

Sociology

<http://soc.sagepub.com/>

Scientology: Therapeutic Cult to Religious Sect

Roy Wallis

Sociology 1975 9: 89

DOI: 10.1177/003803857500900105

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://soc.sagepub.com/content/9/1/89>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



British Sociological Association

Additional services and information for *Sociology* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://soc.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://soc.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/9/1/89.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Jan 1, 1975

[What is This?](#)

SCIENTOLOGY: THERAPEUTIC CULT TO RELIGIOUS SECT¹

ROY WALLIS

Abstract Prevailing conceptions of the cult are criticized. A new typology of religious collectivities is elaborated and related to a theory of the development of cults. This theory claims that a central feature of the cult is 'epistemological individualism'. The central characteristic of the sect on the other hand is 'epistemological authoritarianism'. The process of sectarianization therefore involves the arrogation of authority typically on the basis of a claim to a new and superior revelation. Sectarianization is portrayed as a *strategy* with particular appeal to the leaders of cults faced with the problems of managing and maintaining a fragile institution. These processes are illustrated from the development of Scientology.

Identification

Sects have been the focus of considerable research enterprise in the sociology of religion, and indeed much of this endeavour has been directed to the issue of whether, or under what conditions, sects become transformed into denominations.² This dominating area of concern has distracted attention from other types of ideological collectivity and other possible processes. The collectivity with which I am here concerned is that of the *cult*, and the particular process at issue, that of the transformation of a *cult* into a *sect*.

This is an area that has received negligible exploration. Cults have until recently been regarded as rather trivial social phenomena, unworthy of systematic sociological attention. More important perhaps, the process to which I am directing attention, that of the transformation of cults into sects, has, on some accounts been rendered not merely empirically unlikely, but *a priori* impossible.

Consider e.g. Glock and Stark's definition. Cults they argue are

religious movements which draw their inspiration from other than the primary religion of the culture, and . . . are not schismatic movements in the same sense as sects whose concern is with preserving a purer form of the traditional faith³

Glock and Stark define cult and sect in terms of the *content* of belief. Cults have theologically alien beliefs, sects have more rigorous or fundamentalistic variants of the prevailing theology. On this basis there can be *conversion* from one to another, but not organizational transformation.

While Glock and Stark draw an impenetrable theological boundary between cult and sect, others, such as Lofland and Dohrman blur any boundary between them at all. Lofland, in his definition of cults describes them as 'little groups' which break off from the

conventional consensus and espouse very different views of the real, the possible and the moral⁴

while Dohrman suggests that

the concept of 'cult' will refer to that group, secular religious, or both, that has deviated from what our American Society considers normative forms of religion, economics, or politics, and has substituted a new and often unique view of the individual, his world, and how this world may be attained.⁵

These forms of definition seem inadequate from a number of points of view:

1. If deviance is the identifying characteristic of cult beliefs as in the Lofland and Dohrman case, Christian schismatic and heretical forms of belief, those of Christian Science, the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and even the Salvation Army, become the ideologies of cults. The distinction between cult and sect disappears.⁶
2. If, as with Glock and Stark, cults are to be identified in terms of their alien 'inspiration', and sects in terms of their concern to preserve the purity of the 'traditional faith' and their schismatic origins, cult and sect are types of ideological collectivity which bear no developmental relationship to each other. We cannot predicate of a cult its possible transformation into a sect. More important, however, this definition altogether ignores a crucial sociological feature, i.e. the social organization of the collectivities concerned. Their theological criterion of classification provides us with no insight into the similarities in mode of organization and control over adherents of such theologically diverse movements as Christian Science, Scientology,⁷ the Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.

Deviance, I have suggested is a distinguishing feature of both cult *and* sect. Cult and sect are deviant in relation to the respectable, the normatively sanctioned, forms of belief prevailing at any time. Today, they are deviant in comparison with prevailing indifference, agnosticism, or denominational Christian orthodoxy.⁸ A feature which distinguishes between them is that, like the church, the sect is conceived by its adherents to be *uniquely legitimate* as a means of access to truth or salvation. The cult, like the denomination is conceived by followers to be *pluralistically legitimate*, one of a variety of paths to the truth or salvation.⁹ This provides us with the following typology:

FIG. 1.
A Typology of Ideological Collectivities¹⁰

	<i>Respectable</i>	<i>Deviant</i>
<i>Uniquely legitimate</i>	Church	Sect
<i>Pluralistically legitimate</i>	Denomination	Cult

In an attempt to show the utility of this typology I shall examine the history of a new religious movement, Scientology.¹¹ I shall argue that this movement originated as a cult, developed into a sect, and that today, aware of the 'respectable' status of denominations, the movement is presented by its leadership as increasingly denominational. Before doing so, however, I shall outline a theory of cult development.

