

KIM STOCK

Cultures present perspectives

Last December, I had the opportunity to display my acting talent as a bit part in UNL's production of a "Christmas Carol." And when I say it was a bit part, I mean it was a bit part. I'm sure most people who payed the \$20 to see the play wouldn't even be able to recall my presence on the stage. But, that's OK, it was a learning experience to just be able to stand on the Lied Center stage. I was also pleased to see a few brown faces amid a sea of white faces promising a few specks of diversity in our cast.

But, my excitement about being in "A Christmas Carol" fizzled when during our first dress rehearsal, a fellow actor came into our dressing room with some disturbing news. The actor told us that the directors were trying to put white make-up on an Asian actor who played as one of Bob Cratchit's sons. From the directors' points of view, it seemed natural to make this actor fit in with the rest of the Cratchit family by making him appear as white as the other white actors. I, as well as many of my fellow cast members, saw it as stripping that actor of something that the directors could not nor should not change — his race.

That incident clouded my faith that I once felt for the theatre department. Perhaps the directors forgot that it was just last summer that the Nebraska Repertory Theatre did a production of David Hwang's "M. Butterfly." Perhaps the directors forgot that theatre is an art that doesn't necessarily reflect reality — who cares if one of the Cratchits was Asian. Perhaps the directors forgot that theatre at times can reflect changing reality, minorities do not want to be Step-in-Fetch-it-Bruce-Lee's any more.

So what does this have to do with anything? The point is that this inci-



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dent was caused by the directors' ignorance on the role that minorities now play in theatre. But the directors' ignorance is just a reflection of all peoples' ignorance about the role that minorities play in life. That is where education plays a vital role in how we perceive each other.

Multicultural education shouldn't be about presenting one race as superior to another, but rather, should be about presenting the truth. If we, as Americans claim to be proud of our diversity, then why can't our diversity be reflected in our classrooms?

For example, not too long ago I took an Advanced Placement Literature class that was supposed to help us explore general literature from a more "scholarly" point of view. However, when the year was almost through, I confronted my teacher about why it was that every author we studied was a white male.

Somehow, my teacher left out

women and minority authors. It wasn't that the authors that we read weren't good, most of them were brilliant writers, it's just that the class, which was supposed to be a general literature class, was presented from a biased perspective. We missed out on the whole picture of what literature is.

Of course, there is also the argument that if we are going to have classes such as Native American Literature why don't we have classes such as White American History? The reason why is because we already have White American History, it's just under a different name — American History.

If a student takes a typical American History class, chances are the student will study great men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Undeniably these are great men to study and they should be studied. But, they are all white.

What about the role that Native Americans played in the Revolutionary War, or the role that blacks played in the Civil War? Why should we deny these people the recognition of the roles that they played in American history?

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By the way, the Cratchits could have very well have had an Asian son. My parents are white with an Asian daughter. My brother, who is also white, likes to read Rush Limbaugh's opinions on multicultural education to me from the dinner table. Like I said, it's about presenting things from all perspectives.

Stock is a sophomore secondary English education major and a Summer Daily Nebraskan columnist.

WHAT DOES UNL THINK?

What do you think of the decision to wait to repair Memorial Stadium until after football season?

"I personally think it should be fixed before because they're going to lose a lot of revenue from seats that aren't there. Maybe the University needs to take time out and examine the whole stadium."

Andy Budell
Political Science
Junior

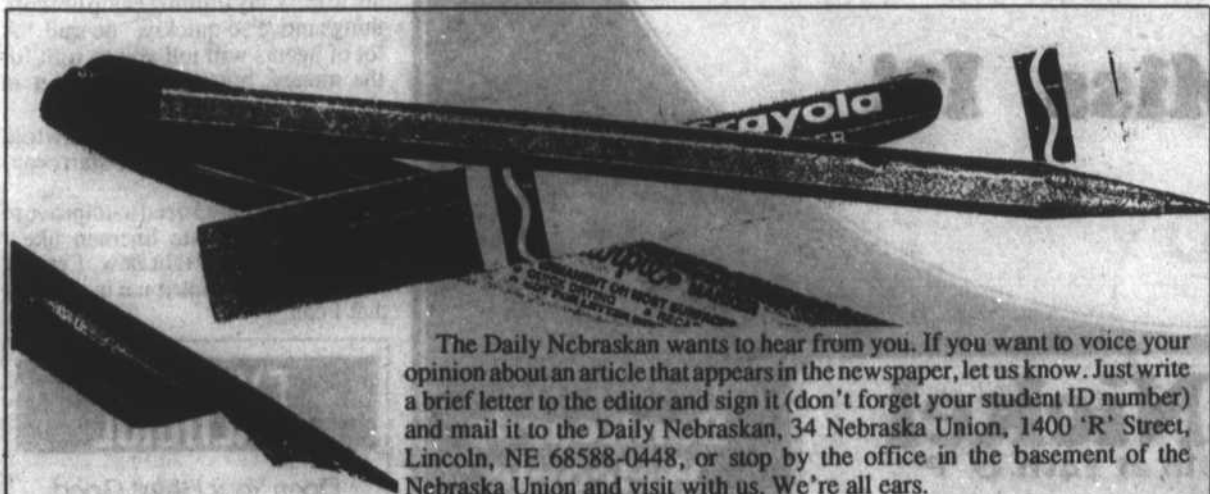
"I don't think its that big of a problem. I don't think seating will be that much of a problem if they don't fix it — I don't think it's a problem if it's fixed afterwards. If they are going to use their own money, they can fix it whenever they want."

Lisa Valentine
Broadcasting
Senior

"I'm very anti-Big Red. But I think it should be fixed before the season starts . . . it's only logical."

Randy Watson
PhD in English
Graduate student

Compiled by Stacie Hakel



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