rips the air to the citizens of Taulkinham with the fervid truth of his new church: "I'm a member and preacher of that church where the blind don't see and the lame don't walk and what's dead stays that way. The Church of Christ Without Jesus Christ."

Motes is able, however, to procure only one member, the fawning Enoch Emory. Emory has what he calls "wise blood" — a feeling he gets of "knowing things I ain't ever seen."

The problems of Motes' life are compounded by the advent of Asa Hawks, a supposedly blind preacher who, in a moment of redemption, was to have blinded himself with lime. Hawks is accompanied by his precocious daughter Sabbath Lilly, who makes blatant advances towards Motes. Motes, however, is indifferent to her, abandoning himself instead in an attempt to discover the haunting mystique which lies within the preacher's scarred eyes.

Huston, retaining the novel's disjointed visage, expertly slips back and forth between the innocent, almost childish antics of Emory and the more impassioned motives of Motes.

Motes becomes the target of religious shuckster Hoover Shoats, who finds in the church an enterprising way to make money. Shoats hires a drunk to

imitate Motes, and Motes responds with the only compelling force he has left: violence.

Starkly intense, a gross distortion of the human condition and punctuated with poignant stabs of humor, *Wise Blood* is vintage O'Connor, which Huston, utilizing the author's robust dialogue and profound sense of characterization, brilliantly brings to screen.

Wise Blood runs March 12-18. Call the Bijou theater at 686-BIJU for specific times and admissions. **James Jiler**



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Staffbox, Thursday Revue, ODE — Stories here, stories there — always tardy. Oh well, it all builds patience (I hope). Things are coming 'round upstairs at the Emerald as the world falls apart. Hope we don't miss too much while away.

Spring break's just moments away, and I know I've never desired a time-out more: Yippee! Winter '81's been a pretty horrendous term!

The next **Thursday Revue** is April 9; it'll be what we call a "cinema supplement." If you see any great movies over the break, and are dying to do an outrageously ingenious review, give me a call before the 2nd... maybe we can make a deal. Otherwise, all other copy material to be included in the April 9 section (both calendar and general advances) needs to be in my box by the 2nd. Got that? Nothing's changed: We run a week ahead of what you see.

Well, have a nice meager 10 days of vacation. Kirk sends his love and continues to cut out too many things and forgets to replace them with the appropriate symbols/words, but that's okay, we still like him. Sandy and the Prodo staff are patient... maybe I should take lessons. And I'm ready to take a trip. Toodles, Erz.

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