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The Scientology Game

- and The Matrix Player's Handbook

Over the past decade, Scientology's [bizarre belief systems](#) have become a matter of public record. Given all the controversy and pop culture jokes, it can be difficult to come up with a frame of reference to understand why the controversial organization has managed to survive for so long. (L. Ron Hubbard wrote the group's cornerstone text, Dianetics, in 1950.)

The more you read about Scientology, the more unbelievable it seems, the more fantastical. The stories of swindles, of double-crosses, of space operas and attempted coups, adventures on the high seas and UFOs, they all seem too ridiculous to be believed. How can a religion be like this? Many have been asking why on earth people are willing to go into Scientology despite the publicly well-known controversies. But I think there is a specific reason that makes it clear why people are willing to believe in Scientology.

It is because Scientology is not a religion, though it claims to be. And it isn't a business, though its current leader, David Miscavige, likes to style himself as Chairman of the Board.

Scientology is a role-playing game!

This isn't something I make up, nor is it an interpretation. In 1954, an [edition of The Aberee](#), a periodical edited by Scientologists and ex-Scientologists that was critical of L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology, said: "Scientology is Hubbard's game."

After all, nobody objects to the rules of Monopoly: How come you can be sent to jail for the arbitrary reason of landing on a certain space? How come we keep going around in a square?

These are simply the rules of the game.

But what is meant by this? Well, the concept of games is embedded in the very fabric of Scientology's worldview. Hubbard wrote endlessly on the subject of games,

identifying them as a core concept of the Scientology metaphysics, while daring us to identify the entire enterprise as a giant game.

The official Scientology website has a [Frequently Asked Questions section](#), and one of the questions is “[How do Scientologists view life?](#)” Their answer:

As a game. A game in which everyone can win and no one need lose.

Scientologists are optimistic about life and believe there is hope for a saner world and better civilization and are actively doing all they can to achieve this.

Oddly enough, in several ways, the closest system Scientology approaches is therefore that of a role-playing game. A role-playing game, or RPG, is a game where players pretend to be someone else. RPGs come in many forms: “tabletop RPGs” like Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), daily private role-playing, or nightly massively multiplayer online role-playing games ([MMORPGs](#)). There’s even the occasional RP party in online chats like Omegle. Like any other healthy social system, the best RPGs teach creativity, teamwork, and discipline.

Very rarely, however, an RPG can spiral out of control, leaving participants emotionally shaken and prone to mistaking what’s fantasy and what’s real. That’s what happening with the Scientology Game. This is called a broken role-playing game.

In this Ebook I will take a look at the things Scientology has in common with RPGs, especially the role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). I will also look at how the line between fact and fiction systematically is seeked blurred in Scientology, and how Scientology has this in common with other New Age systems. The ethics of Dungeons and Dragons (and other role-playing games) is contrary to this a training in the discrimination between fact and fiction.

So, Scientology is not just an RPG. It’s a live-action role-playing game, a LARP, because the players are asked to act out their roles in real life. And that’s where the existential problems for real begins, as I will explain in the last part of this Ebook.

Because it’s a massively-multiplayer live-action role-playing game, with players all over the planet contributing to the world of the game, scientology is the first of its kind: an MMLARP. But as I will show: this is just a symptom of something we all more and more are being seduced into: the massively-multiplayer live-action role-playing game of the Matrix Conspiracy. In this connection I introduce The Matrix Player’s Handbook, a manual for philosophical navigation in this game.

The Ebook is in this way divided into five parts:

1. Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons.....	3
2. Hubbard’s Campaign.....	5
3. Hubbard’s Confabulation.....	19
4. The Matrix Player’s Handbook.....	30
5. Scientology Ethics.....	45

1. Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons

In the same way as childhood game-playing is a preparation for adulthood, it is my claim that D&D can function as a map over the spiritual journey through the dream-labyrinth of life and death. It has an ability to unambiguously describe and explain both dangers and pitfalls, as well as pathfinders and trail markers. So, the game can in that way prepare the players (train their minds) for a deeper spiritual quest for the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of their own lives.

The Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game is about storytelling in worlds of swords and sorcery. It shares elements with childhood games of make-believe. Like those games, D&D is driven by imagination. It’s about picturing the towering castle beneath the stormy night sky and imagining how a fantasy adventurer might react to the challenges that scene presents. Childhood games of make-believe is an important element in my own [Peter Pan Project](#) and the art of seeing life as a play without reason. Neverland is a fictional location featured in the works of J. M. Barrie and those based on them. It is an imaginary faraway place, where Peter Pan, Tinker Bell, the Lost Boys and other mythical creatures and beings live. Although not all people who come to Neverland cease to age, its best known resident famously refused to grow up. The term is often used as a metaphor for eternal childhood (and childishness), immortality, and escapism.

Unlike a game of make-believe, D&D gives logical and ethical structure to the stories, a way of determining the consequences of the adventurers’ action. Players roll dice to resolve whether their attacks hit or miss or whether their adventurers can scale a cliff, roll away from the strike of a magical lightning bolt, or pull off some other dangerous task. Anything is possible, but the dice make some outcomes more probable than others.

In the Dungeons & Dragons game, each player creates an adventurer (also called a character) and teams up with other adventurers (played by friends). Working together, the group might explore a dark dungeon, a ruined city, a haunted castle, a lost temple deep in a jungle, or a lava-filled cavern beneath a mysterious mountain. The adventurers can solve puzzles, talk with other characters, battle fantastic monsters, and discover fabulous magic items and other treasure.

One player, however, takes on the role of the Dungeon Master, the game's lead storyteller and referee. The Dungeon Master creates adventures for the characters, who navigate its hazards and decide which paths to explore.

The game has no real end; when one story or quest wraps up, another one can begin, creating an ongoing story called a Campaign. Many people who play the game keep their campaigns going for months or years, meeting their friends every week or so to pick up the story where they left off. The adventurers grow in might as the campaign continues. Each monster defeated, each adventure completed, and each treasure recovered not only adds to the continuing story, but also earns the adventurers new capabilities. This increase in power is reflected by an adventurer's level.

The many worlds of the Dungeons & Dragons game are places of magic and monsters, of brave warriors and spectacular adventures. They begin with a foundation of medieval fantasy and then add the creatures, places, and magic that make these worlds unique.

The worlds of the Dungeons & Dragons game exist within a vast cosmos called the Multiverse, connected in strange and mysterious ways to one another and to other planes of existence, such as the Elemental Plane of Fire and the Infinite Depths of the Abyss.

Why is it that the images, which especially the fantasy genre work with, have such a haunting effect on us? Is it superfluous entertainment? Is it a waste of time? Is it dangerous? Is it good? And what has it to do with philosophy?

All fans of The Lord of the Rings have probably dreamt of being a part of that universe themselves. I'm sure many have said to themselves: I wish I could be there. That's the whole idea with D&D: to be there yourself as far as this is possible.

Fantasy is rooted in mythology. And mythology is rooted in the deepest aspects of the human life. Your thoughts are words and images, which work in this stream. It is Heraklit's River, it is the River of Time.

But, can't there be a danger that the fascination which drives D&D, can result in that the players can't discriminate between fantasy and reality? That question will be a main part of this booklet. In my pop culture file on [Dungeons and Dragons](#) I continually make a comparison with New Age, which precisely is characterized by seeking to blur the line between fantasy and reality, and since Scientology without doubt is a New Age phenomenon, I will also compare Scientology with New Age.

2. Hubbard's Campaign

Hubbard is of course the Dungeon Master in his own game, not surprisingly since he was a science fiction author. So, there is a story for scientologists, who are the players, the adventurers, the characters in Hubbard's campaign.

Let me give a short introduction to this campaign. Scientology is a body of religious beliefs and practices developed in 1954 by American science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard (1911–86). Hubbard initially developed a program of ideas called Dianetics, which was distributed through the Dianetics Foundation.

Scientology does not preach or impose a particular idea of God on Scientologists. Rather, people are expected to discover the truth through their own observations as their awareness advances. Like New Age, both religion and philosophy are reduced to psychology and psychotherapy, though Scientology are using their own invented pseudoscientific terms. Like in New Age, Scientology's metaphysical theory is idealism. In philosophy, idealism is the group of philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial. Epistemologically, idealism manifests as a skepticism about the possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. In a sociological sense, idealism emphasizes how human ideas—especially beliefs and values—shape society. As an ontological doctrine, idealism goes further, asserting that all entities are composed of mind or spirit. Idealism thus rejects physicalist and dualist theories that fail to ascribe priority to the mind.

On the whole, Hubbard's story is characterized by what I call The Mythology of Authenticity. In my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life – a Basic Reader* I presented what I call the four philosophical hindrances and openings in towards the Source. I presented them in order to show what I think characterizes the spiritual practice, as it exists in all the original wisdom traditions. Ever since I have become increasingly puzzled over, how the self-help industry - which claims to work in accordance with spirituality, and also are inspired by philosophy of life and philosophy of existence - is turning all this upside down. The paradox is that while

the self-help industry is claiming to create the authentic, autonomous, resource-filled and competent human being, at the same time is doing the exact opposite: it is making people dependent of therapists, coaches, others ideas and ideals; making them modeling and imitating so-called successful people, etc., etc. In short: the emphasis of role-playing.

The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement).

The difference between the self-help industry and spirituality is that where authenticity in the self-industry is the same as becoming another (authenticity is a dream, a mythology, and a role in this story), then authenticity in spirituality is the same as being what you are (authenticity is reality); or said shortly: the difference between becoming and being. The reason for this difference is ideological founded. Scientology is especially inspired by management theory, where role playing also is emphasized.

About management theory. We live in a postmodern society, where the distinction between reality and appearance/superficies is about to disappear. Reality is often the images, we receive through the stream of information. And it becomes more and more difficult to see, which objective reality that lies behind. It seems more and more to be the images, which are real, and not some behind lying reality. In that sense all images are equal true - (because there is no objective instance to decide what is more true than something else) - but they are not equal good, for some images are more fascinating than others, some images affect us more than others. Therefore the expression of the image has come in focus. The expression of the image – its aesthetics – decides, whether it fascinates us or bores us. What apply for today, is the intensity and seduction of the expressions. The new truth criterion is, whether something is interesting or boring. Eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away.

The death of the eternal values doesn't only apply for reality, but also the personality. The individual human being lives in a space without truth, in a time without direction, and with an information flow so huge, that the manageability beforehand has to be given up. How are we to live then? Well, the management theorists claim, you do this by creating yourself in a never-ending new narrative. The personality then becomes a persona (mask), an eternal change of role, because when the role begins to stiffen, it becomes uninteresting and boring. New is good, as these theorists say. What before characterized the personality's relationship to the world, was a call. Now the relationship has become a project (or as the management theorists say: a good story, a good branding, a good spin), which is formed, quickly is being carried out

and dropped for the benefit of a new project, that can maintain the constant demand for intensity and seduction.

Just shift the word project with the word campaign, and you have a real life role-playing game. So, the Scientology Game is not so much different than the game all people today are forced to participate in.

It is precisely the management theories, which are lying behind the companies' much talk about the employees' willingness to personal development, flexibility, innovation and readiness for change. Words, that appear in almost any job advertisement.

And therefore also so much bet on PR; that is: not only concerning consumer goods, but also concerning people, for example politicians. The image of the politician in the media is today more important for his choice than the politics, he may advocate. Politics becomes, like everything else, a ware, which has to be sold through good stories (branding, spin). Everything becomes a business, which have to be runned economical. The business community of the management culture, with its active leaders, is being transferred to all areas of life, where everything is being evaluated from if it can be sold, not from the Source of wisdom: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

The management theories, and the belonging self-help industry, have actual become a common accepted ideology. A whole time-tendency within school, folk high school and continuing education, focus on so-called "personal development/self-improvement". Therefore you can't avoid being encouraged to an unrestrained and Egoistic self-expression, where you are letting your choices (story-telling, self-branding) decide everything, in the belief that you through your choices can create a successfull life as it fit you. From the management theorists you hear slogans such as: "It is not facts, but the best story, which wins!"

The intention is to help people using their full potential, to help them in having success, both in work and in private life. The management theorists call it a win-win situation: both the private life of the individual, as well as the company, where the individual is employed, get profit by it – as they claim. What it in other words is about, within these theories, is to become something (be focused on the future), to get success, to conquer a place on the top, to become a winner. Of course, since the whole thing is a role-playing game.

The virtues are self-assertion, storytelling, ambition and will to change. The terms of coaching and self-help are closely connected with these ideals.

There are especially three theories, which function as inspiration for these tendencies:

1) New Thought

2) Humanistic psychology

3) The Postmodern Intellectualism

1) The New Thought movement, or New Thought, is a spiritual movement, which developed in the United States during the late 19th century and emphasizes metaphysical beliefs. It consists of a loosely allied group of religious denominations, secular membership organizations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who share a set of metaphysical beliefs concerning the effects of positive thinking, the law of attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power.

The three major religious denominations within the New Thought movement are Religious Science, Unity Church and the Church of Divine Science (so it is important to know, that there is a special religious movement behind the management theories and the self-help industry, which everyone today, through education and work, is forced to accept – also the use of New Age methods is widely accepted. We are all players in this global capitalistic role-playing game.

The main theory is the subjectivistic belief (philosophical idealism), that your thoughts create reality. By focusing on positive thinking, and by avoiding everything you find negative, you can create your life in accordance with your needs, feelings and wishes. The “positive” is identified as success, money, sex, material glory, etc. Examples of book-titles are: “Prosperity Through Thought Force”, “The Science of Getting Rich”, “Think and Grow Rich” (read more in my article The New Thought movement and the Law of Attraction).

2) Humanistic Psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Rollo May) is a second fundamental inspiration for the management theories.

The humanistic psychology is based on a biological view of human nature; or said in another way: it believes that humans entirely are desirous beings. Carl Rogers is therefore in his self-actualisation theory focusing on the emotional experience of the individual. Abraham Maslow is in his self-actualisation theory focusing on different levels of needs in the individual. Rollo May is in his existential psychology focusing on the will and wishes in the individual.

It is especially from humanistic psychology the term of “self-help” is coming.

If you focus on these aspects of the human nature you will find your true authentic self, they claim. Like New Thought Humanistic Psychology namely has an idea about, that Man has a spiritual/divine core, which is called the self (you could also simply call it the Ego!). Focusing on this is called positive thinking. The concept of positive psychology is therefore a mix of New Thought and Humanistic psychology.

Religion has in this way been reduced to psychology (feelings, will and wishes, – Carl Rogers and Rollo May), spirituality has been reduced to biology (needs – Abraham Maslow), and philosophy has been reduced to ideology (read more about Humanistic psychology in my article [Humanistic Psychology, Self-help, and the Danger of Reducing Religion to Psychology](#)).

3) A third central influence on management theory is the Postmodern Intellectualism (Constructivism, Social Constructivism, Pragmatism, Feminist Epistemology, Deconstructivism, and much more - see my article [Constructivism: the Postmodern Intellectualism Behind New Age and the Self-help Industry](#)). We have already looked at postmodernism. But there are especially three aspects of the postmodern intellectualism you see repeated in the management culture and the self-help literature:

1) George Orwell's novel 1984. The novel is not mentioned (because it actually is a warning against its own terms), but the terms of old-thinking and new-thinking is widely spread (see the Matrix Dictionary entry [Doublethink](#)).

2) Quantum mechanics. Here the pseudoscience of quantum mysticism is spreading a web of lies, where quantum mechanics is used to prove everything from clairvoyance and time travel, to consumer capitalism, healing, law of attraction, etc., etc.

3) Thomas Kuhn's work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Kuhn's concept of paradigm shifts is again used in a pseudoscientific way. The intention is to avoid critique, and get the management theories forced through.

