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THE TRANSCENDENTAL ENGINEERS

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THE TRANSCENDENTAL ENGINEERS:  
THE FICTIONAL ORIGINS OF A MODERN RELIGION

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with science fiction and its manifestations as a force in popular culture. To be specific, I discuss science fiction and its symbolic connections with the recently formed 'cult' known as the Church of Scientology. Scientology was created by a former science fiction writer, L. Ron Hubbard, who uses a great deal of science fiction imagery in church doctrine.

Essentially, this study is an example of "processual symbology"; how ideas and symbols can be manipulated by relevant persons, changing the meanings of the symbols and altering any behavior surrounding those symbols. In this case we examine how ideas and themes in a fictional setting can become transformed into religious doctrine.

Science fiction has avid followers known as "fans"; intense fans often spend the greater part of their energies pursuing their interest in science fiction. It is established in the thesis that fans subscribe to a science fiction ideology which in turn Scientology borrows from.

Science fiction fandom and Scientology in the earlier form of Dianetics existed in a common cultural underground of rejected occult knowledge known as the "cultic milieu". Tracing the history of the Scientology movement, we see how the organization grew into a large bureaucracy, socially distant from science fiction but still exploiting its fantastic imagery. In addition I discuss other minor

cultic events generated by science fiction.

In conclusion, I mention the possible implications science fiction and groups like Scientology have on contemporary society. Also I use the utopian orientation of Scientology's doctrine to question the merit of grand utopian schemes in general and how these ideologies can affect those of us outside cultic movements.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE APPEAL OF SCIENCE FICTION

Most of us have had some encounter with science fiction at some point in our lives. Of course, the nature of these encounters varies from person to person. A few do not need much exposure to science fiction to realize what they do not like and to proclaim their distaste. Others are more receptive to the genre and occasionally partake in a science fiction novel, film or television program. Within the ranks of the more devoted enjoyers of science fiction exist more deeply committed enthusiasts. These are the fans, people who read or watch little but science fiction. Fans also publish their own amateur magazines, discussing their interests with like minded individuals.

Whatever variation we may find in reading tastes, it is nonetheless true that science fiction as entertainment permeates Western popular culture. Even those who dislike science fiction have probably sat through the occasional rerun of "Star Trek", or have been burdened with the onerous task of having to stand in line while taking the children to see "Star Wars" for the sixth or seventh time. A frequent event at dull parties held by



university students is the comparing of favourite episodes of "Star Trek". This television program has been re-broadcast so often and people are so familiar with it that out of a total of 79 episodes, many can identify segments by their title and can spontaneously offer succinct summaries of each episode. Some examples of the interest in and obsession with "Star Trek" are truly staggering. During the course of my research, I had occasion to attend a Star Trek Festival. A local Hamilton theatre ran three consecutive episodes on the big screen. Attendance at this event was moderate, but I was still surprised that anyone besides graduate students looking for ideas would bother to pay three dollars to see what they could see at home for free. My amazement heightened as I watched the rest of the audience. At the intermission, most of the viewers stayed in their seats, periodically standing up and shouting trivia questions to each other across the isles:

"Why did Mr. Spock limp in Part One of *The Menagerie*?"

Answer: A leg wound from an unportrayed battle on Riegel 12.

What is Capt. Kirk's middle name?"

Answer: Tiberius.

"In what other television program did the monster in *Menagerie* first appear?"

Answer: "The Outer Limits" episode entitled *Fun and Games*.

Meanwhile, other fans closer to me were engaged in a worried discussion about whether the character Kirk would really be killed in the sequel to "Star Trek: The Motion Picture." In typically participant observer fashion, I tried to interview some Trekkers.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately I could only obtain the cooperation of two fans. Both were teenage males, and both were dressed in the blue tunic similar to that of Science Officer Spock. One was wearing pointed ears.

The fellow without ears told me that he never missed any episode; that "every Sunday afternoon, I've got my shirt on and I'm watching. It's like really being in space."

I asked the fellow with the ears why he was so keen on the show: "I like Spock, he's so cool; nothing ever bugs him."

