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The Fat Giraffe, preliminary material (1969)

Mark Vinz

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May 1, 1969

TO: Moorhead State Faculty
FROM: Mark Vinz, English Department

Please announce to all classes:

The Fat Giraffe, a new publication of poetry and other creative writing, is encouraging contributions from students. The format is very informal, so no one need hold back his work for fear of criticism; all interested students are urged to submit their writings. Also, students need not fear censorship, as The Fat Giraffe is completely independent of MSC funds. Printing will be as frequent as possible, depending on the amount of available writing. Talk to Mark Vinz (236-2235, MacLean 202E, or 236-5226), Mike Moos (233-0572), or Rich Callender (233-5130) for further information.

TO: All MSC Faculty

FROM: The Fat Giraffe

The following essay, entitled "Reflections," was submitted to The Fat Giraffe for publication in the current issue (although not by the author). Primarily because we do not want to jeopardize the future success of Project E-Quality, we have decided not to print the essay as a part of our magazine and thus take responsibility for admitting it to general circulation. Still, it is our opinion that the essay should be read, especially by MSC faculty; we feel it is a sincere and genuine reflection of one student's frustrations with the whole situation a Project E-Quality student must face--a frustration that needs to be understood. What you choose to do with the essay is, of course, your business. We only hope that you will read it and profit by it.

Printing and distribution of "Reflections" have been carried out independently of Moorhead State College, solely at the expense of The Fat Giraffe, and with the permission of the author.

Reflections of an Equality (ha!) Student

As Fargo-Moorhead rapidly approaches 1900, in perfect sequence with super scientific technology in development of methods to exploit (outer/inner) space or; as man approaches an ass, enter!--a soul-shaking earth-quaking, conscience-bothering, myth-defying, equilibrium-upsetting, collection of marrow, corpuscles, protoplasm, hair and lots of sperm-existence. A Nigger!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!!!

Quick, hide, and break out the guns, shoot! before you see the black of his ass. Hurry before he breathes. . .if he breathes he'll fuck. He'll fuck her and her and her and him and you and me. OH NO!! he's. . .he's fucking me! OH! my ass, my stomach, my heart, my tongue, my mouth, my lies, my nose, my eyes. OH GOD! he's fucking my mind. . .no more lies.I'll die.

(I, we've) been here since September (the world began), and we were to prove, partially, that all niggers (Negroes, blacks) aren't crazy and lazy and destructive and trouble makers and sex maniac. are crazy and lazy and destructive and trouble makers and fuck crazy. It's been proved.

Fall quarter was beautiful. Everyone, (almost), accepted (excepted) us (fronted off). We were up here for orientation (indoctrination and propogandization) week, and we began to mingle and mix and associate and acquaint and socialize with each other. For most of us this was the first time we would be living away from home, for any length of time, with (white/black) people. This

intersocialreactionaryacceptance program went on during the rest of the quarter, then. . .the (cardinal/common) sin was committed. we took out: white girls (black guys, white guys, black girls). Mothers and fathers gasped and threatened, sisters and brothers rejoiced and spat. Friends () dropped their jaws, smiled and cursed. But the ever-prevailing midwestern "wait and see" (Fargo-Moorhead--ignore it, and it will go away) attitude kept things at a sullen plateau (half-assed peace).

"Be in style for Halloween--get your Afro wig here." That week went by quickly. I never did find out if they sold any of those things or not. Thanksgiving was next. Equality students were invited into faculty members and other prominent community figures homes to eat. We ate. Christmas came, we left.

Nineteen sixty-nine was born, we came back. Relationships had become stiffened, some dormant prejudices were becoming active, a new (old) perspective was shaping. I think (?) powers beyond our control (the administration) were also hip to the situation and wanted to avoid (at all costs, no doubt) any confrontation between races. I noticed a somewhat enthusiastic (?) recruitment drive to get some blacks to pledge fraternities. (Come to Moorhead State College and be white!).

Snow was still on the ground, it was cold. Ignorance was still on the mind, it was closed. North Dakota winters (in an environment unreal--wanting to reach out and embrace my mother, and father, and all my love, and footprints, and dirt, and heat; beautiful

(dumb) simple (black) life I had led. Smile at myself growing up) create a strange, unescapable, feeling. It was almost as if a grid or screen had been lowered to a height of approximately five feet nine inches (or whatever the middle of anyone's brain is) and actually penetrated our minds and we were all dangling (arms and legs helplessly flailing the air, walking, turning pages, crossing legs, rubbing bodies) from a huge net. Winter quarter, in Moorhead, Minnesota 1969, was one of the most physically exhausting and mentally abusing times I have ever experienced. I hope I am now prepared to cope with another one. Everybody prayed for heat, or rain, or anything except that goddamned snow!

Spring arrived, at least that's what the quarter said. One more to go. Things were changed, hates established. Kill the hunky--niggers ain't shit. Some brothers in the dorm fired a blank at some white cat and scared the shit out of him. They got busted for it. Childhood teaching (fairy-tale rap): The good guys win, the bad guys are punished. Real-life story: the cats that started the shit are still walking around everyday, unharmed, no conscience bothering them, no reprimand, hand spanking or anything. They are white. The cats that were (attacked, confronted, approached, accosted) were charged with aggravated battery, possible expulsion from school, degraded by the whole (WHITE) community (ha!). And undoubtedly will be victims (martyrs) of (white) justice in the (white mans' kangaroo) court of (white) law. They are black. Somebody please run that fairy-tale rap down to me again. I could really dig it. . .maybe. . .if. . .I. . .had some wings? Some chicken wings!

Don't try to ignore them, it won't work. You ever try to ignore a wart? It don't go away. Ignore a disease, and the longer you ignore it the more it will consume you. You are going to be victimized by your own blade, slitting your own throat. Smile. Don't worry though, it won't hurt. . .never does. . .ask anybody (black, brown, red, yellow).

You (Fargo-Moorhead, America, white people) are not going to wake up--listen--to what I'm/we're talking about. It won't be too late though--it is. All that's happening now is a time thing.

Wait.

Soon.

Smile.

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The program as a whole needs some more work. It is run haphazardly, the funding thing is not the best in the world, and the seminars seem to be a cross between a black history course, a theoretical political science class, and a remedial English class (do you want me to teach you how to talk, walk, eat, sleep, dress, shit?). Get it together will you? It will work though, maybe, one day. (One day, once upon a time, this bear came running over the hill backwards, with flames shooting out of his ass, shouting: fuck you.

fuck it.

fuck

- Ran Bradley