

Alternative therapy, Dianetics, and Scientology

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Abstract:

Since orthodox medicine sets the standard for what is acceptable within the medical arena, some alternative medicines integrate into medicine while others remain separate or face too much scrutiny to continue practicing. In the 1970s, Morely and Wallis (1976) recognized Dianetics and Scientology as a “marginal medicine,” and from the 1960s to 1970s several government organizations worldwide investigated the group. Consequently, Scientology retreated from the medical arena, claiming that it was a religion and establishing boundaries to insulate itself from regulation. Despite Scientology’s attempted retreat, Dianetics and Scientology doctrines and practices continue to reflect concerns and actions that belong to what Tovey and Adams (2001) identify as the social world of alternative medicine. In this article, I outline Scientology’s position within the medical arena, how that position has transformed over time, and Scientology’s isolation from the dominant social world within that arena (specifically scientific medicine).

It is nearly impossible to imagine Western society without the presence of scientific medicine. Prior to the last 130 to 180 years, however, competition for legitimacy between various healing organizations within the medical arena occurred on relatively equal terms (Morely and Wallis 1976:9; Tovey and Adams 2001:698; Samson 1999:3). In fact, many scientific healing techniques, such as bloodletting, were no more effective (if not more harmful) than their alternatives (Samson 1999:7). Today, although scientific medicine dominates the medical arena, it constitutes differing opinions, healing theories, and constant change (Tovey and Adams 2001:696).

Tovey and Adams (2001:698) use the Social Worlds (SWs) perspective to discuss the overlapping various opinions and theories of the social sub-worlds (SSWs) of alternative therapies and orthodox medicine, as well as the unequal nature of the interactions between those worlds. SWs are clusters of organizations (SSWs) that share common activities or concerns (such as treating the ill [Strauss 1978:122]). Tovey and Adams (2001) identify the relationships between various alternative therapies and orthodox medicine as relationships between various SWs and SSWs that interact with and interpenetrate one another to varying degrees. Each SW inevitably splinters—through disagreements on what constitutes legitimate actions and concerns, interactions with other SWs,

boundary setting, and so forth—into SSWs, which continue to share the dominant activities or concerns, despite their differences (Strauss 1982:174). Generally, SSWs need to both establish their uniqueness from other SSWs and to attempt to find some legitimacy in order to maintain their position within the larger SW.

Many SSWs within alternative medicine find enough legitimacy to continue existence because, despite modern medicine's countless advances, it can fail to demonstrate definitive success (such as a range of such psychiatric illnesses and chronic diseases) and it can allow unhealthy patients to survive and possibly seek alternative treatments (Jones 2004:706). The SW of alternative medicine offers hope for escape from certain physical discomforts and ailments that biomedicine cannot eradicate. For instance, Scientology claims to heal physical ailments, which it claims are psychosomatic (i.e. caused by the mind itself) through the psychological and spiritual development of patients who follow its teachings.

Most alternative therapies have fairly strong boundaries that allow their existence as a SSW outside of medical hegemony. For instance, Jones (2004) argued that alternative therapies contain a "cultic element" and are sectarian in nature due to their opposition to orthodox medicine. Furthermore, Morely and Wallis (1976) labeled alternative therapies that attempt to heal specifically through sectarian and religious claims "marginal medicines" because they often face greater opposition than other alternative therapies. The "cultic element" and the label, "marginal medicine," prevent Scientology's rapid growth and legitimacy within the medical arena. Nonetheless, I argue that (at least in the case of Scientology) some "marginal medicines" find shelter from the regulatory forces of the SW of medicine by affiliation with the SW of religion.

In fact, many religious organizations (or SSWs of the religious arena) influence the medical practices of their adherents. For instance, fundamentalist Christian groups—such as Faith Tabernacle, Faith Assembly, End Time Ministries, and many others—may encourage members to rely on prayer and/or "God's will" rather than medicine for all physical ailments (Linnard-Palmer 2006:56-57; Merrick 2003: 270). Devout Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions, and justify their refusal with scriptural citations and "medical" assertions (Linnard-Palmer 2006:69-76). As these and other examples indicate, countless SSWs exist within the SW of religion whose practices influence choices relevant to the SW of medicine. Many of these groups' practice alternative treatments, such as spiritual healing, and are able to avoid medical interference despite the dramatic impact they have on their adherents' health.

I argue that as an allegedly religious organization, Scientology's practices of alternative therapy have received little attention from the medical arena in recent years despite the widespread use of potentially harmful and ineffective treatments within the group. Therefore, the same factors that prevent Scientology from integrating as an active member of the medical arena also prevent regulatory forces within the medical arena from recognizing Scientology practices as a form of therapy and therefore, subject to the same scrutiny that other SSWs experience. First, I outline how

Dianetics emerged within the SW of alternative medicine to find very little acceptance. Next, I discuss how regulatory forces within the medical arena delegitimized Dianetics. I demonstrate that Scientology maintains doctrines and practices that scientific medicine once deemed unfit therapeutic practices, and I outline some reasons why members believe in Scientology's practices, what its practices are, and why some of them are potential dangers. I conclude that despite Scientology's widespread illegitimacy within the medical arena, the SSW manages to continue its existence within that arena through isolation from orthodox medicine's regulatory forces and through interactions with the SW of religion.