After lecturing me on why I should watch the show and write to the local station to demand that it be run more often, my interviewees excuse themselves. This description of events at a second-run cinema in Hamilton has significance as more than a curious anecdote. The behavior of a few Star Trek fans is indicative of an effect which is of central importance to this thesis: the immersion of consciousness into a fantasy world. My friends at the movies revealed how they entered an altered state of awareness. By donning their costumes, surrounding themselves with science fiction paraphernalia and viewing the program,

adolescents were able to leave the dreary and unrewarding lives of high school students and enter for a time the interstellar experience of their space heroes, a realm far more exciting and gratifying.<sup>2</sup>

People like Trekkers and science fiction fans are concerned with realizing private fantasies outside their own individual imaginative experience. The most devoted of Star Trek fans will spend considerable amounts of time and money in the effort to accumulate reproductions of props used in the series. Authentic props are close to impossible to obtain for any except a tiny elite of fans. Perhaps the most graphic example of the attempt to actualize the fantasy experience can be found in an event at a 1976 Star Trek convention. Here a studio, a complete reproduction of the bridge of the Starship Enterprise, had been constructed. Fans were able to don the uniforms of their heroes and parade in front of videotape cameras. Those with sufficient interest were able to act out their favourite episodes (Starlog #3, 1976:30).

Avid readers of science fiction literature have engaged in similar activities. Fans have held science fiction conventions as early as 1936. At these gatherings, they too act out their favourite fantasies. Fans frequently dress up as fictional characters, often holding "best costume" competitions.

Again it must be pointed out that these occurrences are not simple peculiarities without any real significance. Science fiction is an important part of modern popular culture and insight into our society can be obtained from its study. Science fiction fans at conventions, and my friends at the Star Trek festival illustrate the case for science fiction as a cultural phenomenon. Viewing an entertainment as a cultural force becomes understandable if we consider culture to be primarily a creative event (Wagner, 1975:3). Individuals and groups engage in acts of invention and counter invention to generate and maintain social forms and behavior. Essentially in this "invention" of culture, a society's values and worldview, and its reality are the products of creative cultural events. Science fiction fandom is also the result of the creative behavior of its members. A different "reality" is manufactured by this subcultural group, based on the symbols found in science fiction literature.

This thesis deals with science fiction and its social manifestations as a cultural phenomenon. In the conclusion to *The Known and the Unknown* (1979), Wolfe writes of the far-reaching influences science fiction has on wider areas of contemporary culture, suggesting that "there is something more to the genre than a group of interesting stories written by a limited group of writers over the years" (ibid., p. 228). I shall explore some of these wider

influences with the purpose of proposing a means by which ideas influence behavior and social organization. As a distinct subculture, science fiction has contributed to our culture a body of emotionally-laden and intellectually alluring symbols. We noted that science fiction literature has generated a group of followers known as "fans". This term is derived from the word "fanatic". By virtue of their interest, fans hold certain values which can be labelled a science fiction ideology.

One aspect of the wider influence of science fiction is the cult movement known as the Church of Scientology. I shall examine how bodies of ideas, in this case taken from an entertainment, can influence social configurations and behavior. Further, I shall elaborate on how science fiction symbols and enthusiasts aided in the formation of a religious institution: Scientology. This is an exercise in "processual symbology"; how various ideas and symbols can be manipulated by persons (in this case church founder L. Ron Hubbard, himself a science fiction writer) to gain control over symbols, by changing their meaning and context. At one level we shall be examining the groups who deal with fictional concepts. We shall also witness how notions found in a particular genre of literature can become transformed into religious doctrine.

Scientology arose out of the same cultural and social context as science fiction fandom, and it is more than

just common roots that these movements share. Both Scientology and science fiction fandom are attempts to create new social forms from the source of personal fantasy. What distinguishes fans from Scientologists is the degree of commitment to these fantasies. Fans try to act out their daydreams on a more personal level. They wish to write massive critiques and to illustrate and collect objects related to their best-loved works of fiction. Scientologists attempt to actualize their beliefs as a drive for social reform. Adhering to Hubbard's scheme for repairing the world's ills entails concepts highly reminiscent of science fiction literature and ideology. But in this case, the effort to bring about these daydreams is more of a public event. Also, church members all subscribe to the same belief system, the one set down by Hubbard.

Examples of attempted dream realization in groups are not restricted to Western culture. Possibly one parallel can be found in Melanesian Cargo Cults. Scientologists and deeply committed science fiction fans are dedicated to the notion that technology and science will somehow bring about a superior world state. In effect, these persons are appealing to images of a projected future to work for a more gratifying present. Similarly, cultists in the South Pacific manipulate their ritual activities, social conventions and religious beliefs in the effort to receive access to what they regard as more privileged

European status and technology. Fans, Scientologists and Melanesians are all seeking their own millenia, hoping that new beliefs and actions will "redeem" them. The fact that science fiction and Scientology use fictional and fantastic material also has its parallels in some cargo behavior. Native mythologies can be transformed and manipulated to form a part of a millennial charter:

They (Melanesians) begin to regard themselves as "just rubbish" or as "rubbish-men", or feel they are regarded as such by others. But this cannot be borne. There must be some way of gaining an acknowledged integrity. Old myths and assumptions, whether handed down in an oral tradition, or written down in authoritative form, tend to be constructed anew (Burridge 1969:107).

