

Scientology: To Be Perfectly Clear

by William Sims Bainbridge and Rodney Stark

Abstract: Advances a theory to explain the apparent success of Scientology in raising its members to a superhuman level of functioning known as "clear". It is argued that empirical evidence does not support this claim and that the state of "clear" "is not a state of personal development at all, but a social status conferring honor within the cult's status system and demanding certain kinds of behavior from the person labeled 'clear'." Hubbard's social mechanisms used to establish and defend the status of "clear" are discussed. Scientology caters to those people who suffer from chronic unhappiness or inability to perform at the level set for themselves. It does not solve the underlying problems; it merely "cures the complaints by ending the person's freedom to complain."

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Introduction

Magic is risky merchandise. Sometimes it will seem to work. At other times, it will clearly fail. The more specific and serious the aims of magic, the more often it will be seen to fail. For example, magic meant to improve our spirits will succeed more often than magic meant to cause passionate response in a specific object of our affections. Magic intended to bring rain soon will more often seem to succeed than magic meant to bring rain tomorrow. Yet even unspecific magic can fail. Personal misfortunes can follow a ritual meant to cheer us up, and it might not rain again for a year.

In previous chapters, we have emphasized that religion as such is not vulnerable to empirical disconfirmation and that, for this reason, religions tend to discard the practice of magic. For similar reasons, magical client cults often are prompted to evolve into fully developed religions. In this chapter, we examine these matters closely through a case study of the Church of Scientology. This case is of special interest for a number of reasons. First, Scientology is not just another obscure cult movement, but an international organization of considerable magnitude (see appendix). Second, Scientology has been the training ground for a host of other cult founders and has served as an inspiration for many new cult movements (Bainbridge, 1984). Third, its history has been extremely well documented, not only by journalists, scholars, and even government commissions and courts, but in exquisite detail through its own prolix publications. Finally, Scientology is of exceptional interest because it has not yet been able to escape its primary basis in extremely specific and serious magical claims.

This chapter examines the heroic attempt of Scientology to preserve its high tension magic indeed, to convince clients it has delivered on its impossible promises and the extreme lengths to which it went to protect its magic from disconfirmation. But this struggle is doomed to failure. Early in its history, Scientology switched from a pure client cult to one that presented two faces to the world. Many a recruit was told the group's specific claims were based on science and that the most marvelous real benefits would be received almost immediately. But, at the same time, the group claimed the official protection of religious status. That this double game was a very difficult one for the cult to win will be evident as we see the extreme tactics required to defend Scientology's magic.

Although this chapter is primarily theoretical, it rests on an empirical base. Bainbridge (1970) carried out six months of intensive ethnographic research inside the Boston branch of this group. Subsequently, we obtained a large library of Scientology publications, reports by outsiders and former members, and literature from groups related to this important innovative religion. Ten years ago, the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C., was kind enough to provide tape recordings of many lectures by the founder. More recently, the Seattle church provided the quantitative data that we have incorporated in Chapter 18. The ethnographic research on Scientology was supplemented by more extensive investigations of The Process (Bainbridge, 1978c), a derivative cult, and of the science fiction subculture from which Scientology sprang (Bainbridge, 1976, forthcoming). Finally, we are guided by Roy Wallis's (1976) fine sociological study.

In our view, Scientology has great difficulty protecting its magic from empirical disconfirmation, a view that may not be held by all of our colleagues or (at least officially) by many practicing Scientologists. Yet there is much public evidence that the defense of its magic is a tough job for the cult. For one thing, Scientology has taken several authors and publishers to court, seeking to stop publication of debunking reports. Among the popular books involved were *Scientology*, *The New Religion* by George Malko, *The Scandal of Scientology* by Paulette Cooper

(Wallis, 1976:22, 218), and, more recently, *Snapping* by Florence Conway and James Siegelman.

It seems to us that expensive legal action to block publication of these books would not be necessary were Scientology in a position to refute the debunking of its system carried out by the authors. As an experiment, in 1970, Bainbridge, while engaged in participant observation as a trainee in a Scientology course, quietly raised the question of whether Malko's book might be accurate. He was immediately isolated from contact with other students, given various therapy routines designed to make him feel better about the problem, but was provided no objective evidence of any kind to dispel Malko's criticisms.

Certainly, Scientology has good reason to resent the attacks made upon it by the secular institutions of society over the years, which are, typically, aggressive rejections of the cult's claims. One of the more dramatic moments in this continuing struggle came in 1963 when agents of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration raided the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C., confiscating "EMeter" electronic equipment allegedly used in improper attempts to cure diseases, action finally reversed by the U.S. Court of Appeals six years later. For a time, both the Australian and British governments seemed bent on banning Scientology, and disputes with the American government have continued unabated, marked by such extreme indicators of tension with the socio cultural environment as another government raid in 1977, this time on the Los Angeles branch.

Although Scientology has frequently succeeded in getting unfavorable court decisions overturned on appeal, often relying on the protection of its status as a religious organization, it has suffered from many attacks by dissatisfied customers of its magic. In 1979, an Oregon court awarded just over \$2 million in damages to Julie Titchbourne, supporting her claim that Scientology had defrauded her in its promises to improve her life. Following a preparatory judgment by the state supreme court, the jury had been instructed that Scientology did not enjoy religious immunity for any promises that were not religious in nature (Lang, 1979).

From our perspective, many of Scientology's claims promise specific benefits, capable of empirical test but offered without public evidence of their truth. Thus, Scientology provides the specific compensators of magic, perhaps overshadowing the general compensators that mark religion. In effect, the Oregon courts decided that many of Scientology's claims were indeed magical, not religious, and thus susceptible to empirical refutation and legal attack. The following analysis demonstrates this point, with particular focus on the chief benefit originally promised by the cult.

Clear Status

Scientology, the vast psychotherapy cult founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, offers members an alleged state of high mental development known as clear. A recent advertisement urged: "Go Clear For the first time in your life you will be truly yourself. On the Clearing Course you will smoothly achieve the stable State of Clear with: Good Memory, Raised I.Q., Strong Will Power, Magnetic Personality, Amazing Vitality, Creative Imagination." For years, going clear has been the prime goal for Scientologists and for members of Hubbard's earlier Dianetics movement. Outsiders may doubt that Scientology actually can create clears, as clear persons are called, but Clear News, a Scientology newspaper, reported that a total of 16,849 people had reached this marvelous state by the middle of 1979.

Perhaps Scientology's claims are true, and these legions really have attained a supernormal level of mental functioning and emotional health. But there are good reasons for doubting the testimonials of even 16,849 Scientologists. First, other techniques based on tested principles of behavioral science cannot produce a state like clear. Second, controlled, scientific studies verifying the characteristics claimed for clears have not flooded the standard journals. Third, although Scientologists have created a vigorous religious movement, they have not taken charge of major secular institutions as true supermen and superwomen could. Fourth, reports by independent observers (including one of us) who have interacted with clears do not convey the impression that clears are markedly superior people. Of course, alternate explanations exist for each of these four points, but they render plausible the view that the claims for clear are false and raise the question of how thousands of individuals could be seriously mistaken about their own abilities.

