

EDITORIAL COMMENT

**Abortion—
time for change**

Veneral disease, one of society's worst menaces, is commonly defined as "disease usually transmitted through sexual intercourse." From this definition many people have concluded that the most widespread venerable disease is not gonorrhea or syphilis, but unwanted pregnancy.

While an unwanted pregnancy may not be a disease in the pure sense of the word, it does produce immense physical, mental, social and economic suffering.

However, it is extremely hard for a woman to obtain an abortion in Nebraska. The state's laws, adopted more than 80 years ago, say the operation is legal only to save the mother's life.

With the increasing number of states adopting liberalized abortion laws, it is a good time to ask the question: how realistic is Nebraska's nearly absolute ban on abortion?

Most of the facts point to the conclusion that Nebraska laws on abortion should be changed by the Legislature.

There is increasing public opinion in Nebraska to change the existing abortion laws. An "information week" on abortion, sponsored by the Nebraska Organization for the Repeal of Abortion Laws, starts Monday at UNL. The organization is attempting to change Nebraska laws so abortion is strictly a matter between the physician and the woman.

One of the best arguments for legalizing abortion is that the practice would be voluntary. It would be a decision of the expectant woman to end her pregnancy.

Actually Nebraska women who want and can afford an abortion can get it now since many states have legalized the practice. Mrs. Twig Daniels, who is actively involved in birth control counseling in Lincoln, estimates an average of 25 to 30 Lincoln women have abortions each week. About 60 per cent of them are college students.

However, out-of-state abortions are usually expensive. Thus only the very poor are now usually prevented by Nebraska law from having a legal abortion.

Although abortion is widely practiced, it is definitely not the best means of birth control. The moral and religious questions involved with abortion should never be forgotten. However, the views of a group such as the Catholic Church do not necessarily make the best laws for the whole society.

Often attempts at legislate morality create greater problems than they solve. Such is the case with Nebraska's abortion laws.

Gary Seacrest

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

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Telephones: editor: 472-2588, news: 472-2589, advertising: 472-2590. Second class postage rates paid at Lincoln, Nebraska. Subscription rates are \$5 per semester or \$9 per year. Published Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during the school year except during vacation and exam periods. Member of the Intercollegiate Press, National Educational Advertising Service.

The Daily Nebraskan is a student publication, editorially independent of the University of Nebraska's administration, faculty and student government.

Address: The Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508.



Phoenix, escalating from the ashes



jeffrey hart
Verbal hysteria

In a famous essay called "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell showed how polysyllabic bureaucratic jargon could be used to place a barrier between reality and understanding. The "rectification of frontiers" meant an invasion. "Re-education" meant a trip to Siberia. "Liquidation" meant murder. But the jargon veiled the facts.

Since the mid-1960s another and even more insidious kind of corruption has been eroding the relations between language and reality. I call it the rhetoric of moral indignation, and it has now slipped totally out of control. The terms of abuse are now so heightened that they have ceased to reflect any sort of reality.

Looking back, it seems to me that the first important and symptomatic instance of this sort of thing was the widespread acceptance of the term "ghetto" to describe Negro neighborhoods. This usage obliterated the fundamental differences between such neighborhoods and the Jewish circumstance in pre-war Europe. But if it failed analytically and descriptively, it was a tremendous emotional success.

The use of the term really signified that the user was against the current situation of the Negro in America. And it opened the way, by a metaphoric leap, to the related use of the adjectives "fascist" and "racist" to describe the rest of the American society. If the Negro neighborhood was a "ghetto," then Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were "Hitler."

The rhetorical floodgates are now wide open. The hopped-up feverish statement gains attention at the expense of the more reasonable one, and both politicians and journalists instinctively grasp this tactical fact. Last week it was Teddy Kennedy charging that Nixon was

trying to "destroy" the Constitution. The week before that it was William Kunstler charging that Nelson Rockefeller is a murderer. This week, as the political season approaches, the examples multiply. Do you realize that you are living under a reign of terror? Listen to Harriet Van Horne writing in the New York Post:

"We are losing our freedoms. We are losing them more rapidly, more insidiously during these Nixon years than at any time since the first World War. . . we are experiencing a tyranny over the mind of man that is virtually without precedent in modern times. . . Even if a new administration is voted in at the next election, it will still require a generation or more to erase the scars and heal the blows dealt our system by the Nixon bureaucracy."

