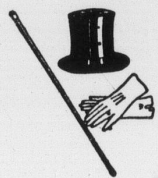


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Televisions Black Journal Criticized For Racist Views

by John J. O'Connor
New York Times Service
NEW YORK— "Black Journal is produced by black people to black people for the liberation of black people. It is a tool in the struggle for dignity and pride in ourselves."

So writes executive producer Tony Brown in a brochure titled Teach, that outlines the philosophy of Black Journal. Produced by N.E.T., the halfhour program is carried on the public broadcasting service each Tuesday at 9.30 p.m.

As one of the few broadcasting outlets for "the black man with a black viewpoint," Black Journal can be valuable for both black and white viewers. From unusually candid interviews with black entertainers to investigations of racial tensions within prisons (before the explosion at Attica), the series has had its share of impressive contributions.

It has also, however, had its share of questionable, or at least highly debatable, contributions. In attacking white racism, Black Journal has sometimes merely offered the other side of the same racist coin. It may be the black side, but it is no less ugly.

The most recent case in point was a two-part offering, concluded last week, called Black Paper on White Racism. In each part, Brown moderated an "analysis" of various aspects of racism as interpreted by a panel of three black spokesmen. Both parts included sweeping generalities, which were not only unchallenged but were encouraged by the moderator. For purposes of this column, however, focus will be kept on the first instalment, which "analyzed" Christianity, history and education.

The panelists were John Henry Clarke, a nassociate professor of African and Afro-American history at Hunter College in New York; Preston Wilcox, head of the

education workshop of the Congress of African People, and the Rev. Albert Cleage, pastor of the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Detroit.

Clarke began by tracing the roots of racism to the beginning of white European expansion ("Christopher Columbus and other thugs") in the 15th and 16th centuries. Before long, however, all of history was being discussed as if biological racism was an eternal fact of life.

Cleage, arguing that Christianity "began as the black man's religion," observed

that there is the "simple fact that white people have pretended for so long that Jesus was white, and yet they've had the necessity to interpret Jesus as being white when essentially white Christianity is historically false and theologically absurd . . ."

Clarke, arguing that black madonnas were "very prevalent in the churches of Europe up until the 16th and 17th centuries, "jumped to the flat (and false) statement that "There were no white madonnas in the churches of Europe."

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