

Negro Discrimination— Problem in the North

by Jo Nielsen

Margaret Mead has said, "Every cultural significant attribute, negative or positive, cowardice, talkativeness, or musical ability, once believed to be associated with some type of physique, has been shown to be a matter of education and opportunity."

A New York City minister has stated, "One drop of Negro blood makes a Negro. It kinks the hair, flattens the nose, thickens the lip, puts out the light of intellect, and lights the fires of brutal passions. The beginning of Negro equality is the beginning of the end of this nation's life."

Your responses elicited by these two statements give some indication of the role Northerners are assuming in one of America's gravest social problems. Most people would not be effected by the first statement, simply because these facts are realized and accepted in the minds of

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most Northerners. But the words of a New York City minister (of all people!) sound harsh to your ears because the words are so irrationally cruel.

But unfortunately, what we think and what we do are diametrically opposed to each other. In contrast to the South, but subtle acts of discrimination prove that we are fooling ourselves. And the effects of this subtlety, such as the seating of a Negro party near the service door of an exotic New York restaurant or the flashing of a "no vacancy" sign as a Negro family approaches a Michigan motel, are more incisive than the obvious housing and economic discrimination found in the South.

Perhaps the, most human characteristic of the Northerner's role (and the Southerner's role, for that matter) is the fact that we are satisfied to accept the **status quo**. No one wants to be the first one to **move in the direction** of integration. Our actions might disrupt a nice social setting, or we might lose something that we want! What is so damn sacred about the **status quo**? If we would realize that this inhibition of not wanting to be the "guinea pig" is a universal human characteristic, perhaps together we could move in the direction of solving the "white problem."