

Quebec play deals with issue of porn

Le Theatre Parminou
Intimate Invasion
SUB Theatre

review by Lisa Hall

The Quebec touring group *Le Theatre Parminou* successfully expressed its views of pornography this week at SUB Theatre. Two performances, one of *Intimate Invasion* on Monday, and another on Tuesday in the original French version of the play *Ca creve les yeux, ca creve le coeur* were given. The purpose of the shows was to depict the ill effects of pornography on our intimate lives and on society in general.

The play first amused an appreciative SUB audience with humour, but by the end of the play no one was laughing.

The play is introduced by Therese and Girard, a couple who own a variety store which sells pornographic material in the small town of Victoriaville, Quebec, showing that pornography is not only rampant in big cities.

Therese says in an over-stressed French accent, "We have been married since twenty years." The couple agree that when people have known each other for as long as they have, they start to look like each other. Both are wearing the same fake plastic noses under their glasses.

The audience meets the other characters individually, as they visit the couple's store.

The play shows three generations who are affected by pornography. First, there are two children, Christian and Natalie, who are shocked by what they see in a porno magazine. Second, there is a young couple, Monique and Denis, whose sex lives are hurt by the exposure to pornography. Third, there is the old couple, Therese and Girard. They may look alike, but they do not think alike. Therese reveals her disgust of having seen the pornographic material in their store go from soft core to hard, to harder.

Monique and Denis reveal that the pornographic material they saw as children (drawing one's thoughts back to Natalie and Christian), has caused them to fantasize about erotic



Pornography did not help this sex life.

Photo Dragos Rulu

sex. Now, they cannot distinguish between these erotic fantasies and what they really want their sex life to be like.

Girard says that pornographic material is fine, because "it helps men to lead better, fuller lives." But he really justifies selling it because he knows that if he doesn't, the competition still will, and he will be run out of business. He is also under pressure from his distributor to carry "spicier" products.

All the events of the play are brought together in the end of the play at the Victoriaville town council meeting. This occurs the day after it has been found out that

Jean Consonne, the guy who seems nice, if quiet, and buys 1000 jujubes and a porno mag every day, is a child molester. This was not a surprise to the audience.

At this meeting, several characters take seats in the audience, turning it into the assembly at the meeting. When the assembly was asked who would like the issue of the displaying of pornographic material moved from item 15 on the agenda to item one, three-quarters of the hands in the enthusiastic audience went up.

It is at this meeting that the points of the play are summed up. Pornography can hurt, as has been shown throughout the play. It is

not stated, however, what should be done about pornography. The only mention of what actions should be taken against pornography is when Therese says to Girard: "Let's go clean up the store."

Monique states: "We aren't for censorship, we are against pornography." The play only briefly mentions Bill C-54. It also doesn't clearly define what the difference between pornography and erotica is, which leaves the audience wondering exactly what they are against.

Denis and Monique had described the pornographic images which still remain and affect their sex lives. To prove the power of images, slides were shown during the play to represent Denis' fantasies, and by Therese at the council meeting. The slides were of strong pornographic content, and were very powerful. In a discussion after the play, members of the audience said they felt numb or sick. The images were definitely hard to forget. These slides, combined with the characters' reactions to pornography, were successful in showing that pornography can hurt.

The set was simple, yet ingenious in that one structure provided several different settings. The back drop to the variety store became the screen for slide projection. Folded, it became a kitchen table. Turned around, it became an upright bed for Denis and Monique. This brought many laughs as the audience had an aerial view of the couple in bed. The two were actually standing, leaning against the backdrop behind a blanket, also supported vertically.

The actors were careful not to overact, but still managed to convey their grief, rage or shock to pornography. The distributor, Mr. Cochon, is a "smut-seller" who knows what ladies really want. His character was exaggerated; but to good effect.

Le Theatre Parminou was formed 14 years ago, and they tour the country with creations that deal with contemporary issues. *Intimate Invasion* and *Ca creve les yeux, ca creve le coeur* performed their role in the fight against pornography by showing how it can hurt, but the shows were careful not to define the term nor say what measures should be taken against it.

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