Science fiction does much the same for its followers; it generates alternate visions of reality and human experience, more gratifying to its readers. If taken to extremes, either as entertainment or religious doctrine, science fiction can generate promises of "new heavens" and "new Earths".

An important aspect of the approach of this thesis is found in the idea that the study of symbols and creative acts is necessary to the understanding of social interaction.

Throughout this work, I shall be looking at the appeal and drawing power of science fiction symbols at different

levels and the structure of the thesis will reflect this emphasis. The first chapter shall deal with the appeal of science fiction at the level of individual personality. The question of why readers become obsessed with science fiction must be addressed. From this perspective I will consider the implications of the widespread acceptance of private fantasies. In the second chapter, the history and nature of the group phenomenon of science fiction fandom will be discussed. Various political and quasi-religious movements will be reviewed to demonstrate some of the consequences of people's effort to manufacture their own reality. In the third chapter, the background and nature of the Church of Scientology will be discussed. Scientology in the context of this essay can be considered a fan fantasy taken to a more public degree, L. Ron Hubbard having made the shift from fiction to religious teaching. The fourth chapter will deal in greater detail with how science fiction fandom and the church stem from a common cultural source of fringe beliefs and ideology, a so-called "cultic milieu". The concept of the cultic milieu allows me to uncover further organizational changes that occur with the creation of science fiction "realities". The metamorphosis of the Scientology movement, from a diffuse and disorganized cult reminiscent of fan groupings to a rigidly hierarchical sect, will be outlined and explained. Lastly, chapter five will note how common symbols but different organiza-



tional forms and individual attitudes place fandom and the church in a situation of "symbolic ambivalence", each group viewing the other as heretical.

The material in the thesis allows us to view the changes in structure and belief in subcultural groups. In a sense we shall see how ideologies interacting with social forms can produce new and variant institutions. Since I am dealing with the origins of symbols and ideologies, I must examine possible sources of symbols in groups. Creative events by individuals can act as a breeding ground for ideologies. As Turner notes:

...I regard mankind as one in essence though manifold in expression, creative and not merely adaptive in his manifoldness. Any serious study of man must follow him wherever he goes and take into serious account what Florian Znaniecki called the "humanistic coefficient", whereby sociocultural systems depend not only for their meaning but also for their existence upon the participation of *conscious* human agents and upon men's relations with one another. It is this factor of "consciousness" which should lead anthropologists into extended study of complex literate cultures where the most articulate conscious voices of values are the "liminoid" poets, philosophers, dramatists, novelists, painters, and the like (Turner 1974:17).

Turner's perspective not only gives us the gateway to studying literate societies and those individuals engaged in the creation and manipulation of symbols; it also allows us to consider the social implications of the appearance of symbols and ideas. Turner notes how we can study the

values of a culture by studying its art and its philosophy. He is telling us that cultures are integrated and that activities in one area of culture will affect other parts.

Science fiction as literature has properties which make it unique and alluring to some. As with an anthropological structural analysis, the reader may find insight into his situation by comparing fictitious and hypothetical models of imaginary worlds with the world he experiences as real. Often science fiction can be seen as having something of a structuralist function. Science fiction almost routinely postulates the various aspects of reality in different arrangements.

Science fiction also gains impact in the story-telling process because of its ability to suggest complete worlds based on fragments of contemporary culture. Readers are able to contend with current topics of concern in a tolerable, even enjoyable format. Examples of science fiction's suggestive power can be seen in novels such as *Preferred Risk* and *Logan's Run*, works which deal respectively with the question of what would happen to our society if (a) insurance salesmen were to become the dominant force in society and (b) if the same were to befall youths and they were to become the ruling class.

In this facility, science fiction can create new realities based on current issues or fragments of our cultural experience. Science fiction in this way is a

means of dealing with various concerns in society, a means of providing social criticism in an entertaining fashion. As such, science fiction can function as a form of "cultural myth". It moves beyond the strict definition of literature and becomes a part of a social process.

Scholars perhaps superficially refer to science fiction as the "new mythology", simply remarking that like mythology, science fiction deals with fantastic characters and settings. It is my intent to define more rigorously science fiction's significance as myth. In traditional societies, mythology is frequently found in oral tradition. Analysts often correctly point out how folklore is frequently a useful and powerful influence on the beliefs and behavior of people in a given culture. Since I am going to argue that science fiction does much the same thing, it seems useful as an heuristic device to discuss science fiction as folklore.