Where the main method in humanistic psychology is psychotherapy, then the main method in postmodern intellectualism (constructivism) is coaching. The paradox in both methods (the management theories and the self-help industry as such) is, as mentioned, that while claiming to create the authentic, autonomous, resource-filled and competent human being, at the same time is doing the exact opposite: it is making people dependent of therapists, coaches, others' ideas and ideals; making them imitate and model so-called successful people, learning them to play the roles in the campaign.

So, The Church of Scientology has therefore no set dogma concerning God that it imposes on its members. As with all its tenets, Scientology does not ask individuals to accept anything on faith alone. Rather, as one's level of spiritual awareness increases through participation in Scientology auditing and training, one attains his own certainty of every dynamic. Accordingly, only when the Seventh Dynamic (spiritual) is reached in its entirety will one discover and come to a full understanding of the Eighth Dynamic (infinity) and one's relationship to the Supreme Being.

Many Scientologists avoid using the words "belief" or "faith" to describe how Hubbard's teachings impacts their lives. They perceive that Scientology are based on verifiable technologies, speaking to Hubbard's original scientific objectives for Dianetics, based on the quantifiability of auditing on the E-meter. Scientologists call Dianetics and Scientology as technologies because of their claim of their scientific precision and workability.

This is not true. *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* is treated as if it were a holy scripture by Scientologists and they treat it as if it were the cornerstone of their church, their religion, and what they consider to be their science. Hubbard tells the reader that dianetics "...contains a therapeutic technique with which can be treated all inorganic mental ills and all organic psycho-somatic ills, with assurance of complete cure..." He claims that he has discovered the "single source of mental derangement" (Hubbard 6). However, in a disclaimer on the frontispiece of the book, we are told that "Scientology and its sub-study, Dianetics, as practiced by the Church...does not wish to accept individuals who desire treatment of physical illness or insanity but refers these to qualified specialists of other organizations who deal in these matters." The disclaimer seems clearly to have been a protective mechanism against lawsuits for practicing medicine without a license; the author repeatedly insists that dianetics can cure just about anything that ails you. He also repeatedly insists that dianetics is a science. Yet, just about anyone familiar with scientific texts will be able to tell from the first few pages of *Dianetics* that the text is no scientific work and the author no scientist. *Dianetics* is a classic example of a pseudoscience.

On page 5 of *Dianetics*, Hubbard asserts that a science of mind must find "a single source of all insanities, psychoses, neuroses, compulsions, repressions and social derangements." Such a science, he claims, must provide "Invariant scientific evidence as to the basic nature and functional background of the human mind." And, this science, he says, must understand the "cause and cure of all psycho-somatic ills..." Yet, he also claims that it would be unreasonable to expect a science of mind to be able to find a single source of all insanities, since some are caused by "malformed, deleted or pathologically injured brains or nervous systems" and some are caused by doctors. Undaunted by this apparent contradiction, he goes on to say that this science

of mind "would have to rank, in experimental precision, with physics and chemistry." He then tells us that dianetics is "...an organized science of thought built on definite axioms: statements of natural laws on the order of those of the physical sciences" (Hubbard, 6).

There are broad hints that this so-called science of the mind isn't a science at all in the claim that dianetics is built on "definite axioms" and in his a priori notion that a science of mind must find a single source of mental and psychosomatic ills. Sciences aren't built on axioms and they don't claim a priori knowledge of the number of causal mechanisms which must exist for any phenomena.

According to Hubbard, the single source of insanity and psychosomatic ills is the engram. Engrams are to be found in one's "engram bank," i.e., in the reactive mind." The "reactive mind," he says, "can give a man arthritis, bursitis, asthma, allergies, sinusitis, coronary trouble, high blood pressure, and so on down the whole catalogue of psycho-somatic ills, adding a few more which were never specifically classified as psycho-somatic, such as the common cold" (Hubbard, 51). One searches in vain for evidence of these claims. We are simply told: "These are scientific facts. They compare invariably with observed experience" (Hubbard, 52).

An engram is defined as "a definite and permanent trace left by a stimulus on the protoplasm of a tissue. It is considered as a unit group of stimuli impinged solely on the cellular being" (Hubbard, 60 note). We are told that engrams are only recorded during periods of physical or emotional suffering. During those periods the "analytical mind" shuts off and the reactive mind is turned on. The analytical mind has all kinds of wonderful features, including being incapable of error. It has, we are told, standard memory banks, in contrast to the reactive bank. These standard memory banks are recording all possible perceptions and, he says, they are perfect, recording exactly what is seen or heard, etc.

What is the evidence that engrams exist and that they are "hard-wired" into cells during physically or emotionally painful experiences? Hubbard doesn't say that he's done any laboratory studies, but he says that in dianetics, on the level of laboratory observation, we discover much to our astonishment that cells are evidently sentient in some currently inexplicable way. Unless we postulate a human soul entering the sperm and ovum at conception, there are things which no other postulate will embrace than that these cells are in some way sentient (Hubbard, 71).

This explanation is not on the "level of laboratory observation" but is a false dilemma and begs the question. Furthermore, the theory of souls entering zygotes has at least one advantage over Hubbard's own theory: it is not deceptive and is clearly

metaphysical. Hubbard tries to clothe his metaphysical claims in scientific garb. The metaphysical theory is as mentioned idealism. This kind of philosophical idealized biologism is seen in numerous variations in New Age (see for example the Matrix dictionary entries [Rupert Sheldrake](#), [Bruce Lipton](#), [Robert Lanza](#), [Gregg Braden](#)).

The cells as thought units evidently have an influence, as cells, upon the body as a thought unit and an organism. We do not have to untangle this structural problem to resolve our functional postulates. The cells evidently retain engrams of painful events. After all, they are the things which get injured....

The reactive mind may very well be the combined cellular intelligence. One need not assume that it is, but it is a handy structural theory in the lack of any real work done in this field of structure. The reactive engram bank may be material stored in the cells themselves. It does not matter whether this is credible or incredible just now....

The scientific fact, observed and tested, is that the organism, in the presence of physical pain, lets the analyzer get knocked out of circuit so that there is a limited quantity or no quantity at all of personal awareness as a unit organism (Hubbard, 71).

Hubbard asserts that these are scientific facts based on observations and tests, but the fact is there hasn't been any real work done in this field. The following illustration is typical of the kind of "evidence" provided by Hubbard for his theory of engrams:

A woman is knocked down by a blow. She is rendered "unconscious." She is kicked and told she is a faker, that she is no good, that she is always changing her mind. A chair is overturned in the process. A faucet is running in the kitchen. A car is passing in the street outside. The engram contains a running record of all these perceptions: sight, sound, tactile [sic], taste, smell, organic sensation, kinetic sense, joint position, thirst record, etc. The engram would consist of the whole statement made to her when she was "unconscious": the voice tones and emotion in the voice, the sound and feel of the original and later blows, the tactile of the floor, the feel and sound of the chair overturning, the organic sensation of the blow, perhaps the taste of blood in her mouth or any other taste present there, the smell of the person attacking her and the smells in the room, the sound of the passing car's motor and tires, etc" (Hubbard, 60).

How this example relates to insanity or psycho-somatic ills is explained by Hubbard this way:

The engram this woman has received contains a neurotic positive suggestion....She has been told that she is a faker, that she is no good, and that she is always changing her mind. When the engram is restimulated in one of the great many ways possible [such as hearing a car passing by while the faucet is running and a chair falls over], she has a feeling that she is no good, a faker, and she will change her mind (Hubbard, 66).

There is no possible way to empirically test such claims. A "science" that consists of nothing but such claims is not a science, but a pseudoscience.

Hubbard claims that enormous data has been collected and not a single exception to his theory has been found (Hubbard, 68). We are to take his word on this, apparently, for all the "data" he presents are in the form of anecdotes or made-up examples like the one presented above. Hubbard is for sure a good science fiction storyteller.

So, Hubbard presents two major divisions of the mind. The reactive mind is thought to record all pain and emotional trauma, while the analytical mind is a rational mechanism that serves consciousness. The reactive mind stores mental images which are not readily available to the analytical (conscious) mind; these are referred to as engrams. Engrams are painful and debilitating; as they accumulate, people move further away from their true identity. To avoid this fate is Scientology's basic goal.

Again, this is typical New Age psychological reductionism; that is: spiritual practice is reduced to psychotherapy, and a "single cause-single cure" idea. The whole vocabulary is just a re-defined version of typical psychotherapeutic concepts of the conscious and the unconscious mind.

By being a kind of New Age psychotherapy based on philosophical idealism we have the four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the source (the psychotherapeutic problems are written in italic):

1) A rational where you take your assumptions, conceptions and values for absolute truths (*hereunder the subjectivistic and relativistic point of view that the power of thought can create reality as it fits you*) and hereby end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and lived live.

2) A life-philosophical, where you are circling around your own past and future (*the idea that you should get in contact with your hidden resources to either becoming yourself as you once were: humanistic psychology and the idea about your inner core, and its method: psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past – or to become the other, you want to become: the constructivistic idea about your potentials, and its*

method: coaching and the hope for a richer future) and hereby are creating a closed attitude, inattention, absent-mindedness and ennui.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are (*the dream about that you in reality are another (humanistic psychology) – or that you always can become another (constructivism)*), where you imitate others, are a slave of other's ideas and ideals (*life is about becoming something fantastic and/or becoming a success; you ought to model fantastic and/or successful people; the conception of Man as chronic in-authentic, a victim who constantly has to heal (humanistic psychology and psychotherapy) or form (constructivism and coaching) himself in the therapeutic practice; psychotherapists and coaches as the new authorities*), and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

4) A spiritual where you are identified with your lifestituation, are dependent on political or religious ideologies (*the supreme good is lying out in the future, and the end therefore justifies the means; you ought to find ways of getting on in the world rather than finding ways of discovering the truth; it is alright to use thought distortions in this quest*) and where you hereby exist on a future salvation. And this evaluating fragmentation is the separation of the observer and the observed.

According to the original wisdom traditions these four hindrances constitute a malfunction in the human mind. And it is this malfunction, which is the cause of the ignorance of the source of life. Ignorance is again the cause of suffering. In this way spiritual practice becomes a practice, which seeks to correct this malfunction. And therefore the two main concepts in spiritual practice are ignorance and suffering. In that way you get the four philosophical openings in towards the source:

1) A rational, where you examine the validity of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and search for coherency between your thoughts and your lived life.

2) A life-philosophical where you are present in the Now, and hereby achieve that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion and identity formation are yourself in the sense of being precisely what you are here and now (no matter how insignificant, or negative, it might seem in relation to your own or others' ideals), live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

4) A spiritual, where you aren't identified with your lifesituation, and where you, independent of religious or political ideologies, live from something deeper: The source itself; the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Said in another way: where essence (the form of consciousness, meditation, the divine source) is one and the same with existence (being precisely what you are, existential presence in the now, life itself, the otherness). And this realized oneness is the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

I am well aware that New Age, and therefore Scientology, is using the concepts of the openings as positive concepts (especially the existence-philosophical opening with its concept of authenticity; that it is good to work with yourself, and realize your illusions, etc.), and therefore would disagree with my claim that they see them as negative. The use of the concepts of the openings is also the reason why it can be hard to discover the paradoxes. But the problem arises because they see them as future-oriented goals or ideals. And in order to reach these ideals you need therapy or coaching. And it is in this "practice" they end in the hindrances. That should be easy to see, when looking at the concepts of the hindrances. What they misunderstand is that the openings precisely are a practice in themselves: the true spiritual practice.

Such a spiritual practice can again be said to contain three aspects:

- 1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others – see my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#)).
- 2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the ego – see my articles [The Emotional Painbody and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#), and [Suffering As An Entrance to the Source](#)).
- 3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images – see my book [Sūnyatā Sūtras](#)).

The reason why New Age, and therefore also Scientology, considers these three aspects, and therefore the four philosophical openings, as negative, is the advocacy of subjectivism and relativism: there is no objective scale of truth that can decide whether something is positive or negative; it is entirely your own subjective feelings, that decide what is positive or negative. Therefore thought distortions can be seen as positive means of getting on in the world.

Some engrams are taught by Hubbard to happen by accident while others are inflicted by “thetans who have gone bad and want power,” as described by the Los Angeles Times. These engrams are named Implants in the doctrine of Scientology. Hubbard

said, "Implants result in all varieties of illness, apathy, degradation, neurosis and insanity and are the principal cause of these in man." Again: typical psychotherapeutic vocabulary.

Hubbard described the analytical mind in terms of a computer: "the analytical mind is not just a good computer, it is a perfect computer." According to him it makes the best decisions based on available data. Errors are made based on erroneous data, and is not the error of the analytical mind. Very similar to NLP (see my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#)).

Dianetic auditing is one way by which the Scientologist may progress toward the Clear state, winning gradual freedom from the reactive mind's engrams and acquiring certainty of his or her reality as a thetan.

David V. Barrett, a sociologist of religion who has written widely about the subject, says that according to Scientology, the "first major goal is to go Clear." Clearing was described to represent "the attainment of Man's dreams through the ages of attaining a new and higher state of existence and freedom from the endless cycle of birth, death, birth ... Clear is the total erasure of the reactive mind from which stems all the anxieties and problems the individual has."

Similar to New Age, Scientology asserts that people have hidden abilities which have not yet been fully realized. They are unconscious. It teaches that increased spiritual awareness and physical benefits are accomplished through counseling sessions referred to as auditing. There is absolutely nothing about meditation. Auditing is one and the same as the spiritual practice. Just shift the word auditing with psychotherapy, and you have New Age. Spiritual practice has been replaced with psychotherapy.

Through auditing, people can solve their problems and free themselves of engrams. This restores them to their natural condition as thetans and enables them to be at cause in their daily lives, responding rationally and creatively to life events rather than reacting to them under the direction of stored engrams. Accordingly, those who study Scientology materials and receive auditing sessions advance from a status of Preclear to Clear and Operating Thetan. Scientology's utopian aim is to "clear the planet", that is, clear all people in the world of their engrams. This is *precisely* the same in *Dungeon and Dragons*, where you move towards higher and higher levels, gaining more and more abilities and power.

Though using different vocabularies, all this is common New Age stuff, which millions of people all over the world believe in. The concept of being in a role-

playing game is also the reason for why New Agers can describe themselves as enlightened masters without relating to whether this is true or not. They say it because they have attained certain levels through private New Age courses and educations.

Auditing is a one-on-one session with a Scientology counselor or auditor. It is similar to confession or pastoral counseling, but the auditor records and stores all information received and does not dispense forgiveness or advice as a pastor or priest of another religion might do. Instead, the auditor's task is to help a person discover and understand the universal principles of affinity, reality, and communication (ARC). Most auditing requires an E-meter, a device that measures minute changes in electrical resistance through the body when a person holds electrodes (metal "cans"), and a small current is passed through them.

Again: a re-defined version of New Age psychotherapy sessions. Mostly, it reminds about NLP psychotherapy. And, as mentioned: the special about New Age psychotherapy is that psychotherapy is believed to be a spiritual practice.

Scientology teaches that the E-meter helps to locate spiritual difficulties. Once an area of concern has been identified, the auditor asks the individual specific questions about it to help him or her eliminate the difficulty, and uses the E-meter to confirm that the "charge" has been dissipated. As the individual progresses up the "Bridge to Total Freedom", the focus of auditing moves from simple engrams to engrams of increasing complexity and other difficulties. At the more advanced OT levels, Scientologists act as their own auditors ("solo auditors").

Douglas E. Cowan writes that the e-meter "provides an external, material locus for the legitimation of [Scientology] practice." Scientologists depend on the "appearance of objectivity or empirical validity" of the e-meter rather than simply trusting an auditor's abstract interpretation of a participant's statements. He also states that without the e-meter, "Scientology could not have achieved whatever status it enjoys as a new religious movement." He also argues that without it, the Church may not have survived the early years when Dianetics was just formed.

