

Hiding behind mask of racism

My friends, we are presently faced with a deadly foe that is entirely capable of collapsing the cracked and crumbling foundation of our social state. It spreads and infects like a virus, leaving wounds that quite often never heal and scars that never really go away.

I'm speaking of racism. The eternal plague of humanity, the scourge of the masses, the disease without a cure.

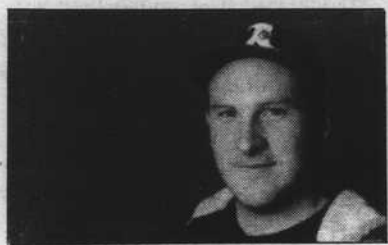
The racism that runs unchecked today is far different from that of 10, 20 or 30 years ago. It used to be simple in the sense that it was largely one-sided and blatant. Whites persecuted blacks and openly treated them as second-class citizens for the better part of 200 years.

In recent years, however, racism has evolved into a beast that is just as destructive as before, but now includes a subtlety that resembles an ocean current's undertow — you don't realize the harm until you start to drown.

There is a backlash among the ranks, swinging and punching through the walls of social order, sucking in any who will join in the free-for-all decline of the urban infrastructure.

In this new age of racism, whites, blacks and other minorities prey on the fear of and for their counterparts by initiating and cultivating irresponsible and deviating actions and accusations which give rise to the one thing we, as a country, have fought so hard to eliminate: separation.

Stereotypes, founded by poor heritage and tradition and supported by the continuously damaging media microscope, still eat away at the delicate relationships between various peoples. To many



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blacks, Hispanics and other minorities, the white race is the enemy, the oppressor, the reason for segregation in the first place. To many whites, the minorities are the source of violence, crime and general rot in cities across America.

These classifications are absorbed into the communal psyche and are impossible to break loose after being repeatedly hammered into place.

The Colin Ferguson debacle is an example of an individual attempting to take advantage of the uneasy racial relations in the United States. Ferguson was charged with shooting 25 people on a Long Island Railroad commuter train on Dec. 7, 1993. Six were killed in the attack.

Ferguson claimed that the shootings were committed by a white man who stole his gun while he was sleeping on the train. The gun was a semi-automatic assault rifle, which begs the question of why Ferguson was carrying a loaded gun on a train anyway.

The point of this column is not to convict Ferguson (since a New York jury did just that on Friday), but to show that in order to save himself, he attempted to interject a racially motivated argument.

(Ferguson has since changed his story, saying that a black man who looks like him is trying to frame

him.) The same can be said for Susan Smith. She fanned prejudiced flames by claiming, on national television no less, that a black man was responsible for the disappearance of her two young children. The state of South Carolina was in an uproar, applying tremendous pressure upon the black community while searching for a suspect. Smith has since been charged with the murders and is presently standing trial.

Then there's the television menace. If you don't think that television plays a powerful part in our decision-making processes, then you're probably living in a vacuum.

Every day we see whites, blacks, Hispanics and others portrayed in a particular manner by the news and entertainment media. We are bombarded by repeated images of blacks killing blacks in the ghetto, whites in high positions being pointed out for crimes against humanity, illegal immigrants (especially Hispanics) sucking a free ride from the government, minorities across the world killing each other savagely; the list goes on and on.

The influence of television, as well as damaging statements by selfish people, makes it easier to be engulfed in racism. But we must look beyond the hatred if we are to survive as a nation.

Racial prejudice, discrimination, social oppression. All of these illnesses can be eliminated through understanding, time and effort.

The cure is inside all of us.

Justice is a junior broadcasting and news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

'Bleeding hearts' in all races

My black heart is bleeding, but most people wouldn't notice it. Especially the people who think of African Americans as powerless victims, including many African Americans who see themselves that way. The perspective of a bleeding heart comes from a safe vantage point, which is not thought possible to be enjoyed by African Americans.

My white, bleeding-heart counterparts are very uncomfortable with the idea that "their" perspective can be shared by an African American. I've actually been treated with more hostility by them than by any bigot. The thought that an African American has ideas based on a privileged perspective is hard for many to understand.

African Americans are not thought to be capable of having bleeding hearts. It's something that has been associated more with white Americans who sympathize with less-privileged people. The bleeding-heart "liberal," for example, arbitrarily decides what powers the victim should be given. That's ridiculous. The "victim" doesn't have to let the liberal speak for them.

To think that African Americans are powerless is to say we have done nothing as a people. It is also to say that as individuals we've done nothing without a helping hand from our benevolent white bleeding-heart friends. That, too, is ridiculous.

When discussing race matters, we bleeding-heart types tend to mistake an African American's viewpoint as that of all African Americans. African Americans, on the other hand, accept the role of the victim-spokesperson too willingly. Since historically we are thought to have not had any



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advantages, anything different from the standard victim viewpoint is very strange to many people.

