Subject: Re: Can't trust those "Mechanists"
Posted by Bill Epstein on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 09:00:00 GMT
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From the Wikipedia (no copyright folderol intended):"Universal mechanism has come and gone, but the debate over anthropic mechanism seems here to stay. The thesis in anthropic mechanism is not that the everything can be completely explained in mechanical terms (although some anthropic mechanists may also believe that), but rather that everything about human beings can be completely explained in mechanical terms, as surely as can everything about clockwork or gasoline engines.One of the chief obstacles that all mechanistic theories have faced is providing a mechanistic explanation of the human mind; Descartes, for one, endorsed dualism in spite of endorsing a completely mechanistic conception of the material world because he argued that mechanism and the notion of a mind were logically incompatible. Hobbes, on the other hand, conceived of the mind and the will as purely mechanistic, completely explicable in terms of the effects of perception and the pursuit of desire, which in turn he held to be completely explicable in terms of the materialistic operations of the nervous system. Following Hobbes, other mechanists argued for a thoroughly mechanistic explanation of the mind, with one of the most influential and controversial expositions of the doctrine being offered by Julien Offray de La Mettrie in his Man a Machine (1748)."I suppose if we didn't have those that believe " everything about human beings can be completely explained in mechanical terms, as surely as can everything about clockwork or gasoline engines..." there'd be no engineers and thus no electric can-openers or compression drivers. I can hear significant differences between main amplifiers, pre-amplifiers and phono stages. Likewise, my hearing discrimination encompasses capacitors, volume controls and power supply configurations. I didn't need to be "taught" to listen for differences, they simply presented themselves. To say that the electronics chain accounts for only 5% of the listening experience might be disingenuous except when coming from a mechanist. I'm sure Dr. Geddes is being truthful in regard to what he hears. But to propose that his perception of sound is the "objective reality" of the Universe is a bit too dogmatic for my tastes.Try this on for size: Comparatively small changes, less than 5% of listening perceptions significantly change our attitude toward an entire system of sound reproduction. In other words, even if Dr. Geddes offered proof of the minor role he says electronics play, does that really contain the corollary that we ahould like or dislike this or that system in a direct ratio to that percentage? I think that at some point the clock-work winds down and causes listeners to make value judgements that result in the hypothetical 5% influencing up to 100% of the listening experience.