A Theory of Cult Development

Although, and it is worth emphasizing this point, clearly not all new religious movements go through any simple unidirectional sequence of stages,¹² I suggest that some do undergo transformation from one type of collectivity to another. The best known case, although less typical than was once believed, is the development of sects into denominations. I shall argue that some new religious movements emerge as cults and, of these, some develop into sects.

Colin Campbell has proposed the notion of the *cultic milieu* to refer to the cultural underground from which cults arise. This *cultic milieu* he describes as

Much broader, deeper and historically based (sic) than the contemporary movement known as *the* underground, it includes all deviant belief-systems and their associated practices. Unorthodox science, alien and heretical religion, deviant medicine, all comprise elements of such an underground. In addition, it includes the collectivities, institutions, individuals and media of communication associated with these beliefs. Substantively it includes the worlds of the occult and the magical, of spiritualism and psychic phenomena, of mysticism and new thought, of faith healing and nature cure. This heterogenous assortment of cultural items can be regarded despite its apparent diversity, as constituting a single entity—the entity of the cultic milieu.¹³

This idea seems a helpful one in broadly characterizing the background from which cults emerge. Cults differentiate themselves from this background as more or less temporary associations of ‘seekers’ organized around some common interest, the researches or the revelations of an individual. The belief systems around which they are organized are typically broadly based syntheses of ideas and practices available within the cultic milieu and sometimes beyond, adapted, supplemented, and organized through the insights of their founders.¹⁴

Cults are generally described as exhibiting a number of typical features. They are seen as oriented toward the problems of individuals; loosely structured; tolerant; and non-exclusive. They make few demands on members; possess no clear distinction between members and non-members; have a rapid turnover of membership; and are transient as collectivities. Their boundaries are vague and undefined, and their belief systems are said to be ‘fluctuating’.¹⁵ These features of the cult can be accounted for in terms of a central characteristic of cult organization, ‘epistemological’ individualism. By epistemological individualism I mean to suggest that the cult has no clear locus of final authority beyond the individual member. Unlike the sect, the ideal-typical cult lacks any source of legitimate attributions of heresy. Hence in movements such as spiritualism,¹⁶ New Thought,¹⁷ and much of the flying saucer movement,¹⁸ heresy is a concept without clear application. The determination of what constitutes acceptable doctrine remains in the hands of the member.

Lacking any authoritative source of attributions of heresy there can be no clear boundaries between cult ideology and the surrounding cultic milieu, nor, in the absence of authoritative tests of doctrine or membership, between members and non-members. There are, therefore, few barriers to doctrinal adaptation and change.

Since the determination of doctrine lies with the members, cults cannot command the loyalty of their membership which remains only partially committed. Commitment being slight, resources for the control of members are lacking. Members typically move between groups and between belief systems adopting components to fit into the body of truth already gleaned. Loyalties of members are thus often shared between ideological collectivities leading to tolerance. Membership will change rapidly as members move on from one group to another.¹⁹ The collectivities themselves will tend to be transient as charismatic leaders emerge and attempt to control the activities of the following leading to alienation, or as dissension arises due to the relatively limited basis of shared belief. Since the particular cult is only one among many possible paths to the truth or salvation, membership may decline through sheer indifference. In order to retain or bolster membership, appeal may be made to an ever wider range of interests, leading to ideological diffuseness and the reduced relevance of cult beliefs for the individual's salvation.²⁰ Power lies in the hands of the consumer and leaders may often be forced to cater for consumer interests rather than directing them, or risk membership decline.

Cults then, are fragile institutions. They typically face a problem of *doctrinal precariousness*, that is, the ideological distance between the cult doctrine and the cultic milieu from which it was derived is typically slight. The cult is, therefore, poorly differentiated from its background. A membership primarily recruited from other cultic groups is liable to subject the doctrine to selective acceptance and synthesis with other belief-systems, threatening reabsorption into the cultic milieu.