Methods

I base my analysis on Dianetics and Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's (1911-1986) writings, Scientology documents, academic literature, and government reports. In this analysis, I often cite both the original and 2007 versions of *Dianetics* because the contents of this book have altered since 1950. In this study, I utilized archives from the Alternative Religions Collection housed at the University of Alberta Library. While employed by Dr. Stephen Kent, who created and maintains this archival collection of documents on various religious and ideological organizations, I gained exclusive access to tens of thousands of primary Scientology documents that previous researchers and I have organized. Due to two years' employment at the archives, I was already intimately familiar with the contents over fifty feet of Scientology documents that relate specifically to Scientology's therapeutic practices that are neatly categorized within filing cabinets. In addition, I had access to dozens of Scientology books, many of which Hubbard wrote.

The emergence of Dianetics and Scientology

In 1950, Dianetics entered what Tovey and Adams (2001) call the medical arena in America as a lay psychotherapy method that promised mental and physical well-being. Thousands of people bought the book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* and read related articles in science fiction magazines (Wallis 1976:31). From the beginning, Hubbard (1950: 39) argued that Dianetics not only improved mental health, but also cured the cause of most illnesses. When Hubbard established Scientology in late 1953 (attempting to transfer the SSW of Scientology from the medical arena to the religious arena), he included Dianetics' therapeutic claims, which the Church of Scientology quickly added to. Today, the newest editions of older books—such as *Dianetics*, *Handbook for Prelears*, and *Science of Survival*—and several Hubbard Communications Office Bulletins and Policy Letters continue to claim that Scientology and/or Dianetics can heal psychosomatic illness (Hubbard 2007a:111; 2007b:307; 2007c:96). Moreover, Scientology founded several ongoing programs (i.e. Drug Purification Rundown and Narconon) that it claims cure drug addictions, radiation exposure, and other health problems (Hubbard 1967:49; 1978).

Medical supporters of Dianetics

Despite Hubbard's (1961:1) claims that "Scientology will inherit the hospitals, the clinics, the asylums, the halls of learning, where humanity was abused;" he also stated, "A trained Scientologist is not a doctor" (Hubbard 1962b: 4 [emphasis in original]). Consequently, Hubbard sought some support from the medical profession. Although the public perceives the medical field as uniform and united, scientific knowledge is socially constructed and therefore, pluralistic views exist within science (Hirschhorn and Bourgeault 2005:163). Both Tovey and Adams (2001:704) and Hirschhorn and Bourgeault (2005:160-161) recognize that alternative therapists can influence the SW of medicine through education. Consequently, Hubbard initially wrote *Dianetics: The Original Thesis* for the medical profession (Wallis 1976:23). By presenting Dianetics as scientific and complementary to medicine, Hubbard attracted several medical and mental health care professionals. Gaining support from a few key medical professionals helps many alternative therapy SSWs gain more widespread acceptance within the medical arena. Many of these individuals, however, stopped supporting Dianetics before Hubbard began claiming Dianetics belonged to a religious organization he named Scientology.

For example, Dr. Winter ("Introduction" in Hubbard 1950:xxii), the former medical director of the Dianetics Research Foundation, claimed to have used Dianetics on "patients, friends, and ... family" with success. Winter listed the alleged medical benefits of Dianetics in the foreword to the *Dianetics: the Modern Science of Mental Health*, which had potential to influence other healthcare professionals and spread the acceptance of Dianetics by some SSWs within the SW of medicine (see "Introduction" in Hubbard 1950:xxiii). Winter severed this potential when he left the group in August 1951 due to a difference of opinion (i.e. doubts regarding some of Hubbard's claims, such as past lives) and Hubbard removed his foreword from later editions of *Dianetics* (Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation 1951:8; Kent 1999:100; Wallis 1976:77).

More recently, some medical practitioners supported Scientology's drug rehabilitation program, Narconon, and published studies with the Scientology front group, the Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education (FASE) supporting Hubbard's detoxification treatments. For example, Drs. Gene Denk, Megan Shields, Steven Brunton, and John Wolfe directed a study along with psychologists Elaine Parent and Dr. Marion Arom to evaluate the detoxification regimen that Hubbard designed (Foundation for Advancements 1982). Several of the physicians cited in this study participated in other FASE studies with other physicians, all of which support Hubbard's theories. Although these studies may appear scientific, they are most likely instances of what Hess (2004:699, 703) suggests are activists from an alternative medicine convincing scientists involved in dominant research to align their research program with the activists' goals. Thus far, however, the physicians affiliated with FASE have failed to legitimize Narconon within the SW of medicine.

