

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

Post by "Pacatus" of November 14, 2024 at 2:02 PM

On re-reading this whole thread, I have some (possibly disjointed) thoughts:

1. Maybe we should allow all the meaning possibilities of *δίκαιος*, and allow our translation/understanding to rest on context (such as "justice" or "civilized behavior" or ...). The same for the concept of justice itself: it is not synonymous with broader terms such as "rightness" or "moral" (which I generally take in a social context, as opposed to ethics - but sometimes they are treated as synonymous). And I think the appropriate limits of that term, in line with Epicurean philosophy, are well-delineated here.
2. Along the lines of Cassius reference to "malum in se" (or "bonum in se"), I think there can be some provisional Epicurean affirmation of *something like* those notions (excluding idealisms such as Plato's or Kant's). And I suggest appeal can be made to *prolepsis*.
3. We have talked about *prolepsis* as an innate ability for pattern recognition. But I think that is too narrow. I have used "intuition" - as "a. the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference; and b. immediate apprehension or cognition." (Merriam-Webster)
4. Although that faculty will vary individually, I take it as an innate hereditary ability across humanity - as much as the other criteria for knowledge: sensation and feeling. Perhaps evolutionarily. And I think there are broadly common (though not absolute or universal) *prolepseis* (which themselves may give rise to *pathe*) including moral questions - e.g., the raping of an infant. Even in a group that had no "justice compact" regarding that behavior. And I don't think that is strictly a matter of an individual's proclivity for pleasure or choice-worthiness.
5. Therefore, *prolepsis* could provide a natural foundation for some common perspectives on what people might think of as "malum in se" or "bonum in se" - without any appeal to idealisms. Universal/absolute? No. But a broad generality based on a commonly evolved faculty.

All of this really came in a rush of mental "hypertexting," so might not be so carefully laid out ... 😊

Aside: There was some discussion about how broad a community/society might be appropriate to consider - e.g. the polis, the nation, etc. I would suggest that, in our highly connected modern world, the old Stoic idea of *kosmopolites* is not totally out of bounds: trying to hide out with your select group of friends - or even a metaphorically walled-in nation state - may not, ultimately, offer all that much security. And I'm not much into being a bread-and-water-in-a-

cave survivalist. 🙄