

## SOE20 - On mutual advantage

Post by "Hiram" of December 31, 2019 at 11:30 AM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

I think we have had this discussion before and I have the same issue. Is every breach of every agreement "unjust?"...

hmmm I don't know if EVERY breach of an agreement is unjust, but PD 37 does not shy away from saying "**whatever in the needs of mutual association is attested to be useful, is thereby stamped as just**, whether or not it be the same for all". So the justness is tied to the utility in mutual association.

In the case of rabbits that overrun a field and eat the farmers' carrots, it's useful to kill them for the farmers (who get to keep, eat, and sell more carrots) and for the people who enjoy rotisserie rabbit. So here, the PD is saying positively that killing and eating the rabbits is "just" for as long as this utility persists ("for the time being, it was just", it says).

PD 38 also does not shy away from saying that, as per EP, there are laws that are NOT just when judged by their consequences. Presumably, what is being said here (to answer your question) is that "breaching that agreement" would be just, because the law is unjust?

The point, in the end, is that the original Epicureans DID pass moral judgment on laws and policies, and that they **appealed to the material utility and the observable consequences of the laws**. Notice this is consistent with how Epicurus says that we think empirically concerning the actions based on the results observed from any course of action ([On Nature, Book 18](#))

### Quote

**38. Where without any change in circumstances the conventional laws, when judged by their consequences, were seen not to correspond with the notion of justice, such laws were not really just...**