

Hypotheticals: Would An Epicurean Hook Himself Up To An "Experience Machine" or a "Pleasure Machine"?

Post by "Matt" of January 8, 2022 at 11:49 AM

Epicurus argues against UNNATURAL desires. Such things, though they might be saturated with pleasure, can lead to pain. This machine idea seems to be the ultimate theoretical unnatural construct. It's a "gotcha" trap...

Instead of a machine it could be a "pleasure drug" that comes in pill form.

A pleasure machine doesn't exist naturally, it must be made to be manifested into reality. So it already is outside of natural processes that lead to pleasure. Everything has consequences, actions and reactions in reality. So a thought experiment where there are no consequences based on observable experiences isn't reality and is now beyond the scope of Epicurean philosophy. This line of abstract argument is for adversarial Idealist philosophers attempting to trap Epicureans...the answer for the Epicurean is don't play the game and don't step into the idealist arena because THAT isn't real. The world of the pleasure machine doesn't exist, just like the the world of pink fluffy invisible dragons that grant wishes doesn't.

There are many unnatural unnecessary things we might desire...people say that heroin feels like the greatest pleasure, but we all know what happens when someone goes down that road. Consequences. Consequences in reality. And since hooking yourself up to a "pleasure machine" in reality must also like heroin have consequences then we must accept this machine is an UNNATURAL and UNNECESSARY desire that will lead to pain. Given the testable and observable evidence for people who have addictions to the cyber world: VR, social media, pornography, video game addiction, there is very good evidence that this machine idea is a red herring.