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Traccia 2

In my opinion, prejudice is an intrinsic feature of human nature that has always influenced man and, as a consequence, his relationship with the world. Prejudice arises when man needs to expound something that is different or unknown and conjectures an explanation concordant with what he knows already of the world. Consequentially it brings him to have a feeling of like or dislike towards that particular something or someone. However, this feeling is not usually reasonable or logical.

The most ancient example of bias I can think of goes back to primitive men, when they saw for the first time a lightning hitting a tree and, impressed and scared, they justified it with the existence of a supernatural entity that is God.

Being born and living in the world, man constantly creates prejudices, since he's brought to try and give an explanation for whatever he's in contact with, another man or Nature that is, and since he's also constantly influenced by the community he lives in.

In fact, we could say that the events and the features of every historical period have been dictated by the common mentality of the society of that time. Each of those societies had a different way of looking at the world and at the Other, different prejudices of culture, language or look.

For example the ancient Greeks called barbarous every population who could not speak Greek, regarding those way of speaking more as a babble than as proper language, and used this idea to conduct wars against those populations. This kind of prejudice of language had been used again in the 19th century to exalt the Indo-European languages and in particular the German language, as more noble and superior than the others, such as Arabic and Hebrew language. This the origin of the Aryan theory.

Bias became dangerous when it can be easily used to maniple masses and it can quickly degenerate from a simple thought of indiscrimination to a justification for action against another person, population or civilization.

For example, racism and fascism have both their roots on prejudice, aggravated by an alleged scientific ground, and both lead to the elevation of one social class based on its cultural background, look, accent, tradition.

Another example, prejudice against women, on the ground of their less vigorous physical appearance, is still very fervent today and it's the reason for discrimination at work and in society, especially in Oriental cultures.

It is evident that man history is full of examples of bias and that is due to human nature itself.

As I said before, man feels scared and lost in front of the unknown, from what it's different from him: he can't explain it and that also reminds him of his limited nature. So he tries to respond to everything he's in contact with in the only way he knows or he's accustomed to, based on his cultural, social, religious backgrounds.

This is well explained in Hegel theory of history. In fact, from the beginning, when the first man alive, after being in contact with only objects for a long time, finally meets another man he tries to objectify him, because that it's the only reality he has known up to that moment. However, the second man, after being in stage, even though in slavery condition, with his master for a while, begins to realize that the two of them are actually very similar, not only in the way they look but also in the way they think and behave, and relate to the world. He discover that he's a subject too.

In conclusion, I think that Hegel's shows that for his own nature man can't help but feel threaten in front of something or someone new, he can't escape prejudice and act as a consequence with the means he has or knows, however he must stay open to confrontation in order to build in amity a developed society based on principles of reason, acceptance and equity.