

# “System of Nature”: Man Is Only Unhappy Because He Misjudges Nature

Part III: He must be shown the truth

By [Dr. Rudolf Hänsel](#)

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## Introduction

*The subject of this three-part series of articles is the science of humanistic psychology.*

*In Part I, the thesis was put forward that man is not ill, but not properly enlightened. The next part (II) dealt with the question of war and peace. The psychological insight was that*

*man has no innate aggression instinct, but that his nature is peaceful. War would only occur because of the greed for power of those who would act as authorities within the nations. For this reason, humanity would be able to live together without weapons and wars.*

*Such a world, however, would not come into being of its own accord, but solely through human resolve, through thought and action oriented towards the ideal of peace and justice. Humanity should muster this "indomitable will" (Gandhi) already today.*

*In the last part (III) for the time being, the author refers to the insights and books of the philosopher of the French Enlightenment, Baron Paul-Henry Thiry d'Holbach (1723-1789). He will also quote from his own book: "Handing over power to no one! A Psychological Manifesto of Common Sense" (1).*

*Since these books critical of religion examine the effects of religion on the development of the child and the psyche of the human being, it should be made clear at the outset that it remains, of course, the inalienable right of the religious person to draw revelations of the highest religious truths from the words of the Bible. But it is likewise the unconditional duty of the researcher to infer historical truths only from completely impeccable testimonies (2).*

## System of Nature

D'Holbach's book *System of Nature* or *Système de la Nature ou Des Loix du Monde Physique et du Monde Physique et du Monde Moral* (*System of Nature or of the Laws of the Physical and Moral World*) was published in 1770 under fictitious authorship and caused a scandalous stir because, in the opinion of the French clergy, it was "godless, blasphemous and seditious" (3).

Excerpts from the author's preface suggest this:

"Man is unhappy only because he misjudges nature. His mind is so contaminated by prejudice that one could believe he is condemned to error forever: he is so tightly bound up with the veil of views that has been spread over him from childhood that he can only be released from it with the greatest difficulty. A dangerous ferment is mixed with all his knowledge and makes it necessarily wavering, unclear and false: to his misfortune he wanted to transcend the limits of his sphere and tried to raise himself above the visible world. (...).

There is only one truth, it is necessary for man, it can never harm him, its invincible power will reveal itself sooner or later. That is why it must be revealed to the human race. (...).

Let us try, then, to dispel the mists which prevent man from advancing with a sure step on his path through life, let us instil in him courage and respect for his reason, let him learn to recognise his nature and his legitimate rights, let him ask the advice of experience and renounce the prejudices of his childhood; let him base his morality on his nature, his needs, his real advantages which society affords him; let him dare to love himself, let him work for his own happiness by promoting that of others, in a word: he is sensible and virtuous in order to be happy here on this earth, and does not occupy himself with dangerous and useless reveries. (...).

If he needs fantasies, let him at least allow others to spin up some of their own that are different from his own; finally, let him convince himself that it is very important for the

inhabitants of this earth to be just, charitable, and peace-loving, and that nothing is more trivial than thinking about things that are inaccessible to reason.” (4)

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant defined “Enlightenment” in 1784 as follows:

“Enlightenment is the exit of man from his self-inflicted immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s intellect without the guidance of another.” (5) His motto was “Sapere aude!” (Dare to know) or “Have the courage to use your own understanding!”

According to Kant, one reason for not being able to think for oneself is laziness and cowardice. Being immature is comfortable and thinking for oneself is “a vexatious business”. This makes it easy for others, Kant believes, to become the “guardians” of these immature people. For a spoiled and thoughtless person, it is more comfortable to use the guidance of an authority and to be in harmony with the supposedly powerful and their mass media, because then one is always on the “right” side and can refer to the supposedly “infallible” power (6).

### “Kadavergehorsam” and common sense

Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, wrote a text in the mid-16th century to which the German word “Kadavergehorsam” can be traced. The version translated from Spanish into Latin and published by the Congregation of the Order in 1558 states (translated):

“We should be aware that each one of those who live in obedience must allow himself to be led and guided by divine Providence by means of the superior, as if he were a dead body to be taken wherever and treated in whatever way, or like a staff of an old man to serve wherever and for whatever the wants to use him.” (7)

But back to the Enlightenment philosopher and encyclopaedist Baron Paul-Henry Thiry d’Holbach:

In 1772, just two years after the publication of “System of Nature”, his book “Common Sense” appeared under the title “LE BONS SENS DU CURE MESLIER”. In order to avoid persecution by the “Holy Inquisition”, Holbach again published his thoughts under the name of a deceased person: the free-thinking priest Jean Meslier. During his time in office, the latter was not allowed to dare communicate his critical thoughts to the church congregation.

The German translation published in 1878 reads: “Der gesunde Menschenverstand oder das religiöse Testament des Pfarrers Meslier. A religious-philosophical treatise on the concept of “religion” and on the existence of a divine creative being – Dedicated to the spiritually advanced people.” (8)

Already in the introduction Holbach writes:

“It is a vain effort to try to cure people of their vices if one does not begin by curing their prejudices. One must show them the truth, so that they get to know their most precious interests and the true motives that lead them to virtue and their true happiness. (...).

