

PD10 - Interpretations of PD 10 Discussion

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 8, 2022 at 3:03 PM

Well, @Nate, lets get the debate rolling 😊

[Quote from Nate](#)

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)

Very good point, and one I can't argue with.

[Quote from Nate](#)

[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.

I get what you mean, but I meant the "standard" monotheistic God (a poor phrasing on my side, I'm sorry 😞) And well, for me personally, the Matrix would be a God if I didn't know about her existence and the pure fact that she's a machine. Why shouldn't the experience machine be exactly the same?

Quote

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

Although you're somehow right, I can't fully agree with you. I fear that I'm not proficient enough in Epicureanism- and I'm not even sure that my viewpoint is Epicurean at all-, but I'm convinced that we have to accept certain societal thought experiments not as true, but that these thoughts exist. And I think that the existence of a God is accepted by five billion people on earth. To refuse acknowledging such a speculation would be madness, in my humble opinion. I obviously don't agree with the idea that there **is** a God, but I most certainly acknowledge that people **believe** in a God.

Quote

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.

Well, but when it produces more pleasure in the end than normal life, why shouldn't I sacrifice virtue and dignity for more long-time pleasure? 😞