

Common Sense Versus “A Magical Worldview”

Part II

By [Dr. Rudolf Hänsel](#)

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Theme: [History](#)

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Read Part I:



[The Agony of a Totalitarian “New World Order” \(NWO\) and A Different “Being Human”: Scientific Psychology Demands New “Enlightenment”](#)

By [Dr. Rudolf Hänsel](#), May 24, 2022

*The critical thoughts on religion and its effects on human feeling, thinking and acting are based primarily on the author’s own experiences with religious faith and the institution of the Catholic Church. In addition, as an educator and psychologist, the author draws on the science of psychology and the unique life work of his esteemed Zurich psychology teacher and psychotherapist **Friedrich Liebling** (1893-1982). From him, the author has unpublished manuscripts and extensive personal records of private and public conversations at his disposal.*

Another basis are the works of the French Enlightenment philosopher and encyclopaedist **Baron Paul-Henri Thiry** d’Holbach (1723-1789) “System of Nature” (5) and “The Common Sense of Father Meslier” (6). In addition, there are the thoughts of the French radical enlightener and “atheist in a priest’s skirt” Jean Meslier (1664-1729), which he wrote down in his testament “Memorandum of the Thoughts and Convictions of J. M”.

Holbach’s book “*System der Natur oder von den Grenzen der physischen und der moralischen Welt*” (System of Nature or of the Limits of the Physical and Moral World) appeared in 1770 under fictitious authorship and caused a scandalous stir. The French clergy demanded its immediate banning by parliament because it was “godless,

blasphemous and seditious". Excerpts from the author's preface suggest that:

"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 is 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 vacillating, unclear and false; he wanted, to his misfortune, 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, then, try to dispel the mists which prevent man from advancing with a sure step on his path of 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: let him be sensible and virtuous in order to be happy here on this earth, and not occupy himself with dangerous and useless reveries! " (7)

In 1772, just two years after the publication of "System der Natur", the book "*Der gesunde Menschenverstand des Pfarrers Meslier*" (8) appeared under the title "*LE BONS SENS DU CURE MESLIER*". To avoid persecution by the "Holy Inquisition", Holbach published his thoughts under the name of the already deceased free-thinking priest Jean Meslier.

Meslier, who was not allowed to share his critical thoughts with the church community during his tenure, wrote them down during his last years. This comprehensive, anti-religious manifesto "Mémoire" was published as a testament after his death in 1729 and exerted a considerable influence on the incipient Enlightenment. Meslier's ideas were disseminated in many excerpts and were considered a bestseller among the secret writings. In 1792, Voltaire also commented on it.

In 1878, a German translation of "*LE BONS SENS DU CURE MESLIER*" was published: "*Der gesunde Menschenverstand oder das religiöse Testament des Pfarrers Meslier aus Étrépigny. A religious-philosophical treatise on the concept of 'religion' and on the existence of a divine creative being - Dedicated to the spiritually advanced people -*" (9). Orthography, punctuation and sentence order were adopted unchanged.

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. They must be told the truth, so that they learn to know their dearest interests and the true motives that lead them to virtue and their true happiness.

The teachers of the people have long enough raised their eyes to heaven; would that they would at last turn them to earth! Bowed down by incomprehensible theology, by ridiculous fables, by impenetrable mysteries, by childish ceremonies, let man at last concern himself with natural things, with intelligible objects, with visible truths, with

useful knowledge! Eliminate the vain chimeras which keep men in bondage; and sensible thoughts will, as it were, take root of their own accord in minds which were believed to be destined for eternal error. (...)

To discover the true principles of morality, man needs neither theology, nor revelation, nor God; he needs only a sound mind; he need only look within himself, investigate his own nature, consider his advantages, contemplate the purpose of society and of all its members, and he will easily come to the conclusion that virtue makes happy and vice makes unhappy.

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 already punishes itself in this life. (...).

Truth is simple; error is complicated, uncertain in its course and surrounded by deviations. The voice of nature is intelligible; that of falsehood is ambiguous, enigmatic, mysterious. The path of truth is straight, that of deceit is crooked and dark. This truth is necessary to all men, and is felt by all the righteous. The teachings of reason are for all those who are of an honest mind. Men are unhappy because they are ignorant; they are ignorant because everything conspires against their enlightenment, and are bad merely because their powers of thought are not sufficiently developed." (10)

The French philosopher and writer **Pierre Bayle** (1647-1706), also a central figure of the Enlightenment, believes:

"That an opinion, merely because it has dragged on from century to century, is now a truth, is quite simply a delusion." (11)

High "suggestibility" in childhood supports religious readiness to believe

The Christian Church believes that what is missed in the religious education of the child can hardly be recovered. It must first artificially induce its teachings in the young, still spiritually helpless person in order to have him firmly in its grip as an adult.