Opposition to Dianetics

As early as 1950, most professionals within the medical arena criticized Dianetics by calling it another “mind healing cult,” while psychologists called it a threat to public health (Wallis 1975:92; see Kent 1996 1999; Wallis 1976). Along with numerous alternative medicines that began facing challenges from orthodox medicine since the 1960s (Hess 2004:697), Dianetics and Scientology faced criticism worldwide (countries included Australia, Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States) for practices that opposed medical theories. Critics of Dianetics and Scientology spawn from many SSWs whose members work to oppose and/or regulate potentially harmful organizations. Critics included state agencies such as the FDA, physicians and psychiatrists, former Scientologists, relatives of Scientologists, people living near Scientology establishments, members of governments, and various western media outlets (Wallis 1975:101-102). These criticisms constitute what from the SWs perspective suggests is a “nonauthenticating processes (like excommunication)” (Strauss 1978:124). In this process, members of the SW and supporting SWs react to what they designate to be legitimate practices and/or beliefs and remove SSWs that violate those practices and beliefs from the larger SW.

For instance, between 1951 and 1955, American law enforcement arrested several Scientologists for “operating a school for treatment of disease without a license” and confiscated several E-Meters (Electrometers, which are machines that register changes in the skin’s conductivity to a small electrical current [as cited in Kent 1996:30]). In addition, the FDA initiated a raid against the Washington Founding Church of Scientology, confiscating all its E-Meters and literature in 1963. By 1969, however, the government returned the E-Meters and publications, while deciding that the use of E-meters within the religious arena was permissible as long as Scientologists did not partake in practices affiliated with the SW of medicine, such as diagnosing and treating illnesses (Wallis 1975:100). The FDA required Scientology to attach a disclaimer that E-Meters were solely for spiritual counseling (United States of America v. Founding Church of Scientology et al. 1971:357, 364). In effect, Scientology was allegedly “excommunicated” from the medical arena and has received little scrutiny from the government regarding healing practices despite the fact that claims of healings still resonate through Scientology literature.

Similarly, in 1965, the Australian Board of Inquiry reported that Scientology’s practices opposed medicine and science (Wallis 1975:95-96). The report delegitimized Scientology within the Australian medical arena by concluding that Scientology used the “pseudo-science” Dianetics. The Australian Board of Inquiry feared that Dianetics was “potentially dangerous to mental health” and “constitute[d] a serious medical, moral and social threat” (Anderson 1965:1, 2). In addition, the report suggested that Dianetics, and therefore Scientology, claimed to “cure mental and physical ills” (Anderson 1965:14). The parliament of Victoria (Australia) acknowledged the report by

passing the *Psychological Practices Act*, which banned Scientology, banned the use of E-Meters (unless by a psychologist), and permitted the Attorney General to seize and destroy Scientology's documents (Wallis 1975:96). Consequently, this report established that Scientology did not belong within the SW of medicine.

Conversely, the Committee on the Healing Arts (1970:510) in Ontario, Canada concluded that Scientology should adhere to proscriptions of the practice of medicine under the country's Medical Act, which requires Scientology to follow the same proscriptions designated to other medical professionals (including medical physicians) for the purposes of protecting patients from malpractice. In so doing, the Ontario committee stated the necessity of regulating the SSW of Scientology within the medical arena, although it is unlikely that the province succeeded in manifesting any such regulation for that organization.

The existence of these state-based committees that questioned Scientology diminished to the point that Scientology is now able to minimize its interactions within the medical arena in many countries by claiming religious affiliation. Even so, Strauss's (1982:172) assertion that SSWs are bound with common concerns and activities and that one SSW can belong to numerous SWs allows for the hidden existence of Scientology within the medical arena despite attempts at its excommunication. Following interactions with supporters of the medical SW that Tovey and Adams (2001:698) call the "cultural authority" that is scientific medicine, Hubbard strategically merged Dianetics into Scientology, which he claimed was a religion, and effectively hid it from the medical arena. In fact, in a policy letter, Hubbard (1962a:1) suggested that Scientology maintain its religious claims for the benefit of the organization: "It is of interest to all organizations that *all* Scientology incorporations are religious in nature." Similarly, Hubbard stated that Scientology did not need a clinic in name, only in operation (Kent 1999:109). With a religious name but therapeutic operations, the SSW of Scientology borders between the SWs of medicine and religion.

Isolation from the Medical Arena

Tovey and Adams (2001:698) suggest that overlapping SSWs within the medical arena compete and interact with one another on unequal terms. Groups such as scientific medicine and alternative medicine can break down "into smaller subworlds based upon therapeutic modalities" and often find allies from similar SSWs (Tovey and Adams 2001:702). In Scientology's case, one supposed ally within the SW of alternative medicine that I have found is an affiliation with the *National Alternative Medical Association*, a group that a Scientology article alleged strongly respected Scientology in 1985 [see Church of Scientology Flag 1985?:1]).