### Science Fiction as Folklore

If we wish to assert that a study of literature or dramas can yield insight into social process and organization, Turner provides support to this position. In his analysis of Icelandic sagas (1971), he notes how readings of traditional tales and folklore can provide information about the lifestyle of the pre-Christian Icelanders.

Turner's discussion states that we can use the dramatic

heritage of past cultures in an effort to more fully understand that now-vanished society. In essence, Turner tells us that it is possible to obtain anthropological data from historical material.

Professor Jan Vansina...has been able to show us how the formerly despised oral tradition can be handled as reliable historical evidence, if it is critically assessed in relation to other sources of knowledge about the past... (Turner 1971:350).

The concept of the social drama and its processual form are a central concern to much of Turner's work, and in the search for this form in various cultural records, he finds further insight into the nature of society.

...I was convinced that each society had its own variant of the social drama form. Each society's social drama could be expected to have its own "style", too, its aesthetic of conflict and redress, and one might also expect that the principle actors would give verbal or behavior expression to the values composing or embellishing that style (1971:350).

Leaving aside the issue of the details of the social drama's processual stages, we note this important aspect of Turner's approach: that relevant and useful data can be obtained from the study of a culture's folklore, drama or literature.

It can be suggested that the process of analyzing dramatic entities for the purposes of anthropological

analysis may not be restricted to historical material. It may well be possible to study a currently existing culture and to gain insight by examining its folklore and entertainments.

Bruce Franklin (1980:3) writes that science fiction literature deals with many of the crucial core values of contemporary American society. To understand America, Franklin argues, one must understand its science fiction. So then, Franklin is telling us much the same thing as Turner, that we can capture the "essence" of a culture's values by appreciating its fiction and entertainments. Geertz in his study of Bali culture illustrates how insight into Balinese character can be revealed from a study of Balinese forms of entertainment such as the village cock-fight. (1971:1-38).

If we consider science fiction as folklore, then we can see that as a literary genre it reflects certain characteristic values of segments of our society. Ben Amos points out how folklore is an "organic" phenomena in that "it is an integral part of a culture." The social context of folklore is very important to its appreciation (1969:4). In this way we can view much folklore as typifying a society's values.

However, certain questions arise when one attempts to classify science fiction as folklore. Primarily, science fiction literature violates two percepts that apply

in the definition of folklore. Science fiction is a literary phenomenon. It cannot be considered a part of an oral tradition. As written work, science fiction seems to contradict the model of the "folkloric event", typically the telling and retelling of oral tales to a small audience. After all, scores of science fiction books and magazines are printed and distributed to an audience of millions world-wide.

The scale and medium of science fiction seem to render considering it as folklore impossible. However, Ben Amos indicates that folklore does not always have to be transmitted by an oral medium, and that it does not always have to have as its source a "traditional" culture. Ben Amos' approach is that folklore can be defined as "a body of knowledge, a mode of thought, or a kind of art." As will be discussed later, science fiction and what we will label "science fiction ideology" comply with this definition.

Also one should realize that while science fiction may have a readership of millions, the number of highly committed fans is relatively few in number. So in a sense, fans can be seen as comprising the small-scale group necessary for folkloric events. Science fiction provides the basis for the folklore of a subculture of fans. As we shall discover later on, the label "fan" indicates a person who expresses intense interest in science fiction and related issues. We must make the distinction between the fan and the occasionally interested reader.

Moreover much communication between science fiction fans takes place through informal lines, a folkloric trait. The amateur publications known as "fanzines" can hardly be considered literary phenomena. Fanzines are also printed for a small number of people, in a sense a small-scale audience. In addition, fan interaction is often at a face to face level at science fiction conventions. Indeed, many fan institutions are part of an "oral tradition". The "lore" of science fiction fandom will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II.

If one accepts the argument that science fiction possesses folkloric elements, then we are able to understand a central argument of this thesis. Science fiction as folklore can express many of our values. As a storehouse of symbols representing these values, individuals may draw upon the lore in various forms of social interaction.

### The Psychological Impact of Science Fiction

When the argument is made that science fiction somehow is characteristic as cultural myth or folklore, the intent is to illustrate that somehow science fiction has certain qualities that make it a significant influential force acting on individual thought and action. What we are dealing with is an attempt to account for the existence of

the science fiction fan; an individual steadfastly committed to the vision of science fiction. If we are able to understand science fiction as folklore or as some form of cultural myth, we are able to gain at least some insight into the fascination it holds for enthusiasts.

