

VALUES & MATERIALISM

It is generally believed that the recognition of the social efficacy of value systems refutes materialism. Thus, it is sometimes said that Weber's thesis, that protestantism generated capitalism, refutes Marx's thesis that religion is a product of society. While it is true that these two theses are mutually contradictory, it is not true that Marx's is strictly materialist: it is not because it conceives of religion as an immaterial entity rather than as a social system (a religious community) and therefore a material one. In any event, a consistent materialism has no difficulty in admitting the social efficacy of value systems because, to him, value systems are "embodied" in the people who share them.

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FT 395