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Scientology's FAQ: Sciencing, Tech-romancing, Simulacra, & Simulation

An Estranged Content Analysis

by

David Scott Morrill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Communication

Thesis Committee:
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Abstract

This thesis examines how the practice of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation manifests in both the text and symbols used on audiences of the Church of Scientology's outreach materials. It specifically examines its official FAQ page. Self-framing was observed that satisfied the definition of sciencing and tech-romancing. Under an Estranged approach, I examined selections of the Church's FAQ pages, coding for instances of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation. The data indicate that the Church frequently adopts simulacra and engages in simulation. The Church was seen frequently adopting technological and scientific symbols and jargon. The degree of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation present in their materials positions the Church of Scientology as an excellent case study, and even epitomizes the use of these constructs.

Acknowledgements

During the production of such a significant work, there are innumerable influences that ought to be regarded as essential or significant in their contributions to my success. Despite my inability to list them all below, I have made an effort to include the most essential.

Thank you, Dr. Coleman. Our interests had intense synchronicity. Work on Sciencing will not end with Coleman, work on sciencing will not end with myself, but hopefully our unified contributions will stand upon giants and aide the discipline.

Thank you to my incredibly capable committee for all your contributions and generous guidance over the years. Though their contributions are wide ranging and profound, if a single sentence was required to delineate their greatest influences they would read as follows: Dr. Shaker taught me the value of scope; Dr. Suldovsky taught me the value of concrete methodology.

Furthermore, thank you Danny for your motivational and directional contributions. Were it not for another uniquely qualified, and already credentialed studious person that I could use as a goalpost and lighthouse I would have been profoundly less productive, dramatically less coordinated, and certainly would have generated less timely materials of a lower caliber.

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Preface

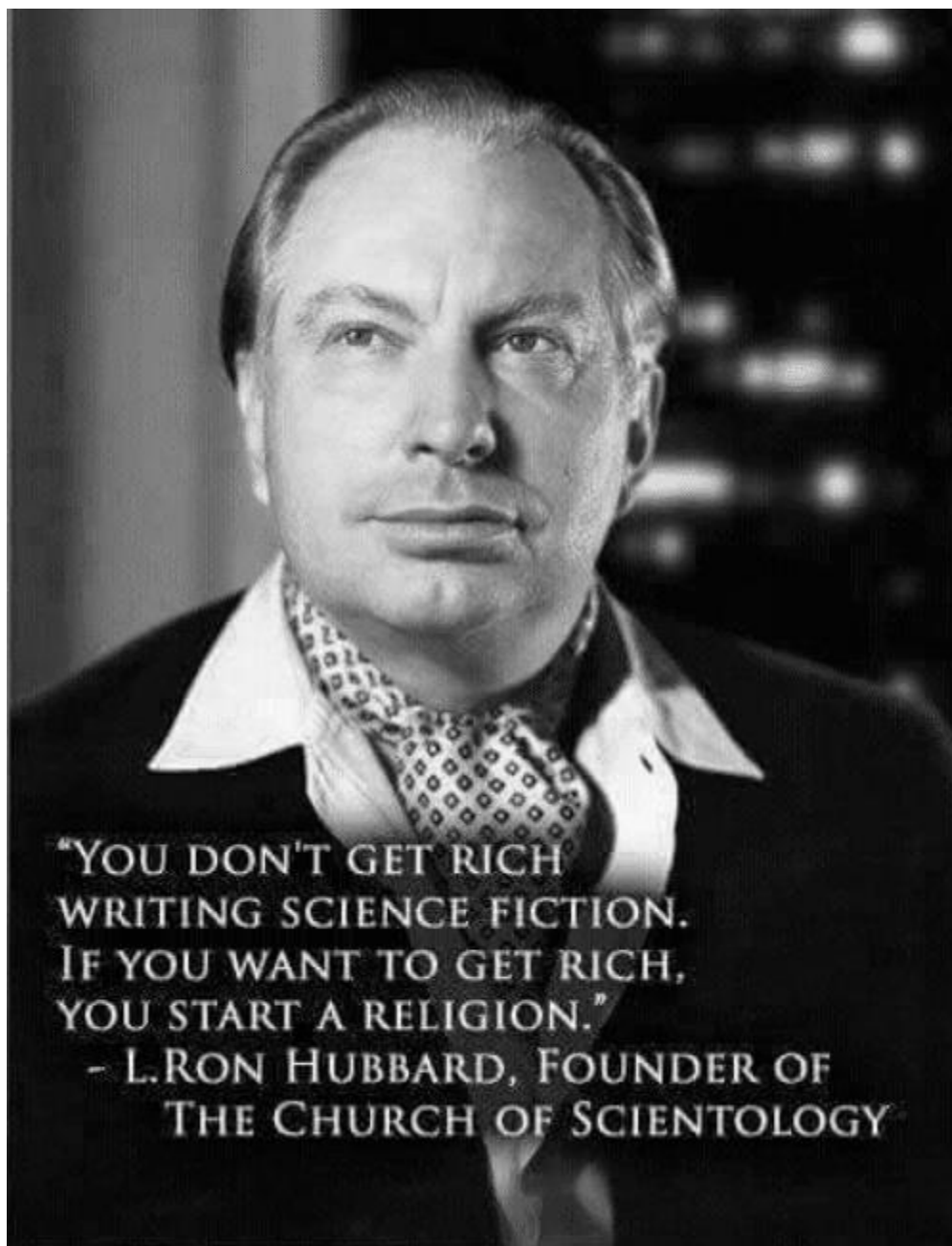


Figure 1: Photograph of L. Ron Hubbard with quote

Chapter 1: Introduction

Why Scientology?

Scientology is a peculiar beast that has found itself published in academic journals, at one point in time, as being a *discovery* rather than an *invention* (Cook, 1971). Scientology has attracted the attention of observers ranging from the general public via the lauded Netflix docuseries *Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath* (2016), to esoteric groups such as the hacking collective Anonymous (Shermer, 2020).^{1,2} The Church's belief system has run the gamut of being spoofed by the television program *South Park* all the way to successfully legally colliding with the behemoth that is the U.S. government (Shermer, 2011).^{3,4,5}

As noted by Bainbridge and Stark (1980), the Church of Scientology has become synonymous with the word “cult,”⁶ while drawing comparisons and connections to Aleister Crowley—a renowned occultist who founded the religion of Thelema in 1904.⁷ Within Thelema, Crowley identified himself as the prophet entrusted with guiding humanity into the Æon of Horus. This honorific position held by Crowley in Thelema is similar to the reverence granted to the inceptor of Scientology today.⁸

By examining how key Church texts and symbols relate to pseudoscience, my thesis seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge about the Church. Scientology is one of the most successful fledgling religions of the modern era—being legally acknowledged and validated in literature internationally (Benthall, 2018). While there has been plenty of coverage generated that disparages the Church or showcases the most salacious stories that can be compiled, there has been a noted dearth of critical analysis surrounding how Scientologists frame themselves in regard to sciencing. A potential

body of data which has been hitherto underexplored is their internet presence, specifically how the Church of Scientology frames itself on their FAQ pages.

Before diving into the FAQ pages, I will first set the stage by introducing *Dianetics* (2000), the foundational doctrine of Scientology, then detail the *frames* and *patterns* of the Church of Scientology—examining its self-framing à la *sciencing*, as well as how the Church semiotically manifests *simulacra* (signs, symbols, etcetera) and *simulation* (the religion as a system). The data collected from my sources—principally from the FAQ section of the webpage—suggest that the Church of Scientology is an institution gilded in sciencing and enrobed with simulacra.¹ By describing my findings, I seek to establish Scientology as a preeminent contemporary case study on sciencing and detail how the Church semiotically simulates religion in the vernacular of Jean Baudrillard (2010).

This analysis was guided by the anthropological concept of Estrangement (Geertz, 2010). Using this methodology, I aim to analyze the ways in which the Church of Scientology's content utilizes sciencing, *tech-romancing* (a term of my own creation, that can be thought of as a corollary to sciencing, effectively meaning the utilization of a romanticized version of technology), simulacra, and simulation.

My contribution is to demonstrate empirically that the language and symbols used to describe the Church of Scientology's principles invoke science and technology to reinforce the notion that its religious practices are verifiable, while imitating other religions (such as Christianity). It is clear that the Church's discourse is, in effect, a bricolage that weaves together science, religion, imitation, facts, and fiction.

¹ See Appendix B.

Furthermore, the degree of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation present in its materials positions the Church of Scientology as an epitome of these constructs.

Most importantly, I have captured the themes the church deploys, the frequencies and locations of such deployment, and identified the origins of these themes—while also collating the literature surrounding each construct. My work has generated a useful template of coding that could inform future research on the persuasive efficacy of the Church of Scientology’s linguistic and semiotic framing. Rather than having to dissect the Church, future scholars now have the advantage of quick reference to my work when designing experiments that could parse out the efficacy of the Church of Scientology’s appeals without having to undertake the cumbersome legwork of combing through the FAQ pages themselves.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Church's Outreach

The Church of Scientology has a few primary avenues for public outreach. An example of a significant one-on-one interaction occurs when people engage with the E-Meter (the small computer-like electronic device) via Auditing. Auditing, the process my friend and I encountered² in the mall during my first experience with an E-Meter, is the central ritual of Scientology. It involves a series of questions designed to ascertain the participant's spiritual well-being in a quantifiable way.

In addition, Scientology uses Super Bowl advertisements to reach audiences. Scientology does not advertise elsewhere on television. I watched the totality of these advertisements to familiarize myself with this channel of their outreach. The Super Bowl advertisements are notably vague and flashy; there is a pattern of questioning without giving answers within the audiovisual productions. When I watched the Super Bowl advertisements, I noticed one consistent occurrence within every single advertisement: each concluded with a URL to the Church of Scientology's official webpage.⁹ Another pattern emerged; be it at their kiosks, or on their website, *Dianetics* is heavily featured. My thesis examines the outreach materials that Scientology uses, which frequently feature *Dianetics*—the Church's ecclesiastic bedrock—and because that is the case, I purchased and read a copy before proceeding with my analysis.

² Our encounter is described in full in Appendix D. In short, we were teenagers heralded over to two men at a booth who wanted to use a “technologically advanced” machine, the E-Meter, to “read” our minds and bodies in order to provide results to improve our wellbeing.

***Dianetics*: L. Ron Hubbard**

Because Hubbard's work is inseparable from an investigation into the Church of Scientology, his *Dianetics* (2000) is integral to this case study. *Dianetics* (2000) is a foundational text for Scientologists. This underpinning of Scientology serves to illustrate the Church's use of pseudoscience from its inception. It also has the unique advantage of being a primary source document.

Dianetics (2000) was published initially in the 1950s but has gone through many revisions; the copy procured for my analysis is the 2000 publication. The book was originally pitched as a branch of psychiatry. However, the majority of psychologists of the day dismissed Hubbard's musings as unsupported by scientific evidence (Manca, 2012; Raine, 2014).

Despite being central to the Scientological belief, *Dianetics* (2000) cannot be exhaustively explored within the confines of this thesis. Rather, its inclusion is leveraged to contextualize and expound Scientological content. I did not attempt to dissect *Dianetics* (2000); rather, I read through it multiple times to gain an understanding of the jargon of the Church. *Dianetics* (2000) itself advises visiting the website (p. 633). Given that all of this material was created by the Church it undoubtedly contains efforts to frame themselves how they wish to be seen.

Other Scientology Research

A broad coalition of citations was collated to establish what had been explored before. The literature can be separated into two overarching categories: literature which offers a glimpse of the Church of Scientology through a historical lens (Bainbridge & Stark, 1980; Manca, 2012; Menadue, 2018; Raine, 2014; Urban, 2012; Whitney, 1995),

and literature which aimed to examine current aspects of the Church (Barker, 2015; Cook, 1971; Halupka, 2014; Lewis, 2015; Locke, 2004; McAllister, 2013; Shermer, 2020; Wolfe, 2017). Notably, despite being excellent resources, none of these studies significantly overlap with the methods or focus of this thesis.

Bainbridge and Stark's study was on the social status afforded those dubbed "clear"—the highest possible state achieved by Scientologists—by the Church of Scientology. Though they did do admirable work in examining this, from the outset they present Scientology as "one of the largest and most influential cults" and suggest that Scientology is not yet a true religion but may "be forced to evolve more fully into" one.

Manca's (2012) study provides a valuable insight into the role of the Cold War into the appeal of Scientology, namely L. Ron Hubbard's claim that Scientology would help the general public to survive nuclear fallout. His study reflects some bias in its assertion that "these claims contributed to both Scientology's and Hubbard's financial well-being but provided little to no benefit for followers and may have harmed some patients."

Menadue (2018) summarized debates on Scientology within the science fiction arena that Hubbard rose to fame in. The public debates he elucidates are a fascinating insight for any study on the development of Scientology, but the author reveals his bias in saying that "by the mid-1980s, dianetics and scientology were no longer serious topics in the magazines but had been added to other fads and fallacies of sf history."

Raine (2014) makes a further convincing case for the influence of trends in science fiction—namely the subgenre of space opera—on Scientology. Though she

ultimately argues that Scientology constitutes a “unique tradition,” she still shows bias in admitting that Hubbard is “creating a new reality.”

Urban (2012) was of particular use to this study as a demonstration of Scientology as a bricolage—most notably as this was the first source I found to use that term in particular for Scientology. “Crowley's occult ideas, I argue, do in fact represent one—but only one—element in the rich, eclectic bricolage that became the early Church of Scientology; but these occult elements are also mixed together with themes drawn from Eastern religions, science fiction, pop psychology, and Hubbard's own fertile imagination.”

Whitney (1995) states that: “acknowledging that this institution has a history of credibility problems, my conclusion is that it is striving hard, by way of the media, to convince others of its authenticity.” He also quotes someone he only lists as “one authority,” who said that Scientology “Despite its quasi-religious vocabulary, has no theology worthy of the name, and its use of such terms as “the church,” without reference to Jesus, the founder of the church, seems to be a verbal camouflage to escape taxation.”

Wolfe (2017) examined whether or not the data from Scientology’s OCA tests could prove useful to someone seeking psychological insights into those tested. He illustrates that the OCA was derived from the Johnson Temperament Analysis, which itself was not strongly founded. His conclusion is that the way that the OCA is currently administered does not provide useful data but could given a few of his recommended alterations.

As for resources on more contemporary trends, Cook (1971) presaged Manca’s (2012) assertion of the importance of Cold War culture to Scientology. However, he

ultimately said about Scientology and Dianetics, “my overwhelming reaction was that Scientology and Dianetics were really a hoax, and that the [BBB] ought to be alerted.”

Lewis (2015) studies the religious legitimacy of Scientology through the “Free Zone,” or those expelled from the Church of Scientology who still primarily identify as Scientologists. “However, it is clear that Scientology actually is a religion — at least in the sense of functioning as a religion in the lives of participants — parading as science; instead of, as Hubbard thought, a science parading as religion” (p. 226).

Barker (2015) argues that Scientology would make a good case study for defining religion in a legal context because the Church of Scientology operates at the boundary of what constitutes a religion. The author gets specific and defines boundaries the law needs to test the margins, not the center.

Halupka’s (2014) article concerns in particular the process by which the Church of Scientology regained its tax-exempt status in America in 1993 after having lost it in 1967. “The article argues that the processes of both legal recognition and legitimization draw upon each other in a new faith’s transition to mainstream theology. In this, the Church employed perception management in attempt to influence both processes.”

McAllister’s (2007) thesis operates along similar lines to my own, however McAllister’s focus in the framing used by the media about the Church of Scientology, rather than internal documentation as my study examines.

Wolfe (2017) detailed the ways in which the Oxford Capacity Analysis (OCA) is unsuitable for outcome studies. Wolfe continues however by tepidly endorsing the ability of the OCA to be of value stating that the situation could change if additional research could demonstrate that the OCA had validities comparable to other personality tests.

Summarily, nearly all of the literature reviewed expressed some level of bias against the Church from the outset in the way they explored their content. Though they were likely as objective as could be, what they focused on in the first place was conscious and directed. Although one source noted positive outcomes, it was tempered by noting “my overwhelming reaction was that Scientology and Dianetics were really a hoax, and that the [BBB] ought to be alerted,” (Cook, 1971, p. 60). My approach is unique in that it examines the ways Scientology chooses to frame itself inductively on its FAQ—it’s most contemporary and controlled introductory messaging. My examination of acts of sciencing, etcetera, is done with a predetermined set of coding, yet through the process of Estrangement leading to an inductive and qualitative set of data.

Framing

Framing is a concept, or set of concepts, that an individual or group uses to organize, perceive, or communicate their reality. Robert M. Entman (1993) characterizes framing as enhancing the salience of certain features or portions of information for the purposes of constructing a narrative. Matthes and Kohring (2008) critique the ambiguous nature of framing concepts and their measures, in particular the works of D’Angelo (2002), McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, and Llama (2000) Reese (2007), Scheufele (1999), and Weaver (2007, p. 93). To resolve this criticism, Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) “propose framing research be both terminologically and conceptually refocused around [...] alterations in the presentation of information rather than the persuasive value of that information,” even potentially including a preference for nonverbal or visual cues over text-based framing (p. 15).