Pondering those sentences, you wonder whether this columnist really believes what she is writing: "A tyranny over the mind of man is virtually without precedent in modern times." No, in fact she does not, I think, really believe that. But it sounds good to her; it is expressive and operatic.

Harriet Van Horne is not an isolated example. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has issued a report called "The Nixon Administration and the Press" which is the occasion for her spasm of indignation. An example of the ACLU rhetoric: "There are some who say freedom of the press is now in the greatest danger of being lost in America. There are others who say it is all but lost already."

After a dose of this sort of thing it is a relief to get back to the language of fact and sober analysis, a change that is like a refreshing swim in a clear, cool stream.

Distributed by King Features Syndicate



bob russell
Odyssey on Zero Street

The other night I was bored, disinterested, at wit's end for what to do. I was not tired, but my will power was at an extremely low ebb. For us existentialists, this experience is known as "coming to grips with nothingness." The only thing I can compare this to is when Jesus people "are saved", a sort of opposite similar experience.

I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do. I tried sleeping, but I would just lay on my bed with my eyes open. Finally, inspiration struck, "Why not experience nothingness to the fullest degree, McDonald's Restaurant?"

I drove to the McDonald's at 48th and "O" (Zero for you Allen Ginsberg freaks). As I traveled down Zero Street, I experienced American architecture to the greatest extent, the endless motels, billboards, neon signs, drive-ins etc. And it is from this etc. that I gained my name for this type of architecture. I dubbed it "Gas Station Architecture."

Tom Wolfe, author of *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* and *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, designated Las Vegas, the ultimate example of Gas Station Architecture, as the "Versailles of the modern western world", as it is the only city in modern Western culture that has uniform architecture.

Robert Venturi and Denise Brown, architectural professors at Yale, have defended Gas Station Architecture, saying that it's here to stay so we might as well learn to live with it.

As I entered the McDonald's parking lot, I noticed on their billboard that they had sold six billion hamburgers, which means that every American has bought around thirty hamburgers. Figuring five minutes a hamburger, each one of us has spent at least two and a half hours in the mere act of eating McDonald's hamburgers.

I had to walk across the parking lot to enter the establishment. As I walked across the lot, I noticed people flipping nearly everything out their car windows: napkins, cups, french fries, pickles. These acts made me regain my faith in the American economy, because every cup thrown out had

to be picked up, thereby creating extra employment. This extra employment would require more wages, thus increasing the Gross (in two ways) National Product.

The people in the place were mostly turned-on teens making a pit stop in their rodding around. The cars of these kids are easily identifiable. The males drive hopped-up cars with those tractor-size rear tires, giving the car a 45 degree forward tilt. The girls drive their parents' large suburban cars.

I finally ordered my food: two double hamburgers, french fries, a chocolate shake, and a small Coke. I always order double hamburgers. In an operation that usually produces single hamburgers, ordering something else, like a double hamburger or a hamburger without pickles or mustard, is an act of pure joy and anarchy. It takes them ten minutes or so to get the word through the chain of command in order to produce a double hamburger.

After an eternity they brought me the food (loosely defined). I was disappointed that they rang up the bill on a regular cash register. At King's, in addition to patriotic messages and telephone ordering, the bill is rung up on the Digitmaster, a glorious super adding machine.

The way McDonald's food is manufactured has definite effects on the body. The hamburgers are a bit greasy, as are the french fries. With some mysterious process, there seems to be an inordinate quantity of air in the malts and Cokes, as if air were somehow injected.

The effect of this food are either somewhat immediate or are delayed. If the effects are immediate, one must belch. If this proves to be impossible, the effects are delayed, and one must f-t. The gas to be exuded must come out one end or the other. As they say, "Flatulence is our motto."