Despite this illegitimacy within the medical arena, Scientologists demonstrate unwavering faith in the legitimacy of Hubbard's words. Helping to understand this unwavering faith are comments by Jones (2004:704), which suggest that alternative practitioners offer unconventional knowledges that constitute a form of easily understandable *gnosis*. Scientology concedes that the material that

Hubbard (the founder, source, and “the point of origin” [1975:vii, 238, 395]) wrote in his lifetime constitutes that sacred truth: “more important however, is the fact that *all* of the materials of the subjects [on which Hubbard wrote] remain valid and in force today” (Eds. in Hubbard 1975:vii). In fact, Scientology is less likely to accept external influences and changes than other SSWs because Scientology regards Hubbard’s work as the unchanging truth, and therefore, rejects any influence outside of its own literature (all allegedly unchanged since Hubbard’s death in 1986). This attempted preservation of Hubbard’s words limits the “tremendous fluidity” that often allows constant evolution between and within SWs and SSWs (Tovey and Adams 2001:697; Straus 1978:123). This faith results in part from the tight boundaries and standards within Scientology. These boundaries and standards remain intact with the aid of Scientology therapists (called auditors), Hubbard’s own writing, and success stories that reaffirm the effectiveness of Hubbard’s theories.

Unquestioned truth

Tovey and Adams (2001:701) argued that the SSWs of conventional and unconventional medicine “represent ‘cultural systems of meaning,’ which compete within the medical arena over the legitimate ways of formulating and undertaking healing practices as a means of relieving ill-health and/or maintaining well-being.” These SSWs seek legitimacy at the same time as they set boundaries and standards (Tovey and Adams 2001:697). Each SW and SSW contains “in-world experts,” who maintain standards, recognize outstanding members, and thereby, legitimate the SSW’s cultural systems of meaning both inside the SSW and (if possible) within the SW. In the SW of scientific medicine, these experts constitute an array of physicians, researchers, and other prominent medical professionals. A similar array of experts exists within Scientology. For instance, auditors and volunteer ministers reinforce Scientology therapies inside the SSW as legitimate world views and defend the “ordinarily unquestioned canons of truth, morality, beauty, usefulness, and propriety” by which Strauss (1982:176) argued each SSW operates.

Scientology therapists work as an organized ‘professional’ body that maintains the standards and boundaries that protect Hubbard’s life work. Scientology therapists (including auditors, volunteer ministers, and others whom I do not discuss) claim to relieve illness and injury indirectly, since their primary concern is what the SSW calls engram clearing. Allegedly an engram is “a mental image picture which is a recording of time of physical pain and unconsciousness. It must by definition have impact or injury as part of its content” (Hubbard 1975:41). These therapists allegedly work to alleviate the pain that the engram causes as well as the engram itself.

Scientology trains auditors and volunteer ministers to apply its therapies in accordance with the organization’s standards. An auditor’s task is to apply a Scientology procedure (called auditing) by going over engrams with the client so that the client can contact and remove them (Hubbard 1975:28). Auditors allege to effectively treat ill health (and other conditions) by guiding patients

through simple topics and sharing access to Scientology *gnosis* or “unquestioned truth.” Through this special knowledge, Scientology internally legitimizes its world views. Auditors even treat the healthy on the grounds that they have yet to clear all their engrams and therefore, to become “the optimum individual” (Hubbard 1950:437; 2007a:555).

Volunteer ministers apply treatments by conducting assists (i.e. “anything that would help” [Hubbard 1958a:3; 1969a:1-2]). Many kinds of assists exist, most of which allegedly alleviate pain by restoring communication between the body and the spirit or soul (called a thetan [Hubbard 1982:617]). The basic idea behind assists is that the patient is stuck in the past and needs to realize the present in order to overcome her or his ailment (Hubbard 1969a:1). Unlike other Scientology therapists, volunteer ministers appear to mingle with other SSWs of the medical arena, by selectively integrating medical knowledges about which Hubbard approved. For example, a Scientology magazine entitled *Volunteer Ministers in Action* reprinted an article in which Hubbard encouraged volunteer ministers to work with relief agencies such as the Red Cross and obtain a Red Cross First Aid Certificate (I Help International 1995?a). In addition, volunteer ministers teach Scientology healing techniques to healthcare professionals in disaster regions. For instance, in Armenia, Volunteer Ministers trained 580 paramedics, the Secretary of Health, thirty nuns, and some psychology students to conduct assists (I Help International 1999:3-5). In Dublin, Ireland, Volunteer Ministers gave assists in hospitals and trained nurses (I Help International 1999:3). Furthermore, billboards throughout the U.S. offer Volunteer Ministers to individuals suffering from mental anguish (O’Neil 2002).

