

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

Post by "Pacatus" of November 20, 2024 at 4:35 PM

I have finished Aioz and Boeri's *Theory and Practice in Epicurean Political Philosophy: Security, Justice and Tranquility*. These are my personal thoughts:

Despite the extensive lacunae in the received Epicurean literature; despite the anti-Epicurean slanders of such as Cicero, Plutarch and Epictetus; and despite those slanders having been accepted by many modern scholars – even those sympathetic to Epicurean philosophy, even those attracted to it – despite all that, there is an identifiable, if bare-bones and subject-to-personal-adaptation, foundation for socio-political activity in Epicureanism based on social compacts against harm, with considerations of justice and equity.

And, for me, that brings some “peace of mind” (ataraxia). Here’s why –

It made me realize that there is a cogent philosophical, socio-ethical counter to (a) Platonic illusionism, (b) Stoic virtue-flogging, (c) divine-command superstition and (d) perhaps especially in my case, Kantian duty-mongering (his metaphysics of morality) other than the “moral noncognitivism” that I briefly embraced.

My socio-political activities now are much reduced, compared to my years before retreat-to-the-country retirement – or subsequent late-life move back to more urban environs – mostly voting and occasional voice. I can look back on those years without thinking they are wedded to delusive aberrations vis-a-vis Epicureanism. Or reflecting an unrecognized moral noncognitivism. Although I certainly didn't know it at the time, they seem perfectly in accord with Epicurean notions of social justice/equity – rooted, perhaps in *prolepsis*, but also subject to rational analysis.

And, as I say, that brings me some peace of mind.

I recommend Aioz and Boeri unreservedly (though it is a bit of a scholarly slog).

Thank you for bearing with me ... 😊

LATE ADDENDUM: I want to add that, far from any criticism (express or implied) for those who choose *lathe bios* and general escape from the political vicissitudes and social turmoils, I heartily affirm that choice. It has been mine for much of my post-middle-age life – and mostly still is. I am not anti-social, but do live much of the time as a quasi-recluse. ❤️