After finishing, I did the ritual croak. Then I noticed this hamburger laying on the sidewalk. A dog went up to it, took a sniff, then a bite, belched, and then trotted away. Never a more fitting end.

With that I pulled back on to Zero Street.

LETTERS to the NEBRASKAN

Brevity in letters is requested and the Daily Nebraskan reserves the right to condense letters. All letters must be accompanied by writer's true name but may be submitted for publication under a pen name or initials. However, letters will be printed under a pen name or initials at the editor's discretion.

Dear editor,

There is an element on our campus that absolutely turns me off. This element consists of various students who have to crusade every damn thing that comes up. This group has four or five pillars of strength that obviously thrive on splashing their name as often as they can in the news media.

I am, however, insulted that this group feels that it has to be the conscience of what they obviously consider an effete student body and community.

Simply because their form of protest takes the form of public statements and demonstrations does not mean that only that element of our student population is deeply concerned about the general state of affairs in our country and state. Many of us work with many different organizations around town which contribute greatly toward reform in many areas.

I, for example, would rather work through the church and help collect blankets and clothing for families in India or Pakistan, rather than standing at a booth all day doing nothing but talking a lot.

I would rather use my annual church pledge as a contribution to the deacons fund, so that hungry people in my immediate neighborhood can eat if they are hungry. I would rather spend my time marching on "Honey Sunday" for the Jaycees, than standing around talking. There are many problems in our country that are just as important as the war.

Since this is America I would say, "You do your thing, and I'll do my thing. As long as we are both putting our best foot forward striving for significant change in an important area, we should not be insulted because somebody else thinks that we should be doing something different."

The statement has been made, "Bob Hope is about as funny as a dead Vietnamese baby." Bob Hope is a very funny fellow, yet, there is nothing at all funny to me about a dead Vietnamese anybody.

S.H.

Dear editor,

It is unfortunate that the Youth Coalition for Muskie has already been reduced to a state of ideological bankruptcy. Enough attention was focused on the Students for McGovern's

poor choice of dorm leafletting methods in the November 5th issue of *The Daily Nebraskan*; Roy Baldwin and Allen Bricker's subsequent "denunciation" was as superfluous as it was puerile.

The "Coalition" for Muskie would do well to re-evaluate their own strategy and begin to educate the public about the merits of their candidate. We would like to know more about the man himself and how he stands on the issues of the Indochina War, racism, poverty, unemployment, and the overall mis-management of the economy, and not merely how well he rates on national polls.

The idea that his middle-of-the-road stance makes him "the one" is disturbingly reminiscent of references made in the '68 campaign to the desirability of the Republican front-runner.

Muskie's choice of running without announcing his candidacy may be the most expedient, but is it the most honest one? (And while we are on the subject of information, it would be only slightly less interesting to learn how Roy Baldwin metamorphosed into a moderate.)

Instead of bemoaning the fact that they will be unable to use dormitory mailboxes to distribute their literature, the Muskie students should make active use of the many other channels available to them.

Andy Cunningham

Dear editor,

The "All American" Michael Hilgert said that I seem to despise America and I should go to North Vietnam or Cuba (*The Daily Nebraskan*, Nov. 12).

I don't seem to despise America, I despise "All American" Americans like him and the idiotic/racist institutions they stand for. He'd probably tell the "Native Americans" (Indian American) to go to North Vietnam or Cuba if they didn't like "All American" Americans like him and the idiotic/racist institutions they stand for.

I think Michael Hilgert should read the "All American" Constitution and the "All American" Declaration of Independence, and then come talk to a militant African American who is a product of this "All American" America. Sanjulu Michael C. Randall

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The Marines are looking for a few good men to lead.

FOR DETAILS, CAPTAIN TAYLOR WILL BE IN THE NEBRASKA UNION, PLACEMENT OFFICE ON NOVEMBER 16, 17 and 18 FROM 10 AM to 3 PM

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