EDITORIAL PAGE

Daily Nebraskan

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JOURNALISM AND YOU:

Reporting Trend?

Cries for more depth, or explanation of the implications, in the news have been registered by this nation's intellect and to a degree by its public. Meanwhile, several accomplished leaders in this aspect go apparently unnoticed.

The most striking example would be the NEW YORK TIMES, this country's long established newspaper of record.

But several other members of the mass media have taken long strides toward this supposed advance in journalism.

Mark Ethridge, a member of the board of directors of the LOUISVILLE COURIER JOURNAL, outlines some of his paper's steps in presenting its readers a more meaningful explanation and summary of the news.

To begin, the LOUISVILLE COURIER JOURNAL, in itiated a unique Sunday section, in which the week's news is presented so as to show the interrelationships, the interweaving of news events—and explain their meaning in full context.

In addition the newspaper trains its reporters and editors in the tastes of its immediate reading public. Writers are trained to write to the level and taste of its Louisville audience. And the paper's reporters not only in Louisville, but in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, New York and Washington do just that.

The COURIER JOURNAL also has home reporters educated in specific fields who roam to all corners of the nation to present the news accurately to its readers.

According to Arnold Gingrich, publisher of ESQUIRE, this type of work would indicate a trend.

Gingrich believes the character and intellectual levels of the American public are rising. He points to the evolution of his own magazine from the day of pin-up girls to the present, when much of ESQUIRE'S material is real art, as evidence.

In that speech Gingrich offered a series of dares to American journalism. Most were dares not to fall into conformity or shy away from challenge. The last dare was the most significant, "Never let well enough alone."

Whatever the direction that American journalism travels in the next few telling years, it is important to remember that it has as its basic consideration, you, the public. It is for you that journalism dares to innovate.

"AND HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DOMESTIC POLICY, SEN. GOLDWATER?"

JOHN MORRIS, editor, ARNIE GARSON, managing editor; SUSAN SMITHBERGER, news editor; FRANK PARTSCH, MICK ROOD, senior staff writers; KAY ROOD, JUDI PETERRSON, BARBARA BERNEY, PRISCILLA MULLINS, WALLI LUNDEEN, TRAVIS HINER, junior staff writers; RICHARD HALBERT, DALE HAJEK, CAY LEITSCHUCK, copy editors; DENNIS DeFRAIN, photographer; PEGGY SPEECE, sports editor; JOHN HALLGREN, assistant sports editor; PRESTON LOVE, circulation manager; JIM DICK, subscription manager; JOHN ZEILINGER, business manager; BILL GUNLICKS, BOB CUNNINGHAM, PETE LAGE, business assistants.

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MOVIE REVIEW—

'Black Like Me'

EDITOR'S NOTE: This review was produced by Film Making and Moviegoing in New York City.

BLACK LIKE ME is based on the true adventures (and book) of John Howard Griffin. It stars James Whitmore. It was directed by Carl Lerner. It is a Walter Reade-Sterling release. It is about a white man named Horton (Whitmore) who darkens his skin chemically, and who travels through the South. White people think he's a negro and act accordingly.

Whitmore does this thing for two reasons: because he's a newspaper man, and it would be a good story; and because it's a matter of conscience with him. I imagine negroes might look with impatience on the second reason; whites would probably think it's the better reason.

I suppose that for white Americans the single most unknowable thing in America is the clear knowledge of how black Americans live. In point of fact, we can hardly hope to even faintly approximate that kind of knowledge. Why then does Horton make the trip? He must hope for some sort of purification (you know, like PILGRIM's PROGRESS). Now that may be all right for Horton, but it makes a problem for the film.

If white Americans can't know what they should know, you would think that they should at least be able to identify with a white man who lives as if he were a negro. But Whitmore always remains a white man, and this record of his experience therefore relates first to the white sensibilities of the audience (not the feeling that negroes live that way); it relates to the fact of how in these circumstances Whitmore as a white man must feel. If I thought, if I really believed, that the necessary relation to negro feelings would then be made, I wouldn't come down so hard, but I don't think it happens. I don't think it happens.

To a certain extent, however, the film does combine in a single person a double focus—white and black. This focus unravels three kinds of scenes: (1) Whitmore as a negro with negroes, (2) Whitmore revealed as a white man with negroes, (3) Whitmore as a negro with whites.

The scenes with the whites have a certain obligatory familiarity—in a word, they're typical. But of course Whitmore is trying to become a typical negro—he is never, a singular man. These scenes then are not unsatisfactory because they are untrue, but they do not come at us as they should. They seem weary and sluggish.