Reason to believe

Success stories reinforce internal legitimacy within the SSW of Scientology. These stories reaffirm the unquestioned canons of Hubbard’s work and the usefulness of those canons by attributing improvements in health within Scientology to Scientology practices. For example, in Florida, a volunteer minister, using touch assists, claimed to stop a girl’s pain from a leg burn (I Help International 1995b). In Sacramento, a woman insisted that Volunteer Ministers helped her husband (whom doctors said would not live, talk, or walk again) to begin talking and preparing to walk (I Help International 1995b). An exceptional example in Scientology a magazine, *Ability*, reported that an auditor raised a child from the dead: “A child had died, was dead, had been pronounced dead by a doctor, and the auditor, by calling the thetan back and ordering him to take over the body again brought the child to life” (Hubbard 1955:19). (The thetan is the “living unit,” “the source of life,” and “life itself.” It is “the person himself—not his body or name, the physical universe, his mind, or anything else; that which is aware of being aware; the identity of the individual” [Hubbard 1975:429, 431-432].)

Moreover, prominent Scientologists attempt to legitimize Scientology therapies for both its members and curious outsiders. In an entertainment magazine interview, actor Tom Cruise claimed that his wife, Katie Holmes, would attempt childbirth with Scientology procedures instead of an epidural (Kaylin 2006:148). Cruise alleged that scientific medicine supported Scientology's silent birth method: "there are medical-research papers that say when a woman's giving birth, everyone should be quiet" (as cited in Kaylin 2006:148). Moreover, Cruise attempted to open Scientology's boundaries to other celebrities when he sponsored a Scientology tent (containing Scientology literature and volunteer ministers who were administering assists) for the 2005 *War of the Worlds* movie set (Waxman 2005:C1).

Similarly, in a Scientology magazine in 1993, actor John Travolta claimed to eradicate his flight instructor's seventeen-year-old injury (Church of Scientology Celebrity 1993:9). Travolta claimed that he used auditing to reconcile childhood instances from before his instructor's injury. Following the procedure, Travolta alleged, "the problem with his arm totally disappeared" (as cited in Church of Scientology Celebrity 1993:9). Travolta claimed to use assists on movie sets because: "They get results and I give them all [the] time" (as cited in Church of Scientology Celebrity 1993:9). In fact, Travolta did an assist on popular musician Sting's sore throat at a concert (Gordinier 1994:30). Similarly, Travolta used assists in his personal life and claimed to have taught his son many assists: son Jett (1992-2009) "knows how to give himself a contact assist. He's been doing them since he was about 13 months old" (as cited in Church of Scientology Celebrity Center International, 1993: 9).

Like the celebrity supporters of Scientology treatments, several celebrities support the Scientology sponsored drug program, Narconon. Following the death of former model Anna Nicole Smith, Travolta alleged, "We could have helped her with Narconon but didn't get the chance" (as cited in Lacey 2007). Martial arts expert and actor Chuck Norris and his brother, Aaron Norris, appeared in a Narconon pamphlet with the quote: "Let's kick drugs out of America!" (Chuck Norris, who probably is not a Scientologist, may have only temporarily supported Narconon [as cited in Narconon International 1990]). Actress Kirstie Alley encouraged Scientologists to help build a Narconon treatment facility named the Chilocco New Life Center on an Indian reservation near Newkirk, Oklahoma as part of Scientology's war on drugs (Narconon International 1990; 1991). (The Chilocco Center was controversial because Narconon hid its affiliation with Scientology and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs accused it of operating without a license [Lobsinger 1989; Zellner 1995:118]). The organization also quotes several politicians, law enforcement offices, and medical professionals who attest to Narconon's success rates and ignores those who believe it is useless or dangerous (Narconon International 1989:4-6).

Illegitimate healing theories

Alleging that medicine only treated symptoms, Hubbard stated that until a patient with a chronic psychosomatic illness uses expensive Dianetics processing, that patient's symptoms will continue to reappear:

Feeding a patient with a psychosomatic ill any number of drugs can result in only temporary relief. . . . [I]f anyone succeeds in curing it short of removing that engram, the body, at the command of the reactive mind, will find something else to substitute for that ill or develop and 'allergy' to the drug or annul the effect of the drug entirely (Hubbard 1950:108; 2007a:131).

Hubbard asserted that antibiotics complicate auditing and people must treat medication and/or drug use before they can make "good cases" (Hubbard 1971:1). To conceal its aversion to medicine (which could elicit intervention from the SW of medicine), Scientology argued that patients should maintain antibiotic use while undergoing Dianetic therapy until the cause of the illness vanishes (Jason 1975:2). Scientology's best known aversion to medical procedures, however, is its hostility toward the treatment of psychiatric illness, which is a section of medicine that Jones (2004:706) claimed (in an overstatement) suffers from an "apparent lack of success" and therefore, many SSWs, like Scientology, devote efforts to its eradication.

