

Can killing another human be justified under Epicurean philosophy?

Post by “Pacatus” of October 25, 2023 at 6:16 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"Justified to whom?"

Whilst I agree that context and circumstance are critical, I just want to say that I think we ought to be careful not to totally relativize the question: the most atrocious act against another human being you can think of can likely be justified by “someone” somehow (especially, perhaps, the perpetrator).

With that said: (a) it seems almost universal across cultures (historical and present) that justification is called for with regard to acts of harm (whether we might think whatever justification is valid or not), while acts of kindness and compassion generally do not require such justification. And (b) justification and justice (in terms of a just act), despite their etymological relation, are not the same thing. The question of justice would seem to be what circumstances might justify (in Epicurean thought) violation of the compact to neither harm nor be harmed.

Yes, it’s a tough nut. I think [Don](#) gave two good examples.

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I want to add that there are different concepts of justice generally: e.g., restorative or redemptive/rehabilitating as opposed to merely retributive/punitive.