This chapter offers an analysis explaining how people might agree they had indeed gone clear without a significant real change in their objective abilities or even in their subjective state. Although inspired by six months' participant observation inside the cult and by a large body of literature by and about Hubbard's movement, this chapter is theoretical rather than ethnographic. Our central thesis is that clear is not a state of personal development at all, but a social status

conferring honor within the cult's status system and demanding certain kinds of behavior from the person labeled clear. Such externally demonstrable qualities as good memory and high IQ may have nothing to do with it. Although our theory of clear is designed to explain acceptance of this status within Scientology, it might be adapted to explain a variety of similar statuses of alleged personal perfection, such as salvation in fundamentalist Christianity and satori in Zen.

Hubbard first described clear in an article in the May 1950 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*. He began by discussing "the optimum brain," modeled on "the optimum computing machine." Hinting that his readers might personally acquire an optimum brain, he said, "modified by viewpoint and educational data, it should be always right, its answers never wrong" (Hubbard, 1950a:46). A calculator can give wrong answers if, for example, a constant five is added to every computation because of false programming. To restore the calculator's mathematical perfection, we need only clear the five. To restore perfect functioning to any intact human brain, we need only clear false programming acquired in the owner's past experiences. The task of Dianetics, as Hubbard called his early techniques, was to develop the right procedures for successful clearing. In the bible of his cult, *Dianetics, the Modern Science of Mental Health*, Hubbard's (1950b:30) claims for clear were extremely optimistic.

A clear can be tested for any and all psychoses, neuroses, compulsions and repressions (all aberrations) and can be examined for any autogenic (self-generated) diseases referred to as

psychosomatic ills. These tests confirm the clear to be entirely without such ills or aberrations. Additional tests of his intelligence indicate to [sic] it to be high above the current norm. Observation of his activity demonstrates that he pursues existence with vigor and satisfaction.

The sense perceptions of a clear are said to be more vivid and precise than those of a preclear, a neophyte still working to go clear. The clear is unrepressed. A clear does not have any "mental voices"! He does not think vocally. He thinks without articulation of his thoughts and his thoughts are not in voice terms.... Clears do not get colds.... A clear ... has complete recall of everything which has ever happened to him or anything he has ever studied. He does mental computations, such as those of chess, for example, which a normal would do in half an hour, in ten or fifteen seconds.... The dianetic clear is to a current normal individual as the current normal is to the severely insane. (Hubbard, 1950b:38,101,107,179,15)

In 1950, Hubbard thought that clears might be produced in short order; yet the movement now says that the first member did not go clear until early 1966 (Hubbard, 1968b:111). Apparently, it took this long for Hubbard to develop the social mechanisms to establish and defend clear status. He developed innumerable rules, procedures, and doctrines over these years; but our theory conceptualizes them in terms of four main interdependent strategies: (1) prohibition of independent creation and evaluation of clears, (2) development of a hierarchy of statuses below clear, (3) isolation of the preclear at the crucial stage in upward progress, (4) development of a hierarchy of statuses above clear. Running throughout these is the theme of costs and rewards for the committed Scientologist, failing to achieve clear is extremely costly, but the apparently everincreasing rewards to be gained rising through the ranks cannot be obtained outside the Scientology organization. We will examine the strategies, in turn, as Scientology employed them in the 1970s.

Prohibition of Independent Evaluation

Hubbard's first Dianetics publications urged readers to try the technique, becoming auditors (therapists) either by simply following the instructions in the first book or by joining in the formal Dianetics movement. A strong impression was conveyed that clears had already been produced and that a skilled auditor could duplicate Hubbard's successes. Dr. J. A. Winter, who collaborated with Hubbard in setting up the movement, says Hubbard claimed "that a 'clear' had been obtained in as few as twenty hours of therapy." But Winter himself never saw a single convincing clear during his association with Hubbard. "I have not reached that state myself, nor have I been able to produce that state in any of my patients. I have seen some individuals who are supposed to have been 'clear,' but their behavior does not conform to the definition of the state. Moreover, an individual supposed to have been 'clear' has undergone a relapse into conduct which suggests an incipient psychosis" (Winter, 1951:34; cf. Wallis, 1976:85).

Martin Gardner reports that, in 1950, Hubbard presented a young woman to a Los Angeles public meeting, saying she was a clear with a perfect memory. "In the demonstration which followed, however, she failed to remember a single formula in physics (the subject in which she was majoring), or the color of Hubbard's tie when his back was turned. At this point, a large part of the audience got up and left" (Gardner, 1957 :270). The second Dianetics book (Hubbard, 1951) continued to claim that the great benefits of treatment could be measured objectively and listed a number of diseases it could cure. These strong claims may have attracted sufferers seeking real solutions for specific problems, but they left the entire Dianetics movement open to being discredited in public. The safer course was to prevent outside evaluation, especially of clears, insulating individual followers from knowledgeable independent assaults on their hopes.

Not only was failure a threat, so was the alleged success of rivals. Sociologist Roy Wallis (1976:84) reports, "A severe challenge to Hubbard's standing in the movement came when independent auditors began to proclaim that they had produced 'clears.' Such auditors were eagerly sought for guidance, training and auditing, and rapidly moved into positions of leadership in the Dianetics community." Dianetics had been presented as a science, a public process of discovery, open to all who would experiment with the new techniques. This meant not only that some, like Winter, would be disappointed at the empirical results, but also that more sanguine auditors could claim to equal or surpass Hubbard's achievements. This, presumably, was one of the main reasons Hubbard recast his science as a religion, establishing the authority of a prophet with the incorporation of the Founding Church of Scientology in 1955 (Hubbard, 1959; Malko, 1970; Wallis, 1976).

Today, clear status can be conferred only by high ranking ministers of the church, and clears are not presented for examination by outsiders. Clears are discouraged from demonstrating paranormal abilities even for lower ranking insiders. Persons taking the clearing course are enjoined from communicating about it to anyone other than those directly in charge of it (Hubbard, 1968b: 112). Attainment of new status, however, is marked by triumphant ceremony, especially in the case of clear. Each new clear is given a unique international clear number, engraved on a silver bracelet, awarded a "beautiful Permanent certificate," and "joyously announced" in a Scientology newspaper. Clears have higher status than the many preclears below them, whether or not their individual abilities have increased.

Scientology does not recognize claims to status of members of rival groups, such as Jack Horner's schismatic Dianology movement, which also attempts to produce clears (Horner, 1970).

Thus, clear has become a status within the social system of Scientology, rather than an objective state of being. Aside from the social power it confers within the cult, it is a compensator. Within the limits of the cult, it is not vulnerable to challengers from outsiders.

A Hierarchy of Lower Statuses

The years from 1950 to 1966 may have been frustrating for persons who had long followed Hubbard in the quest for clear, but, during this period, the movement developed a complex structure of other statuses to distribute among members. One kind of status was professional, which designated various levels of skill and training in performing the therapy. By 1954, these went as high as a doctor of Scientology, or D.ScN. degree (Hubbard, 1968a:12). Since then, the number of levels of auditor has steadily increased, each empowered to perform therapy on preclears and clears of different statuses. Of course, these auditors have a stake in maintaining conviction in their own successes. Their training is timeconsuming and expensive. The honor they receive is partly dependent on their clients' satisfaction.

