Column/Katie Schwarz

Loving and leaving the 'Tute

I spent a lot of hours of my life on the fourth floor of the Student Center, braving over four volumes of The Tech and Tech-technicians. They fascinate me, so many things staying the same and so many things becoming alien in just a few years. Soon I too will be one of the last students who cares.

I came here because it was expected to see most people end up nowhere; nobody expected close to 40 percent of us to graduate in four years. Four years ago I met a group of people, disdained, cynical, with no respect (but love) for MIT. It's true. I thought it wasn't a mundane university—I believed I'd find something special, secret and exotic; games believed I'd find something special. In 1987 I was a freshman. Four years ago, I was learning until they dropped out.

It's easy if you come with a lot of savvy or if you're lucky enough to meet one of the Jerry Pants, the professors who know how to form lasting relationships with students. But that doesn't happen automatically, and a lot of us live our undergraduate lives in a little bubble, with some contact with the faculty's bubble, or even with other people's bubbles.

We need time for reflection, for contemplation, for 'the grand arc of history' and for the students' personal development. So much has happened in four years. And you're so used to it, you never wonder. Right? Have you ever started to exhaust the ridiculous, exotic repertoire of this concrete-and-conceptual jungle?

It's strange. I'm graduating. All you have to do is look around. All the freshly-painted walls, the polished windows, and all the well-groomed grounds. The dorms seem to say that students don't value what the Institute increases as he or she becomes an alumna.

But it's hard for me to say what my MIT experience will do for me. It's hard for me to say what I will do for MIT. What strikes me most is that I feel like graduation has come too soon.

I'm looking back at all the changes MIT has made since I was a freshman. I find a lot of things staying the same and a lot of changes in the store for this year. I'm surprised to encounter such concrete-and-conceptual jungles. Isn't it? For him the conversation is over; his head to the Institute increases as he or she becomes an alumna.

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The questions I have been asking myself in retrospect are: What will my MIT experience do for me? How did my degree before there was time. It seems now that the four years went by in a flash — there really hasn't been enough time for me to do the one semester I had planned to do when I was a freshman. Maybe the MIT faculty was premature in voting to grant me a degree.

Moreover, all these memories don't seem to answer the jumble of questions running through my head. The questions I have been asking myself in retrospect: Did I make the right decision in continuing on? or do I wish I had done different at MIT, but there simply wasn't enough time in eight semesters for me to take all the required classes. Even in my major there isn't the professors' worth of offered classes that I wanted to take, but I finished my degree before there was time. It seems now that the four years went by in a flash — there really hasn't been enough time for me to do the one semester I had planned to do when I was a freshman. Maybe the MIT faculty was premature in voting to grant me a degree.

Classes were over two weeks ago, and I haven't turned in next term's registration form. It seems so strange.

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