

# Letters

## We are men and anti-porn

### To the Editor:

We are a group of men who firmly support women throughout Canada in their opposition to the proposal by First Choice to screen Playboy films on their pay-TV network. The issue has prompted us to discuss the question of pornography among ourselves; we urge other men to do likewise. We believe it is time that men confront and resist the dangers and deceptions of our increasingly pornographic society.

We oppose pornography because we believe that its fundamental intent is to provide men with exploitive fantasy images for sexual arousal and masturbation: images we find unacceptable in their assertion that men have a right to, and should, "possess" women if they so choose, and in their reiteration of the notion that women exist to serve men's sexual demands. We do not oppose erotica, which does not offend the humanity of those portrayed.

However, mass-market pornography is propaganda which spreads hate, contempt, and fear of women in particular and human sexuality in general. There is now clear evidence that it induces destructive behaviour such as rape, sexual assault, and wife-battering in many men. At its least harmful, it turns men's sexual urges inward upon an undesirable fantasy world in which men subjugate women. Thus, we find pornography is a sexually regressive, not liberating, force in society, contrary to the claims of its advocates, and of pornocrats like Hugh Hefner.

Men are typically too embarrassed to admit to using pornography. However, such men seek protection behind the ethic of "privacy:" what one chooses to enjoy privately, or at home, is nobody else's business.

Applied to pornography, this is a fallacy. The making and selling of pornography are clearly social, not private, activities: witness the magazines at the corner store where kids buy candy. Or the pornographic cinema on Main Street. Or the airwaves in which First Choice is given a licence, by public authority. Even private homes are social dwellings: women and children living in them should, but often do not, have a voice in what "entertainment" is welcome there. Moreover, try as they may, pornographers can never completely "privatize" their wares; even if they did, pornography would be no less objectionable.

Men should stop using "privacy" and individual "rights" to defend pornography. If they are interested in equality and respect for women, they will stop buying into a valuable system which degrades women.

Instead, men will stop consuming pornography, and actively oppose its proliferation. Men can start by engaging in an honest dialogue on pornography with other men, and with women. Pornography will continue to thrive as long as it is regarded as a private affair.

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## Sexual philosophy of porn

### To the Editor:

Pornography is the means by which a largely ignorant, both sexually and in terms of women generally, male population tries to come to terms with his own misogyny.

It separates the sexes into 'separate' worlds and could be a reaction to mother dominance.

Generally, it is a very backward nation's, North American, way of allowing men to have sex without women. They can masturbate while viewing a non-woman, an object.

Pornography, which is becoming the *sexual philosophy* of North Americans, as it is the Japanese and English — *excludes* women from a 'sexual world' occupied only by men in which women are simply used. It defines sex as simply a man reaching a 'sexual peak' with no need to gratify, please or impress a partner — which is why men like it.

It is a uni-form of sexual interaction — an interaction with the self and an object. It totally cuts off feedback, or the intended natural 'feeling' of reciprocalness therefore it is totally non-satisfying by trying to satiate in terms of lust only.

Primarily it is an expression of men's desire to not include women in the sexual act but to look on at them as objects by which 'jerking off' or increasing the violence, degradation and humiliation becomes the only means of ever knowing 'where it is at' sexually. Until reciprocity is the main intent of the act no man will ever find the meaning of sexual gratification. Even pictorially the teaching of 'techniques' or methods of mutual enjoyment caring and gratification have been completely lost to a backward, political view that sees sex as uni-sexual.

It is a non-disclosed phenomenon because it indicates to women the 'real' male view to their existence and their need and attempt to indulge in this world that is totally against women and which sees sex as the number one weapon to affront her.

IT DENIES WOMEN PRIDE IN THEIR OWN BODIES.

B. Williams

## No right for attack

### To the Editor:

I was just sitting in the Killam reading the March 24th Gazette when I came across a letter from a courageous individual making her stance known on the pornography debate raging through Dalhousie. I'd like to commend this courageous individual in person, but sadly she hasn't been quite courageous enough to sign her name. C'est la vie. We must march on.

There was a rape scene in *Fritz the Cat*. A group of neozis beat up and molested a young woman, and the clear message was that it was wrong, evil, sick. Saying it was pornographic is analogous to saying the Bible is mindlessly violent because of a well publicised crucifixion to be found within.

There was a rape scene in *Clockwork Orange*. It was seen as the act of a group of people who have been raised by parents who rather obviously ran and hid at the suggestion that there was anything wrong with their world or their moral codes or their children. The consequences of their act were clearly shown when the woman died several months later, and again the message was one of wrong and sickness.

This shining example of anonymous courage deserves some thanks, for she has illustrated the best argument against censorship in the world. If a film protesting mind-control can be treated so paranoically by anyone on a censorship board, then Alex the Droog might be prancing along your street soon, folks.

Thomas Lorimer

Yours sincerely,

## In response to the defense of Clockwork Orange.

### To the Editor:

Re: *A Clockwork Orange* and pornography:

In discussion the issue of pornography, it is important that the concept not be too broadly defined, as it has been in these columns recently. We feel it to be a mistake to define pornography simply as the depiction of dominance over women by men. To disallow such depictions entirely in books, movies, etc, would be to deny that such things occur in real life. This is, of course, absurd.

