

Robert Nozick (Book notes)

The Experience machine: Should we plug in?

- Others can plug in, so no need to stay unplugged to serve them

↳ Nozick → no b/c we want to do things not just experience them, and we want to be a certain way / person

- limits us to a man-made world → no actual contact w/ deeper reality

- We desire to live ourselves in contact w/ reality → a machine cannot do that for us

Robert Nozick

• The experience machine: give you any experience you desire (but in reality you would be floating in a tank)

- you would not be able to distinguish between being in the experience machine and real life

↳ Should you plug in?

• Ethical hedonism's response → ethical hedonistic egoism / utilitarianism tell us we should all plug in

• Nozick's response → we would not because there are things that matter to us other than pleasure or the absence of pain → we would not plug in, therefore psychological hedonism is false

- if there are things that matter other than pleasure / pain, then there are values other than pleasure + pain → don't plug in due to other values → ethical hedonism is false

↳ 3 other things that matter to us

1) to do certain things, not just have the experience of doing them (to run, to graduate, to write)

2) to be a certain way, to be a certain kind of person (to be in the state, condition, or position of physical fitness / helpfulness, liked)

↳ not just experiencing what it would be like

3) Plugging in 'limits us to a man-made reality' → we want to be in contact with the actual world

CONTACT WITH THE ACTUAL WORLD