Social Control in Scientology

by Bob Penny

Bob Penny, one of the founders of F.A.C.T.Net (Fight Against Coercive Tactics Network), gives this account of how his book was originally published in a dual edition with Margery Wakefield's book, *The Road to Xenu* :

> Margery wrote the first part of the book (*The Road to Xenu*), and I wrote the second part (*Social Control in Scientology*). We decided that the two parts complemented each other, so we published them together in one volume which we first released at the 1991 Cult Awareness Network conference in Oklahoma City. The printing was done in response to demand at the nearest Kinko's or other quick printer. The volumes were bound in a thermal binding machine of mine. Both Margery's work and mine were released to the public domain in 1993, when they were offered for download on the (non-internet) F.A.C.T.Net BBS. Neither are on file with the Library of Congress unless someone else put them there. The text has been available (with no remuneration to either Margery or me) on the F.A.C.T.Net BBS and on countless Web and ftp sites for I know not how long.

Social Control in Scientology is available on the World Wide Web at
`http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/Library/`
and
`http://www.demon.co.uk/castle/xenu/scs.html`

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Introduction

A newsletter of former Scientologists, the *inFormer*, published a Gary Larson cartoon which shows a couple driving along a dark road surrounded by giant mutant vegetation and ants. The caption says: ‘‘Something’s wrong here, Harriet... This is starting to look less and less like the Road to Total Freedom.’’

That cartoon describes very well the last several of my 13 years in Scientology and the process by which I was finally able to escape from what was by far the most destructive and debilitating influence that my life has encountered.

The clues were there all along, so it is no surprise that the experience finally reduced itself to absurdity. The wonder is that I wasted 13 years of my life and more than $100,000 before learning to handle the false loyalties and other tricks in which I was enmeshed for so long. Clearly, something was going on that my basic ‘‘street education’’ had not prepared me to deal with. Rationalizations such as, ‘‘it’s the best thing we’ve got,’’ and ‘‘at least it’s moving in the right direction’’ (neither of which is true) helped perpetuate the stasis. Even afterwards, it was hard to avoid rationalizations like ‘‘but I learned a lot,’’ or ‘‘the organization sucks but the tech is good’’ which were attempts to minimize and not really face the harm which had occurred and from which I had yet to recover. The habits of self-censorship, loaded language, avoidance of contrary data, and other thought-stopping mechanisms took a long time to go away if, indeed, they are gone even now.

I was intensely curious how such a bizarre situation had come to be. Coming to understand it was a part (only a part) of my recovery. The articles here are derived from my notes, compiled slowly as thoughts occurred to me over a four-year period after getting out of the cult.

If you are looking for a systematic discussion of ‘‘mind control’’ or suggestions for helping loved ones in a cult, I recommend that you read Steve Hassan’s book, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, Park Street Press, 1988.

If you want a description and history of the Scientology organizations, read John Atack’s *A Piece of Blue Sky*, Carol Publishing Group, 1990.

If you want a feel for life in the Scientology environment, read Margery Wakefield’s *The Road to Xenu*.

The material I present here is none of those things. I have tried to step back from the narrative detail that Ms. Wakefield presents, to look at the underlying pattern and structure of Scientology’s manipulation and abuse of otherwise free people. By printing both works in the same volume, we provide an immediate juxtaposition of the specific and the general, the trees and the forest, so the reader can refer back and forth between Wakefield’s specific narrative and my more general characterizations of similar experience. I believe this juxtaposition provides a more complete description of how cult entrapment actually occurs and what it consists of.

These models of social manipulation, which I have drawn from my own experience, may be most recognizable to others with direct cult experience (any cult, really — my contacts with ex-members of various groups show the ploys and traps to be quite similar from one cult to another), so the primary use of this material may be in exit counseling.

But it is possible too, I would hope, that these models may sensitize any reader to recognize them if such types of experience occur in his or her own life. Recognizing these patterns may make the reader less vulnerable to cult recruitment in the first place. It is my strong belief that there is a lot more mileage in education and prevention before the fact, than in trying to get people out of cults once they are in.

Our ‘‘street smarts’’ must expand to cover the new dangers created by the growth and increased sophistication and power of destructive cults (and gangs, hate groups, etc.). This is an educational endeavor, a kind of consumer awareness education.

As Wakefield shows, Scientology creates a specialized environment within which anything can be made to seem true or reasonable or ethical. It is this insane environment, not any flaw in the individual person, which accounts for the apparently insane behavior which she and many others have described, just as similarly perverted environments trap otherwise good people in lynchings, gang behavior, Nazism, and other social ills.

How does it work? The mechanisms of cult entrapment are not hard to understand, once you look at them. But there are many things in our social environment we take for granted and do not look at, any more than we look at the air we breathe.

There is no one answer. A person is not hypnotized or brainwashed suddenly one day and a slave thereafter. It is a process of social learning, like any other except with demented content. It occurs gradually over time.

In the following series of twelve short articles, we will look at some of the ways in which this happens, and attempt to sensitize the reader to some of the pressures which can force a person into cult servitude. It remains for each person to recognize such mechanisms as they may occur in his or her own life.

Chapter 1
Shared Self-Deceptions

You hear about mind control in cults, but what is it and how does it work? It is not the same as brainwashing and we know that torture, at least of the physical variety, is not involved. There are no scars on the bodies and you can't see the ones on the minds.

Manipulation of group agreements is the key. A manipulated social environment is created in which, to be loyal to one's friends, one must believe the most amazing things and perform actions which, in real life, would be beneath contempt.

Cults (not just Scientology) create a social milieu which gradually and covertly seduces good people into agreeing among themselves on self-deceptions, so they come to believe themselves an elite in unique possession of the only right answers. The real result is dependence on the group and vulnerability to its control and exploitation.

For example, to act in good faith, we who were Scientologists had to believe there was a good result to what we were doing. But immense pressure is put on any evaluation of result by the environment of selling and gung ho, by our own complicity and participation, by our disposition to grant benefit of the doubt, to cooperate, to be willing, enthusiastic, and loyal. Spiritual growth is what was promised, thus precluding any determination of result except subjectively by the influenced group member himself. What, then, can we say about result?

First the obvious: that even if there was any validity to the claims made, this hothouse of social pressure would be the last place to expect any kind of objective perception, evaluation, understanding, or verification of results. What kind of science can work only within the confines of a closed group that actively suppresses nonconforming viewpoints while demanding and rewarding gung ho agreement?

A kind of insanity is visible in the peculiar group-think ways of evaluating or not evaluating information (like Ron said so) that we accepted and sold to each other. If there was demonstrable result, why would all the hype and controlled information be needed?

The hype is needed, of course, to allow us to share belief in a result. The process can be summarized in four steps — small steps at first, but larger and larger each time around until the person gradually assimilates the group-think.

1. **Sell him something.** The person is told that if you do X you will get better. It is standard practice to promise anything (without actually promising anything), and whatever the person can be made to admit to wanting (called his ruin) becomes the excuse for getting him into this process.

2. **Whip up gung-ho.** Group members manifest their friendliness, concern and hope for the person. They make very clear that they want him to get better and they are very sure that participation in Scientology will do it. The expectations are set in place so that not to get better would be a betrayal of one's friends.

3. **The person does X.** While engaged in the action, he has special status. He is adulated for being ''on purpose,'' and carefully not disturbed or ''enturbulated.'' He is clearly an important person. He may also be told how much better he is looking, and how apparent the change is. A social expectation of result is built for the particular case at hand.

4. **The person agrees that he is better.** As a good group member, he will find some way to creatively play his part, to justify the time and money he has spent, avoid embarrassment, and not let his friends down.

With all this weight of authority and expectation, merely focusing attention on an area of life may ''rattle the cage'' and give an impression that something has happened. Add the feelings of relief and solidarity after completing something important and sharing a success with one's friends. The notorious unreliability of subjective perception is not considered, nor are there methods to control bias and ascertain the actual substance of the experience. Instead, the resulting mental state is exploited uncritically in whatever way will best fit doctrine and make everyone agree that it worked.

At that high moment, the person quickly attests in writing that he got an appropriate result from the service and is satisfied. He must do this to complete the service, or he is ''handled'' further at his own expense until he does. No gun is held to the person's head so the success story may be said to be freely given. The cost of remedial handling provides additional motive for everything to be all right.

After I say that everything is all right, my agreement is taken as proof that what you are doing is OK. Your success provides the same rationale for me. By uncritical acceptance of influenced, unreliable data, we deceive ourselves and keep the circle closed. If everything was not all right, one's status in the group would be jeopardized. An enemy of the group, or ''Suppressive Person,'' is said not to have case gain. Success stories, attestations, and gung-ho agreement are evidence that one has ''case gain'' and so is a valid group member.

Case gain requires no substantiation beyond the person's attestation and other evidences of loyalty. As long as the supposed benefit is attributed to Scientology and does not contradict doctrine, the person is free to claim whatever he wants to believe about himself and dare anyone else to contradict his personal delusions (it is a crime to invalidate a Scientologist's case or gains). When personal delusion is reinforced by doctrine, the result can be impaired self-knowledge, obstructed ability to deal with real situations, and a danger to the person's mental health.

Such is the quality of material which forms the basis for Scientology's claim of results. A legal case for fraud would be difficult, because the person said in writing that he got what he was supposed to have gotten. And it is difficult to go back on representations made voluntarily. One must defend the delusions or risk facing the terrifying loss of control of one's life which has occurred. There are numerous motives to find ways to actually believe that one has experienced case gain.

The payoff is whatever psychic benefit the individual derives from belonging — the appearances of community and caring, certainty, allies, defense against others in life, and evasion of the real challenges of growth.

Given such motives, the individual may well not care how the apparent benefit was obtained or what it cost, just as the high is everything to the drug addict. He has found where to get it. Alternatives are irrelevant. I have even heard, ''So what if it is a placebo....''

Never mind that truly needed help may be foregone in favor of the immediate fix. Life goals may be abandoned or redefined as the true cost of participation becomes manifest. In this pressure-cooker of agreement and gung-ho, the benefit may be illusory but the person can no longer tell the difference.

As the cult member continues to deny his dependence, or to rationalize it as ethical and beneficial, employers, parents and concerned others must protect themselves as best they can. An obvious concern is the situation of children living in such an environment, whose welfare is subject to the parent's need to believe and to belong.

''TRs'' (Training Routines)

Many of us considered TRs to be innocuous; yet we were aware they were part of something destructive, and didn't know how to sort out the connection. I had fun doing TRs too. Chanting, meditation, TRs, hypnosis, physical exhaustion, a good back rub — these are all conditions that subjectively feel mellow and lucid while actually they heighten suggestibility and reduce critical awareness. We all have our more sharp and less sharp moments.

The feeling of lucidity produced by TRs, meditation, drugs, etc. is merely a subjective state. The group tells you how to think about that state, such as ''you are more in present time.'' The suggestion is that you are less suggestible and you buy it because you are in a highly suggestible state. Other cults sell meditation or Jesus the same way.

The cult environment systematically exploits these less-sharp moments. In a Scientology courseroom, for example, the student is surrounded with the cult's pressure and loaded language. He might be receptive even without TRs. Maybe he's tired or lonely. TRs are just one more device to enforce agreement and compliance. At least they're more fun than ethics.

Many of us have trouble enough recognizing and accepting our feelings even without any ''help'' from Scientology. To practice suppressing our feelings and substituting group-mandated responses in their place, all within this context of group pressure and heightened suggestibility, is destructive indeed. The next step is the success story where one talks about having more reality on the first dynamic and coming to understand that one's real self wants only to serve the cult.

Such understanding makes it much easier to send your kids to the Cadet Org and ''disconnect'' from your ''suppressive'' mother or spouse.

