

KIM STOCK

# America is like a giant salad

Imagine a world where everyone is green.

This world wouldn't be much different from the place we live: These green people — let's call them Greendroids — like to eat, sleep, and watch television, just like their Earth brothers and sisters.

Young Greendroids attend college so they can join the older civilians in the 9-to-5 work world upon graduation. Greendroid parents want to send their children to the best schools where they won't have to worry about drugs and weapons in the classroom. When Greendroids reach age 65, they receive a social security check every month from their government and are eligible for 10 percent discounts at all local restaurants.

The only way the Greendroid world is different from our own is that everyone has the same skin color, comes from the same culture, speaks the same language, eats the same food, practices the same religion and wears the same style of clothing. The Greendroid world is as homogenous as all 200 pieces of paper in a notebook.

I suppose some people think the idea of identicalness is nice. Some insist we should look at everyone as if they were no different from ourselves. Politically correct scholars are spreading the message that people must be "color blind" in order to think of the next person as equal.

Let me explain. Being color blind is pretending that the person of color sitting next to you is no different. If you are successful at achieving color-blind status, you will often catch yourself saying things such as "Oh, I don't even think of Bill as a black man" or "I forget that Sue is Chinese, because she doesn't act, you know,



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Oriental."

Although color blindness may seem like a good idea, it actually is an unrealistic and silly notion. We are so afraid of being considered racist that we think the only way to cure ourselves of this ailment is to ignore race as an issue.

People love the idea of America being the great melting pot — people of all races and ethnicities coming together and literally melting away their heritage to create people who are the same. However, I don't want to contribute to a melting pot, because I don't want to lose my background as a Korean American.

I don't want my children to grow up believing that being Korean is no different than being white, black, or Portuguese. The truth is, we are all different.

And being different isn't such a bad thing.

America should instead be thought of as a giant salad. A salad consists of green lettuce, red tomatoes, brown mushrooms, white onions and orange carrots. If you take out the carrots, you still would have a salad, but it wouldn't be as good. Take out everything except the lettuce, and you no longer have a salad. Every vegetable equally contributes to the salad. One vegetable alone doesn't

make a good salad.

We shouldn't have to ignore one another's colors. Appreciate me for being Korean, and I'll appreciate you for being German or Irish.

It's true that my race doesn't make me a fundamentally different person. I'm a college student, and I worry about my future just like the next person. But my race does help me see things in a different light. The same is true about my religious beliefs, my family values and the high school I attended.

If we were all the same, this world would be a boring place. We wouldn't want to travel to Europe because it would look just like America. There wouldn't be foods such as lasagna, burritos, corned beef and won-ton soup. We wouldn't have the Spanish channel or the Chicago Korean Times. We'd be forced to eat hot dogs and hamburgers while watching soap operas all day.

The Greendroids are all the same. You've met one Greendroid, you've met them all. We, however, should not pretend we are identical; instead, we should acknowledge our differences.

Now, what kind of dressing did you want with your salad?

Stock is a junior secondary education major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

E. HUGHES SHANKS

# Racial definitions usually dumb

Last week a white friend of mine asked me about the O.J. Simpson case. He said, "I heard he really wasn't black anymore — that he had become white." He waited for my reply.

I had so many things to say. I didn't know where to begin. I could have said, "Listen, you white son of a bitch, what the hell do you know about being black?" But I didn't.

I could have said, "Yeah, that black bastard betrayed his race." But I didn't. Instead, I chickened out and simply said, "Oh?" And I've been talking about my friend behind his back for his ridiculous assertion ever since.

As I try to sort out this business about who is black and who isn't, I've decided first to look at the color of the person talking. If their skin is at least as dark as the person about whose blackness they are talking, fine.

If they are lighter, their opinion can't be as valuable. I mean, really! Can a white person tell a black person what it means to be black? I don't think so.

Black people know what color they are. How could we forget? We also know we are not supposed to be white. We don't need any reminders about what it means to be thought of as, GASP, an Uncle Tom. (That's slang for a black person acting white or for one who invests more time disassociating oneself from black culture than identifying with it.)

The term "Uncle Tom" isn't used as much as it used to be, but the sin of not acting black enough persists. The punishment can mean strikes against all blacks.

Blacks know what kind of responsibilities the "house nigger" has to the rest of the black race. One mistake can turn the massa' on us. Damn it, O.J., you made it harder for us blacks to move up. You blew it! You had everything — except a dark brown woman — and you were arrested for killing a white woman.



*The term "Uncle Tom" isn't used as much as it used to be, but the sin of not acting black enough persists. The punishment can mean strikes against all blacks.*

Just what the hell is wrong with you, BOY?

Being anything but black is one of the nine deadly sins: talking white, walking white, dancing white, dating white, marrying white, not having answers ready for people who ask about black issues, voting Republican, not being seen with enough black people, and finally, criticizing anyone who is black.

Blacks commit these sins at the risk of being accused of the worst sin of all: wanting to be anything other than black. Neither O.J. Simpson nor any other black person is supposed to want to be anything but black. Don't forget your place.

Recently, I've heard a lot of talk about how O.J. Simpson isn't really black. Apparently, his lifestyle turned him into kind of an aspiring or wanna-be white, and that seems to be a strike against him.

I've heard both blacks and whites saying O.J. Simpson's situation somehow is tied to having forsaken his blackness. The punishment for forsaking your race is banishment. No one group wants you except those who also have forsaken their race or those who don't care.

Whites and blacks now can say, "That's what he gets for being so white, so it serves him right." It is as if it's OK to be in "whitey's" house, but don't make them regret letting you in. And for God's sake, don't embarrass blacks and make it harder for us to get in when it's our turn. It

seems that unless your name is Vanilla Ice, it's OK to be white and act black. So why isn't it OK to be black and act white?

Once you are found guilty of one of the nine deadly sins, black folks who don't commit them don't like you. White folks, on the other hand, like you even more.

As a black man who has been found guilty, been tried and been convicted of several such "sins" in different combinations over the years, I can tell you, sometimes it gets lonely at the top. Just kidding.

What does it mean to be black anyway? Is it all about being poor, oppressed, mad at white people and having mostly black friends? If that's what being black is all about, no, thank you.

If it means being a whole person, with lots of different kinds of friends (which most people don't have), and being able to move about in society with success, yes, thank you.

Discussing what O.J. Simpson seems to have done in his life because of his lifestyle is a ridiculous racist thing to do. Oh yes, blacks can have racist attitudes too. For blacks to stoop solely to a race-based explanation for things is exactly what we've been telling whites to stop doing.

And that's a part of being black I don't want any part of.

Shanks is a graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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