Framing occurs frequently in Scientological materials, where content has a pattern of using scientific verbiage and technological jargon to describe its views. An element of this pattern is that jargon is often lifted from established disciplines and prior systems. Consequently, the narrowed definition of framing presented in Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016) is of value to this exploration.

Estrangement

Crucial also to a fair exploration of the Church is “Estrangement,” from the anthropological tradition—especially the works of Charles Taylor and Clifford Geertz. Alexander, Smith, and Norton (2011) describe the method quite effectively. The ideal outcome of Estrangement is that “the observer divests himself or herself of the usual cultural familiarities, to claim a certain strangeness [sic]” (p. 10) when in the throes of research. I attempt to effect Estrangement by observing precisely what the Church would like for audiences to observe, including: its public outreach, *Dianetics* (2000), and its Super Bowl advertisements—all of which guide participants to its official website. All the while I attempt to remain as neutral as possible with a sense of curiosity rather than judgment. Estrangement will be the underpinning of my methodology and the means by which I traverse and observe the landscape of Scientological materials, in order to collect data around the constructs outlined below.

Sciencing Literature

Science and sciencing are different concepts. Before detailing the act of doing bad science via sciencing, a baseline of what good science looks like is essential. To this end, I utilize Pierre Bourdieu’s (2001) quality of epistemic reflexivity to apply scientific principles to the social world, as well as Thomas Kuhn’s (1962/2012) “paradigm shift”

approach to science's progression over time. Faulty processes in contention with established Western science have historically been called pseudoscience or junk science. Carl Sagan's (1996) work helps ground the identification of pseudoscientific fields by examining both what science is and what makes pseudoscience pseudoscientific.

Sagan (1996) outlines important foundations of the scientific method: (1) hypotheses which can be disproven; (2) false conclusions are possible but are expected to give way when the data support an alternative explanation; and (3) ultimately, practitioners realize disproving is not personal. Sagan goes on to directly define pseudoscience as: (1) having hypotheses which have moving goalposts or cannot be invalidated; (2) being prone to conspiracy theory for why the pseudoscience is "suppressed" by scientists; and (3) having practitioners who are defensive and dismissive of skeptical scrutiny (p. 21).

Sagan (1996) uses the term pseudoscience to discuss such diverse topics as witchcraft, UFOs, and the cult of Aum Shinrikyo—united by deviation from science but not necessarily by motivation. His work, alongside Ann Druyan and Steven Soter (1980), on the importance of the scientific process, has been a significant influence on people in the scientific field today, and his precepts of pseudoscience can all be seen in Scientological texts.

Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber's (2002) collaboration provides a more contemporary history of pseudoscience. Their work details the ways that corporate entities leveraged pseudoscience in sales and public relations. This is similar to how I argue the Church of Scientology employs sciencing and tech-romancing. Their inclusion

builds upon prior work via definitions historicized by Cynthia Coleman's sciencing operationalization (2020) and Ralph Nader's (1998) essays on junk science.¹⁰

The term sciencing does not always and has not always implied pseudoscience. Previous examples of the word's usage as early as 1938 simply denote "the act of doing science,"¹¹ but contemporaries, such as Coleman (2020), use sciencing to describe pseudoscientific approaches to the act of doing science.

A similar pejorative used to describe pseudoscientific studies can be found in the use of the term *junk science*. The term is used by Nader (1998) to describe the disinformation campaigns of special interests like the pharmacological industry and the tobacco industry (Rampton & Stauber, 2002, pp. 229-231). Rampton and Stauber (2002) allege that the term junk science:

has very little to do with the quality of the research in question. [...] 'Junk science' is the term corporate defenders apply to any research, no matter how rigorous, that justifies regulations to protect the environment and public health, (Rampton and Stauber, 2002, pp. 222-223).

The term junk science carries with it a dig at the validity, and therefore credibility, of the science in question. It also bears mention that, for Nader (1998), junk science has an economic interest in distinction with pseudoscience—which can function independently of financial incentive. Junk science falls under the umbrella of pseudosciences as outlined by the sociologist Terra Manca (2012):

Pseudo-sciences [sic] are nonscientific because their participants utilize research techniques and results that diverge from the methods and results that the scientific community and other disciplines whose members conduct rigorous research (such

as the humanities) generally accept (Hansson 2008). Unlike other nonscientific undertakings, however, they work to create the impression that they are scientific while promoting a deviant doctrine (teachings that deviate from those with scientific legitimacy [Hansson 2008]). In the mid-1950s, science writer Martin Gardner realized that *Dianetics* (which would evolve into Scientology) was a new example of pseudo-science [sic] that was sweeping through the general population [...] (p. 80).

All of these concepts coalesce into Coleman's sciencing codification.

Sciencing is an attempt to invest one's beliefs or arguments with the trappings of science as an appeal to the normative epistemological view that science is capable of producing transhistorical, immutable truths. As Bourdieu (2001) outlines, science in normative scholarship is seen not as a slow, collaborative process composed of a series of failed hypotheses and experimentation, but as a series of singular and final discoveries (p. 2-3). As Kuhn (1962/2012) pointed out, scientific fields change over time through a series of paradigm shifts from one dominant theory to the next—shifts which are strongly contested in the moment. For example, before germ theory, medical science in the West was assumed to function in line with the Aristotelian conception of humoral theory. In humoral theory, it was supposed that all diseases came from an imbalance in the four essential humors, as representations of the four Aristotelian elements. These elements were said to compose all matter, including the human body.

The difficulty in analyzing scientific change is that once a field moves from one paradigm to the next, scientific textbooks which inform lay knowledge of the field exclude the prior paradigm and convey the notion that this latest paradigm is the final

truth of the matter—not the most recent in a series of experimental models (Kuhn, p. 136-138). As Kuhn's contemporary, Carl Sagan, put it, if science instructors rely on inherent authority and rote memorization “without communicating its critical method,” (1997, p. 21) the result seen by the laypeople is just an assertion made by a confident individual wearing a lab coat.

Sciencing allows one to tap into public misconceptions by suggesting that one's own beliefs or suppositions have also been arrived at by this supposedly infallible method and so constitute a universal truth. Sciencing is the process by which a lab coat is put on a fallible message—or by which someone with good intentions convinces themselves they are genuinely engaging in science and accidentally beguiles others. Rampton and Stauber (2002) elucidate the mindset behind those who engage in sciencing:

they didn't just think that they were pulling off a good scam. They literally believed that their ‘analysis’ was rational, objective, and reasonable, while their critics were deluded, prejudiced, and even emotionally unbalanced. They were experts, and the public merely needed to be ‘educated’ (p. 2).

In line with sciencing—and also to bolster their claims of scientific efficacy—the Church makes good use of technological terminology and imagery in a way that I label *tech-romancing*.

Tech-romancing Literature

To romanticize something is to claim that it is more meaningful and better than commonly viewed, or to believe that something is better than it objectively is.

Romanticization is accomplished through a lens of deference, idealization, and adoration.^{12,13} For the sake of brevity, and because romancing is defined as the act of

romanticizing, the term I use is tech-romancing. To imagine the E-Meter as a “religious artifact”, as the FAQ pages claim, is to hold the technological device in high regard.

The E-Meter is not alone in the wider literature as a romanticized technology. In order to better explain tech-romancing as a term, the contemporary Silicon Valley zeitgeist is a valuable congruence. That zeitgeist is such a severe romanticization of technology that scholars have identified techno-religious marriages well outside the confines of the Church of Scientology. Even those that are traditionally more secular and atheistic can find a sort of solace in the promise of technology as an approach to the infinite. This appeal to the concept of the infinite is indicative of the romanticization of technology.

Nick Bostrom’s (2003) simulation theory is one such romanticized conception. This theory reinvigorates ideas about a post-death existence via ancestral simulations according to Bostrom’s (2003) posits. That is, a sufficiently advanced future civilization with access to greater energy reserves and computing power could theoretically create computer simulations that play out versions of the past. Bostrom is noteworthy for his philosophical thought experiments examining the likelihood that our own reality is a literal simulation, or that it one day could be. These thought experiments were initially rooted in academic practice, however in the absence of such a demure approach, a misconception may blossom into romanticization. This potentiality can be observed in the popularity of the movie *The Matrix* (1999).

The Matrix (1999) is a film that features a romanticized version of technology—wherein persons can enter an entirely artificial reality created by computers and code, then modify that reality at their whim experiencing it as if it were real. The lead character

can download martial arts skills instantaneously, bend spoons with his mind, and even fly through the medium of technology.¹⁴ The film is an allegory of philosophical conceptions from Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*; the film even features the book within the opening sequence as an Easter egg for those with a keen eye (see Figure 2).¹⁵



Figure 2: The Matrix still frame with Simulacra and Simulation

More contemporarily, Nathan Schradle mentions the existence of a “Way of the Future Church” founded explicitly to further “the realization, acceptance, and worship of a Godhead based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) developed through computer hardware and software” (Schradle, 2020). Though this approach is more extreme than most, it exemplifies a wider-spread faith in the ability of technology to provide fuller satisfaction of the more abstract, romanticized human needs such as spiritual well-being. The movement represents an attempt to romanticize the mundane concept of an Artificial Intelligence to the extreme; an AI which has achieved the level of Godhead is a romanticization of the AIs (e.g., Amazon’s Alexa AI) which are used in the minutiae of modern life.

This plays well into one of the Church of Scientology's most basic tech-romancing instances—the technology of “*WordClearing*.” In this practice Scientologists take the mundane and polish it with techno-jargon. The “technology” of clearing words is detailed within Scientology Courses as:

a misunderstood word will remain misunderstood until one *clears* the meaning of the word. Once the word is fully understood by the person, it is said to be *cleared*. The procedures used to locate and clear up words the student has misunderstood in his studies are called *WordClearing* [sic] (Clearing Words, n.d.).¹⁶

WordClearing does not make use of an external mechanism as Auditing does, but the Church seeks to place *WordClearing* itself as a sort of technology on par with the E-Meter in its infallibility. Only by utilizing this technology of Scientology can one be said to understand language completely. They seem to be adopting the romanticized invocations of technology and applying the veneer of such veneration to places where wires and electricity do not even exist. Because *WordClearing* is labeled a technology, it surpasses simple word comprehension, and promises something more profound and technological. But that is just the tip of the Scientological sciencing iceberg.

The effectiveness of the E-Meter and of Scientology's tech-romancing is well illustrated in Diane M. Beck's “The Appeal of the Brain in the Popular Press” (2010). This article analyzes the findings of a 2008 neurological study. The study examined how laypeople and students unfamiliar with neurology rated explanations of a neurological concept from experts. In half of the cases, the expert offered a clear definition, and in the other half the expert intentionally gave a vacuous, circular explanation. Simultaneously, portions of each group were shown an fMRI scan of the relevant part of the brain during

the expert's presentation. In groups that were not shown an fMRI scan, participants were generally able to distinguish between the "good" and "bad" explanations. However, participants that were shown fMRIs were significantly less able to make the distinction. This indicates the fMRI's potency as a persuasive tool by mere association. To explain this phenomenon, Beck reasons that the fMRIs created a more easily digestible message for the audience—thus collapsing the expert's message into something like "phenomenon X causes Y part of the brain to light up" (Beck, 2010, p. 763).

This phenomenon can be seen in the use of the E-Meter during Auditing. The E-Meter's fluctuating needle and the values it produces are said to explain the whole of the participants' mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing—a fusion of spirituality and technology (Bigliardi, 2016). Though the individual participant may struggle to comprehend the underlying theory of Thetans and Engrams, they can certainly see the needle on the dial of the E-Meter move from one area to another. The task of reaching a healthy and happy life is shrunk to making the needle go from one part of the dial to another, which is a tantalizingly simplified (read: romanticized) approach to living through technological intervention.

Importance of Study

Coleman's (2020) work highlights the centrality of understanding sciencing through the lens of peoples who have suffered negatively from it. Sciencing has a far darker connotation when seen through this lens. An eminent example Coleman uses for sciencing is phrenology. She notes that the issues surrounding phrenology operate at two levels: (1) confirming existing biases and (2) relaxing the otherwise rigorous standard of proof. From the layperson's perspective, phrenology's differentiation between human

brains conformed to views of racial (read: white) supremacy. When phrenology entered the social discourse, phrenologists tried sciencing their arguments by publishing their pseudoscience in the *American Phrenological Journal* (p. 30). Phrenological study produced “evidence” that reinforced the associated discourse, and this associated discourse and its relevant force relations in turn shaped phrenological study in an Ouroborosian manner.³

Data are collected, material is written, and entire disciplines can coalesce out of sciencing. However, when these performative masquerades are passed through the rigors of replicable science, the cracks begin to show. Given the success of phrenology, and the damage caused by its sciencing, if another discipline (read: Scientology) was practicing the same thing, it would warrant attention. In a similar way to phrenology’s sciencing, Scientological practices, such as *Dianetics* (2000), were dismissed by the psychiatric field but clung to by adherents—seemingly in defiance of Kuhn’s (1962/2012) described paradigm shift model. Given this, investigation seems necessary. Such necessity can be satisfied by the following research question:

RQ1. How does Scientology content manifest sciencing frames?

In addition, the aforementioned tech-romancing angle should be investigated as a tightly knit corollary to sciencing. Consequently, a second research question emerges:

RQ2. How does Scientology content manifest tech-romancing frames?

Semiotics Literature

Philosopher Jean Baudrillard was impactful for his work on the media, communication, and contemporary culture. His philosophical contributions are useful for

³ Ouroborosian being a reference to the Ouroboros symbol and its self-feeding nature.

understanding the function of Scientology's texts, images, objects, practices, etcetera—a phenomenon related to his conception of the four stages of simulacra.

Sciencing, left to function within its own recursive justification, may be understood as an iteration of Baudrillard's (2010) fourth stage of simulacra—something that *simulates* the ritual of science. It is true sciencing, but without success in conducting true science. Baudrillard's (2010) definition of the stages of simulacra helps also to elucidate the Church's simulation of religion, such as the appropriation of the Spanish cross. This appropriation acts as a second stage simulacrum—a perversion of the Spanish cross's reality. The cross's transmutation is part of a larger process that evolves with use to embody the fourth stage.

Much along the same lines that the Church of Scientology adopts such religious imagery, it adopts the trappings of science without the sort of reflexive examination that Bourdieu (2001) asserted as essential to overcoming the innate human biases that come from having different backgrounds and experiences. Scientology presents a system that needs no reflection, as it is already solved. The methods of Auditing⁴ and the process of becoming *clear*⁵ are continually presented as superior to modern medicine, asserting that disease is best understood as the influence of foreign *Thetans* (a term echoing “soul” that is expounded later) in one's body that can be removed by progressing through Scientology's rituals.

⁴ In the words of Scientology, Auditing provides a precise route for people to gain higher states of being and awareness, improve abilities, and confront issues.

⁵ In the words of Scientology, you begin as a pre-clear as you start receiving scientological “therapy.” In reading, becoming clear is mastery of self and the achievement of supposedly preternatural abilities.

The Church of Scientology asserts its practices and beliefs are in a sense scientific, and claims all the credibility associated with that, but also implies that it has a superior understanding to normative sciences. The Church's practice reflects a highly developed sciencing that ultimately goes beyond mere representation and into Baudrillard's concept of a hyperreal simulation in which it begins to lose its referent but instead conjures a reality of its own. The immediacy with which Baudrillard's concepts can be attached to the Church rationalizes further academic scrutiny. This will be explored by the following research questions:

RQ3. How does Scientology content manifest as simulacra?

RQ4. How does Scientology content manifest as simulation?

Chapter 3: Methods

Step-By-Step

To ground the Church of Scientology's use of sciencing, I read *Dianetics* (Hubbard, 2000) in its entirety multiple times. As it is the most significant Scientological text, it will not be dissected at length in this study. Instead, I used the text to help me see sciencing jargon present in their outreach materials, specifically the Super Bowl ads and the web content. Although something may not have looked like sciencing *prima fascia*, with an understanding of what the Church meant using my knowledge from *Dianetics* (2000), sciencing became apparent.⁶

I analyzed the official FAQ webpage for instances of sciencing (RQ1), tech-romancing (RQ2), simulacra (RQ3), and simulation (RQ4). I chose to focus on the FAQ page because previous studies about getting information that answers users' queries, such as Jijkoun and de Rijke (2005), found that FAQ pages are an effective resource in addressing users' questions. This is paramount because, as an Estranged observer, I had questions and was seeking the most rapid answers.

Within the Church's FAQ pages I scoured the major headings: [Background and Basic Principles](#) and [Scientology and Dianetics Auditing](#). During this scouring, I was also faced with a personality test pop-up (Figure 5, so it was included in the corpus. A rudimentary flowchart of my website traversal can be observed in Figure 3.

