

# PD10 - Interpretations of PD 10 Discussion

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2022 at 11:13 AM

There are a few inconsistencies we can flesh out.

## [Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

Even if that pleasure is real- which seems very difficult to implement for me-, I would be so shocked about the waste of my life that the only possible answer for me would be to reject such a machine.

The true waste of life is an existence where happiness is controlled by a machine. Rejecting necessity is a worthy goal (and is literally the plot of *The Matrix* and the theme of most of Rage Against the Machine's songs, which is tight).

*“[T]here is no necessity to live under the control of necessity.” (Epicurus, Vatican Saying 9)*

## [Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

But then, which role does the machine take? It controls my world, it controls my life, my happiness and unhappiness, so **it's God**. When I become plugged in, the machine becomes my own, personal God; she controls every aspect of my experience.

A god, according to Epicurean sources, is either (1) an animal who has perfected their existence to such an extent that they have become incapable of being troubled, destroyed, or inconvenienced, or (2) mental images that inadvertently enter our minds, which alert us to the possibility of living a better natural life. A machine cannot be a god because it is neither an organism living a perfect existence, nor an image that only interacts with the rest of us accidentally, inadvertently, and randomly, through dreams. A machine feels no pleasure, no pain, and has no sense of prudence. Furthermore, the entire existence of the machine is, literally, designed to interfere with human beings. An entity that troubles others is unworthy to be venerated as a god. Rather, it sounds like just another troublesome obstacle, like a destructive force of nature (but, in this case, artificial), not a path to growth and satisfaction.

## [Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

In that case, the whole Epicurean argument- which states that there can't be any omnipotent God-, **doesn't work**. It's like applying Scepticism to a world in which it has (by whatever means) been proven that truth exists. Or Christianity to a world where it has been proven for certain that there can't be a God.

The Epicurean argument is alien and ineffective to a world where it has been proven that there is a God; but because this machine is God itself, we have to employ other philosophical traditions in order to determine if we should surrender to a God.

This speculation, that a monotheistic entity exists, is an example of what Epicurus would call a "liability to vain imagination", a "groundless", "illusory", or "vain fancy", an "empty imagining" or a "senseless whim". In other words, it is a proposition that is neither based on sensory data, internal feelings, or mental anticipations, but, rather, is a pure product of the imagination. To entertain an idea would be as fruitless as testing for the existence of elves and faeries. Surely, like the Skeptics, we could devote thousands of pages to refuting every idea under the sun. However, in Epicurean philosophy, prudence is the greater virtue, and a speculation that does not lead to practical wisdom is empty.

#### [Quote from smoothiekiwi](#)

So tl;dr- such a "bliss machine" doesn't destroy the hedonistic argument, simply because the hedonistic argument never claimed to know the ultimate truth. It's designed to live everyday life, not to answer every possible philosophical question. And, as [Don](#) already stated, this mind experiment is- and will stay for the foreseeable future- a mind experiment. In case that someone discovers a perfect experience machine which provides only natural pleasures without any drawbacks, let me know- I would love to try it out 😊

There is a fundamental difference between painlessness due to maximizing the enjoyment of a natural life versus sedation due to an emotional withdrawal from the challenges of a natural existence. The "bliss machine" is a form of sedation. In fact, I think in this case, a thought experiment isn't even necessary. Just look at alcoholism and opiate abuse throughout "advanced" countries. There is a possibility of abusing "bliss". There is no possibility of abusing "painlessness" if we look at it honestly, because we cannot achieve "painlessness" through any other means besides fulfilling our potential as human beings. We couldn't enjoy exercise or companionship connected to a machine. The machine does not require that we act sensibly, with decency and dignity. It just requires our submission.