

RAINBOW ROWELL

'World' lacks Midwesterners

I love Nebraska. If I can help it, I'm never leaving Nebraska. Everything I'll ever need is right here: friends, family, a few movie theaters, a few libraries, a reasonably broad selection of fast-food restaurants.

For the rest of my life, I don't ever have to venture past the panhandle or the Missouri River.

If I get tired of eastern Nebraska, I can always visit Pioneer Village or Chimney Rock. And if I desperately need a change of pace, I can take a pilgrimage to the Black Hills or Kansas City once or twice a decade.

Say what you will about Nebraska. Complain about its lack of oceans and skyscrapers. Whine about the weather and the tractors clogging up the interstates. But you cannot deny that Nebraska is a friendly place. And that Nebraskans, in general, are very, very friendly.

In Nebraska, we're nice to everyone — even people we don't know. I suppose this Mayberry-like friendliness has its dark side: It could be dangerous.

I know I'm far too nice to strangers. Not that I'd accept candy from a stranger or anything, especially if it was his last piece.

I like being nice to people and being around nice people. But the rest of the country might take us more seriously if we weren't so friendly.

That's probably why there's never anyone from Nebraska on "The Real World" — that MTV creation that captures ON FILM the hi-jinks that occur when six strangers are forced to live together in a posh New York apartment or a beach house.

In its two-season run on everyone's favorite music network, "The Real World" has had all sorts of wacky REAL, LIVE people. Actress-wannabes, model-wannabes, poet-wannabes, etc.

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a broad-minded network, "The Real World" features folks of different races and sexual preferences, and even a future host of "The Grind."

Talk about diversity! They've had a rapper AND a country musician AND a folk singer.

Just one demographic group has been suspiciously ignored — Midwesterners.

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I suppose we're just not exciting enough. We wouldn't create enough screaming and hissing to keep the cameramen busy.

Even really mean Nebraskans are more courteous than the "Real World" gang, and we avoid conflict like the Black Plague if we can help it.

It's significant that Nebraska is not famous for any uprisings or riots and that no wars are named after our state.

Those MTV people probably know what they're doing. I wouldn't watch "The Real World" if it were about Midwesterners.

"Tune in next week when Lisa catches Kristen wearing her favorite sweater...."

"Oh my God, Kristen, you're wearing my sweater. You look so much better in it than I do. You have to keep it."

Their biggest fights would be about who was going to do the dishes. "I'm doing the dishes tonight."

"I won't hear of it. I'm doing the dishes. You relax."

"Stop this insanity! I can't believe you two. Why do we always have to argue? Can't we get through just one meal that doesn't end in a shouting match? Just get out of here. I'm doing the dishes."

I'm not saying that they wouldn't hate each other on "The Real Midwest." They most certainly would. But they would never let on.

Well, maybe it would be exciting. Few things are more amusing than watching two people who hate each other bend over backward to out-nice one another.

But subtext and underlying tensions seem a little subtle for MTV audiences. Watching people smilingly seethe isn't quite as thrilling as watching them throw punches and dump mouthwash on each other's beds.

They have courteous Southerners on "The Real World." I guess MTV excuses their friendliness because they have silly accents and commit interesting racial faux pas.

Remember the time the cute Southern girl asked the black girl, "Are you a drug dealer?" And the time the dimpled Southern guy, asked his black roommate, "Do you mind if I hang a confederate flag?"

That's television!

Rowell is a junior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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