Another kind of status invented was that of release. When Hubbard had to confront the fact that his first clears were not very clear, he redefined their status as Dianetics release, a condition of superior improvement, but not yet clear. Hubbard developed literally hundreds of mental exercises and therapy routines, each supposed to deal with a problem of the human mind identified by the evergrowing ideology of the cult. As the years passed, levels of release proliferated, until, in 1970, there were five basic release statuses, listed here from the lowest (grade 0) to highest (grade IV): communications release, problems release, relief release, freedom release, and ability release (a sixth release grade is awarded in the midst of the clearing process). Below these levels is the mass of newcomers, active in various introductory classes, the main effect of which is to create social bonds linking the neophytes and incorporating them in the social structure of preclears, who stand in the release hierarchy (see Chapter 14).

Many of the lower level therapeutic procedures seem well designed to train the preclear in compliance to the role demands of clear. Perhaps the most important attribute acquired is a confident acceptance of impossible ideas with a consequent willingness to make statements that outsiders would find incredible. At the very beginning, in the so-called Alice Games of the Communication Course, preclears are made to recite wild sentences from Alice in Wonderland as if they were their own confident statements about reality. Later, in Dianetics and Scientology auditing, they will come to "recall" traumatic experiences in the womb, as their mother tried to abort them, and to relive the adventures of previous incarnations centuries ago (Hubbard, 1950b, 1958). On the one hand, preclears are trained to express their emotions through the radical ideology of the cult, and, on the other, numerous exercises reward them for inhibiting spontaneous expressions of feeling. In one of the most basic, TR0, they must sit immobile and unresponding for up to two hours, regardless of what stimuli are bombarding them.

After as much as a year or more of work at the lower levels, a preclear is probably heavily committed, having invested time, money, and emotion in the clearing process. To abandon the quest at grade IV release, when clear is supposedly within reach, would be to lose a great investment that could be preserved at little apparent extra cost. Although they originally may have been invented to mollify impatient preclears while they awaited Hubbard's discovery of real clears, the release grades now serve to commit Scientologists to extreme exertions to achieve clear and give them psychological momentum in its direction.

Isolation of the Preclear

Preclears will have received their release grades and other preliminary treatment and training at their local Church of Scientology or at the mission branch of a church. But when it comes time to go clear, they must travel to one of the advanced organizations or to Flag Land Base. Since the late 1960s, there have been three "advanced orgs" in the United States (Los Angeles), Britain (East Grinstead, Sussex), and Denmark (Copenhagen). In 1976, an extensive Flag Land Base was established near Tampa, Florida, offering a full range of advanced processing, including many courses and levels not available even at advanced orgs.

Preclears must pilgrimage to these four centers from as far away as churches in Australia and South Africa. Each center is organizationally and physically separate, even from its local Scientology church. At the org or at Flag, preclears are removed from the social supports for their old status in the cult, isolated from the audience for which they will later play the clear role, and subjected to an unfamiliar situation among strangers, fraught with psychological challenges.

To this point, preclears have always been relatively passive recipients of auditors' treatments, but now they must complete a solo auditor's course and take responsibility for raising themselves up to clear. Several of the earlier processes involved the use of a simple lie detector, the EMeter. The preclear would sit on one side of a desk or table, clutching tincan electrodes, one in each hand, while the auditor would sit on the other side, asking penetrating questions and giving commands while privately watching the dial that gave an approximate reading on the preclear's emotional responses. As part of our empirical research on Scientology and related cults, we obtained an EMeter, received training in its use, and experimented extensively with it. In addition to giving a "scientific" flavor to the therapy sessions, the EMeter really does guide the auditor to some extent and increases his or her authority with the preclear.

After months or even years of passively receiving authoritative auditing, in preparation to go clear, the preclears must learn to play both roles simultaneously, holding the two cans (separated) in one hand while operating the EMeter with the other. All alone, they will process themselves up the last few steps to clear. Thus, at the last moment, Scientology transfers responsibility for achieving clear status to the preclears. If anything goes wrong, the fault is theirs. Isolated from fellow preclears, they are prevented from launching a serious challenge to the validity of the process.

There remains the possibility that the person will seek help, either before or after being labeled clear. Help is available, but at extra cost. Unlike other religions, Scientology charges precise amounts for its services. In mid1979, the Los Angeles org was charging \$3,692.87 for the solo audit course, \$1,777.84 for the grade VI release that followed it, and \$2,844.54 for the clearing course. Solo assists, if done separately from the solo audit course, cost \$923.22 for those individuals who sought this help. Among the most expensive special aids, New Era Dianetics, offered to clears, was sold at about \$250 an hour. How many hours an individual needs depends on how long it takes him or her to decide to play the assigned role and stop asking for help. The org offers package deals, and, in mid1979, 50 hours of New Era Dianetics suitable for clears was available for a straight price of \$12,603.61. Over the years, Hubbard devised many "case remedies" and other special processes. The alternatives to acceptance of the clear role can be expensive.

Of course, when the new clears return home, they are likely to defend their valuable status in the group by making a public show of being clear. They may give inflated testimonials, whether

formal statements of how wonderful they feel or more subtle hints about their newfound confidence and ability. Given the social isolation of the clearing process, the new clear probably operates in a condition that social scientists call pluralistic ignorance: each person thinks that his or her experience is unique, but in fact it is identical to that of many others. In this case, clears may feel that their state is not as good as those of their fellows, but be reluctant to admit it. They may privately wonder how they can become as successful a clear as their fellows, misled by their inflated testimonials and ignorant of the fact that each of them has similar private reservations (cf. Schanck, 1932).

Our field research in other cults suggests that pluralistic ignorance is a widespread mechanism by which faith is maintained, or at least insulated from overt expressions of doubt. For example, Stark spent a considerable period in the early 1960s with the flying saucer cults that flourished at that time, observing "contactees" persons who claimed to have had direct personal contact with creatures from outer space and even to have taken interplanetary trips with them. A great number of separate clues strongly encouraged the conclusion that most contactees were aware that they were making it all up. Some of them, among the most successful, were not bothered by this knowledge because they were con artists of long standing who were merely exploiting the latest sting. But the majority of contactees appeared to believe the claims of the other contactees and to think they were the only ones who were shamming

We have also found evidence that some quite successful contemporary cult leaders are conscious frauds, aware that they have no psychic or mystical powers, but still think some other people are genuine psychics and mystics. Thus, we have the odd spectacle of cult leaders who have thoroughly convinced a group of adherents that they alone possess access to the divine mysteries yet who continue to seek their own religious answers by dabbling incognito in other cult movements, unbeknownst to their followers.

In these examples, pluralistic ignorance was sustained without benefit of an organization designed to promote and preserve such misperceptions. In Scientology, such a design is highly developed and perfected. Individuals confer the title of clear upon themselves. If they privately think they are not as clear as they hoped to be, they are at fault. But to admit their shortcomings will only cost them their coveted status in the group and a great deal of money for the additional therapy needed to become more adequate. Indeed, one could usefully think of Scientology as an elaborate and most effective behavior modification program in which potent reinforcement schedules are employed to cause individuals to learn how to act like clears and to keep their doubts and problems to themselves (cf. Bandura, 1969). Scientology may or may not help anyone solve psychological problems. But it most certainly makes it extremely expensive for people to admit their therapy has been less than a resounding success. It is a therapy in which patients rapidly are taught to keep silent about their dissatisfactions and to perceive satisfaction in the silence of other members.