Chapter 2
Friends to Be Cooperated With

Entrapment occurs through deceptive manipulation of our best qualities: loyalty, courage, desire to help. We try to cooperate and be supportive of our friends. That normal desire and tendency is exploited in this tricky environment to create an appearance and belief that Scientology works.

Reader be warned: this is the most difficult article in this collection, but also the most exact description of the nature of the trap. To describe what is so hard to put into words, I will use the concepts of sociologist Erving Goffman who describes the devices by which we all maintain identities and the amount of work and learning required to do so.[1]

The man in public with an unzipped fly has failed to maintain the consistency of appearance required for the identity or image that he is presenting. Such an incident is embarrassing both to him and to those who witness it. For witnesses, there is a reminder of how fragile are our appearances and how much we rely on the good will of others to maintain them, a reminder that face can be lost and that one's own is not invulnerable.

In going un-self-consciously about our business, we normally do not dwell on or even notice the fragile nature of the appearances which make it possible. It is a natural response to creatively find ways to gloss over embarrassment, to help the actor who blew his lines recover as gracefully as possible so the show can go on — including our part in it, in which we have some stake of gratification and status. The maintaining of presented identity is a cooperative endeavor and we are accustomed to cooperating as a basic habit of civilized behavior.

The desire to cooperate is strongest when we feel a community of interest with other players and feel that they would willingly help us handle an unzipped fly situation. But it is possible to do the opposite, to search out any flaw or error in the presentation and expose it: Hey, everybody look, this guy's fly is unzipped!

The Hard Sell salesman's job is to get the mark to cooperate with him in maintaining whatever image he is trying to present, while the salesman works to destroy the integrity of any independent (non-checkwriting) identity presented by the mark. Perhaps this imbalance is possible because the mark denies (tries not to acknowledge) his humiliation. By naming the salesman's games (in which he has participated) the mark would further discredit himself (by association). This would further destabilize the interaction, which is normally a cooperative endeavor, in which he has a role and stake.

Under such pressure, the mark (in a defensive manner, to avoid what Goffman calls soiled identity) makes an extraordinary effort to preserve the appearance that everything is normal, as best he can under the circumstances. A cultural image which might help identify this denial of humiliation is the shiteating grin.

This cooperation is seen in the mark's creative justifying of potentially alarming situations by giving benefit of the doubt or making excuses for actions by Scientologists which might otherwise appear overzealous or discreditable. Typical excuses include:

- he's untrained,
- he wouldn't do that if he were Class VIII,
- these things go in cycles and there's a lot of heat on right now,
- at least he's making mistakes on the right side,
- at least he's doing something,
- he has case problems.

In such ways, actions which might otherwise become clues to the real situation are made to look normal and no cause to look further. Thus the faith can be kept and the self-images which go with it.

Cooperation is not a bad thing, but this is a perversion of cooperation to achieve exploitation. Compare the denial, rationalization, and loyalty characteristic of battered women, whose situation is similar.

Cooperation, even with deception, is possible because we are involved with real people who possess

[1] The interested reader may refer to the following books by Goffman: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1961. *Relations in Public*, Harper Torchbooks, 1972.

real abilities, real strengths, real human beauty. Their willingness, enthusiasm, even heroism, can be intensely admirable. That feels good to be a part of.

When involvement occurs in a context called Scientology, then Scientology may be said (by unsubstantiated assertion) to be the source of the admiration and good feeling we share with our fellows when actually the source is agreement and cooperative action with like-minded participants, as may also occur, for example, in a theater company, military unit, or entrepreneurial business.

The intense loyalties generated by group action, thus misdirected, produce further motive to creatively justify the group's ideology. We cooperate. We work creatively with the other actors to ensure that we all know our lines and that the show as we collectively agree it to be can go on. We mutually support each other in creating the appearances which are necessary for us to go on believing and acting in good faith. In a cult, this means we tell each other that we are an elite in unique possession of the only right answers.

The person in a Scientology auditing session knows the rules of the game and what the normal actions of the session will be. The auditor is a real person in front of him, in a situation of high affinity and community of interest. The normal cooperativeness of social interaction is heightened by this affinity and by the environment of pressure and expectation.

One can be very creative in fulfilling the shared expectations of this situation. The auditor's role is to be there to be cooperated with.

The ''tech'' is just stage management. The auditor is there as reminder of the social context and the imperatives which await just outside the door. In this milieu, the preclear will produce appropriate ''cognitions'' (past lives, etc.). The auditor's only error would be to disrupt the normal process of cooperation by obtrusive or distractive statements, actions, or mannerisms.

In this setting, the person discovers for himself how it could be that way — just as in everyday life we creatively find ways to go on letting doctors be doctors and janitors be janitors, and cover for each other's unzipped flies.

Chapter 3
A Destructive Cult

America is a land of voluntary associations, with the right to do your own thing well established in our traditions. The diversity thus protected is a source of strength for American culture. But in recent years we have seen totalist groups systematically employ undue influence to exploit the shelter of this tradition, bypass our society's normal controls on unethical activity, and mount large scale programs of entrapment and fraud.

An internal power struggle in Scientology in the early 1980's left many people willing to tell what they had seen, and a number of court cases have put some truth about Scientology into the public domain. Several books have presented documented descriptions of Scientology, the most recent being Jon Atack's *A Piece of Blue Sky*, published by the Carol Publishing Group in 1990. Much of this information was published in a six-part expose by the *Los Angeles Times* in July, 1990, and an abbreviated version by *Time* magazine in May, 1991.

The written sources tell what is easiest to describe: the trashed families and careers, lost savings, abandoned educations, and the like, which are common stories among ex-members. But in my opinion, a primary harm done by Scientology is capture and corruption of the group member's ability to make moral and intellectual judgments. Impoverishment, broken families, etc. are merely what follow.

To evade scrutiny, Scientology tries to pass as just another church or self-help group with laudable aims and programs. But Scientology is neither the answer to all problems of life nor even a helpful activity exerting influence in the right direction.

Behind the hype and ''PR'' (public relations), Scientology is a money-making enterprise which systematically exploits, under the guise of help, the hopes, needs, and weaknesses of those it recruits. It operates by selling questionable services with ambiguous products (so that fraud is difficult to prove), then using mind control techniques to substitute certainty (loyalty) in place of truth. The result is to make those who take the bait into captive group members who will sacrifice their lives and fortunes to the group, defend it, and insist publicly that they received benefit.

In its efforts to conceal the reality, Scientology has become notorious for vicious attacks and disregard of the civil rights of any who would expose the truth of its actual practices. As with rape and other abuse, cult activity can cause lasting harm to those involved, to their families, and to society.

This is something from which one must recover, often with considerable difficulty, and there is risk of lasting ill effects if the recovery is not complete. The process and difficulty of emerging from a cult and regaining one's own integrity and growth are discussed at length in Steve Hassan's book, *Combatting Cult Mind Control*, Park Street Press, 1990.

Scientology represents itself as the way to better communication, health, ability to learn, a more successful career, or a better life. Scientology is not any of those things, but the bait gets you into the trap. Under carefully controlled conditions, you learn not to question the claims. You learn the countless reasons why your education is less important than learning Scientology, your career less important than serving Scientology, your family less important than clearing the planet.

The means replace the end; loyalty substitutes for result; the group replaces life. That is no accident: the only true product of a cult is group members, desperately telling each other that they are an elite with the only answers to life's questions. It becomes normal and commonplace to substitute certainty in place of truth, group loyalty in place of informed decision. As time goes on, one needs to believe in the group agreements in order to justify what he or she has done, the trashed families and so on.

In such an environment, one is prevented from developing realistic understandings of self and the world. Instead, the person must defend illusory self-images composed of various abilities supposedly acquired through Scientology training and processing. That the snake oil is bogus cannot be faced without raising serious identity problems. How the harm comes to be done, the impairment of judgment and the fostering of delusion, is particularly evident if we examine Scientology's LRH Study Technology (discussed in the next article) which Church members inflict on children as well as on each other.

Chapter 4
Scientology Training: Selling "Hard Sell"

Scientology's indoctrination procedure consists, on the one hand, of an official line which emphasizes respect for individual reality and experience, and includes formal prohibition against ‘‘feeding cogs’’ or telling the person what he will experience or what to think about his case or about Scientology (called evaluating).

Underlying that official line is an enormous flow of informal data, such as wins sessions and success stories and just plain gossip, through which one begins to learn who are the bad guys and what are acceptable ideas and statements. The new group member begins to practice voicing these ideas (including the rationale and techniques of ‘‘dissemination’’) as his own, in fulfillment of obligatory participation in the bonhomie of the group.

Learning How to Learn

Scientology claims to be rational, founded on observable evidence, and scientific. In fact it is strongly anti-intellectual, espousing freedom of thought publicly while in practice bringing to bear emotional group pressures and influences which systematically create the opposite of the openly stated ideals.

Scientology's Student Hat (how to study) course contains LRH tape lectures filled with easily-agreed-with material about finding out for yourself, not blindly following authority, and seeing what really is there rather than what authority or training or habit says is there.

Yet the people who take those courses, and those who supervise them, are uniformly exposed to the fictitious and deceptive biography of Mr. Hubbard published in Church materials. Not once in thirteen years did I hear anyone openly question those fictions, and never did I hear from Church sources or members the truth of the man's background and activity. Instead, socially mandatory applause was universal practice in every Scientology courseroom I ever attended, repeatedly honoring the man Judge Breckenridge, after days of testimony (Los Angeles Superior Court, May, 1984), described as virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements. When success stories and wins are given publicly, obligatory applause creates a motive to rationalize agreement. (Why am I applauding? Oh, yes....)

Pointing out the discrepancy between official and unofficial would of course be a *faux pas*.

These same practitioners of Scientology's Study Tech also found nothing wrong with the efficacy of auditing being proved by anecdotal testimony given routinely under the most influenced circumstances imaginable, and with total lack of verification by sources not under Church control.

On one occasion when I communicated some of these concerns to a person who I thought was a trustworthy friend, the mere fact that I was thinking such things was greeted with horror and I was told to route yourself to Ethics and get it ‘‘handled.’’ That is the true product of Scientology's Study Tech.

How Questions are Handled

Another bulwark of Scientology's attack on thought is the tenet that knowledge is not information or understanding, but certainty. Increased certainty is commonly cited in success stories as a benefit gained from auditing and training.

This ideal is so much part of Scientology's culture that any questioning or un-certainty comes to be seen as a moral failing, not to be admitted. In practice, certainty becomes synonymous with loyalty, and to be uncertain is to fail as a group member and very possibly to betray the group.

Questions about minor points of doctrine are ‘‘handled’’ routinely by cramming or retraining (at the person's expense). But uncertainty on any basic matter becomes a question of ethics or disloyalty to be handled with Scientology's ethics conditions.

The ethics conditions include the Condition of Doubt, through which the wavering group member is supposed to regain certainty. In following the prescribed remedy for that Condition, a question of fact, logic, or intellectual standards will be resolved by deciding who are your friends and what group you wish to belong to. The actual issues are disposed of or rationalized away in whatever way will permit an unambiguous affirmation of loyalty. (This is an example of the distraction and misdirection which I have cited elsewhere as key words describing my own experience of Scientology.)

The Doubt Formula includes gathering information on the two sides between which one is undecided. It is always a mutually exclusive either-or choice (no mention of none of the above). I never saw a doubt formula which gathered any information about Scientology beyond its own PR claims and stated intentions, nor would it be admissible within the group to do so.

Other information, not under group control, is labeled with the sweeping generality ‘‘enthetha,’’ which categorically outlaws its consideration or dissemination without regard to truth or fact. Thus information which has been publicly available to others for many years, such as the facts of Hubbard’s actual history and qualifications, is not commonly known to Scientologists.

The ideas of working hypothesis or conditional judgment based on the best evidence to date (which imply openness to new information) are excluded in favor of categorical appeals to group loyalty which require suppression of any contrary thought or data.