The Introspection Rundown is a controversial Scientology auditing process that is intended to handle a psychotic episode or complete mental breakdown. Introspection is defined for the purpose of this rundown as a condition where the person is "looking into one's own mind, feelings, reactions, etc." The Introspection Rundown came under public scrutiny after the death of Lisa McPherson in 1995. I will return to this in the chapter on Scientology ethics.

And now to the science fiction part of Hubbard's campaign, the "space opera," where the concept of a role-playing game really is being set into a mythological context.

As a spiritual practice Scientology beliefs revolve around the immortal soul, the thetan. Scientology teaches that the thetan is the true identity of a person – an intrinsically good, omniscient, non-material core capable of unlimited creativity.

Hubbard taught that thetans brought the material universe into being largely for their own pleasure. The universe has no independent reality, but derives its apparent reality from the fact that thetans agree it exists. Again: this is based on philosophical idealism. Thetans fell from grace when they began to identify with their creation rather than their original state of spiritual purity. Eventually they lost their memory of their true nature, along with the associated spiritual and creative powers. As a result, thetans came to think of themselves as nothing but embodied beings.

Thetans are reborn time and time again in new bodies through a process called "assumption" which is analogous to reincarnation. Scientology posits a causal relationship between the experiences of earlier incarnations and one's present life, and with each rebirth, the effects of the MEST universe (MEST here stands for matter, energy, space, and time) on the thetan become stronger.

Scientology holds that at the higher levels of initiation ("OT levels"), mystical teachings are imparted that may be harmful to unprepared readers. These teachings are kept secret from members who have not reached these levels. The church says that the secrecy is warranted to keep its materials' use in context and to protect its members from being exposed to materials they are not yet prepared for.

These are the OT levels, the levels above Clear, whose contents are guarded within Scientology. The OT level teachings include accounts of various cosmic catastrophes that befell the thetans. Hubbard described these early events collectively as "space opera". Such UFO religious versions of Theosophy are again common stuff in New Age (see my article [The Fascism of Theosophy](#)).

In the OT levels, Hubbard explains how to reverse the effects of past-life trauma patterns that supposedly extend millions of years into the past. Among these advanced teachings is the story of Xenu (sometimes Xemu), introduced as the tyrant ruler of the "Galactic Confederacy". According to this story, 75 million years ago Xenu brought billions of people to Earth in spacecraft resembling Douglas DC-8 airliners, stacked them around volcanoes and detonated hydrogen bombs in the volcanoes. The thetans then clustered together, stuck to the bodies of the living, and continue to do this today. Scientologists at advanced levels place considerable

emphasis on isolating body thetans and neutralizing their ill effects. So, something of these annihilated aliens remains as a sort of "original sin" to be passed on by humans, causing us continual spiritual harm. The Church of Scientology considers the story of Xenu a piece of "religious writing" on par with the Old Testament.

In my article [The Emotional Painbody and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#) I have explained why concepts of original sin, or negative karma, or any re-defined versions, can't be healed through therapy, but only through an intervention from something external, the new, the otherness, the divine. In Scientology, as in New Age as such, the external has been made internal.

Excerpts and descriptions of OT materials were published online by a former member in 1995 and then circulated in mainstream media. This occurred after the teachings were submitted as evidence in court cases involving Scientology, thus becoming a matter of public record. There are eight publicly known OT levels, OT I to VIII. The highest level, OT VIII, is disclosed only at sea on the Scientology cruise ship Freewinds. It has been rumored that additional OT levels, said to be based on material written by Hubbard long ago, will be released at some appropriate point in the future.

A large Church of Spiritual Technology symbol carved into the ground at Scientology's Trementina Base is visible from the air. Washington Post reporter Richard Leiby wrote, "Former Scientologists familiar with Hubbard's teachings on reincarnation say the symbol marks a 'return point' so loyal staff members know where they can find the founder's works when they travel here in the future from other places in the universe."

All in all: Hubbard's story is just one more large New Age system based on a space mythology where the distinction between fact and fiction is being systematical blurred. Scientology is special in the way that the whole of this has been made into a real life role-playing game.

3. Hubbard's Confabulation

One of the core tenets of Scientology is the practice of dianetic auditing, which is one and the same as spiritual practice. Scientology's own website describes auditing as "the process of asking specifically worded questions designed to help one find and handle areas of distress." What they don't tell you is that this is only basic Scientology. At the upper levels, or "OT" levels, [Scientologists literally re-enact scenes](#) from the moment when [Emperor Xenu](#) dropped an H-bomb into a volcano, scattering billions of alien souls into the cosmos.

The scenes are scripted and come complete with sound effects, as you can see from this excerpt from a [1981 Scientology text](#):

INCIDENT TWO SEQUENCE

1. CAPTURE TRANSPORTATION
3. PLACEMENT ON/IN VOLCANO (See list attached)
4. H-BOMB DROPPED ON VOLCANO
5. EXPLOSION
6. TERRIFIC WINDS [sic]
7. THETANS STUCK TO OR PLACED ON ELECTRONIC RIBBON AND PULLED DOWN OVER PEAK
8. BEGINNING IMPLANT (Not 36 days)
9. PILOT SAYS I'M MOCKING IT UP or 'YOU'RE MOCKING IT UP.' (Stop here don't go any further)

According to Scientologists, the result of this role-play session is “a sort of superhuman independence from the physical universe.”

Nearly all RPGs use similar general outlines for gameplay.

“Often players go a session knowing how things are going to go in general, and then play it out in an ephemeral real-time medium,” an anonymous member of an online journal-based RPG explained.

Whether they're informal online planning sessions or published information, [like the kind put out by Wizards of the Coast](#) for D&D aficionados, RPGs use planned outlines before a dramatization in precisely the way Scientology uses scripts to help its members “relive” pivotal moments of Hubbard's created history. In style with other such New Age invented stories, Hubbard's story is based on the thought distortion called *Confabulation*.

The drive to find personal meaning or significance in impersonal or insignificant coincidences (*Subjective validation*) may be related to the powerful “natural” drive to create stories, narratives that string together bits and pieces of information into a tale. Of course truth matters most of the time, but many of our narratives satisfy us regardless of their accuracy. This tendency to connect things and create plausible narratives out of partially fictitious items is called Confabulation.

A confabulation is a fantasy that has unconsciously replaced events in memory. A confabulation may be based partly on fact or be a complete construction of the

imagination. The term is often used to describe the “memories” of mentally ill persons, memories of alien abduction, and false memories induced by careless therapists or interviewers (see my article [Regression psychotherapies](#)). Auditing has clear regression therapeutic elements.

Have you ever told a story that you embellished by putting yourself at the center when you knew that you weren't even there? Or have you ever been absolutely sure you remembered something correctly, only to be shown incontrovertible evidence that your memory was wrong? No, of course not. But you probably know or have heard of somebody else who juiced up a story with made-up details or whose confidence in his memory was shown to be undeserved by evidence that his memory was false.

In my book *A Portrait of a Lifestylist* Confabulation is a central issue. I here show how memories are constructed by all of us and that the construction is a mixture of fact and fiction.

Confabulation is an unconscious process of creating a narrative that is believed to be true by the narrator but is demonstrably false.

Young Earth creationists (YECs) provide an excellent example of Confabulation mixed with *Motivated reasoning*. To maintain their position, YECs must reject nearly all science and confabulate new laws of nature and rules of logic and evidence, and subject themselves to ridicule for their willful ignorance and irrational adherence to the myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people. The same we see within the postmodern intellectualism on Universities, which therefore justifies the tendency within Management theory and New Age to confabulate stories which are not true.

We heard the management theorists say: “It is not facts, but the best story that wins!”

So, in our time with the spreading of subjectivism and relativism - and therefore *Magical thinking* - we are seeing how Confabulation somehow gets a justification. There is in fact - as I claim in my article [The Matrix Conspiracy](#) - a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality.

Communal reinforcement is a social phenomenon in which a concept or idea is repeatedly asserted in a community, regardless of whether sufficient evidence has been presented to support it. Over time, the concept or idea is reinforced to become a strong belief in many people's minds, and may be regarded by the members of the community as fact.

Often, the concept or idea may be further reinforced by publications in the mass media, books, or other means of communication. There is no doubt about that The Matrix Conspiracy (which is a strong advocate for the use of hypnosis and hypnotherapy) will be made propaganda for through mass media phenomena such as Transmedia Storytelling, Alternate Reality Games (for example The Blair Witch Project), Viral Marketing/Internet Hoaxes and Collaborative Fiction.

The phrase “millions of people can’t all be wrong” is indicative of the common tendency to accept a communally reinforced idea without question, which often aid in the widespread acceptance of urban legends, myths, and rumors.

The new New Age product called the WingMakers Project is an attempt to create an alternative history which is fully comparable with Scientology. It is not directly an example of Confabulation, since the creators of the website hardly believe their story to be true, but it will certainly create confabulation in others (see my article [Time Travel and the Fascism of the WingMakers Project](#)).

Alternative history or alternate history is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which history has diverged from the actual history of the world. Since the 1950s this type of fiction has to a large extent merged with science fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or psychic awareness of the existence of “our” universe by the people in another; or ordinary voyaging uptime (into the past) or downtime (into the future) that results in history splitting into two or more time-lines.

WingMakers is also a so-called secret history. A secret history (or shadow history) is a revisionist interpretation of either fictional or real (or known) history, which is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored by established scholars. Originally, secret histories were designed as non-fictional, revealing or claiming to reveal the truth behind the “spin”. Today we see how secret history sometimes is used in a long-running science fiction or fantasy universe to preserve continuity with the present by reconciling paranormal, anachronistic, or otherwise notable but unrecorded events with what actually happened in known history; for instance in the fictional time travel theories. The WingMakers story combines this with the urban legend and alternate history from the Ong’s Hat myth. Though the WingMakers website tries to avoid critique by saying it is a modern mythology (where urban legends are considered as a modern folklore) it also keeps on, precisely as in urban legends, to insinuate that the story is true. It is therefore a piece of pseudohistory.

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of it isn't history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practising pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one's own ideas. An example is *The Celestine Prophecy*. A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g., *The Urantia Book*, *Bringers of the Dawn*, and *A Course in Miracles* (see the Matrix dictionary entry [A Course in Miracles](#)).

New Age is permeated with references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative (you can tell good people by their eyes), stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn't matter. Truth is what you make it. Life's too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.

This New Age subjectivism and relativism (idealism) encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. Subjectivism shuts down people's critical faculties, making them suggestible for any *Ideology*. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking *Magical* about that *Subjective validation* and *Communal reinforcement* lead to bliss. Hypnosis is in New Age directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews (see my article [Hypnosis, Hypnotherapy and the Art of Self-deception](#)).

The subjectivism in the WingMakers Project can be seen in the question about whether the WingMakers material is fact or fiction. The introduction to the project says as follows: "It is fact wrapped in fiction otherwise known as myth." So here we see how subjectivism is used as an attempt to get the line between fact and fiction blurry and obscured. It is also an attempt to avoid critique. Without success, because the story, as mentioned, ends in pseudohistory.

The main creator of the WingMakers Project, James, says himself that the WingMakers' content "is disconnecting people from the established fabric of the New Age and acquainting them to new energies that are present within themselves, not the New Age."

This is actually a typical trait of New Agers: to claim they are unique free thinkers without any connection with New Age. James is namely discussing the Urantia Book, extraterrestrials, 2012, the Shining Ones, DNA activation, Jesus, who he says is a member of the Lyricus Teaching Order, metaphysics, Remote Viewing, chakras, the Christ, the Galactic Federation, the Eternal Watcher, Zeti Reticuli, teachers of light, ascended masters and so on and so forth; all of which are standard New Age subject matter. He promotes ideas such as all existence derives from one source of divine energy, and that everything is universally connected. He talks about energy fields and personal transformation by means of guided imagery and meditation that will ultimately help bring about global transformation. He promotes positive thinking (which the WingMakers website also has (had?) a link to, explained as a metaphysics link), and quantum mysticism including the subjectivistic notion that thought creates reality. He discusses multidimensional reality, Multiverse and multidimensional beings. The Matrix is introduced as a "Hologram of Deception", "supported" by the Simulation theory (see the Matrix dictionary entry on Simulation Theory). He claims to be a reincarnation of famous historical figures. All the WingMakers' associated music would only ever be classed as New Age Music.

Scientology is based on precisely the same concepts, though re-defined.

In John Atack's [A Piece of Blue Sky](#) (download [free PDF version](#)), a takedown of Scientology that the Church succeeded in having banned in England, he explains Scientology's origin of the universe:

Thetans are all-knowing beings, and became bored because there were no surprises. Hubbard asserted that the single most important desire in all beings is to have a [game](#). To have a game, it was necessary to not know certain things, so certain perceptions were negated. Since thetans knew everything, this required them to abandon or suppress perceptions and knowledge. Over time, the loss of perception accumulated and certain thetans began to cause harm to others. [Physical] beings also sought to trap thetans in order to control them.

The thetans have by now become so enmeshed in the physical universe that many have identified themselves totally with it, forgetting their quadrillions of years of existence and their original godly powers.

In Scientology's worldview, we are all thetans who have forgotten that we are just playing a game. But this description fits Scientologists perfectly. And it is not a coincidence that this has happened. It is by design. The concept of humans as designed is standard New Age speak today, and is clearly fascistic - see for example my articles [A Critique of the Human Design System](#) and [The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#), and the posts on Lucifer Morningstar's blog: [Uncover Ancient Truths to Transform Humanity](#), [Rewriting the Genetic Code](#), [Human by Design](#), and [The WingMakers Project](#).

Games feature prominently in an essay Hubbard wrote entitled "The Responsibilities of Leaders," which was ostensibly a review of a biography of Simón Bolívar and Manuela Sáenz entitled *The Four Seasons of Manuela*, by Victor W. von Hagen. In it, Hubbard writes (we have already seen how Scientology is based on management theory):

[T]he foremost law, if one's ambition is to win, is of course to win. But also to keep on providing things to win and enemies to conquer. Bolivar let his cycle run to 'freedom' and end there. He never had another plan beyond that point. He ran out of territory to free. Then he didn't know what to do with it and didn't know enough, either, to find somewhere else to free. But of course all limited games come to end. And when they do, their players fall over on the field and become rag dolls unless somebody at least tells them the game has ended and they have no more game nor any dressing room or homes but just that field. ... And so the players start fighting amongst themselves just to have a game. And if the leader then says, 'No, no,' and his consort doesn't say, 'Honey, you better phone the Baltimore Orioles for Saturday,' then of course the poor players, bored stiff, say, 'He's out.' 'She's out.' 'Now we're going to split the team in half and have a game.'

Hubbard sees the creation of never-ending games as the fundamental task of leadership. If you can create a game and get people to play it, then you can control their behavior.

Later in the essay, Hubbard lists "seven things about power." His second point restates this idea:

2. When the game or the show is over, there must be a new game or a new show. And if there isn't, somebody else is jolly well going to start one, and if you won't let anyone do it, the game will become "getting you."

Hubbard wrote literally thousands of essays to other Scientologists, but this is one of the most important. It is David Miscavige's [favorite essay](#), and he makes it a

mandatory read for many Scientologists, having them “Word Clear” it, which basically means that they have to painstakingly look up the definition of every single word.

As mentioned in the beginning of this Ebook: Many have been asking why on earth people are willing to go into Scientology despite the publicly well-known controversies. But I think that the understanding of Scientology as a game makes it clear why people are willing to believe in Scientology. It is not gullibility which causes Scientologists to accept increasingly preposterous notions, but a simpler, more common phenomenon: suspension of disbelief.

After all, nobody objects to the rules of Monopoly: How come you can be sent to jail for the arbitrary reason of landing on a certain space? How come we keep going around in a square?

These are simply the rules of the game.

Scientology is obviously a role-playing game.

