

KIRBY MOSS

Interracial dating is bold choice

The couple next to them direct a furtive glance of surprise and disgust. A black man and white woman sit in the center of the restaurant, as if in an arena. He's kind of stout. She's blond. Must be a football player and a sorority girl?

There are many Mexican-American and white, Asian-American and white, Mexican-American and black couples. But for some reason, Americans see something curiously degrading about the thought of black and white people mixing intimately.

Race and dating. Why should it matter since beneath the thin layer of color exist two people? But add their contrasting colors and they find themselves alone. Scorned by whites and blacks as well.

Interesting, though, when a white woman has a black male friend as a co-worker. Pure friends, eh. Her family hails her as a humane person able to transcend society's racial injustices. An open mind.

They say: "We the family are the same way. See, we invite him over for dinner." When he calls for her: "Oh! It's you. Glad to hear from you. She'll be right with you. How are things with you?"

But one day that platonic relationship melts into intimacy and other tender feelings. At the same time the family's perceived openness erupts into fear and shame. Ironic. He was good enough to be a friend. Now that they want to be more than that, he's sub-human.

"Maybe she's a victim of some powerful, carnal black voodoo curse?"

No. That's not it at all. They're in love. Above race. Above history and societal mores. Love transcends all.

"It's just a phase she's going through. Rebelling. That's it. It's her hormones. Once the flame of lust dies out, she'll realize her mistake and the shame."



Race and dating. Why should it matter since beneath the thin layer of color exist two people?

But, no. Again, love. It even transcends lust and sex. They want to get married. Have babies!

"Oh! Now that's going a little too far. Stop this charade at once! Besides, what kind of life will those kids have. I mean, they will be confused. Lost souls. Freaks of nature. No one will accept them. Poor kids. How can you both so selfishly do this to them? How can you do this to us? They'd be our grandchildren, after all!"

They marry. Wrapped in their difference, they believe in what they're doing. Two people in love, that's all.

"I'll never speak to her again. She's shamed me and this family."

For years family and castaways exist on their respective sides of the familial fence. Separate Christmases. Separate Thanksgivings. A distinct blank spot in the family reunion pictures.

Eventually, after symbolic hate has eaten away their anger, the parents give in. They want to see their grandchildren. But must the contrasting couple accept? Independent now. Strong and proud of their stance so

many years ago. Can love transcend ignorance?

All the family's hot words said in protest long ago still cut them both.

"How can you marry a nigger?! We didn't raise you to be white trash! We don't want black grandchildren! You're a disgrace to this family!"

The couple decides: We must stand by the rule you made. We can only love and respect those who love and respect us.

That's fiction, folks say. It's not like that anymore many people believe. Interracial dating must be OK.

In 1989, census numbers showed that of the 52.9 million total married couples in America, 219,000 — 4 percent — were mixed black and white couples.

Society constructs such high, righteous walls to say it's immoral to date between races. Consequently, mixed couples are sneered at. Stared at. They are perceived as two people who have turned their backs on their respective cultures.

I've tried interracial dating. For many of the reasons mentioned in this column, it didn't work. No regrets. I learned a huge lesson, however. Couples don't exist in a vacuum. Family, friends, society all take their jabs at you.

"However, because of my woeful experience, I'm not about to say brothas should only date sistas, and white folks only white folks. That's absurd. Date who you want, but be aware. Because to date in black and white is to look society straight in its evasive, hollow eyes and say:

"I don't care what you think you cowardly bastard," because it is society in all of its forms that is the ultimate nemesis.

Moss is a graduate student in anthropology and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

GARY YOUNG

Generic prayer is minor loss

An uninterested observer of the current squabble over prayer at graduation might think the national debate over church and state was of little consequence. At issue is whether we should pray to a nonsectarian, unnamed, faceless spiritual thing out there, a divine being. Simpler, the debate is whether or not we should nod in respect to a god who would not require any exclusive devotion, an ultimately silly god.

