

Justice

Astraeas is the star goddess of justice. What is Justice?

The virtue of Justice is to “never seek or grant the unearned and undeserved, neither in matter nor in spirit” -Ayn Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", in *The Virtue of Selfishness*

How to define Justice:

"What fact of reality gave rise to the concept “justice”? The fact that man must draw conclusions about the things, people and events around him, i.e., must judge and evaluate them. Is his judgment automatically right? No. What causes his judgment to be wrong? The lack of sufficient evidence, or his evasion of the evidence, or his inclusion of considerations other than the facts of the case. How, then, is he to arrive at the right judgment? By basing it exclusively on the factual evidence and by considering all the relevant evidence available. But isn't this a description of “objectivity”? Yes, “objective judgment” is one of the wider categories to which the concept “justice” belongs. What distinguishes “justice” from other instances of objective judgment? When one evaluates the nature or actions of inanimate objects, the criterion of judgment is determined by the particular purpose for which one evaluates them. But how does one determine a criterion for evaluating the character and actions of men, in view of the fact that men possess the faculty of volition? What science can provide an objective criterion of evaluation in regard to volitional matters? Ethics. Now, do I need a concept to designate the act of judging a man's character and/or actions exclusively on the basis of all the factual evidence available, and of evaluating it by means of an objective moral criterion? Yes. That concept is “justice.”

-Ayn Rand, “Definitions,” *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*

“ . . . Justice is the principle of cause and effect applied to human action. If by my actions I cause good, then the consequential effect should be that I am rewarded. If I *produce* something of economic value (e.g., knitting a hat or budding a house), then I deserve the use of it. If by *trade* I bring value to others (e.g., by bringing wheat or software to market), then I deserve the wealth that I receive from my customers. If I *develop* my intellect and emotions, then I deserve the rewards of a cultivated psychological life. If by my personality and character I *add richness* to others' lives, then I deserve the rewards of friendship and love.

“The negatives of cause and effect also hold. If I simply fail to produce or trade or develop myself, then it is sadly appropriate that I would be poor, lonely, and not even like my own company. And if I actively

cause destruction in my life or in others', then I deserve to bear the costs—the self-loathing and the active dislike and punishment that others would inflict upon me.

“Injustice is the opposite—the *severing* of cause and effect in human action. If you bake bread and I throw it in the trash, if you write an essay and I plagiarize it, or if you commit a good deed and I withhold praise, then all of those are acts of injustice. In each case I sever the enjoyment of the effect from its enabling cause. If you steal from others', assault them, or spread malicious gossip about them—and I *praise* you for doing so—then I commit injustice by failing to judge you negatively for your destructive actions.

“Individuals and institutions are just to the extent that they *evaluate* themselves and others according to what they deserve and *act* on those evaluations.”

Stephen Hicks, *Liberalism Pro and Con*

“Justice is Truth in Action.” – Peter Nivio Zarlenga, *The Orator*.

More on Justice: <http://aynrandlexicon.com/lexicon/justice.html>

Image: Astraeas, Goddess of Justice