Many people are surprised to find that we don't all think like victims, we don't act like victims, nor do we all feel like victims. As long as African Americans can show that victimization is only a part of who we really are, people will deal with us on a higher level.

It is understandable how unusual a bleeding African-American heart might seem. To someone who doesn't know an African American who has had any advantages, a bleeding heart may not seem possible at all. African Americans traditionally have been considered as being only victims without any influence or control over their destiny.

White Americans are often amazed to find that people of color don't all think alike. African Americans make this mistake, too. The color of a person's skin should have little to do with what they are thinking. People often find that their views are decided on before they even start talking.

As an African American, I know my bleeding heart seems odd, but it bleeds just the same as any other. In order to have a bleeding heart, a person has to have enjoyed some privilege or advantage. African Americans can have advantages, too.

Look around on this campus.

Virtually every student, by comparison, is at a considerable advantage. Any college student has advantages that most people don't. There is no comparison to the amount of privilege enjoyed historically by whites in this country, but education has its advantages just the same.

Some African Americans who enjoy such advantages and accept the victim role for themselves are making a big mistake. We are in a sense victims, but we are much more than that. It is important to understand that. Otherwise African Americans will only be seen in that way. Actually, African-American college students might even be more privileged than white students, since being in college is more unusual for us.

When it comes to issues about race, most people seem to feel they already know what the other person is thinking because of their color. African Americans, for example, are expected to be sympathetic to an African-American "perspective" — whatever that is. In my 36 years, I've learned that this mythical perspective has certain undesirable yet essential elements.

One of these elements is that all-too-familiar view of African Americans as victims first. This includes idea that African Americans have no power, never had any power — unless it's given to them. That is, at the very least, very offensive to people who have worked hard to achieve their goals. Kudos to whites who don't see us that way. And thank goodness, all African Americans don't see themselves that way.

Anyone can have a bleeding heart, but who needs one?

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Quayle's presidency like house arrest

Pointing at the TV set, Slats Grobnik: "Why's Dan Quayle giving us such a line of baloney?"

What baloney? The man very forthrightly says he isn't going to run for president.

"Yeah, but listen to the tall story he gives us for not running. Does he think we'll buy that?"

I accept it. He says that raising a campaign fund and running for president would be disruptive to his family. Why should that raise doubts? After all, he is one of the country's strongest advocates of family values.

"OK, then tell me this. What's his hobby?"

Unless he has recently taken up stamp collecting, I believe that he is an avid golfer.

"And he's good at it, right?"

Very good. Regularly shoots in the 70s, which most hackers only fantasize about.

"That's what I thought. So how does a guy get that good at golf?"

Well, you can either cheat or play and practice a lot.

"See? This guy's a golfer. And there's no game that disrupts family life like golf. Out of the house in the morning. On the course all day. Then sitting around with the guys, counting the scores, paying off the bets, playing cards, and guzzling gin and telling a lot of lies."

Well, the doctors insist that we get our exercise.

"Did you know that golfers get divorced more than bowlers, country dancers or birdwatchers?"

That wouldn't surprise me. It just shows how much they love the ancient game and will sacrifice for it.

"No, just shows that when a golfer says he wants to be with his family, it's an excuse for him to leave because he's losing at cards. Any time someone gives me that spend-more-time-with-the-family routine, I know it's a line."

That's unfair. "OK, and how do teen-agers spend their day?"

They comb and primp their hair in the morning, usually several times before they get it just right. Then they go to school. Then they come home and make phone calls. Then they go hang out.

"You got it. Is that how you want to spend a day?"

Impossible. I don't need that much time for my hair.

"So it's a lot of baloney, all these famous guys saying they want to spend more time with



Mike Royko

their families. Remember what Michael Jordan said when he quit the Bulls?"

I don't remember. The city was weeping so loudly I couldn't hear Jordan.

"He said he wanted to spend more time with his family." So? That just shows what a fine young man he is.

"Ah, but then what did he do? After a few days of changing diapers, watching Mister Rogers and going to the Jewel to push the cart for his wife, he packed his bags and went down south to play baseball."

Well, as Plato said, a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.

"Right. It ain't natural for a man to spend all of this time sitting around with his family."

"You ever hear of a judge sentencing a guy to go to work every day? Nah. But sometimes a judge will sentence a guy to house arrest because sitting home all day is real punishment."

You may have a point.

"Sure. So if Quayle was worrying about disrupting his family, how come he ran for Congress and was a senator? Then when he was vice president, all he did was fly halfway around the world to go to foreign funerals. What kind of family life is it when you tell your wife and kids: 'Gotta fly off to Zimboolie for a dictator's funeral, if his people don't burn the body first'?"

But the presidency is so awesome a job. It is bound to have an effect on your family life.

"Why should it? You work at home, so you can't phone your wife from a bar and tell her you'll be late. I figure that being president has got to improve a guy's family life."

I don't see how. "Ask Mrs. Clinton. Without state troopers, a guy can't get in any trouble if he's all worked up over baseball."

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