

Proletariat and wealth are antitheses. As such they constitute a whole; both are manifestations of the world of private property. The question to be considered is the specific position which both occupy in the antithesis. To describe them as two sides of a whole is not a sufficient explanation. Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to preserve its own existence, and along with it that of its antithesis, the proletariat. Private property satisfied in itself is the positive side of the antithesis. The proletariat, on the other hand, is obliged, as proletariat, to abolish itself, and along with it private property, its conditioned antithesis, which makes it the proletariat.

It is a negative side of the antithesis, the internal source of unrest, the disintegrated and disintegrating proletariat.

The possessing class and the proletarian class represent the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels perfectly satisfied with this self-estrangement, knowing that in this estrangement resides its own power, and possesses therein the semblance of a human existence; the latter class feels itself to be destroyed by the estrangement, perceives therein its impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence.

Within the antithesis, therefore, the owner of private property is the conservative, and the proletarian is the destructive party. From the former proceeds the action of maintaining the antithesis, from the latter the action of destroying it. From the point of view of its national, economic movement, private property is, of course, continually being driven towards its own dissolution, but only by an unconscious development which is independent of it, and which exists against its will, and is limited by the nature of things; only, that is, by creating the proletariat as proletariat, poverty conscious of its own physical and spiritual poverty, and demoralized humanity conscious of its own demoralization and consequently striving against it.

The proletariat fulfils the judgment which private property by the creation of the proletariat suspends over itself, just as it fulfils the judgment which wage-labour suspends over itself in creating alien riches and its own condemnation. If the proletariat triumphs, it does not thereby become the absolute side of society, for it triumphs only by abolishing itself and its opposite. In this way both the proletariat and its conditioned opposite, private property, are done away with.

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## FRENCH MATERIALISM

The French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and especially of French materialism, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and against the existing religion and theology, but equally an open and outspoken campaign against all metaphysics, especially that of Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, and Leibnitz. Metaphysics was confronted with philosophy, just as Feuerbach, in his first decisive stand against Hegel, opposed sober philosophy to drunken speculation. The metaphysics of the seventeenth century, which was driven from the field by the French Enlightenment, and especially by the French materialism, of the eighteenth century, experienced its victorious and opulent restoration in the German philosophy, and particularly in the speculative German philosophy, of the nineteenth century.

After Hegel had combined it in an ingenious manner with all subsequent metaphysics and with German idealism, and founded a universal realm of metaphysics, the attack on speculative metaphysics and on all metaphysics was once again synonymous, as in the eighteenth century, with an attack on theology. Metaphysics succumbed for good and all to materialism, which itself was now perfected by the work of speculation and coincided with humanism.

French and English socialism and communism represented the materialism which coincided with humanism in the practical sphere, just as Feuerbach represented it in the theoretical sphere.

There are two tendencies of French materialism, one of which derives its origin from Descartes and the other from Locke. The latter is pre-eminently an element in French culture and merges directly into socialism. The

former, viz., the mechanical materialism, is absorbed in French natural science. The French materialism which derives directly from Descartes does not concern us particularly, any more than the French school of Newton and French natural science generally.

Only this much need be said. In his physics Descartes invested matter with self-creative power, and he conceived mechanical movement to be its vital act. He separated his physics completely from his metaphysics. Within his physics matter is the only substance, the only basis of being and perceiving.

Mechanical French materialism absorbed the physics of Descartes, while rejecting his metaphysics. His pupils were anti-metaphysicians by profession, that is to say, they were physicians.

This school commences with the doctor Leroy, and reaches its acme with the doctor Cabanis, while the doctor Lamettrie is its centre. Descartes was still living when Leroy transferred to the human soul the Cartesian construction of animals, and explained the soul as a mode of the body and ideas as mechanical movements, similarly to Lamettrie in the eighteenth century. Leroy even believed that Descartes had dissembled his real opinion. Descartes protested. At the end of the eighteenth century Cabanis perfected Cartesian materialism in a work entitled: *Rapport du physic et du moral de l'homme*.

Cartesian materialism exists in France even to this day. It had its great success in mechanical natural science, with which Romanticism will least of all be reproached.

The metaphysics of the seventeenth century, as specially represented for France by Descartes, had materialism for its antagonist from its hour of birth. In person this antagonist confronted Descartes in the shape of Gassendi, the restorer of Epicurean materialism. French and English materialism always remain in close relationship with Democritus and Epicurus.

Cartesian metaphysics found another antagonist in the English materialist Hobbes. Long after their death, Gassendi and Hobbes triumphed over their opponent at the moment when the former reigned in all the schools of France as the official power.

Voltaire once remarked that the indifference of Frenchmen in the eighteenth century towards Jesuitical and Jansenist quarrels was brought about less by philosophy than by Law's financial speculations. Thus the overthrow of the metaphysics of the seventeenth century can be explained from the materialistic theory of the eighteenth century only in so far as this theoretical movement is itself explicable by the practical shape of the French life of that time. This life was directed to the immediate present, to worldly enjoyment and worldly interests, to the secular world. It was inevitable that anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, materialistic theories should correspond to its anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, its materialistic practice. In practice metaphysics had lost all credit. Here we have only to indicate briefly the course of the theoretical movement.