Let us tell men to be just, charitable, temperate and sociable, not because their gods

demand it, but because one must seek to please one's fellow men; let us tell them to abstain from sin and vice, not because one will be punished in another world, but because evil punishes itself already in this life. (...)." (9)

On the question of courage to be critical of religion, Holbach writes at the end of his book:

"It was not permitted to make any discovery. (...). Only with trembling could the greatest men feel the truth; only rarely did they have the courage to speak it. Those who dared were usually punished for their audacity. Religion has never been so gracious as to permit thinking aloud, or to combat the prejudices to which man has everywhere served as a victim and a fool." (10)

## The influence of society on people's religious attitudes

Man is born neither religious nor believing in God. The mentally healthy and uncrippled child, however, comes into a society in which delusional ideas and illusions prevail.

According to Karl Marx, man's metaphysical need is only a protest against the misery of this world, because he is just as powerless and helpless in the face of economic hardships as he is in the face of the forces of nature or crises and wars.

Marx saw through the gears of society and came to the conclusion that man cannot change until the structure of society has changed. As long as everyone could not live humanely and without fear in this world, there would be a belief in a better hereafter, in a balancing justice:

"Religion is the striving for illusory happiness of the people, which springs from a state of society which needs illusion." (11)

Economic factors strengthen or inhibit a person's religious attitude. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1875) – German philosopher, anthropologist and critic of religion, whose epistemological standpoint has become fundamental for modern human sciences such as psychology and ethnology – already demands that man must finally stop being a plaything of the anti-human powers that use religion for oppression (12).

For Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), too, religion was an illusion, born of very old, fierce human desires: the desire for a just world order, for freedom from want, as well as the desire for eternity of personal existence, conceived as a future life in a heaven (13).

## The intimidation of intellect and reason begins in childhood

Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach writes on this subject in "Common Sense":

"The principles of all religions are founded on the idea of God; but it is impossible for men to have true concepts of a Being who does not act on any of their senses. All our concepts are derived from objects which we perceive. But what can represent to us the concept of a God who is necessarily only an idea without an object?" (14)

However, the child is taught things that are foreign to its nature and do not require its reason. No sooner do the first mental impulses appear and the child learns to speak than it is "taken into care" by society, parents and the church. It is made clear to it that its nature is not allowed to develop freely with regard to the feeling for nature and the world view. If it

wants to avoid being punished with hellish chastisements, it must press its nature into a certain ecclesiastical form.

If the consciousness of the “I” then forms in the third year of life, the god and devil of the religion in question already intervene and teach the child not to trust in itself, but to let itself be guided and controlled by supernatural powers. Thus the child learns about the fear of demons. The “virtues” of submissiveness, obedience and humility are also imprinted. The child is not allowed to develop naturally and freely. Psychiatrists sometimes diagnose anxiety neuroses and mental disorders as a result.

With this approach, a strong and paralysing pressure is exerted on the child’s soul. No political organisation, no matter how dictatorial and totalitarian, is capable of exerting such paralysing pressure on children’s souls. This mental rape is worse and more lasting than any physical rape (15).

As an adult, the person then shows in worldly thinking the “deformations” that were inflicted on him in childhood. Thus he is inhibited in the development of the ego, but is in bondage to the priests. In ideological discussions, the remnants of common sense often have to be fought down and one has to be dishonest with oneself.

Religious people are often haughty towards those who think differently, and they feel exalted. Thus he often regards the non-believer as a stupid or mentally abnormal and sick person. In the daily life of this religious adult, on the other hand, one sometimes observes a strong human need for devotion and a blind obedience to authority and religious leaders.

## Schools and universities are public institutions

Religion and any other kind of occultism are private matters for parents and their children and must therefore be rejected as a special subject in schools. The school must be non-denominational. It must first and foremost convey the conviction that experiential knowledge, understanding and reason always and everywhere have priority.

Only a faculty of religious studies should be admitted to universities; theology does not have the rank of a science. Theology should be confined to seminaries.

In education, the youth must be taught values from the beginning that correspond to today and are still valid in adulthood. The pupil must be shown that there is a high ethic even without beliefs. The young person should be helped to develop his or her own nature without being constricted by a denomination. This person will generally also be moral.

The school has to strengthen the young people’s own strength and self-confidence, to divert attention from their own beloved salvation to the salvation of the general public, to the necessity of helpfulness, to an ideal which no longer sees the highest moral force in the religious but in the social idea, in the creation of a “paradise” of humanity on earth. (16)

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## Notes

(1) Hänsel, Rudolf (2020). Handing over power to no one! A psychological manifesto of common sense. Gornji Milanovac. See also abridged version of the book in: "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" and "Global Research".

(2) op. cit., p. 57

(3) D'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry (1978). System der Natur oder von den Gesetzen der physischen und moralischen Welt, Frankfurt a. M., p. 2.

(4) op. cit., p. 11ff.

(5) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel\\_Kant](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant)

(6) Hänsel, Rudolf (2020). Handing over power to no one! S. 32

(7) <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadavergehorsam>

(8) D'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry (1976). The common sense of the priest Meslier. Zurich

(9) op. cit., p. 4ff.

(10) op. cit., p. 160

(11) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_Deutsche\\_Ideologie](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Deutsche_Ideologie)

(12) [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig\\_Feuerbach](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Feuerbach)

(13) Hänsel, Rudolf (2020). Handing over power to no one! S. 61

(14) D'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry (1976). The common sense of the priest Meslier. Zurich, p. 9

(15) Hänsel, Rudolf (2020). Handing over power to no one! S. 64

(16) op. cit., p. 66ff.

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