It is vital for the movement that clears not communicate dissatisfaction to preclears. One aid to this is that the clears are finished with the basic processing offered by their local church and will come around the place only for group meetings at which they are one of a parade of celebrities, socially rewarded for playing the clear role well. If they are members of the church staff, they will have regular contact with preclears, but thorough training and constant reinforcement will guide them to play a convincing clear. Of course, expressions of dissatisfaction may begin to leak to Scientology friends and relatives. Hubbard developed a final strategy to sustain the clear's optimism: minimizing the significance of the clear state and creating several levels of status above clear.

A Hierarchy of Higher Statuses

Although the first Dianetics book remains required reading for all Scientologists, its descriptions of clear are no longer definitive. The Scientology Abridged Dictionary (Hubbard, 1965) defines the word as follows: "CLEAR: (noun) A thetan who can be at cause knowingly and at will over mental matter, energy, space and time as regards the First Dynamic (survival for self). The state of Clear is above the Release Grades (all of which are requisite to Clearing) and is attained by completion of the Clearing Course at an Advanced Organization."

The second sentence is quite intelligible and summarizes information we have already given about how the status of clear fits into the Scientology hierarchy. The first sentence is utterly unintelligible to persons untrained in cult doctrine and therefore does not represent a claim that is disconfirmable by outsiders. The word thetan might be translated as "soul of a human being" and to be "at cause ... over mental matter, energy, space and time" means "good mental and emotional health."

Cult advertisements and informal comments vary, but, in general, it is no longer boldly asserted that clears are geniuses or that they never get colds. Clear status has been mystified and subtly deflated. Even the most doctrinally learned Scientologists may be unsure exactly what palpable qualities a clear is supposed to manifest, other than confidence and loyalty to the cult. Therefore, new clears may not feel justified in criticizing the quality of the clear experience, but they still may want more than they have received. The original promise of clear, and much more, is offered by a still growing series of levels above clear, the operating thetan or "OT" statuses. The "first dynamic" overcome by clears is only one of eight dynamics, each representing a sphere of human motivation the first is the drive for personal survival; the second is the urge toward sexual reproduction. Mastery of dynamics beyond the first, and ultimately full control over the physical as well as mental universe, are among the goals for OTs.

For OT processing, the Scientologist must return to the advanced org. and a common pattern is periods of normal life and money raising at home punctuated by trips to gain one or two more levels. A February 1980 price list from the Los Angeles org offers a package deal for basic processing from OT I through OT VIII, costing \$15,760.03, not counting special treatments. OT processing continues the exchange of wealth for status that began when the individual entered Scientology and is the chief way a member may remain an active Scientologist after going clear. The cult does not worship a deity, and, except for lectures and occasional celebrations, a clear who had not become a professional auditor would have little cause to come to the church. Outside Scientology, clear status has no meaning; so the status can be maintained, let alone increased, only by further expenditure for further therapy.

Progress up the Scientology status pyramid remains slow, and only just over a thousand persons had achieved OT VII at the Los Angeles org by mid1979. A high proportion of these probably consists of professional auditors committed by all aspects of their lives to the cult. Therefore, the value of the top OT levels has not been disconfirmed within the cult, and they may be followed by yet other levels in future years. Essential to preservation of their value are two conditions: (1) maintaining secrecy and isolation of these statuses and (2) keeping the numbers of people at the top of the Scientology pyramid relatively small. If everyone were at the top, and everyone could see that even OTs are not superhuman, the entire structure might be threatened. But, for the time being, the OT levels serve to defend clear and other lower statuses by offering continued hope that ultimately all the promised benefits will be provided.

From Magic to Religion

Clear is not a state of being, but a status in a hierarchical social structure. It demands that its incumbents play the role of superior person and surrounds them with strategic mechanisms that prevent departure from prescribed behavior. Many people come to Scientology with specific complaints about chronic unhappiness or inability to perform at the level they demand of themselves. We suspect that Scientology cures the complaints by ending the person's freedom to complain, not by solving the underlying problem.

Of course, for some people suffering low self-esteem or anomie, the status of clear may be an efficacious compensator for the problem, even though it is only a status and does not transform the person's basic nature. Our analysis is meant to explain the successful creation and maintenance of clear status without assuming that anyone necessarily benefits objectively from Scientology. If clear were a true reward rather than a compensator, it would not be so closely guarded from evaluation.

After we completed the analysis presented in the foregoing pages, we received a new piece of evidence supporting our interpretations. In 1978, Hubbard once again redefined clear, reducing the importance and thus the vulnerability of this status. Scientology is always changing, and the fluidity of its claims and practices shows how precarious is its definition of reality. As the cult becomes larger, better established, and more familiar to outsiders, its effort to convince members that they have achieved the impossible gets progressively more difficult. Calling 1978 "the year of lightning fast tech" (tech means auditing technology), Hubbard (1979:6) announced, "We are making Clears these days in many cases so fast that Clearing Course bracelet numbers are jumping up by the thousands per month. We are also finding that some old Dianetic pcs [preclears] had gone clear and the auditors didn't even notice."

Thus, there came to be two routes to clear, the newer one designed to facilitate advancing those Scientologists who previously could not meet the role requirements of clear and the higher release grades. It seems that the significance of clear and of any single plateau is being dissolved into a long staircase of statuses leading upward into the stratosphere of OT. If the importance of clear has been diminished somewhat in the past few years, our theory is not made less relevant. Rather, the analysis of this chapter now extends more broadly to explain how all the higher statuses are maintained. And the progressive deflation of clear demonstrates our main point that magic is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain within a stable organization.

In the 1980 journal article on which this chapter is based, we suggested that clear would continue to lose significance as the cult evolved, and new evidence continues to support our prediction. Scientology publications issued in 1982 indicate that New Era Dianetics has become the standard route to clear. Release grades V and VI, and the solo audit course, are required only if the person "did not go clear on NED." Apparently, clear has become sufficiently deflated that the solo audit strategy is now necessary only in especially difficult cases. The progressive deflation of clear has implied a continuing proliferation of OT levels, and, by 1982, there were 11 of these higher statuses. Eventually, clear may be submerged completely as but one of the steps in Scientology's stairway to heaven. Or perhaps it will become a step of special ritual significance, similar to adult baptism or confirmation rituals experienced by Protestants who had been practicing members of their church for some time previously.

In 1950, Dianetics offered just two statuses: preclear and clear. By 1954, the reorganized

Scientology movement offered six statuses to members: general member, Scientology group leader, Hubbard certified auditor, bachelor of Scientology, doctor of Scientology, and the still unattained status of clear. About 1965, according to the first "Classification, Gradation and Awareness Chart," there were eight classification grades, labeled "0" to "VII." Grade IV was simply "release," later to become a series of release grades, VI was "clear," and VII was "OT" or "operating thetan." In 1970, after clear had been achieved, there were 41 distinct, named statuses, not to mention graduation certificates for various special courses.