A sense of something wrong with this, or disagreements on specific issues, are ‘‘handled’’ alike by demanding that the individual resolve it now (complete his ethics condition) and categorically re-commit to the group. This cuts short any thought process or consideration of other data and is one of the best examples of this group’s totalist, anti-pluralist control process. You are either totally with the group or totally against it.

I Will Wait until You Stop Asking

Questions may arise during training about unsubstantiated claims or about the relation of this material to mainstream lines of thought. The standard handling of such questions in Scientology is to explicitly disregard them. Instead, the student is told to do it ‘‘exactly as the materials state’’ and then observe whether it works. That approach sounds sensible: see if it works. Yet in this group environment, the actual results are twofold.

First, the student is prevented from integrating or aligning what he is studying with other things he already knows or might learn if he investigated. The normal processes of evaluation, comparison and judgment are bypassed.

Second, evaluation of the material is deferred until a later time when he has learned it exactly as stated, which may be a very long time indeed, because it is asserted that if he has questions then he has not understood the material. This provides time for the process of socialization through which, for extraneous reasons of group loyalty, the person will come to accept what he has been taught, believe in its correctness, and stop asking questions.

The effect is to replace questions of fact and evaluation of data with questions of group loyalty, to the point where the former become forgotten and indeed unthinkable.

Study Tech is only one example of the reversal of values on a gradient, which is what happens as Scientology’s official line becomes correctly understood in actual group practice.

Being able to live with such contradictions is the hallmark of a Scientologist. The trick has to do with ‘‘unmocking’’, or making nothing of other values, so the contradiction ceases to have meaning. Only devotion to the group remains.

Another Example of Scientology Training: ‘‘I Am Not Your Auditor’’

Early in the game, on the HQS course, for example, one is familiarized with certain rules of conduct called The Auditor’s Code, also referred to as rules for civilized conduct. This includes rules against invalidating another person and against telling him what to think about his case or about Scientology (called evaluating). This familiar and apparently humanitarian approach makes it easy for the new person to get into it.

Later along the gradient, one learns that such rules apply only to an auditor during an auditing session, and that apart from that context (i.e., most of the time) invalidation is a standard means of control, and evaluation is the backbone of socialization into the group. In one of my early naive encounters with a registrar, I was aghast at his disregard for what I thought were central values of the group. His reply: ‘‘I am not your auditor.’’

The person hooked on The Auditor’s Code learns from experience with registrars and others what it is really all about. By being a good listener, for example, the Scientologist masters just one more trick of manipulating communication to obtain compliance with ethics and Hard Sell.

A Separate Realm of Thought

Through such experience, much of what winds up in the minds of Scientologists — including children exposed to this environment — gets there through informal indoctrination under group pressures. Additional points of the informal indoctrination include:

- That one does not disagree with anything Mr. Hubbard said or question in any way the authority of Church organizations.
- That Scientology is beneficial and ethical, and that this topic is not open to question or discussion.
- That one does not openly value any other activity unless it is unambiguously subordinate to Scientology. Hubbard used bowling as an example, suggesting that whatever else you might be doing is as unimportant as bowling. I once told an auditor socially about an impressive ocean voyage made by a friend. The auditor disapprovingly called my friend a dilettante and not serious as a Scientologist.
- That if you have a disagreement or reservation, it indicates something wrong with you (never the Church), a problem to be solved by correcting you, whatever that takes.
- That past-life or any other experience contacted through Scientology's exclusive methods are normal, acceptable, and factually valid.
- That contact in auditing with this and other data is sufficient to establish its factualness without reference to any other validation and despite its disconnection from ordinary standards of evidence and evaluation (i.e., one comes to operate with and accept the separateness per se of this frame of reference).

Lack of alignment with ordinary reality is no accident, but is a vital part of disconnecting the person from the rest of life. Scientology is not to be seen as like psychology or like anything else. The proselyte must set up a separate category of thought, suspending disbelief, maintaining politeness, granting benefit of the doubt, operating in a part of his mind as if these things were true.

This separateness is necessary to create a niche of credibility, a beachhead for the trip, to create a conceptual space within which, for example, there is room to believe that ''OT'' (''Operating Thetan'') means something more than a status within the group.

We learn many things by setting them aside separately until enough understanding has been achieved to make integration possible with the rest of life and thought (a conditional frame of reference).

What is different about cult indoctrination is closure — that the cult's special frame of reference behaves like a cancer, preventing integration and seeking to destroy (invalidate) any competing or non-supportive realm of thought.

For example, there is no reason in principle why recent-past-life experience contacted in auditing could not be verified historically, if valid, and integrated with other modes of thought. But Scientologists do not do that. Integration is prevented.

Reference to non-Scientology standards of evidence are invalidated as meaning the person cannot observe or has fixed ideas or is subject to (dramatizing) unseen influences or evil intentions. To be a Scientologist, one must learn to accept it as a special frame of reference. This is a key criterion of valid group membership.

This new beachhead is emotionally connected to one's own ego and vanity. You have ''cognited.'' You know the Truth. You are special. But others don't have the tech. They don't know the real (i.e., past life) causes of what they do. You wouldn't want to be like them, would you? This is the mental space from which other values and sources of meaning in life become subject to invalidation.

These specialized images of self and others become part of the expectations of a highly visible reference group. In the busy-ness of ordinary life there is no occasion to challenge them. Making sense of it all, in any wider context, is Not Done. It would be too much trouble. It is not the easy, sociable thing to do. You would have to deal with what people would think about the nonconformity. You would risk losing all that flattery about what a good, special, and important person you are.

Unresolved questions and dissatisfactions are easier to put off when conforming activities are so readily available (busy, rush, emergency, important) and when any deviation would be a big hassle. In Scientology, any nonconformity becomes a big hassle.

Critical thought or independent evaluation of what one is doing is prevented by incessant busy-ness and rush. The hype says that Scientologists are rational, even scientific, but the atmosphere is one of continuous crisis and emergency which interrupts and prevents rational thought. One gets points for how rapidly one completes a course. Sales cycles are always Buy Now because of some asserted emergency or other (the Church is under attack, we're in a desperate race to save the planet, etc.). To step back and think it over before signing the check is a sign of case interfering with Clearing the Planet, and if you let that happen you are out ethics.

Start of the Trap: The Numbers Game

The initial come-on (the start of the gradient) may have been in terms of tools for life, it might help, see if you find it useful or it worked for me. Just try it and then decide for yourself. If you were reluctant, you may have been accused of being closed minded, fearful, unwilling to change or improve. PR buttons such as freedom, ability, education, drug rehabilitation, etc. may have been used to attract your attention and interest.

The real purpose was to get you physically into the environment described here (called ‘‘bodies in the shop’’), and exposed to the influences which seek to create in you this separate realm of thought and thus to bypass your own decisions, standards of evidence and evaluation, and original purpose. Whether because of a sense of danger or just the high prices, most of those exposed to all this do not stay. There have been a lot more Dianetics books sold and free personality tests given than there are Scientologists.

It is a numbers game. If enough people are exposed, there will be some with compatible emotional needs or situations in their current life which make them vulnerable, who will swallow the bait and become captive to the group.

The Trap Continues: Gradual Erosion

One step at a time, the new proselyte gradually finds ways to suspend disbelief and develops special criteria of evaluation to use when dealing with this group’s data — much as one might do with a pushy encyclopedia salesman. Midway through the sales pitch it becomes difficult and a failure of self to confront the displacement of one’s own standards which has occurred (‘‘but I thought you cared about your children...’’). So you buy a set of encyclopedias and thereby escape the awkward situation you were boxed into. The salesman leaves with a check and you soon recover from a small blow to your dignity.

In Scientology, however, the salesman does not leave (figuratively speaking). What is sold is not just a book or course or some hours of auditing, but a set of ideas and perceptions which lead to the one conclusion of total commitment to the group. This does not end with any one-time concession. The accommodation of writing a check to get rid of the salesman is merely prelude to the next round of demands.

Any Scientology activity, be it a communication course, school for children, management course, drug rehabilitation program, or other apparently laudable activity contains this covert agenda.

Even well-meaning and contributing outsiders cannot be taken seriously on their own terms because they lack the special Truth available only to insiders, which cannot be examined or questioned. Any problem or disagreement with Church activity is interpreted by the Scientologist in private terms as the influence of harmful and unseen past-life causes and not really the person’s own words or desire at all. As one gains understanding, outside reality becomes dim and distorted, seen only though a peculiar filter. One’s responsibility to the group always becomes more clear.

At introductory levels you might be hoping for help with some situation or condition in your life. For a while you go on, hoping that your or your family’s as-yet unresolved questions and problems will be resolved on some not-yet-reached higher level. By solving problems you never even knew you had (but which were discovered in auditing) you gradually forge a more thoroughgoing and consistent group-member identity. This becomes the measure of progress and the justification for continuing.

As more inches and miles are taken, one increasingly becomes an insider who accepts this situation and logic. Gradually you come to understand that the real purpose of Scientology is to help mankind, not you the individual.

You become a real insider with the next step, of understanding that your real duty is to the group, and that your personal condition and the failure of other individuals is not important. Thus your original need is solved by distraction and misdirection (‘‘gung ho’’). Scientology worked.

Where does this lead? In my own experience, while under a siege that I felt but was unable to recognize or understand, I became withdrawn, hostile, and incompetent in dealing with the ongoing issues of life.

By comparison, since getting out of the cult I can at least deal with the actual situations around me, for better or worse. Most striking is the change in ease of dealing with people since leaving the cult. I notice this especially and joyfully with my children and with coworkers. Within the cult there was always the filter of false and preemptive explanations and importances (those validations of insider status) which distracted from the actual situation at hand. A real dealing with situations would have involved open-ended amounts of heresy, forbidden other practices, or at least failure to apply the tech.

Any other learning, growth, or change would have been very difficult to follow through intelligibly and for the most part simply did not occur. The only solutions available were the redirection of attention type described above.

Factors of life not accounted for in Scientology's pop-psychology are called complexities. Attention to complexities is said to indicate something wrong with you, an inability to understand, or having something to hide. This discouragement of thought, plus the ever-present atmosphere of rush and hurry, left nowhere to go except deeper into gung-ho as the solution to all of life's problems.

Those years in Scientology were the most extended period in my life with the least of what I would consider real personal growth. They left quite an unfinished agenda for my real life to catch up on and go forward from.

After Gradual Erosion: Hard Sell

Not surprisingly, it takes increased force to maintain such increased levels of delusion, to ignore the vacuousness of claimed results and the ordinariness of superbeing ''OTs.'' Status within the group becomes more and more the sole and exclusive basis of self-image.

As one becomes an insider, agreement is more and more presumed. Claimed respect for integrity and individuality gives way to an environment of undisguised peremptory orders and Hard Sell salesmanship: of participation, auditing, commitments, self-conceptions, ideas, ethics, or anything Church representatives want you to believe or do. Truth comes to exist in Hard Sell salesman terms, i.e., whatever it needs to be at the moment to invalidate your objections and obtain compliance.

Hard Sell technique that I observed (and was subjected to) consisted of a fast-paced and disorienting swirl of asserted and presumed agreements, trumped-up emergencies, plays on loyalty, physical exhaustion, sophistical arguments, accusations of betrayal, guilt-trips, browbeating, physical and verbal intimidation, humiliations, attacks, threats, insults, alienations of affection, ganging-up-on, asserted and presumed commitments, promises, demands, orders, invalidations, ridicule, plays on deeply felt needs, pleas, misidentifications, misrepresentations, putting words in my mouth, telling me what I think, asserted truths, validations, praise, flattery, plays on status, ''trust me's'' — anything to destroy my position, to close the sale, to get the stat, to get the check. On one occasion (personal experience) this went on day and night for three days. These words do not begin to describe it.