In this section we shall consider the drawing power or appeal of science fiction at the level of the individual. Here we shall consider various theories of why people become 'addicted' to science fiction.

Freud and other psychiatric thinkers note how the important and primal symbols of human existence, psychosexual symbols, are the result of sexual drives and longings found in infancy. Further, the psychoanalytic paradigm suggests that as we progress through the various developmental stages in our lives, these symbols take on new meanings and relevance. But those symbols based on our early experience still define our later emotional orientations.

One relevant feature in our study of the appreciation of science fiction is that it usually becomes appealing to readers of a certain age, as a rule those at the outset of puberty. This effect tempts us to apply a developmental paradigm similar to the psychoanalytic framework in our understanding of the drawing power of science fiction. Alexi and Cory Panshin try this approach in their dissertation on the fiction of Robert A. Heinlein. Here the authors



try to account for several characteristic themes found at different stages of Heinlein's career as indicative of various developmental stages experienced by Heinlien. The Panshins also suggest that youths come to enjoy science fiction because the literature answers their needs at a particular stage of their emotional and intellectual development:

In our adolescent years with our full intellectual command and whatever facts we have accumulated, we review the situation in which we find ourselves. We try to relate ourselves to the universe by separating the essential from the contingent. We try to decide for ourselves in the course of endless bull sessions and in private rumination what is real and what is not (Panshin 1974:107).

As an adolescent, the individual is on the brink of pursuing an adult role in a society defined by adults. Science fiction is used as another means of testing what is real in the world and what is arbitrary or illusory. Elsewhere the Panshins write of what they believe to be the central purpose of all art, including science fiction: life is change and to survive, each of us must undergo a difficult process of personal evolution that is stimulated by the advent of numerous inevitable life crises. We either surmount these problems, transcending our old immature selves and assuming new identities, or we fail and cease to grow. Fiction provides us with models which act

as guides through these crises (1973:217-219).

With science fiction, we see that once again the adolescent uses the literature as a means of exploring new roles and situations before he embarks on the long and hard task of taking on an adult role. This activity could be seen as an almost structural exercise; science fiction gives the youth a means of rearranging the different components of existence into different simulated models of the universe. It is hoped that our hypothetical adolescent eventually accepts a model of reality that at least roughly corresponds to the one to which his culture adheres.

Emphasizing the adolescent's interest in science fiction is important in that the Panshins' work suggests that science fiction has peculiar properties that make it especially appealing to a select audience. When the argument is made that somehow science fiction fans as youths cathect on science fiction, we may be pointing to a phenomenon similar to that discussed by Victor Turner in his study of Ndembu ritual. Turner divides the rite of passage rituals for Ndembu into orectic or sensory and ideological poles. The orectic relates to aspects of personality connected to psycho-sexual processes. Orectic symbols are of the same kind found in Freudian dream analysis; they are often sexual in nature. Orectic symbols relate to the personal emotional and bodily experiences we undergo as we pass through life. An example of orectic symbolism is the white sap of a certain

tree found in the jungle. The tree and its sap are of particular importance to women in the Ndembu village because they are associated with lactating breasts. Young Ndembu women are informed of this association while they are undergoing the physical and social changes of puberty--the association is made very intense (1967:28).

It can be argued that there is a heavy orectic component in a great deal of science fiction literature, with phallus-shaped spacecraft, ultra-competent, ultra-masculine supermen and machines and fantasy women. But much of the literature, especially that written before the 1950s, may seem rather repressed, dealing with sex and romance in very distant and euphemistic terms. Such prudery is not evident in science fiction illustration (Harrison 1977:7). In fact, the major American fanzines are full of naked women of unrealistic proportions in improbable situations; a great deal of French science fiction is outright pornography with much technologically oriented sado-masochism (1977:51-71).

When a youth starts reading science fiction for the first time, he is at an age when his (or her) sexuality is starting to express itself. This stage can present a certain amount of anxiety. Reading science fiction may provide the youth with a means of indulging sexual fantasies in an acceptable form. Not even the reader may be aware of the sexual component to the material at a conscious level.

The sexual symbols that do not seem sexual to uninitiated outsiders also free those who are aware from any fear of parental discovery. Science fiction escapist qualities may also give the young reader the chance to avoid arousal and frustration by replacing sexual matters with far-off fantasies in space.

In terms of Turner's scheme, the ideological pole of a rite consists of the surrounding culture's norms and values. In the Ndembu example, the white sap comes to represent the bonds of affiliation between the group members and the role and duties of motherhood (Turner 1967:21). The importance and influence of the culture's ideology have been reinforced by their association with the orrectic qualities of the symbols and their powerful impact on the emotions.

