

Dropping in the Trap of Self

Prejudice means the strong inclination of the mind or a preconceived opinion about something or someone, indicated in the current dictionary. As human beings, we are influenced by our preconceived notions constructed from the childhood or our professional biases. We tend to pre-judge events according to our knowledge of experiences and we are not conscious about our biases. In “Challenge: An Exploration” by Nancy Mairs, in “Water” by Edward Abbey and in “Except from A Different Mirror” by Ronald Takaki, they all exhibit their biases in views. Their attitudes produce their positively oriented lives. Taking another perspective from the other side, Campbell says, “that a prejudice may create ‘blindness’ that block one’s mental vision”, while a bias obstructs the way to progress forward.

Sometimes, persisting in an opinion is, in itself, a prejudice. In the text of “Challenge: An Exploration”, Mairs talks about her open mind towards the fact of her physical disability. In the article, she repels against the use of euphemism. Driving from her high-educated esteem, she thinks that it is only an excuse to hide the wound. In her subtly allegation, her cute stubbornness insists she is a cripple, not a “physically challenged”. She does not look down herself because she is confident to herself. Unlike other people in physical problems, with a positive personality, she holds an optimistic attitude to look at her problems. She does not lose her will of living; meanwhile, she bravely welcomes any challenges to announce that she is not different from normal people. Out of her attitude of facing the truth, she does not easily give up any opportunities of learning and appreciates her growth of spirit and mind because of her

disability. However, she, in her inner mind, cares to many words of description that the judgment of her mental vision could be obstructed.

Obviously, Mairs' bias blocks her acceptance of other's opinions. She flatly refutes people's good intentions and interprets that these are behaviors of escaping. However, because her prejudice, she is hoodwinked to realize the real meaning of using euphemism behind the screen. She ignores people's reaction to the dilemmas and it blocks her empathy to those encountering the difficulties. The modification of function does not mean the hypocritical affection. Respecting is not a mask of despicability. Unfortunately, her twisting thought narrows down her views and she does miss opportunities to involve a different life and to experience a different feeling in enjoying the euphemism. Furthermore, she again and again tells people that she does not care her problem at all; in fact, she is telling people that "I care so much about my disability".

Bias makes people satisfied with the present. In "Water", Abbey is not bothered at all the less water in Utah compared to Cleveland where there is plenty of water and is humid. When a visitor complains about the dryness and desolation in the desert like Hell, Abbey refutes the visitor's unfair accusation. "If we had water here, this country would not be what it is", said by Abbey. He like this barren. From Abbey's prior frame built on his experience, that is the image he builds to interact with this environment. Concrete mind teaches him to anticipate and love this surrounding. This is a magic desert, including dryness, rainstorm, flood, the vivid life and the danger of death. For Abbey, there is enough water, because we can find it under the rock and the ground, and in the cliff. The rhyme of life is so strong when we stand by and look around the desert. In the game of death, we can defeat the danger and win because we can survive once we know

how to observe and react the environment. Everything is so perfect to Abbey; nothing has to be changed. He enjoys his life.

However, the bias of satisfaction might dampen the will of fight to challenges and obstruct the probability of progress. When people are blinded by the content, they lose the ability to assess the environment. Certainly, without the contrast, people lose a rule to measure, then, no progress. At the moment of being content, Abbey ignores the development. He fails to get a balance between his favorite and ecosystem. The issue about the extension of desert is serious gradually into consideration. Threatening the extension of population and people's danger, with his abundant knowledge of desert and his advantage of the environment he lives, he should contribute himself in this research, but not guarding this place by the myopia.

Furthermore, expressing "Excerpt from A Different Mirror", usually, Ronald Takaki points out the taxi driver's racial bias which reflects American's general concept. From the taxi driver's point, people are not Americans as long as they are not white. In other words, only the white and the red are Americans; then, the yellow are never Americans forever. Indeed, people are affected by their frame of perception established from their self-built value. In the context, Takaki try to explain and clarify the misunderstood from an angle of history. Actually, this country was built by different races. Tracing back the nineteenth twentieth century, the black were imported from Africa into America. Although they are slaves, however, their contribution to the economic prosperity in cotton should not be blotted out. In addition, the early immigrants from the whole world established this home with their blood and labor. However, because the plenty of peoples surged in the United States, the original began to against races.

Gradually, people to people, race to race, they naturally want to protect themselves from being invaded by different peoples. Developing from this concept, people in the same race unite a strong coherence and take care of each other and reject the peoples outside.

Without doubt, in this society, accepting varied people is a tendency. We propose every race is equal and develop the concept of world village. With the improving techniques, we can go everywhere. There is no limit from race to race anymore. The traditionally narrow nationalism has been challenged now. Takaki mentions that, in “Excerpt from A Different Mirror”, African Americans have been the central majority throughout the history. Sealed behind the nationalism, people only are bound by their prejudice. Complexion is not an element of identifying nationality anymore. Moreover, under this distinguish of race, the conflict will only increase everywhere with an excuse of discrimination. Thus, it is necessary that people treat this issue with an open mind and vision.

“Only in world 3 can the mind be described as truly open”, said by Jeremy Campbell in his “Farewell the Open Mind” reminds us of our biases developed in the highly scientific world existing everywhere. Living in this civilized box, we tend to judge the world by our logical fabric and manipulate our life with educated ways that we thought it is reasonable. We are blinded in this dark box and try to build a value to avoid perplexing. Therefore, Nancy Mairs develops a set of self-theory to obtain a confidence and positive attitude instead of restlessness and unstableness. However, her open mind covers the reality happened here we live and twists good intention modifying the imperfects. Moreover, enthusiasm for enjoying the isolated hermitage quiets down Edward Abbey’s mind and he fits the desert well. In the other hand, with his prejudice,

his self-defeating has been killed and, as well, his ambition has been eroded forgetting what his obligation being a citizen to contribute to his society. With no doubt, Ronald Takaki's explicit elaborating Americans' racial bias forces us to put this issue under the spotlight. It obstructs our world view and deceives our vanity. It is our true prejudice and biases are a mirror reflects our inner structure in a certain point of view, and we deal with the reality with them. Recalling "a form of prejudice, a certain point of view, creates a blindness that blocks a scientist's mental vision in certain direction, while extending it in other, perhaps more interesting, direction" by Campbell, could we walk out and do not lose ourselves in this net called scientific and high technics world?