The scenes with the negroes are considerably better. There are two that I liked very much. The first is in a shoeshine parlor (it's the best in the film; it's the best I've ever seen). Whitmore has been in the shoeshine parlor as a white. He returns later with his skin darkened. He asks the negro shoeshine man (Richard Ward) to show him how he should act to be a convincing negro. And he gets for an answer five minutes of instruction—five lovely negro minutes of sly, biting, cold instruction.

The second scene is near the end of the film. Whitmore, weary of the trip, is staying with (and sharing the bed of) an old negro man (P. J. Sidney) and his young activist son (A. Freeman, Jr.) He tells them what he's trying to do. The son becomes angry—angry at this impersonation, this lark, this insane ignorance, this unasked for intrusion. And the old man reminds Whitmore that his skin is only temporarily black, that it's all just a charade, and he asks Whitmore to leave. And Whitmore leaves.

I think that the film breaks some new ground and I recommend it for that reason. It is, however, overlong. On the whole not a bad try: no easy answers; the occasional and unusual sound of truth.

Can We Preserve The Academic Community?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Royce H. Knapp is a Regents Professor of Education at the University. Here, he discusses some of the problems of growing higher education and proposes one solution which might ease some problems at Nebraska.

By Royce H. Knapp
Regents Professor of Education

It is the thesis of this presentation that the academic community is being threatened by outside forces, at least, by the specter of having some of our important problems solved from without rather than from within.

The enrollment trends in higher education during the past twenty years indicate that the dominant type of collegiate instruction for most students in the United States is that offered by the multi-purpose state universities. They have grown the fastest; they are the ones who can, and most likely will, absorb the extra hundreds of thousands who wish to go to college in the next decade. A recent study shows that if institutions, private and public, with enrollments of 0-399 were to treble in size, and those with 400-799 were to double, the additional places created would amount to approximately five or six hundred thousand. This is about one-sixth to one-fifth of conservative estimates of the 1970 requirements for additional places. About 75 to 80 percent of the total pressure would remain unabated. Therefore, the large increases are going to be in totally new universities such as those being built in California and in the state colleges and universities like those found in Nebraska and the Middle West. Some of the large public centers of higher education will undoubtedly get larger and new ones will have to be built if we find places for the students who are already at the junior high school level today.

Many of the great centers of learning, research, service, and professional training are already suffering because of insufficient buildings, faculties, and research funds. But more importantly, the individual student is rapidly becoming a statistic and a number on a computing machine. We are sometimes guilty of spending more time counting the students than we are in planning for their effective education. Unless some radical changes are made and rather quickly, the advantages of the great faculties, libraries, research facilities, all of which have required nearly fifty years to accumulate in these multiversities, may be lost to the individual student. When the enrollment bulge hits in the near future, supreme efforts will be needed to build buildings and to hire staffs to handle the multitude.

Perhaps just as pressing is our need to improve the quality of liberal or general studies. These are the studies which are required of all students to help them synthesize their intellectual outlook, to give them a more discriminating set of choices in a complex society, to help them discover richer and more meaningful leisure and cultural activities, and finally, to bolster their moral sensitivity and humane values. The hodgepodge of introductory courses in social sciences, humanities, sciences, and mathematics which we combine to call liberal education are chiefly organized as the beginnings of specialization, and as such, they are probably excellent. We are kidding ourselves, however, if we think these groups of required subjects satisfy the aims and purposes of liberal education. Jacques Barzun says, "The liberal arts tradition is dead or dying." There is little provision for undergraduate students to come in contact with outstanding intellectual leaders to discuss the meaning and relevance of the facts they are memorizing. We need to address ourselves seriously to the task of helping ALL students find some integrating perspective and synthesis in that diversity of human knowledge, ideals, and experience.

We have achieved a high degree of skill in building specialization into the undergraduate and graduate programs. Everyone can applaud and appreciate the performance of our majors in mathematics, chemistry, English, sociology, history, etc. We have effectively built our graduate programs on top of these specializations. We have placed our graduate students in close relationships with great advisers and researchers. Our graduate students are on the frontiers of exciting new knowledge, and their motivation, interest, and productivity is excellent. I believe it is probably the most desirable learning situation in the world today. And, it is the most expensive. If we could just achieve a measure of this faculty-student relationship at the undergraduate level, we would make a great stride forward.

