

Threads of Epicureanism in Art and Literature

Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2021 at 6:44 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Grappling with Epicurus's contractual nature of justice is not easy. Intellectually, it makes sense.

And I am not even sure that "contractual nature of justice" really conveys his views accurately either. I can see how it can be interpreted that way, and he does talk about agreement being involved. But when a particular agreement can at one moment be just but another moment become unjust (due to a change in circumstances) then it isn't just a simple question of "Did you make the agreement?" And "Did you break it?" (which I think is the way we tend to think of contract law.)

Justice is definitely one of the more difficult doctrines for us to understand, but I agree with Don that the problem is that our cultural attachment to contract and the idea of absolute right and wrong is so great today. Quite possibly if we looked at this from the perspective of a "family," (or at least friends) where we don't view agreements so formally and we release people from agreements easily, we might find it easier to understand Epicurus.

Because remembering [PD39](#) he is saying that we try to make people into one family (or friends? Depending on the Greek) and for those who can't be made that successfully we to an extent separate from them. Maybe this is another situation like gods where he is stating that the common definition of the word needs to be understood differently.

So maybe we ought to be thinking about [PD39](#) when we discuss the justice doctrines.