Es tu, Alan?

inment when I stopped to last Tuesday's Gateway for ite. I came upon Alan vod's column about The pcents, currently playing at erdale Playhouse, and read he had further to say about teur theatre in general and terdale in particular with inting amazement, followed plazing anger.

First, let me make it clear that neither a member of the cast he Innocents, nor am I on the cutive of Walterdale Theatre ciates. I have however, been ciated with theatre generally dmonton for the past twentylears.

Now to Mr. Filewod's any member of the audience as a perfect right to dislike ything about it, and say so as emently as he feels essary. His first four agraphs are, therefore, ectly valid, and enough to a clear idea of what he thinks it The Innocents as a play

was in the middle of a class exceeds his brief, and it is in the fifth paragraph that he begins to strain our credulity. I shall deal with his statements point by point.

1) To say that: "Critics and audiences patronize the amateur theatre out of a sense of obligation rather than delight ... " is the wildest of generalizations. In the case of Walterdale Playhouse; the audience has increased from 1960, with a handful of people -sometimes twenty, sometimes ten - at each performance, to a solid base of season-ticket holders and sold-out nights for most plays. (And, Mr. F., they can't all be "distant relatives" applauding "... the first steps of a retarded cousin.")

This audience has not only grown in size, but has followed the Playhouse to three different locations, each theatre building seating substantially more than the previous one. The early seasons of four plays has now increased to full seasons of five plays, plus 1-Acts, Young Walterdale, etc., and the length of each as a production. But he run has grown from six days to

two weeks.

2) "The group lacks competent directors, designers, actors, and technicians. So much is obvious." How is it obvious - on the strength of one play? "One swallow maketh not summer," nor does one play enable a critic to make a calculated assessment of the achievement and/or facilities of any theatre amateur, professional or university.

3) Mr. Filewod talks about the days when amateur theatre in Canada "... provided the best and most exciting theatre in this country ... with the Dominion Drama Festival in its heyday." Fair enough, and true. But then he goes on to weaken his point by saving that, in those days, "Amateur theatre was considered a potent force, and a valuable alternative to the suffocated professional drama of the day."

And this statement really is a laugh, dear Mr. Filewod, because I remember those days; and amateur theatre was not an alternative, it was the only one. I was in a Dominion Drama Walterdale that it leaves one

Festival when I first arrived in 1951, and there was no professional theatre of any stature whatsoever in Canada (Stratford began in the summer of 1952), let alone one that was "suffocated." Incidentally, as a purely grammatical point, suffocated by what?!

3) The Samuel French reference is a red herring - I have yet to work with a director in Edmonton who tells his actors to go by the Samuel French blocking, or who encourages his designer to work from the SF set plans. Nor does Samuel French hold the rights to all the plays produced at Walterdale though, admittedly, they might like to.

4) The final paragraph, which begins: "Perhaps some day amateur theatre artists will strive to attain the level of skill, discipline, and dedication that characterizes amateur athletes," shows such a incredible lack of knowledge of the standards and dedication which obtain at

gasping. Except that, from his earlier references to the remarks of "a colleague" that "nobody takes Walterdale seriously, except for those involved in its production," Mr. Filewod shows himself a man who will take second-hand, even if erroneous, opinions rather than wait and make up his own mind. Thus he strains our credulity from the outset.

If Mr. Filewod wished - for whatever reason - to write a diatribe against amateur theatre, he could surely have had the guts to do so in a separate article, and not have hidden behind a socalled review. Though, judging from both his recent articles, his crying need is not for a column, but a soapbox.

I do not hope to change his mind, nor do I care about his own - or his borrowed — opinions; in themselves they matter nothing. What does matter is that other Gateway readers be able to read a rebuttal to statements made in such abysmal ignorance and towering arrogance.

Mary Glenfield

In all fairness I must admit sideration and dismissed for my wod's review of "The Inents" was one of extreme just but I did not leave off my usal of said article at the ond paragraph. I read it ugh, which was much more ice than it deserved.

Four paragraphs out of nine e spent on wide and low s at the play. The remaining kept up the unfounded. artive pace then aimed at ateur theater in general and terdale and Samuel French in icular

The Innocents" was poorly e, admitted, but to use the ng as a criteria of the quality written play is to criticize a p on the basis of a cracked Mr. Filewod obviously has the basic knowledge essary to discriminate ween the various influences tted by playwright, actor, or ctor on a given production. If easy to write a "scathing ew of such an inept play," partially viewed, how much er is it to take pot shots at the ch broader field of amateur atre with less acquainceship than an entire play. ities exchanged with a league," Mr. Filewod asserts "nobody takes Walterdale ously, except for those ined in production." Pray tell if there is so little serious lvement from outside, how this inept organization been existence for over 16 years? whas it managed to maintain a scription list numbering in hundreds and built a theater costs over \$100,000? The of the theatre may seem ry compared to the \$6.5 lion edifice of the Citadel, but ly it must prove Walterdale to just slightly out of the league the first steps of a retarded Isin How can a person claiming be a critic judge the quality of ectors, designers, actors, and nnicians of an entire organizapast and present, on the s on one play? I could recite ny talented people that have Walterdale's boards and e put those boards together, my recitations would fall, no ubt, on ears made deaf ^{ough} ignorance. The article s itself open for libel suit upon suit but the source of such ider must be taken into con-

response to Alan what it is - ignorant pontificating.