⁶ Much like the difference between per se and per quod; [Defamation Per Se vs Per Quod - 50 states](#)

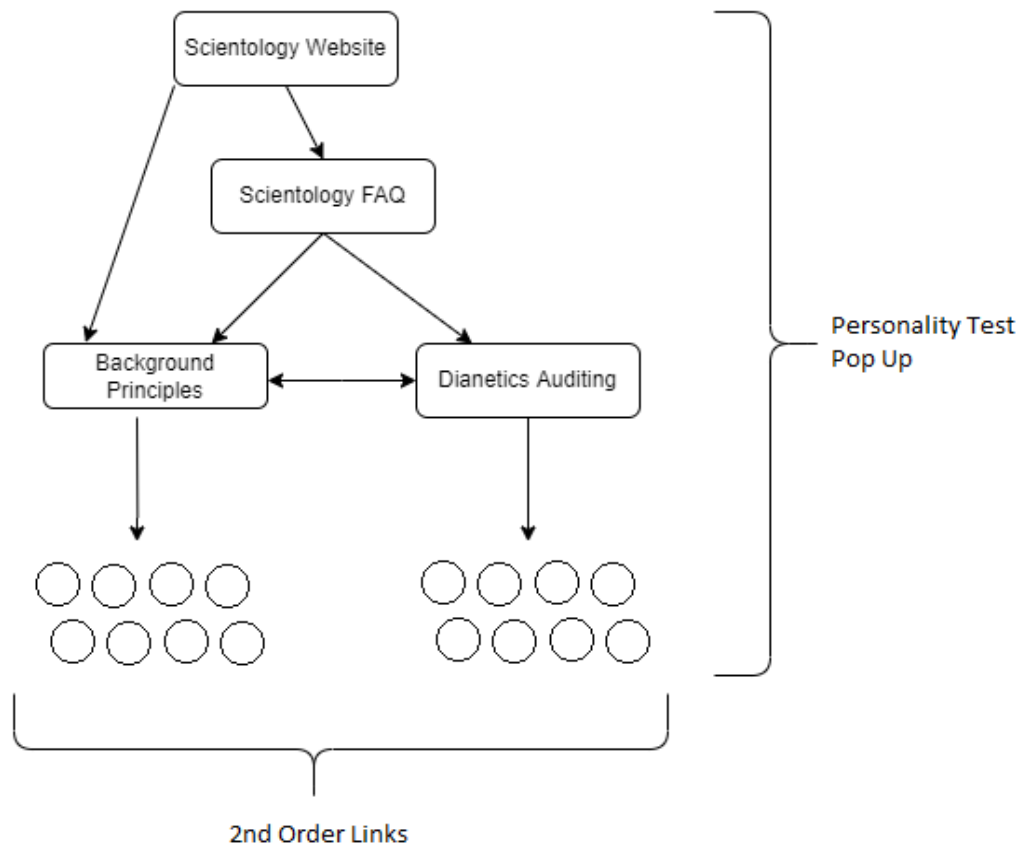


Figure 3: Website/FAQ flowchart showcasing pathways traveled

Once I identified each object of study, I printed all pages of the web links and grouped them according to their location. For each printed page I was using Coleman's codification of sciencing, my own codification of tech-romancing, and Baudrillard's codification of simulacra and simulation. Coding is discussed in Chapter 4. When I noticed the presence of any of these constructs written or visually represented on the document, I would highlight them with color coding: green for sciencing, yellow for tech-romancing, orange for simulacra, and pink for simulation. When printing and

highlighting, I started with the topmost and leftmost link, and went left to right, line by line, to examine text via Estrangement.

An Estranged approach to the topic is not just attempting to remain objective in examination, but rather allowing the viewpoint of a newcomer to the topic to inform the research itself. It has a rich history of use reaching far back into academic history.

Admittedly, it is possible that unique individuals would travel differently through the Scientology.org FAQ than I did given their personalities and histories. One could imagine, for example, someone who was particularly curious about Auditing may skip straight to the articles surrounding that and avoid others. However, I was not trying to impersonate anyone in particular. Rather, I was trying to approximate a hypothetically generated average layperson obliging the designs of the church. In the course of this study, I allowed the Estranged viewpoint to inform exactly which articles I examined, rather than following my own line of logic trying outright to find instances of sciencing or the like.

Estrangement acted, at points, as somewhat of a limitation, keeping me from pursuing a path that I thought may be more conducive to finding just the constructs that I had established, but at the same time this perspective afforded an insight into the materials the Church uses especially early on to entice readers to join the Church. The prevalence of instances of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation I encountered while examining the materials presented by the Church for newcomers helps to show that these constructs are central to Scientology's framing.

The Official FAQ Webpage

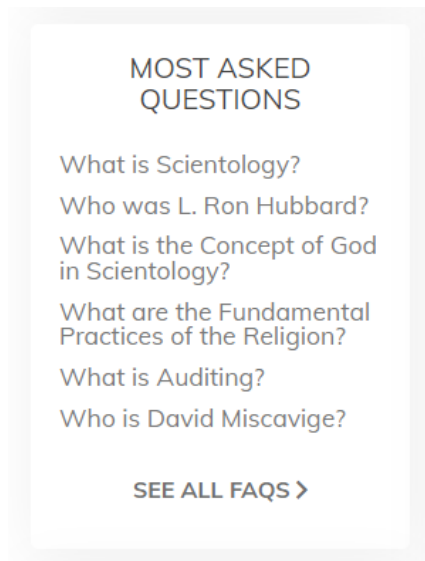


Figure 4: FAQ sidebar (homepage)

I began by looking at Scientology’s link to the FAQ page. The FAQ page (Figure 4)¹⁷ is complex, with links, menus, pop-ups, and images. Again, my overall guide was a method in qualitative analysis called Estrangement (Alexander, Smith, and Norton, 2011, p. 10). This is to say, I distanced myself, to the extent I was able, from my preconceived cultural notions about Scientology and approached the FAQ as someone freshly encountering the institution. I imagined where a novice would naturally gravitate and did as they would. Therefore, I started my textual search with the section titled: “MOST ASKED QUESTIONS.”

[Background and Basic Principles](#)

The Most Asked Questions section included a list of six questions: “What is Scientology,” “Who was L. Ron Hubbard,” “What is the concept of God in Scientology,” “What are the fundamental practices of the religion?” “What is Auditing?” and “Who is David Miscavige?” Rather than clicking on these individual links I noticed a button

immediately below them called “SEE ALL FAQS,” and pressed it, as I imagined an Estranged viewer might do. The next section that drew my attention was a sidebar on the landing page that the aforementioned button led me to—titled “FAQ” with 19 headings with links. I began at the top and opened “Background and Basic Principles.” After opening the main category, I found additional second order links present at the base of the webpage, which I also read.

In exploring the webpage, I found that there were multiple ways for users to reach the FAQ, and to reach Background and Basic Principles within the FAQ: (1) in the top bar of every page of the Church of Scientology’s webpage FAQ is the seventh option from the left on the header, (2) hovering over the FAQ option on that header generates a drop-down menu, the first link listed is Background and Basic Principles, (3) Background and Basic Principles is also always present on the left-hand FAQ bar.¹⁸

Because of this section’s ubiquity, I opened and read all of its second order links as tabs within the instance of the web browser to explore the main section.¹⁹ These second order links included:

- [What does the word Scientology mean?](#)
- [What Is Scientology?](#)
- [How did Scientology start?](#)
- [Is it all based on one man’s work?](#)
- [What are some of the core tenets of Scientology?](#)
- [Why is Scientology called a religion?](#)
- [Why is Scientology a church?](#)
- [Does Scientology have a scripture?](#)

- [What is the Scientology cross?](#)
- [What does the Scientology symbol, the S and Double Triangle, represent?](#)
- [What is Dianetics?](#)
- [What is the mind?](#)
- [How does Dianetics work?](#)
- [What is the difference between Scientology and Dianetics?](#)
- [What is the Bridge in Scientology?](#)

Scientology and Dianetics Auditing

In a separate instance of my web browser, I began again on the FAQ landing page. I then returned to the bar of options on the side of the screen. There were plenteous sections and sub-links that could be explored when clicking through the webpage. However, when thinking back to the other Church of Scientology activities, and remaining Estranged, the Church's non-digital outreach materials were presented in two main forms: (1) Scientologists' engagement with the public using *Dianetics* (2000), and (2) the E-Meter (Auditing). Recalling these facts, and viewing the sidebar of the FAQ, one header stands above the rest: "Scientology and Dianetics Auditing." Because laypeople would likely have been introduced to Auditing in an analogue setting, or been directed towards *Dianetics* (2000), there is a firm rationalization for choosing the Scientology and Dianetics Auditing hyperlink as part of my sample. I clicked into this header and saw more second order links at the base.²⁰ I likewise opened all of these second order links as tabs within the instance of the web browser I was using to explore the main section. These second order links included:

- [What is auditing?](#)

- [What is the difference between the two Scientology paths of auditing and training?](#)
- [Do all Church staff participate in auditing and training?](#)
- [What do the terms preclear and Auditor mean?](#)
- [What is the E-Meter and how does it work?](#)
- [Why does one have to wait six weeks to participate in auditing if one has been habitually using drugs?](#)
- [Will taking antibiotics prevent me from participating in auditing?](#)
- [Is it okay to take any sort of drugs when you are in Scientology?](#)
- [What is the Purification Rundown?](#)
- [How many hours a day can one participate in auditing?](#)
- [Has the technology of auditing changed since the early days of Scientology?](#)
- [What will I get out of auditing?](#)
- [Does auditing really work in all cases?](#)
- [What can auditing cure?](#)
- [Can one go exterior in auditing?](#)
- [Are Auditors governed by a code of conduct?](#)
- [Is information divulged during auditing sessions always kept confidential?](#)

Personality Test Pop-Up

While looking through the pages of the FAQ, I saw a persistent pop-up advertising a free personality test titled “CURIOUS ABOUT YOURSELF?” that followed me every step of the way.²¹ The Church presented this pop-up on every page, so in line with the Estrangement Method, I followed the link.

Clicking the pop-up displays an overlay asking for the reader's demographic and contact information (Figure 5).²² There is also a blurb about what the test entails.

In this blurb, at the bottom of the overlay, readers are introduced to the test as the “OCA”; this language reads as: “The OCA Personality Test and complimentary [sic] results consultation are absolutely free with no obligation—it’s simply a great opportunity to learn more about you” —language taken directly from Scientology.org.

TAKE A FREE ONLINE PERSONALITY TEST

[Privacy Info](#)

First Name:

Last Name:

E-mail:

Age:

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Country:

Postal code:

Phone number:

START YOUR TEST

Oxford Capacity Analysis (OCA) Test

- What is the OCA?
- How it Works
- Personal Successes

The OCA Personality Test and complimentary results consultation are absolutely free with no obligation—it's simply a great opportunity to learn more about you.

Figure 5: Webpage view when personality test pop-up is click

Chapter 4: Explication and Operationalization

Despite being Estranged, one must still adhere to analytical methods. To this end, I refer to Coleman’s previously established coding schema for sciencing as a guidepost, with my own addition of tech-romancing. I also draw upon Baudrillard’s conceptions of a simulacrum and simulation. Operationalized codifications will be provided below.

Sciencing Coded

To code specifically for sciencing frames, Coleman’s definition will be used: “The practice of doing science ... [that] obscures the ideological framework” (2020, p. 51). Coleman then conceived ways to measure sciencing in news text and settled on:

1. “Any reference to science, facts, truth, etcetera, that is related to “sciencing” (so the truth of the Bible would not be included).
2. Any types of scientific method words such as data, results, effects, samples, studies, etcetera.
3. Specific types of methods such as measurements, weights, examination, tests, etcetera.”
4. Terms and phrases relating to medical science, such as medical advice (Coleman, personal communication, April 27, 2022).

Tech-romancing Coded

A strict reading of previous coding for sciencing may leave certain terms out. In the same vein as sciencing—given the Church’s penchant for techno-babble—this study also considers scientifically loaded words such as “technology,” “machine,” “device,” “circuitry,” “electrical charge,” etcetera, as tech-romancing. Tech-romancing is a term of my own creation but can be thought of as a derivative of sciencing due to the searching

parameters and methods for data collection being a near mirror of Coleman's ideation—yet the two terms are divorced in focus. Again, tech-romancing can be thought of as the romanticization of technology. Though this term may very well have significant overlap with sciencing, it is uniquely different in its focus on tech being the first association above and beyond the potential scientific applications of said technology, much like how the engineer is conceptually distinct from the scientist.

Tech-romancing also featured heavily in the Church's outreach materials and worked alongside the heavy sciencing to reinforce Scientology's place as being able to address spiritual concerns with a degree of scientific accuracy and technological mechanisms. The most prominent example is the E-Meter device, which not only features heavily in marketing, but acts as a form of marketing itself, providing the image of technological precision to the "stress test" that Scientology evangelists offer prospective converts.

Instances of tech-romancing should largely accompany instances of sciencing, but several pages are likely to included tech-romancing without sciencing. The non-exclusive connection of tech-romancing to sciencing is evidence that tech-romancing should be considered separately from the established codification of sciencing. Because tech-romancing is a narrowed application of sciencing, it follows that its use, while pervasive, should not appear as foundational to Scientology's self-framing as sciencing. To be clear, I coded anything with the word technology as tech-romancing as well as any instances where electronics were mentioned.

Simulacra and Simulation Coded

Simulacra and simulation are philosophical terms from Baudrillard's text of the same title in which he explains the terms through a four-stage process outlining their development. The first stage of a simulacrum is a faithful image or copy, the second stage is an unfaithful copy, the third stage is where the simulacrum masquerades as a faithful copy, however, it is a copy without an original, and the fourth stage is pure simulation, in which the simulacrum has no relationship to any reality whatsoever. This is a regime of total equivalency, where cultural products need no longer even pretend to be real in a naïve sense, because the experiences of observers' lives are so predominantly artificial that even claims to reality are expected to be phrased in artificial, hyperreal terms (Andalib, 2015). An example of this is Disneyland.²³

Disneyland is an apt demonstration of simulation in the following way: if a child visited the institution and witnessed an actress in a Snow White costume, the child may notice how exciting it is to see the "real" Snow White. But there is no "real" Snow White, only the paid actress playing Disney's copy of The Brothers Grimm's character.²⁴ Many iterations of simulacra have been layered to eventually expose a level of convolution where marking the distinction between fake and real is inconsequential or even an exercise in vain. Thus, Disneyland is a complete simulation, according to Baudrillard.

Baudrillardian simulation is a kind of end point but simultaneously a process. For this reason, I use the term *simulacra* to describe the signs, symbols, and concepts of Scientology, and I argue the Church creates a *simulation* of religion through various practices, naming schema, actions, or rituals, such as Auditing. Simulation is elevated to a process and a system, not merely an object or a signifier. Therefore, I coded simulacra

as the aforementioned signs and symbols, and I coded simulation any affectation of religious processes.

Operationalization Validity

It is reasonable to question the legitimacy of the terms and content included due to the number of moving parts involved. Fortunately, these decisions have been backed by an unbroken string of research and prior scholarship. The following is a brief rationale that reiterates the validity of incorporating the methodology and constructs selected.

Estrangement

I drew the method of Estrangement from its usage in the field of anthropology by scholars such as Clifford Geertz. Geertz himself derived the term from the works of the philosopher Charles Taylor who cautioned those in the “human sciences,” such as anthropology and psychology, against trying to approach their work as a natural science and so reduce human behavior to a simple “objective” norm based on preconceived notions (Geertz, 2010, pp. 155-157). Geertz applied this to study by attempting to approach subjects with as few pre-existing notions as possible, in order to learn about the subject on its own terms. Given the negative depictions of Scientology in media I had seen, I considered it imperative that I go about my research similarly. This process helped me divest myself “of the usual cultural familiarities, to claim a certain strangeness,” (Alexander, Smith, and Norton, 2011, p. 10) and so to circumvent my pre-existing biases in regard to Scientology.

Sciencing and Tech-romancing

Sciencing as a term has been used directly by scholars from Pierre Bourdieu (2001) to Cynthia-Lou Coleman (2020), but it draws on a much larger body of

discussions in the philosophy of science surrounding pseudoscience (e.g., Nader, 1998), “junk science” (e.g., Rampton and Stauber, 2002), and broader considerations of epistemology in science (e.g., Kuhn, 1962/2012). The definition of sciencing that I use in this study originates from Coleman’s *Environmental Clashes on Native American Land: Examining Cultural Ruptures through Social Discourse* (2020) but has been supplemented through my own correspondence with her as necessary.

Similarly, tech-romancing, despite being a creation of my own, is emulative almost in its entirety to Coleman’s coding and construction of sciencing. Tech-romancing should be understood as building on already-established notions from the broad body of literature surrounding sciencing. tech-romancing is not the invention of the wheel, but rather an articulated subsection of sciencing nestled under the umbrella of the prior literature. Tech-romancing should be counted as distinct from sciencing as chemistry is to science.

When originally thinking about this specific application of sciencing to technology, I chose to create this portmanteau. The underlying idea behind the use of tech-romancing is that technological terms are being used in a way divorced from technology itself and more in line with the romanticized promises or possibilities of technology. Like sciencing, its use is a contradiction of technology’s rationalist associations, while co-opting its authority. It has been shown that the inclusion of something as simple as a magnet can increase the trust of people when making claims and interacting with technology (Spurlin, 2003). The idea of technology, rather, is being invoked to indicate the subject’s romanticized associations with technology.

Simulacra and Simulation

In the course of examining Scientology's materials for sciencing, I encountered several instances of Baudrillardian simulacra and simulations that were so interconnected with the Church's use of sciencing and tech-romancing that they warranted inclusion in this examination. In line with Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2016), who propose framing research be focused on alterations in the presentation of information, Parry-Giles (2010) states that

Images are malleable and easily manipulated. They exist in the realm of fantasy and construction, public relations and puffery. The philosophical extreme of this criticism is articulated by Jean Baudrillard, who attempts to understand the "murderous power of images," particularly in religious iconography where such images are seen as the "murderers of the real" in contrast to "representations as a dialectical power, the visible and intelligible mediation of the Real" (p. 36).