Most recently, the 1982 booklet, "From Clear to Eternity," lists 64 named statuses. The effective number of statuses is even greater than this because there are a further 30 steps in the processing regimes that do not confer a degree. The system always includes statuses that no member has yet attained. Clear used to be the most advanced unreached goal; now OT VIII is just being offered, and OT IX, OT X, and OT XI are not yet "released" and thus play the roles of rather general, superhuman compensators formerly played by clear.

In addition to the processing levels, there are innumerable bureaucratic statuses in the Scientology organization, many of which are called "hats." On September 25, 1970, the organizational chart of the Boston org identified 27 departments under nine divisions, following a plan designed by Hubbard, in addition to the chief executive roles of "director" and "guardian." The fact that staff actually numbered only 13 while 46 of these organizational positions were filled meant that each person, on average, held 3.5 positions. And levels of processing and training interacted in complex ways with these organizational statuses, the ranks in the bureaucracy and in the processing correlating highly, but not perfectly. For example, there were 30 Boston area clears, but only 4 of the 13 Boston staff were clear, and 3 of the top 5 executive positions were held by clears. Until Scientology lowers its tension with the surrounding sociocultural environment and becomes a respected church, none of these statuses will have much significance outside the closed system of the cult.

The Precarious Defense of Magic

Although our analysis was designed to fit a single, special phenomenon, maintenance of clear status in Scientology, it really explains something of more general interest: how people can sustain their faith in magic despite daytoday experience of its failure. The Scientology processes to create clear are indeed examples of modern magic: mental and symbolic exercises undertaken to accomplish the impossible. The four strategies of Scientology show that faith in magic can be sustained:

- 1.By separating performance of the magic from the world of ordinary experience;
- 2.By committing participants to magical success through requiring great investment and membership in a cohesive, influential social group;
- 3.By maneuvering each participant into accepting personal responsibility for success of the magic;
- 4.By providing supplementary hopes for ultimate future success to compensate participants for any private dissatisfaction they may continue to feel.

Together these factors protect Scientology's claims and insulate its magic against disconfirmation. However, the system is not wholly effective, nor is it, in principle, beyond empirical disconfirmation. That it is not wholly effective can be seen in the constant tinkering with the system that seems designed to add stronger inducements to members to continue their quest for supernormal powers. Even so, the system remains subject to potential disconfirmation because it primarily is dealing in magic, not religion. The difference is critical.

Magic offers to provide specific results that are subject to empirical verification. Although Scientology has fairly effectively prevented neutral tests of the results it claims, it does promise to provide members with tangible benefits that they, at least, are positioned to assess. Indeed, so long as the original claims about clear status were maintained, no clears could be created (and were not), for the fact is that, even within the persuasive structure of the cult, it was not possible to convince people that they had supernormal powers of such potency and specificity when they did not. Only by deferring these results to the new OT levels was it possible to create clears. But this is only postponement. Thousands of Scientologists still hope to gain the magical powers promised to them.

In contrast, religion offers its results in an inherently unverifiable context. Christianity, for example, does not promise eternal life in this world, but only after physical death and in another, nonempirical realm. Nor does Hinduism promise that a better life will come to the holy during their present incarnation but only that they will be reborn in a more exalted status. Such promises are beyond all possible empirical evaluation. Christianity is not haunted with people who have gone on to heaven but who still come around to Sunday services and who might suggest that heaven is highly overrated. But this is precisely Scientology's current situation.

For 30 years, Scientology has sought public status as a religion while privately claiming to be a science as well. For a time, auditors sometimes appeared in public wearing crosses, and a book comparing passages from the Bible with utterances by Hubbard seemed to claim Christian connections for the cult (Briggs et al., 1967). But today the church suggests that it is closer to the Eastern traditions. A label on our EMeter says, "This Hubbard Electrometer is a Religious Artifact, Used in the Church Confessional, and is not Intended, Effective, or Ever to be Used for Attempted

Diagnosis, Treatment, or Prevention of any Disease." And the costs of various courses and processing given on price lists are called "donations." Flag Land Base is said to be "a religious retreat maintained by the Church of Scientology for its parishioners." "Sunday Services" are held at Flag Land Base and many other centers, and, in many cities, Scientology branches have sought membership in local councils of churches.

Recently, new leaders, in the central organization as well as in the many regional orgs, seem to be moving Scientology further in the direction of pure religion and of lower tension with the sociocultural environment. But shifts like this have happened before, only to be reversed later on. Thus, we resist the powerful urge to predict that Scientology will soon abandon its magic to seek more comfortable status as a new member in the family of conventional churches.

The history of a cult is shaped by the decisions of individual leaders, by accident, and by general sociological principles. Our theory can explain and predict general processes of evolution much better than it can prophesy the fortunes of any particular religious organization. But this, of course, is a limitation faced by all social science. Such examples as Scientology can demonstrate the extreme precariousness of such bold magical claims as clear, and we can see in Scientology both the potential to abandon magic for religion and social forces moving in that direction. But there can be counterforces as well, and the future success of Scientology may depend upon the outcomes of struggles between different constituencies within the cult and different segments of the leadership.

Abandonment of the most precarious magic and evolution into a purely religious organization may be more in the interests of local Scientology churches than in the interest of Flag Land Base and the advanced orgs. Local leaders increase their own importance to the extent that they can build congregations content to hold the status of laity and enthusiastic about accepting the ministrations and rituals offered at the local church. But the advanced orgs and Flag need a constant flow of ambitious clients willing to leave the local org and invest great sums and much time in processing to climb the ladder of higher statuses. And it is the magical claims that provide a basis for that extensive hierarchy of processes.

Furthermore, the current magic is extremely labor intensive, and a switch to the pattern of more conventional religion would put many staff members out of work (and out of status) unless there were a sudden explosion in recruitment of new members, a trick Scientology seems unable to turn at the moment. Scientology is labor intensive because so many of the most important processing routines require an auditor to work for several hours a week with a single preclear, as is also the case for Psychoanalysis. When there were 13 staff members in Boston and an additional 4 at the Cambridge branch of the org, the total number of active Scientologists in the area was hardly 200. Thus, there were on the order of 10 lay members for each person who might be called clergy. At the same time, there were about 440 church members to each paid religious worker in the United States as a whole. Thus, Scientology was overclergied to a factor of about 44.

A religion might assign its staff extensive recruiting work to justify a high ratio of clergy to laity, but Scientology already does this and can hardly expand its recruiting efforts to fill slack time released by the abandonment of magical practices. Lower echelon staff members are now kept busy in such tasks as writing hundreds of letters to inactive members or immersed in labor intensive recruiting campaigns. For example, one week the Cambridge branch of the Boston org sent letters to a thousand schoolteachers in the area, and during another week it attempted to contact the 400 persons who had signed its guest book. From January through May 1970, this tiny branch distributed approximately 590,000 tickets on the streets, inviting people to attend the introductory lecture that recruited to the inexpensive HTHPI communication course, which itself

was the main recruiting ground for Dianetics auditing. This is long, hard work. Yet, over these five months, only 62 people signed up for the course, most of them only to drop out soon after.