Characters are asked to place themselves in the role of the God-like thetan, unlocking their powers as they climb the Bridge. Additionally, as previously mentioned, there is a strong element of grinding in Scientology, always new levels to reach.

But it’s not just an RPG. It’s a live-action role-playing game, a LARP, because the players are asked to act out their roles in real life. And that’s where the existential problems for real begins, as I will explain in the last part of this Ebook.

Because it’s a massively-multiplayer live-action role playing game, with players all over the planet contributing to the world of the game, scientology is the first of its kind: an MMLARP. But as I have suggested: this is just a symptom of something we all more and more are being seduced into: the massively-multiplayer live-action role playing game of the Matrix Conspiracy.

But that’s not Scientology’s only innovation in the game world. Scientology might, in fact, be the first example of what many think is a new phenomenon: the pay-to-win game.

A pay-to-win game is a game that requires financial contributions in order to succeed. [Candy Crush Saga](#) is such a game, designed to ramp up the difficulty level slowly to the point where people are powerless to resist. So is Zynga’s [Farmville](#).

And, in fact, the stories of Scientology greed are mirrored in stories of Candy Crush Saga or Farmville's effect on its players.

In 2014, Candy Crush Saga players "[spent over \\$1.33 billion on in-app purchases, which was a decline from the previous year.](#)"

A [Wired article](#) called Farmville 2 "the ultimate perpetual-motion money machine," a critique you could easily see leveled against Scientology.

And there are many stories like that. According to [a Kotaku article](#), "[in] the online gaming industry, the most addicted customers—and the most lucrative—are referred to as 'whales.' They spend insane amounts of money buying virtual goods to advance in online games, whether its seeds in Farmville or fake fish tank 'pearls' in Fishies." Or, you can imagine the addition, for levels in Scientology. In all online role-playing games it is almost impossible to reach higher levels if you don't pay for help to do this.

As mentioned, the same tendencies are already present in New Age as such. I have spoken about Scientology's inspiration from management theory. Within management theory we know the phenomenon of so-called Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT). LGAT is a personal development training program in which dozens to hundreds of people are given several hours, to several days, of intense instruction aimed at helping participants begin to discover what is hindering them from achieving their full potential, and living more satisfied lives.

LGAT, or self-help programs, have also been developed for corporations and public agencies, where the focus is on improving management skills, conflict resolution, general institutional strengthening, and dealing with the eternal problem of employees who drink too much or use too many drugs.

LGAT gurus claim to know to help people become more creative, intelligent, healthy, and rich. They focus primarily on the role interpersonal communication plays in self-esteem, and in defining our relationships with others. LGAT gurus claim to know why their participants are not happy, or why they are not living fulfilled lives. They assume everyone are being hindered by the same things, and that one approach will suit all (the "single cause-single cure" approach, which also Scientology offers).

Some LGAT gurus use public television and books as their vehicles. Others give seminars in hotel ballrooms. Some use infomercials and peddle books and tapes to the masses to help them on the path to self-realization and success.

It is a typical American phenomenon, which we see copied all over the world. It is penetrating everything, even on the highest political levels. We all know the concept of spin doctors. The famous coaches within the area travel around in the world as superstars, and their “shows” - with extremely high fees on tickets - are being attended by the highest placed politicians and business leaders, who worship them as divine beings. Just look at Tony Robbins, whom I have dealt with in my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#).

Though some coaches within the area advocate visualization, self-hypnosis, and other techniques for achieving self-actualization, most LGAT programs focus on communication skills and the effect of language on thought and behavior. As with other personal development phenomena, the whole thing is mixed with religion, spirituality and philosophy: a New Age phenomenon.

As the critical thinker Robert Carroll says, then the importance of the messenger and the way the message is delivered can't be overestimated in LGAT. The messenger must be believable. He or she must appear sincere. He must exude confidence. She must know how to use her voice and body to get her message across. He must be a master of communication skills. She must have wit and humour. He must be a raconteur. She must not only talk the talk but appear to clearly walk the walk as well. And he must do it with a large group and utilize the energy and enthusiasm of the group members to infect each other. If she or he is successful, the participants will leave charged up and ready to take on the world. The revival will have revived them. They will be running on sixteen cylinders. They will be tuned up, turbocharged, and empowered to change their lives. They will have experienced a peak experience.

There are examples of people having a psychosis after LGAT seminars. Two decades ago cathartic theories of screaming, pounding, fighting, sitting on the hot seat, and group confrontation were put into place in a number of therapy centers. The popular therapies emerged out of Esalen and other “human potential” centers, growing out of groups like the Living Theater and the Theater of All Possibilities and evolving into myriad innovations like Bio-Energetics, Gestalt Therapy, and Psychosynthesis. Model confrontational programs, such as Synanon and its clones, were being praised left and right.

Another variant of the confrontation therapies appeared in the commercially sold large group awareness training programs such as Mind Dynamics, Direct Centering (aka Bayard Hora Associates, aka The Course, aka Naexus), Arica Institute, Insight Seminars, and Lifespring. These programs were sold to hundreds of thousands of customers over two decades, and some still exist in old, revised, and new forms. Marketed to individuals, organizations, and business and industry as experiential education, they typically use powerful psychological and social influence techniques,

not always bringing about the advertised claims of success and profit to the buyer, and sometimes bringing psychological distress to the clients.

Varieties of these confrontation therapies and self-awareness programs are still with us two and three decades later; in fact, they're going strong, and they are also a part of Scientology, which I will return to this in the last part of this Ebook.

People are going bankrupt one after the other after having been involved in these groups. Criticism is often brutally crushed. Many LGAT gurus are so rich, that they can sue almost anyone. And that is precisely what they do. It is a scare tactic. Which company wants to be sued for running a critical story? These days none. Because the whole thing is also about eliminating critical thinking. Are you critical? Then you really are a nasty person/company. And there are examples on, that LGAT gurus have crushed newspapers' criticism, because they didn't want the hassle of dealing with the lawyers of these gurus. People, who were about to write critical about LGAT in books, have been stopped. The exact same tactic as Scientology, and it works; especially because it is a way of violating the freedom of speech, which has been governmentally accepted as legal.

So those running programs within LGAT must excel in persuasion skills. The trainers (coaches) are motivators. They must use their powerful communication skills to persuade the trainees to believe, that they only have experienced a small taste of the wonderful pleasure and fulfillment that await's those who sign up for advanced training. In short: the trainers are not just teachers, they are sellers. Their main job is to motivate participants to buy more services, i.e., sign up for new courses.

The whole thing typical goes off as follows: you are being invited to attend a free course in for instance NLP. This course is about persuading you to buy an "actual" course in NLP. If you then go on and buy this course, then this course is about persuading you to buy a more advanced (more expensive) course and so on it continues. You are still not becoming that Einstein you would like to be. The only thing you might have learned, is how you yourself can become a coach; that is: a seller of courses, someone who have reached another level in the never ending role-playing game. And if you complain, criticize, well then you must have psychological problems to deal with, and that also requires a course you must buy.

The fact that trainers are unlikely to do any follow-up on their trainees, except to try to persuade them to take more courses, indicates that their main interest is not in helping people lead more fulfilling lives (they can't, because the theories are wrong from the start – just look at the existence-philosophical shipwreck of NLP. No, the trainers have a sales job to do. They are paid commissions for the number of people they recruit and train, not for the number of people they truly help. It is not their

interest/ability to do follow-up studies of their trainees. It is in their interest to do follow-up recruiting calls. Often this is done as hard pressure direct contact with participants, including phone-calls that border to harassment, according to some participants.

Some critics even think that recruitment is the main goal of the program. So there is a hard sell to sign up for future participants. Leaders encourage people to bring friends and family to a free session to celebrate their newfound love of life and invite them to enroll in the next available weekend, and hereafter pay the fee.

Personal development programs such as LGAT and NLP (and even cults like scientology) can point to many “successes.” They can demonstrate that their programs “work”. They can bring forth to testify on their behalf hundreds, if not thousands, of satisfied customers, among them famous celebrities. But it is important to know, that testimonials do not validate a self-help program. Scientifically seen this is pure nonsense, and deeply manipulative. All talk about that testimonials are a proof, is a sign of pseudoscience. Furthermore, the sense of improvement, for instance peak experiences, might not be matched by improved behavior. Just because they feel they have benefited doesn't mean they have. Often they just have become a nuisance for their non-initiated surroundings.

4. The Matrix Player's Handbook

We have seen that Scientology supports the metaphysical theory idealism. The well-known problem with idealism is that it leads to solipsism. Solipsists maintain that your own mind is the only existing reality and that all other realities, including the external world and other persons, are representations of that mind, and have no independent existence. It's an incredible easy idea to debunk (again: see my Matrix Dictionary entry on [Simulation theory](#)). Moreover: it is an extremely frightening thought, which can be compared with the short stories of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. It is a vision of Hell that wants something: you yourself have to simulate infinity each and endless moment in an infinite past and infinite future. You have no family, no friends, no other humans to support you, and no other existence at all, except yourself and your [Sisyphean](#) mind-work. Ergo: there is no reason at all to share the idea because there is no one to share it with. I will return to Jorge Luis Borges.

The question remains: where does all the external challenges comes from? Because it is impossible to constantly create these through your mind. This frightening thought is the reason why the idealist philosopher George Berkeley created the add hoc clause of God, as the one who does all this work for you. But this doesn't explain anything, it could just as well have been anything else. Robert Lanza calls it Biocentrism,

Sheldrake calls it Morphic Resonance, Hawking calls it M-theory. All of them believe in the simulation theory, which basically is advocating the thought of The Matrix. All this could, if you are taking the theory seriously, be your own mind-creation, or a simulation created by evil scientists, extraterrestrials, or maybe even...The Devil?

It ends in an infinite regress: because what creates the Matrix? The questioning doesn't stop. And the polarity argument says: Why is God, and therefore the good, the cause of all this? You can't define the good without the opposite: the evil. It could with precisely the same weight be claimed that the Devil is the cause of all this.

This was also something the philosopher Descartes pondered over, and he came to the concept of The Evil Demon, also known as malicious demon and evil genius. In his 1641 Meditations on First Philosophy, Descartes imagines that an evil demon, of "utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me." This evil demon is imagined to present a complete illusion of an external world, so that Descartes can say, "I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare my judgement. I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or senses, but as falsely believing that I have all these things." Some Cartesian scholars opine that the demon is also [omnipotent](#), and thus capable of altering mathematics and the fundamentals of logic, though omnipotence of the evil demon would be contrary to Descartes' hypothesis, as he rebuked accusations of the evil demon having omnipotence.

So, now we have the concept of the Devil, whose proper name is Lucifer Morningstar, the Dungeon Master of The Matrix Game, and therefore also the unknown Dungeon Master of Scientology and everything else. But what is the nature of the Devil's game? That's what I explore in my book Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story. The back cover description goes like this:

With a preface by the Devil we are introduced to the love story of Dracula and Mina, seen with the eyes of a philosopher.

We learn that the nature of the Devil's game is the paradoxical. This is revealed when we guess that the Devil's proper name is Lucifer Morningstar, which means Bringer of Light.

We hear about the Devil's double incarnation in the pain-bodies of Dracula and Mina. In the search for the unification of their love we undertake a Hero's Journey

through the Earth-Moon Kingdom of the Vampire. Like Vergil in Dante's The Divine Comedy our guide will be Karen Blixen.

In this book I'm using popular culture to shed light on my own pain-body and the dark ancient powers I have struggled with for over two decades. In this way the book is an analogistic portrait of the experiential background for my teaching Meditation as an Art of Life.

The book is an inquiry into the nature of suffering and love.

You could say that it is this book which is *The Matrix Player's Handbook* – a manual for philosophical navigation in the Devil's game. People who have been caught up by the Devil's game (or are identified with the game) could be called paradoxers. You could also call them Matrix Sophists, because they use thought distortions as a way of getting on in the world. The Matrix Sophists are the teachers of self-assertion. The Matrix Sophists play what I will call *The Right Hand of Darkness*. They play the position of the Ego, or the Sophist's hand.

In the book, the Devil, in his preface, suggests that the reader tries the opposite: To play *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the negation of the ego, or the philosopher's hand. He also suggests that what traditional was considered as the Seven Deadly Sins today, with the Matrix Sophists, have been turned into virtues. That's a part of the game, the paradox (I will return to the Seven Deadly sins in the last part of this Ebook).

The Devil also suggests, as part of the paradox, that while the self-help industry is claiming to create the authentic, autonomous, resource-filled and competent human being, at the same time is doing the exact opposite: it is making people dependent of therapists, coaches, others' ideas and ideals; making them modeling and imitating so-called successful people, etc., etc, or said in another way: it turns people into role-players who need to obey the rules of the game.

In short: as a player of *The Left Hand of Darkness* you need to understand the nature of the game, instead of being a blind obeyer of its rules.

So, there are a whole host of philosophical issues surrounding the Devil. There are metaphysical issues regarding the existence and nature of the Devil, Hell, and evil; epistemological issues concerning knowledge and belief in the Devil and other immaterial beings, logical issues pertaining to the Father of All Lies who tricks and deceives people into believing false claims and fallacious, irrational reasoning; ethical issues about devilish behaviour, resisting the Devil, and even the possibility of

a demon remaining a demon while abiding by moral principles; issues on political philosophy having to do with devilish democracies and the wickedness of injustice.

There are straightforward as well as subtle distinctions that can be made between the Judeo-Islamic-Christian conception of the Devil and Satan – and other demonic, evil figures – as many have done throughout history. For example, the German bishop and theologian, Peter Binsfeld (around 1540-1603), divvied up demons according to the seven deadly sins: Lucifer as the demon associated with pride; Satan with anger; Beelzebub with gluttony; Asmodeus with lust; Leviathan with envy; mammon with greed; and Belphegor with sloth. And most of us have heard of, and read, John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost* (1667) where he equates Satan with Lucifer, who's aided by other demons such as Beelzebub, Belial, Mammon and Moloch. In most cases, throughout my book, the Devil, Satan, and Lucifer refer to the same being.

Yes, when dealing with the Devil, it's a good idea to know who you're dealing with.

Notice that many of the names Binsfeld uses are names that we generally treat as interchangeable with "The Devil." But back in the day different names were often used to identify different entities. For example, the Hebrews did not identify the serpent of the Garden of Eden with the Devil, and they did not believe in Hell in the same way many Christians do today. Satan was, to the Hebrews, often described as "the adversary." We assume that means God's adversary. But many Hebrews believed it was the role the angel was given, to be our adversary. Basically, you could think of Satan as the prosecutor in God's trial of your life. That actually explains my own puzzle over the nature of Hell, as a seven year old boy, starting in school for the first time. I will therefore advice the player of *The Left Hand of Darkness*, to follow this [Ariadne's Thread](#), through the maze of the Matrix.

The Devil, to the Hebrews, was known as "the adversary." He didn't choose to take up the mantle of prosecutor (or persecutor); he was appointed that task as an angel. The Hebrew translation of Satan's name makes him sound far more like our opponent than the incarnate evil opponent of God. In fact, it makes him sound like the guy who's doing God's bidding by prosecuting those who deserve it.

But the naming problem gets even worse. "Lucifer," today, is synonymous with the Devil, though it has not always been. The translation of Lucifer means "bringer of light." It was a reference to the morning star that comes right before the dawn. The "Lu" in "Lucifer" shares with it words like *luminous*, *luminescent*, and *lumens*, all words meaning "light." If we look at the book of Genesis, the fall of Lucifer is the verbal equivalent of "light-bringing." And what happens as a result of Lucifer's fall?

Well, we're all damned, but also, we're granted knowledge: tremendous knowledge of Good and Evil. In other words, the darkness of our minds is *illuminated*! I would guess, seen in that light, that the proper name of the Devil is:

Lucifer Morningstar.

So, the ego's complex is there, it requires a name, it wants voice, time, awareness. If not, it destroys the consciousness and drowns the world in pollution and violence.