Hard Sell is official written Church policy. It is justified in terms of this preemptive definition: caring enough about the person to insist that he Buy Now and get the service that will rehabilitate him. Actual techniques are learned primarily from role models, but also in classes and workshops.

The effect is to undermine all meaning and value apart from Scientology. It becomes permissible to destroy anything (of someone else's) to produce a result useful to the Church. A registrar told my wife, ''What have you got to lose?'' when they were discussing whether I might leave if she borrowed against our fledgling business to purchase Scientology services. That same registrar explained his actions to me, ''I'm just doing my job.''

I tried to explain away such events as just the isolated action of lone individuals, but after my 1986 trip to Scientology's base in Florida I could no longer deny that this sort of action is typical, characteristic, and approved by the Church. I saw and experienced additional instances, and attempts were made to recruit me for similar activity. I saw that a major activity at the religious retreat is to train people in such actions and to handle their scruples.

Chapter 5
The Creation of Ignorance

A cult's special kind of group-think may need to contend with alternative or competing ways of understanding the world. Thus there may be special definitions which explain to the group member how he is supposed to understand other understandings and the persons who represent them. If the group member happens to have knowledge of the alternative understanding, it may be necessary for him to create an ignorance of the alternative in order to be able to accept an emotional and unsubstantiated rejection of it — just as racism demands some degree of ignorance of the humanity of the ‘‘wog’’ or ‘‘nigger.’’

Consider, for example, the relation between Scientology and psychology. Both offer explanations of and methods to change individual human behavior and so might be seen as competitors. Scientology attempts to invalidate psychology (and psychiatry) by describing both as a single undifferentiated generality identified with the physiological school of Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920). In thirteen years I never once heard any Scientologist communicate anything even vaguely informed about the actual state of psychology. Skinner, Maslow, Erikson, Piaget were all one with Wundt. To study (or teach) psychology would be heresy. To accept and promulgate this viewpoint requires accomplishing an ignorance.

This kind of thinking can produce harm beyond that done to the person's intellect. Scientology's self-serving anti-psychiatry campaign led, in 1991, to a war on the anti-depressant medication Prozac; a war in which, as usual, individual Scientologists knew nothing of the facts but just followed group direction (‘‘Psychiatry Kills’’ bumper stickers, for example).

An FDA investigation, prompted by Scientology's smear campaign, pronounced Prozac to be safe and effective. But meanwhile, a public scare had been manufactured which deprived many patients of badly needed help, the April 19, 1991 *Wall Street Journal* reported. A representative of Prozac's manufacturer is quoted as saying, ‘‘It is a demoralizing revelation to watch 20 years of solid research by doctors and scientists shouted down in 20-second sound bites by Scientologists and lawyers.’’

In another example of the creation of ignorance, Scientology is laced with pseudo-scientific overtones such as referring to Mr. Hubbard's opinions and pronouncements as data and tech to make them sound somehow scientific. This attitude includes ridicule of physics, often personified in the name of Albert Einstein, a name sure to be known by anyone, the implied assertion being that Scientology is far advanced beyond mere twentieth century Earth science — an assertion not borne out by any evidence that I know of. But a person actually educated in the sciences could have a very hard time un-learning enough to go native credibly in this environment. Anyone applying normal standards of validity and scientific method to the data of Scientology would become an instant pariah (‘‘he's attacking my religion’’). To survive in the group one must accomplish an ignorance.

A striking instance of willful ignorance is Scientology's Purification Rundown, a supposed detoxification program developed by Hubbard which uses saunas and high doses of niacin and other vitamins. That procedure is also the basis of Narconon, a Scientology recruitment effort operating under the guise of drug rehabilitation (as their promo puts it, Narconon is the bridge to The Bridge).

Dr. James J. Kenney, Ph.D., R.D., a member of the National Council Against Health Fraud (a group which also includes former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop) cites medical studies of the effects of niacin, and concludes:

> There is no credible support for claims that large doses of niacin clear toxins from the brain, fatty tissue or any other part of the body.... To subject people to ... potentially serious side effects on the pretense that they are being ‘‘detoxified,’’ ‘‘cleared’’ or ‘‘purified’’ is quackery.

What else does Scientology want you to believe? Consider what you would have to ignore or cease to know in order to be able to agree with the following points of the Scientology group-think.

- One guy (L. Ron Hubbard) got it all right and nobody else has any chance of getting anything right except by agreeing with Mr. Hubbard (i.e., he is the exclusive and only possible Source of Scientology), including ...

- ... some stories discovered by Mr. Hubbard about space opera and things that we supposedly experienced during past lives on earth and elsewhere millions of years ago. Our problems and circumstances cannot be understood or resolved without reference to such things which can be known about only through the methods of (by belonging to) this one group.
- The group's methods provide sufficient and conclusive evidence of the factualness of past life experience and other phenomena said to exist, apart from and in spite of any other standards of evidence and evaluation. Apart from Scientology there is no hope for man or for men. Only Scientology possesses the Truth and there is no chance of anyone learning the Truth except by becoming a Scientologist. Any other hope or promise of betterment is false at best or ''suppressive'' if it competes with Scientology.
- Since only this one group possesses or ever can possess the technology of Scientology, only it can achieve the goals of Scientology. Therefore any opposition to the group is opposition to those goals. The goals of Scientology are ethical. Therefore anything which furthers the group and its action is ethical.

That last includes justification of Hard Sell dissemination tactics and the group's asserted right to control all aspects of a member's life, such as knowledge reports. Such ideas justify the intended conclusion, you can't be half in and half out of Scientology, and thus total commitment by and total control of the individual.

It appears to be irrelevant to the faith of Scientologists that the guy who got it all right is the same guy who, according to extensive court testimony, lied continuously about his childhood, education, military record, research activity and much else, and accumulated millions of dollars from the Hard Sell and Crush Sell tactics of his followers. Despite abundant red flags and indications of a trap, many things can be made to sound rational, given properly controlled information and good cheerleading.

Chapter 6
But I Thought You Cared about Your Children...

The salesman gets the prospect saying yes. Once the prospect establishes a pattern of agreeing, he is divested of his objections in small increments, each not unacceptable in itself, until finally he must either accept the close or awkwardly contradict what he apparently agreed to before. If the prospect still resists, the salesman then can accuse him of betrayal, of leading him on, of wasting his time, and attempt to shame the prospect into the close: ‘‘But I thought you cared about your children....’’

The salesman gets agreement on a sufficient number of apparently innocuous points to covertly define the terms of the discussion (the rules of the game, the agenda) in a manner that permits only one outcome.

Scientology asserts a distinction between the spiritual being that is really you (good) and your case, which is the composite of all sources of irrational conduct (bad), and that only Scientology can know which is which and free the spiritual being from its case. Suppose for the moment that you really want to better yourself and others, and that you have gone along with this thus far.

What happens now, when you find agreement with whatever the registrar wants from you validated as really you (good) and any other of your interests and values ruthlessly invalidated and attacked as just case (bad) on the basis of the supposedly expert knowledge of the Scientologist? Suppose you were reluctant to mortgage your home or company, or trash your children’s college savings to purchase Scientology services. ‘‘But I thought you wanted spiritual freedom....’’

Of course this is logically absurd, but it is nonetheless a cognitive trap that has nailed many people.

Any sale results in the person getting on course, being ‘‘connected up,’’ his ‘‘body in the shop’’ exposed to group influence.

Look Only Where I Tell You to Look

Scientology presents itself to the public as a dedicated group of concerned people trying to help. The Scientologist might talk about how children do better in school if they look up misunderstood words in a dictionary (as though that notion was anything peculiar to Scientology). This is the stage magician’s trick of misdirection — he can make you see what he wants you to see if he can get you to look only where he wants you to look. In addition to this misdirective attempt to identify Scientology as consisting of one or a few acceptable concepts, contrast with criminals or drug dealers may be used to argue what a beneficial thing Scientology is by comparison. Note what happens if you add none of the above to the artificially restricted choices offered by the salesman.

Key words, such as ‘‘communication,’’ ‘‘drugs,’’ ‘‘education,’’ ‘‘management,’’ ‘‘religion,’’ ‘‘freedom,’’ etc., are buttons used to attract and direct attention. By attacking opponents of the cult as soft on drugs, against education, and so on, Scientology attempts to:

- divert attention away from critical evaluation of itself,
- create an unquestioned presumption that Scientology is effective and relevant to those issues,
- discredit and smear opponents,
- intimidate internal dissent,
- and publicize the buttons that will get new raw meat in the door and subject to group controls.

Once one responds to a button, the first introduction to Scientology, such as a Dianetics lecture or Communications course, is generally pleasant, sociable, non-threatening and in some way useful or seemingly so. The perspective jolt of new viewpoints may be exciting and somewhat liberating in itself. The staff group’s morale is high and contagious, somewhat like that of a theater company whose members similarly share the task of presenting a special reality to the straight world. It is easy to say yes and go along with what is happening.

This is salesmanship of membership — not of the ostensible purpose or activity — but of belonging to a group.

Scientology's agenda begins with the fact of membership — a matter handled as routine upon starting any activity with the group. The person who came in for a Communications Course suddenly becomes a member of something. He has joined something. He has, by whatever means and however naively, been persuaded to accept a new label and role with consequences as yet unforeseen — but this is not what you are supposed to look at or notice.

One learns, in the Scientology environment, that he is either a Scientologist or a wog, a derogatory and racist term used to refer to non-Scientologists, defined as a person who isn't even trying. That is the real curriculum and message.

The fact of membership — then, of having taken a course or participated in any way — is asserted by registrars and others as evidence of commitment, often greater than the person ever understood or intended, to compel deeper participation which then can be used as evidence of deeper commitment, and so on. ''You are loyal to your friends, aren't you?''

One might be asked, ''What could be more important than starting your next course?'' Any answer at all to such questions gives the registrar some area of meaning and value in the person's life — anything that might compete with the priority of membership — to invalidate and knock out of the way. Through this ''take a mile if he gives an inch'' sales technique, the proselyte continuously is asserted to be more and more deeply committed to the group, so that he must either say yes and take another small step forward (then rationalize having done so), or disagree and create a significant upset. Small non-upsetting steps are usually the path of least resistance.

Take a Mile If He Gives an Inch

The idea of ''gradients,'' or steps, is espoused in Scientology as the way to ''handle'' something in an orderly, step-by-step manner. In actuality, this concept becomes justification for deception. For example, the new proselyte is not told about Hard Sell because that would be ''out gradient.''

One who encounters ''out gradient'' material — for example, by witnessing Hard Sell used on another — is belittled and invalidated by being said to have ''not cognited yet,'' and treated like an immature schoolchild having trouble figuring it out. The implication is that when he grows up a little more he will come to agree with the use of coercion and become more skilled at understanding deception.

Training courses are the usual introductory service (start of the gradient) sold to ''raw meat.'' Training for life involves the same courses as training for the ''profession'' of auditor.

The rationale is that one needs auditor training to ''handle'' life. In doing the Communications Course, for example, or another common introductory course called the Hubbard Qualified Scientologist (HQS) Course, one comes to discover that he has thereby embarked upon auditor training.

By the time he has completed the introductory course the new member will have spent enough time with the group to have become somewhat accepting of, or at least familiar with, the idea of becoming an ''auditor.''

Thus he is sold another new label and role, and becomes subject to additional expectations and demands by the group. Now he must complete his auditor training and then audit. The latter is commonly done by joining staff, and so it goes.

Regardless of his original purpose, the new group member is expected to believe that this new profession exists and possesses a legitimate body of knowledge. And it is easy: one can become a valuable and skilled person wholly in group terms, without having to deal at all with outside standards of accomplishment.

That initial course begins the softening-up process by which the proselyte is introduced and gradually acclimated to the actual agenda of Scientology; i.e., this is his introduction to what really is being sold.

