

Toward A Better Understanding of Epicurean Justice And Injustice (With Examples of "Just" and "Unjust")

Post by "Don" of March 23, 2021 at 2:36 PM

Let me talk this out:

So, humanists deal in ideals. "The powerful *should* protect the weak." There's no natural source for this. It simply derives from the humanist idealist perspective of the "intrinsic" value of human life. It's an article of faith if you will. Epicurus rejects ideals and absolutes. So...

Question 1: What, if any, intrinsic value does Epicurus place on human life? I'm seeing the answer as "none" with the caveat that he also places great value on the life of the individual since this is the *ONLY* life you get... And we should strive to make it as pleasurable as possible.

So, maybe the idea that Epicurus doesn't place an absolute value on human life needn't bother me? But...

Question 2: Is Epicurus equating animals with the people who don't have the power to - or who chose not to - enter into social agreements? On one level, that's true. From a naturalist perspective, we're all animals. On the other hand, this idea has been used to rationalize some heinous atrocities throughout history. Does Epicureanism recognize such events as atrocities (e.g., Holocaust, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Cambodian Killing Fields, etc etc)? Or, if the people involved had no power, is there any injustice? What is an Epicurean response to these kinds of events - historically and contemporary? If there one kind of response or just individual responses? What is the practical response? What is the philosophical response?