In the book I deal with someone who could be termed as a real-life Dungeon Master, who *precisely* played with the paradoxical in the Devil's game: Karen Blixen. Karen Blixen's novel *Out of Africa*, is in short about finding the universal images behind everything, the original, as she calls it, the ancient, where you live in accordance with yourself, with God's plan with you.

When Karen Blixen was lying in her sickbed, and after having realized, that this maybe was God's plan with her - she made a pact with the Devil, that she from now on could change everything into stories. And in her stories, and in her following life as a storyteller, she realized the dreams she had had as a young woman in Africa.

All her following stories, for example *Seven Gothic Tales*, are reflections of her own experiences with destiny. They are all about how to find the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life - God's plan with you - and about people who live in accordance with these power lines, and about people who don't live in accordance with them (see my article [What is karma?](#)).

These themes continue in Karen Blixen's storytelling ever after.

And Karen Blixen herself became, in her pact with the Devil, an embodiment of the same demonical element, which fascinated Milton, Romanticism, Baudelaire, etc. The Devil haunted in her, and around her, just like he haunted in figure of Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as Mefistoteles in Goethe's *Faust*, or as Conchis in John Fowles' *The Magus*; all examples of Dungeon Masters making life into stories.

The Devil haunts in the change of Karen Blixen's looks, the change of the beautiful, brightly dressed woman, into the blackdressed witch-like woman. Karen Blixen even liked to speak about herself as a witch (in D&D: a sorcerer or wizard), since she considered a witch as someone, who has contact with the deep, ancient secrets and powers (in D&D: arcane magic). And this is not only something symbolical. Karen Blixen's access to the collective time's astral worlds, her transformation into a witch,

her paranormal abilities, are something completely real, which several times have been depicted by people, who were close to her.

She created an energy-mandala around herself, a magical circle. You can directly feel the magic just by reading her books. It waves out of her stories, just like it also can be felt in books, which are written about her.

The magical circle of poets and men of letters (among whom Thorkild Bjørnvig, Aage Henriksen, Jørgen Gustava Brandt and Jørgen Kalchar), who moved around Karen Blixen on Rungstedlund, were after own statements, in works and scriptures, grabbed by a strange indefinable magic. They were lovers, but however clearly not lovers in ordinary sense. They were in apprenticeship, but not in apprenticeship in ordinary sense; they were in pact with, and weaved together with Karen Blixen, and at the same time they came deeper in towards their own creative potentials (in D&D: the collaborative creation). They were drawn into the collective time. Both in their being together with Karen Blixen, and in their works, they melted together with a world of archetypes, primordial images, myths and dreams. All of it was changed into stories.

What she referred to as God's plan with you, she also referred to, as that to find your role in the story, and since she herself was the storyteller, she didn't mind forcing the circle around her to find their roles in her story. To adhere to God's plan with you, just like the man in the story about the stork, she could also refer to, as that to keep the author's idea clear. And the author was herself. The roles in this play she referred to as marionettes (in D&D: characters). The good marionettes are rewarded, not with well-being or a special kind of happiness, but with a fate, an image that was remembered, for example a stork (in D&D: higher levels). They would get to see the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of their lives – God's, or the author's plan with them.

She could in other words refer to herself as God himself, or the Devil himself. The witch. She could do this, because she apparently was conscious about herself manifesting an universal image. She referred to herself as being 3000 years old and of the same age as the prophet Esajas, whom she had an intensive, conflict-accented relationship with. And all of it, her own fate, the relationship with her students (or role-players), can be found reflected in her stories in a fount of variations. Reality and stories are melting together.

The initiation ritual into this magical circle was the same for each of them. She told the individual person the story of her disease, and that she in her sickroom had a visit from the Devil, which she entered into the pact with, that she from that moment of

would be able to transform everything that happened to her into stories. Furthermore that if they mixed blood with a witch, they would get access to the same ancient, deep secrets and powers, which she herself possessed. They would get an image, they would get to see the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of their lives – God’s, or the author's plan with them.

That Karen Blixen herself, through her fate and her distinctive attitude to this fate, opened her mind to the collective time's polar relationships, is without any doubt. That she radiated an enormous witch-like eros and at the same time a dramatic tragic fate, is also without any doubt.

This, not only personal creative power, therefore constellated - in its quality of collective - a circle of highly intelligent and sensitive men, who together with Karen Blixen, constituted this fascinating energy-mandala-phenomenon.

How demonical was it? It is an open question, because as already mentioned, what she in her letters refers to as the Devil, she in her stories refers to as God. She keeps on being an aesthetic borderfigure between the realized and lesser realized transmission of energy and consciousness. As Kierkegaard says, then God’s nature always unites the opposite.

My concept of Lucifer Morningstar is inspired by Karen Blixen, but the concept of the paradoxical, or the possibility of playing *The Left Hand of Darkness*, is not possible in Scientology. This is due that they blindly are playing *The Right Hand of Darkness*. Furthermore: role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons discriminate between real life and the game. In fact (and that’s my point in my pop culture file on *Dungeons and Dragons*): the logic and the ethics of the game train the players in this discrimination. This was only vaguely seen by the players in Karen Blixen’s game, and in Scientology, and in the Matrix Conspiracy as such, this line is systematical seeked blurred.

Karen Blixen was very well aware as herself as a Dungeon Master creating a magical circle around her, though she of course didn’t knew this concept. In their seminal game design textbook, Rules of Play, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman discuss the “magic circle” of a game. It serves as a protective frame that surrounds the game and prevents the external world from interfering. This is essential in a game where the metaphysical theory is idealism, which doesn’t allow the existence of anything external to the mind. As psychologist Michael Apter writes:

In the play state you experience a protective frame which stands between you and the “real” world and its problems, creating an enchanted zone in which, in the end, you

are confident that no harm can come. Although this frame is psychological, interestingly it often has a perceptible physical representation: the proscenium arch of the theater, the railings around the park, the boundary line of the cricket pitch, and so on. But such a frame may also be abstract, such as the rules governing the game being played.

And so Scientology has an elaborate magic circle that protects its members from the outside world. Members are instructed not to read critiques of Scientology, because they will hamper the individual's progress in Scientology. Reading that the game you are playing is a fraud or scam might decrease your desire to play, because it destroys the "protective frame" that enables gameplay.

Additionally— though the Church denies it—Scientologists practice the act of "disconnection," whereby people the Church has declared Suppressive Persons (or SPs) are cut off from their friends and family within the Church.

This boundary, between the real world and the world of the game, must be vigilantly protected, or the entire foundation breaks down. This is essential to the development of the game ethics which I will return to in the end of this Ebook. I will just mention that this ethic is based on warrior virtues, or a reversed version of the Seven Deadly Sins.

In his Philadelphia Doctorate Course, a series of lectures given around the founding of Scientology, Hubbard [says](#):

"Now, we get the rules of the game as follows: limitations on self and others, obedience to rules, unconsciousness of rules and reality—we pretend the rules are real."

This is the affirmation of the magic circle, a declaration that the rules of the game will be obeyed, and an attempt to lose oneself—like the aforementioned thetans—inside the construct of the game.

Hubbard continues:

"There is a necessity to have a new game coded before one ends the old game ... Otherwise, everyone becomes a maker of games with no game. ... Now, the value of pieces. Ownership of pieces may be also the ownership of players. And the difference between players and pieces, and the difficulty of players becoming pieces ... so you've got to hide the rules from the pieces..."

And he later explained the basic hierarchy of games:

“Now, the caste system of games consists of this: The Maker of Games, he has no rules. ... He runs by no rules. The player of the games: rules known but he obeys them. ... And the assistant players merely obey the players. ... And the pieces obey rules as dictated by the players, but they don’t know the rules.”

Getting bolder, he explains how to make a piece out of a player:

“First, deny there is a game. Second, hide the rules from them. Third, give them all penalties and no wins. Fourth, remove all goals. All goals. Enforce them—their playing. Inhibit their enjoying. ...”

And later:

”To make a piece continue to be a piece, permit it to associate only with pieces and deny the existence of players. It can’t be a game.”

This is a description of how thetans may be lost inside a game of their own creation, but it also details the exact mechanisms by which Scientologists are trapped within the game of the Church.

So, there are three major ways in which Scientology fits Hubbard’s definition of a game, and not just any game, but a game which turns players into pieces.

1. Scientology Never Ends.

When Dianetics was published, the stated goal of the text—the game—was to attain the state of clear. However, as the demands of PR and circumstances dictated, more and more people were declared clear.

This produces a real problem: becoming clear is the purpose of Dianetics, once accomplished, people need a new game to play.

For that, Hubbard turns to a technique used in most videogames: DLC. DLC is not a Scientology acronym, but a gaming one. It means “downloadable content,” and it refers to additional material which may be purchased by a player, new levels, new abilities, new goals. Precisely as the above-mentioned LGAT courses.

All of Scientology is essentially expensive DLC-expansions to the original game. Rather than just attempting to become clear, now players have a new goal: the attainment of the state of Operating Thetan.

A “clear” has perfect recall, a brilliant mind, no emotional difficulties confronting problems, and a number of other powers. But a clear is just a person, and it gets so much better than that, an Operating Thetan has powers beyond that of ordinary people.

At the beginning, these powers are small, as super-powers go: levitation, mind-reading, the ability to influence minds. But as you ascend the Bridge and attain higher OT levels, you begin to develop the ability to control space and time. Remember: the metaphysical theory is idealism.

These are enticing powers, for sure, but it is very difficult to achieve them. Some estimates put the cost at around [\\$380,000](#). But it’s easy to make a mistake and—like Chutes and Ladders—fall down the Bridge and have to repeat levels, at additional cost.

2. The Rules are Hidden from the Player

Much has been made of Scientology’s belief in the Xenu, the alien warlord who features prominently in Scientology’s creation myth. However, most Scientologists are unfamiliar with this story, because you have to get to Operating Thetan level III to have the [story revealed](#).

The reaction to this revelation is often one of shock, confusion, anger, or bewilderment. Some Scientologists report thinking that it is some sort of test, that if you believe it, you flunk. But that is not the case, believing in the Xenu story (called Incident II within Scientology) is essential to your progression up the Bridge.

This secrecy is part of the reason that Scientology so strongly attacks its critics. They have argued in court that the Xenu story is [akin to Coca-Cola’s “Secret Formula,”](#) and should be protected as a kind of trade secret. The other part is the warrior virtues promoted.

The Xenu story is not just a creation myth. It is the introduction of a new phase of Scientology auditing. Now, you are attempting to remove not only the engrams which keep your rational mind from functioning, but also the “body thetans,” additional souls which have implanted themselves into your body. Explaining this is like describing to someone how to play Dungeons & Dragons.

I could write for a hundred paragraphs and the basic concepts would only be barely addressed. I include it only to illustrate how—in Scientology—the “rules of the game” are kept hidden from the player, exactly in the manner that Hubbard said would turn a player into a piece.

3. The Magic Circle is Enforced

Scientology includes several features which prevent the protective frame, or magic circle, of Scientology from being broken. I already mentioned the concept of disconnection, whereby believing Scientologists are prevented from interacting with apostates (called “Suppressive Persons”) because such interaction might weaken or break the magic circle.

This is all in keeping with Hubbard’s suggestion for making a piece out of a player by “[permitting] it to associate only with pieces and deny the existence of players.” But there are more insidious ways that the circle is enforced, and one of them is through the creation of a very specific jargon, in which [hundreds of terms are defined or redefined](#) to create a closed universe of meaning. For example: This jargon makes it such that two Scientologists can have a conversation—full of words like engram, thetan, 2D, clear—which have meaning only within Scientology. You cannot even discuss these concepts from a critical perspective, or from outside the game, because they only exist as terms inside the game. Again: this is standard New Age stuff (see for example the Matrix Dictionary entry on [Ken Wilber](#), who with his insider jargon also are creating a game-like reality for his followers).

A non-Scientologist and a Scientologist cannot have a discussion about Scientology with any real content, because they will not be speaking the same language. In the same way with Wilber devotees and non-Wilber people. It’s a typical cult phenomenon.

Karen Blixen is a real-life example of genius collaborative creation. And my concept of Lucifer Morningstar is based on precisely the paradox which is so central in Karen Blixen: the paradox, that what she in her letters refer to as the Devil, she in her stories refer to as God. Lucifer Morningstar is a kind of [alter ego](#), and his collaborative creation is based on a [Hoax of Exposure](#), something which ought to bring people into thinking for themselves. In the context of D&D he is certainly a Dungeon Master, and his story, or campaign, is the Matrix Conspiracy. The villains are of course the Matrix Sophists, and the monsters are the paranormal phenomena explained by the concept of spiritual crises.

The whole hoax is based on that Lucifer Morningstar as an avatar is going directly into the pop culture worlds of today, and using the same methods as the villains in order to fool them. He plays several characters, either as the Devil, Dracula, Batman, or even Hannibal Lecter, all characters who represent our dark side, our painbodies.

It is by no means that I have chosen Lucifer Morningstar's place of home in Venice, Italy. Venice is the real-life analogy of mazes, masks and mirrors, which double in endless alleys and inter-dimensional gateways. See for example Lucifer Morningstar's blog page [A Venetian Grandmother](#), a story by Hugo Pratt about his childhood in Venice; a story fictitiously told to a party in Lucifer Morningstar's palazzo.

In my booklet *The Psychedelic Experience versus The Mystical Experience* I explain that spiritual crises are my explanation of paranormal phenomena; they are the dark inter-dimensional gates between parallel worlds. That there is a current collective spiritual crisis in progress, can be seen in the many film and series that focuses on this. In popular culture, in films and Netflix series such as *Stranger Things*, *Black Mirror*, *Dark*, *Alternate Carbon*, etc., etc. we see how the border between fact and fiction is broken down, and the gates to the parallel worlds are being opened.

I will explain this with a literary example. The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges was fascinated with philosophical idealism, and this is also central to one of his longest stories, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." It is a "what if?" think-piece: if the idealists' speculation really were true, what would a world based upon them be like? It is striking how much it reminds about *The Matrix Conspiracy*, and it could be taken as an experiential analogy to *The Matrix Conspiracy*. That's of course not that strange though, since the main philosophy of the *Matrix Conspiracy* is idealism, especially Berkeleyan idealism, and all the later versions of it: the New Thought movement, The Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis and the Simulation theory. And: Scientology.

Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius is an imaginary place written into existence by a secret society of such philosophers, an early member of which was Berkeley. The project grows over the generations thanks to the munificence of Berkeley's near namesake, one Buckley, an American millionaire. The story begins with a mirror and an entry into a rogue copy of an encyclopedia, both idealist images: the mirror because what we see in mirrors has no substance but is just a product of our perception, and the encyclopedia because, rather than a work which describes something real, this rogue encyclopedia invents a fictional region called Uqbar. Borges has much pseudo-philosophical fun summarizing this entry and the volume of a subsequent encyclopedia that describes a whole invented planet called Tlön. We are given a

synopsis of thought on Tlön, its languages, its heresis, the refutation of those heresies, its mathematics, its literature, and so on. We learn that objects there depend upon being perceived so, in a *reductio ad absurdum* of idealism, an amphitheater exists only because some birds or a horse visit it (again an example of the poetic beauty in idealism). The southern languages of Tlön contain no nouns because this is a radically anti-materialist world. Things there have no objective existence, but can, somewhat illogically, be manufactured by being imagined (this is *precisely* what The New Thought movement claims). There is no causality on Tlön because separate perceptions cannot be linked in time; thus a smoldering cigarette, a bush fire, and smoke are not related causally, any connection between them being considered merely an association of ideas. The philosophers of Tlön invent paradoxes in the style of Zeno in which, playing Devil's advocate, they conjecture that things really do exist independently of the mind, and then find sophisticated arguments to disprove such an outlandish heresy (that is *precisely* what Quantum mysticism practices). Borges's humorous account of the Tlönian philosophers' logic-chopping in an attempt to prove what appears to them as common sense gives us pause as we are invited to question the assumptions we, in turn, make about our own world. In Tlön, as there is nothing outside the perceiving mind, psychology lies at the heart of its culture (well, that's almost a fact in our own world today). This is an interest not in the individual psychology but in the idea that mind is all there is, and the mind in Tlön is just clusters of perceptions. Indeed, one school of Tlönian thought postulates that everybody is really the same mind. The absence of self on the planet has various repercussions; for example, in the planet's languages the only verbs used are impersonal ones. There is a range of opinion on Tlön about time: for some Tlönian schools of thought time exists, predictable enough, only in the mind and exclusively in the present.