Cults similarly face a problem of *authority*, deriving from two features of cultic movements. Firstly, their membership is predominantly composed of *seekers* who see a variety of paths to the truth or salvation, and, as I argued earlier, retain within their own competence the right to select those ideas and practices which will lead toward this goal. Secondly, cults are typically service oriented, purveying an experience, knowledge or technique through teachers and practitioners. Hence, charisma tends to be dispersed toward the lower echelons. Membership (or clientele) loyalties are often centred on the local teacher or practitioner rather than the movement as a whole. There is therefore a perennial threat of schism and secession as local teachers or practitioners assert their autonomy.

Thirdly, cults tend to face a problem of *commitment*. They are viewed as one among a range of paths to the truth or salvation rather than as a unique path. They typically dispense commodities of a limited and specific kind. The involvement of the membership tends, therefore, to be occasional, temporary and segmentary. Retaining, institutionalizing and enhancing membership commitment therefore presents a problem to cults, which if unresolved, may lead to passive and limited involvement, apathy, and declining adherence.

In the face of these problems of organizational fragility, the development of a cohesive sectarian collectivity is a possibility with considerable appeal to some cult leaders.

Sects may emerge in a variety of ways: as schismatic movements from existing denominations; as a result of interdenominational crusades; or through a process of development from cults. The dimensions of the sect have been much debated.²¹ Among those that have been advanced, a number, such as Troeltsch's stress on the eschatological nature of the sect, but also such characteristics as asceticism; the achieved basis of membership; an ethical orientation; and egalitarianism; seem in retrospect to have been features of the sect in particular socio-historical circumstances rather than timeless, or universal dimensions of sectarianism.²² Those features advanced as central to the concept of sect which have stood the test of time, therefore, seem to centre on the right to exclusion, a self-conception as an elect or elite, totalitarianism, and hostility toward, or separation from, the state or society.

I suggest that these dimensions of sectarianism are related to the characteristic which underlies sect organization—'epistemological' authoritarianism. Sects possess some authoritative locus for the legitimate attribution of heresy.²³ Sects lay a claim to possess unique and privileged access to the truth or salvation. Their adherents typically believe that only error exists outside the confines of the collectivity. The truth must be protected from defilement or misuse and therefore requires extensive control over those to whom access is permitted, and the exclusion of the unworthy. Those who remain therefore believe themselves to have proven their superior status. Hostility to state or society readily follow. The state demands acceptance of its own version of the truth in some particulars. In those areas it defines as its legitimate concern it can brook no rivals—taxes must be paid, births registered, children educated, wars fought, whatever the revelation. Thus state and society may threaten to impinge upon and indeed directly conflict with the sectarian's notion of what constitutes the truth, sometimes forcing the sect to defend its vision by isolation and withdrawal.

The transition from cult to sect, therefore involves the arrogation of authority. In order for a cohesive sectarian group to emerge from the diffuse, individualistic origins of a cult, a prior process of expropriation of authority must transpire. This centralization of authority is typically legitimized by a claim to a unique revelation which locates some source or sources of authority concerning doctrinal innovation and interpretation beyond the individual member or practitioner, typically in the person of the revelator himself.

Propounding a new gnosis and centralizing authority permits the exercise of greater control over the collectivity through the elimination or undermining of alternative loci of power and the transmutation of independent practitioners and teachers into organizational functionaries. It permits the establishment of clearer cognitive boundaries around the belief-system, through the abandonment of those elements which most closely link it to the cultic milieu, and the introduction of new doctrinal elements which effectively distinguish it from competitors. The doctrine can be expanded to incorporate a systematic metaphysics increasing its scope beyond merely the provision of a rationale for a specific and limited form of practice, thus

encouraging a wider and deeper commitment. Since the new doctrine is endowed with unique salvational efficacy it provides a focus for more than segmentary and occasional involvement, and a rationale for insulating the believer, *e.g.* by the denigration of alternative sources of ideology and involvement, and by endowing the world and competing belief-systems with formerly unsuspected danger. The emergence of a charismatic leader provides a focus of loyalty of a supra-local kind. Together these factors assist in the transmutation of a clientele into a following. A successfully implemented strategy of sectarianization, therefore, provides one viable and attractive solution to the cultic problem of institutional fragility.