Baudrillard delineates these representations into four stages of simulacra, culminating in simulation (2010). This culmination—simulation—was used in its fourth-stage simulacrum sense to denote the processes and systems by which the Church of Scientology simulates religious practice.

Chapter 5: Findings with Analysis

Summary and Overall Findings

Based on my examination of the Church of Scientology's website, through an Estrangement lens, I have confirmed that the Church does invoke sciencing (RQ1) and tech-romancing (RQ2), while incorporating simulacra (RQ3), thus creating a simulation of religion (RQ4). For this section, I draw upon data collected during my Estranged approach to examining the Church's online FAQ pages. In presenting data for this section, I explicitly listed the number of occurrences of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation observed in the FAQ pages, while noting pages upon which these constructs most often occur.

My thesis contributes an analysis of the most controlled and distilled messaging that the Church produces. Other scholars have examined materials, or practices that the Church generated, from a detached perspective, but my contribution to the field is unique in its focus on the experience of a newcomer to the Church. This view is of paramount importance given that this is the Church putting its best foot forward—the Church exactly as it wishes to be seen. It stands to reason that the Church puts particular focus on the appeal of the articles first presented to novices. Ergo, the prevalence of the constructs I examined in these materials proves their centrality to the Church's framing.

While others have perused the periphery, I stared into the eyes of the Church and engaged them in an Estranged way on their own terms. While a not insignificant portion of the population within the United States has some measure of familiarity with Scientology, their expansionary tactics will certainly expose the uninitiated to Scientology globally. My findings and thematic analysis are dissecting what this new

wave of potential contacts will likely be cajoled, corralled, or otherwise guided into experiencing.

RQ1, Sciencing: Findings and Analysis

FAQ Texts

While very much emphasizing Scientology as a religion in its outreach, the Church sets itself above other religions by contrasting its supposedly scientific methods with “dogmatic religions.” This can be observed in the FAQ article titled “What is Scientology,” which states:

Scientology is not a dogmatic religion in which one is asked to accept anything on faith alone. On the contrary, one discovers for oneself that the principles of Scientology are true by applying its principles and observing or experiencing the results.²⁵

This use of sciencing as a way to position itself above other faiths can be seen throughout the Church’s materials and is crucial to its messaging. In fact, the word “Scientology” itself can be understood as sciencing. The suffix “-ology” is associated with the study of a field (e.g., biology, chemistry, virology, and so on), so the Church is immediately declaring itself the study of science on the outset.

In examining the FAQ pages, I counted 219 instances of sciencing, which are listed in Figure 6.

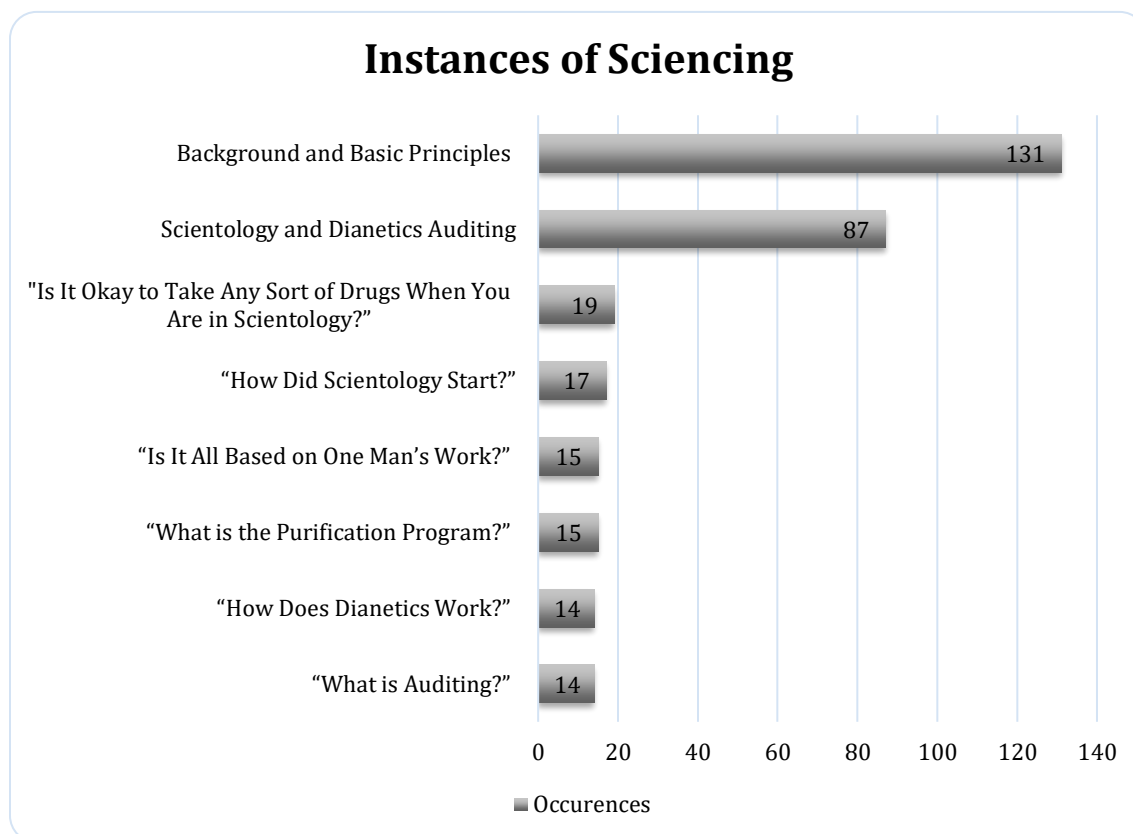


Figure 6: Instance of Sciencing

The instances occurred most frequently in the Background and Basic Principles section (N=131), though sciencing was also a key aspect of the Scientology and Dianetics Auditing section (N=87). Instances of sciencing spiked on the pages "How Did Scientology Start?" (N=17), "Is It All Based on One Man's Work?" (N=15), "Is It Okay to Take Any Sort of Drugs When You Are in Scientology?" (N=19), "What is the Purification Program?" (N=15), "What is Auditing?" (N=14), and "How Does Dianetics Work?" (N=14). For further breakdown of terms within these pages, see Appendix C.

The page with the highest count of sciencing was the “Is It Okay to Take Any Sort of Drugs When You Are in Scientology?” (N=19), due to the amount of medical sciencing.

Appeals to Authority

One illustrative example of sciencing is in “Is It All Based on One Man’s Work?” On this page, Hubbard (2000) explicitly credits the “fifty thousand years of thinking men without whose speculations and observations the creation and construction of Dianetics would not have been possible.” *Dianetics* is thus credited to individuals critical to the development of science and math including: René Descartes, James Clerk Maxwell, Euclid, Herbert Spencer, Roger Bacon, William James, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, Joseph Thompson, and “my instructors in atomic and molecular phenomena, mathematics, and the humanities at George Washington University and at Princeton”.

Perhaps the most explicit case of sciencing can be found on the page “What is Auditing?” that states:

there are no variables in the technology of Auditing, no random results of haphazard applications. Auditing is not a period of vague free association. Each process is exact in its design and in its application and attains a definite result when correctly ministered.²⁶

By using such loaded verbiage, this is a poignant display of Coleman’s (2020) codification of sciencing. Although this particular description bleeds into my concept of tech-romancing—given the self-framing of Auditing as a technology—the underlying appeal offering a definitive scientific answer is paramount. Other such instances of

sciencing can be observed throughout the FAQ pages and can be reviewed in Appendix B and Appendix C.

RQ1 Summary

Sciencing can be seen throughout the Church's outreach materials as an integral part of their messaging. A few patterns of sciencing emerged, such as invoking legitimacy by associating their teachings with hallmark figures in the history of science. Sciencing patterns also included attacking other domains and disciplines—especially psychiatry, and attacks on a broad array of other medical interventions were observed (e.g., vaccination, or prescription drugs such as Ritalin).²⁷ While Scientology does present itself as a religion firstly, it differentiates itself from other faiths by claiming a degree of scientificity, technological legitimacy, and going on the offensive towards other disciplines. By claiming both the trappings of faith and science, the Church asserts itself as uniquely above either alone and above alternative systems.

This has been observed in their use of the suffix -ology. In my Estranged observations, I found seventy-six mentions of Scientology throughout their FAQ pages. They cite no less than ten scientific minds and imply that L. Ron Hubbard is amongst them. I observed them describing their rituals as “exact,” “definite,” or “not random,” most especially in regard to Auditing. Lastly, its E-Meter device is said to produce reliable and actionable data—a hallmark of sciencing.

RQ2, Tech-romancing: Findings and Analysis

Tech-romancing also featured heavily in the Church's outreach materials and worked alongside the heavy sciencing to reinforce Scientology's place as being able to address spiritual concerns with a degree of scientific accuracy. The most prominent

example is the E-Meter device. It features heavily in marketing and acts as a form of marketing itself, providing the image of technological precision to the “stress test” that Scientology evangelists offer prospective converts.

I found thirty-three instances of tech-romancing on the FAQ, which appeared on nine out of the thirty-two pages. Instances of tech-romancing were skewed towards the “Scientology and Dianetics Auditing” section (N=29). Instances of tech-romancing largely accompanied instances of sciencing, but several pages included tech-romancing without sciencing. This occurred when relating to the “standard technology of Dianetics and Scientology” on the page “What do the Terms Preclear and Auditor Mean?” and referring to the “Scientology theology and technologies” on the page “Does Scientology Have a Scripture?” The greatest instances of tech-romancing occurred on the “What is the E-Meter and How Does it Work?” (N=21) page. The non-exclusive connection of tech-romancing to sciencing is evidence that tech-romancing should be considered separately from the established codification of sciencing. Because tech-romancing is a specific application of the ideas behind sciencing, it follows that its use, while pervasive, was not as foundational to Scientology’s self-framing as sciencing.

Technology

Throughout Scientology’s outward-facing materials, *Dianetics* and Auditing are described as “technologies” set forth by L. Ron Hubbard. The repeated usage of technology rather than a term like rituals, or another such religious term, leads me to believe that it is a conscious distinction between Scientological practices and those of more normatively accepted religions. Importantly, the Church seems to litter the word technology in the FAQ, forming a definite pattern of use. Practices as simple as

understanding the definition of words are titled “technologies,” such as *Wordclearing* are included.

In addition to labeling various simple practices “tech,” the Church has its pièce de résistance—the E-Meter. In “What is the E-Meter and How Does it Work?” the Church describes the E-Meter first as a religious artifact, as they are legally mandated to do, but after listing that in one sentence, the remainder of the article refers to the E-Meter as an “electronic instrument,” which sounds more like a secular technology.

E-Meter

The E-Meter, which appears in both the Super Bowl ads and the FAQ, is essentially a dolled-up Electroencephalogram (EEG) (devices traditionally employed in the medical and psychological disciplines). Whereas EEGs are cumbersome and involve attaching electrodes to an individual’s head, the E-Meter is handheld and involves no further attachments. Because the E-Meter is recognizably so similar to the EEG, and therefore appears more technological than common religious edifices (such as a cross or rosary beads), it allows Scientology to occupy a position more rooted in tech-romancing than its spiritual competitors. The FAQ assures readers that these practices are precise and methodical: that is, scientific.²⁸

The procedures surrounding the E-Meter serve to emulate both the scientific rigor of a medical test and the more spiritual aspect of comfort in something akin to confession or therapy. Whereas going into the hospital and being hooked to an EEG can produce quality data, the E-Meter merely romanticizes such a process and evades scrutiny. Such a device produces flickering findings with its robotic arms and pseudo-sensors that Auditors are told to graph.²⁹

Whereas the EEG is used in a medical context to measure electrical activity in the brain, the Scientological apparatus measures electrodermal activity (EDA).

Measurements of EDA have a long tradition of use in psychological and medical research; for example, devices in biofeedback therapy use EDA to measure and help control individuals' anxiety levels.³⁰ That said, in accordance with a court order, the E-Meter must be used only in a bona fide religious context and its use must be contextualized with a disclaimer that it is not a means for medical or scientific diagnoses.³¹ This is because Scientology attempted to claim the E-Meter was a genuine medical device—a claim that was subsequently legally challenged in *United States v. ARTICLE OR DEVICE, ETC.*, 333 F. Supp. 357 (D.D.C. 1971). Both before and after litigation, Scientology outreach programs used the E-Meter under the guise of a “stress test.”

The Church of Scientology's public relations relies heavily on the incorporation of a facsimile and aura of science. One salient quote, provided by Locke (2004) is “Scientology caters [...] through its manipulationist appeal employing highly developed “techniques of salesmanship and public relations” [...] albeit ‘packaged in a rhetoric of science’” (p. 120). It can be argued that Scientology's use of the E-Meter, or Electropsychometer, is the peak iteration of Locke's critique. The Church asserts that the difference between Scientology and other faiths was that Hubbard had “developed an actual technology that enables you to use his discoveries to improve yourself and others.”³²

RQ2 Summary

In keeping with the Estrangement method, I traveled to the Dianetics and Scientology Auditing pages on the FAQ and found thirty-three instances of tech-romancing. Throughout the FAQ, the word “technology” and its variant “technologies” are present on seven pages. It appears far more than is necessary in describing rituals such as Auditing. Conversely, the E-Meter is certainly technology, but it is referred to as a “religious artifact” (post-litigation), despite being composed of mechanical parts such that it is much more clearly technological. When actual wires and gizmos were used, it was not referred to as technology nearly as frequently as a process such as *WordClearing*.

The Church frequently describes the E-Meter with technological jargon and flourish, having at one point claimed that it was a genuine medical device. After having that claim legally prohibited, The Church seems to have added weak disclaimers, followed by scientific and technological claims of certitude. This pattern was found on the FAQ page “What Will I Get Out of Auditing?” and the following page “Does Auditing Really Work in All Cases?” The quote “we are not making any claims for Dianetics or Scientology. When you have experienced it, it is *you* who will make the claims” is immediately followed by the contradictory quote: “Dianetics and Scientology technologies are very exact and well-tested procedures that work in 100 percent of the cases in which they are applied standardly and as intended.” Combining all of this, the E-Meter presents as tech-romancing.

RQ3, Simulacra: Findings and Analysis

Recorded instances of simulacra (N=26) were few and far between compared to sciencing (N=219) and simulation (N=164), but where mentioned, they played a

significant role in the construction of Scientology's theology. As stated above, simulacra may be considered a gradual departure from an existing idea. Simulacra are differentiated from simulation in a pronounced way; simulations are processes and systems whereas simulacra are signs, symbols, or concepts.

Instances of simulacra were more prevalent in the Background and Basic Principles section (N=16) than the Scientology and Dianetics Auditing section (N=10). Of the Background and Basic Principles pages, seven out of fifteen included simulacra. However, of the Scientology and Dianetics Auditing pages two out of seventeen included simulacra. Mention of simulacra spiked the most on "Can One Go Exterior in Auditing?" (N=7).⁷

Thetans

To arrive at the concept of Thetans, the E-Meter and Auditing return to the discourse. In their messaging efforts, the principal use of the E-Meter is as a "spiritual technology," and it has been codified as a "religious artifact."³³ With the Auditing readings generated by the device, test-takers can allegedly infer the influence of Thetans on their well-being. A single human body can have enormous volumes of Thetans imposing their Engrams. Identifying and grappling with areas where Thetans are harming a person allows for personal development in Scientological theology.

A Thetan is a collection of past life images and emotions that represents one's false self. The purpose of Auditing is to sort out the true self among all these and remove the foreign Thetans from the practitioner. You are said to have reached the level of

⁷ For a breakdown of instances of simulacra on these pages, see appendix C.

"Operating Thetan" in the Church when this process is complete (Safoutin, 2008).

Scientology uses the Thetan as a stand in for the soul, a concept found in more conventional religions. Thetans carry with them subconscious associations stored in the reactive mind, again, called Engrams. The concept of a Thetan can be seen as a simulacrum of a soul, but with the flavor of past lives sprinkled in—something likely drawn from Hubbard's study of Eastern traditions (Kent, 1996). Additionally, *Engram* is a term with a history in established neuropsychology that has been hijacked.³⁴ By this I mean Scientology is a bricolage of signs and symbols lifted from other traditions and perverted, manifesting as simulacra by Baudrillard's conception.

Engrams

Hubbard, who is elevated to a messianic platform in the faith, evokes symbolism via Engrams within the text of *Dianetics* (2000).³⁵ Engrams appear in the FAQ as well (N=4), but with far less substance surrounding their definition. According to Scientology, Engrams are essentially symbols of trauma experienced in prior lives or by foreign Thetans inhabiting one's body. Though someone affected by Engrams did not, in their current life, undergo that trauma, they carry it in the form of Engrams. They are a faithful copy of prior negative experiences. This corresponds to Baudrillard's second stage simulacra as the term exists elsewhere (in neuropsychology), but Hubbard is putting his own spin on it.

Hubbard (2000) characterizes Engrams as:

moments of 'unconsciousness,' when the analytical mind is attenuated in greater or lesser degree, are the only moments when Engrams can be received [...] The Engram is a moment of 'unconsciousness' containing physical pain or painful

emotion and all perceptions and is not available to the analytical mind as experience (p. 63).