Healing theories within Scientology and Dianetics literature contradict those of the dominant SW of scientific medicine (and at times, other Scientology theories). For instance, to justify the existence of mental disorders and anguish, Hubbard (1969b:1) argued that "'insanity' is most often the suppressed agony of actual physical injury." Conversely, Hubbard (1950:91-108; 1969b:1; 1974:432; 2007a:111) stated that many illnesses and injuries are psychosomatic or result from a lack of communication between the body, mind, and thetan—i.e. "The term psychosomatic means mind making the body ill or illnesses which have been created physically within the body by derangement of the mind" (Hubbard 1950:92; 2007a:112-113). Hubbard's claim that most disease is psychosomatic is unlikely to appeal to most medical professionals because the beliefs that the patient's disease is nonorganic or psychological are infrequently cited as reasons healthcare providers seek alternative treatments (Hirschhorn and Bourgeault 2005:160). Consequently, even without Hubbard's more bizarre theories, it is unlikely Scientology could have found a legitimate stake in the medical arena. While all SSWs within the medical arena at times contradict one another, interactions between those SSWs allow for the accommodation to dominant theories. As for Scientology, however, contradictions to medical treatment remain strong and unchanged due to the canonization of Hubbard's theories.

Examples of Hubbard's more bizarre theories abound. Incongruously, Hubbard (1957:1) stated that people do not see through their eyes, but rather through little gold discs on the front of the eye, which medical professionals have yet to recognize. Hubbard (1957:1; 2007a:16) argued that the need for eyeglasses often is psychosomatic and requires treatment through auditing not only of the eyeglasses, but especially the gold discs:

Havingness [sic] in terms of glasses, or in terms of eyeballs, do produce some sort of change, but havingness [sic] in terms of little golden discs produces an awful alteration in terms of eyesight, sometimes faster than is comfortable (Hubbard 1957:1).

Furthermore, Hubbard suggested that with the help of Dianetic practitioners and auditors, individuals could reach the state of clear and become entirely free of all aberrations (i.e. departures from rationality including psychoses, neuroses, psychosomatic ills, compulsions, and repressions or fixed ideas that are not true [Hubbard 1958b:3; 2007:539; Kent 1999:99]). In addition to overcoming ailments, the clearing process can allegedly create the 'optimal state' with a higher IQ, increased perceptions, ability to recall the past, and heightened hearing (Hubbard 1958b:3, 5; Kent 1999:99). The vast majority of SSWs within the SW of medicine would never accept these claims. But with Scientology's belief that Hubbard's word constitutes the truth, Scientology would never accommodate to scientific medicine's criticisms and therefore, Scientology cannot acceptance in the medical arena.

Despite these absurd claims, Scientology joins some other alternative therapy SSWs in underplaying the physical causes of illness: "[T]he removal of an organic cause for the symptoms forces the apparently more controllable psychological or lifestyle causes on to the agenda with an associated switch of responsibility" (Tovey and Adams 2001:699). Scientologists believe that some individuals suffer illness because of a controllable subconscious drive in the reactive mind: "It could be said, on the reactive level, that the aberre [any person who suffers aberrations] will not permit himself to suffer illness from his engrams unless that illness has a 'survival' value" (Hubbard 1950:105; 2007a:128, 539). Hubbard (1950:105; 2007a:128) alleged that a 'survival value' is any positive effect that a patient receives from displaying disease symptoms.

Hubbard constructed several other theories, some influenced by mainstream psychology, psychiatry, and fringe therapies—including Rankian and age regression (Wallis 1976:310) to distinguish Scientology from other SSWs within the medical arena. Hubbard's explanation of the human mind shows Dianetics's previously more fluid boundaries that Tovey and Adams (2001) suggest characterize most alternative therapies. Hubbard (1950:43; 2007a:55) alleged that the human mind possessed three components: the reactive mind, the somatic mind, and the analytical mind. The analytical mind, Hubbard (1950:43-44; 2007a:55-56) insisted, is the "monitor" or the "center of awareness of the person" and "it never makes a mistake." Illness is allegedly psychosomatic and arises because the reactive mind holds records of pain by acting as the "engram bank" (i.e. the part of the mind that stores engrams [Hubbard 1950:51, 438; 2007a:65, 568, 610]).

The reactive mind allegedly directs the somatic mind, somatic meaning the “dianetic neologism for pain, any body condition experienced when contacting an engram; the pain of a psychosomatic illness” (Hubbard 2007a:50, 619). Hubbard (1950:109; 2007a:114) suggested that the reactive mind attracts engrams, which detract from the “theta” (i.e. emotion and possibly “life force itself”—theta is the universal force that is beyond human conception [Hubbard 1975:429]).