I have argued elsewhere that this process can be identified in the development of a number of cults. I wish to show here how closely it relates to the development of Dianetics and Scientology.

Dianetics and Scientology

In 1949 an adventurer and accomplished 'pulp' fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard began interesting a small circle of acquaintances in New Jersey, U.S.A., in a new system of psychotherapy with which he was experimenting, which he called Dianetics. Among those whom he interested was the editor of a highly popular magazine *Astounding Science Fiction* for which he had frequently written stories. John W. Campbell, the editor, introduced others to Hubbard including a publisher, and himself commissioned an article on Dianetics for *Astounding* after Hubbard cured him (albeit only temporarily) of sinusitis.²⁴ Campbell had very considerable prestige among science-fiction fans and his excited previews of Hubbard's article roused enormous anticipation. In early 1950, Hubbard's article appeared. It developed a psychological theory which claimed there were two sectors of the mind—the *analytical* and the *reactive* mind. The analytical mind was the basis of intelligent reasoning, and when its functioning was not constrained, had much greater power than was available to the ordinary individual. Fully 'cleared' of 'engrams', *i.e.* the recordings of traumatic incidents suffered by an individual, he would be able to 'compute' perfectly, would be completely free of any psychological problems or psycho-somatic illness, have a vastly increased IQ, and so on. Hubbard also outlined a method of producing this desirable state. Both theory and technique were further elaborated in a book, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, which appeared shortly after. The book became a best seller, and Dianetics briefly became fashionable. Thousands tried out the technique with friends or family and hundreds enrolled for short courses of 'auditing' (the technique of therapy) or training at one of the Hubbard Dianetic Foundations established in several major American cities. Orthodox practitioners of psychotherapy in reviews and comments on the movement, however, attacked it as 'a serious menace to public health',²⁵ and yet another 'mind-healing cult'.²⁶

Dianetics appears to have drawn on a range of mainstream and marginal psychological theories and psychotherapeutic practices—hypnotic age-regression

techniques, and a Rankian theory of birth-trauma, a quasi-psychoanalytic model of the mind, and behaviourist deconditioning techniques. The other major ingredient was Count Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics. Of the following who remained when the initial craze died, the staunchest disciples came from among science-fiction fans, former adherents of Korzybski, hypnotherapy, chiropractic, and other occult or marginal healing and self-improvement cults.²⁷

The movement had developed rapidly all over America and less extensively in Britain. Local enthusiasts formed groups to pursue the study and practice of Dianetics and recruited others. The atmosphere that pervades the writings and recollections of this period is one of excited experimentation. Hubbard's work was seen as a starting point, an initial exploration to be developed further by others. Under local leaders a great deal of experimentation was conducted with many individuals generating new theories and techniques and introducing elements from other systems—psychoanalysis, chiropractic, yoga, etc.

The view that many held was that Dianetics was a *Science* to which any individual could contribute. In operational terms, this meant that no one person could prescribe the direction in which Dianetics was to develop. One editor of a Dianetics newsletter emphasised this individualistic orientation

There is no reason to take what I say as the 'truth', as the 'right way'. Your way is the best for you.²⁸

Similarly, Dianetics practitioners claimed

there are many, many roads to a higher state of existence . . . no man can say 'This is the road for all to follow'.²⁹

Hence while Hubbard was recognized as having a certain priority, others believed themselves equally competent to develop the system further. Moreover, while Hubbard's authority was being challenged by innovators and putative leaders in the field, he also found himself constrained by other directors of the central organizations who had independent views about how Dianetics should develop. As the Dianetics boom collapsed and the mass following disappeared, Hubbard broke with his erstwhile colleagues and proclaimed the development of a new and transcendental gnosis, Scientology, which moved far beyond the limited confines of Dianetics. Scientology incorporated an elaborate metaphysics and a theory of reincarnation. In contrast to the vagaries of a lay psychotherapy Hubbard now offered a 'Science of Certainty'. Although derived from Dianetics theory and practice it rapidly moved away from its origins, introducing entirely new forms of theory and practice. Hubbard attacked those who continued to teach and practice Dianetics as 'Black Dianeticists' much after the fashion of Mrs. Eddy's attacks on her dissident students as practitioners of Malicious Animal Magnetism.³⁰

Scientology was concerned not with the mind, but with the *thetan*, the spirit. In the course of its many reincarnations the thetan had experienced many traumatic events which progressively weighed it down, causing it to lose its spiritual abilities

and awareness and leaving the individual believing he was merely a body. Scientology practices claimed to liberate or 'rehabilitate' the thetan, clearing away 'mental mass' which limited its activity, until the individual became again an Operating Thetan, able to travel independently of the body, and with other supernatural abilities. It is the concern of the movement with spiritual rather than psychological affairs that legitimates its claim to religious status.

