Racism not understood

Perspective

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Racism was first identified as the segregation between the intellectual domain and the “oblivious” world in ancient Greece. The main outcome of this was illiteracy being minimal in ancient civilisations, and education taking the forefront.

Seneca¹ was one of the first orators who openly described ‘occupati’ in the *De Brevitate Vitae*, as ‘those engaged people’ who would chase insignificant pursuits, such as ‘gossip’, on a daily basis and live life in that mode. Looking further back, ‘intellectual discrimination’ or racism was also not uncommon at the time of Socrates², where Socrates himself claimed that a life without research is not worth living; his audience felt allegedly ‘intellectually discriminated’ by him, tragically leading to his death, even if Socrates’s intention was never that of discriminating in the first place, but more of offering guidance, and leading by example. Although Lucretius’s philosophy is often viewed parallel to Seneca’s, Lucretius³ did follow the footsteps of his predecessor by proposing the seize the day aphorism to his literary audience, thus “*Carpe Diem*” in Latin, where he explains that time goes by too fast to waste it on trivial matters.

Intellectual discrimination persisted for centuries, however a drastic shift occurred at the time of the first colonisation, or Imperialism, with the conquest of America and the introduction of ‘slavery’. Previous to that, Feudalism began being viewed as an unequal system because people felt discriminated on the basis of classism. Such views are inconceivable in modern society where classism may still persist with much less discrimination than it used to in the past, although wealth redistribution always constitutes a problem.

Slavery, however, had an important impact on the misinterpretation of discrimination. At the time of the *Conquistadores*, who were driven by capitalism, therefore profit and wealth, racism began to associate a person’s geolocation to the man’s intellectual abilities, but for some reason, racism annulled another human being’s will, which was viewed as irrational. In the “Valladolid debate” (1550 ca.), Las Casas⁴, a friar known as the Protector of the Indians, shows evidence that Indians (Amerinds) were at times intellectually superior to the Conquistadores, and not just ‘beasts’ as

Sepulveda and the plunderers asserted. Consequently, slavery was partially abolished and respect restored.

Nevertheless, racism started assuming a different meaning. Thankfully, because a man's will was considered to represent human rights, racism and slavery were subjected to restrictions.

Discrimination against intellectuals started rising, with Hitler being the first who openly adopted discriminatory regulations against intellectuals, which were in contrast to Nietzsche's idea of the overman⁵, demarcated by the character of his book, Zarathustra who is a pilgrim of wisdom sent to mankind to teach. Hitler declared a war against all intellectuals whom he blamed for contemporary society's downfall.

Prior to Hitler, the renowned persecution of alchemists is another example of discriminatory conduct against intellectuals.

In art, discrimination against 'scholars' was always less and less tolerated, more prominently, "fauves" and "impressionists" were hardly accepted initially, regardless that their art was beautiful, because it was too avant-garde, and therefore intellectual. Similarly, photographer Nadar had to face initial discernment because his technique of seizing the light, nature and weather transformations in the 'nick of time' was viewed as too Progressive.

Although one would think that racism should burn and extinguish in the future, the reality is that history repeats itself. Science itself has adopted biases when it comes to publishing work on journals and part of the academic world remains reluctant to accepting bright minds from different ethnic backgrounds as shown by several recent studies.

In modern times, it is estimated that at some point, every human being will be or has been discriminated once in their lifetime. The perpetrators, or "occupati" eventually also face lawful discrimination, because the legality of certain actions is questionable, conversely, the problem with it is merely vindication, but the irreversible health impacts racism has on society.

Women in particular that face gender or race discrimination tend to be more susceptible to anxiety, even if mortality in men is higher than women prior to menopause due to lifestyle changes as a result of elevated stress. But women who complained high stress levels were more likely developing fibroids, as an effect of amplified adhesions, provoked by increased norepinephrine and cortisol amounts released in the bloodstream.⁶

Men on the other hand, were more psychologically susceptible to discrimination, than physically, but long term psychological susceptibility leads to physical consequences if such concerns are not resolved.

A lot of focus on issues arising from discrimination are being addressed in Academia, as it still represents the pillar of society, and the gateway to professionalism, which is necessary for successfully progressing mankind, however, eradicating racism should be generally based on equalising chances by ignoring prejudice and gossip in all sectors. Intellectualism is important to preserve mankind, therefore we need to sustain it by being proactive, while antagonism and competition take a backseat.

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