On one side of the debate is a slew of academic bureaucrats overcome by the spirit of this age, moralizing that enlightened tolerance means we should obliterate every vestige of America's clearly Christian heritage. The gods of their faith are the fads of "diversity" and "tolerance." These gods insist on the dubious claim that being tolerant of people who may have different gods requires abandoning all claims that any particular god is truly worthy of prayer.

But the prayer advocates should not fret if these barbarians force their diversity religion on them. Losing prayers to an unjealous god is a low-cost casualty in this cultural onslaught. One might be more nervous when the cultural barbarians make it personal, when they target individuals who would pray to a God with a Name.

One such target is Jimmy Zobrest, a plaintiff in a lawsuit currently before the U.S. Supreme Court. Zobrest is a deaf Arizona boy who requires a sign-language interpreter in school. He attends a private school, and Arizona state law requires that the public school district where he lives provide him with an interpreter.

The only problem is: Zobrest is Roman Catholic.

Thus, the high-minded school district refused to supply the interpreter. Apparently helping a deaf kid under-



Simpler, the debate is whether or not we should nod in respect to a god who would not require any exclusive devotion, an ultimately silly god.

stand what his teachers say would be to violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution. The Zobrests filed suit and the trial court agreed with the school district.

The trial court's holding was a surprise to most. Courts have long held that the establishment clause does not mean, for example, that fire stations should not provide the basic public service of putting out fires, simply because it is a church that is burning. Apparently for the court however, the basic public service of a sign-language interpreter is another matter.

Eminent Yale law professor Akhil Amar has pointed out that an honest reading of the establishment clause suggests that the past 40 years of constitutional jurisprudence on church and state is historically dishonest.

"Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of any re-

ligion." The stress is properly on "respecting," not "establishment." That is to say, Congress was restricted from respecting one state's established religion over another state's. Connecticut or New Hampshire — each of which had official state religions well into the 19th century — could relax, assured that the federal government would not force the religion of the other onto it.

At its root, the establishment clause is a protection of state's rights. As such, it should never have been incorporated; states should be free from its restraints.


The courts departed from this original intent long ago. In itself this is no wrong; the Constitution is a living document, and the American project is a living tradition. The challenge to any living tradition is to respond to social change by wisely co-opting it into its original presuppositions. Change can bring new life to the project. Mishandled, change can make it sick.

Re-examining the history of the clause suggests that those who would attack all vestiges of religion in our culture — to be forthright, those who would attack its Christian aspects — do not live within the assumptions of the American project. Rather, to meet their goals, they must stand against the project, they must distort it.


Their revision of history is painless to them because they do not yet bare the costs of it. This month the Supreme Court, however, will witness one who does: A poor deaf boy whose only fault is that unlike the interfaith prayers we quibble over, he prays to a God with a Name. A dangerous thing to do in these "tolerant" times.

Young is a first-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



IMPROVE YOUR NIGHT LIFE.



Too many accidents are caused by car drivers who didn't see the motorcyclists. That's why reflective vests, bright clothing, and reflectorized tape are so important. They help you be seen. And standing out on a dark, crowded road can keep your evening from being ruined. **MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOUNDATION**



ATTENTION
MAY 1993 GRADUATES
 Your Degree Application is Due
FEBRUARY 8, 1993
 Apply at 107 Administration


ROBERT MAX OPTICIANS
unique eyewear

LINCOLN
 330 No. Cotner Blvd
 Suite 5
 467-4300
OMAHA
 120 Regency Pkwy
 397-0930

OLIVER PORTS

A Face is Like a Work of Art. It Deserves a Great Frame.

UNL TAE KWON DO-KARATE CLUB



- Self Defense
- Self Confidence
- Reduce stress and tension
- Get in shape

Beginners Class
 Tues. & Thurs.
 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Contact: Campus Rec. 472-3467 or
 Chris 483-6174

JOIN
 UNIVERSITY PROGRAM COUNCIL

UPC

THE CHOICE IS YOURS
 LEADERSHIP, EXPERIENCE
 ENTERTAINMENT, EXCITEMENT

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT
 117 NEBRASKA UNION
 300 NEBRASKA EAST UNION

APPLICATIONS ARE
 DUE FEBRUARY 15!