

Biased

We are all constitutionally biased. It may all start with 'I love milk with peanut butter,' or 'I can't stand the color red,' but wherever bias starts, way back in the squalling infant making a choice between left breast and right breast, we early on adopt a personhood crowded with innate biases. Above we discussed the problem of being fair; that is the problem of bias seen from the opposite side. To be biased is by definition not to be fair.

Examples

1

I have a bias against business and a bias for education and culture. How stupid to have inclinations of this sort in a complex world that contains every kind of activity and need! How stupid is this bias, and how easily trackable! As a child of the University world, saturated in faculty family behaviors, I was long ago told by my Mom that the academic life is the freest, most independent, and most thoughtful life possible, and that other types of life—business would typically be the example—were pretty constricted by contrast, limited, say, to dirty work like making money. The results of this indoctrination play out absurdly in my present mind set. I am constantly critical of the University world, which seems to me—sour grapes, no doubt—permeated with jealousies, backbiting, and obstacles to the imagination. Though part of the University world I do not love it. The business world, too, finds no way to charm me.. I am left with no 'world' to honor and glorify, and only the simple fact of one thing after another on the ground. Life is deeper than 'world,' and the simplest 'being here' seems our finest refuge.

2

I have a bias in favor of the theist sensibility. I would like to name my religious affiliation, for I am proud of it, but that very pride offends the body of belief I work with. Theist sensibility, for me, seems to be the broad, indeed global term to describe an attitude, archaically rooted in our species, that expresses awe at the creation and its maker. This attitude is natural, inventive, and reassuring, I think, because it springs from our human constitution. I am surrounded by people for whom the given world seems just that, given, and not created. They find their ways through that world, more effectively than I and my kind, and yet they miss out on the transcendence which defines, spurs, and creatively humiliates us.