

## editorial

# female film-maker perpetuates sexism

Last Thursday MGM/UA sent one of our arts editors to New York City to see the new movie *Blue Steel*. She was flown to New York along with about 40 reporters from the United States and Canada to see the film, have lunch and attend a press conference with star Jamie Lee Curtis and writer and director Kathryn Bigelow.

The movie is about a psychopath who becomes obsessed with a female police officer after he sees her shoot an armed robber.

It is a typical action film about a good cop and a crazed killer. The movie is filled with violence, death and disturbing imagery connecting violence with sex.

But what makes this film particularly disturbing is that the women who are the primary creative forces have left no distinguishing mark on it. Sexism and violence plague this film as much as in similar films made by men. The women have forfeited an opportunity to make an original comment about violence directed at women, guns and sex, women in the police force . . .

Bigelow said, during the press conference, that violence is "wonderful in the safe confines in a beautiful room." Curtis said, "There is a large audience who, in fact, totally enjoys, on a very positive level, this experience."

Feminism has been successful to the point where women are being taken seriously as writers and directors in Hollywood. Unfortunately the women involved with this film have appropriated an often used male formula. Curtis, according to the press kit, discovers her strength, but this strength is the ability to kill. She still does not have the inner strength to stop her father from beating up her mother.

*Excalibur* was told that this movie is aimed at "the university crowd." Canadian universities, however, have experienced enough real violence this year from the Montreal murders to the "No means harder" campaign at Queen's which incited violence. Although violence has not been prevalent at York, sexist fraternity posters still appear and there was a reluctance to give full funding to the Women's Centre.

Influential women in Hollywood have made a movie that values the ability to kill. And violence continues on university campuses. If women perpetuate sexism, how can we expect men to stop?



**HEY ROSLYN!**  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY (IT'S TODAY,  
EVEN). ENJOY YOURSELF.  
LOVE, ALL YOUR EXCAL PALS.

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## letters

We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words. They *must* be typed, doubled spaced, accompanied by the writer's name and phone number. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

### Les Miz reviewer called elitist

Dear Editor:

I just re-read Darren Alexander's critique of *Les Miserables* (March 6). Nice article, Darren. Now, let me get this straight. (This might take awhile, as I'm an uncultured, unbuttered slice of whitebread.)

You object to the "exclusivity" of this stage production. Fine. However, your article almost implies that any non-white theatre patron would not be welcomed at *Les Miserables*. I'll need to ponder your critique again to make sure I didn't misread you.

You spend time attending theatrical "stuff dealing with contemporary issues and innovative ideas." I think that's great. Also, you've READ *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* — we applaud your literary pursuits. So, if I might continue your line of reasoning, a person who enjoys *Les Miz* couldn't possibly handle a real "serious" piece of theatre, nor could they be adept enough to read a classic that's easily available at the video store.

Now who's being elitist?

OK, you didn't like *Les Miserables*. Your crowd doesn't go for the mass audience stuff. Maybe it is exclusively for the well-off. Maybe it's a lot of things. But, maybe your article has forgotten what *Les Miz* really is: ENTERTAINMENT. (That's it.)

Should a person feel guilty for being white and having an enjoy-

able evening out? At least, I've heard it is an enjoyable evening out.

I hope you do succeed in your chosen art form. I hope everyone does. But maybe you can keep in mind that, although the rest of the world may not be as artistically in tune as you, the rest of the world doesn't want to be condescended to.

You're outraged? Renounce your whiteness to the world. Give all your possessions to charity. Don't generalize. Don't assume. Don't write until you can be objective, and understand what it is you're writing about. See another perspective.

P.S. I hope I haven't missed your assault on *Phantom of the Opera*.

### Student wants \$ back; appalled by ad in Excal

Dear Editor:

I am writing this to point out a grave injustice that you have ignorantly allowed to take place. As a woman and a student, I am appalled at your decision to run the *Bad Influence* film ad. This ad objectifies and demeans women.

The woman in the ad is actress Lisa Zane, a player in the movie. She is not so much as given an identity or a credit. She is turned away from the reader so we only see her bare back. The men in the ad, however, are allowed identities and credits as the main male actors in the film, Rob Lowe and James Spader.

Understandably, ad revenue is vital to a newspaper. But for a newspaper that receives \$4 from each full-time undergraduate student (there are over 20,000 undergrads), I would think that you

could be a little more choosy of what ads you run.

Furthermore, the fact that the ad was run in the issue for International Woman's day coupled with an editorial titled "Sexism, Homophobia, Racism Run Rampant at York" only intensifies the ignorance you have displayed in running the ad. I paid \$4 for a newspaper I am appalled with. I'd like my money back please.

Signed  
Joy Sculnick

1st Year English Student

### Excal editorial does not mirror ad content

Dear Editor:

Your comments in the March 8 issue of *Excalibur* regarding sexism do not seem to mirror the content of the paper. You describe a frat poster depicting a woman with her hands over her head, a man's "much larger naked torso" behind her. I'm not disputing the fact that this is an example of sexism at York, courtesy of a fraternity on campus, which is the point of your argument, but on page 11 you discredit an otherwise well-constructed editorial. It is an advertisement for the movie *bad influence* starring Rob Lowe and James Spader, depicting a naked woman in the arms of a supposedly concerned man.

I wonder if your editorial is well placed, because it appears to be just another example of the "bandwagon" effect in the current frat-bashing. Don't misunderstand me, I am not, nor will I ever become a member of any fraternity. I wouldn't give them the time

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