

# Realism matters

**Post by "Charles" of January 4, 2020 at 12:53 PM**

Interestingly enough, Mettrie has quite a few quotes on the subject, decades before Darwin.

"The first generations must have been very imperfect. Here the esophagus will have been lacking; there the stomach, the vulva, the intestines, & so on. Obviously the only animals that will have been able to live, conserve, & perpetuate their species, will have been those who have been provided with all the parts necessary for reproduction, & which in a word no essential part will not have been missed. Conversely those who have been deprived of some part of a necessity absolute, will be dead, or shortly after their birth, or at least without reproducing. Perfection was no more the work of a day for nature than for art."

"People say that all eyes are made optically and all ears mathematically! How do they know that? Because they have observed nature; they were astonished to see that its productions were so equal, and even superior, to art. They could not do otherwise than suppose that it had some aim or enlightened purposes. Nature thus existed before art, which was created following in her steps and came from her as the son comes from his mother. And a chance arrangement, providing the same privileges as an arrangement made on purpose by all possible hard work, earned our common mother an honor which is due only to the laws of movement."

"By what an infinite number of combinations matter must have passed before reaching the only combination which could result in a perfect animal, and through

how many others before reproduction reached the degree of perfection it enjoys today!"

"Everything doctors & physicists have written about

the use of the parts of the animated bodies, always appeared to me

unfounded. All their reasoning on the causes

finals are so frivolous that if Lucretius had refuted them so wrongly then he must have been a bad physician as he was a great poet"

"The elements of matter, by dint of twitching &

mingling, having managed to make eyes, it was

impossible not to see, as not to see oneself

in a mirror, either natural or artificial. The eye has found itself

the mirror of objects, which often serve them in turn.

Nature did not think more of eyeing to see, than

water, to serve as a mirror for the simple shepherdess. The water is

found suitable for returning the images; the shepherdess saw there

with pleasure, her pretty face. This is how the author of the *Machine Man* thinks."

Mettrie made sure to reject all of the supernatural and to stay firmly within a naturalistic and material view of the world, often conceding to Lucretius and disagreeing with his former Cartesian colleagues .