

Anticipations in La Mettrie

Post by "Charles" of January 25, 2020 at 2:38 PM

[Quote from Hiram](#)

So I wonder to what extent a transfer of ideas from La Mettrie - to Jefferson - to Wright took place.

I don't have the time to get into a large wall of text explaining Mettrie at the moment, but he was heavily censored and faced constant backlash, he was "kicked" out of France during the War of Austrian Secession to escape punishment at the hands of the clergy, prompting him to the more tolerant Netherlands - in which he was later evicted and he was practically saved by his friend "Pierre Louis Maupertuis" who secured him a spot in Fredericks Court (I've yet to read the letters between the two).

Back to Mettrie, his works were so controversial that other materialists had to tone down the ideas of Mettrie that they had incorporated, and much of his ideas live on in the legacy of psychology, specifically behaviorism in the works of other, lesser known thinkers.

However, I mentioned this once very briefly and haven't had the chance or opportunity to look into it further, since Mettrie's introduction to Epicurean Physics was *not* from Gassendi, it was from Guillaume Lamy who said of Gassendi's Epicurean-Christian atomism that it was "watered-down". If that means that Mettrie had not been exposed to Laertius, I cannot say yet as there's still quite a large number of works I haven't delved into yet, as for context with Epicurus as he mentions him by name quite a few times in the three works I've been studying (Anti-Seneca, System of Epicurus, & School of Volup.).

Regardless, it's absolutely clear that Mettrie has an extremely heavy and prolific reader of: history, poetry, and scientific works; having very keen and astute knowledge of all the leading theories and popular poets of his day (he drops the names of his contemporary poets left and right in School of Volup.). But the nature of his works has less to do with acknowledging history, than it does with speculating & hypothesizing and stating his beliefs on various subjects or findings.