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*I remember*

What is it to be human? This is the question that keeps babies crying all night and old men quiet all day, that drives some men mad and others to elation, that has kept philosophy pertinent for thousands of years; and, though its answer may be elusive (or controversial, at best), one aspect is certain – life, itself, is the most important factor in the equation. Life. We all experience it. This is why so much interest is sparked from Friedrich Nietzsche's quotation: "It takes a great deal of strength to be able to live and to forget how far living and being unjust are one" (Nietzsche 22). Nietzsche seems to equate living and being unjust when he claims they are one; but what is justness and unjustness, and how is life a direct representation of the latter? Perhaps some insight into what Nietzsche means when he uses the word justice will help to explain his syntactic intentions.

*Fiat veritas pereat vita*

"The hand of the just man who is competent to sit in judgment no longer trembles when it holds the scales" (32). This statement uses the metaphor of the scales of justice to represent a man with the same virtue. What the use of the scales seems to imply is the element of unbiasedness, for scales are completely balanced if there is nothing to be weighed on them. Could unbiased be a synonym for justice, though. A few sample substitutions will help to clarify this. On page thirty-two in the book *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*,

Nietzsche asks the following question: "Is it true that objectivity has its origin in a heightened desire and demand for justice?" If the word justice is replaced by the word unbiasedness, the question not only seems to portray the same meaning but also portray it with more clarity; however, this example is a question, which could give the original intentions ambiguity. Will the substitution hold when used within a statement? On page eleven is a chance to try this experiment: Regarding a man who is acting with only the present in mind, the author states that

“It is the most unjust condition in the world...and yet this condition—  
unhistorical, contra-historical through and through – is the cradle not  
only of an unjust, but rather of every just deed; and no artist will  
paint his picture, no general achieve victory nor any people its  
freedom without first having desired and striven for it in such an  
unhistorical condition.”

With the word biased transplanted for the word unjust and unbiased for just, the above quotation is still understandable when it is realized that biasness is the condition of having motivations beyond simply truth.

### *Memento vivere*

With a suitable definition of justice, it is now possible to explore the different ways of life presented in Nietzsche's text to view if and how unjustness and, consequently, biasness play a role in each. The first historical view, or world-view, that will be explored is monumental

history. With this view one remembers Caesar's great deeds but not his common life; one remembers the pyramids but not the slaves; one remembers the Revolutionary War but not John Brown's raid. Monumental history is one in which great deeds are what is remembered about the past. The advantage of having this sense of history is that past glories breed hope that glory is possible in the future, for it has already been shown to have been possible. There are disadvantages, though, the biggest being that "the past itself suffers damage" (17). With just the big moments of history preserved, there are so many moments that become forgotten. The events that are necessary before great moments can be achieved are also forgotten. How could living through this historical view be interpreted as unjust or biased? The most obvious way is that it does forget that small events are needed before bigger events come to fruition. This forgetting is surely biased, for there is motivation behind it, namely, that those small events are unimportant. It also makes men disregard the normal happenings in their own lives because they are always looking toward new monumental events. Only greatness becomes good enough to live through. "The dead bury the living" (18). Monumental history displays such an immense amount of bias that it can turn into negative self-bias, as expressed in the fore-mentioned quotation.

The second historical view (or way of life) that Nietzsche suggests humans exhibit is that of antiquarian history. Under the spell of this view, a person tries to preserve a past historical period. It is equivalent to a scenario in which there is someone who was born in the 1980's but wants to live in the 1950's, so he makes his world that of the one for which he longs. The upside to antiquarianism is that it preserves history (every little detail). The downside, though, is that "it merely understands how to preserve life, not to generate it" (21). Living the antiquarian way is possibly synonymous with living someone else's life. With that stated, even the nonchalant observer will notice that life – new life – is compromised. This is blatantly biased. It elevates one

time because of a quality that it expressed, whilst, simultaneously, disregarding any value in the present time because it does not express that same interesting quality as the previous time. Life can only be just if it is generated in the first place, and Nietzsche, himself, denies that the antiquarian indeed does generate life.

After the monumental and antiquarian histories, the third historical view practiced by man is deemed the critical view. The critical view examines the past vigorously until it finds something to condemn (for every age has condemnable aspects), and then it condemns the entire age. A positive note emitted from this view is that acts that are horrific are not praised or breezed over, they are genuinely noted as being horrific and are actively avoided. However, with the bad from any age always comes the music of good, and the negative aspect in the critical world-view is that the good things that come from history are also condemned. One thing that the critical historian seems to forget is that "if we condemn those aberrations and think ourselves quite exempt from them, the fact that we are descended from them is not eliminated" (22). This is from where the biasness and unjustness of life in the critical way comes into play. Without divulging deep enough into an age to subtract the positive events before condemning the whole is a definitive display of biasness, for the participant is so fully motivated to openly label the negative events in history as negative that he overlooks the positive ones and blanketly labels them as negative, too. The motivation is betterment of the present and future. It is not solely for pure knowledge; therefore, it is not just and is biased.

*Vivo, ergo cogito*

As shown by Nietzsche's three historical distinctions, life certainly is equated with being unjust; however, this statement is not as disheartening as it appears at first glance. The unjustness to which is being proscribed is not the unjustness of negative actions: It is the unjustness of positive actions. In order for a person to act, he must act upon some form of motivation. By having motivations, he is forfeiting the acquisition of pure unbiased truth; however, if he were to explore the realm of acquiring pure truth, he could only have the role of observer not actor. The role of observer is not only unreasonable but also impossible to sustain. Needs that correspond with survival cannot be met in a state of observation, only in a state of action. Therefore, even in a literal sense, life is unjust. As defined by Nietzsche, true justness, if sustained, can only lead to death.

**Perhaps it is the fool who seeks truth**