[I think that the past and the future are reactions to challenges from the Now (which includes what is independent of the ordinary mind). But the past and the future in themselves are the *thinking's* past and future, and the *thinking* can't be present in the Now. As Kierkegaard says: "When that to exist (being in the now) can't be thought, and the existing person yet is thinking, what does that mean then? That means, that he thinks momentarily, he thinks ahead and he thinks behind. His thinking can't obtain an absolute continuity"].

"Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," then, provides a test bed for idealist philosophy, humorously showing how different from our world (so far) is a world based on a philosophy that purports to describe ours.

Borges drew upon philosophy as a springboard for his fiction. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" opens with a first-person narrator in a reassuring world of real places and

real people (yes, according to idealism people are not real, included your family and friends), many of whom were Borges's own friends, and it is to that world that the reader is returned after the account of Tlön, to be informed in a postscript of the fictional origins of the imaginary planet. If the story had ended at that point we would be left with a neatly rounded tale which took us from the real Buenos Aires, to an invented land, and back again. However, the postscript subverts that structure and is far from reassuring. Borges published "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" in May 1940, as Hitler began his western offensive. Borges's postscript, futuristically dated 1947, predicts how the world would have been changed by then: it is a terrifying place in which the imaginary planet of Tlön, which seemed to have no existence outside the pages of an invented encyclopedia, invades reality: people die in agony, and all our languages, history, and methods of intellectual inquiry based on materialism disappear, as Tlön with its one big idea takes over. Reality gives way; "The truth is, it wanted to cave in. Ten years ago [i.e. 1937], any symmetry, any system with an appearance of order – dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism – could spellbind and hypnotize mankind. How could the world not fall under the sway of Tlön, how could it not yield to the vast and minutely detailed evidence of an ordered planet?"

The frightening thought is that The Matrix Conspiracy is an idealist ideology that *precisely* like Tlön are invading reality right now.

Borges implies that we constantly search for explanations because we are uncomfortable with the messy unknowability of the world (the unknown, the unimaginable, the unlimited, the uncontrollable). In the 1930s he saw the rise of seductively simple political philosophies. They were, of course, man-made and therefore, like Tlön which is also the product of human intelligence, they were neat and rendered the world comprehensible. That was their fatal attraction. In the face of totalitarian ideologies, like that of Tlön, of Nazism, and of communism which subordinate the individual to the masses, the first-person narrator in the story resists by reasserting an identity which had been progressively eclipsed in the story. He celebrates doubt – the essence of intelligence for Borges – and different languages, with all their unsatisfactory, untidy idiosyncrasies: "As for me, I pay no attention to all this; during quiet days in my hotel in Adrogué, I go on revising (though I never intend to publish it) a hesitant translation in the style of Quevedo of Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial*." This is his way of keeping totalitarian barbarians at bay.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War Borges published his chilling tale "*Deutsches Requiem*." The narrator is Otto Dietrich zur Linde, a member of a German military dynasty who explains, on the eve of his execution by the victorious Allies, how he came to run a Nazi concentration camp where he tortured and

executed Jewish prisoners. He presents himself as a sensitive and cultured nationalist who found spiritual refuge in music, literature, and metaphysics, although, as often with Borges's first-person narrators, we become aware that he is deceiving himself as well as us. Zur Linde's interest in Schopenhauer led him to abandon Christianity, and when he read Nietzsche – or at least the Nietzsche of the Nazis – he not only made some of that philosopher's views his own, but acted upon them, cultivating ruthlessness (in my pop culture files Nietzsche is depicted as the villain over them all: the Sophist king). His account is shot through with the language used by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Spengler, and with his selective understanding of their writings which, like a religious zealot, he applies uncritically to his own life. For example, he maintains that everything we do and experience is preordained and willed by us; he considers himself a superman; his attitudes are those of a warrior caste, and he learns to exalt war and violence; he admires strength of will above all else, despising and overcoming the weakness of compassion which he claims was natural to his character and which Nietzsche had identified with a "slave mentality"; and, perversely, he exults in the destruction of what he holds most dear: Germany. He finds justification for this in an apocalyptic vision, partly absorbed from Nietzsche and Spengler, in which violence and destruction are to be welcomed because a new order will arise from the ashes.

Borges paints a disturbingly human portrait of a man who claims that his philosophical beliefs are at odds with his nature, but who nevertheless convinces himself of their truth and so persuades himself to embrace Nazism and the opportunity to act monstrously. We appreciate, as he does not, that a combination of that ideology and his personal inadequacy – his fear of cowardice, his intellectual rather than militaristic bent, the loss of a limb which prevented him from soldiering as his forebears had done, and in particular his suggested sexual impotence – lie behind zur Linde's cruelty, and that he is the victim of his own convictions. In this story Borges tries to understand how a country he himself loved succumbed to an ideology he despised. A lesson emerges from it: philosophy is intellectually engaging, but it is perilous when read unintelligently; that is, without appropriate detachment, for the reader may then come to believe in its conclusions and even act upon them. After the horrors of the War and as news of the Nazi concentration camps reaches him, Borges's advocacy of scepticism is urgent. This least dialectic and most metaphysical of writers adopts an ethical stance. And in this is the real nature of philosophy: learn how to think for yourself, and not how to think in accordance with someone else's philosophy.

Lucifer Morningstar's avatar is especially played by his monster [The Ghost Rider](#) and his Penance Stare. The Penance Stare is a supernatural ability that incapacitates victims and is only performed by the Spirits of Vengeance or Ghost Riders. When in

close combat, the Ghost Rider locks eyes with his opponent and induces self-mortification by imposing him or her every negative actions, behavior and sensation, from sins to the pain of others, that that individual has ever committed in their lifetime. The Ghost Rider is *The Mirror*, which I talked about in my Matrix Dictionary entry on [Spiritual Placebo](#). In a world he conceives as pure illusion and a product of our inner eye, Lucifer Morningstar raises the question of whether the character(s) he plays means he has become illusion incarnate. And this triggers the question in the viewer's mind of whether what is apparently a fake character actually hides a deeper truth.

The Ghost Rider is in many ways a pop culture version of Raguel. Raguel (also Raguil, Rasuil, Rufael, Raquel, Reuel, and Akrasiel) is an angel mainly of the Judaic traditions. He is considered the Angel of Justice. His name means "Friend of God".

Raguel is almost always referred to as the archangel of justice, fairness, harmony, vengeance and redemption. He is also sometimes known as the archangel of speech. In the Book of Enoch, cap. XXIII, Raguel is one of the seven angels whose role is to watch. His number is 6, and his function is to take vengeance on the world of the luminaries who have transgressed God's laws.

Raguel's duties have remained the same across Jewish and Christian mythologies. Much like a sheriff or constable Raguel's purpose has always been to keep fallen angels and demons in check, delivering heinous judgment upon any that over-step their boundaries. He has been known to destroy wicked spirits, and cast fallen angels into Hell (called Gehenna in the Hebrew Old Testament and called Tartarus in the Greek New Testament). Read more in my book *Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story*, and [Lucifer Morningstar's blog](#).

Nothing of all this has anything to do with Satanism, only with the acknowledgement, that the Devil is real, also inside ourselves. Something anybody of a spiritual quest sooner or later must face.

5. Scientology Ethics

In his book *The Hero's Journey* the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, the monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed. This monomyth explains spiritual crises in the light of mythology (one of the types of spiritual crises is in fact called *Spiritual Crises as a Hero's Journey*), but it of course also fits perfectly into the D&D

universe. And it fits into the Scientology Game if you see it as a “warrior’s journey.” (read more in my article [The Hero’s Journey](#)).

The Scientology game is namely characterized by a so-called “warrior ethics.” The Sea Organization (Sea Org) is a legally nonexistent Scientology organization, which the Church of Scientology describes as a "fraternal religious order, comprising the church's most dedicated members". All Scientology management organizations are controlled exclusively by members of the Sea Org. David Miscavige, the de facto leader of Scientology, is the highest-ranking Sea Org officer, holding the rank of captain.

According to Hubbard, the Sea Org's mission is "an exploration into both time and space". In accordance with Scientology beliefs, members are expected to return to the Sea Org when they are reborn; the Sea Org's motto is "We Come Back". Members must therefore sign a symbolic billion-year "religious commitment", pledging to "get ethics in on this planet and the universe." Members who leave the Sea Org are issued a "freeloader's bill", retroactively billing them for any auditing or training they have received. Although the bill is not legally enforceable, these Scientologists may not receive services at any Scientology organization until they pay the bill and perform an ethics course.

All new recruits are required to complete compulsory novitiate before they are allowed to join the Sea Org, which has been described as a boot camp. During this phase, recruits are not yet considered to be Sea Org members, and are required to address all Sea Org members, regardless of rank, as "sir" as well as having to run everywhere instead of walking. Married couples are separated for the duration of the EPF and are not allowed to have private or intimate contact with each other.

While on the EPF, recruits perform five hours of manual labor every day, in addition to a five-hour study period that consists of studying several Scientology courses, including the Basic Study Manual, an introductory course in study tech, introduction to Scientology Ethics, a basic course in Scientology ethics, as well as courses concerning the history of the Sea Org and personal hygiene and grooming.

According to the Church of Scientology, ethics may be defined as the actions an individual takes on himself to ensure his continued survival across the dynamics. It is a personal thing. When one is ethical, it is something he does himself by his own choice.

According to Hubbard's teachings, Scientology ethics is predicated on the idea that there are degrees of ethical conduct.

The Church's official position declares that "(T)he logic of Scientology ethics is inarguable and based upon two key concepts: "good and evil", and goes on to state that "nothing is completely good, and to build anew often requires a degree of destruction" and "to appreciate what Scientology ethics is all about, it must be understood that good can be considered to be a constructive survival action".

In this way we see that the Scientology's ethics are in good compliance with its metaphysical theory idealism. Its ethics are so-called ethical subjectivism, which mean that good and evil exclusively are what you yourself subjective feel is good and evil. There isn't any objective standards for what is good and evil. The absurdity in this is swiftly seen. If you for example preach ethical subjectivism and believe that everything is subjective and for that reason equally good - (you must accept that what other people subjectively feel is good, is based on precisely the same standards as your own truth) - you have thereby accepted that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence, are as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue. Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you haven't got any objective frame to start from. You can't criticize anyone for argumentation bungling, or to replace arguments with machine guns, because this presupposes, that there is an objective foundation in your arguments.

But this also implies that Scientology itself hasn't any objective frame for defending itself towards attack. Ethical subjectivism is logical fallacious because it of course considers itself as being true. But it can precisely, in accordance with its own built-in subjectivism, not itself be regarded as truer than for example objectivism. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions.

The self-contradiction is that ethical subjectivism makes an exception of its own position: the very assertion of ethical subjectivism is itself non-subjective. Subjective ethics are of course a brilliant method for the advocacy of just about anything which normally would be considered unethical.

Several scholars, writers and former members have compared the Sea Org to a paramilitary group. In [Tom Cruise: An Unauthorized Biography \(2008\)](#), Andrew Morton described it as a "fraternal paramilitary organization", and wrote that members are instructed to read [The Art of War](#) by warfare expert Sun Tzu, and [On War](#) by General [Carl von Clausewitz](#). He wrote that Scientology leader [David Miscavige](#) created an elite unit within the Sea Org called the "SEALs", named after the United States Navy SEALs, who receive better lodging, sustenance, and uniforms than other Sea Org members.

Lawrence Wright wrote in *The New Yorker* in 2011 that the Sea Org used small children drawn from Scientology families for what the article described as forced child labor. The article described extremely inhumane conditions, with children spending years in the Sea Org, sequestered from mainstream life.

As mentioned: this warrior ethics is a reversed version of The Seven Deadly Sins. In his book *The Good Life* the Danish philosopher Mogens Pahuus writes, that if you ask about, what the old Scandinavians (the Vikings) saw as the highest and the greatest in life, the ecstasy of life, then the answer would be, that it is self-assertion – the assertion of oneself and the family. He also writes, that you in Christianity find a diametrically opposite view of self-assertion, – both in its Catholic form as in Protestantism. In Saint Gregory and Thomas of Aquinas haughtiness/pride/self-assertion was the first and greatest of the seven so-called deadly sins. And in Luther self-assertion nor was a goodness, but the vice over all vices. It is the seven deadly sins Dante in *The Divine Comedy* must look in the eyes one after one, in order to be able to progress. He must use the discrimination, which is the purification process, where you look your destiny in the eyes and do penance after having realized how your perspective distorts reality.

In that light you would say that self-assertion is a vice. Self-assertion is a kind of self-interest, where everything turns around the Ego, and therefore makes the mind mediocre. To live in a world, which is controlled by self-assertion, without being self-assertive, means, truly, to love something for its own sake, without seeking a reward, a result; but this is very difficult, because the whole world, all your friends, your relatives, struggle to achieve something, to accomplish something, to become something. Today we are all somehow a part of this role-playing game.

So, today self-assertion once again is considered as a virtue. Self-assertion is the essence of the Scientology ethics, though there is not much Viking over a scientologist. But this kind of ethics is mainstream due to The Matrix Conspiracy as such. The gurus (warriors) are the many advocates for the market and the economical competition, as for instance several management theorists as we already have seen. And the education-instrument is the self-help industry. The disciples are the consumers; that will say, that this outlook of life obviously is shared by most people in our society: that it is about becoming something, to get success, to conquer a place on the top of the mountain, to become a winner. Mogens Pahuus believes that the modern ideal about becoming a success, a winner, is a perverted ideal. The society praises a self-assertion, which has gone over the top, and there dominates a self-assertion, which is a vice, because it both spoils the life of the self-assertive, and the lives of those, whom the self-assertive measures himself in relation to, and whom he wants to overpass.

Pahuus mentions some of the forms of self-assertion: 1) Vanity, which is a vice, because the vain-full always is bearing in mind, how he or she looks like, or is considered like, in the eyes of others. 2) Ambition, which is a vice, because you here constantly are on the way forward, or upwards. 3) Haughtiness, which is a vice, because you here, in your feeling of own superior value, look down at others, are letting others feel their inferiority; that is: because haughtiness is unethical. But also in the arrogant himself, haughtiness is destructive: it isolates. 4) Joy of power. The ethical seen most violating form of self-assertion is the joy of having power over others, of controlling others, or oppressing them.

Pahuus quotes Alfred Adler and says that the above-mentioned forms of self-assertion are attack-characterized. But there also exists a non-attack characterized form, as for instance the hostile isolation, anxiety and bashfulness, which you see in the *Underground Man* in Dostojevskij's small novel *Notes from an Underground*.

The vice (the paradox) in the different forms of self-assertion is that it leads to an unreal life. All in all: another unknown Dungeon Master, Lucifer Morningstar, has introduced his own game: the Devil's Game.

The Scientology game has the same characteristics as ideologies. That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. In Scientology we have seen this in connection with the magical circle. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attribute on to everyone, who don't agree). An ideology is therefore characterized by, that it is not able to contain, or direct refuses, rationality and critical thinking. We all know how dissidents have been killed, jailed and tortured under totalitarian ideologies. Combined with the warrior attitudes of Scientology this creates an aggressive approach towards critics.