In the seventeenth century metaphysics had already been provided with a positive, a profane content (*pace* Descartes, Leibnitz etc.). It made discoveries in mathematics, physics, and other definite sciences which appeared to belong to it, but by the beginning of the eighteenth century this semblance had been destroyed. The positive sciences had broken away from it and mapped out their own territory. The whole metaphysical realm consisted in nothing more than creatures of fancy and heavenly things at the precise time when real beings and earthly things were beginning to concentrate all interest upon themselves. Metaphysics had become stale. Helvetius and Condillac were born in the same year that Malebranche and Arnauld, the last great French metaphysicians of the seventeenth century, died.

The man who theoretically destroyed the credit of the metaphysics of the seventeenth century and all metaphysics generally was Pierre Bayle. His weapon was scepticism, forged out of the magic formulas of metaphysics itself. He took Cartesian metaphysics as his immediate starting-point. Just as Feuerbach in combating speculative theology was driven to combat speculative philosophy, because he perceived in

speculation the last support of theology, because he had to force the theologians to retreat from fictitious science to crude, repugnant faith, so religious doubt drove Bayle into doubts of the metaphysics which supported this faith. Consequently he subjected metaphysics in its entire historical evolution to criticism. He became its historian in order to write the history of its death. Above all he refuted Spinoza and Leibnitz.

Pierre Bayle not only prepared the way for the acceptance in France of the materialism and philosophy of healthy common sense through the sceptical disintegration of metaphysics. He announced the atheistic society which was soon to come into existence, inasmuch as a society of avowed atheists could exist, as an atheist could be an honest man, as man was not degraded by atheism, but by superstition and idolatry.

In the words of a French writer, Pierre Bayle was "the last metaphysician in the sense of the seventeenth and the first philosopher in the sense of the eighteenth century."

In addition to the negative refutation of the theology and metaphysics of the seventeenth century, a positive, anti-metaphysical system was required. A book was wanted which would systematize the practical activities of that time and provide them with a theoretical foundation. Locke's essay on the "Origin of the Human Understanding" came as if summoned from beyond the Channel. It was greeted enthusiastically as an anxiously awaited guest.

It may be asked: Is Locke perchance a pupil of Spinoza? We would answer. Materialism is the native son of Great Britain. Already her schoolman Duns Scotus asked "whether matter could not think?"

In order to work this miracle, he took refuge in God's omnipotence, that is, he made theology itself preach materialism. Moreover, he was a nominalist. Nominalism is found to be a chief ingredient among English materialists, just as it is the first expression of materialism generally.

The real progenitor of English materialism and of all modern experimental science is Bacon. Natural science was regarded by him as the true science, and physics as the principal part of natural science. Anaxagoras and his homoiomeriæ, Democritus and his atoms, are frequently quoted as his authorities. According to his doctrine, the senses are infallible and the source of all knowledge. All science is based upon experience and consists in subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a rational method of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the chief instruments of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in matter movement is the first and foremost, not only in the form of mechanical and mathematical movement, but even more as an impulse, a vital spirit, a tension, as a qual (a torture)--to use an expression of Jacob Bohme's--of matter.

In Bacon, as its first creator, materialism still conceals within itself in an ingenuous manner the germs of a many-sided development. On the one hand, the sensuous poetic glamour in which matter is bathed entices the whole personality of man. On the other, the aphoristically formulated doctrine swarms with theological inconsistencies.

In its further development, materialism becomes one-sided. Hobbes is the man who systematizes Baconian materialism. Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic bloom, and becomes the abstract experience of the mathematician. The physical movement is sacrificed to the mechanical or mathematical; geometry is proclaimed as the chief science. Materialism takes to misanthropy. In order to overcome misanthropic, fleshless spiritualism on the latter's own ground, materialism must mortify its own flesh and turn ascetic. It reappears as an intellectual entity, but it also develops all the ruthless consistency of the intellect.

Hobbes, as Bacon's continuator, argues that if the senses furnish men with all knowledge, then concepts and ideas are nothing but phantoms of the material world more or less divested of their sensual forms. All philosophy can do is to give these phantoms names. One name may be applied to several phantoms. There may even be names of names. It would, however, imply a contradiction if, on the one hand, we contended that

all ideas had their origin in the world of senses, and, on the other hand, that a word was worth more than a word; that besides the individual beings known to us by our senses, there existed also beings of a general nature. An immaterial substance is rather the same absurdity as an immaterial body. Bodies, being, substance are but different terms for the same reality. One cannot separate thought from matter that thinks. It is the substratum of all changes. The word infinite is meaningless unless it signifies the capacity of our minds to perform an endless process of addition. As only material things are perceptible and knowable, nothing can be known about the existence of God.

My own existence alone is certain. Every human passion is a mechanical movement which has a beginning or an end. The objects of impulse are what are called good. Man is subject to the same laws of Nature. Power and freedom are identical.