This new revelation clearly located Hubbard as the discoverer and revelator of a realm totally beyond anything to which his rather more mundane competitors offered access. A new organization was founded with much greater central control devolving almost entirely upon Hubbard. The local following that Hubbard drew with him or subsequently recruited was no longer permitted to organize in autonomous and independent local groups. Anyone permitted to belong to such a group had also to be a member of the central organization. Shortly, however, groups were almost entirely abandoned, the local following being organized around licensed professional practitioners who were themselves increasingly constrained by the central administration. Only the lower levels of teaching and auditing could be received from such practitioners, more advanced training and auditing having to be obtained at the central organization.

A rigorous system of social control gradually emerged within the movement and doctrinal or technical innovation, other than under Hubbard's direct authority, led to severe sanction. This 'Ethics' system reached its peak during the middle and late 1960s in response to the internal threat of heresy and schism, in conjunction with severe external threat of investigation and even prohibition by various state governments.

By this stage, although Hubbard continued to pay lip-service to the earlier epistemological foundation of the movement, asserting that 'If it's true for you, it's true', the operating assumptions of the movement were very different. The doctrine now asserted that 'Reality is agreement' and since Hubbard was the founder of the movement, to disagree with Hubbard over theory and practice clearly meant one had lost touch with reality. The individualism of Dianetics was now seen as something to be radically avoided. Referring to one crisis, Hubbard insists that

Obsessive individualism and a failure to organize were responsible for our getting into the state we got into.³¹

The dangers of individualism³² leading to synthesis and compounding the practices of Scientology with those of other systems, and therefore a re-emergence of institutional fragility, were well recognized. In a report by one leading figure in the movement on an unsatisfactory situation in the Washington Organization, it was noted that:

One of these people was so individual that he had maintained an allegiance to several hostile groups even though occupying a high post in Scientology. This appeared to be the Source of the Individualism (sic) and the strong introduction of mixed practices . . .³³

In the middle and late 1960s, Scientology increasingly became the subject of public controversy.³⁴ In the degree to which its quasi-religious beliefs and practices were purveyed on an apparently highly commercial basis; in what were seen as its claims to efficacy in 'spiritual' healing and its attacks on the medical and psychiatric profession; and in its later practice of requiring the 'disconnection' of Scientologists from friends, relatives, etc. who remained adamantly hostile or critical toward Scientology; the movement found itself in conflict with a range of deeply held social norms and firmly entrenched social institutions. This conflict gradually developed on an international basis, leading to Acts prohibiting the practice of Scientology in three states of Australia, and a prohibition by the British Home Office on aliens entering Britain to study Scientology.

The extremely hostile reaction experienced by Scientology in the late 1960s and early 1970s has led to some modification in its policy and practice. Its leadership, aware in the past of the advantages of being recognized as a religion rather than as a psychotherapy, are equally aware today of the advantages of 'denominational' rather than 'sectarian' status—particularly in terms of treatment by the press and state agencies.

In response to public criticism some of the more severe of the movement's social control measures were dropped in 1968 and 1970, and in recent years Scientology has sought more strenuously to present itself as religious and humanitarian in nature. Press and other media coverage tends to be led whenever possible to portray Scientologists in 'dog-collars' and to show services in the organization's chapels.³⁵ Some attempt has also been made to display tolerance of other belief-systems. Adherents of all religious faiths proclaim the compatibility of their beliefs with Scientology.³⁶ Doctors, ministers and even psychiatrists are invited to sample Scientology's wares, sometimes free of charge.³⁷ However, the continued practice of expulsion of individuals who fail to accept the established dogma without question, the vitriolic attacks on psychiatry and mental health in Scientology publications,³⁸ and the harassment to which it has been alleged some writers on and critics of this movement have been subjected,³⁹ suggest that Scientology's tolerance and denominationalism is as yet only public relations officer deep.

