Column/Simson L. Garfinkel

Pornography made him sick

Walking out of the registration day movie, I felt sick to my stomach.

I felt slightly disturbed at paying a buck for what I had just seen, but thankful I hadn't spent more. I didn't feel angry at the Lecture Series Committee for producing the film or entertainment or for showing me a film with bondage and rape scenes.

After all, I had freely walked into Kresge, had freely paid my dollar, and here I was, free to leave at any time during the presentation. I walked in — and didn't walk out early — because I had always wanted to see the "regular" film, and I wanted to get my money's worth.

Besides, I had never seen a porn film before.

I got what I paid for. I paid to see explicit sex. I paid what I saw. Here and there a little plot was thrown in, probably more to provide a pause between the sex scenes, rather than an actual attempt to tell a film story. The film was even mildly funny at times, though there were long scenes where I found myself bored and actually anticipating the pornography.

I also got the worst stomach ache I ever had in my life.

It is most important, seeing "Take Off!" was an educational experience. Seeing the movie taught what a pornographic film is, and showed me many important things that I had never dreamed of. I would be very upset if the Lecture Series Committee had not shown the movie. I might have had a chance to see the movie or MIT had forbidden me to see it.

It didn't matter whether or not the movie showed the exploitation of men or women, or showed men and women in stereotypical roles.

Many movies show exploitation, both sexual and otherwise. It is not possible to consider a pornographic movie on it or entertainment medium as exploitation, or demeaning, or any other adjective. Pornographic movies seem to encompass the range of human sexual expression, and, quite unfortunately, exploitation, rape, masochism, and sadism fall into this category. It would be nice if movie distributors, or at least the Lecture Series Committee, would tell us what to expect from their films, but if they did so, it would be at their option.

At the Student Center the night of the movie, I met Lita. Lita was struggling with a difficult issue: She had friends who were planning to see the movie, and she didn't want to discourage them. She realized it was their choice to see the movie, but felt the movie had a moral obligation to prevent, or at least try to prevent, them from going.

Lisa made the same mistake that those who try to legislate morality have always made. She believed she had the right to make the same choice for her friends that she had made for herself.

Films can have a tremendous impact, but only on those who watch them. Even a stomach ache can be beneficial if it helps one resolve a moral question.

To the Editor:

I am deeply disappointed that the Lecture Series Committee decided, once again, to show a pornographic film on the evening of registration day, especially in light of the many discussions on this issue which have taken place since last spring.

It appears that all appeals to a sense of what is appropriate for this community have come down to a question of whether there is a "market" for such films at MIT. Evidently there is. But it seems to me that those who insist on their right to screen and view such films ought to consider not only their individual interests but the effects such activities have on the culture of MIT and of the larger society. The pornographic industry, by its nature, exploitative, dehumanizing, and violent. By screening and attending these films, we are encouraging — indeed supporting — that industry and its conduct. LSC argues that it is responding to community interests by showing such films, if there is to be a change in this "tradition," then members of this community must express through their actions (by the films they attend or by participation in LSC) their belief that this type of activity is not for MIT.

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President