The first pages of all Scientology courses are a policy letter called ''Keeping Scientology Working'' from which I quote:

> When somebody enrolls, consider he or she has joined up for the duration of the universe never permit an ''open minded'' approach. If they're going to quit let them quit fast. If they enrolled, they're aboard, and if they're aboard, they're here on the same terms as the rest of us — win or die in the attempt. Never let them be half-minded about being Scientologists.... The whole agonized future of this planet, every Man, Woman and Child on it, and your own destiny for the next endless trillions of years depend on what you do here and now with and in Scientology.

One could walk out, but in most cases the habits of social cooperation suspend response to the unreality of this inexplicable diatribe.

One cooperatively continues along the gradient, hoping that whatever this may turn out to mean, it will be sane and acceptable.

The person who thought he was taking a Communications course thus unknowingly grants some degree of complicity to a different agenda which has as its goal making him a group member above all else, and an auditor, and signing him up for the duration of the universe. That apparently innocuous membership begins to acquire quite a different meaning, but group pressures keep him playing along until he gets used to it and thoroughly trapped.

The person was persuaded to ‘‘say yes’’ and agree that his being here has to do with caring about his children, spiritual growth, or something of undeniable value — a hope and commitment he cannot deny. So he goes on.

Education, business, and drug rehabilitation are areas infiltrated in this manner, to covertly introduce the agenda of Scientology through activities which apparently have other purposes. This is illustrated by a student at the Delphian School (reported in *The Delphian*, Issue XXIV, 1989, p.7), who wrote, ‘‘it took a lot of effort from everybody here ... to help me understand that this was the right group for me.’’ That student indeed got the message.

Remember the Hard Sell concept of truth: anything that will undermine the mark’s position and obtain compliance with the ‘‘ethical’’ actions that will bring in More Money to Scientology. Apply that to the concept of ‘‘gradients’’ and what do you get? The *New York Times*, July 17, 1989, discussed a Narconon facility planned near Newkirk, Oklahoma:

> Townspeople say that Narconon has not been honest about its links to Scientology, its financing, its medical credentials, and its plans for the project.... Narconon officials denied any connection to Scientology until confronted with a Scientology magazine article titled, ‘‘Trained Scientologists to Staff Huge Oklahoma Facility.’’

The truth would have been ‘‘out gradient’’ for the poor wogs of Newkirk. In the same way, other Scientology front groups conceal their real agenda.

A Sea Org (Scientology) magazine, *High Winds*, Issue 9, 1989, refers to the World Institute of Scientology Enterprises (WISE) working to boom Scientology through its use and dissemination into businesses. It also refers to the Association for Better Living and Education (ABLE),

> ... where the many vital social programs using LRH’s technology are administered. One such program which receives guidance from ABLE is Narconon....

Another is the Delphian School.

In Other Words... (a summary)

- The cult process begins with deceptive recruitment — management training, drug rehabilitation, communication course, etc.
- The real purpose is to get ‘‘bodies in the shop’’ where they can be sold membership in a group.
- Within the cult group, loyalties, sociability, willingness, desire to help, etc. are manipulated (ref. Robert Jay Lifton’s ‘‘Eight Points of Mind Control’’) to get the person cooperatively to go along with shared self-delusions which create and then sustain mutual-dependence relations with the group.
- Starting to go along with the group-think (for example, starting to see oneself as part of an elite with special understanding available only through the group) is the beginning of a gradient of indoctrination, control, and exploitation.
- Hubbard presents the idea of ‘‘gradients’’ as part of his ‘‘educational technology.’’ One learns on a gradient to assimilate the Hard Sell concept of truth, which destroys value, isolates the person from his social roots, and makes him exploitable by the group.
- The ‘‘gradient’’ is presented as a gradient toward understanding. But in the Hard Sell concept of truth, the measure of understanding is compliance. If you to not comply with Church instructions it is asserted that you have not understood them. The drills on the communication course are about control.
- The actual gradient then, is a gradient toward compliance. Anything that will produce compliance with Church interests becomes The Road to Truth.
- The lies told to the citizens of Newkirk are thus a correct application of Scientology’s concept of gradients. Those people were not ready to comply, and anything is justifiable to move them further along the Road to Truth — as truth is understood by deceived and self-deceived group members. The bottom line, of course, is More Money to Scientology.

Chapter 7
Scientology Ethics

In Scientology, ethics is defined as ‘‘rationality toward the greatest good for the greatest number of dynamics’’ (parts of life, such as self, family, groups, etc.). The purpose of ethics is said to be ‘‘paving the way for getting tech in.’’

Notice how that second sentence qualifies the first and frames how the definition of ethics is to be understood and applied in Scientology. In practice this turns out to mean getting statistics up. If a registrar brings in dollars then his ethics must be correct because dollars help Scientology survive and ‘‘get tech in,’’ and of course the other dynamics (parts of life) will not survive without Scientology. That is ethics.

There are formulas in Scientology by which one evaluates alternative courses of action and then announces publicly and acts on what he has decided to be the more ethical action. When done inside the group context, this ensures the decision will be seen in terms of Scientology's frame of reference, and non-Scientology considerations invalidated. The action most favorable to Scientology gets decided upon because it is favorable to Scientology, and therefore by definition ethical — since nobody else has the tech. One cannot argue otherwise within the group without losing cachet.

As the subject of ethics becomes externalized, the person's own sense of right and wrong gradually is invalidated and replaced by public procedures monitored and controlled by Scientology.

Conflicts of value are held to be illusion, with the non-Scientology side false and unreal, not really you, just your ‘‘case,’’ something to be resolved and overcome by additional ‘‘handling.’’ If others would be harmed by an action, then it is not really them who would be harmed, just their case. One learns to dismiss any nonconformity as aberration and achieve personal distance from any alternative source of meaning. If I wish to help you, I put my attention on Scientology, not on you.

This facile and self-serving logic isolates the Scientologist, like the Ugly American, behind a barrier of moral impenetrability, and justifies a pathetic and lonely arrogance. Eric Hoffer, in *The True Believer*, describes it in these words:

> The fiercest fanatics are often selfish people who were forced, by innate shortcomings or external circumstances, to lose faith in their own selves. They separate the excellent instrument of their selfishness from their ineffectual selves and attach it to the service of some holy cause. And though it be a faith of love and humility they adopt, they can be neither loving nor humble.

Ethics as an Assertion

Hubbard writes in *The Auditor*, No. 9, 1965: ’’...the only slim chance this planet has rests on a few slim shoulders, overworked, underpaid and fought — the Scientologist.’’ Such melodramatic imagery pervades and characterizes the writings of Scientology — always unsubstantiated of course, except by assertion. But such assertions, and the crisis mentality they invoke, provide the short-circuit of thought necessary to override other values and sustain the anything we do is ethical *modus operandi*.

Success stories, those socially expected expressions of gratitude to my auditor, the C/S, and most of all to LRH, provide immediate assurance that one is doing something worthwhile, and so justify not looking further. In turn, each participant is expected to mirror similar assurances to others. Scientologists tell each other constantly that they are ethical people because they are Scientologists.

In contrast to this nobility of participation, lore about ‘‘Suppressive Persons’’ makes clear how one could be stigmatized as betrayer of all that is good and decent if any significant conflict with Scientology were to occur. To become or remain a valid group member, one must eventually rationalize, using such data as success stories, how the actions and viewpoints which result from Scientology involvement are ethical — i.e., one must internalize the Church's interest as his own ethic.

Scientology's asserted but unproven relevance to the buttons it uses for public relations, such as crime, insanity and drugs, provide an easy vocabulary for talk about ethics. The actual relevance of Scientology to such issues is not open to question or discussion within the group. Instead, we find any such questions diverted by vocal attacks on others, such as psychiatrists, and by inference on any who would question. Attacks on disagreement, even attacks on non-hostile but non-Hubbard ideas, comprise much of the activity of Scientology ethics. In the late 1970's a ''teach your baby to read'' program, temporarily popular among Scientologists and in no way hostile to Hubbard's ideas, was suppressed merely because it wasn't Scientology.

The policy letter, ''Keeping Scientology Working,'' a checklist for suppression of deviant thought, is included in every Scientology course and is itself the subject of a special course. One of its proscriptions is closing the door on any possibility of incorrect technology.

Correct technology consists only of that already written by Mr. Hubbard and published in official Scientology bulletins and policies.

The contrast between honest thought and Church authoritarianism is very clear, yet to be a valid group member one must learn to rationalize this away.

Ethics as the Destruction of Values

Scientology's inability to tolerate disagreement makes it seem an act of loyalty to label others as enemy and to discredit non-group persons and values. In this authoritarian atmosphere, the Church is always right. In taking any independent position, the individual is always wrong. In the logic of Hard Sell, a clever person can produce an infinity of reasons why the individual is wrong-for-some-reason-or-other without regard to the facts of any particular situation.

A common misdirection is to force attention off the issue and onto intentions and motives; anyone who is not gung ho must have evil intentions. Thus discourse is reduced to smearing, invalidating, or otherwise ''disconnecting from'' (generally: not seeing) those not of one's persuasion. For example, a Scientologist who saw a very early draft of these notes made no response at all to their content, but was horrified that I would discuss the group in non-group terms. I was told to see an ethics officer and get it ''handled.''

Sacrifice of non-Scientology values is the normal currency of status enhancement (or brownie points), as in I trashed my business to buy more Church services. One must produce a satisfactory list on paper of proofs of contribution to be eligible for certain services, and items such as the above are quite acceptable. I divorced my wife (or husband) because she (or he) wasn't helping me get up the Bridge was one I heard more than once.

In an ethics ''handling,'' one is under immediate pressure from officials and/or peers to get this resolved. The group's culture provides facile justification for why it is OK to deny one's former associations and beliefs, and why what others might consider betrayal really isn't. With acute awareness of what others will approve, and under supervision from an ethics officer, the person decides how far he can go and an ethics handling is worked out. If necessary, there may be more handling until the person has appropriate realizations — which the techniques of Hard Sell ensure that he will have.

The individual's participation prevents the required change from being more than he can justify in view of his present commitment to the group, and thus inclining him to leave. But by keeping ethics in over the course of a person's career, his former identity can be eroded piecemeal, by numerous small accommodations, in each of which the present group pressure outweighs the sacrifice of more distant values. If he did not go far enough this time, well, there is always next time.

The matters in question will be shown to work when we all agree that they did, so eventually one is going to have to assert agreement — or leave. The social pressures involved (friendships, status, finishing what you started, validation for being a valuable being, not being wrong about something you invested so much in, the stigmas of betraying your group and ''but I thought you loved your children...,'' etc.) encourage one to find how it could be that way and believe it and say so — whatever the betrayals one must commit or nonsense one must find some way to believe.

Products of Scientology ethics that I saw included people convinced their most ethical action was to obtain as many credit cards as possible and max them all out buying Scientology services.

I met a woman who had gone through complex legal maneuvers to secure possession of a trust fund left by relatives to her children, and donate it to Scientology. A fellow, perhaps mentally retarded, had spent all his money on Scientology and had been sent more by his employer to get home. The registrars got it. Breaking trust and confidences with spouses, friends, or employers was a common ethical action (I saw a lot of ''Liability Formulas'').

I heard numerous brags about how ''I got my husband to send X amount of money'' or ''we trashed our business to buy services'' or ''we sold our house'', etc.

My personal impression of people I met who had done such things is that they were scared and confused, having been intimidated by high pressure sales tactics and having yielded to the invalidation of whatever else had been important to them (perhaps after a heroic struggle with ''suppressive'' influences). They were hanging on desperately to the one thing they had left that people would validate and praise them for. The woman with the trust fund could not look me in the eye.

Many of these were good and intelligent people for whom I felt genuine affection. One wonders what they might have accomplished had not their life's energy been short-circuited into this frenetic closed-circle race to justify each other's delusions.