Later he uses the description: “the word Engram in *Dianetics* is used in its severely accurate sense 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, 2000, p. 90). Further in the text he clarifies: “the reactive mind impinges these Engrams upon the analytical mind and the organism whenever they are restimulated after being keyed in” (p. 209).

The construct of an Engram hosts an inherently negative connotation. The FAQ demonstrates this further, choosing to use as its example of Engrams those gained by a woman struck unconscious and insulted. This becomes problematic when the woman then associates the sound of running water with being hit as the water was running while she was hit.³⁶ The FAQ is less transparent than Hubbard’s earlier descriptions in *Dianetics* (2000). The wishy-washy definitions are indicative of an unfaithful copy and thus a second stage simulacrum.

Exteriorization

Another simulacrum that appeared was exteriorization (N=4). After reading the context of the term, it was immediately clear to me that the Church is using its own terminology to describe the more common phraseology of the metaphysical concept of astral projection. Astral projection appears in various spiritualities, esotericism, and occult practices as a means of separating the spirit from the physical body.³⁷

Exteriorization or “going exterior” is described precisely like that. Despite the potential for deeper differentiation with greater familiarity, exteriorization on its face

appears to be a near carbon copy of astral projection. Therefore, astral projection is the base referent, and exteriorization is one degree removed creating a second stage simulacrum.

Signs and Symbols

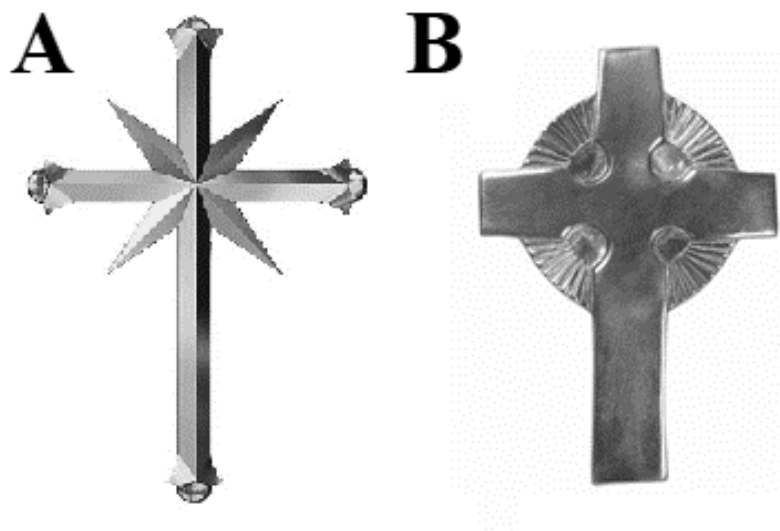


Figure 7: Scientology cross (A) compared with Spanish cross (B)

Accordingly, as an observer continues to navigate, they will invariably encounter seemingly familiar symbols. It is easy to see the similarity between Scientology's cross, also known as the "sunburst cross," and the typical Spanish Christian cross (Figure 7).^{38,39} In fact, if viewed at a distance, the average observer would likely not be able to distinguish the sunburst cross from any other they had seen before—as demonstrated in Figure 8.⁴⁰



Figure 8: Scientology building with cross

This nearly indistinguishable symbol, conjoined with its separate meaning, places the visual firmly in the category of a simulacrum—because the object still has its base referent, and it is a near carbon copy meant to convey religiosity. As noted earlier, I define simulacra as the signs and symbols Scientology has devised to imply its place among more canonically accepted religious traditions. This is in line with perception management as outlined in Halupka (2014).

The sunburst cross is an eight-pointed cross, which the FAQ state symbolizes the Eight Dynamics of Scientology.⁴¹ However, many denominations of Christians have their own flavor surrounding their renditions of a cross. The sunburst cross is said to be based on the design of a sand casting for a cross used by Spanish missionaries in Arizona that Hubbard found in the 1950s.⁴²

Not all symbols the Church uses are simulacra, as per my operationalization. The sunburst cross sits in staunch contrast to the large letter “S” nested atop the A-R-C Triangle and K-R-C Triangle. The double triangle with the “S” is another emblem that

can be seen in the FAQ and across other Scientology materials. Upon examining it, the triangle does not appear to satisfy the definition of a simulacrum, as used in this thesis.



Figure 9: Scientology symbol

The design is unique and without a basal referent that I can determine. The inclusion of this logo is to demonstrate that signs and symbols were not merely plucked out of convenience to prove the points of this thesis, but rather that the FAQ were scoured for data that may disconfirm my presumptions as well (see Figure 9).⁴³

The Oxford Capacity Analysis

Additionally, when clicking throughout the FAQ, there is a persistent pop-up that cannot be ignored. This pop-up mentions a personality test—included previously as Figure 5.⁴⁴ This test uses the well-known name Oxford in its title, which likely creates an association with observers. Throughout the course of history, Oxford University has acquired considerable prestige as an institution. When thinking of Oxford, there are all varieties of associations about history, intellect, power, and clout—these attributes would

be virtually impossible to mute. This is why it is significant that Hubbard would in 1959 publish the recognizably titled *Oxford Capacity Analysis* (OCA) (Kemp, 1959).

The first edition of the OCA was copyrighted under the name of Ray Kemp, but subsequent editions are copyrighted in Hubbard's name (Wolfe, 2017). The Oxford Capacity Analysis calls up immediate associations with Oxford University, but they are in no way affiliated. Wolfe (2017) pulls documentation from the past about the OCA and reveals that about three-fourths of the OCA Manual is actually just paraphrased or even copied verbatim from the American Psychological Association Manual. The Church is bandying about a document that is effectively plagiarized, with a title that connotes academic or established associations that do not exist. The test is administered as a "personality test." It is supplemented by questions that the Church would claim were devised by Hubbard, but scholars such as Wolfe (2017) would credit to Kemp, under whom the test was initially copyrighted:

there is a widespread misconception that Hubbard was the author of the [...] OCA. Nothing could be further from the truth. [...] Hubbard himself explicitly disavowed any expertise in psychometrics and relied on the advice of others, and yet the myth persists that the inceptor of the religion conceived something associated with Oxford University (p. 4).

This unfaithful association is demarcated as a simulacrum because it is a subversion of reality that is attempting to mask truth—a.k.a. a third stage simulacrum.

Though Scientology uses the OCA in a few ways, one of the primary ways is as an instrument for enticing newly contacted persons outside of the faith, which can be done at booths, churches, or online.⁴⁵ The test is then administered as a way of figuring

out faults or weaknesses in aspects of the prospective member's personality. The test can either be given in person with the assistance of an E-Meter or pressed upon website visitors via a persistent pop-up (see Figure 5).⁴⁶

If one clicks on the pop-up, you are greeted with an initial screen that asks for contact information before allowing you to begin the test. I entered a pseudonym to satisfy the roadblock. After you have entered the testing screen, there is a progress bar at the bottom of the screen. There is a large, numbered question in the center of the page with choices marked yes, no, or maybe. Once you answer one question, you are moved to the next question and the progress bar updates. The questions involved range from the rather portentous: "Is your life a constant struggle for survival?" or "would you admit you were wrong just to 'keep the peace'?" to the more innocuous: "do you greet people effusively?" and "do you sleep well?" There were 200 questions total. Upon completing the test by answering "yes" on 100% of the questions, I was greeted with a graph showing results as well as a map towards my nearest Scientology Church—however, I was using a VPN, so it was nowhere near my real location.⁸ Figure 10 shows the results of my test below.

It is notable that the features of your personality are represented by letters, and that then the Church urges you to come in physically to see what these letters represent. These letters were lumped into "unacceptable," "normal," or "desirable." Only one single attribute was considered "desirable," however this was a result of selecting only the yes option to each question. "Find out exactly what your personality strengths and weaknesses are. Which points are highest and which points are lowest? Schedule for your

⁸ The OCA result screen has no URL, as it was uniquely generated content.

free in-person evaluation and find out.” The webpage also includes a link to purchase *Dianetics* (2000). Whilst the test itself is coded as a simulacrum, the results it generates can certainly be seen through the lens of sciencing in that it is generating data that is supposedly objective and empirical—again demonstrating the interconnectivity of these constructs.

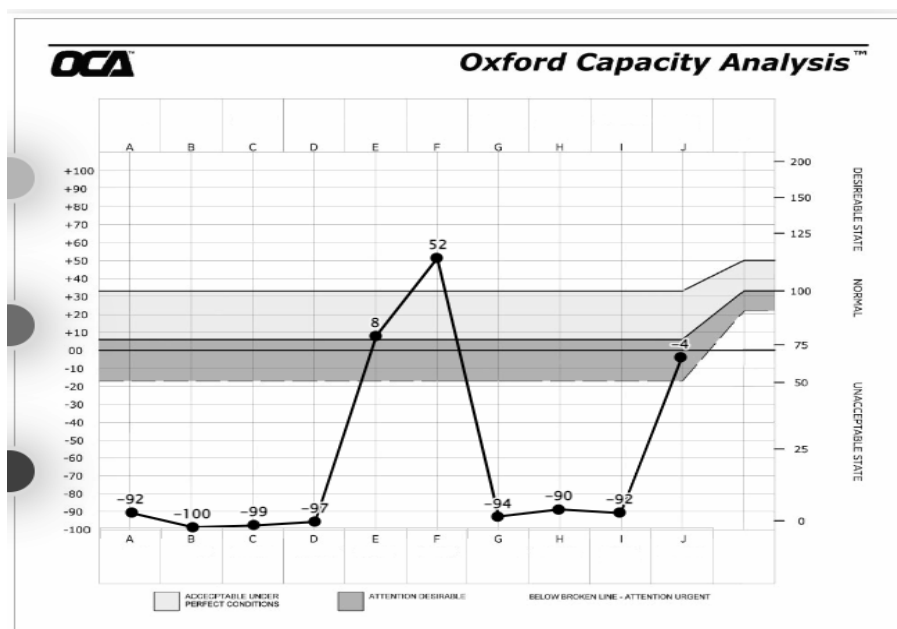


Figure 10: Graph of results from the pop-up personality test

The sell, after having taken the test, is that individuals could improve their faults if they merely enroll in Scientology services (Wolfe, 2017, p. 4). Notably, “experts [...] justifiably faulted the test administrators for ignorance of psychometrics and OCA test construction, thus risking giving incorrect interpretations to the examinees,” which casts further doubt on the test’s efficacy as administered by the Church of Scientology’s test administrators (p. 5). Their persistent usage continues the pattern of a distaste for

reflexivity as demanded by Bourdieu (2001)—that is to say they are engaging in sciencing.

RQ3 Summary

Whilst exploring the FAQ, various signs and symbols that fit the description of simulacra emerged. Thetans, Engrams, and Exteriorization were featured in varying locations. All three of these were concepts of the Church, whose basal reference could be easily identified as: the soul (the Engram from neuropsychology) and astral projection. Going further, one is exposed to the Scientology cross, which upon first glance could easily be misattributed as a standard Christian symbol. Diving deeper into the FAQ, a unique Scientological emblem was discovered, which does not appear to have a basal referent from another religion or institution—the A-R-C Triangle.

The Church of Scientology’s use of simulacra here shows a pattern of bricolage in the variety of sources they co-opt symbols from (Bogdan, 2015). The Church emulates elements of religious institutions with a degree of academic or theological legitimacy, seemingly to manage perceptions (Halupka, 2014). Examples include: “Oxford” in the instance of the OCA and the linkages of the cross and soul that they represented in the form of Thetans and Engrams.

Lastly, throughout the entirety of my traversing these FAQ pages, a pop-up advertising the OCA pestered me. In keeping with the Estrangement effect, I explored it. Once completed, the test generated a graph with undefined variables. Only one single attribute was considered “desirable,” perhaps to encourage the test taker to learn more. Upon digging, it is apparent that despite being labeled as “Oxford,” no association with

that academic institution exists with the OCA. The culmination of all these observations clearly showcases the deployment of simulacra.

RQ4, Simulation: Findings and Analysis

Throughout Scientology's materials, I found instances of simulation, primarily in regard to the simulation of religion (because I considered simulation the invocation of religiosity). The website's main FAQ page, for example, highlights the questions that the Church feels most important to address and emphasizes a number of questions in regard to Scientology being a religion, for example: "How does Scientology compare with other faiths?"⁴⁷

Examining the FAQ pages, I found 164 instances of simulation. Simulations mostly appeared in the "Scientology and Dianetics Auditing" (N=124) section. Spikes in the number of references to simulation occurred on the pages "What is Auditing?" (N=29), "Why is Scientology a Church?" (N=15), "Is Information Divulged During Auditing Sessions Always Kept Confidential?" (N=18), and "Are Auditors Governed by a Code of Conduct?" (N=22).⁹

The most prevalent simulation term was Auditing (recall that Auditing means the use of the E-Meter in a ritual between Scientologists to achieve higher levels of spiritual awareness). It occurred in sixty-one instances. The prevalence of instances is due to repeated use of the term Auditing, which I have coded as a simulation of engaging in a pseudo-confessional. It is a pseudo-confessional as practitioners are encouraged to reveal any faults or foibles they may have to their superior in the church behind the E-Meter. It

⁹ For a breakdown of instances of simulation in the FAQ, see appendix C.

can also be thought of as a simulation of talk therapy or a medical process. Given the frequency of the Church's mentions, it seems key to the simulation.

The Church

The term “church” was used a total of seventeen times, with the largest share being in “Why is Scientology a Church?” (See Appendix B for a precise rationale behind each instance's inclusion.) When speaking of “the Church,” the implication is beyond a mere title. The Church is referencing a whole institution and the way that institution frames itself and operates within the world. Because of this, it seems elevated beyond a mere sign or symbol into the realm of simulation—that is, it is a whole process and manifold enactments rather than just a name for something. For example, a church has tax-exemption status, a church's members have established titles, and a church's members go to their organization to worship. All of these manifold enactments are expressed by the Church of Scientology in their simulation.

As defined earlier, in Baudrillardian vernacular, the fourth stage of simulacra is pure simulation, in which the simulacrum has no relationship to any original reality whatsoever. It is assumed that observers' lives are so overwhelmingly artificial that even claims to reality are expected to be expressed in hyperreal, artificial terms (Andalib, 2015). Whether or not a Scientology church is a *real* church becomes irrelevant, as it certainly has become a real *Scientology* church—whatever that means. Again, simulation is a process and a system, not merely an object or a signifier. There are titles that act as signifiers within the Church: parishioner, minister, scripture, etcetera. But those titles and terms are complementary components of the structure that is the Church as a whole—the

system and process of simulation. The way the entity of a church engages with the world around it satisfies these parameters.

In summation, the Church simulates religious elements such as parishioners, scripture, etcetera, and engages with society writ large within this shroud. For this reason, I codify terms such as “church,” “parishioner,” “minister,” “scripture,” etcetera, as simulation.

Auditing

In regard to Auditing, the term is coded due to its explicit connections to religiosity in Scientological thought, as evidenced on the page “What is Auditing?” Here it is claimed that “only auditing provides a precise route by which individuals may travel to higher states of spiritual awareness.” The connection of Auditor to clergy is likewise explicitly stated on the same page “an Auditor is a minister or minister-in-training of the Church of Scientology.” The parallel between priests listening to confessions and the definition of an Auditor on the same page as “one who listens” reinforces this further.

Auditing can also be seen as a distorted version of talk therapy, and further a slight perversion of a medical procedure as the E-Meter is always present. This combined emulation of confession, talk therapy, and pseudo-medical procedures elevates the practice to that of a simulation. This is because auditing is a process, a ritualistic process, involving multiple persons interacting systematically in a way transcends falsifiability in the way that a church of Scientology is a *real* church of Scientology, without regard to being a church.

Religion

In the same way that being a “church” is a complex process, the use of the word “religion” rises above lower order simulacra into the domain of complete simulation. Though religion can be worn like a badge or a moniker, it is used by Scientology more as a reference to an entire established order of what it means to be religious. The term is invoked twenty-two times within the FAQ. One such instance is when the FAQ mentions that the E-Meter is a “religious artifact [sic].” In order for this “artifact” to be religious, Scientology itself must be a religion. Such instances with this implication are littered throughout the FAQ. On a later page, the word scripture is used to describe Scientology’s writings; there is no context that I am aware of when the term scripture does not have religious connotations. A pattern emerged within the FAQ: It is not merely that Scientology calls itself a religion, but rather that it frequently adopts religious jargon and expressions. Invoking such associations can be interpreted as part of the Church’s perception management endeavors (Halupka, 2014).

In “Why is Scientology Called a Religion?” The Church asserts that Scientology meets criteria “used by religious scholars” as constituting a religion, those being: “(1) a belief in some Ultimate Reality [...] (2) religious practices directed towards understanding, attaining, or communing with this Ultimate Reality; and (3) a community of believers.” Who exactly these religious scholars are or where they derived these criteria from is not further elaborated upon. This leads one to suspect the Church may have set these standards for themselves to adhere to, thus simulating religious authority in order to bolster their simulation of religion writ large. This again demonstrates how the

verbiage of religiosity is used as a systemized interaction with the world around the Church, rather than as a simple title.