Conclusion

The argument of this paper suggests that cults develop as syntheses of ideas and practices from the prevailing cultic milieu. Cults are, however, inherently fragile institutions, tending to be relatively transitory due to the epistemological individualism which typically motivates their following. The founder of a cult doctrine therefore has considerable psychological pressure to attempt to preserve his priority and position in the face of a tendency for the collectivity and its belief-system to become gradually re-submerged in the cultic milieu. In such circumstances strategies of sectarianism will have a particular appeal, since if successfully negotiated they may result in the emergence of a stable and cohesive collectivity organized

around the leader. Negotiating the transition to sectarianism involves the arrogation of authority from the membership and its centralization in the hands of the leader. Typically this is effected on the basis of a new gnosis which locates the revelator as the authoritative source of doctrinal and organizational innovation and interpretation. It thereby establishes a locus for attributions of heresy and provides a legitimation for the exercise of more rigorous control over access to the doctrine and the behaviour of members. I have elsewhere applied this analysis to Christian Science, Unity, the Aetherius Society, etc.⁴⁰ Within the limitations of space available, I have here sought to show its application to the development of Scientology.

Notes and References

1. I am grateful to the editor of *Social Research* for permission to include brief passages from my paper 'Ideology, authority and the development of cultic movements', *Social Research* 41, 2, Summer 1974, pp. 299-327. Some aspects of the analysis in a very preliminary form appeared in my 'A comparative analysis of problems and processes of change in two manipulationist movements: Christian Science and Scientology', in *The Contemporary Metamorphosis of Religion?* Acts of the 12th International Conference on the Sociology of Religion, The Hague, Netherlands, August 1973, pp. 407-422. I am grateful to the Social Science Research Council for a grant in support of my research and to Dr. B. R. Wilson, Reader in Sociology at the University of Oxford, for his helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. In substantially its current form the paper was delivered to a Staff Seminar in the Sociology Department, University of Essex, January 1974.
2. H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1925; Bryan R. Wilson, 'An analysis of sect development', *American Sociological Review*, 24, 1959, 3-15.
3. Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965, p. 245.
4. John Lofland, *Doomsday Cult*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 1.
5. H. T. Dohrman, *California Cult: The Story of Mankind United*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, p. xi.
6. As it does in the work of some theologians, e.g. A. A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963.
7. For a comparison of Christian Science and Scientology, see Roy Wallis, 'A comparative analysis of problems and processes of change in two manipulationist movements: Christian Science and Scientology', *op. cit.*
8. On the prevailing religious climate in Britain and America, see Bryan R. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969; Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1960; Rodney Stark and Charles Glock, *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
9. The notions of unique and pluralistic legitimacy were first employed by Roland Robertson, *The Sociological Interpretation of Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1970, p. 123 in slightly different fashion.
10. In the context of some ideological collectivities the label 'church' would be inappropriate, as indeed might some of the others. In the case of political movements, e.g. what one has in mind here is the Nazi party in Germany post 1934, or the Bolshevik party in Russia post 1922. In terms of churches, Catholicism would typically fit this category, as would