Personal Integrity

To complete an ethics action, the individual may be required to strike an effective blow against the enemy then make public repentance within the group and petition for readmittance. Through such repentances and the realizations used to justify them, complicity is obtained in the compromise of other values in the person's life. The resulting vacuum of meaning is filled from the surrounding high-pressure ambience of ''gung ho'' and ''dissemination,'' and the person then must convince himself so as to maintain personal integrity.

The preemptive definition of personal integrity (''what is real for you is what is real in your own experience'') functions as a normative injunction not to perceive or admit to coercion from within the Church. If it was coercion or trickery then it was not real for you, and of course you can never admit that.

One's own reality is said to have a kind of separate and autonomous existence apart from realities mutually agreed upon with others. Thus anything, however self-serving or illusory, could be true for you in your own universe and used to justify ethical action against others or to justify not dealing with issues raised by others. Thus ethics can defend insanity or criminality, as long as group allegiance is not compromised. In fact, a virtue is made of disagreeing with agreed-upon meanings — except, of course, there is never any virtue in disagreeing with Scientology.

In this way, external viewpoints and standards of validity, and sometimes of legality, are defined as irrelevant. If you agree with something, or have been sold on agreeing with it, then it is true for you and any other evaluation or source of meaning should not be allowed to sway you. You are supposed to be steadfastly unreasonable and maintain your position.

The meaning in practice of your own position is illustrated by how registrars make use if it: if you fail to allow influence by the Church then there is something wrong with you, but if you allow influence by non-Scientology ideas then you are compromising your personal integrity. I never heard anyone accused of violating his personal integrity because he gave money to a registrar.

Advanced Skills of Being In-Ethics

One knows that his actions today may come up later on ''security check'' questions in auditing, such as ''failed to apply Policy.'' This could include any failure to report another person's nonconformity (''knowledge reports'' are Policy). Thus any relationship always has an implicit third party present, enforcing gung-ho compliance and enforcing one's enforcement of that compliance upon others.

To prove his conformity and rightness, and to avoid appearing less than completely loyal, the experienced Scientologist learns to delicately reconcile the roles of disseminator and mark.

As mark, he can never be good enough, sacrifice enough, donate enough. Whatever he has done, more can be asked — and will be asked. Yet he cannot rebel or refuse. He must remain able to act from the viewpoint of the registrar and insist that no conceivable resource be held back.

He is expected to demonstrate gratitude and loyalty to the group by actively cooperating with registrars, ethics officers, and others, and by accepting their viewpoints: we're both on the same team, I'm just here to help you get what you've said you want, and so on. Any other position is ''ingratitude,'' and is undermined by the mark's own complicity.

If any other position impinges on the situation, whether as moral scruples or as sales resistance, it is invalidated as merely a problem the person has with his personal integrity or ethics.

The mark may save face if capitulation is negotiated in private, without visible representatives or reminders of any independent viewpoint or value. Thus he remains visibly in ethics. Knowing the registrar role, he knows what he must do to submit and cooperate with this invalidation. Isolated, and surrounded by a closing team (the most I personally observed was six on one), the individual is in a vulnerable position. He learns over time that he might as well concede in advance and internalize the destruction of value, so that no visible ''counter-intention'' need ever appear — even, perhaps, in his or her own mind.

To avoid conflict or dissonance, the mark learns to invalidate in advance any value of his own which might compete with a registrar's demands, just as he learns to maintain distance from any insufficiently gung ho friend.

You know you are going to wind up agreeing anyway (you're used to it, good at it, proud of it), so you quickly figure how it could be that way, then proceed (rush, rush) straight ahead without looking off to either side. The special frame of reference which gives meaning to such things as ''OT'' misdirects attention away from the actual mechanics of the situation so one is able to believe that Scientology works every time.

With practice, this can be done unselfconsciously and sincerely, without noticing the mental gymnastics involved. Such speed of understanding is a source of actual pride for many Scientologists. It reduces costs in auditing.

This peculiar approach to evaluation of data helps preserve certainty that one is acting ethically.

Chapter 8
The Defeat of Street Smarts

Claiming to be a religion is but one means of sheltering a commercial enterprise from accountability. Ambiguity of product is another.

The legal profession struggles to keep up with questions of accountability that arise when buyer and seller disagree about the nature and effect of esoteric services. That problem becomes all the more difficult when the product is inherently ambiguous, as is the case with the subjective and possibly manipulated mental state of an individual. This ambiguity is a legal weak point which Hubbard recognized, exploited, and further obscured by mixing it with religion.

By charging money for obscure expert services which are part of a religion and which have as their product an ambiguous subjective condition, Hubbard created a sales and recruitment machine virtually immune from legal accountability.

Caveat Vendor (Seller Beware)

Special concern for accountability is appropriate when the user of a service is at a significant disadvantage in relation to the provider, as is the case with complex medical services. In such cases the rule tends, properly, to be *caveat vendor* (seller beware). The vendor is liable for harm or fraud which the disadvantaged consumer was not in a position to understand or avert. Thus medical products and services are subject to extensive governmental, scientific, and professional review by which the vendor establishes that he has shown due regard for the consumer's interest and is not negligent.

Caveat emptor (buyer beware, otherwise known as ''street smarts'') may have been sufficient protection for the consumer against the snake oil salesman. But a new kind of consumer disadvantage must be considered when an authoritarian, well staffed group, hidden from public scrutiny, uses sophisticated techniques derived from a half-century of social science research to manipulate the lay consumer and thereby secure the purchase, acceptance, and recommendation of an essentially worthless or even harmful service.

In the legal periphery where cults reside, shrouded by irrelevant issues of religion, there is no accountability or protection for the consumer of quasi-medical or self-improvement services. Scientology has made many claims which could be tested, if those claims were legitimate — such as Hubbard's numerous claims for the state of Clear.

Instead, the group relies on bald assertion of miraculous results, backed only by success stories written by people in the midst of intense social pressure — and on the legal presumption of *caveat emptor*.

Scientology fanatically avoids any independent review or evaluation of its actions. Attempts to establish accountability are slandered and misrepresented as attacks on religion.

An Example: Narconon and the Purification Rundown

Public scrutiny may sometime occur, however, despite the Scientologists' best efforts to prevent it. Here is one example concerning Narconon, a Scientology recruitment program operating under the guise of drug rehabilitation — a bid to promote Scientology by coattailing on an established social issue.

[*Narconon NEWS*, Volume 6, Issue 3, states, ''NARCONON is freeing people from crime and drug abuse with standard tech, and starting them up RON'S bridge to total freedom. WHO CAN YOU START ACROSS THAT BRIDGE?'']

Narconon is based on the Purification Rundown, a detoxification program developed by Hubbard and promoted through Scientology organizations. The following assessment of the Narconon program is dated January 5, 1991, by Dr. James J. Kenney, Ph.D., R.D., a member of the National Council Against Health Fraud, a group which also includes former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

> I am familiar with the ''Hubbard Method'' of ''detoxification'' which is used at Scientologist run ''clinics''.... This ''purification'' program was created by L. Ron Hubbard's fertile imagination in the mid-1950s. It is part of the teachings of the Church of Scientology and lacks any credible scientific support.

> This ‘‘purification’’ or ‘‘detoxification’’ program is claimed to help ‘‘clear’’ the mind of toxins such as drugs, pesticides and chemical pollutants. It consists of large doses of niacin, vegetable oil, exercise and ‘‘low temperature’’ saunas. According to the followers of L. Ron Hubbard, the large doses of niacin work by stimulating the release of fat into the blood stream and this is accompanied by various ‘‘toxins’’ trapped in the body’s fatty tissues.
>
> According to science, large doses of niacin actually block the release of fat from fat cells. This has been observed both at rest[2] and during exercise.[3]
>
> In other words, the scientific evidence shows the exact opposite of what Hubbard’s theory predicts. There is no credible support for claims that large doses of niacin clear toxins from the brain, fatty tissue or any other part of the body. To make matters worse, large doses of niacin ... can cause serious liver damage ... trigger gout, raise blood sugar into the diabetic range, cause itching, flushing and a rash. Nausea and gastritis are other side effects of large doses of niacin.
>
> To subject people to these potentially serious side effects on the pretense that they are being ‘‘detoxified,’’ ‘‘cleared’’ or ‘‘purified’’ is quackery.

NCAHF president, William Jarvis, Ph.D., writes,

> NCAHF believes that responsible community leaders should reject the Narconon addiction treatment program. It appears to be among the least acceptable in a field that already suffers from a lack of sound objective research.

Certainty vs Truth

Sound objective research is not relevant to the true believer. In place of evidence and scientific validity, things are said to work (in Scientology) by using social pressures to persuade people that they did work; i.e., by gradually interfering with the individual’s ability to evaluate information.

The coercion which accomplishes this defeat of ‘‘street smarts’’ may not be obvious. It would be a pretty ineffective group that had to control its members through blatant coercion. It is much more efficient to create a milieu in which the members indoctrinate and control themselves, and convince each other that it was all their own free choice and decision. As a cohesive group, they will enforce such ideas as a condition of friendship and belonging.

We encounter a friendly and enthusiastic group which espouses goals and values that are easy to agree with. Home at last!

At first, it seems that all we are being asked to agree with is better communication, getting people off drugs, motherhood, and apple pie.

What these groups really sell is membership. Sure, they want your money and your time, and they will take all there is of both. But what they want above all is for you to be one of them, to belong, to agree with them, to reassure them by the sacrifice of your own life and values that their own lives and decisions have not been futile misguided error.

‘‘Street smarts’’ is swept away by the person’s urgent reliance on the constant reinforcement required to maintain ‘‘certainty those collective self-deceptions about being an elite in unique possession of the only right answers. It may be decades before one begins to realize, or to fight desperately against realizing, that life has gone by to no constructive effect.

There were some tricks going on that our ordinary schoolyard and street education failed to teach us about.

[2] *Acta Medica Scandinavia* 1962, 172(suppl):641)

[3] D. Jenkins, *Lancet* 1965, 1307

Chapter 9
An Example of Word Games: The Word Control

The effectiveness of cult manipulation would suffer if it was perceived and understood. Something cannot be my deepest understanding of myself if it obviously is some group's attempt to control or own me.

Understanding of the manipulations is prevented by group-think definitions which assure me that manipulation is not something I should notice, not something about which I should be wary, i.e., not an alarm, in the sense of Goffman's discussion, in *Relations in Public*, of normal appearances.

Normal Appearances

> ''When the world immediately around the individual portends nothing out of the ordinary, when the world appears to allow him to continue his routines (being indifferent to his designs and neither a major help nor a major hindrance), we can say that he will sense that appearances are 'natural' or 'normal.' ... Wariness is handled as a side-involvement; one might say that he can 'take things at face value,' the unstated implication being that he can predict from what he sees what it is that is likely to come about, and this is not alarming. And when special attentiveness is required, as when humans cross a busy intersection or unpack eggs, it will be understood that this special effort is restricted to a brief period of time.''

Alarms

> Goffman's discussion of alarms is more involved, but generally the term refers to signs that something is up other than what first appears, and that it may not be safe to take things at face value. An alarm might be the knock on the door or another person's expression of surprise or fright. It could be the absence of some expected event. Various kinds of all-clear signals communicate the absence of cause for alarm, even though the situation as seen by someone else might be ambiguous.

Much of Goffman's discussion concerns the ways in which alarms (or all-clear's) can be false or manipulated, as indicated by the phrase ''acting natural'' and by various techniques of criminals and confidence men.

Scientology makes totalistic control of group members appear normal by making control central to the ideology and experience of the group, defined as a good thing to which one would object only if aberrated. The suggested image is of driving a car, where one necessarily is controlling the car and does so either well or poorly. This image is generalized to social groups, and used to justify an extraordinary degree of control of members by the group.