Scientology's response to accusations of criminal behavior has been twofold; the church is under attack by an organized conspiracy, and each of the church's critics is hiding a private criminal past. In the first instance, the Church of Scientology has repeatedly stated that it is engaged in an ongoing battle against a massive, worldwide conspiracy whose sole purpose is to "destroy the Scientology religion." Thus, aggressive measures and legal actions are the only way the church has been able to survive in a hostile environment; they sometimes liken themselves to the

early Mormons who took up arms and organized militia to defend themselves from persecution.

The church asserts that the core of the organized anti-Scientology movement is the psychiatric profession, in league with deprogrammers and certain government bodies (including elements within the FBI and the government of Germany). These conspirators have allegedly attacked Scientology since the earliest days of the church, with the shared goal of creating a docile, mind-controlled population.

On the other hand, Hubbard has proclaimed that all critics of Scientology are criminals. Hubbard wrote on numerous occasions that all of Scientology's opponents are seeking to hide their own criminal histories, and the proper course of action to stop these attacks is to "expose" the hidden crimes of the attackers. The Church of Scientology does not deny that it vigorously seeks to "expose" its critics and enemies; it maintains that all of its critics have criminal histories, and they encourage hatred and "bigotry" against Scientology. Hubbard's belief that all critics of Scientology are criminals was summarized in a policy letter written in 1967:

Now get this as a technical fact, not a hopeful idea. Every time we have investigated the background of a critic of Scientology we have found crimes for which that person or group could be imprisoned under existing law. We do not find critics of Scientology who do not have criminal pasts. Over and over we prove this. -- Critics of Scientology, "Hubbard Communications Office Policy Letter," 5 November 1967.

Scientology has a reputation for hostile action toward anyone who criticizes it in a public forum; executives within the organization have proclaimed that Scientology is "not a turn-the-other-cheek religion". Journalists, politicians, former Scientologists and various anti-cult groups have made accusations of wrongdoing against Scientology since the 1960s, and Scientology has targeted these critics - almost without exception - for retaliation, in the form of lawsuits and public counter-accusations of personal wrongdoing. Many of Scientology's critics have also reported they were subject to threats and harassment in their private lives.

The organization's actions reflect a formal policy for dealing with criticism instituted by Hubbard, called "attack the attacker". Hubbard codified this policy in the latter half of the 1960s in response to government investigations into the organization. In 1966, Hubbard wrote a criticism of the organization's behavior and noted the "correct procedure" for attacking enemies of Scientology:

(1) Spot who is attacking us.

- (2) Start investigating them promptly for felonies or worse using own professionals, not outside agencies.
- (3) Double curve our reply by saying we welcome an investigation of them.
- (4) Start feeding lurid, blood, sex, crime actual evidence on the attackers to the press.

Don't ever tamely submit to an investigation of us. Make it rough, rough on attackers all the way. You can get "reasonable about it" and lose. Sure we break no laws. Sure we have nothing to hide. BUT attackers are simply an anti-Scientology propaganda agency so far as we are concerned. They have proven they want no facts and will only lie no matter what they discover. So BANISH all ideas that any fair hearing is intended and start our attack with their first breath. Never wait. Never talk about us—only them. Use their blood, sex, crime to get headlines. Don't use us. I speak from 15 years of experience in this. There has never yet been an attacker who was not reeking with crime. All we had to do was look for it and murder would come out.
 —Attacks on Scientology, "Hubbard Communications Office Policy Letter", 25 February 1966

Hubbard detailed his rules for attacking critics in a number of policy letters, including one often quoted by critics as "the [Fair Game](#) policy". This allowed that those who had been declared enemies of the Church, called "[suppressive persons](#)" (SPs), "May be deprived of property or injured by any means...May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed". (taken from HCOPL Oct. 18, 1967 Issue IV, Penalties for Lower Conditions)

The aforementioned policy was canceled and replaced by HCOPL July 21, 1968, Penalties for Lower Conditions. The wordings "May be deprived of property or injured by any means...May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed", are not found in this reference. Scientology critics argue that only the term but not the practice was removed. To support this contention, they refer to "HCO Policy Letter of October 21, 1968" which says, "The practice of declaring people FAIR GAME will cease. FAIR GAME may not appear on any Ethics Order. It causes bad public relations. This P/L does not cancel any policy on the treatment or handling of a SP."

But the warrior attitude is also directed towards the members of Scientology. In 2007, a 25-year-old woman from Sydney was charged with murdering her father and sister and seriously injuring her mother. Her parents had prevented her from seeking the psychiatric treatment she needed because of their Scientology beliefs.

In 2012, Debbie Cook, who ran the "spiritual Mecca" for seventeen years, came forward and accused the church of repeated accounts of "screaming, slapping" and being "made to stand in a trash and water's poured over you" in efforts to confess her sins. This was all done in "[The Hole](#)", located at Scientology's International base in the California Desert. She claims that she was taken there against her will and forced to stay for seven weeks. The church states that she "voluntarily" participated in their program of "religious discipline". [Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath](#) is an 2016-2017 A&E documentary series that investigates abuses of the Church of Scientology by interviewing of former members.

The most widely publicized death of one of the organization's members was that of 36-year-old [Lisa McPherson](#) while in the care of Scientologists at the Scientology-owned Fort Harrison Hotel, in Clearwater, Florida, in 1995. McPherson, at the time, was displaying symptoms suggesting she was struggling with mental illness; in one case, she removed all of her clothes after being involved in a minor traffic accident, later remarking she had done so in hopes of obtaining counseling. The Church, however, intervened to prevent McPherson from receiving psychiatric treatment and to keep her in Church custody. Records show that she was then placed in a Scientology program, the [Introspection Rundown](#), which was forced isolation used to handle a psychotic episode. Weeks later, she was pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital. The autopsy identified multiple hematomas (bruises), an abrasion on the nose, and lesions that were consistent with "insect/animal bites". An autopsy showed that she had died of a pulmonary embolism.

Florida authorities filed criminal charges against the Church of Scientology, who denied any responsibility for McPherson's death and vigorously contested the charges. The prosecuting attorneys ultimately dropped the criminal case. After four years, a \$100 million civil lawsuit filed by Lisa McPherson's family was settled in 2004. The suit resulted in an injunction against the distribution of a film critical of Scientology, [The Profit](#), which the Church claimed was meant to influence the jury. The terms of the settlement were sealed by the court.

There is nothing surprising in the "therapeutic" methods used in Scientology. It is all standard New Age psychotherapy.

In connection with New age psychotherapy cults techniques of propaganda are often referred to as 1) Thought struggle, 2) Brainwashing, 3) Thought reform, 4) Debility, dependency, and dread (DDD syndrome), 5) Coercive persuasion, 6) Mind control, 7) Systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence, 8) Coordinated programs of coercive influence and behavioral control, 9) Exploitative persuasion.

Generally cults and groups using thought-reform processes do not have a visible product, such as a computer or a book or a car, to sell. They have an invisible product. Therefore, those who offer psychological, political, or spiritual transformations and enlightenment have learned that either they need to prove that they have special knowledge of some kind and that a follower will gain something unusual by participating in their group, or they need to use specific persuasion techniques that will convince followers to stay with them.

If cult leaders can't give you "proof," then they can manipulate you into believing. Through a variety of skillful manipulations and deceptions, they will persuade you that they have the ultimate solution.

In general, cult leaders combine two methods of persuasion:

1. Inducing predictable physiological responses by subjecting followers to certain planned experiences and exercises, and then interpreting those responses in ways favorable to the leaders' interests
2. Eliciting certain behavioral and emotional responses by subjecting followers to psychological pressures and manipulations, then exploiting those responses to induce further dependence of the cult.

The Church of Scientology is frequently accused by critics of employing brainwashing.

The controversy about the existence of cultic brainwashing has become one of the most polarizing issues among cult followers, academic researchers of cults, and cult critics. Parties disagree about the existence of a social process attempting coercive influence, and also disagree about the existence of the social outcome—that people become influenced against their will. In connection with academic researchers of cults it is important to be aware that postmodern intellectuals claim that concepts such as brainwashing are created by ideological opponents. I have several times said that postmodern intellectualism is a part of the Matrix Conspiracy. It is for example typical that postmodern researchers of religion, are defending New Age, and are criticizing Christianity. They even claim that the concept of a cult also is created by ideological opponents of cults. What they say is that here isn't any difference between a cult and other religious groups. But this is a confusion of concepts since the concept of a cult is necessary in order to point out what divides a certain group from another kind of group.

One alleged example of Scientology's possible brainwashing tactics is the [Rehabilitation Project Force](#), to which church staff are assigned to work off alleged wrongdoings under conditions that many critics characterize as degrading. Some of these allegations are presented in Stephen Kent's *Brainwashing in Scientology's Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF)*. Articles that claim to rebut those charges include Juha Pentikäinen's *The Church of Scientology's Rehabilitation Project Force*.

Critics of Scientology have also accused Hubbard of authoring [The Brainwashing Manual](#), but these accusations have not been confirmed. Hubbard did publish a copy of this manual on two technical bulletins, "for the benefit of the auditors who may face victims of brainwashing". Hubbard discussed brainwashing in several of his works, but these, "expose brainwashing as something that should not be practiced", and "the practice of brainwashing could only end up in disaster".

The final results of the [Anderson Report](#) in 1965 declared:

"The Board is not concerned to find that the scientology techniques are brainwashing techniques as practiced, so it is understood, in some communist-controlled countries. Scientology techniques are, nevertheless, a kind of brainwashing...The astonishing feature of Scientology is that its techniques and propagation resemble very closely those set out in a book entitled Brain-washing, advertised and sold by the [HASI](#)".

The Church of Scientology has also been criticized for their practice of "[disconnection](#)" in which Scientologists are directed to sever all contact with family members or friends who criticize the faith. Critics including ex-members and relatives of existing members say that this practice has divided many families. The disconnection policy is considered by critics to be further evidence that the Church is a cult. By making its members entirely dependent upon a social network entirely within the organization, critics assert that Scientologists are kept from exposure to critical perspectives on the church and are put in a situation that makes it extremely difficult for members to leave the church, since apostates will be shunned by the Church and have already been cut off from family and friends.

The Church of Scientology acknowledges that its members are strongly discouraged from associating with "enemies of Scientology", and likens the disconnection policy to the practice of shunning in religions such as the Amish.

Brainwashing or not. Scientology has something in common with the self-industry as such. If a person really succeeds in adopting the advices of the self-help books she really gets a problem. Not only does she have to fight with the never-ending development, and the egoism. She is also becoming a serious problem for her

surroundings. Because she is now, as the Danish psychologist, Nina Østerby Sæther, says, a potential psychopath.

On a course about psychopaths Nina Østerby Sæther realized, that there were many similarities between psychopathic traits, and the advices, which are given in self-help books. It made her point out some frightening resemblances (see my article [Humanistic Psychology, the Self-help Industry and the Danger of Reducing Religion to Psychology](#)).

Though some of the self-help books' advices might sound similar to true spirituality (most often they directly quote and use spiritual texts taken out of context), then you have to remember how the wholeness and the external otherness have been removed. Religion and philosophy have been reduced to psychology and psychotherapy: or said in another way: it has been reduced to the mind; philosophical idealism. And when this happens it takes a totally wrong course.

In Jeffrey Masson's book *Against Therapy*, you can see that all these characteristics are characteristics for all psychotherapists and psychotherapies, no more or less, since they are part of the underlying assumptions about psychotherapy that are common to all of them. In short: in psychotherapy the characteristics are, scary enough, directly used as theoretical tools.

In this ground-breaking and highly controversial book, Masson attacks the very foundations of modern psychotherapy from Freud to Jung, Fritz Perls to Carl Rogers. With passion and clarity, the book addresses the profession's core weaknesses, contending that, since therapy's aim is to change people, and this is achieved according to the therapist's own notions and prejudices (subjective idealism), the psychological process is necessarily corrupt, and can justify the use of brainwashing, beating and torture.

John Rosen, a professor in psychiatry, who had been analysed but never trained as a psychoanalyst, originally professed in 1947 that his new method, which he called "direct analysis," led to schizophrenic patients "recovering" and having their "psychosis resolved." Claiming that his patients had not been loved during childhood, Rosen reported spending sometimes as much as ten hours a day with one patient. What was eventually revealed about what went on in those sessions is almost too horrific to imagine. Some of the techniques were tantamount to extreme violence and torture. You can see documented details in Masson's book.

An article by Rosen in a 1947 *Psychiatric Quarterly* reported on thirty-seven of his cases. Rosen claimed that all thirty-seven individuals recovered. Six years later in his book *Direct Analysis*, Rosen reported that thirty-seven of the original sample were no

longer psychotic and were doing well. Yet, in a follow-up study in 1958, nineteen of the former patients from Rosen's report were located by researchers at the New York Psychiatric Institute. They found that seven of the nineteen were not schizophrenic at that time, nor had they ever been; instead, six were evaluated as neurotic and one as manic-depressive. These independent researchers concluded that "the claim that direct analytic therapy results in a high degree of recovery remains unproven."

Finally, in March of 1983, thanks to the courage of a number of Rosen's former patients who came forward to speak out and expose the abuses they suffered, Rosen surrendered his medical license. In his book Jeffrey Masson is precisely intrigued over, that it was the patients, and not the professional colleagues of Rosen (or Rosen's followers) who were sane enough to expose Rosen. And it is this peculiarity Masson especially is focusing on, when showing his radical point of view, that all psychotherapies are corrupt.

Rosen had been charged with "sixty-seven violations of the Pennsylvania Medical Practices Act and thirty-five violations of the rules and regulations of the Medical Board, [which included] the commission of acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption, as well as misconduct in the practice of medicine, practicing medicine fraudulently, beyond its authorized scope, with incompetence, or with negligence."

In fact, unbeknownst to many, as far back as 1960 Rosen had lost a case in New York in which he had been accused of beating a female patient. From investigation, depositions, and testimonies given regarding the various charges against Rosen, information came forth about the kind of care patients were given at Rosen's facilities. Striking, stripping, and beating patients were a regular occurrence. Patients were kept locked in security rooms without toilets, and at least two patients died. Both male and female patients were sexually abused by Rosen and forced to engage in the most atrocious acts with him and sometimes with other patients.

Rosen may have lost his license, and you might think that his case is an exception due to his personality, but this is not so. His therapy is called *Direct Analysis*, and the confrontational techniques that he professed live on today. The vampirised spirit of John Rosen still rambles around. That's the point Masson is making. The reason why more patients not are exposing all this is either because of fear or embarrassment, but it can also be due to the thought distortion called *Subjective Validation*. Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate even if these statements *not* are accurate. It is clear that in idealism subjective validation is the only way of validation that exists.

As mentioned, many of Rosen's methods have filtered into the profession and are alive and well today in various therapies that regress and infantilize clients to the point of having them drink from baby bottles and be humiliated and punished in other ways. When asked by Jeffrey Masson in an interview in 1986 if he still used the methods he learned from Rosen, a doctor replied that he used "physical methods that included shaking patients, sitting on them, and wrestling with them."

Because there is more awareness and concern today about abuse and patients' rights, the doctor qualified his comments by saying that "he would use something like the cattle prod only experimentally."

Attack therapy is an outgrowth of ventilation theory. Here the patient becomes the subject of verbal abuse, denunciation, and humiliation. This assault may come either from the therapist in individual sessions or from peers in a group context. Sometimes both methods are used. This negative and destructive development in therapy was encouraged by two major influences. First came the growth of unmonitored group therapies, which took hold in the late 1950s and continue to this day. Second was the widespread popularity of some form of therapeutic *encounter*. The actual therapeutic value of much of this type of work with clients is highly questionable.