If the cult evolved fully into a real religion, and abandoned most of its magical work, there would be fewer organizational statuses to go around even in the local orgs. As earlier chapters have told us, such conflict between the interests of different constituencies can lead to schism. Thus, if Scientology were to move in the direction of a real religion, and lower its tension significantly, some leaders might try to lead unemployed auditors from the local orgs in a sect movement, thereby reestablishing an emphasis on the old magical traditions.

To reduce tension significantly, Scientology need not abandon all magic, only what is most difficult to sustain in the face of likely empirical disconfirmation. Many intangible benefits promised by auditing are difficult to evaluate systematically. Both privately to their friends and publicly in formal testimonials, Scientologists habitually report moments of ecstasy achieved in the treatments, often coupled with a highly personal sense of new insights. Who but the persons experiencing these grand moments can judge their authenticity?

If it stops making refutable promises to achieve the impossible, Scientology may become even more effective in its use of a therapeutic model as the basis of recruitment and as a primary focus of member activity. That is, by becoming less specific and ambitious, Scientology will become a more "effective" therapy. As we pointed out in Chapter 7, all therapies seem to work because of regression toward the mean and the random ebbs and flows of life. People who seek a therapy at a "bad" time in their lives (which is when they have a motivation to seek it) are likely to find that their lives soon improve just as most people will recover from many kinds of illness whether they receive medical treatment or not. Thus it is that magic always has gained and regained its plausibility. Magic often "succeeds." If the shaman, the medieval witch, the psychoanalyst, and the water dowser must endure frequent failure, they also profit from frequent success. In similar fashion, many who begin Scientology courses find their expectations for increased happiness and selfconfidence fulfilled, thus giving them "proof" that Scientology is valid and a reason for increased commitment.

Moreover, these therapeutic successes involve more than chance, regression to the mean, or placebo effects. In Chapter 14, we examine in detail the fact that human relations lie at the core of the conversion process. People convert to new faiths because their friends believe. In the encounter between an individual and a religious movement, a central feature is the formation of new and strong bonds of affection with members. Indeed, converts often markedly increase their selfesteem and social competence from being treated as personally valuable by other members. Affection is a truly powerful therapy and a specific cure for those suffering loneliness and isolation. Whatever else Scientology may offer, it is well designed to provide a rich supply of individual attention and affect to newcomers. The closeknit, mutually gratifying group of friends thus created needs only a religious creed to become a congregation.

Scientology already promulgates a belief that could be used to shift the cult away from its present reliance on magic to adopt a more religious solution to member needs: the doctrine of reincarnation. The superhuman capacities once associated with clear status, and now ascended to the levels of OT, may eventually move out of the empirical realm altogether. That is, people may no longer expect to develop geniuslevel IQ, perfect health, and a magnetic personality in this incarnation. But they may be promised such achievements in their next life, if they scrupulously follow Scientology's procedures. The failure of our world to be flooded by superhuman Scientologists returned from the grave will be explained by the cult's doctrine that reincarnation typically transfers one to a new planet. When Scientology truly becomes a church, dealing in

supernatural general compensators, it will have escaped the pitfalls that beset all organizations based primarily on magic. And to be perfectly clear will be a posthumous award.

Conclusion

For Scientology, reduction of magic means reduction of tension with the surrounding sociocultural environment. It also means reduction in the capacity to offer specific compensators for scarce rewards. Many longtime members and new recruits will still want efficacious specific compensators, however. In Chapter 5, we note that a likely result is schism, especially if the religious group is cut by deep social cleavages. Such is the case for Scientology, which consists of dozens of relatively independent local orgs and branches, often in uneasy competition with the advanced orgs.

In some cases, the local orgs are in direct competition with each other. Not long ago, a Scientologist canvassing the neighborhood came to Bainbridge's door in Cambridge, Massachusetts, thus conveniently, if inadvertently, making a home delivery of sociological data. The revealing fact was that he came not from the Cambridge org, but from the rival Boston org, which is closely allied with the central organization of the church and appears much stronger than the one in Cambridge. The New York Times (Lindsey, 1983) reported that disputes over authority have recently caused several orgs to split away, although the decentralized corporate structure of the church can blur the degree of association so that only the most overt conflicts are visible.

There have been other periods in which the threat of schism for Scientology has been high, and always before unity was reestablished in a short time. But now the situation is rendered more tense by apparently premature claims that Hubbard has died. Even if he survives for many years and actively guides his church through the rough waters ahead, this death scare underscores the fact that Hubbard has held in check the schismatic tendencies fueled by competing interests of different constituencies in both the leadership and the ordinary membership.

Aside from any guidance he gives the church, Hubbard is vital to its unity for two reasons. First, he is a figurehead and rallying point whom only one group may claim as its own so long as he lives. Many competing churches may claim the patronage of Jesus Christ because each has him only in spirit, not in the flesh. Clergy of one Christian denomination do not have to explain to their congregations why Jesus attends services at the church down the road rather than at theirs. Until Hubbard becomes a spirit, he will remain the property of the central organization.

Second, Hubbard is the only source of new auditing techniques and new levels of OT. Over the years, there has been an intense battle between Scientology and competing organizations, such as The Process, founded by ex-Scientologists seeking their own independent routes to spiritual advancement. Indeed, the surest sign that a schism or leadership defection was brewing was unauthorized experimentation with new processes. So long as Hubbard lives and produces the higher levels above clear so useful in protecting the magic from disconfirmation, the central organization will hold a very strong hand in its dealings with the local orgs, with him as their trump card. But once his time on earth has come to an end, the forces pressing for schism will be fully unleashed.

Among the wisest steps Hubbard has taken to preserve his movement as a whole, but one injurious in the long run to the central organization, is to make the new, streamlined version of clear available at the larger local orgs. Recent interviews at the Boston org indicate that members are of two minds over which kind of clear is actually superior. The traditional, more psychologically demanding, and more expensive Scientology clear offered only at the advanced orgs has a certain majesty and implies the person has gone through some very special experiences. But it also

implies the person may have been incapable of going clear by the shorter, local Dianetics route and thus was someone initially inferior to those who could go clear at home. We note that one of the three officers named on the Boston org's letterhead achieved clear locally, one indication that it is a highly respectable route to status.

These developments are good for the movement in the long run not only because they strengthen the local churches, which, after all, are the organizations that recruit new members and through which the movement must spread. But perhaps more important, the movement will enter the period after Hubbard's stewardship with a number of centers of authority, each of which can innovate somewhat independently, giving the movement as a whole more chances of coming up with the right combination of beliefs and practices to achieve enduring growth.

This chapter describes a series of tactics designed to promote and protect Scientology's magic that Hubbard developed over nearly 20 years of experimentation. After his departure, Scientologists must experiment further to create a religious denomination of moderate tension attracting congregations interested in a faith designed for the modern world of science. Other Scientologists will undoubtedly find ways to keep the magic high, whether in small, high tension sects of Scientology or through independent therapy services. Then Scientology will fully illustrate the religious dynamic that is the theme of this book.