Man likes to believe what corresponds to his desires and his respective mood. Suggestibility" is a personality trait that expresses the extent of "receptivity" to suggestively transmitted information about certain facts that are integrated into one's own cognitive systems (perceiving, thinking, remembering, etc.). Often people transmit this information as self-experiences or their own experiences. In this process, thoughts, feelings, perceptions or ideas are taken over from outside that do not correspond to reality and are intended to influence the person mentally and psychologically in a manipulative way (12).

Due to the more or less great suggestibility of almost all people, religious belief is substantially supported. Very suggestible adults are often called "naive" or "gullible". It is different with children: Their suggestibility is very high, which is why young people are particularly targeted for manipulative influence. In addition, children can tend to confuse suggested information with what they have experienced (13). Before even consciousness awakens and before it can think and evaluate, the child is instilled with the ideas of God, the devil, demons, dark forces and hell. The very thought of doubting these ideas leads directly

to hell.

As a rule, the believer enters his church already in a semi-suggested state; further things happen automatically: the solemn church milieu, the priestly dress, incense, organ music, litanies and the sermon that pathetically wants to persuade. All this completes the suggestion and shuts down the critical thinking faculty. Thinking is quietly and imperceptibly pushed aside and lulled by the voice of the preacher. The same thing is said for the hundredth and thousandth time, one hardly listens any more.

Through religious suggestion, not only the intelligence is intimidated, but also the will and the self-confidence, because apostasy and leaving the church have been considered grave sins, infidelities and Judas deeds since apostolic times. The healthy and spiritually-psychologically unmanipulated person expresses judgements only when he has checked them against experience and recognised them as not contrary to reason.

The soporific effect of monotonous religious ceremonies and the religious festivals which represent the climax of the year, as well as the constant devaluation of a temporary existence on earth in favour of eternal life in the hereafter, mean that a fatalistic and passive attitude often becomes the dominant character trait of the personality.

A person can, however, change in his way of thinking and his world of thoughts. Young people today are freer than in the past; it is already a different world because civilisation has advanced. This young person has grown up with religion, he knows all the mystical thought and is still afraid not to believe because that is a sin and he could lose eternal life.

But if he trusts an enlightened psychotherapist, for example, and gets courage, after some time a person stands before us who can put all this aside: He no longer believes because he has gained insight into natural science, because he has begun to read and because he has become acquainted with church history and the history of the other side, the doubters, who have rebelled against religion. He begins to have an eye for the real world and gets new thoughts; he no longer believes in the old ones. He has a different view of life because he has examined his thoughts and feelings.

The problem of violence in authoritarian education

In our society and culture, violence is always used. It starts with the mother. How is it that a mother beats, insults and irritates her child? Surely this is not intentional: she brought a child into the world and put her whole heart into it. However, if we include our entire social order – the principle of violence and coercion – then the mother has already been brought up in this way and believes that she must also bring up her child in this way.

A high percentage of the population – the intelligent, the stupid, the academics, the non-academics, the believers and the unbelievers – they all vote for “peace and order!”. That is the barrack yard, our cultural problem and our misfortune! That is where “the dog is buried”. We have all experienced compulsion in education – and therefore we have compulsion within us.

School is also an institution of violence – even if it has been somewhat mitigated today because of psychological findings. The teacher is no longer allowed to hit – but he hits anyway. The teacher’s whole attitude is authoritarian, even if he does not hit. The child is not happy in life. He does not live in a friendly world; everything is the continuation of the

educational problem at home.

The professor is also a ruler to whom the student is no match. This idea of authority is cultivated everywhere. Teacher and professor are afraid of losing their prestige if they talk to and help the student. They are afraid because they too have experienced this education. It is not a good, equal relationship.

In authoritarian education, we don't guide the child gently and we don't treat him or her like a being who is to become, who is developing. We demand a lot and quickly become nervous. Father and mother just come from the melting pot of the church and mysticism. Our morals and opinions are infused with the thought of religion.

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Notes

(5) D'Holbach, Paul Thiry (1978). System der Natur oder von den Gesetzen der physischen und der moralischen Welt. Frankfurt am Main

(6) D'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry (1878). Common Sense or the Religious Testament of Father Meslier of Étrépigny. St. Gall

(7) D'Holbach, Paul Thiry (1978). System der Natur oder von den Gesetzen der physischen und der moralischen Welt. Frankfurt am Main, p. 11 f.

(8) D'Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry (1878). Common Sense or the Religious Testament of Father Meslier of Étrépigny. St. Gall

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

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

(11) Hagen, Friedrich (1977). Jean Meslier or an atheist in a priest's skirt. Leverkusen and Cologne, p. 36

(12) <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suggestibilität>

(13) op. cit.

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