In the 1960s and 1970s the world witnessed a kind of free-for-all approach to psychotherapy (due to the spread of postmodern intellectualism – subjectivism and relativism – the same approach to science, treatment, philosophy, spirituality, etc., etc., is today seen in the New Age environment). As life became faster paced, so did the quest for a quick and radical cure for all problems, including psychological and emotional ones. Groups, which until that time were quite sedate and conventional, suddenly turned into "marathon" encounter sessions that went on for hours, days, or entire weekends. Therapy – whether one-on-one or in a group setting – took on a confrontational and piercing quality. In many cases there was no history taking at all, simply an almost coercive thrust to deal in the "here and now," often with a stress on nonverbal techniques. As one critic put it, "Tact is 'out' and brutal frankness is 'in.' Any phony, defensive or evasive behavior...is fair game for...critique and verbal attack."

It seems that with the acceptance of this pressing immediacy, all sense of propriety and ethics was thrown out the window. There were no rules, no standards, no guidelines in this milieu where the overarching goal was to express and experience feelings. It's not surprising then that more violent and active psychotherapy techniques would arise in this out-of-control climate, and that the abreactionist school of thought would be adopted by so many – mental health practitioners and purveyors of self-improvement programs alike.

Theories of screaming, pounding, fighting, sitting on the hot seat, and group confrontation were put into place in a number of therapy centers. The popular therapies emerged out of Esalen and other “human potential” centers, growing out of groups like the Living Theater and the Theater of All Possibilities and evolving into myriad innovations like Bio-Energetics, Gestalt Therapy, and Psychosynthesis. Model confrontational programs, such as Synanon and its clones, were being praised left and right.

Another variant of the confrontation therapies appeared in the commercially sold large group awareness training programs such as Mind Dynamics, Direct Centering (aka Bayard Hora Associates, aka The Course, aka Naexus), Arica Institute, Insight Seminars, and Lifespring. These programs were sold to hundreds of thousands of customers over two decades, and some still exist in old, revised, and new forms. Marketed to individuals, organizations, and business and industry as experiential education, they typically use powerful psychological and social influence techniques, not always bringing about the advertised claims of success and profit to the buyer, and sometimes bringing psychological distress to the clients.

Varieties of these confrontation therapies and self-awareness programs are still with us two and three decades later; in fact, they’re going strong. We have already looked at them.

Outrageous Betrayal: The Dark Journey of Werner Erhard from est to Exile – is a book by Steven Pressman. This book outlines the following: At the age of twenty-four, Jack Rosenberg was a smooth-talking car salesman in Philadelphia with a wife and four small children. But on a spring day in 1960, he abandoned his family to forge a new identity as Werner Hans Erhardt and to begin a bizarre journey that eventually brought him to the New Age shores of California. As the founder of a Human Potential movement known as “est,” which stood for Erhard Seminars Training, Erhard in the 1970s and 1980s attracted hundreds of thousands of followers who sat through grueling sixty-hour “training” sessions that promised personal transformation and profound insights into human relationship, eventually spiritual enlightenment.

Over the years, est’s customers – from curious housewives to famous Hollywood celebrities – paid millions of dollars to receive Erhard’s brand of enlightenment. To many of them, Erhard became an exalted guru who deserved nothing less than godlike devotion. In the 1980s, the est training was replaced by a similar program called the Forum.

But Werner Erhardt was eventually plagued by problems and controversy, culminating in horrifying allegations, which he hotly disputed, that he had forced his

wife to live apart from her children and sexually abused two of his daughters. Erhard also became the focus of renewed charges that his est movement had taken on some of the trappings of a cult. At the same time, the Internal Revenue Service persisted in claims that Erhardt's est-related companies owed millions of dollars in back taxes. A bitter divorce battle between Erhard and his second wife further helped to fuel speculation that est's approach to personal transformation was both cruel and hollow. Finally, in early 1991, Erhard left the United States, preferring the solitude of self-imposed exile to the glare of harsh publicity.

The methods of Werner Erhardt continues today in a multitude of variations. The question remains: why do people buy this, and continues to buy it, even after the exposures? You could answer with a quote from Erhardt himself: "I need to see I am a con man before I can see my true value." That is: the whole book, in the eyes of Erhardt's devotees, just outlines a Master's correct practice of his teaching. Furthermore: Erhardt and followers just follow the prescript that psychotherapy in its very essence (subjectivism) is corrupt, and, in the name of psychotherapeutic healing, justifies the use of brainwashing, beating and torture. They are simply models of loving beings, winners caring for the losers.

The theory of verbal abuse, denunciation, and humiliation as a road to spiritual enlightenment, is also the reason for, that the devotees use this outside the environment, in family and friendship relations, and in public discussions. I have tried to be attacked many times by these vampires, due to my critique. In public internet forums they have found a big subject of victims. Internet trolling, fake news, alternative facts, pseudoscience, etc., is a feast for them. It is in fact a very common way of "communication" method of New Age.

So, most important is the fact that the basic underlying principles are the same for all therapies, whatever their theoretical orientation or the techniques of their practice. Masson is referring to a state of mind that takes precedence over any particular orientation, the very decision to offer therapy in the first place. While some individual therapists are warm, accepting, loving human beings, no therapist, regardless of background or school, escapes the criticism Masson has made in his book. By virtue of the simple fact that they are offering *therapy*, they are subject to the criticism Masson has made. As individuals they may be of high character and intelligence, but once they done the invisible robe of authority that psychotherapy invests them with they have entered an entirely different realm.

This realm is the thought distortion *Truth by Authority*. There are today a vast amount of non-enlightened, self-proclaimed New Age/self-help gurus (in science of religion they actually have no numbers of this enormous market) who get authority by

claiming, that their teaching/technique, either is coming from a state of enlightenment, is being channeled from some kind of divine source, or are coming from clairvoyant abilities.

They might very well have strange paranormal abilities, it doesn't matter in this question, because if such teachers put their teaching forward in this way, you can be hundred percent sure, that this teacher has a problem with *ego-inflation* (if he is not directly a fraud - and then there are thousands of within New Age). Why? Because no real enlightened master would argue in this way. True enlightened masters, or sober spiritual teachers, speak from their own source, and are always characterized by humility. Just look at Dalai Lama, who incessantly claims, that he hasn't reached the full Rigpa, and that he just is a beginner. True enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, are also always philosophers, who are giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions. This is precisely the experience Raphael had when she met the true masters, and an indicator of the difference between a true teacher and a false.

Truth by Authority is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities, etc.) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate, because the statement may be based on different kinds of thought distortions, for example *Nondual bias*.

People, who in their arguments/teachings, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teachings, are hundred percent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. Again it is interesting to see, that true enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, never do this. And interesting, that probably most of the many people, who have made a business on being clairvoyants/mediums/channelers etc., will fall for *Truth by Authority*.

Role-playing appeals to people who like to pretend they're someone else for a while, whether they're actors or [everyday would-be heros](#). At a basic level, RPGs ask you to spend a bit of time pretending to be a fictional character.

Rarely, we find groups of people who spend the vast majority of their time either role-playing as other characters or actually living in the belief that they are other characters. Perhaps the best known example of this belief system is [Otherkin](#), which, while not a religion of its own, does have some [religious overtones](#). Similar are those who practice [Multiplicity](#) (sometimes called [Plurality](#)), many of whom have been diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder, who seek to gain wider acceptance and legitimacy for their belief that they inhabit multiple personas.

Where things get tricky is when some of those personas turn out to be fictional characters from novels, anime, or movies—often known as [Otakukin](#) or as [Fictives](#). It can be hard to draw a clear line between role-playing a fictional character and believing a fictional character has taken over your body as a Fictive.

One person who knows this all too well is Abbey Stone, who for years was the victim of an RPG-turned-cult. Last year, Stone [wrote about her experiences](#) in an attempt to warn potential new victims about the cult's figurehead, Andrew Blake, previously known as Jordan Wood.

Stone details years spent interacting with fictional characters from *The Lord of the Rings* (and some of the film's actors, too), all of whom Wood believed were real people inhabiting another plane of reality.

Stone describes how each *Lord of the Rings* persona that she and Wood's other victims encountered while channeling had some kind of pain that had to be processed so that they could heal and move on. Note: This has nothing to do with the real Orlando Bloom.

“We helped Pippin (Raz) and Merry (Kali) come to terms with the rest of their post-quest lives, and from the curse that had tormented them for the next 6000 years....And Andy [Blake] came – that is, now he was the duplicate soul of Orlando Bloom, who also had a history full of abuse and unprocessed pain. We had to ‘help’ him too.”

Jordan Wood's mini-cult was remarkably similar in practice to Scientology, which also posits that every human is full of alien souls, termed “thetans,” which Scientology seeks to identify, heal, and purge. The idea of multiple souls in one body is not unique to Scientology—many regression psychotherapies espouse the idea, and

Otherkin and Multiples believe in the concept of [walk-ins](#), or other souls who essentially pop in for a visit now and again.

But the belief in fictional identities that need to be prioritized above one's own well-being, purged, and set free at all costs? That is something uniquely cult-like.

Stone's incredible story has an [equally incredible climax](#): Wood forcing her to abandon her belongings and walk from Buffalo, N.Y., to the Canadian border in the middle of winter. Explains Stone, "He had a character who was a Mountie who explained how very, very easy it was to seek political asylum in Canada."

Stone escaped. Wood, now going by Andrew Blake, [went on to become involved in a triple murder-suicide](#). A source close to the subject alleges that he is currently working at a Protestant church camp in the Northwestern U.S.

Stone experienced firsthand the ways in which a cult mentality can grow out of intense situations where reality becomes blurred. Scientology [has been capitalizing](#) on such situations for decades.

So, the international cult [Scientology](#) resembles both normal, healthy role-playing games (RPGs) and unhealthy ones that can even become cults themselves.

Even regular RPGs can turn into epic timesucks. Rare is the person who hasn't lost a few hours of sleep to their RPG. One anime fan told said, "Once I stayed up nearly two days during a private chat RPG. It was just a really intense session."

In this [articulate breakdown of sick systems](#), LiveJournal user issendai lists the characteristics of a system—be it personal, professional, or otherwise—that perpetuates its own dysfunction. Among the traits of a broken system are keeping your members busy, too tired to think, and emotionally involved.

The way you do that, issendai says? "Keep the crises rolling."

A fan named Mela is a victim of a roleplay-based cult that grew out of Final Fantasy VII fandom. This was an RPG based on the Otakuin belief of sharing spirits with fictional characters—in this case, characters from the popular video game Final Fantasy VII.

The RPG spiraled into a scam that [impacted dozens of people](#) and spanned at least six years, ultimately expanding to Suikoden fandom, [ending up on Housemate Horror](#), and finding its way to Something Awful. Victims were scammed for thousands of dollars, and some believe the cult may still be going on.

The FFVII RPG was always in a state of crisis. Mela [recalls](#) interacting with one of the heads of the cult household: “All this time she was telling me how important I was to her special plan, and how the world needed us to stick together so we could conquer evil, etc.”

Role-playing-gamer turned cult leader Jordan Wood coerced his victims into spending years interacting with fictional characters from The Lord of the Rings. One victim, Abbey Stone, [recalls](#) that life in his home was always high-stress: “There were endless missions,” she writes, but adds:

“I’m no longer on world-changing missions. Because once I let go of the fantasy, once I said no more, I realized I hadn’t been changing the world. I was playing pretend with someone who was using me to perpetuate his own imaginary world.”

For Scientology, the crisis involves making you believe that there are hundreds and thousands (and later, millions) of [alien souls invading your body](#). At every stage of Scientology’s “OT” levels, members discover yet more aliens inhabiting their bodies that need to be dealt with and purged.

“He or she has the ability to create new and better realities in improved conditions,” said Tom Cruise in his [infamous leaked video](#) explaining what it’s like to be a Scientologist. “We are the authorities on the mind,” he insisted. “We are the authorities on improving conditions.”

Scientologists manipulate reality at the basic level of auditing, or as their own website puts it, “the process of asking specifically worded questions designed to help one find and handle areas of distress.” Using their E-meter “technology,” they attempt to locate sources of trauma.

One former Scientologist [wrote about the auditing process](#):

“In auditing, the preclear is utterly dependent upon the auditor to confirm that these incidents are real. It all depends on what the E-meter is doing. If the meter says the incident is real, then it is. Gradually it becomes easier and easier for the preclear to believe that these past life incidents really happened. ... All Scientologists believe that these incidents they find in their auditing really happened to them. They believe that they have memories going back thousands of years, millions of years, even billions of years.”

Regression psychotherapy in a nutshell.

Another member of Wood's cult who was 14 years old at the time she lived in the group, [wrote of her experiences](#): "After Andy and his, uh, friends....I didn't know HOW one was supposed to experience reality... Were Raz and Tai real because my neurons fired off signals indicating a hand on my skin, a voice in my head, that tingling you get when someone's close by, a face?"

Healthy RPGs never encourage blurring of reality and fantasy but in a broken RPG, lines between roleplaying characters and lifestyle-based roleplays can turn into a blurred fantasy/reality divide. In addition to the previously discussed [wide-ranging realm](#) of Multiples, Plurals, Otherkin, Factives, Otakukin, and Fictives, we also have [Soulbonding](#), which is what happens when people believe themselves to have formed deep bonds, romantic or otherwise, with the people they channel.

Perhaps the most notorious example of this are the [Snapewives](#), a group of middle-aged women who each believed themselves to be consorts of Severus Snape. When challenged about their belief that they were each married to the famously brash Harry Potter professor, the Snapewives defended their activities as an exercise of imagination. Yet, they serve as a classic example of the way unhealthy roleplaying can distort what's real.

The basic tenets of Scientology were allegedly created through made-up personalities: [according to a court affidavit from Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's son](#), the 280 test cases that provided the supposedly factual basis for his 1950 bestseller Dianetics all came from Hubbard's own head.

"My father represented orally and in writing that his theories relating to the "science of the mind" were based on 30 years of case studies conducted on a scientific basis by him as a nuclear physicist and scientist... [T]he above stated representations are false. My father wrote his books off the top of his head based on his imagination. There were no case studies. He is not a nuclear physicist and flunked nearly all of his science related courses in high school and college."

Though many people believe that Hubbard [began Scientology purely to make money](#), there are literal elements of roleplaying and fantasy world-building built into the tenets of the religion, beginning with the actual ideas he incorporated from his science-fiction writing, proceeding through the roleplay scripting of auditing sessions, and, perhaps most importantly, the structuring of "therapy" around the subject's ability to remember past lives.

[Writing about this phenomenon recently](#) for the Village Voice (whose Scientology coverage is always par excellence), journalist Tony Ortega had a realization:

“Why question Hubbard’s tale about mass alien genocide 75 million years ago, when you’ve been ‘seeing’ yourself as some kind of Buck Rogers fighting enemies and bedding beauties from one end of the galaxy to the other?.... With this new realization, I went back to some of my ex-Scientology sources to put it to them: had they been holding out on me a little about their own Star Wars-like adventures?”

Essentially, Ortega has realized that the same creative thrill that leads RPG members to spend hours of their lives creating fantasy worlds also applies to Scientology members who are taught to believe that those worlds are real.

Scientology completely lacks any ethical foundation, which must be based on the ability to discriminate between fact and fiction; in fact: it directly seeks to blur the line between fact and fiction. In that way Scientology is a broken role-playing game, since role-playing games are based on an ethical foundation. For example: the Netflix series *Stranger Things* tells the story of a group of teenagers who use D&D as a way of navigating in all the evil which the opening of an interdimensional gate has created. A central phrase used by the character Eleven is: “Friends Don’t Lie!” This is a good introduction to how philosophy works. Ethics is a discipline in philosophy, and philosophy is at the core of the player of *The Left Hand of Darkness*.

In opposition to ideologies philosophy focus on, what co-operation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don’t lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don’t manipulate), don’t make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person’s autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not as a mean, but as a goal.

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