

Prejudice: Its Social Psychology

In “Prejudice: Its Social Psychology”, written by Rupert Brown, critical analysis and theories are explored regarding prejudice. Brown focuses on the psychological perspective of prejudice in this book and studies personal behavior to understand why we make subconscious judgments as a species. However, in the first chapter, “Nature of Prejudice,” Brown proposes an argument that seems to deter bias and prejudice from the work I have already mentioned. Brown believes that it is not necessary to imply that prejudice and discrimination are false or irrational. Instead, it is an unwanted action to act negatively towards a specific group. Brown then mentions reasons as to why he is confident in this claim. The first reason is that to imply that something is wrong means correctness that follows when prejudice derives from vague reasoning. The second reason is that two groups can have different perceptions and values relating to something, which does not necessarily mean that one group is correct and one group is wrong. Thus, Brown starts this chapter with a claim that at first looks pretty controversial, when in reality, he can back up his reasoning with critical thinking. Brown successfully demonstrates that to say prejudice is irrational would only mean that you are only invalidating the various and diverse experiences that have allowed prejudice to be in the first place.

Brown’s perspective has been very beneficial and crucial to my work because it offers a view that challenges intersectional thinking. To honor those who are diverse and welcome them into an environment that supports them, we can not invalidate prejudice since oppressed people hold prejudice against others with reasoning. This prejudice is more sensible than others and has experiences and rational sense about their values and emotions. To invalidate prejudice as a whole would only mean you are invalidating feelings. At first, one would not see the correlation Brown’s work has to Zaphir’s, but the connection comes to light with this ideology. Zaphir believes we can change prejudice and bias into something productive and reverse its damage to our perception of it. With critical thinking, thoughtful analysis, and acknowledging how bias can result in specific ways, prejudice can be used as a tool to help reverse our unfair structures. Intersectionality is also brought into question with Brown’s perspective. To “cancel” prejudice as a whole would mean you are invalidating the values and feelings of those who have lived through years of oppression due to *various* possible factors. To cancel prejudice would result in ignoring the years of struggle a woman of color has lived, who has subsequently been paid less than her employees, etc. The coexistence of multiple marginalizations is more often than not present. Just as you can not ignore marginalization, you can not overlook prejudice since it could have derived from marginalization.

Brown, Rupert. Prejudice: Its Social Psychology. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Print.