- Calvinism in Geneva. Catholicism in contemporary America, however, is clearly denominational.
11. It is frequently identified as religious by followers today although some observers appear to find it a matter of debate—among others the authors of the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Scientology for 1972*, Pretoria, South Africa: The Government Printer, 1973, Ch. 13.
 12. The Quakers *e.g.* appear to have fluctuated between sectarianism and denominationalism, see Elizabeth Isichei, 'From sect to denomination among English Quakers', in Bryan Wilson, editor, *Patterns of Sectarianism*, London: Heinemann, 1967, pp. 161–81.
 13. Colin Campbell, 'The cult, the cultic milieu and secularization', in Michael Hill, editor, *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, No. 5, London: S.C.M. Press, 1972, p. 122.
 14. For some of the pseudo-scientific cults to have developed, see Martin Gardner, *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*, New York: Dover Publications, 1957.
 15. See Geoffrey K. Nelson, 'The concept of cult', *Sociological Review*, 16, 3, 1968, 351–62, for a review.
 16. Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
 17. Charles S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion: The Rise and Development of New Thought*, Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963; J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967.
 18. H. Taylor Buckner, 'The flying saucerians: a lingering cult', *New Society*, 9 September 1965. An exception is the Aetherius Society, which has moved very much closer than Buckner's groups toward sectarianism. See Roy Wallis, 'The Aetherius Society: a case study in the formation of a mystagogic congregation', *Sociological Review*, 22, 1, 1974 27–44.
 19. Buckner suggests 'A typical occult seeker will probably have been a Rosicrucian, a member of Mankind United, a Theosophist, and also a member of four or five smaller specific cults. The pattern of membership is one of continuous movement from one idea to another. Seekers stay with a cult until they are satisfied that they can learn no more from it or that it has nothing further to offer, and then move on'. H. Taylor Buckner, 'The flying saucerians: an open door cult', in Marcello Truzzi, editor, *Sociology and Everyday Life*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp. 225–6.
 20. Buckner, *op. cit.*, 1965 suggests such a process occurred in the flying saucer groups which he observed.
 21. Benton Johnson, 'A critical appraisal of the church-sect typology', *American Sociological Review*, 22, 1957, 88–92; *idem*, 'On church and sect', *American Sociological Review*, 28, 1963, 539–49; *idem*, 'Church and sect revisited', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 10, 2, 1971, 124–37; J. Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion*, New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1970; Bryan R. Wilson, *Sects and Society*, London: Heinemann, 1960.
 22. I have argued this point in Roy Wallis, 'The sectarianism of Scientology', in Michael Hill, editor, *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, No. 6, London: S.C.M. Press, 1973, pp. 136–55.
 23. Where such authority lies may not always be obvious, even to members. It may sometimes be shared between two or more loci, a situation liable to lead to conflict, and a power-struggle, as *e.g.* in the struggle between the prophets and the apostles in the Catholic Apostolic Church. See Kenneth Jones, 'The Catholic Apostolic Church: a study in diffused commitment', in Michael Hill, editor, *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*, No. 5 London: S.C.M. Press, 1972, pp. 137–60.
 24. Martin Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
 25. Dr. Martin Gumpert, 'The Dianetics craze', *New Republic*, 132, August 14, 1950, 20–21.
 26. 'Poor man's psychoanalysis', *Newsweek*, October 16, 1950, 58–9.

27. The evidence for this and the rest of my commentary on this movement is explored at length in my forthcoming study, *The Road to Total Freedom: A Sociological Analysis of Dianetics and Scientology*, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1975.
28. *Dianotes*, 1, 9-10, March 1952.
29. Anonymous, 'Introduction' to *Jack Horner Speaks*, (transcription of a lecture to the New York Dianetic Association) Fairhope, Alabama: Eidetic Foundation, 1952, p. 2.
30. Georgine Milmine, *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909, *passim*.
31. H(ubbard) C(ommunication) O(ffice), Policy Letter, 17 January, 1967.
32. There is, however, a sense of individualism which has Hubbard's approval, that is the sense in which it is appropriately contrasted with state intervention, or state control.
33. H.C.O. Executive Letter, 2 June 1968.
34. I have explored this in greater depth in my 'Societal reaction to Scientology: an essay in the sociology of deviant religion', in Roy Wallis, editor, *Sectarianism: Analyses of Religious and Non-Religious Sects*, London: Peter Owen, 1975.
35. E.g. in a recent British T.V. film 'Thank You Ron', A.T.V. 1973.
36. See the comments quoted from Mormons, Jews, Catholics, etc. in Anonymus, *Scientology: Twentieth Century Religion*, East Grinstead, Surrey: The Church of Scientology World Wide, 1972, pp. 50-54.
37. E.g. *Freedom*, 37, 1972, 'Free Courses for Ministers'.
38. E.g. *Freedom*, 10, 1969; *Freedom*, 30, 1970.
39. Roy Wallis, 'Religious sects and the fear of publicity', *New Society*, 24, 557, 7 June 1973, pp. 545-47.
40. Roy Wallis, 'Ideology, authority and the development of cultic movements', *op. cit.*; *idem*, 'The cult and its transformations' in Roy Wallis, editor, *Sectarianism: Analyses of Religious and Non-Religious Sects*, *op. cit.*

Biographical note: ROY WALLIS, born 1945. B.A. in Sociology, Essex University 1970. Nuffield College, Oxford 1970-72. D.Phil. Oxford, 1974. Currently lecturer in sociology, University of Stirling.