The problem of the twentieth century

Introduction

Biologists and scientists may not agree on the existence of race despite the world’s perception of race. The scientists must also agree that there exist less genetic variance among the humans in Asia, Africa and Europe. Nonetheless there maybe some physical features that may be used to assign people a race. A consensus to the concept of race to both sociologists and biologists is the existent of differences in aesthetic attitudes, language, political ideologies and moral affections. Today race has been used to justify mistreatments and appalling injustices against other human beings. With regards to race, there exist troublesome conceptions; based on physical characteristics and based on social designations. However there are merits of cultural conception over the problematic conception of race.

Problematic conceptualization of race based on physical features is strictly limited to visible physical characteristics. Physical characteristics bring out the appearance of a person. Appearance is defined by hair texture, width of the nose, shape of the eye and the skin color. When you look someone at a glance, the latter, are the first recognizable features a looker comprehends. Lots of deductions crisscross one’s mind if you direct your attention towards the race of the person. According to Du Bois, the race idea, the race spirit the race ideal, is the vastest and the most ingenious invention for human progress (Kwame, 52).

W.E.B Dubois believed that a Negro had a message to put across to the whole world. A Negro in the American world was an African-American in possession of black blood. Du Bois knew that he would not be capable of Africanizing America but he was no ready to bleach the Negro soul at the expense of an American soul. He explored the chances of being both an American and a Negro, without; being cursed by fellow, spit upon by fellows, and losing the opportunity of self development (William 104)

A victim of racial discrimination lacks confidence when he appears to a gathering with people of the opposing race. The person has a low self esteem and seems to have lost a meaning of life. Being worthless are some of the terms that he refers to himself. He labels himself as a failure, though he may have achievements accruing to him. As a result of the disappointing experiences in life, and the daily challenges in life a person may become depressed. This discrimination prompted Du Bois to form organizations. When he was not writing or teaching or doing research, he was helping to establish organizations of racial uplift (Kwame 162)

Social designation refers to the position held by an individual in the society. Problematic conceptualization based on social designations looks at race far beyond the biological characteristics of a person. In some point it may be an extension of discrimination with respect to physical characteristics. As a result of racism across many countries victims come together and form associations. In the American history Dubois was the leader of the blacks.

Du Bois formed groups based on race designations so as to achieve equality to all mankind. In doing so, they had accepted the differences with claim of participation of both the Negros and the Americans in the state. Du Bois argues against criticizing the people with their social ability. He laments against judging a person with regard to the position that he holds in a society. The African Americans were enslaved where they were forced to work in plantations. According to Du Bois class struggle was the result of class domination (Kwame, 34). It was as a result of struggling that the Negro was taken advantage of.

Du Bois notes on the civil war by the Negros in the South to liberalize the Negro from slavery. Some of the leaders decided to capture the slaves while others declared them free. This resulted to some of the slaves declaring themselves free while others claimed that their masters had ignored them. Then the long- headed man with care-chiselled face who sat in the White House saw the inevitable and had to emancipate the slaves of rebels on New Year’s 1863 ( William, 10). Freeing of slaves resulted to the formation of Christian movements which provided the basic needs to the free men and women. A bill was even passed in the congress to look into the employment status of the freedman.

Du Bois affirms in his statement, the identity of a black man. He discredit claims that a black man belongs to a specific demographic group with distinguishable characteristics subject to injustices. A member of the black race should not be socially categorized in a scientific manner. When a person introduces himself in a social forum his r’ace should not be used to deduce arguments against him. Du Bois fought for the liberalization of the Negros and even renounced his American citizenship. In the end, his love and disappointment with America led him to renounce his American citizenship, taking Ghana as his new nation (Kwame, 20)

The cultural conception of race digs deep into discrimination as a result of culture. Cultural conceptions are very resourceful in defining human experience. In the past with reference to giest, culture served as an abstraction to assess behavioral patterns and social structure of societies. For instance the cultural conceptions of the blacks, express their behavior. In most cases culture helps to unite a society. The ideal of human brotherhood gained through the unifying ideal of race (William, 7). Cultural activities and festivals bring members of one society together. Members of the society who belong to that society are entitled to engage in the cultural activities. By doing so, bringing down a common enemy in the society becomes a very easy task.

Du Bois reveals geist by refusing to be depressed by the fact he experiences racial discrimination. He comes out as a courageous and perseverant person with aggressiveness in goal achievement. According to him, black people should be allowed to show their humanity. In his argument, color line divides people and causes harm, ruining its pretension to democracy. He challenges the African-American notion of giving blacks only industrial education according to Booker T. Washington (William 28). The greatest success of the freedmen’s Bureau lay in the planting of free schools among Negros, and idea of free elementary education among all classes in the South.

A cultural conception is advantageous over both problematic conceptions based on social designation and physical characteristics. Cultural conception gives an explanation why special rights are granted to indigenous people and linguistic minorities unlike the problematic conceptualization of race. It study’s the behavior of people together with their languages. The problematic conceptualization of race based on race mainly derives conclusions from a general view. One goes ahead to make conclusions even before sharing a word with a victim.

The cultural conceptions are flexible while the problematic conceptions are fixed. Culture gives room for change. Physical appearance, unless manipulated does not change. For instance Du Bois still retained his race even after six decades (William 33). The same case applies to the problematic conceptualization based on physical appearance. If you discriminate a white or a black due to his color you will never change. Problematic conceptualization based social designations do not change. The perception regarding someone due to the society cannot be manipulated.

Cultural conceptions are acquired. The flexibility of culture makes it open to changes. The world today has lots of changing technology. Culture can be manipulated. For the case of problematic conceptualization of race based on physical characteristics it is impossible to changes the skin color as experienced by African-Americans (Kwame 160). Neither can one change his hair color nor his shape of the nose. For instance the use technologies in the current society, most people are quickly adopting the current technology. Even the laggards have been up to the task.

In his writing, Du Bois combines poetry, story and song to reinforce his voice to the society and create awareness for the blacks. Lack of awareness served as a catalyst to injustices bestowed upon the blacks (William 108). If the people of a society are fully aware of their rights they are able to claim the right incase of denial. Du Bois is pleased with what he finds after returning to Berlin. He seemed to have changed the people’s perception on race. As a result of freeing the Negro they were able to contribute to the economy.

*Conclusion*

The problematic conceptualization of race based on physical characteristics and social designations may lead to underdevelopment of a state. The capability and ability of a person cannot be determined by his physical appearance or his position in the society. Discriminating people with regards to race arouses emotions such as hatred and anger. A workforce without anger and hatred is motivated to work. By acknowledging culture of the society a country will develop. All members of the society will boast a sense of belonging to the state.

References

Kwame, Anthony Appiah.*Lines of Descent: W.E.B Du Bois and the Emergence of Identity*. Harvard University Press. 2014. Hardcover.

William Edward Birghtart Du Bois.*TheSouls of the Black Folk.* Dover thrift Editions, 1994