

PD34 - How Does PD 34 Relate to PD 32 As To The Nature of Justice?

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2018 at 12:02 PM

Someone asked me: Cassius, does the term compact = consent to you? 36 suggests to me that, although many people consent or compact with a State Government, there are minorities in that territory, which do not give consent or compact to the State government, thus are facing an injustice?

Here's my response:

Let's see -- thinking back to the prior statement in 32 as a starting point".....and likewise for those peoples who either could not or WOULD NOT not form binding agreements not to inflict nor suffer harm." In your question, you are talking about the common situation where not everyone agrees to the form of government. If they withhold their consent, then they withhold their consent, and the issue is what to label the situation. I think what Epicurus is saying that "justice" is a term that applies only to people who have consented to an arrangement. So in an example where there is a minority which does not agree to an arrangement, they will presumably react in various stages from silence to full-blown revolution, but whatever that reaction is, it is not something to be analyzed in terms of "justice or injustice." Meaning they should revolt or not, as they determine is best for them, but in doing so they do not appeal to "justice" as their reasoning, but to other factors, presumably their own view of the best way to their own happiness, which is all the justification they need in Epicurean terms.

Now if they originally agreed, but then withdraw their consent, then that might be closer to "injustice," but I also think that what they should do would hinge on the circumstances, because Epicurus makes clear that when circumstances change, then the aspects of "justice" change to.

In the end it seems "justice" appears to Epicurus to be just a variation of what we might consider to be contract law. Breach of contract is considered to be "unjust" in contract terms, but for those who have never entered a contract in the first place, there can be no breach. Which is as it should be, because that's the way Epicurus views all "virtues" such as "justice" - either they are instrumental toward happiness, or they are largely worthless.