Of intellectual schizophrenia

BY DERALD GLIDDEN

Discriminating truth from error, although a highly valued academic pastime, is usually accomplished in the realm of matters of opinion. If the opinions being considered are possessed by the Rice administration, it is often prohibitively difficult for the Rice student to obtain them.

I propose a new student pastime, a radical modus operandi: let us heretically examine effects and try to impute a cause or causes. The communication barrier may yet be broken.

Not so many days ago Rice University was treated to the performance of a regional 19th century American cultural artifact, a black face show. Produced by Hanszen College and receiving the blessings of our administration, it took us back to the good old days when the Negro was frequently considered a clown with thick red lips, natural rhythm, unusual sexual prowess and a mind not unlike that of a child.

Slave Personality

I shall be the first to admit that the phenomenon of the "slave personality" is a subject worthy of scholarly investigation. I do not, however, believe that a Rice University production combining a sophomoric presentation of bathroom wallisms with an embarrassing and culturally outdated treatment of an extinct subject for no other purpose than to produce laughter by playing on notions of superiority, prejudices, fear and hate, should ever be tolerated on this campus.

Not only does Hanszen fail to realize how deeply the idea of "black face" is resented by Negroes, they ridicule (maliciously or not) the Negro without having the slightest idea of the real nature and causes of the "slave personality." (Forgive them Dr. King, they know not what to do).

Look for Cause

We have the effect, let's look for the cause. Because the worthy power structure and faculty associates of Hanszen College can surely examine themselves in an intelligent manner, we shall limit our search to the administration.

We can be relatively sure that the cause was neither a humanitarian attitude on the part of the administration nor the statement they issued last year which said there were to be no more black face shows on the campus. I would likewise not consider the administration's obvious awareness of how a black face show at Rice would look to their learned academic peers around the country as a sufficient cause.

Southern Conception

Perhaps they are trying to prejudice their suit by projecting an image that Rice holds to

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the “good old Southern” conception of the Negro in spite of the materialistic necessity of allowing one or two to become Rice students. This hypothesis becomes more than likely when we remember that the administration, out of fear of unfavorably prejudicing the suit, created a spurious dichotomy between integration on the intellectual level and integration on the social level.

While on the subject of slave personalities, it seems proper to examine the recent events at Jones College. While fully realizing that, at least in one sense, the situation was a product of intensely personal problems, I believe it symptomatic of an impersonal, dualistic attitude on the part of the administration. We will not examine the effect; it is too well known by all.

Outside Factors

In our search for causes I think we should consider some not strictly originating with the administration such as community opinion and the biological fact that girls young and old, foolish or wise, possess reproductive organs.

I should suspect that the administrative cause originates with a desire to superimpose a conglomeration of moral imperatives onto Jones College. This sort of operation invariably produces a self-contradictory community of intellectual giants and social dwarfs.

The Jones girl, like the Negro, is chopped up into an intellectual portion and a social portion.

Hypocritical Dichotomies

I am not arguing for sexual immorality but a resolution (or at least a clarification) of hypocritical dichotomies. What are the motivations for the causes? From the above it seems reasonably clear that they are neither fear of community reprisal nor a desire to create a first class academic institution.

The problem is further complicated if we look at the curious position (positions?) the administration takes with regard to the men’s colleges. We can’t play the game if we don’t know the rules. Is he a Negro or a “nigger”? Do college governments play their little games or govern themselves? Is there an imposed university limit on the possibilities of a girl’s maturation while at Rice?

Play the Game

I should suspect that the Jones College Associates who contracted to work under Dr. Class would have a few questions of their own to ask. My only hope is that once the rules are known and the dichotomies, if they can not be resolved, are clear, the game will still be playable.

It would be a tragedy if we have to replace “Art, Letters, Science” with “Abandon Hope, All Ye Who Enter.”