

editorial

Citadel of the rich

A letter in last Thursday's *Gateway* from Peter Michalyshyn provides the perfect case in support of opposition to tuition increases and cutbacks, although that is not exactly what Peter was getting at.

In his letter, Peter says that "for most of us it is ridiculously easy to come to university, especially when in many cases the fees are paid for us." Besides wondering if Peter can produce a fact or two to back his latter assumption, I would suggest that he has inadvertently pinpointed the problem. With tuition fees rising almost annually, it is not the people who can afford to come to university that we should be concerned with, but the people who cannot. You are right, Peter. The people here can afford it, but there are those who cannot, people who have had their right to higher education denied — because tuition fees are so high.

It's not only a matter of paying the fees that should be taken into consideration. It's living expenses, cost of books and countless other costs that adults run into when supporting themselves. Michalyshyn facetiously suggests that "we should ask the government to pay for our books too." Well, that's not the point, and it's irresponsible sarcasm to suggest that most opponents of tuition fees are campaigning along those lines.

Like I've said before, I don't care about Michalyshyn and anyone else who can easily attend university. People opposed to cutbacks and tuition fees, (the two are products of the same mentality), are fighting for the rights of those who don't have it so easy. People are being squeezed out by higher tuition fees just as others are being squeezed into poverty by inflation. The University of Alberta is in danger of becoming an elitist high school for the rich and their children. Perhaps the incredible degree of apathy and ignorance exhibited by some on campus is a result of their direct or indirect wealth.

In any case, for a university to have any value in society, it must represent all levels of that society. With tuition fees rising and cutbacks eating up any attempts at progress and improvement, this university faces cultural poverty. Whether you think that higher education is a right or a privilege, it's obvious that admission to university should be based on intelligence and dedication, and not wealth. Michalyshyn supports the idea of higher tuition fees, and in the same breath is fretting about the value of his liberal arts education. There are others, Peter, who would be happy to have your opportunity, and our present government is denying them their rightful chance.

The Students' Union, in its own cautious way, is forming a committee to deal with the problems presented by cutbacks. All students who see the issue as a societal problem are urged to donate a few hours a week to the cause and help out with the committee's work.

Let's try and make the university accessible to as many people as possible, so Michalyshyn's debate between career and higher education will not be discussed only amongst those wealthy enough to participate.

Gordon Turtle

the Gateway

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If it happens on campus ... it's an illusion

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Criticism of critics' work

Although it is not surprising to find a lack of sophistication in your art criticisms, it is disturbing that your critics believe themselves to be qualified to pass judgement on things only superficially related to the Art that they propose to discuss.

In the October 10th *Gateway* article on the Davies and Dunford exhibition at SUB Gallery, there was dispraise of the people in attendance on opening night. Yet there is little doubt that wine and cheese was served primarily because of its palatability, and not for whatever aesthetic qualities it may possess, however merited these qualities might be. Its consumption, therefore, is not surprising. Even an Art critic cannot make a just evaluation on the degree to which fellow art appreciators are thinking about wine and the degree to which they are thinking about painting. In any case the pertinence of this issue in Art criticism is questionable.

The more recent article on Joe Fafard's exhibit at the Edmonton Art Gallery in the Oct. 16th issue of *The Gateway* holds another irrelevant judgement. The critic speculated that "the only weakness of Fafard's exhibition is that of 19 sculptures, only one is of a woman." It is certainly a unique figure, not expressly because it is a woman, but also because of its pose and its lack of distinct and striking character study. Perhaps this is

indicative of Fafard's attitude toward women (Fafard also sculpts cows) and perhaps it is not, but the issue of Fafard's chauvinism is pathetically immaterial to the issue of his sculpture. Wagner was an extremely conceited man who exploited his friends; he composed with the mind of a genius. Van Gogh was psychologically disturbed; his paintings are undeniably profound. If Fafard would rather sculpt men than women or if the exhibit simply includes eighteen men and one woman, that is, nineteen persons, it is assuredly not a fault in

his art. If a critic can find no flaw in an artist's creative abilities, he certainly does not need to resort to making personal judgements of the artist in order to maintain criticism in his article.

However, the article in question indicates that the critic considers little more than the superficial attributes of Fafard's sculpture. Perhaps deeper study would result in honest criticism. Notably, attacks on society and personality have no place in anything categorized as Art criticism.

Sally McLean
BFA I

General comments

In my official capacity, herewith a notice to those trying to use scrip in the Power Plant. Housing and Food Services will consider during December whether to let us accept it or not. We are ready when they are ready, but until then, no dice.

And in my private capacity, some comments:

1) Nuclear power (re. your issue October 11th) is a damn sight safer than fossil fuel power, for long term ecology. Radioactive waste can be contained, carbon dioxide cannot. Too much opposition is uninformed emotion, with all due respect.
2) Peter Michalyshyn feels that raising fees would make the degree experience more worthwhile for most students,

eh? In my first year here, I earned \$4626 (before tax) as a TA, with a fees and compulsory levies bill of \$1116. As a foreign student, barred from working, there is no way I could stay on if fees were raised.

3) Diane Young writes cogently on funding for the Humanities. However, we have to realise that the Humanities do not require equipment like the \$40 million TRIUMF cyclotron. Sciences will always need higher funding to maintain an adequate level of research. Dr. Horowitz appeared to refer to increased funding, not that presently established. And try comparing the facilities for graduates in Humanities and, say, Health Services (which I understand has nothing to speak of).

4) Charley Farley is starting to slip his gears.

5) Library hours certainly do need overhauling, particularly at weekends.

6) Life of Brian was a disappointing film — what was all the fuss about?

7) You left off at least one fraternity in your list of October 18th, the infamous Kinda Stigma, headed up by geologist Tony Redunzo.

Richard Miller
Graduate Studies
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Cyclists are not alone

For the information of Tom Nillson and the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters ("Militant cyclists pedal on," *Gateway*, Oct. 18), there are already several groups incorporated under societies acts working for the "... recreational, pragmatic cyclist."

Locally there are the Edmonton Bicycle and Touring Club and the Edmonton Road and Track Club, provincially, the Alberta Bicycle Association, and nationally (since the late 1880's), the Canadian Cycling

Association (333 - River Road, Vanier City, Ontario, K1L 8B9) with thousands of members nation-wide.

A united, as opposed to a "balkanized" approach is always more effective when trying to press for change; perhaps the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters should consider joining and working through existing organizations.

Robert Gilchrist
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