In the case of science fiction literature, it can be argued that the orrectic qualities of the field attract devotees at a certain stage of their development. An important question is whether there is an ideological component to science fiction. Are there beliefs and values that science fiction attempts to convey to its readers?

Thomas Disch provides some support for a developmental model regarding the attraction of science fiction. Like Panshin, Disch notes that an intense interest in science fiction begins in early adolescence:

In my own case, and in that of almost all my contemporaries who admit a taste for it, that taste was acquired at around age thirteen. Often earlier; seldom much later than fifteen....The taste may persist throughout life, but it seldom again exercises the addictive force it possesses in early adolescence, except among science fiction fans (1976:142).

Disch continues to argue that in many ways, science fiction fans are overgrown children: science fiction is defined by Disch as a branch of children's literature. Children may tend toward a simplistic view of the world, and there are certain emotional restrictions in the child's experience which are reflected in their literature. The emotional restrictions in children's literature are also the taboo areas in a great deal of science fiction. Morality in most "classic" science fiction such as E.E. Smith's Lensmen books is indeed highly simplistic, the good guys are all good, the bad guys all bad. To quote Disch:

Evil is seen as intrinsically external, a blackness ranged against the unvaried whites of heroism....There can be no tragic dimension of experience (144).

Most children, it seems, express little interest in the finer trappings of romantic love or even in sexual matters, no matter how prodigal they may be. Kingsley Amis mentions how love and sex are outside the focus of science fiction (Disch 1976:144). Science fiction fans are likened to the children at the Saturday matinee who groan in boredom

and suffer through the obligatory love scene between the hero and heroine. Though present in science fiction, sexuality is often submerged.

The crux of Disch's paper rests in the notion that as genre writers, science fiction writers are not responding to their own creative/aesthetic wills, but they write according to the demands of their audience. If this is true, then an analysis of the personal characteristics of science fiction fans should reveal something of the nature of the appeal of science fiction. Disch presents two models of the science fiction fan. The first is

a precocious fourteen year old, impatient with his education, anxious for economic independence, with a highly developed faculty for day-dreaming and little emotional or moral sophistication concerning the content of his daydreams (146).

The second model takes as its departure point the results of John W. Campbell's reader survey for *Astounding Science Fiction* magazine in 1952:

Reader surveys show the following general data: that the readers are largely young men between 20 and 35; with a scattering of younger college students and older professional technical men; and that nearly all the readers are technically trained and employed.

The nature of the interest in the stories is not economic, not love, but technical-philosophical (147).

*Astounding's* readers share some of the qualities of growing children, suggests Disch. They experience chronic frustration and resentment. The child suffers these because it is unable to perform all the tasks it wishes or is expected to. Also, the child may be prevented by adults from acting in a way that it might enjoy but which is disapproved of by adults. Frustration is the result of either restraint or incompetence. Resentment may result when the child observes others performing those behaviors forbidden to him, either because of greater ability or privilege. According to Disch, such a model of resentment and frustration also applies to science fiction fans:

Science fiction is rife with fantasies of powerless individuals, of ambiguous antecedents, rising to positions of commanding importance. Often they become world saviors. The appeal of such fantasies is doubtless greater to one whose prevailing sense of himself is being undermined and meanly employed; who believes his essential worth is hidden under the bushel of a life that somehow hasn't worked out as planned; whose most-rooted conviction is that he is capable of more, though as to the nature of this unrealized potential he may not be too precise (149).

Science fiction fans of both types experience frustration and resentment. Their education may not be as comprehensive as they would have liked; it is likely that many of the workings of a more-educated elite are incomprehensible to them. Disch also mentions that the naive quality of much science fiction makes it similar to legends

and fairy tales. This similarity becomes relevant when we consider the ethnic background of much of early American science fiction's audience--often the children of recent immigrants from Europe, a place where folktales were still a living tradition (147).

Science fiction literature allows a frustrated and resentful audience a chance to daydream away their anxieties through fantasies of dominance, much as a child daydreams of the time when he will be able to order around his older siblings, instead of retaining his usual position of submissiveness. Disch's paper, *The Embarrassment of Science Fiction*, can be interpreted as an expose and a polemic against what Disch sees as the childish and morally remiss aspects of science fiction and its fans. It is not, however, a position fully endorsed by this thesis. Unflattering renditions of science fiction fans are quite common. Probably the most scathing is found in the novel *Herovit's World*. Here fans are portrayed as deranged, maladjusted adolescents, guilty of bedwetting and homosexual panic. Female fans have the honour of being ugly nymphomaniacs (Malzberg 1973).

