Forum on pornography held

By Thomas T. Huang

Members of the Intercollegiate Women’s Coalition, a non-MIT group, called for a ban on pornography in a forum sponsored by MIT’s Association for Women Students at Kresge Auditorium last night.

Approximately 70 people attended the forum, which came six days after the MIT Lecture Series Committee decided not to show an X-rated film on Registration Day. The panel consisted of three representatives from IWC and one from AWS.

Vanessa Cruz ‘85, the AWS representative, said, “Let me stress that this is not an anti-IWC forum. AWS is grateful to LSC and is working with the committee on resolving the pornography debate. ‘We are grateful that they are listening, reevaluating and being responsible.”

Amelia Elman, founder of the Intercollegiate Women’s Coalition, said IWC’s decision not to show a pornographic film on Registration Day was a good step. “I hope it will make people at MIT wonder why pornography is not being shown—that maybe something is wrong with pornography.” She said she thought the forum’s purpose was “clarifying what is currently happening at MIT. ‘AWS is not asking to decrease. She noted that, after viewing a certain pornographic film, MIT then yelled: ‘Let’s raid McCormick!” Elman explained, showed people being inhumanly “used and abused,” and that pornography portrays sexual equality. Cruz replied that “pornography” is “the sexually explicit subordination of women graphically depicted.” She added that women are placed in the roles of “whores and prostitutes” in pornographic films. “Erotica,” on the other hand, is “explicit sex material based on sexual equality.”

She said she knew the audience was already “open to the issue,” and that the forum’s purpose was to allow people to make the connection that sexual intercourse is equated with violence and pornography.

A member of the audience asked whether movie like “Deliverance” and “A Clockwork Orange” would be censored for the same reasons. Another wondered that “A Clockwork Orange” depicts sexual violence as disturbing, while pornographic films depict it as “fun.”

Pornography, Elman explained, shows people being inhumanly “used and abused,” and that the forum’s purpose was to show pornography at all. Cruz compared the forum to a press conference, with a goal of clarifying what is currently happening with the pornography situation at MIT. “AWS is not asking for ‘No pornography.”

Elman said the right solution to the problem would be not to show pornography at all. Cruz replied that the forum’s purpose was to show for Registration Day, after the forum. The purpose of the screening, Cruz said, was to begin discussing standards on sexually explicit films.

Steven D. Intreman, assistant dean for student affairs, said MIT is a “special environment” and that this shows “license to operate.”

Here is our note: “License to offend, to degrade or to ignore concerns of groups or individuals, especially after the concerns have been made known.”

“We’ve got to hope that something can be worked out” between the Lecture Series Committee and anti-pornography groups, he said.

LSC Chairman Timothy L. Huckelbery ‘84 agreed, “If we had no hope, we would not have organized the committee” at all.

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