The only way for a patient to overcome the cause of illness and pain (the suppression of theta) is allegedly through auditing and assists that restore communication with the affected body part, which permits the thetan (the true individual) to regain control of the body (Hubbard 1969a:1; 2007a:144). In this way, Hubbard (1950:91; 2007a:111) alleged that Dianetics could cure up to seventy percent of illnesses, which (he claimed) are psychosomatic: “in short and brief, psychosomatic ills can now be cured. All of them” (Hubbard 1950:108; Kent 1999:99). Hubbard included the common cold, bursitis, asthma, peptic ulcer disease, arthritis, rheumatism, dermatitis, allergies, migraines, bizarre aches and pains, some coronary diseases, and thousands of other ailments in the category of psychosomatic (Hubbard 1951:51; 2007a:113). Hubbard (1966:5; 1969c:2, 3, 5) argued that Dianetics and Scientology also could heal the cause of psychoses or neuroses, insanity, tiredness, poor hearing, withered limbs, and skin blotches.

With these claims, Hubbard acknowledged orthodox medicine’s ability to temporarily alleviate specific ailments, but claimed to treat the “real” cause of illness. Generally, each SSW of alternative therapy claims to “treats the *real* cause of disease” (Beyerstein 2001:235 [emphasis in original]). Hubbard alleged this cause often culminates in prenatal engrams (i.e. engrams that attach to the baby while it is in its mother’s womb as a result of the mother’s actions, such as not having a silent birth, experiencing a physical injury, or arguing with others while pregnant [Hubbard 1950:155; 2007a:159]). Hubbard (1950:130; 2007a:158) claimed that in many instances the state of clear is unattainable until prenatal engrams are audited: “People have scores of prenatal engrams when they are normal. . . . Each contains pain and ‘unconsciousness.’” In fact, Hubbard (2007a:159) alleged that people can have over two hundred engrams. Prenatal engrams are allegedly derived from pre-birth experiences that cannot be measured by the medical science. Similarly, alternative therapies often allege to heal ailments that scientific medicine cannot objectively measure: “[P]ain and suffering cannot be ‘objectively’ measured either before or after birth” (Jones 2004:710).

Due to the alleged overwhelming healing abilities of Scientology, some Scientologists may believe that they can heal without medicine: “for ages Man has known that ‘laying on of hands’ or Mother’s kiss was effective therapy” (Hubbard 1963:2). For example, Roxanne Friend claimed that Scientologists told her that auditing could cure her illness, which turned out to be cancer (Hubbard [1950:93] claimed that curing cancer was in Dianetics’s future [ABCNews 2006: para. 32]). When she left Scientology after years without medical attention, Friend lacked the resources to seek life-saving medical treatment: “She spent over \$80,000 on Scientology, and has almost nothing left, and no medical insurance” (Sawyer as cited in ABCNews 2006: para. 34). Similarly, Scientology officials administered Scientology treatments, vitamins, and illegally obtained prescription drugs to

treat former Scientologist Lisa McPherson's psychotic symptoms (Fort Harrison Hotel Notes 1995: FSO 00138, 00152, 00158; Estate of McPherson v. Church of Scientology 1999: item 123). After seventeen days, Scientology staff transported McPherson past several hospitals to a distant hospital where a Scientology physician pronounced McPherson dead (Estate of McPherson v. Church of Scientology 1999: item 46). In many instances, controversies such as these could force alternative therapy—through interactions with SWs that support scientific medicine (such as government organizations, legal institutions, etc.)—to reform to meet the regulatory forces within the medical arena, as the chiropractic practice did, or face annihilation. In Scientology's case, however, the alleged cessation of its medical practices allowed the SSW to escape legitimizing forces within the medical SW.

Nonetheless, these controversies further isolate Scientology because the risk of liability that accompanies alternative therapies increases with a lack of consensus regarding efficacy, safety, and standards for their use (Bourgault and Hirschhorn 2005:165). Moreover, costs of Scientology treatments create yet another boundary between Scientology and more accepted SSWs within the medical arena. Scientology clients often paid between \$200 and \$1,000 dollars per hour of one-on-one auditing—based on an estimate from the 1980s (Robbins 1988:103-106). In 2006, Narconon spokesman of Toronto (Canada) stated that the full four-month Narconon program costs \$20,000 (Canadian), but claims a seventy percent success rate (Rusnell 2006). Healthcare professionals are unlikely to recommend alternative therapies that require patients to pay out of their own pockets (Hirschhorn and Bourgeault 2005:166); therefore on these grounds alone most healthcare professionals do not support Scientology. Consequently, as a SSW Scientology has what Strauss (1978:121) would identify as tight boundaries and therefore, other SSWs within the medical arena have relatively little influence on it.