Hobbes had systematized Bacon, without, however, providing any firmer basis for the latter's fundamental principle, the origin of all knowledge and ideas from the world of the senses.

It was Locke who established the principle of Bacon and Hobbes in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

Just as Hobbes shattered the theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism, so Collins, Dodwall, Coward, Hartley, Priestley, etc. broke down the last theological bars which still obstructed Locke's sensationalism. At least for materialists, theism became nothing more than a convenient and easy-going way of getting rid of religion.

We have already noticed at what an opportune time Locke's work came to the French. Locke had established the philosophy of *bon sens*, of healthy common sense, that is, to express it in a roundabout way, that there are no philosophers other than those of the understanding which is based upon the healthy human senses.

Condillac, who was Locke's immediate pupil and French interpreter, lost no time in turning the Lockeian sensationalism upon the metaphysics of the seventeenth century. He contended that the French had rightly spurned the latter as a clumsy product of the imagination and theological prejudice.

He published a refutation of the systems of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Malebranche. In his work: *L'essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, he developed Locke's ideas and contended that not only the soul, but also the senses, not only the art of fashioning ideas, but also the apparatus of sensual receptivity, are subjects of experience and usage. Consequently, the entire development of man depends upon education and external circumstances. Condillac was only supplanted in the French schools by the eclectic philosophy.

The difference between French and English materialism is the difference between the two nationalities. The French endowed English materialism with wit, with flesh and blood, with eloquence. They invested it with grace and gave it the temperament that was still lacking. They civilized it.

In Helvetius, who likewise took Locke as his starting point, materialism receives its proper French character. He applied it immediately to social life. (Helvetius, *de l'homme*.) Sensual qualities and egoism, enjoyment and enlightened self-interests are the foundations of all morality.

The natural equality of human intelligences, the harmony between the progress of reason and the progress of industry, the natural goodness of mankind, the omnipotence of education are the principal factors in this system.

The writings of Lamettrie exhibit the union of Cartesian and English materialism. Lamettrie utilizes the physics of Descartes down to its utmost detail. His *l'homme machine* is a performance executed on the model of the animal machine of Descartes. In Holbach's *Système de la nature*, the section devoted to physics likewise consists of the synthesis of English and French materialism, just as the section devoted to morals is

based essentially on the morality of Helvetius. Robinet (*de la nature*), the French materialist who more than all the others kept in touch with metaphysics, expressly founds himself on Leibnitz.

Of Volney, Dupuis, Diderot, etc., we do not need to speak any more than of the physiocrats, now that we have shown the double derivation of French materialism from the physics of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche and Leibnitz. This antagonism could only be realized by Germans after they themselves had come into conflict with speculative metaphysics.

Just as Cartesian materialism branches into natural science, so the other tendency of French materialism merges directly into socialism and communism.

No special acuteness is required to perceive the necessary connection of the original goodness and equally intelligent endowment of men, of the omnipotence of experience, custom and education, the influence of external circumstances on men, the extreme importance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., with communism and socialism.

If man receives all his impressions and forms all his conceptions from the world of sense, and derives his experiences from the world of sense, it follows that the empirical world ought to be so constructed as to offer a wealth of truly human experiences. If enlightened self-interest is the principle of all morality, it follows that the private interests of men ought to coincide with human interests. If man is not free in the materialistic sense, that is to say, is free, not by reason of his negative strength to avoid this and that, but by reason of his positive strength to assert his true individuality, then man must not punish the crimes of individuals, but destroy the anti-social breeding-places of crime, and afford to each person sufficient social scope for the expression of his or her individuality. If man is formed by circumstances, then it is only in society that he develops his real nature, and the strength of his nature must be measured, not with the strength of the isolated individual, but with the strength of society.

These and similar sentences may be found almost word for word in the writings even of the oldest French materialists. This is not the place to criticize them. Significant of the socialist tendency of materialism is Mandeville's (one of the older English pupils of Locke) apology for vice. He shows that vice is indispensable and useful in present-day society. This, however, was no justification for present-day society.

The doctrines of French materialism form the starting-point of Fourier. The followers of Babeuf were crude, uncivilized materialists, but even fully-developed communism derived directly from French materialism.

The latter, in the shape given it by Helvetius, returned to its motherland, to England. On the morality of Helvetius, Bentham founded his system of enlightened self-interest, just as Owen, proceeding from Bentham's system, founded English communism. On being banished to England, the Frenchman Cabet was stimulated by the communistic ideas he found there, and returned to France, to become the most popular, albeit most superficial, representative of communism here.

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## THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

Pourquoi la revolution d'Angleterre a-t-elle reussi. Discours sur l'histoire de la revolution d'Angleterre, Paris, 1850.[10]

The object of M. Guizot's pamphlet is to show why Louis Philippe and Guizot's policy ought not to have been overthrown on the 24th February 1848, and how the reprehensible character of the French is to blame for the fact that the July monarchy of 1830 ignominiously collapsed after eighteen years of laborious existence and was not blessed with the security of tenure enjoyed by the English monarchy since 1688.