RQ4 Summary

In summary, 164 instances of simulation as per my codification and Baudrillardian conceptions were isolated in the dataset. The most prolific category of simulation surrounded the practice of Auditing, a pseudo-confessional, pseudo-therapeutic, pseudo-medical ritual. The Church also referenced itself as a church seventeen times. This is important as being a church is a complex interaction with society more than simply a name given the myriad associated images and implications it conjures. The Church titles itself a religion twenty-two times, describes its writings as scripture, the E-Meter as a religious artifact, its adherents as parishioners, its Auditors as ministers, and otherwise regurgitates traditional religious trappings across the pages of the FAQ—all of which demonstrates its simulation of religion.

Findings and Analysis Summary

Through an Estranged examination of the Church's outreach materials, most especially the website, I found 218 instances of sciencing (RQ1), thirty-three instances of tech-romancing (RQ2), twenty-six instances of simulacra (RQ3), and 164 instances of simulation. The overall frequency of these occurrences suggests their centrality to Scientology's messaging. Various patterns were observed and mentioned explicitly within each section's findings. A universal pattern also presented itself across a totality of the dataset: patterns across all research questions include this weaving of influences that I reference as a bricolage (Bogdan, 2015)—that is, adopting, weaving, and transmuting existing legitimate terminology and influences to serve Scientological purposes with mild

perversions or modifications to the original meaning (Urban, 2012; Whitney, 1995). This can be seen in Figure 11.⁴⁸

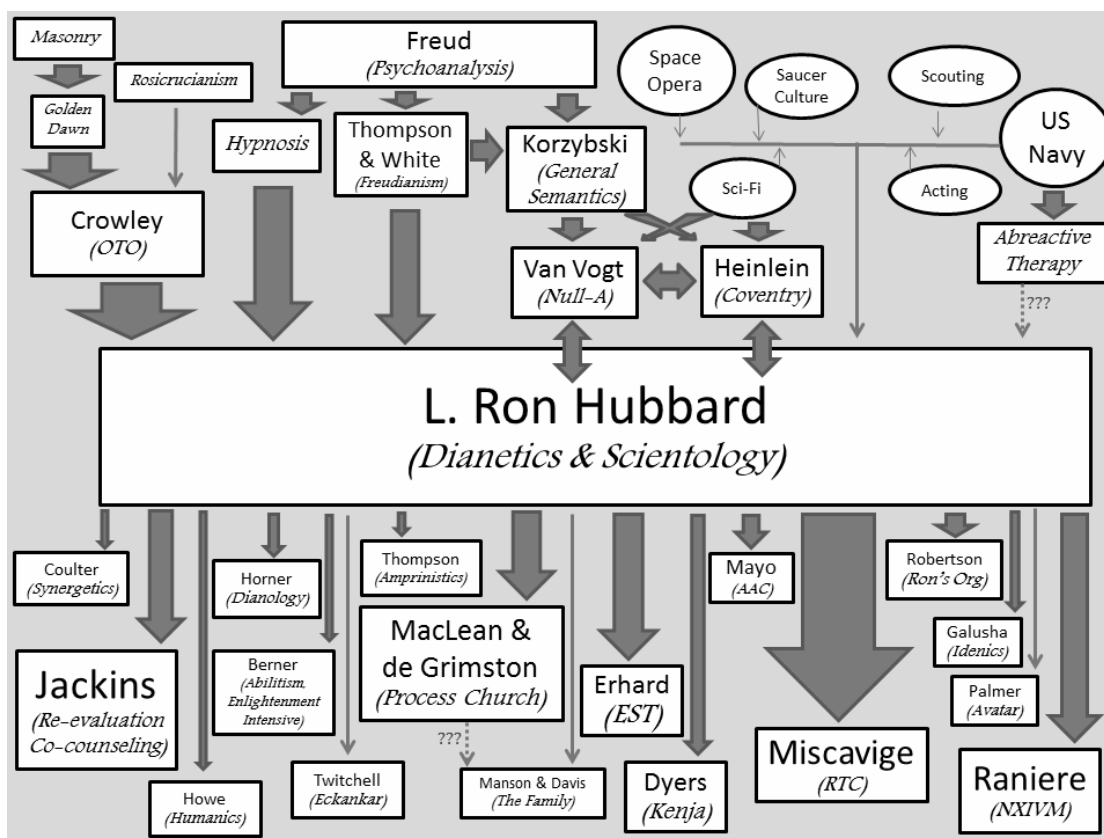


Figure 11: Hubbard's bricolage of influences

Sciencing (RQ1) and tech-romancing (RQ2) function together in service of legitimacy to the Church's practices, such as in the ritual of Auditing, wherein the Auditor follows a clear, repeatable set of instructions in line with the scientific process (sciencing), and utilizes the E-Meter, which resembles the actual medical device called an EEG (tech-romancing). The Church utilizes these and other simulacra such as the OCA to insinuate a place that shares the benefits of both science and religion without having to admit to any accompanying downsides. Scientology also makes use of simulation such as

invoking theology to further position itself as more useful than either a traditional faith or normative Western science.

This study is substantially assistive to the field of Communication as it takes the self-framing of a sprawling institution that is intentionally convoluted and secretive and renders it in a digestible fashion. This material can be used as a base for further Communication research and can be transposed to other disciplines and systems wherever the deployment of pseudoscience and a ballooned significance with the presence of technological baubles may present. This is especially so in regard to the data presented in the appendices, where these constructs can now be more easily identified elsewhere.

Limitations

Such an undertaking is not without restrictions. The most notable of which are as follows: Estrangement itself as a method of exploration, the fact that I am a single coder, and the secretive nature of the Church of Scientology. These issues are expounded below. Estrangement is itself a limitation as different findings could be resting right beyond the veil. I was restrained by the guard rails of Estrangement and could not go where my biases, as an academic specifically searching for thematic patterns, would have led. While the perspective afforded by the approach was central to my own study, there is yet more fruitful work to be done on the topic by a scholar pursuing their ends consciously rather than attempting to follow the flow of articles only that someone unfamiliar to the religion might do.

I was but a single coder, and thus no other views or opinions were engaged in the delineation of the phrases and words that were linked to the research questions. Despite

having firm codifications listed in the body of my work, someone else may very well have disagreed at times when cruising about the FAQ sample. It is worth mention that I did confirm a smattering of my selections with Dr. Coleman directly, but even then, she did not go through each and every page to search for things to code. So, while I am more confident nothing erroneous made it into my selection, I am less confident about having missed something on the FAQ pages.

The Church of Scientology's teachings are esoteric and secretive by design and therefore the findings may not reflect the true nature of the Church, however this sort of undertaking would be outside the scope of my current research due to the nature of my Estranged methods.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

Thesis Significance

The findings of this investigation highlight Scientology as a practitioner of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation. My findings should refocus the gaze of academics concerned with the propagation of sciencing, simulacra, and simulation upon the Church of Scientology as it continues to refine its practices and expand its influence. Future endeavors should also incorporate the search for tech-romancing. These practices should be at the forefront of critical thought where rhetoric absent of scientific principles is increasingly prevalent.

Despite claims in the FAQ that Auditing is not one hundred percent fool-proof, Scientology positions itself as a potent alternative to traditional Occidental science.⁴⁹ The Church was sued successfully in 1971 over claims that the E-Meter was able to cure diseases such as cancer. These new disclaimers on the FAQ seem to be there to satisfy legal requirements more than as a reflection of Scientology's actual belief set surrounding Auditing's efficacy.⁵⁰ Whereas Scientology no longer uses verbiage as bold as "the first science to contain exact technology to routinely alleviate physical illnesses with complete predictable success"⁵¹—phrasing that got them sued in 1971—this study demonstrates that the Church still engages in sciencing to this day with language no less self-serving. The importance of this is, that where a lawsuit was successful in the past, the underlying transgressions are still pervasive within the Church's materials—albeit with weak disclaimers that may be performative. This can be exemplified by the established discrepancy between the pages "What Will I Get Out of Auditing?" and "Does Auditing Really Work in All Cases?" as explained above wherein the Church issued a disclaimer

in the first article about the efficacy of auditing but immediately contradicted itself in the next article by saying that it “works in 100 percent of the cases [...]” This discrepancy is suggestive of the performative aspect of the Church’s simulation.

The Church of Scientology presents its practices as a more effective alternative to traditional Occidental medical science in its claims that Auditing and the accompanying removal of Thetans cannot only cure all diseases but can offer its participants superhuman powers. This claim of medical efficacy is paired with a belief-set influenced by a number of contemporary spiritual traditions such as Thelema, attracting yet more practitioners. As an esoteric tradition, these beliefs are given to members only gradually and by way of the follower’s own initiative. This allows the elements of sciencing and tech-romancing to exist while simultaneously offering more traditional spirituality. By pointing out the ways in which Scientology borrows its concepts and gilds itself in sciencing and tech-romancing—oftentimes appearing alongside simulacra and simulation—its status as a bona fide religion may still be challenged.

By establishing its belief system as sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation, it may one day be possible to dismantle their arguments. Religious dismantling is a daunting quagmire, but legal confrontation might be in the cards. Through the illustration of the Church’s constructs as a bricolage (Bogdan, 2015), rather than a unique theological conception, one might be capable of bureaucratically designating the Church of Scientology as dangerous or disingenuous.⁵² This first step—which has been taken, for example, by the federal government of Germany after institutions there raised the alarm about Scientological “brainwashing” (Von Somm,

1992)—sets in motion a path towards restrictions or precautions that could help inoculate people against the pull of modern cults. This action could be replicated elsewhere.

The Church of Scientology is often waved away as a cult, or publicly dismissed in a salacious manner without critical inquiry. Meanwhile, the Leviathan, to borrow the Hobbesian term for a beast, continues to grow.⁵³ Scientology continues to enjoy tax exemption, to recruit new members globally, to accumulate real estate internationally, to grow its wealth reliably, and otherwise expand while remaining legally privileged and engaging in sciencing and tech-romancing.

To quantify this accumulation: the Church has a real estate empire that has been consistently accumulating more properties, with \$400 million in holdings in Hollywood, California, alone.⁵⁴ Its pocketbooks are estimated to garner around \$200 million in annual revenue, with total valuation easily cruising into the billions according to Scientology's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications.⁵⁵ The Church's wealth and real estate holdings constitute a significant financial stake that can be used to influence even those outside the faith.

Another area in which Scientology had an impact on society-at-large is that members of the Church have successfully claimed religious exemption from vaccinations such as those against COVID-19. Scientologists have used this rationale to lobby against state mandates such as California's mandate for student vaccinations. It has thus impacted contemporary Californians even outside of the Church itself.⁵⁶

Scientology's use of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation, as well as its vast financial holdings, suggest that it will, if left alone, remain and only continue to grow in importance as a faith. The possible ramifications of its flagrant

sciencing and tech-romancing, if unchecked, have potential impacts in the fields of law (Barker, 2015), public health, religious legitimacy (Lewis, 2015), property ownership, and perennial challenges to good faith scientific reasoning. Further dissection of its public face along with the Church's claims of scientificity can give future researchers compounding evidence that Scientology is a simulation, neither truly a science, nor a religion.

Thesis Summation

I set out on this research with my own biases, informed in part by commonly shared opinions, and in part by my experience with the Church of Scientology. Those biases were influenced by a reverence for scientific thought and a disdain for pseudoscience, courtesy of the teachings of Carl Sagan from watching reruns of *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*, as well as my time in the academy. Despite those predispositions, I examined the material Scientology has provided for itself. I used my readthroughs of *Dianetics* (Hubbard, 2000) as a resource to understand the Church of Scientology's FAQ pages. That way, the data, and not personal prejudices, would show the ways in which Scientology manifests sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation when framing itself. I found that sciencing was pre-eminent in the Church of Scientology's self-framing, undermining any suggested foundation in a more conventional science. However, there was a greater tendency to find evocations of ecclesiastical simulation than anticipated. These instances of simulation were manifest in their practices as a church, and emphasis on theological motifs.

My findings have led me to conclude that the Church of Scientology's image of itself is indeed that of a nascent religion—a nascent religion which uses sciencing, tech-

romancing, simulacra, and simulation to gussy up itself for an ever more digital society.

In a way, sciencing in Scientology is reminiscent of how Franz Mesmer's use of hypnotism in the 1700s, then called Mesmerism, impacted the religious movement of Spiritualism.⁵⁷

Future Research

The most exciting potential going forward would be performing an ethnographic study on the process of joining the institution. Such an undertaking would need to be a long-term and dramatic commitment, with exceptional funding given the costly nature of the Church's membership. To the layperson, tell-alls and revelations come from long-term members who are likely unfamiliar with what today's pipeline to their level of commitment looks like. A longitudinal ethnographic study would provide this perspective for future academic dissection.

The Church lost its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, in the late 1980s. Many of the big media stories surrounding the Church of Scientology are from people who were members when Hubbard was still alive, such as Mike Rinder (2020). An analysis and dissection of the frames and semiotics that appear as one wades into Scientology would be of great value to the literature and could document the development of this world-wide religious movement.

Coda

Scientology has achieved something unique in this world that is worthy of academic attention and study. I argue the ways in which it has been framed through the Church of Scientology's sciencing, tech-romancing, and simulacra plays a large part in its

continued process as a simulation of religion. The degree to which their examined tactics work at convincing newcomers, however, is left for future study.

The position I have arrived at is that the Church of Scientology uses framing and semiotics to envelop itself in a self-serving façade. Their outward facing materials are a fine-tuned tunneling mechanism with consistent messaging and persistent frames across multiple forms of media. They have a developed narrative, established outreach tactics, and an intricate methodology—and they are sticking to it longitudinally. As it stands, with endurance over the passage of time and without sufficient challenge, even a science fiction writer’s spiritual flight of fancy may become a hallowed world religion.

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Appendix A: Scientology Super Bowl Advertisement Census

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Appendix B: Coded Terms

The following appendix is a relaying of what was highlighted on the printed pages of the FAQ. It is a complete rationale for why each term was coded the way it was coded. I focus on them term by term, organized by classification as Sciencing, Tech-romancing, Simulacra, and Simulation. Variations of individual terms, such as precise and precision or plural vs singular, will be grouped under the same term for brevity. There are also cases where an entire phrase or sentence is flagged, why it is flagged will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Sciencing

Scientology: the very name Scientology is an example of sciencing. Beyond the similar root of *scientia*, the suffix -ology relates to the scientific study of a body of knowledge.

Study: The term study was included as sciencing in the contexts in which Scientology uses it to assert itself as more a science, such as in “What Does the Word Scientology Mean?” In which the Church defines Scientology as “the study and handling of the spirit” in much the way one would define biology as the study of living beings.

Precise: Precise is used in articles such as “Why is Scientology Called a Religion?” To contrast Scientology from other religions in its offering a “precise path for bringing about spiritual improvement”. The implication here is that Scientology has a greater degree of scientific accuracy in its teachings than more traditional religions.

A body of knowledge: This phrase brings connotations of authority concerning the data set at hand.

Discover: In several articles such as “What is the Difference Between Scientology and Dianetics?” The Church uses discover to insinuate that Scientology was founded on the basis of a scientific proof that “one is a spiritual being”.

True by applying its principles: this passage relates to the scientific theory determining truth value based on the application of principles.

Observing or experiencing the results: this passage relates to the concept of empiricism, a cornerstone of science.

The study of knowing how to know: the given definition of Scientology’s root and suffix, differentiating the term from the philosophical connotations of epistemology.

Field of Scientology: branding Scientology as a field implies that it could be studied academically.

The Modern Science of Mental Health: the subtitle of *Dianetics* (Hubbard, 2000) directly girds foundational scripture as sciencing.

The reactive mind: this differentiation is a new term that Hubbard created—it is a redressing of the concept of subconsciousness, which is presented as fact without proof.

Research: At several points in the FAQ section, such as in “How Did Scientology Start,” the Church refers to L. Ron Hubbard’s writing of *Dianetics* as a process of scientific research into the reactive mind and exteriorization, both “discoveries” of his own.

René Descartes [and other such names]: Within the FAQ, you will run into a wall of

famous scientists. This intentional naming, along with the other subsequent name drops, looks like an attempt to gird Scientology's thought in the advancement of science. Additionally, using such established figures in this way, by association, positions Hubbard amongst them.

My instructors in atomic and molecular phenomena, mathematics: Including professors

of hard sciences in this list is an attempt to add scientific legitimacy—that their teachings directly influenced Scientological thought.

At George Washington University and at Princeton: Including the established names of

institutions like George Washington University and Princeton is an attempt to add authoritative legitimacy to the instructors' alleged contributions.

Matter, Energy, Space and Time: The addition of these four aspects of reality is

superfluous—an attempt to frame religious thought with terms associated with science. These terms are also often abbreviated to MEST.

A way to accomplish it with absolute certainty: The precision alluded to in this statement

gets back to popular expectations of scientific discovery as authoritative in its outcome.

Results: This term is included for its associations with scientific results. Its use implies

direct causality determined by the Scientological method.

Psychosomatic illness: This term has medical associations, which, upon consultation with

Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Psychosomatic condition: This term has medical associations, which, upon consultation

with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Psychosomatic illnesses are physical illnesses: This phrasing has medical associations

and asserts medical knowledge, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

The analytical mind: The attempt to dress the mind up as rational fits the scientific

suppositions of the day and is an attempt to use scientific associations with “analytical” in defining Scientological terms.

Observes: The Church of Scientology indicates that one will “observe” results in one’s

life after beginning Scientological practice in parallel with scientific observation of results in experiments.

