

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the figure of philosopher, physician, and Enlightenment thinker Julien Jean Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751). The work is structured into several thematic sections aiming to provide a comprehensive introduction, supplementation, and contextualization of the life and works of this philosopher for a Czech audience.

In the introductory part, the reader is acquainted with La Mettrie's life at the Prussian court, based on an analysis of references found in the correspondence of his contemporaries. This section also maps the relations between La Mettrie and selected philosophers of the first half of the 18th century, specifically Diderot, Voltaire, and Maupertuis. For contextualization, several events from La Mettrie's life that have not yet been elaborated on by the author are included, such as the circumstances surrounding his death and the beginnings of his conflicts with French physicians, which led to his involuntary exile. Additionally, it explores the intriguing issue of La Mettrie's portraits.

The practical part of the thesis initially focuses on the analysis of prefaces, dedications of works, and outlines the issues related to book publishing. The subsequent chapter is dedicated to radical, atheistic, and materialistic theories in La Mettrie's works and examines the originality of these ideas within the context of the first half of the 18th century.

In conclusion, the author reflects on the use of French materialists and La Mettrie's legacy, as well as the frequency of references to him in relation to the development of historical and dialectical materialism as propagated by Marx and Engels. The references are then compared with references found in modern syntheses of the history of philosophy and the frequency of mentions of La Mettrie in these works.

Keywords:

Julien Jean Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751); Enlightenment; 18th century philosophy; materialism; atheism; Frederick the Great; Prussian court; Academy of Sciences; correspondence; paratexts; historical and dialectical materialism.