The concept of loyal opposition has no place. Any resistance to control or difference in viewpoint is handled as error and/or opposition to the group itself. Thus one's career within the group functions as a kind of obedience training which one is supposed to internalize and affirm.

We are familiar with team sports, traffic regulations, and cooperative action such as getting out a bulk mailing. We accept controls which are limited in time and space to specific circumstances, of clear utility, voluntarily accepted and clearly delineated. It is understandable how that could be like controlling a car well or poorly.

These obvious kinds of control are apparent and highly visible in Scientology organizations, which operate on a military model complete with uniforms, ranks, musters and orders of the day.

These are highly enough visible to serve as misdirection away from less easily identified kinds of control (various demands for total commitment) which are without limit and thus not at all like driving a car or getting out the bulk mail.

Suppose I do not quite understand what the registrar (salesman) is doing, but I can see that he is trying to control me in some way. Well, that is a good thing, isn't it? He is part of my group. I am not supposed to object. I would not want to let go of the steering wheel of a car. I had better write him a check right now.

This is misdirection in the stage magician's sense. What is hidden are the actual mechanics by which agreement and conformity are inculcated and enforced — how and why I came to agree.

Most people have limited skills in identifying and handling covert control mechanisms. An inchoate sense of something wrong with this is hard for the amateur proselyte to defend against the professional registrar who makes the most of the proselyte's faulty grasp of the tricks played on him.

Under such pressure, the proselyte may do the best he can to understand and articulate his discomfort. His amateur best may not be good enough.

He may seize, for example, upon the militaristic, authoritarian organization, which is highly visible, and object to that.

But that is a red herring, a misdirection. His objection was probably not really to uniforms and orders, and so can be talked down. And having accepted Scientology's private concept of control, he cannot say that he objects to control — because he would not let go of the steering wheel of a car. He cannot even say that his objection is to totalistic control, as opposed to specific and limited control, because any instance is always specific and can be justified somehow. The forest can be obscured by looking at a tree.

In the heat of a face-to-face sales cycle, which may not even look like a sales cycle, the target of such trickery can be thrown seriously off-balance. The militaristic red herring is just one example of a ploy. There are countless other sophistries the con (confidence man) could use to throw the mark (the con's target) off-balance and sell the desired understanding of control.

The mark winds up confused, with no ground to stand on, questioning or denying his own perceptions and judgment. Then he can be sold the idea that his confusion is something wrong with him (an aberration about control) which will be fixed by further participation in Scientology.

I Say BLUE; I Dare You To Say GREEN

I used control as an example, to show how it is possible to grab the meaning of a word which, in the context of actual life within the group, likely would become an alarm and nucleus for other interpretation of the activity which occurs. Wariness is averted by a preemptive definition (in this case, of control) which dictates the non-alarming way in which observed phenomena are to be understood.

The effect is: ''I say *blue*. I dare you to say *green*.''

Likewise, a Scientologist is defined as one who is using the technology of Scientology to improve conditions. Therefore you are not to think of Scientologists as persons who have become proficient at invalidating non-group values, or who have learned not to ask certain kinds of questions — meanings which might credibly be constructed from observation of what occurs within the group. They dare you to say *green*.

In another example, one learns that an auditor is one who applies Scientology processes to help people, that auditors are valuable people, that such a profession exists. None of this is demonstrated factually, upon any evidence beyond group data. It is part of the group's everybody knows and the new proselyte is made to feel inadequate because he does not know. He hurries to learn the right words and attitudes. He does not ask questions about the emperor's clothes. They dare you to say *green*.

Such preemptive definitions work by using social pressure to bypass ordinary standards of evidence and evaluation. They bypass any need to make a case for the truth or sense of what is being communicated. The preemptive definition is just how it is. The group dares you to say otherwise. You are the new kid on the block, cooperative and polite, so you don't make trouble (and God help you if you actually are a kid).

The preemptive definition establishes a socially obligatory normal appearance, a way of seeing things which other experience must be made to fit. If you question or disagree (or say *green*) then you get the big chill. Force is not wanted because it calls attention to itself.

Usually the chill is accomplished with condescending disapproval, pity for your inability to understand, a moment of embarrassed silence, or some other in-passing action which is made to seem normal and no occasion for questioning your surroundings. Your awkward questions or other viewpoints will eventually and somehow be rationalized into insignificance. In a totalist context, preemptive definitions can be used thus to systematically bypass and then destroy (replace) existing values and orientation. A person ordinarily has a sense of himself and the world which gives him access to a plurality of sources of value and meaning. No one group or set of definitions is ordinarily able to achieve total dominance and control of the person's thought and action. Family, profession, interest groups and friends comprise the resources (''support groups'') by which a person balances each area of life against others and achieves a mixture which is satisfying and workable for him, difficult though such balance may be in practice.

If this multiplicity of areas of value, resources and support is destroyed, the individual becomes relatively helpless, vulnerable and adrift. If that multiplicity is replaced by a single totalistic source of the values and resources of life, then the individual becomes extraordinarily dependent on that one source and vulnerable to its control. A totalistic group seeks such control by undermining, invalidating and subordinating all areas of life apart from itself. That is what cults do.

A typical cult rationale for this manipulation is some version of you're either totally with us or totally against us (saved or damned) so put your money where your mouth is. The non-group world is depicted as sinful, evil, wrong, incompetent or insane, and the group as the only opportunity for survival, salvation or success.

Though persons so indoctrinated may continue to act in the world but not of it, their cognitive universe and values have become captive to a single totalistic group — a position which undermines the person's very ability to think, to judge, to differentiate, to know. Thus over time, it comes to seem more and more reasonable to invalidate any non-group attachments or values and to live wholly within the bubble.

In an environment (supposedly) of truth, hope, help, and trust, the person thus disoriented can be sold, over time, a systematic inversion of values. Insanity becomes sanity, betrayal becomes integrity, meanness becomes ethics, obedience becomes freedom, slavishness becomes independence, a destructive cult becomes the good of mankind, the group becomes the only truth and the highest purpose.

Soon there is nowhere else to go. Other people are evil and do not make sense. It's crazy out there.

The trap is complete.

Chapter 10
The Web of Group-Think

Fluent use of preemptively defined words in their group-specific sense, and avoidance of other meanings as though such did not exist, are criteria and evidence of legitimacy within the group.

Another example of preemptive definition is the word help which, in the group context, is identified with whatever the Church does — so that any disagreement with the group is made to seem the same as opposition to helping people at all. Obvious not-helped situations in Scientology are rationalized away with technical explanations and removed as nearly as possible from general view. One is not allowed to discuss case problems or disappointments out of session.

Other betterment activities are invalidated as ineffectual, misguided, or ‘‘suppressive.’’ They dare you to say *green*. Nearly all the concepts required to understand actual Scientology practices are found in its own literature, but redefined in a misdirective way to prevent such use and understanding. Wrong source, something done other than what was said, something asserted, and invalidation are examples of concepts captured, and the person given opportunity to rationalize for himself how they actually do not describe his Scientology experience.

The above examples are from a list, called the ‘‘L1C,’’ which is used in auditing when the person has an upset. Repeated use of this list on Scientologists provides ample opportunity for them to cooperatively rationalize how their upsets ‘‘really’’ come from some non-Scientology source (perhaps parents or other associates, or past life influences) rather than from conditions within the group.

Perhaps the ultimate example of such opportunity for misdirective rationalization is Hubbard's blithe comment about people who raise hopes of betterment and then betray them by using hope and human aspiration as bait for a trap.

Preemptive definitions do not exist alone, but in a constructed web of meanings which define the private universe into which the proselyte is to be re-educated. Special terms come to look natural, next to the familiarity of common-language words.

This association of the concepts help and discipline illustrates how Scientology's web is constructed[4]:

> We help beyond any help ever available anywhere. We are a near ultimate in help. ...if we help so greatly we must also in the same proportion be able to discipline. Near ultimate help can only be given with near ultimate discipline.

Notice that nothing was actually said about the relation between help and discipline other than Mr. Hubbard's assertion.

But now you know the approved group line for how you are supposed to think about Scientology's coercive practices, and what line to take in justifying them to yourself and to others.

Something Done Other Than What Was Said

Such associations are made gradually, one small step at a time, so that at each juncture the current lesson is cushioned by one's participation-to-date (complicity) and by the habits of sociable cooperation such as granting benefit of the doubt.

It is your job to incorporate such data into your own life, and change your own understandings so it all fits. The web is built up in thousands of pages of ‘‘technology’’ written over more than thirty years by Mr. Hubbard, in which countless situations are given a place and explanation. That labyrinth of detail resembles a science fiction alternate universe in which the proselyte can lose sight of mundane reality by endless group-validated preoccupation (diversion, bonhomie) with apparently meaningful technical explanations and procedures. He can believe, and find support in believing, that he is learning a science — but without ever having to face the public and adversarial nature of scholarly dialog or standards of validity.

The relative consistency of the web (such that it is) would not be credible were the subject treated seriously as a science (which it claims to be), with public

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[4] L. Ron Hubbard, ‘‘Conditions, How to Assign,’’ HCO PL October 20, 1967

methods and results. But there are no such constraints on the inspired creation of a single individual (author, Source). There are explanations for everything, and in such detail. It is expounded with such confidence and by such nice people. So it must be true.

To avoid being false within himself, the proselyte must take the given raw material, one small bit at a time, and find for himself how it could be that way; i.e., discover, invent, or imaginatively construct whatever thread of logic will produce for him the requisite observations and conclusions (called certainty), while obscuring or invalidating any contradictory or critical thought (the defense of certainty).

Nonconforming viewpoints can be deeply threatening because they challenge this precarious construct.

The claims of superior rationality made by Scientologists require that they perceive themselves as rational and self-determined. There is thus strong motive to submerge control mechanisms into normal appearances, to deny having been manipulated or having acted irrationally.

The the very process described here is thus made invisible (taboo) to group members — though not necessarily to their family and friends.

Chapter 11
Results

It is a high crime (in Scientology) to invalidate the states of ‘‘Clear’’ or ‘‘OT.’’ Thus all that is heard are the widely publicized success stories, which are all that is permissible to say.

A failed case is said to be possible only due to ethics problems such as evil intentions. Scientology’s claims of results are thus based on explicitly manipulated and restricted information.

Given the complicity required for participation in the first place, plus the stigmatization of failed cases, one is effectively forced to claim and to believe that one has had wins. Disappointments are more likely to be manifested as confusion and silence rather than as vocal questions or criticism. The lure remains that maybe the next level will handle it.

Many of those who escape remain silent, whether from fear, consciousness of failure, or dim hope for future results. Thus they leave others to follow blindly in their footsteps and give an unopposed PR victory to Scientology’s letter-writing factories.

Further motive to believe in ‘‘results’’ comes from the high price of Scientology services (in my experience, approximately $100,000 by the point of completing ‘‘OT Level V’’). The high prices, like loaded words such as ‘‘data’’ and ‘‘tech,’’ lend a legitimacy to ideas which might not fare so well on their own merits apart from this formidable context. The prices also provide a rite of passage by which one significantly breaks with wog standards of value and increases commitment to the group. It becomes more embarrassing to have been wrong; there is motive to make it look good.

The Church has used inflated membership figures to suggest widespread acceptance of Scientology’s benefits and results. For example, the 1978 book, *What is Scientology?*, claimed a worldwide membership for the Church of 5,437,000.

In 1984 a new official membership organization was made a prerequisite for receiving Church services. This cost money, so wildly inflated membership figures could not be used — or no one would believe the Church’s urgent need for money. After a year of recruitment, the International Association of Scientologists (IAS) claimed membership of 12,000. Jon Atack estimated in 1990 that worldwide membership was probably close to 100,000 by now due to a recent advertising blitz. (I am personally acquainted with the Hard Sell techniques that were used to sell $2,000 memberships in 1986.)