Our multipurpose universities such as Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin and some others are located in metropolitan centers where land is expensive and where land occupancy surrounding the university is such as to prohibit faculty members living in proximity to the student body so that after dark, the students belong to housemothers, graduate counsellors, and the Dean of Students. Our faculties now live miles from the campus and come back and forth as commuters as if to a business or a factory. Our students meanwhile are being piled up in increasingly efficient and modern skyscrapers in the campus world, and our faculties rarely see them afternoons or after dark. I believe the essential spirit of an academic community is gradually and persistently disappearing.

We are also in the grip of economic and social forces that preclude our making an attack on these forces. State legislatures, city planners, and forces outside the academic community are more and more coming to conclusions based upon their own studies of higher education's role in the scheme of a city or state, while we sit busily enthralled with counting students and providing new techniques of automated instruction and taking up the slack with television and larger and larger lecture classes. We seem to be forever accommodating our educational goals and procedures to the social and economic forces which surround us. We must do something to break through these exogenous forces, and attempt to preserve the age old freedom of the academic community to design its program, provide its intellectual and moral atmosphere, and make such innovations as are required.

Transitory circumstances and enrollments ought not to determine our program of liberal education. Nor, should we permit economic and social forces to determine our programs of counseling, advisement, graduate instruction, student living conditions, or the major aims and activities of the academic community. The forces come and go and change with war, peace, foreign policy, but the great intellectual and moral commitments of higher education must retain some insularity and some basic stability for youth to pause and reflect on the profound problems of mankind.

Several times in our history, **institutions of higher education have made startling innovations in program, procedures and aims. Witness the rise of the elective system at Harvard under Elliott, the graduate program at Johns Hopkins under Gilman, the definition of the state university by Van Hise at Wisconsin and the experimental programs of the private colleges such as Bennington, St. Johns, Swarthomore, and others. Innovation and experimentation today can have their greatest impact when carried on at multipurpose institutions, I think, because they have the most students and the most varied enrollments. In recent years there have been many outstanding books and studies written on higher education that gives us sufficient background for our problems and some very good proposals for effecting change. Kerr, Morrill, Pusey, Millet, and several other college presidents have spoken out on some of our needs.**

As one small contribution to the problems of a multipurpose institution fronted with these problems of increasing enrollments, unsynthesized programs of liberal studies, the dissolution of the academic community, I suggest that we make plans to bring a portion of the University of Nebraska faculty back to the center of student life by placing about 30 leading members of our faculty from all branches of learning in homes adjacent to the campus. These homes should be open to students; the faculty members serving somewhat as do the Masters of the Houses at Harvard as general advisers and intellectual whetstones on which young men and women may sharpen whatever blades of wisdom and knowledge they are gaining.

It may be easier for me to tell you what I would not want these selected faculty members to do than to tell what they should do. They would not offer remedial instruction, manage activities, provide psychic advise for mental health, enforce rules, or recruit students for their special fields.

It should be their main job to help students come to an appreciation of their opportunities for higher education, to synthesize the learning process for students, and to live an exemplary life as a part of an academic community. They should be relieved of part of their work so they can talk to students individually and in groups in the afternoon and evenings. Each of these major faculty members should be assigned a fellow to help him with his courses and to serve an apprenticeship in college teaching. They should be provided a decent house for which they should pay a nominal rent. I would prefer that these men and women be selected from those holding rank of professor. They might be nominated by a committee of the graduating seniors and appointed by the Chancellor and the Board of Regents for terms of 3 to 5 years and then reappointed if the situation warrants.

I propose about 30 of these requiring about 30 homes at $30,000. In all, I see an outlay of about $1,000,000 on homes adjacent to the University. If we appointed 30 fellows at $3,000 each for subsistance, this would require about $90,000 annually to help these resident faculty members with their teaching.

Whatever the administrative details or sources of money, I think we should make this attack on some of our problems. We are aware that the specter of numbers is real, and that for the first time in our history we are living in relative student prosperity. We ought not to call it a problem with no solution. We ought, instead, make plans to sustain the identity, the richness, the intellectual promise, and the spirit of the academic community — not for gifted students only, but for the wider range of talents that Nebraska will continue to attract.

About Letters

The DAILY NEBRASKAN invites readers to use it for expressions of opinion on current topics regardless of viewpoint. Letters must be signed, contain a verifiable address, and be free of libelous matter to the chance of publication. Lengthy letters. Pen names may be in letters may be edited or omitted.