

ANT 261: Science, Religion, and Society: Is the Truth Out There?

Spring Term, 2006: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:30 - 11:20 am, Chambers 1027

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Scientology: Religion and Science Fiction

Scientology:

- Started by science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard and his concept of “dianetics”; theory about the mind where the mind is divided into two levels --- the Analytical Mind and the Reactive Mind
- The analytical mind is rational, and acts irrationally only when it has misinformation; the reactive mind is more like an unconscious reflex; but it can be “taught” through recombining “engrams” (basic storage units of the brain)
- According to the scientology website:
 - Scientology is the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life. The religion comprises a body of knowledge extending from certain fundamental truths. Prime among these:
 - Man is an immortal, spiritual being. His experience extends well beyond a single lifetime. His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized — and those capabilities can be realized. He is able to not only solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain lasting happiness, but also achieve new, higher states of awareness and ability.
 - In Scientology no one is asked to accept anything as belief or on faith. That which is true for you is what you have observed to be true. An individual discovers for himself that Scientology works by personally applying its principles and observing or experiencing results.
 - Through Scientology, people all over the world are achieving the long-sought goal of true spiritual release and freedom. (from scientology website)
- Important part of learning about oneself (the goal of scientology) involves “auditing” or listening sessions, run by auditors (scientology ritual specialists); auditors can use “e-meters” to measure brain activity
- Another important aspect of scientology activity is purification; drugs, pollutants, and other chemicals harmful to the body are purged through sweating and vitamin treatments



THE CREEDS AND CODES OF SCIENTOLOGY

We of the Church believe:

That all men of whatever race, color or creed were created with equal rights;

That all men have inalienable rights to their own religious practices and their performance;

That all men have inalienable rights to their own lives;

That all men have inalienable rights to their sanity;

That all men have inalienable rights to their own defense;



That all men have inalienable rights to conceive, choose, assist or support their own organizations, churches and governments;

That all men have inalienable rights to think freely, to talk freely, to write freely their own opinions and to counter or utter or write upon the opinions of others;

That all men have inalienable rights to the creation of their own kind;

That the souls of men have the rights of men;

That the study of the mind and the healing of mentally caused ills should not be alienated from religion or condoned in nonreligious fields;

And that no agency less than God has the power to suspend or set aside these rights, overtly or covertly.

And we of the Church believe:

That man is basically good;

That he is seeking to survive;

That his survival depends upon himself and upon his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe.

And we of the Church believe that the laws of God forbid man:

To destroy his own kind;

To destroy the sanity of another;

To destroy or enslave another's soul;

To destroy or reduce the survival of one's companions or one's group.

And we of the Church believe that the spirit can be saved and that the spirit alone may save or heal the body.

Whitehead's analysis:

- Situated as a continuation of occultism; historical roots of American occultism go back to the Theosophists of the mid-nineteenth century; occultism (new age stuff) is seen as syncretic, eclectic,
- Whitehead says that occultism is a "reaction to the charismatic void left by the Protestant solution of "inner-worldly asceticism."
- Occult has parallels with magic, parallels to science, and religion; "marketplace" of ideas
- The popularity of science fiction, according to Whitehead, follows from a fascination with the occult; an escapism

It has been argued that the Positivist bias, the speculative style, and above all the skill with which science fiction integrates worldly knowledge with elements of the fantastic and the improbable, bring the science fiction world--or one might say the "science fiction mind-into very close alliance with the Occult orientation. If Scientology has terms and concepts that sound more specifically like science fiction than like earlier Occultism, this is in no way inconsistent. Scientology defines itself as the "science of knowing," or the "science of knowing how to know," and its appeal is exactly commensurate with how well it fulfills this implicit promise. (Whitehead 1974:587).