

# Julien Offray de la Mettrie - Unorganized Thread for findings and quotations

Post by "Cassius" of January 25, 2020 at 7:51 PM

Just glancing at the wikipedia article, I see this, which seems very similar to an exchange that I recently had with Oscar. If I recall the issue that bothered Oscar was whether to use "continuum" or "spectrum" terminology, but the real point that I was interested in was the point Mettrie makes here - **that there is no abrupt transition.**

## ***Man and the animal***

*Prior to Man a Machine he published The Natural History of the Soul in 1745. He argued that humans were just complex animals.[9] A great deal of controversy emerged due to his belief that "from animals to man there is no abrupt transition".[10] He later built on that idea: he claimed that humans and animals were composed of organized matter. He believed that humans and animals were only different in regards to the complexity that matter was organized. He compared the differences between man and animal to those of high quality pendulum clocks and watches stating: "[Man] is to the ape, and to the most intelligent animals, as the planetary pendulum of [Huygens](#) is to a watch of [Julien Le Roy](#)"*

Also, I bet we are going to find that this part of the Wikipedia article is not correct, and that he did not advocate the "unbridled" pursuit of pleasure except in the sense that any Epicurean worth his salt identifies pleasure as the highest goal:

*There La Mettrie wrote the Discours sur le bonheur (1748), which appalled leading [Enlightenment](#) thinkers such as [Voltaire](#), [Diderot](#) and [D'Holbach](#) due to its explicitly [hedonistic](#) sensualist principles which prioritised the unbridled pursuit of pleasure above all other things.[5]*

And also a good chance that we will find this slanderous just as the type of thing aimed at Lucretius:

## ***Death***

*La Mettrie's celebration of sensual pleasure was said to have resulted in his early death. The French ambassador to Prussia, Tirconnel, grateful to La Mettrie for curing him of an illness, held*

*a feast in his honour. It was claimed that La Mettrie wanted to show either his power of gluttony or his strong constitution by devouring a large quantity of pâté de faisan aux truffes. As a result, he developed a [gastric illness](#) of some sort. Soon after he began suffering from a severe fever and eventually died.*[\[3\]\[8\]](#)