Instead we draw on Disch's paper to point out how an individual, through an interest in science fiction, may obtain the means of meeting certain emotional and intellectual needs. In turn the reader can then be socialized into the distinct and identifiable role of "FAN". The



purpose of this chapter is to discover some of the qualities of those fascinated by science fiction, not to condemn them. The process of socializing readers into fans bears much in common with the socializing of children into adult roles in society, specifically, the child's education into religious piety.

The gratifying aspects of entering the realm of science fiction fandom can be seen when reading Malzberg's personal recollection of science fiction and the role it played in his adolescence:

*Item:* Astor Place Bookshop, 1953: a funny-looking kid (I am pretty funny-looking myself) says he doesn't believe I am a true fan because I have never gone to a meeting of a club or for that matter even *heard* of a fandom. He challenges me at random to recite the contents of the September 1948 ASTOUNDING in proof of my credentials. Oh joy! I reel it off. He falls back stunned. The Astor Place Bookstore is suffused with light, with radiance, with small vaulting figurines of glory which waft me singing toward the subway kiosk (Malzberg 1976:18).

Admittedly, Malzberg exaggerates the event, but his seemingly innocuous anecdote does provide insight into the nature and appeal of fandom. First we see the position of "fan" as a definable social role; Malzberg is asked to prove that "he is a true fan". Whether a person is considered a fan or not is decided by his fan peers, who also belong to this distinct social group. Membership in fandom is based on enthusiasm for and knowledge of science fiction

literature. So then, a social group comes to exist with its focus on writing in a particular genre. We see the appealing elements of fandom and science fiction in the outcome of Malzberg's story. Malzberg portrays himself as a rather withdrawn and "funny-looking" kid who is able to triumph over his own limitations and his adversary by virtue of his interest in science fiction. Young Malzberg gets to act out the classic science fiction daydream, because of secret wisdom and hidden potential, the chronically underestimated and ignored person is able to shine forth and overcome any opposition.

Ursula K. LeGuin notes how reading and appreciating science fiction gives readers the chance to indulge in activities that are very necessary for our mental and emotional well-being, but normally forbidden to adults. These activities are a form of play. The wild speculation and creative imagining required to properly enjoy science fiction are much like the imaginative games played by children. Play activity is still important to adults, but the vestiges of American puritanical values pressure adults into not fulfilling this need. Science fiction to a greater or lesser extent may be frowned on by the cultural "establishment", but is still a socially acceptable fashion for adults to play. Dreaming is also considered to be an acceptable way of indulging in fantasy. Perhaps from LeGuin's viewpoint, science fiction is a method of controlled

dreaming (LeGuin 1979:39-41).

If we pursue an interpretation like LeGuin's, science fiction gives us an avenue to explore new exotic worlds and meet strange new people. Also, as Disch suggested, we get to act as assertive and successful individuals. Not only does the reader get to exercise his imagination and intellect; these literary excursions may also provide him with reassuring messages concerning his personal worth.

LeGuin agrees with the charge that science fiction to a large degree is escapist. However, LeGuin might qualify this charge by asserting that such escapism is extremely important, and that escapism is not mere idleness as it was portrayed by the puritans. Science fiction puts important issues into terms that can be coped with by its readers, and escapism for relaxation is given beneficial properties. When we imbue science fiction literature with almost therapeutic properties, we are reminded of Aldous Huxley's paper written after his experiences with mescaline; with all the pressures and stresses of day to day life, to remain emotionally stable, the individual must be permitted to enter altered states of consciousness. Huxley refers to these altered states as "doors in the wall" (1954:51-65).

Huxley thought that these periodic "instant vacations" were to be created by some medically safe drug usage. Perhaps we can interpret the escapist properties of science fiction to be another hole in the wall. The factory worker,

file clerk or graduate student is able to leave his tiresome routine for a brief while and assume command of a giant starship, save the galaxy and transcend all his mortal limitations. Moreover, he is also able to put down the book and function relatively normally in the weary and dull place known as reality.

Colin Wilson also deals with the question of science fiction escapism, but argues that science fiction "firmly rejects the accusation of escapism." Wilson claims that by engaging in behavior that is incorrectly considered to be escapism, we are actually delving into previously unknown areas of human consciousness.

Each one of us is a walking universe, a gigantic symbolic system controlled by a mind whose mysteries have only been deepened by the insights of Freud and Jung. So science fiction can insist that, far from being an "escape from reality", it is an attempt to stimulate the earth-bound imagination of man to grasp the immensity around him. Man's whole evolution has been a history of self-discovery (1978:3).