Reduction of magic and tension constitutes the secularization process. In Scientology, as in the larger world of religion, this process is selflimiting, calling forth schisms in the form of sect movements and innovations in the form of cult movements. Thus, if Scientology is really successful, it will not merely evolve into a single, solid, liberal denomination. Rather, it will give birth to a whole range of groups at different levels of tension and degrees of organization, a spaceage copy of what Protestantism has become.

Appendix: Scientology in Europe

Scientology is an Americanborn movement, the creation of L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction author with a background in the occult. It operates out of many small centers, but these are subordinated to Scientology "orgs" (churches), rather as parish churches are subordinated to a cathedral. As of 1979, there were 51 Scientology churches worldwide. Of these, 23 were in the United States, 14 in European nations, and 14 in Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia.

Scientology Churches and FullTime Staff Members per Million Population

Scientology Churches FullTime Staff
Area N rate per million rate per million
Denmark 3 .59 50.0
Sweden 3 .36 16.4
United Kingdom 5 .09 10.5

West Germany 1 .02 4.5
Netherlands 1 .07 2.5
Austria 2.7
Switzerland 14.3

France 1 .02 2.7
Belgium 2.0
Europe 14 .07(a) 6.9(b)

United States 23 .10 17.9

Canada 4 .17 18.3
Australia 4 .27 13.9
New Zealand 1 .32 17.7

(a) Population of Europe based only on nations having a church. (b) Population of Europe based only on nations having a staff person.

The table above reports the distribution of Scientology churches in terms of rates per million population. Also shown are the number of Scientology staff members in each nation, also computed as rates per million (Church of Scientology, 1978). The data on churches are based on very small numbers of cases and thus potentially subject to considerable random fluctuation, but the staff data represent a very large number of cases, 1,527 staff members in Europe alone, and thus will be very reliable statistically. As it turned out, the rates based on churches are reliable, too, for both sets of data tell precisely the same story ($r = .95$). Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are high, as they were on Indian and Eastern cults, and France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Austria are low.

The American origins of Scientology do show up in the higher overall rates for the United States as compared with Europe. However, Denmark and Sweden surpass the United States in

receptivity to Scientology, and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also equal or surpass America. Once again we see that the popular image of the United States as the land of cults is inaccurate. Other nations, including some in Europe, are just as hospitable.

Appendix: Theory

Stark and Bainbridge examine Scientology within a theoretical framework developed elsewhere in their book, *The Future of Religion*. Their theory supposes a marketplace in which ideologies compete to offer the most effective "compensators" for the human condition. The authors' analysis of Scientology relies on these and other concepts and idiosyncratic definitions, without which some of their observations will be, daresay, less than perfectly clear. The passages below, from the book's first two chapters, introduce these foundational notions:

- religious economy •compensators
- religion
- sect versus cult
- tension
- cult types: audience cult, client cult, and cult movement
- magic The book's Table of Contents is included as well.

religious economy (pp. 56)

Our studies of religious movements are based on an effort to to test empirically our deductive theory of religion. Our basic theory leads us to a definition that attempts to isolate the fundamental features of how religion serves human needs. We shall sketch the logical chain by which our definition arises, and we gave a more formal statement in one of our technical essays (Stark and Bainbridge, 1980).

We begin with a mundane axiom about human behavior: Humans seek what they perceive to be rewards and try to avoid what they perceive to be costs. In various forms, this is one of the oldest and still most central propositions about human behavior. It is the starting point for microeconomics, learning psychology, and sociological theories (Homans, 1950, 1961). However, when we inspect more closely this human tendency to seek rewards, we see two important points:

1. In all societies, many rewards are scarce and unequally distributed. Substantial proportions of any population have far less of some rewards than they would like to have and less of these rewards than some other people actually possess. Scarcity, both absolute and relative, is a social universal.

2. Some intensely desired rewards seem not to be available at all. For example, no one can demonstrate whether there is life after death, but everyone can see that immortality cannot be gained in the here and now, in the natural world available to our senses. But the simple unavailability of the reward of eternal life has not caused people to cease wanting it. To the contrary, it is probably the single most urgent human desire.

compensators (pp. 67)

Noting the strong desires for rewards that are available to many, as well as those that seem not to be directly available to anyone, we can recognize another characteristic human action: the creation and exchange of compensators. People may experience rewards, but they can only have

faith in compensators. A compensator is the belief that a reward will be obtained in the distant future or in some other context which cannot be immediately verified.

We do not use the word compensator in any pejorative sense. By it we simply mean to recognize that, when highly desired rewards seem unavailable through direct means, persons tend to develop explanations about how they can gain this reward later or elsewhere. Compensators are a form of IOU. They promise that, in return for value surrendered now, the desired rewards will be obtained eventually. Often people must make regular payments to keep a compensator valid, which makes it possible to bind them to longterm involvement in an organization that serves as a source of compensators. Put another way, humans will often exchange rewards of considerable value over a long period of time in return for compensators in the hope that a reward of immense value will be forthcoming in return.

Compensators are by no means exclusively, or even primarily, religious in nature. They are generated and exchanged throughout the range of human institutions. When a radical political movement instructs followers to work for the revolution now, in return for material rewards later, compensators have been exchanged for rewards. The party receives direct rewards; the followers receive an IOU. Or a compensator is exchanged for a reward when people have their bodies frozen in a cryogenic vault until science discovers how to cure their disease to overcome the aging process. Similarly, when a parent tells a child, "Be good; work hard; one day you will be rich and famous," a compensator reward exchange is proposed.

religion (p. 5)

How can we distinguish between religions and other ideological systems? In our judgment, the answer was correctly given by the 19thcentury founders of the social scientific study of religion, those men whom Durkheim attempted to bury: religions involve some conception of a supernatural being, world, or force, and the notion that the supernatural is active, that events and conditions here on earth are influenced by the supernatural. Or, as Sir James Frazer (1922:58) put it, "religion consists of two elements ... a belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to propitiate or please them."

(pp. 78)

Although in our more technical essays we are able to derive this line of reasoning from our theory, surely the point can stand on its own merit: Some common human desires are so beyond direct, thisworldly satisfaction that only the gods can provide them. This simple point has profound implications.

So long as humans intensely seek certain rewards of great magnitude that remain unavailable through direct actions, they will be able to obtain credible compensators only from sources predicated on the supernatural. In this market, no purely naturalistic ideologies can compete. Systems of thought that reject the supernatural lack all means to credibly promise such rewards as eternal life in any fashion. Similarly, naturalistic philosophies can argue that statements such as "What is the meaning of life?" or "What is the purpose of the universe?" are meaningless utterances. But they cannot provide answers to these questions in the terms in which they are asked.

This profound difference in compensatorgenerating capacity is why we have chosen to

define religions as human organizations primarily engaged in providing general compensators based on supernatural assumptions.

sect (p. 23)

Benton Johnson (1963:542; cf. 1957, 1971) ... settled on a single attribute to classify religious groups: "A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists. A sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists."

[Since a "cult" also rejects its social environment (to some degree), the authors restrict Johnson's foregoing definition to designate a schismatic group only. Continuing on p.25:]

Because sects are schismatic groups, they present themselves to the world as something old. They left the parent body not to form a new faith but to reestablish the old one, from which the parent body had "drifted" (usually by becoming more churchlike). Sects claim to be the authentic, purged, refurbished version of the faith from which they split. Luther, for example, did not claim to be leading a new church, but the true church, free of worldly encrustations.

cult (p. 25)

Cults, with the exception to be noted, do not have a prior tie with another established religious body in the society in question. The cult may represent an alien (external) religion, or it may have originated in the host society, but through innovation, not fission.