Hubbard's physical remedies

Along with psycho-spiritual treatments and potential medical refusals, Scientology treatments, such as vitamin regimens, bind it to the medical arena. For example, Hubbard (1965:1) recommended that all preclears (people who have yet to clear all their engrams) take over 600mg of vitamin E daily and claimed that some preclears should have as much as 1,250mg. In 1958, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) seized and destroyed 21,000 tablets of a compound called Dianazene from the Washington Founding Church of Scientology (Wallis 1975:92). Hubbard devised Dianazene to prevent and treat atomic radiation and incipient cancer, and he alleged to have successfully eradicated several radiation cases (Hubbard 1965:1; 1975:112). Dianazene (also called "gunk bomb") was a vitamin compound, consisting of 100mg of vitamin B1, 15g of calcium, 500mg of vitamin C, and 100mg of nicotinic acid (Hubbard 1965:1). Hubbard (1965:2) advised that individuals take 600 mg of Dianazene each day to prevent radiation sickness.

Side effects are rare for most of the vitamins that Hubbard recommended (Ames, Elson-Schwab, and Silver 2002; Bays and Gayton 2007). But Hubbard's (1975:126, 464 [emphasis in original]) statement, "**vitamins** are not drugs. They are nutrition" implies that vitamins are safe unlike drugs (including medical drugs), which he alleged "are essentially poisons." Large doses of some vitamins, however, can potentially harm patients, especially if they have specific ailments that react to specific vitamins (Ames et al. 2002:649; Bays and Gayton 2007). This potential harm becomes increasingly worrisome due to the isolation of therapeutic practices within the SSW of Scientology. With this isolation, it is possible that reactions to vitamins may not receive effective medical treatment and result in severe damage to the patient's health.

Likewise, the Narconon program, which interacts with individuals from outside of the SSW of Scientology, requires rehabilitation patients to undergo a strict vitamin regimen (L. Ron Hubbard Library 1991:51). "Staffers call the vitamins 'drug bombs'" that allegedly flush drugs from the patients' systems so that they can recover with minimal withdrawal symptoms and recidivism. The best known vitamins used in Narconon are Cal-Mag (calcium, magnesium, oil, and vinegar) and niacin (which is a vitamin B₃ complex [L. Ron Hubbard Library 1991:53; Zellner 1995:118]). Narconon officials allege that "when enough niacin is taken in the right amounts, it appears to break up and unleash the drug and chemical deposits—including LSD crystals—from the body tissues and cells" (L. Ron Hubbard Library 1991:54). Taken in large doses (>1,500 mg), however, niacin can potentially damage body organs (Bays and Gayton 2007). In addition to vitamin regimens, other alternative therapies Narconon utilizes include a daily thirty minute run, four to four-and-a-half hour sauna session (long enough to potentially harm some individuals), and great deal of therapy and auditing courses (L. Ron Hubbard Library 1991:44-47; Zellner 1995:119). Through these processes, Narconon attests to treat drug abuse very effectively (Narconon International 1989, 1990, 1991). But, these alleged successes have not been objectively assessed by associations that bare no affiliation to Scientology.

Conclusion

Through forced isolation from the medical arena, Scientology has effectively established a SSW within which it can establish its own standards with little input from the medical arena. Without this input, however, it is impossible to know how many patients have been or could be harmed from Scientology treatments. Despite the fact that many SSWs within the medical arena are driven out of existence or forced to comply with the legitimizing forces of scientific medicine; Scientology has managed to continue practicing with little to no legitimacy within that arena. In fact, it is Scientology's alleged relation to the SW of religion that allows it to avoid these regulatory forces. By alleging to be a SSW of religion, Scientology escapes influence from the dominant SSWs within the medical arena even though it continues to share "at least one primary *activity* (along with clusters of activity)" that Strauss (1978:122 [emphasis in original]) claims binds SSWs together within a SW.

Moreover, SSWs can exist within several SWs at any time. After Dianetics fell under heavy scrutiny, Hubbard claimed Dianetics only addressed the body, but Scientology explored the process of freeing souls from entanglements in the physical universe (Kent 1999:102). Nonetheless, Scientology incorporated Dianetics and its healing allegations within its alleged religious practices (Kent 1999:97). Even with these supernatural claims a healing theories that deviate from scientific medicine and unite the SW of alternative medicine remain central to Scientology. Both recent and historical editions of Hubbard's own works allege Scientology can heal spiritual, physical, and mental ills.

Although some challenges to medical knowledge are later integrated into medicine, Scientology's theories are too far removed to achieve this task. While Scientologists continue to practice alternative healing methods that were once recognized as dangerous and a potential threat to public health, the regulatory forces within the medical arena continue to ignore these practices (possibly because they pose no threat to the established medical orthodoxy). Therefore, Scientology's case provides insight into how isolation and tight boundaries can not only prevent the interaction and interpretation of SSWs, but also hinder the regulation of those SSWs.

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