We have received a related letter from a young man we know.

Mother's Day, I have to admit, is one of those so-called holidays that make me want to go underground and crack the greeting-card lobby that I'm sure is at the bottom of it all. But my folks and I live in the same city, so it's never been hard for them to reach out and pin me, when they suggested celebrating Mother's Day with lunch at their favorite Hungarian café on the upper East Side and a movie—the much publicized foreign-film hit "The Gods Must Be Crazy"—I was there on time in shirt and tie and three-piece suit. My mother had had a few tough weeks: because she was born in Berlin and survived the Nazi regime, the whole Bitburg incident and the recent Holocaust remembrances wiped out, at least for the moment, the forty years of relative calm and security she had known as a New Yorker. Retreating for a few hours into a familiar environment (the café) and then a hermetic one (the movies) seemed like a good plan—especially for someone who happened to know more than the news media could ever know about the horrors of the Holocaust, and was eager to somehow get past it. Lunch was pleasant, as was the leisurely stroll down to the East Sixty-eighth Street movie theatre, where we stood in the ticket holders' line for about fifteen minutes before the film. Though the film has been running here for almost a year to sold-out houses, I knew little about it except that it had something to do with African primitives facing the modern world, and that it was a comedy. Apparently, someone felt that it wasn't, for there was a young white man representing Brooklynites Against Apartheid handing out leaflets to all of us in the line and imploring us to ask for refunds instead of going in, because the film was produced by a white South African. Since the movie had been running for almost a year without any reported trouble, I wondered what could be so bad, and I adopted a let-me-see-for-myself attitude, and so did everyone else in the line.

After we were seated and the lights dimmed and the Twentieth Century-Fox logo passed, two young women seated toward the front stood up and began protesting the showing of the film, on the ground that the film did not truly portray the plight of black South Africans; and they succeeded in stopping the film temporarily. The lights came on, and the women continued their speech, only to be drowned out by irate patrons demanding their removal. Shouts went up, and there was a crossfire of feelings: "This is America, and if you want to protest you can do it outside!" a woman yelled from the balcony. A young man called out, "We paid our five dollars! Let us decide for ourselves!" A little voice from the back rang out, saying, "Why not just let them speak?" "Out! Out! Out! Out!" the majority of the audience began chanting. I looked at my mother, sitting next to me, and I could see that she was upset. "If these people"—she meant the two women—"are so committed that they are willing to spend ten dollars to come into a hostile place and get thrown out, there must be some reason," she said. A theatre employee appeared, to the applause next to me, and I could see that she was upset. "If these people"—she meant the two women—"are so committed that they are willing to spend ten dollars to come into a hostile place and get thrown out, there must be some reason," she said. A theatre employee appeared, to the applause of the majority, and he was a little physical in dealing with the two women. Several people shouted at him to take it easy, but most of the audience continued to shout angrily at the women. A few minutes later, things settled down, the theatre darkened again, and the movie began. Just after the opening credits, a young man in the front row stood up and said, in a British accent, "I would like to point out that this is a racist film that supports—and he was drowned out by an infuriated crowd, which now wanted the police to intervene. The young man was daunted. "I will not leave here until I have a chance to say what I have to say," he said. The atmosphere in the theatre—on the upper East Side, on Mother's Day afternoon—grew increasingly tense as demands for the young man's removal became more vehement, and as one or two people in the audience ventured to tell the rest that maybe there was a point worth listening to. "Leave with him! Out! Out! Out!" the chant rose. Finally, two cops arrived, smiling and slightly bewildered by the cheers that met their entrance. The young man left peaceably, and order was almost restored when a bearded fellow in his early twenties stood up in the back and said, "Look, I'm not part of this group, I paid for the movie just like everyone else here, but maybe it's important that we think about taking a moral stand on issues that affect people's lives, instead of just wanting to be entertained. If people had felt as strongly as this about protecting the Jews in Germany, my grandfather might be alive today instead of having been gassed in Dachau." Then I heard a familiar voice saying, "He's right, and you better not tell me to shut up." There was my sixty-four-year-old mother facing down the entire theatre, and she was trembling.