Whether domestic or imported, the cult is something new visavis the other religious bodies of the society in question. If domestic regardless of how much of the common religious culture it retains the cult adds to that culture a new revelation or insight justifying the claim that it is new, "more advanced". Imported cults often have little common culture with existing faiths; they may be old in some other society, but they are new and different in the importing society.

tension (p. 23)

Johnson postulated a continuum representing the degree to which a religious group is in a state of tension with its surrounding sociocultural environment. The ideal sect falls at one pole, where the surrounding tension is so great that sect members are hunted fugitives. The ideal church anchors the other end of the continuum and virtually is the sociocultural environment the two are so merged that it is impossible to postulate a basis for tension. Johnson's ideal types [...] are ideal in precisely the same way that ideal gases and frictionless states are ideal. They identify a clear axis of variation and its end points.

cult types: audience cult, client cult, and cult movement (p. 26)

Three degrees of organization (or lack of organization) characterize cults. The most diffuse and least organized kind is an audience cult. Sometimes some members of this audience actually may gather to hear a lecture. But there are virtually no aspects of formal organization to these

activities, and membership remains at most a consumer activity. Indeed, cult audiences often do not gather physically but consume cult doctrines entirely through magazines, books, newspapers, radio, and television. [Later, the authors cite UFO groups as an example.]

More organized than audience cults are what can be characterized as client cults. Here the relationship between those promulgating cult doctrine and those partaking of it most closely resembles the relationship between consultant and client. Considerable organization may be found among those offering the cult service, but clients remain little organized. Furthermore, no successful effort is made to weld the clients into a social movement. Indeed, client involvement is so partial that clients often retain an active commitment to another religious movement or institution.

Cult movements can be distinguished from other religious movements only in terms of the distinctions between cults and sects previously developed. We address only cult movements in our subsequent theory, but the less organized types currently are more common and need to be described so they will not be confused with the fullfledged cult movement. [Scientology is described as having evolved from a client cult to a cult movement.]

magic

In their chapter on Scientology, the authors define magic as "mental and symbolic exercises undertaken to accomplish the impossible." They discuss the relation of of magic to science and religion on pp. 3033:

Put into our conceptual language, magic deals in relatively specific compensators, and religion always includes the most general compensators. This characteristic of magic has two extremely important implications for understanding religious movements and makes it possible to distinguish cult movements from other cult phenomena.

First, because magic deals in specific compensators, it often becomes subject to empirical verification. This means that magic is chronically vulnerable to disproof. Claims that a particular spell will cure warts or repel bullets can be falsified by direct tests. This makes magic a risky exchange commodity and accounts for the rapid turnover among popular magicians.

In Part V, we suggest that the inclusion of magic in the traditional teachings of the major world religions made them extremely vulnerable to attacks by science over the past several centuries and that this has resulted in considerable secularization of these faiths. But we also pay considerable attention in those chapters to the fact that it is only magic, not religion, that is vulnerable to scientific test. The most general compensators, based on supernatural assumptions, are forever secure from scientific assessment. It is this feature of religion that leads us to conclude in chapters 19 through 22 that, although particular religions, perhaps those of greatest prominence, may go into eclipse, religion will continue.

The empirical vulnerability of magic also helps us identify the line between magic and science. Here we fully agree with Max Weber (1963:2), who distinguished magic from science on the basis of the results of empirical testing: "Only we, judging from the standpoint of our modern views of nature, can distinguish objectively in such behavior those attributes of causality which are 'correct' from those which are 'fallacious,' and then designate the fallacious attributions of causation as irrational, and the corresponding acts as 'magic'." Magic flourishes when humans lack effective and economical means for such testing. Indeed, it can be said that we developed

science by learning how to evaluate specific explanations offered by magic. That is, science is an efficient procedure for evaluating explanations.

We have not identified magic with supernaturally based compensators. Often magic does invoke supernatural assumptions, as when ritual magicians attempt to call up devils to do their bidding. However, the supernatural is often not clearly implicated in magic. Thus, magicians may attempt to overcome natural law in effect, to perform miracles without relying on supernatural agents or clear supernatural assumptions to accomplish such wonders. Indeed, magical properties often are thought to inhere in a particular substance love potions or Laetrile "work" because of their inherent magical qualities. Some people believe they can cause pain by sticking pins in a Voodoo doll, and, as Richard Kieckhefer (1976:6) notes:

For most processes that they employ, people have some vague (and perhaps incorrect) notion of the mechanism involved, or else they assume that they could ascertain this mechanism if they so endeavored, or they take it on faith that someone understands the link between cause and effect. But the man who mutilates his enemy's representation cannot make any of these claims. He may believe that the magical act works, but he cannot explain how.

Similarly, people often will believe in their own or others' magical powers without necessarily explaining these powers by reference to supernatural agents. Psychics, fortunetellers, water dowsers (water witches), and even astrologers often claim inexplicable gifts, but many do not attribute these to supernatural sources. By excluding clear supernatural assumptions from our definition of magic and focusing instead on claims to circumvent natural laws, we leave room in our definition of magic for many folk practices and "superstitions" as well as for presentday pseudosciences, which also often lack clearly supernatural assumptions. This is important later in the book because it permits us to see the conditions under which such "secular" magics do turn toward supernatural assumptions or even evolve into fully developed religions. It also makes it possible to see that religious organizations may impute supernatural assumptions to magical practices that, in fact, do not clearly make such assumptions. For example, as we see in Chapter 5, Christianity often has interpreted folk magic as performed by the devil, even though its practitioners did not believe this. Whether or not they assume the supernatural, these magics can be identified as compensators (and thus as magic) in the manner suggested by Weber and by Kieckhefer, that is, by empirical falsification of their claims. They constitute magic rather than incorrect efforts at science because they are offered without regard for their demonstrable falsity. Thus, we reserve the term magic for compensators that are offered as correct explanations without regard for empirical evaluations and that, when evaluated, are found wanting.

The second important implication of the fact that magic deals only in specific compensators is that magic lacks the exchange characteristics needed to sustain organizations (cf. Fortune, 1932; EvansPritchard, 1937). The most general compensators often require individuals to engage in a lifelong commitment in order to maintain the value of these compensators, but specific compensators can sustain only shortterm commitments. In our formal theory, we are able to deduce these differences between magic and religion as follows:

1. Magicians cannot require others to engage in longterm stable patterns of exchange.
2. In the absence of longterm, stable patterns of exchange, an organization composed of magicians and a committed laity cannot be sustained.
3. Magicians will serve individual clients, not lead an organization.

In the case of religions, however, all these "cannots" become "cans." Religious leaders can create stable organizations because the most general compensators do require longterm, stable patterns of exchange. The Christian, Jew, Moslem, Buddhist, Mormon, or Moonie who lapses from his or her religious obligations risks losing those vast rewards promised by the general compensators of his or her faith.

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