Data: Data is immediately associated with science and other practices. The FAQ

frequently uses data to apply even to expressly religious Scientological information or the outcomes of Scientological ritual. It is worth noting that in “What is the Mind?” the Church uses data specifically to distinguish the object of rational observations of the analytical mind from the purely impulsive reactive mind.

Stimulus-response basis: This is their description of the function of the reactive mind.

This is to say that it only reacts to external stimuli rather than being capable of thought itself. Their inclusion of terms common to behavioral psychology bears mention as it associates their beliefs with accepted science.

Sub-mind: This is used interchangeably with the term reactive mind. L. Ron Hubbard

uses sub-mind or reactive mind rather than unconscious mind as he claims that it remains active even while one is unconscious and so shouldn’t be referred to that way.

Conscious mind: The Conscious mind is also called elsewhere the analytical mind.

Associating the two terms brings to mind that L. Ron Hubbard first sought to have *Dianetics* recognized as a branch of conventional psychology.

Unconscious mind: In “How Does Dianetics Work?” it is made clear that what normative psychology refers to as the unconscious mind is what L. Ron Hubbard called the sub-mind or reactive mind, but furthermore that it is incorrect to use the term unconscious mind because it is a part of the brain that remains active regardless of the state of the conscious mind.

Complete recording, down to the last accurate detail, of every perception present in a moment of partial or full “unconsciousness”: This is a description of the Scientological concept of Engrams. These Engrams are stored subconsciously and are always negative. This scientific descriptor gives an air of precision and helps to describe the concept of mental mass asserted elsewhere.

Procedure: The Church uses this term to describe its practices such as auditing in “What is Auditing?” Procedure brings to mind a medical procedure and brings a parallel between a scientifically vetted medical procedure and Scientology’s auditing, lending it more authority.

Cells or cellular memory: In “What is the Difference Between Scientology and Dianetics?” the Church asserts that “by use of the procedures of *Dianetics*” it was found that the source of all psychosomatic illnesses was Engrams rather than any “cells or cellular memory.” This is asserting in particular that one’s past lives can have influence on them even if they share no biological cells with their past self. Cells, of course, raise the ideas of biology.

Practice of Scientology: In “What is the Difference Between Scientology and

Dianetics?” they claim that “one can increase his spiritual awareness and ability and realize his own immortality” through practice of Scientology. Practice here denotes an exact set of procedures in line with a reproducible scientific experiment.

Substudy of Scientology: Here, again, the Church uses the term study, merely with a prefix. Studies are usually linked with science.

Precise delineation: Precision here is used in a way that Coleman codified as sciencing.

Classification, Gradation and Awareness Chart: This chart shows the codified set of grades that a Scientologist progresses through over their development in the faith. This system affords Scientology a veneer of scientific exactitude in much the same ways their definition of auditing processes does.

It is exact and has a standard progression: This language harkens to procedures and processes that are scientific in nature. It is claiming Scientology is a science and sticks to the same methods as Occidental science.

Thoroughly codified and has exact procedures: This is in reference to the practice of auditing in particular in “What is Auditing?” This is done specifically to distinguish it from “a religious practice” as they clarify in the same article.

Processes: Throughout their materials, Scientology presents its practices not as rituals or ceremonies, but as processes or procedures.

Exact sets of questions asked or directions: In “What is Auditing?” The Church defines processes as “exact sets of questions asked or directions given by an Auditor to help a person locate areas of spiritual distress.” The assertion that these are exact

questions implies that they are tested and proven in the way a scientific procedure would be.

Each process is exact in its design and in its application: As defined before, a process is the “exact” set of questions that an Auditor asks in the course of an audit. This phrasing serves to underline the implication that auditing is a well-tested scientific process.

Attains a definite result when correctly ministered: This phrase is again in reference to auditing. Though the Church of Scientology states that auditing is to aid with “spiritual awareness,” they phrase this as “attaining a definite result” to undergird their assertion of auditing as objectively observable along the lines of a scientific experiment.

Measures: One of the primary advantages of the E-Meter is that it affords measurable, quantifiable data to the auditing process. That the measure itself is of dubious scientific value matters less than the fact that it provides a way to chart the otherwise nebulous concept of “spiritual awareness” in a way that makes it seem more scientific.

The pictures in the mind contain energy and mass: This refers to Thetans and their ability to impact the mind through “harmful energy or force.” By associating it with the scientific concepts of energy and mass, Thetans are made to sound more a proven scientific phenomena rather than an invention of Scientology’s.

Energy and force: That is to say the energy and force by which the Thetan harms one’s mind. This buttresses their assertion of “mental mass” and results in the creation of a pseudoscientific form of mental physics.

Electrical flow: This is in reference to the small electrical charge that an E-Meter gives off in order to measure electrodermal activity. Whereas this does have actual scientific application in combination with other tools of measurement, Scientological procedure takes the base electrodermal impulses to represent the activity of “the reactive mind” and the influence of Thetans that it may contain.

Mental mass and energy: The Church present the concept of mental mass and energy as a given in order to further their claims elsewhere that Thetans are composed of images that have a mass and are able to affect and be affected by energy and force in line with actual physics.

Research has shown: The word research here is being used in regard to scientific research, not merely looking things up.

It takes at least six weeks for the effect of drugs to wear off: This term has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing. Additionally, contemporary knowledge includes a substantially more nuanced understanding of the impacts of drugs. Certain medications can be out of your system incredibly rapidly, whilst others require vast swathes of time to pass before a complete reduction of influence can be objectively stated.

A person on drugs is less alert and may even be rendered stupid, blank, forgetful, delusive or irresponsible: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing. Additionally, certain drugs are given with increasing focus specifically in mind, such as those prescribed for ADHD. Such a divergence from established medical

understanding demonstrates sciencing rather than authentic engagement with scientific findings and norms.

Antibiotics work differently than drugs: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Antibiotics work more rapidly and effectively when they receive auditing at the same time: Scientology offers no proof of this statement. Despite searching for a peer reviewed study that could support this claim, none emerged from my endeavors. I also attempted to find research surrounding the efficacy of antibiotics when used in conjunction with traditional talk therapy (something at least tangentially in the same vein as auditing)—none emerged there either. Ergo, this statement is unsubstantiated sciencing.

Medical drugs prescribed by a physician: The exact definition of what constitutes medical drugs prescribed by a physician and other Scientologically forbidden drugs (as those prescribed by a psychiatrist). The inclusion of such a term is an attempt to align Scientology with medical authenticity while later distancing itself from psychiatry.

Psychiatric mind-altering drugs: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

If a person has a medical or dental condition requiring treatment: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Consult their doctor or dentist: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Drugs are essentially poisons: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

The degree they are taken determines the effect: This sentence has medical associations,

which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

A small amount acts as a stimulant: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

A greater amount acts as a sedative: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

A large amount acts as a poison and can kill one dead: This sentence has medical

associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Drugs also dull one's senses: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Affect the mind and spirit so that the person becomes less in control and more the effect

of their environment: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon

consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Claims of psychiatrists that drugs are a "cure-all": This is false, and I know of no

qualified psychiatrist that would make the claim that drugs solve literally all problems and conditions. Additionally, this sentence has medical associations,

which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

At best drugs only mask what is really wrong: Clearly this statement is false, as drugs have been used to cure many an ailment. Additionally, this sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

At worst, drugs cause harm: Though this phrasing is not necessarily false by any means, this sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Detoxification: The concept of detoxing is popular amongst grifters and pseudoscientific products. Countless teas, pills, and practices for detox have come and gone throughout the years. What specifically is being expunged from your body is never truly defined, and the process through which said detoxification is occurring is not defined either. This is a tired invocation of a scientific sounding word without any true description or rigor surrounding such an invocation.

Rid himself of the harmful effects of drugs, toxins and other chemicals that lodge in the body: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Biochemical Barrier / Biochemical Substances: This term has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing. Furthermore, it is calling up association with biology and chemistry.

Chemical-oriented society: The word chemical is intimately associated with scientificity. Chemical can invoke all sorts of emotions as things like acids are chemicals and

can be dangerous. It is a catchall that increases the dramaticism of language without providing any true context. Dihydrogen monoxide is a chemical name that can frighten the uninitiated, but of course it is merely another way of saying water for those in the know.⁵⁸

Drugs and toxins can put an individual into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health: This is a dual invocation without proper description that combines the two highlights of “drugs” and “chemical” from above.

Can prevent any stable advancement in mental or spiritual well-being: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Mr. Hubbard’s research: The term research here should be immediately recognizable as sciencing. The Church is saying that the writings of Mr. Hubbard are in the same category of rigor and reproducibility as PhDs and famous scientific figures.

LSD stays in the system for years after ingestion, lodging in the fatty tissues of the body / LSD residues dislodge from the fatty tissue: These two statements regarding LSD have medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

A long list of other street drugs, chemical poisons, toxic substances and medical drugs can similarly lodge in the body and cause a person to re-experience: This sentence has medical associations, which, upon consultation with Dr. Coleman, will be included within the frames of sciencing.

Results in the elimination of drug residues and other toxins from the body’s fatty tissues:

This is an assertion of medical efficacy of the Purification Rundown.

Harmful effects of drugs and toxins: This is again in reference to the medical claims

surrounding the Purification Rundown.

Advances and refinements / Research and development: This is in the context of asserting

that the basic technique of auditing has never needed improvement, but there have been “advances and refinements” on the process thanks to L. Ron Hubbard’s continued research after *Dianetics*. This allows the Church to present a facade of continued scientological development surrounding its “procedures” while also not undermining auditing as a cure-all.

Exact and well-tested procedures that work in 100 percent of the cases in which they are

applied standardly and as intended: This is in reference to “Dianetics and

Scientology technologies” in “Does Auditing Really Work in All Cases?” It is a clear assertion of the efficacy and precision of Scientology’s practices and beliefs along scientific lines.

Illnesses that are psychosomatic in origin (meaning illnesses caused by the soul) often

disappear: This is through the use of auditing. Scientologists assert that illnesses that are

psychosomatic in nature are caused by the presence of foreign Thetans that will be resolved over the course of continued auditing.

Evolved over many years of observation: This is in reference to the Auditor’s Code but

demonstrates sciencing in its implication of a scientific process of observation and its conjuration of evolution.

Tech-romancing

Technology: Throughout Scientology’s outward-facing materials, *Dianetics* and auditing

are described as “technologies” set forth by L. Ron Hubbard. The repeated usage

of technology rather than a term like rituals or another such term similarly more connected to religion leads me to believe that it is a conscious distinction between its practices and those of more normatively accepted religions.

E-Meter / Electropsychometer: Though the object is most frequently described as the abbreviated “E-Meter”, its full title is electropsychometer. When used in conjunction with other monitoring equipment, the tool is used in conventional medicine, or devices such as polygraphs to help measure anxiety through electrodermal activity. In Scientology, however, the device is used on its own and its results are interpreted to measure the activity of Thetans in the body.

Electronic instrument: In “What is the E-Meter and How Does it Work?” the Church describes the E-Meter first as a religious artifact, as they are legally mandated to do so, but after listing that in one sentence, the remainder of the article refers to the E-Meter as an “electronic instrument,” which sounds more along the lines of a secular technology.

Electrodes / Wires / E-Meter leads: The FAQ makes special note of these components of the E-Meter and how they work in order to bolster its credibility as a technology. By holding the electrodes or leads, a charge is passed down the wires of the E-Meter through the person’s body.

Electrical Energy / 1.5 volts—less than a flashlight battery: This refers to the electrical charge that the E-Meter passes through the subject’s skin in order to establish a baseline for electrodermal impulse readings. The importance of the more particular phrasing is that it highlights the exact voltage in order to bolster the image of the E-Meter’s use in auditing as technologically sound.

Causing the needle on its dial to move / Needle reactions / Where the charge lies: This is

further detailing on the operation of the E-Meter. Electrodermal activity causes the needle in the dial to move and based on this motion, an Auditor is supposed to be able to find the root of any spiritual or psychosomatic illnesses to be addressed. This detailing allows further seemingly objectively quantifiable data for the Scientologists to claim as proof of their practices' efficacy.

Simulacra

Exteriorization: When reading and absorbing the context of the term, it becomes

immediately apparent that the Church is merely using their own jargon to describe the more common verbiage of the metaphysical concept of astral projection. Though more nuanced differentiation may arise with deeper familiarity, on its face, exteriorization seems like a near carbon copy of astral projection—ergo astral projection is the base referent, and exteriorization is one degree removed creating a first level simulacrum.

Thetan: A Thetan is a collection of images and emotions that constitute a false self-

carried over from one's past lives. The goal of auditing is to sort out the true self from amidst these and rid the practitioner of the foreign Thetans. When this process is completed in the Church, you are said to have reached the level of "Operating Thetan". This is a central symbol to Scientology and can be seen as approximating the concept of the soul as seen in more normative faiths.

Cross / Eight-pointed cross: The cross is very easily recognized as a religious symbol

owing to the ubiquity of the Christian cross. Scientology's own cross is eight-pointed to represent the eight "dynamics of life" in Scientology, but it is still

referred to as a cross and is imminently recognizable as such, and this clear parallel reveals it to be a simulacrum.

Engrams: Engrams are the subconscious associations stored in the reactive mind and they are what Thetans are composed of. This makes Engrams similarly a simulacrum of the concept of a soul. Additionally, Engram is a term with a history in more established sciences that has been hijacked.

Goes exterior: This highlight is merely a different contextualization of the simulacrum of exteriorization described above.

Simulation

Religion / Religiosity / Religious Practices / Religious Services / Religious Tradition / Religious Teaching / Religious Practice / Religious Artifact: Every single mention of religion, religiosity, or religious something or other is a declaration by implication that Scientology is itself a religion. Like the E-Meter being a religious artifact necessitates Scientology being a legitimate religion rather than just simulating religious practices.

Religious Scholars: The context here is a little more complex than other mention of “religious” x, y, or z, but again elevates the use of the term to simulation. The Church asserts that religious scholars would consider Scientology a religion as it—self purportedly—meets every single criterion. The implication is that they are a legitimate religion and engage in religiosity and religious practices. Because this implication is argued as untrue in the body of my thesis, it has been coded here.

Auditing: The practice of auditing is one of the most essential practices in Scientology. When engaging in entry level auditing, there is an Auditor who administers the

process to the person being audited. The entire ritual revolves around the E-Meter.

The Auditor fulfills a sort of therapist, religious superior, spiritual authority, advisor, teacher, or medical practitioner role all simultaneously to some degree.

This power differential and guiding role seems to be an emulation of various religious or spiritual practices engaged with in other systems. When auditing, the Auditor is supposed to be listening and helping the person receiving auditing get to the bottom of issues. The Auditor must take notes, and the person being audited cannot see the dials and needles on the face of the E-Meter. Ergo, auditing is a sort of pseudo talk therapy combined with a sort of pseudo confessional ritual. It has been revealed that as you advance up the bridge you ultimately begin facing the E-Meter towards yourself and proceed to solo audit where you fulfill both roles of administering and receiving the whole process. The way that so many other practices can be related, but there is no firm base referent distinguishes the practices as a full blown simulacrum process.

Training: Training is a part of the auditing process. One goes through auditing in order to advance in grades and as one does, they become eligible to “train” others, which is to say administer audits to them.

Church: When speaking of “the Church”, the implication is beyond a mere title. The Church is referencing a whole institution and the way that said institution operates within the world. Because of this, it seems elevated beyond a mere sign or symbol into the realm of simulation—as in, it is a whole process and manifold enactments rather than just a name for something.

Ecclesiastical: When using this term, the church uses a very specific phrase: “as

distinguished from the secular”. The distinction they attempt to portray is an attempt to imply that they are in fact not secular, and in fact a religion. Because this implication is argued as untrue in the body of my thesis, it has been coded here.

Minister / Minister-in-training / Ministered: Dictionary.com defines minister as “a person authorized to conduct religious worship; member of the clergy; pastor”⁵⁹ As such, the term necessitates the simulation of religion, as there are no secular ministers per the standard definition and colloquial understanding. The other conjugations and modified usages were bundled here and considered in the same way.

Auditor: The Auditor carries out the auditing as described above, but bears separate mention as the Auditor acts as a religious figure, simulating the role of a priest during confession for example.

Scripture: Scripture is used to denote specifically religious literature, and therefore contributes to the simulation.

Auditor’s Code / Clergy-penitent-privilege: Within the Auditor’s Code, the Church of Scientology makes special note to highlight the confidentiality of all information shared during auditing, comparing it directly to clergy-penitent-privilege and therefore furthering the asserting that auditing simulates religious ritual.

Parishioner: A parish is the traditional jurisdictional geographic unit of the Christian church and a parishioner is one that resides in that area. The Church of Scientology’s use of parishioner as a term helps to solidify that they seek to simulate religion.

Appendix C: Recorded FAQ Data

Total Mentions

Record Key: 1.) total mentions of (a) sciencing, (b) tech-romancing, (c) simulacra, and (d) simulation in each section, then record 2.) number of mentions of (a) sciencing, (b) tech-romancing, (c) simulacra, and (d) simulation on each page.