The important factor to consider in viewing portrayals of violence against women in films is the attitude of the director in question toward her/his subject matter. The director can present dominance over or abuse of women in either a positive or a negative light. Offence is given if the director chooses to imply that the dominating male's action is in the right or if his female victim is seen to be wanting, enjoying, or deserving the abuse.

In *A Clockwork Orange*, director Stanley Kubrick shows two brutal scenes against women in a subtly but decidedly negative light. In the first instance, a woman is forcibly raped by little Alex, whose lack of any redeeming characteristic is underlined in the scene by the repeating of his words by the idolizing and aptly named Dim. The woman is clearly not enjoying the attack and has done nothing to bring it upon herself. Her husband, an aged writer, is brutalized along with her. Both are traumatized and left broken by the attack. The second instance gives us Alex as a weak and saucy brat who can assert his masculinity only through violence (here resulting in murder).

Alex does ultimately get away with his crimes to continue on in his wicked ways without remorse. But the point of the film is a moral — not a sexual — one: Alex is a sick, evil little bastard and does not change when freedom of choice is taken away from him. The idolization of such a character is more a reflection on Alex's "dim" real-life admirers than on the film itself.

We have to wonder why an artistic film like *A Clockwork Orange* was singled out for criticism, what with the abundance of more offensive and more seemingly innocuous film fare currently in distribution. In films like *Smokey and the Bandit* (or almost anything with macho-man Burt Reynolds), *Superman II*, *The World According to Garp*, and many others, male domination and the macho standard are favourably portrayed, even glorified, while the "place" (and use) of the female is clearly defined and enforced.

One of the most offensive moments in cinema, we feel, occurs in "classic" *Gone with the Wind*: Handsome, rugged Rhett Butler forcefully carries a bitchy, shrewish Scarlett O'Hara off to the bedroom and gives her "just what she needs," a "healthy" dose of "masculine authority." Afterwards, she becomes passive, unresisting, and "lady-like," having been "put in her place." The actual sexual content is not shown, thus become "romantic" rather than repulsive.

Such scenes are clearly reinforcing of the dominant male/submissive female stereotypes. Sadly, many women and men who perhaps should know better both accept and aspire to this "free market morality" as peddled by the silver screen.

Those of us who wish for the ultimate demise of pornography must be careful in our judgements. Censorship is a very dangerous weapon when placed in the hands of those who will yell "Pornography!" every time a film rises above the level of Walt Disney. Excellent and important films such as *The Tin Drum* have been heavily censored and even banned outright in some areas because of narrow-minded attitudes. The purpose of a film — and how well it achieves its purpose — must be taken into account before judgement is passed on the basis of what is portrayed; a director cannot make an effective statement against violence without showing some level of violence, but a director can support and reinforce harmful stereotypes in a seemingly innocuous and very insidious way without showing anything most would call offensive.

A film should be judged carefully, taking into consideration not merely what is shown, but how it is shown and why. And art should not be censored on the grounds that some people are not sensitive enough to perceive the difference between positive and negative portrayals of abuse.

Thomas G. Morrison  
 Geoff Martin

## Censorship and censored names

### To the Editor:

First, censoring my right to remain anonymous is hypocritical. Also, a European male who has experienced repression is alien to a North American female who daily contends with sexism and misogyny.

The moral overtones of the movie were not overlooked. Depicting a Lolita-like character sucking a phallic sucker is inessential to the 'message' the movie conveys. It is a gimmicky, shallow, trendy movie that capitalizes on the sexual element by using women — and — it produced a eulogy out of a character who typifies what should be eradicated — like the KKK. The neivetté, paucity of vocabulary, and lack of real argument (asshole, fanatic) — and worldly deficiency is expressed in your reactionary letter.

There is nothing enlightening about *Clockwork Orange*. It is one of the shallowest, most ignorant films I've had to sit through. Every woman I talk to has walked out of it or wanted to.

We censored Little Black Sambo because it was detrimental to the image of blacks; we even censored an ad detrimental to the image of porcupines. Nothing detrimental to the image of woman should ever be censored because men find it sexually stimulating or appealing. It could be that if some caring individual had censored material that damaged the image of Jews during one era of repression and near extinction, the world might be a better place to live. The intent is the criteria, not the product itself. Hitler's intent in broadly disseminating anti-Semitic literature should have been looked at over and above the content of the material. The intent of movies is money; as is pornography. If a vehicle can be used to exploit sexuality or hate there is always a willing market, as there was for anti-Semitic literature, to encourage its perpetration.

(name to be withheld by request)

## Killing women not everyone's kicks

### To the Editor:

Re: Ms. Sankey's letter of 31 March

Ms. Sankey feels that men must degrade women in order to obtain sexual pleasure, and that murdering them is the apex of arousal. While this is true for a few men, the majority hold no such view and condemn it. Most men respect women, and especially do not kill them for enjoyment.

However, Ms. Sankey does make a valid point concerning "bunny harems." There is no doubt whatsoever in our minds that men force women to work in these clubs for meagre pay and no benefits. The bunnies have absolutely no choice in the matter, but are mere slaves to the male sex. If Ms. Sankey believes this, she is totally ignorant about the salary the bun-

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