I was most taken by the statement "there is no excuse for this sort of anti-art that Walterdale perpetuates." Firstly, this is a poor old horse whose rotting corpse is never free from continual kicks by hackneyed critics. What is "anti-art"? No definition given, Mr. Filewod tosses it out for us all to admire and applaud as a sign of incisive criticism. "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg,' "Nothing But a Man," "Leaving Home," Hedda Gabler," "Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-in-themoon Marigolds;" these are plays of anti-art, productions to be attempted by "third-rate" amateurs - perhaps second rate plays? I think not, nor do any of the reviews of these productions reflect anywhere near such sentiments.

Walterdale is a community theater. It uses the community as a source for every aspects of its productions. It depends on the community for support and has received it. It maintains a professional standard by using professionals from every walk of life. I am tired of hearing it On the basis of some verbal criticised because its participants are there for the pure virture of the theatrical art rather another kick aimed at nonthan monetary gain. That, Mr. Filewod, is the difference between Walterdale's amateurs and any professional troupe, that and no other factor separates them.

An interesting side swipe was that directed at Samuel French and its collection of 'second-rate plays" and "nominal royalties." He terms it "The Muzak of Theater." I gathered this was meant as from

professional mediocrity by descrediting the source of the plays. Brilliant - too bad that the Samuel French Publishing House is the largest publisher of copyrighted plays in the world, and even the professionals artistic and otherwise - avail themselves of that firm's facilities.

"amatuerism" ludicrous coming, as they do, from one who is an amateur critic; therefore I assume that in comments on amateurness, Mr. Filewod must speak as an expert.

As a conclusion I should like to correct one line from the review and ask that it stand at epitaph for Mr. Filewod and his ilk. "It is too easy to write a scathing review of such an inept play" - wrong Mr. Filewod, it is The pot shots of far easier to write an inept review. seem most scathingly Maureen Rivet Arts 2

In his review of the Walterdale Theatre Associates production of "The Innocents," Alan Filewod tells us that he has "been informed by a colleague that nobody takes Walterdale seriously, except for those involved in its production." Second-hand bitchery, Al, makes for second-rate criticism.

I take Walterdale seriously. I take it seriously for the numbers of playwrights and actors it has introduced in Edmonton, many of whom have gone on to work in the professional theatre (which it would seem Alan Filewod takes a bit too sericusly). Many of whom, for that matter, have chosen not to. And others of whom chose to

return to Walterdale regularly.

I take Walterdale seriously for offering those people with remarkable energies - if not always remarkable talents - an opportunity to develop their sincere interests in theatre. which interest they bring to the professional theatres as discerning audience members.

I take it seriously for producing so many seasons of theatre, of no more erratic quality than that found in any regional professional theatre, without a cent of subsidy. I take it seriously for operating free of the rigor and perfidy which characterizes Edmonton's professional theatre. criticism, not railery. (In which, by the way, I make my

living.)

I could take Alan Filewod seriously. It is clear that he is a knowledgeable man who as a critic has something to say, if he would quit proselytizing and say it. Theatre in Edmonton could do with a kick in the head, and if that's your intention Alan, hossana, hossana, hossana.

But you have managed to dismiss Walterdale's legacy of activity after seeing one-half of one show, and largely on the basis of an eight-year old girl's performance.

What we need now is Frank Moher

reenande ta cevila

5

In regard to the questionnaire in the Nov. 23 issue of the Gateway we feel that we should respond with more than just a tic in the appropriate box on the

question under "General Issues: Is Frank Mutton a homosexual? If so, is this good for Canada?"

As members and active participants in the gay community of Edmonton we take offence to the levity in which this subject was presented. A common malady of our society is to laugh off potentially embarassing, political, or controversial topics in an attempt to ignore the fact that such issues are just that: embarassing, political and controversial.

The plight of the homosexual in today's society is no laughing matter. Instances of discrimination in the form of mental and physical abuse (a day to day occurance in the life of a homosexual) are being ignored and even justified by many people. This will continue to happen as long as people continue to

treat the subject with humour This does not mean that we, the homosexuals, have lost our sense of humour. It merely emphasizes the fact that we do not consider our situation to be all that amusing.

As a significant number of GATE's members are part of the through their fees help to support your newspaper, we take your display of "humour" as a personal affront to our dignity. You are willing to accept our money, but appear to have difficulty in accepting us.

We find that the joke has continued into the Nov. 25 edition, whereby Mr. Mutton's "sexual orientation" once more is raised. It is quite obvious that the person(s) behind this are totally ignorant of what homosexuals are. The preconceived idea of what constitutes "MASCULINI-TY" and the implication that such a phenomenon is absent in male homosexuals is a stereotypical Ed. Note: Point well taken; we

cliche that demonstrates your utter lack of knowledge in this area of sexual lifestyle and sexual being. From the viewpoint of gay women and men, this joke is on the same level as any ethnic or racial joke, depending as they do on cardboard stereotypes.

We consider the Gateway to U of A's student body, who have exercised a great injustice to all gay women and men who function within our society, who are working toward a better society, and most of all who have done nothing to warrant the abuse that they receive. On behalf of our people and as financial supporters of your newspaper we demand an apology. If you are indeed a responsible and progressive newspaper we suggest that you use the necessary journalistic principles of integrity and discretion in your future publications. Bob Radke & Rosemary Ray for GATE Edmonton

apologize. Although no slight was intended, the attempt to lighten the serious note of the questionnaire was in poor taste and, as you point out, an affront to gays. Sorry.

Look it up

Methinks that thou dost protest too much!

In the same issue that you reassure Manfred Lockhart (that your policy of publication is not sexist) your mast-head humour reveals that you don't know what sexism is. (Vol. LXVII, no. 22(. J. Creechan

Sociology

Ed. Note: if making a mildlypornographic joke about prostitution is sexist, i.e. reveals a form of discrimination based solely on gender, then you are quite correct Mr. Creechan: I don't know what sexism is.