An appearance of result can be produced by misattributing the result of some other activity. Several books on Scientology have described working conditions and pay scales in the Sea Org. Is forced labor extorted by ‘‘heavy ethics’’ really the better life promised by Scientology?

Likewise in Scientology’s front organizations, results attributed to ‘‘Hubbard Management Technology’’ may actually result from very ordinary brute force methods applied under group pressure.

For example, a March, 1990 article in *Podiatry Today* asks the practitioner:

> Do you feel comfortable asking a patient to call and refer a friend to you while that patient is still in your office for treatment? Or sending a card to a friend before their own procedure is completed? Do you feel comfortable using tone scales to manipulate a person’s response to your treatment proposal? Or talking about money and payment methods before discussing illness and treatment methods? Do you feel comfortable using tried and true hard sell methodologies within the doctor-patient relationship?

That same article notes that consulting firms licensed by WISE paid ten to fifteen percent of their gross revenue to WISE, which then ‘‘by extension, flowed into Church of Scientology coffers.’’ In other words, Hard Sell is used to to get medical practitioners to use Hard Sell on their patients to get money to give to Scientology. That is ‘‘management technology.’’

One’s ordinary work may come to be understood as part of Scientology because it is done in that context. The usual group pressures (‘‘gung ho’’) are relied upon to cement the misidentification. Problems of organization and production can be handled enthusiastically and creatively, without having to pay much attention to what is being organized or produced. The technical activity itself, and the person’s expertise, become the focus. The goal becomes to do a good job, and a good person will produce a result. The Church of Scientology (or an entity under its control) becomes an employer. The person's work habits become an area of security to fall back on when doubts or questions occur about more controversial topics — a defense familiar in many industries, from nuclear weapons to advertising. One can feel more normal while preoccupied in dealing with UPS, printing companies, airlines, etc.

Just as being an auditor is asserted to be a legitimate profession, a job like many others, so the registrar can fall back on an image of himself as a dedicated sales professional doing right by his employer. In both cases, close focus on the task at hand becomes a means of avoiding notice of expensive pseudo-therapy, Hard Sell, abused clients, alienation of friends and family, and disrupted lives. One just ''does a good job'' and ''increases production.''

At each step, Hard Sell tactics assert some absolute which justifies disregarding any other concerns. At early levels it may be solving some problem or increasing ability. Later it becomes ''getting stats up'' or ensuring the future of Scientology. It may be averting nuclear war, getting rid of body thetans, or ensuring that Scientology controls sufficient resources, when the time comes, to repel the Markabian invaders from outer space — anything to invalidate the mark's objections, to get the stat, to get the check.

The auditor is responsible for delivering a by-the-book correct session — not for whether his preclear gets better. There is neither motive nor occasion to look closely at the actual result. But there is plenty of motive to stay busy and Make Money.

That is the result.

Enforcing the Appearances of Results

Scientology's claim to offer help for whatever ails you is possible because any situation is ''handled'' in the same way: transfer the person's attention away from the immediacy of his own situation and onto group loyalty and participation (busy, busy) which will encourage him to agree that results exist and are as miraculous as claimed.

Anyone doing Scientology and amenable to the new identity thus imposed could claim, at least temporarily, to have solved his problem by participation in Scientology. For example, a marital problem might be solved by doing Scientology so that hats, ethics officers, confidential data, special knowledge, and so forth constantly are interposed between the individuals involved, who then put attention on Scientology rather than on each other: I will help us by going off and doing something with them which I can't tell you about because it happened in session so it is confidential.

You, then, are supposed to cooperatively consider it fixed because I went off and did some Scientology. Otherwise you are not acting validly as a group member. You too must remove attention from whatever was wrong and put it onto Scientology (more gung ho), so as to make it not matter that whatever was wrong is still right where it was. It is fixed because we both did ethics conditions and wrote success stories and then got very busy: a therapy of distraction and misdirection which works when we all agree that it did.

A classic form of this is to do something unethical to get money to give to the Church, then fix everything by doing an ethics handling — but keep the money! In a similar way, the Church will punish overly coercive members who have created a flap, make claims of reform, then recruit others to do the same things again.

The group member will appear inadequate or disloyal if he does not find some way to agree that the asserted result occurred and the situation is fixed. Success stories are a means by which one ranks and assesses status with reference to the Bridge, a complex chart of abilities supposedly gained at various levels of one's Scientology career. To fail to claim to have achieved the specified results would discredit one's status as a Scientologist and invite expensive remedial action. Thus one must come to see oneself and demand to be treated by others as an unusually sane, capable and rational person — one with extraordinary ability to communicate, who has no problem with problems, one not troubled by past upsets in life, and so on. It is discrediting to admit having a problem that was supposed to have been ''handled.'' At the moment of attestation you said it was handled. Are you now saying that Scientology does not work, or that you lied in your attestation? A way is needed, perhaps a divorce or most commonly by joining staff, to deny that such situations still exist. By doing Scientology (busy, busy) one gains an avenue for action that simply bypasses the circumstances of own prior life, so that such questions simply will not arise — the ultimate invalidation.

OT abilities are least likely to be challenged by other Scientologists who have similar ego needs, most likely to be seen as delusional by those who have known the person well over time. Lack of real change, and evident failure, can be covered up by staying in the group and doing Scientology.

The more vain the person or fragile the ego, the more tightly and desperately held (internalized, believed) are the claims made for personal condition and ability, and the more threatening any challenge to those claims. An attack upon one's religion becomes emotionally synonymous with an attack on one's personal vanity and self-concept.

The group-think presumption that Scientologists will succeed better than other people encourages unequal standards of evidence and validity, giving benefit of the doubt on the one hand and withholding it on the other. If one begins to act more like a Scientologist, that tends to be perceived as improvement per se. Likewise, ‘‘he's better now'' tends to mean that he is acting more like a Scientologist. Realistic assessment becomes impossible, the real accomplishments of others are minimized, and the ordinariness of trained Scientologists is not to be noticed.

Don't Overlook the Obvious Absurdity

Claims of success by Scientology or due to Scientology are supposed to be accepted at face value — including the ‘‘I was thinking about my sister in Terra Haute and just then she called'' type of thing which is common in promotional materials. Asserted but unverified claims are particularly evident in areas of education, drug rehabilitation, business management, and communication skills, where the Church makes claim to unique competence which is widely asserted but which I have never seen supported by evidence.

An amusing instance of claims for Scientology occurs in a book which we gave our employees for Christmas several years ago. It stated that with the amazing discoveries of Dianetics and Scientology there is no reason for anyone ever to wear glasses. This became a standing joke among the rest of our employees because all five of our Scientologists wore glasses.

If the claims made by Scientology were in any way true, the world and especially Scientology would be full of virtual supermen. I have not observed any, and I have observed people who should have been supermen if there were any — in fact I should be one.

Social status such as ‘‘OT'' or upper management enable some to pass within the group as superior beings without having to show anything more than an air of confidence.

In those I knew best, I saw no positive result not attributable to pressure-cooker motivation, experience, and the maturing of already existing ability. While those things may be valuable, they are not the claims made by and for Scientology. Certainly I saw no special qualities which cannot be observed also in non-Scientologists. The most predictable result I observed was a temporary elation following completion of a service.

There are negative results too. We might ask what it costs a person to believe, and act on the belief, that Scientology is scientific, that it is man's only hope, that only Mr. Hubbard got it all right, that nothing is as important as your status with Scientology, that everything associated with Scientology is always an emergency and urgent and mandatory, that the rest of the world lacks the tech and can be saved only by getting into Scientology, or any of hundreds of other examples from this bizarre ethos.

What relevance to anyone else does such a person have (except within the group's bubble)? What better life could such a person have created, on a more sane basis? And what is the cost to that person's associates?

A six year old child described being told by her Scientologist mother, when you get to higher courses you can be kind of dead and then if you don't like where you are, you can get to be somewhere else just by thinking about it.

Evaluation of result is pretty much bypassed in practice. The selling of cult membership relies on other means. Astounding results are widely asserted in promotional materials, to provide a needed rationale, but actual evidence is not needed for those already in the maw of Hard Sell and heavy ethics. Neither is it needed to attract new raw meat, the supply of which is assured by broad dissemination to the public at large, and playing the odds. There will always be some who will try an introductory course or service and prove defenseless to a new agenda for their lives — especially if the cult is able to suppress free and public information about itself, and if those who have been there remain silent.

Chapter 12
About the Author

My background includes undergraduate and graduate study in anthropology and sociology, 1961-1970, at Brandeis University, Washington University in St. Louis, and the University of California at Davis.

By 1970 I had found fixing cars more rewarding than the life of professional academics, and I spent roughly a decade doing that. In 1973, at a time of change and confusion in my life, I encountered the Church of Scientology. Curious and otherwise at loose ends, I spent eleven months in L.A. studying that subject. I met the woman who was to become my wife and business partner. She learned of Scientology from me and got into it on her own before coming to Colorado to join me. She insisted that its viewpoints be the conceptual and normative basis of our life together.

As the 1970's ended I was writing computer software and, together with my wife, started a company to market and continue developing the product I had created. That company (sans wife) is still my work.

I had left L.A. with reservations, after such experiences as observing unattended babies crawling on urine-soaked carpets (at a place called the Cadet Org), and hearing recruiters clearly advocate breaking promises to friends, families, and employers (''we can handle that'').

Most unsettling of all, however, was my observation that being a Scientologist required becoming a master of facile justifications of such things. I saw that the group think was expected to justify anything.

But I rationalized that any shared language could serve, at least as starting point, for communication between people committed to each other, that the bad parts were less important and would get sorted out, and the outcome would be beneficial. Thus hopefully, I set out sincerely to make my own best use of Scientology's conceptual framework.

I did not understand fanaticism or the abeyance of kindness and thought it can produce, or that the means for achieving desired ends would take such total precedence over the ends themselves. There was no backstage, no home to go home to (ref. Charles Schultz's Peanuts cartoon, ''Home is where you'd rather be when you don't know the answers'').

For me, that was a lonely and frustrating time of intellectual and social isolation, during which pursuit of alternatives per se violated norms of a group which now included my family. Obviously something was wrong, but there was no avenue to communicate, explore or handle it: any viewpoint other than Scientology tech was unacceptable. I got pretty weird, negative, uncommunicative, unpleasant and unhappy. I did not understand what was wrong or what to do about it. I stayed very busy writing software. I was in Scientology through 1986, becoming a Class IV Auditor and Case Supervisor. I did volunteer work for most of a year as a Case Supervisor but was never actually a staff member. My last formal connection was at the Church's base in Florida during 1986 when I reached the fairly high status they call ''OT Level V.'' During that four-month stay, though I was there as participant, not observer, I could not help but observe how the magic tricks were done, i.e., the control mechanisms which produce ''OTs'' (''Operating Thetans'') and other kinds of group members.

The long years of trying to be a valid group member had reduced themselves to absurdity. The thing was not worth being, in fact it was clearly destructive. The rationalizations and justifications crumbled away, leaving me to face many things which I had really known but long denied out of hope and misplaced loyalty.

I had no specific help or exit counseling. It was nearly three years before I found people who understood what I had been through. I would not recommend that others wait so long.

Scientology was not a beneficial experience for me. I avoid the word fraud because it connotes a deliberate and knowing deception which is rare among the misled, but I do believe the organizations practices are based on fraud. The ''tech'' is certainly fraudulent. But as regards most individual Scientologists, I suggest instead the word trip, in the sense of a self-justifying system of thought which, once entered, leads only into itself.

My words for the experience and for its effect on my life are distraction and misdirection, the latter in the stage magician's sense.

The group has countless reasons why to explain why it is not really a cult and why coercion and deception are really other than how they seem. But despite the sophistry, I suggest that if something looks like a duck, walks like a duck, talks like a duck, etc. then the simplest and most obvious explanation at least deserves consideration.