Background and Basic Principles:

Total Count: (a) 131, (b) 4, (c) 16, (d) 40

“What Does the Word Scientology Mean?”: (a) 5, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 0

“What is Scientology?”: (a) 13, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 2

“How Did Scientology Start?”: (a) 17, (b) 0, (c) 1, (d) 2

“Is it All Based on One Man’s Work?”: (a) 15, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 0

“What are Some of the Core Tenets of Scientology?”: (a) 10, (b) 0, (c) 4, (d) 0

“Why is Scientology Called a Religion?”: (a) 13, (b) 0, (c) 1, (d) 11

“Why is Scientology a Church?”: (a) 6, (b) 1, (c) 0, (d) 15

“Does Scientology Have a Scripture?”: (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 0, (d) 4

“What is the Scientology Cross?”: (a) 2, (b) 0, (c) 4, (d) 0

“What Does the Scientology Symbol, the S and Double Triangle, Represent?”: (a) 3, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 1

“What is Dianetics?”: (a) 5, (b) 2, (c) 0, (d) 0

“What is the Mind?”: (a) 6, (b) 0, (c) 1, (d) 0

“How Does Dianetics Work?”: (a) 14, (b) 0, (c) 4, (d) 0

“What is the Difference Between Scientology and Dianetics?”: (a) 10, (b) 0, (c) 1, (d) 1

“What is the Bridge in Scientology?”: (a) 9, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 4

Scientology and Dianetics Auditing:

Total Counts: (a) 87, (b) 29, (c) 10, (d) 124

“What is Auditing”: (a) 14, (b) 2, (c) 0, (d) 29

“What is the Difference Between the Two Scientology Paths of Auditing and Training?”: (a) 3, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 10

“Do All Church Staff Participate in Auditing and Training?”: (a) 0, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 3

“What do the Terms Preclear and Auditor Mean?”: (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 0, (d) 6

“What is the E-Meter and How Does it Work?”: (a) 11, (b) 21, (c) 3, (d) 7

“Why Does One Have to Wait Six Weeks to Participate in Auditing if one has Been Habitually Using Drugs?”: (a) 3, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 2

“Will Taking Antibiotics Prevent Me from Participating in Auditing?”: (a) 2, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 3

“Is It Okay to Take Any Sort of Drugs When You Are in Scientology?”: (a) 19, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 0

“What is the Purification Program?”: (a) 15, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 0

“How Many Hours a Day Can One Participate in Auditing?”: (a) 0, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 5

“Has the Technology of Auditing Changed Since the Early Days of Scientology?”: (a) 4, (b) 3, (c) 0, (d) 3

“What Will I Get Out of Auditing?”: (a) 3, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 5

“Does Auditing Really Work in All Cases?”: (a) 4, (b) 1, (c) 0, (d) 6

“What Can Auditing Cure?”: (a) 2, (b) 1, (c) 0, (d) 3

“Can One Go Exterior in Auditing?”: (a) 1, (b) 0, (c) 7, (d) 2

“Are Auditors Governed by a Code of Conduct?”: (a) 1, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 22

“Is Information Divulged During Auditing Sessions Always Kept Confidential?”:
(a) 2, (b) 0, (c) 0, (d) 18

Mentions Per Page

In addition to the number of instances of sciencing, tech-romancing, simulacra, and simulation, it would be helpful to readers to be able to see how words were coded on each FAQ page. This section of the appendix lists the occurrences per page.

Background and Basic Principles

1. Sciencing: Scientology (3), study (2)
2. Sciencing: Scientology (8), precise (1), a body of knowledge (1), discovers (1), true by applying its principles (1), observing or experiencing the results (1);
Simulation: religion (2)
3. Sciencing: Scientology (4), studies (1), the study of knowing how to know (1), field of Scientology (1), discoveries (2), The Modern Science of Mental Health (1), discovery (2), discovering (1), reactive mind (1); Simulacra: exteriorization (1); Simulation: religion (1), churches (1)
4. Sciencing: Scientology (1), René Descartes (1), James Clerk Maxwell (1), Euclid (1), Herbert Spencer (1), Roger Bacon (1), William James (1), Francis Bacon (1), Sigmund Freud (1), Isaac Newton (1), van Leeuwenhoek (1), Cmdr Thompson (MC) USN (1), Count Alfred Korzybski (1), my instructors in atomic and

molecular phenomena, mathematics (1), at George Washington University and at Princeton (1)

5. Sciencing: Scientology (5), the physical universe is composed of Matter, Energy, Space and Time (1), MEST (1), Scientologists (1), discover (1), discovers (1); Simulacra: Thetan (4)
6. Sciencing: Scientology (10), Scientologists (1), a precise path (1), with absolute certainty (1); Simulacra: Thetan (1); Simulation: religion (2), religious scholars (1), religiosity (1), religious practices (1), the religious services (1), auditing (1), training (1), church (1), religious tradition (1), religions (1)
7. Sciencing: Scientology (4), Scientologists (1), results (1); tech-romancing: technology (1); Simulation: church (9), ecclesiastical (1), religious teaching (1), religious practice (1), religion (1)
8. Sciencing: Scientology (3); tech-romancing: technologies (1); Simulation: scripture (2), religion (1), theology (1)
9. Sciencing: Scientology (2); Simulacra: cross (4)
10. Sciencing: Scientology (3); Simulation: religion (1)
11. Sciencing: psychosomatic illness (1), reactive mind (1), The Modern Science of Mental Health (1), psychosomatic condition (1), psychosomatic illnesses are physical illnesses (1); tech-romancing: technology (2)
12. Sciencing: the analytical mind (2), the reactive mind (2), observes data (1), stimulus-response basis (1); Simulacra: Thetan (1)
13. Sciencing: The Modern Science of Mental Health (1), sub-mind (2), 'conscious' mind (1), unconscious mind (1), discovery (1), 'unconscious' mind (1), the

- reactive mind (2), complete recording, down to the last accurate detail, of every perception present in a moment of partial or full “unconsciousness” (1), psychosomatic illness (1), procedure (1); Simulacra: Engrams (2), Engram (2)
14. Sciencing: Scientology (3), psychosomatic illness (1), procedures (1), cells or cellular memory (1), discovery (1), study (1), practice of Scientology (1), substudy of Scientology (1); Simulacra: exteriorization (1); Simulation: religion (1)
15. Sciencing: Scientology (5), precise delineation (1), Classification, Gradation and Awareness Chart (2), exact and has a standard progression (1); Simulation: training (1), Auditor (1), auditing (1), religious tradition (1)

Scientology and Dianetics Auditing

1. Sciencing: precise (2), thoroughly codified (1), has exact procedures (1), Scientology (3), processes (2), exact sets of questions asked or directions given (1), process (3), each process is exact in its design and in its application (1), attains a definite result when correctly ministered (1); tech-romancing: technology (2); Simulation: auditing (17), religious practice (1), audited (1), Auditor (6), minister (1), minister-in-training (1), audits (1)
2. Sciencing: Scientology (2), Classification, Gradation and Awareness Chart (1); Simulation: auditing (4), training (5), minister (1)
3. Simulation: church (1), auditing (1), training (1)
4. Sciencing: Scientology (3); tech-romancing: standard technology (1); Simulation: Auditor (4), auditing (2)

5. Sciencing: Scientology (3), measures (1), precision (1), the pictures in the mind contain energy and mass (1), energy and force (1), energy or force (1), electrical flow (1), the reactive mind (1), mental mass and energy (1); tech-romancing: E-Meter (7), electropsychometer (1), electronic instrument (1), how the E-Meter works (1), charge (1), a person holds the meter's electrodes (1), a very tiny flow of electrical energy (1), about 1.5 volts—less than a flashlight battery (1), the wires (1), E-Meter leads (1), electrodes (1), flow of electrical energy (1), the needle reactions (1), where the charge lies (1); Simulacra: Thetan (3); Simulation: religious artifact (1), auditing (3), minister (1), minister-in-training (1), Auditor (1)
6. Sciencing: research has shown (1), it takes at least six weeks for the effect of drugs to wear off (1), a person on drugs is less alert and may even be rendered stupid, blank, forgetful, delusive or irresponsible (1); Simulation: auditing (2)
7. Sciencing: antibiotics work differently than drugs (1), antibiotics work more rapidly and effectively when they receive auditing at the same time (1); Simulation: auditing (3)
8. Sciencing: Scientology (4), medical drugs prescribed by a physician (1), psychiatric mind-altering drugs (1), if a person has a medical or dental condition requiring treatment (1), consult their doctor or dentist (1), drugs are essentially poisons (1), the degree they are taken determines the effect (1), a small amount acts as a stimulant (1), a greater amount acts as a sedative (1), a large amount acts as a poison and can kill one dead (1), drugs also dull one's senses (1), affect the mind and spirit so that the person becomes less in control and more the effect of

their environment (1), claims of psychiatrists that drugs are a “cure-all” (1), at best drugs only mask what is really wrong (1), at worst, drugs cause harm (1)

9. Sciencing: detoxification (1), rid himself of the harmful effects of drugs, toxins and other chemicals that lodge in the body (1), create a biochemical barrier (1), chemical-oriented society (1), drugs and toxins can put an individual into a condition which not only prohibits and destroys physical health (1), Mr. Hubbard’s research (1), LSD stays in the system for years after ingestion, lodging in the fatty tissues of the body (1), a person can re-experience a “trip” as LSD residues dislodge from the fatty tissue (1), research (1), a long list of other street drugs, chemical poisons, toxic substances and medical drugs can similarly lodge in the body and cause a person to re-experience their effects (1), biochemical substances, it results in the elimination of drug residues and other toxins from the body’s fatty tissues (1), discoveries (1), the harmful effects of drugs and toxins (1)
10. Simulation: auditing (4), audited (1)
11. Sciencing: Scientology (2), advances and refinements (1), research and development (1); tech-romancing: technology (3); Simulation: auditing (3)
12. Sciencing: Scientology (3); Simulation: auditing (4), ministered (1)
13. Sciencing: Scientology (2), exact and well-tested procedures that work in 100 percent of the cases in which they are applied standardly and as intended (1), procedures (1); tech-romancing: technologies (1); Simulation: auditing (4), scripture (1), church (1)

14. Sciencing: Scientology (1), illnesses that are psychosomatic in origin (meaning illnesses caused by the soul) then disappear (1); tech-romancing: E-Meter (1); Simulation: auditing (3)
15. Sciencing: Scientologists (1); Simulacra: exterior (4), exteriorization (2), Thetan (1); Simulation: auditing (2)
16. Sciencing: evolved over many years of observation (1); Simulation: Auditors (2), Auditor's (6), audited (3), auditing (4), Auditor (3), ministers (1), religions (1), parishioners (1)
17. Sciencing: Scientology (2); Simulation: auditing (3), minister (4), parishioner (3), religion (1), church (4), clergy-penitent privilege (1), Auditor's (1)

Appendix D: Personal Encounter

When I was a teenager I stumbled upon Scientology at the Lloyd Center mall in Portland, Oregon, around 2009. At the time, there was no indication that I had run across Scientologists, but rather I was just barked at by some purveyors trying to get my friend and me to take a free stress test with ostensibly no further obligation. Even as a child my hackles went up. No one is at a mall simply trying to be generous out of one of those center aisle solicitor booths. We approached the two men who were working at the station because they were dapper and articulate; the fellows did not appear to have any shlock to foist upon us, but rather just a small table with a single piece of equipment atop it—the E-Meter.⁶⁰ They insisted they really wanted to give us the opportunity to use their “advanced technology” to probe our minds and bodies to see if there was any way we could improve our wellbeing. This “advanced technology” that they were hawking was a strange, diminutive computing device hooked to wires and metallic grips. The grips were about the size of soup cans—just a bit longer and with less girth. The core of the unit had dials and various knobs adorning its face. All in all, the device looked sleek and certainly technological in nature.

These well dressed and well-coiffed men handed me the soup cans and began asking probative questions. I gave them simple answers, and they rapidly dove into more personal affairs. They would look at the machine with intensity and admiration as they made mental jottings about its readouts, then shifted their tone and tenor based on what the device had supposedly revealed. At the time I was an incredibly cocky guy, so their inquiry fazed me little. I truly believe my teenage angst and ego protected me from going too far with these gentlemen. When they began suggesting some of my answers may be

problematic, I guffawed and handed back the soup cans. The data they got from me were basic, partially falsified, and otherwise insignificant as I was not taking the exercise seriously. That is where my experience being Audited came to an end.

My companion, however, was feeling more generous with his answers and attention. The demographics were captured once more at the beginning of the exercise, but the inflammatory questions got far more of a rise out of him. After asking if he loved his family or something in that vein, they began seeking clarity on his mother's mental health, and ultimately her use of antidepressants. These medicines were something my friend said contributed to her well-being. The mall-based analysts with the strange machine had a vastly different impression of the value of such medications. My friend was appropriately flustered. Also, how had these guys pulled such personal details out of him so rapidly? These were the sorts of questions that would yield condemnation at a dinner table for their private and sensitive nature. They proselytized about the dangers of drugs, ignoring completely every time my ally expressed that medicine had profoundly positive effects with his family member. They then tried relating his frustration (falling on deaf ears) with personal failings and character flaws. It struck me as odd that they manufactured a scenario through their bullheadedness that then was parlayed into a prescription of fault. I suppose a claim can certainly be made that even though they were what was jostling him, he still could have refused to be impacted were he stoic enough. Nevertheless, my friend had what they were clearly seeking: a perceived fault to glom onto.

The solution was obvious to them. After they produced a book from under the table, the answer was to purchase a copy of *Dianetics* and just read a little bit. See if it

speaks to you, and go from there. If we never wanted to be upset by such an exercise again, maybe reading this book could provide what we needed to achieve that end. We did not purchase a copy and left feeling equal parts disgruntled and bemused. Whatever parlor tricks they were trying to use to seduce us did not meet their mark in the moment, but the confusion of what just happened admittedly morphed into intrigue as time ticked by.

What was *Dianetics*? What was that peculiar machine? How on earth did they pull such personal details out of my friend so rapidly? Frankly, the fascination never faded. With the media attention Scientology has had throughout the years it only ballooned into a stronger urge to know more. Now, as a man armed with an education, advanced methods of analysis, and the formidable powers of hindsight and critical inquiry, the time felt right to wade into that intrigue.

I found the techniques used by the Scientologists resonated with what I was learning in my graduate studies, such as persuasive methods and message framing. I was struck by the Scientologists' use of pseudoscientific methods (such as the E-Meter) and I discovered that many scholars—ranging from Dr. Cynthia Coleman to Pierre Bourdieu—have written about scientificity and sciencing: that is, using what appear to be scientific techniques to persuade, justify, or rationalize some notion or activity. While thinking about scientificity and sciencing, and their relationship with Scientology, I wondered whether such techniques illustrate more than pseudoscience. Do they illustrate a false rendering of science, which Jean Baudrillard (2010) called a “simulacrum?” I explored these questions more formally in the body of this thesis.

Appendix E: Endnotes

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- ¹ [Amazon.com: Customer reviews: Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath Season 1](#)
 - ² [Anonymous hackers take on the Church of Scientology - CNET](#)
 - ³ [What Scientologist Actually Believe - South Park \(Video Clip\) | South Park Studios US \(cc.com\)](#)
 - ⁴ [Spy vs. spy: How Scientology and the CIA battled 40 years ago \(inforum.com\)](#)
 - ⁵ <https://southparkstudios.mtvnimages.com/images/shows/south-park/clip-thumbnails/season-9/0912/south-park-s09e12c08-what-scientologist-actually-believe-16x9.jpg>
 - ⁶ [Is Scientology a Cult? \(learnreligions.com\)](#)
 - ⁷ [Thelema - Wikipedia](#)
 - ⁸ [The Strangely True Connection between Scientology, the Jet Propulsion Lab and Occult Sorcery – The Arcane Laboratory](#)
 - ⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y800s8y9Zg>
 - ¹⁰ [Cynthia-Lou Coleman | Portland State University \(pdx.edu\)](#)
 - ¹¹ ["Science is sciencing" - The Long Narrow Swale - ANR Blogs \(ucanr.edu\)](#)
 - ¹² [ROMANTICIZE | meaning, definition in Cambridge English Dictionary](#)
 - ¹³ [ROMANCING | definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary](#)
 - ¹⁴ https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0133093/?ref=nm_sr_srgs_0
 - ¹⁵ <https://camilleleboulanger.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/simulacra-768x324.jpg>
 - ¹⁶ [Clearing Words \(scientologycourses.org\)](#)
 - ¹⁷ <https://www.scientology.org>
 - ¹⁸ <https://www.scientology.org/faq/>
 - ¹⁹ <https://www.scientology.org/faq/background-and-basic-principles/what-does-the-word-scientology-mean.html>
 - ²⁰ <https://www.scientology.org/faq/scientology-and-dianetics-auditing/what-is-auditing.html>
 - ²¹ <https://www.scientology.org/faq/scientology-and-dianetics-auditing/what-is-auditing.html>
 - ²² <https://www.scientology.org/faq/scientology-and-dianetics-auditing/what-is-auditing.html>
 - ²³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disneyland>

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- ²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_White
- ²⁵ [What is Scientology?](#)
- ²⁶ [Official Church of Scientology Video: Auditing in Scientology, Spiritual Counseling](#)
- ²⁷ <https://people.com/celebrity/tom-cruise-lashes-out-at-matt-lauer/>
- ²⁸ [How the E-Meter Works \(scientology.org\)](#)
- ²⁹ [Validation of Results \(scientology.org\)](#)
- ³⁰ [Biofeedback Therapy: Uses and Benefits \(webmd.com\)](#)
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