According to Wilson, science fiction provides us with an avenue to new insight into the human condition and the proper place of human feelings in an increasingly mechanistic and non-humanistic world-view.

Wilson's account of his personal history seems to place him comfortably into our scheme of the development of a science fiction fan. He started to read science fiction during early adolescence and read nothing else until

the age of seventeen. While he lost interest during early adulthood, upon reaching middle age, Wilson found his fascination with science fiction rekindled, to the point where he concluded "quite simply that science fiction was perhaps the most important form of literary creation that man had ever discovered."

When we broach the question of whether science fiction fans are somehow maladjusted, it is useful to compare Wilson's ideas with Disch's. Disch sees fans as essentially frustrated and resentful men, held back by educational and financial deficiencies. Science fiction acts as a means of psychologically compensating for feelings of inadequacy. Wilson points out that the heroic tradition of much science fiction flies in the face of most tragic literature. Unlike the tragedy, where all human activity in the end becomes useless, science fiction asserts that while the universe is a far stranger and vaster place than we have imagined it to be, human action does make a difference in the state of affairs and that action is by and large a positive force.<sup>3</sup>

Wilson states that both the philosophical doctrine of existentialism and modern science fiction appeared at roughly the same time in the 19th century. Science at the time was in fact revealing vast and confusing intellectual vistas that seemed to drive men away from science "into subjective gloom and despair." Such an attitude is manifested by the literary elite of England in the first half

of this century. In the works of Virginia Wolfe and D.H. Lawrence we see a romantic backlash against new scientific horizons. H.G. Wells, their contemporary and intellectual opponent, saw the problem of the subjective retreat and wrote in the more objective and positive genre. This genre was then known as the "scientific romance" and is generally acknowledged to be the precursor of modern science fiction.

According to Wilson, the frustration experienced by science fiction writers and readers is the result of living in times where there are bewildering and shifting definitions of the universe and existence in it. Science fiction gives us a means of overcoming this despair. Wilson writes:

The strange thing about writers--even rather bad ones like Lovecraft and Weinbaum--is that they turn defeat into a strange kind of victory. They convert their frustrations into dreams and symbols, and the result has its own kind of validity, like a great poem.

Wilson's paper is useful because it allows us to synthesize previous theories concerning the appeal of science fiction. Firstly, Wilson deals with the question of science fiction and escapism. He also uses a personal anecdote about his youth, placing his ideas firmly in the developmental models of Disch and the Panshins. Wilson, however, would like to expand the appeal of science fiction to a base broader than that provided by Disch. Certainly the "frustrated youth or technician syndrome" may be preva-

lent, but perhaps the appeal of science fiction extends beyond this small group. Science fiction readership is far more diverse than the tiny group sampled by survey almost twenty years ago. Science fiction has a wider readership than Disch might have us believe, because many of us live in a culture with secularized and mechanistic attitudes in some segments. Science fiction is one means to cope with the "cold equations". This effect is likely to be more prevalent than lower-middle-class resentment. It would be inaccurate to attribute the qualities of these few readers of 1952 to all readers of science fiction.

Unlike Disch, Wilson wants to take the assertive quality of science fiction beyond mere occupational frustration. Wilson's discussion deals with the problem of existential despair. The greatest difficulty we face is retaining morality and faith in a culture whose values are becoming purely functional and objective in its orientation. The cultural implications of the scientific method as a value has resulted in a perception of the demystification of the universe. God and all religious experience have been removed from an exclusively scientific account of the human situation.

Existentialism rejects the mechanistic worldview, saying that even in a supposedly "scientific" reality, there is a place for faith and morality, on their own terms, regardless of any empirical analysis of them. Science

fiction, however, uses a unique method to impose the element of humanity, it turns to scientism to create mystical experiences. Most American science fiction tends to deify technology. Instead of reducing the world to empirical data, the scientific method is alleged to unleash the magical potential within man. Science fiction tries to generate "charismatic" science.

When we acknowledge that science fiction has a broader interest base, it becomes possible to address this problem: Just how deviant are those who succumb to the appeal of science fiction? Using the tiny sample supplied by Disch's paper, science fiction fans seem to be a bizarre and totally maladjusted bunch. But incorporating the concepts of other critics for our range of criteria for defining fans, we see that there are various reasons for reading science fiction and varying degrees of interest in it. The danger in viewing science fiction fans as members of a distinct social group, as is necessary in this analysis, is that the term "fan" becomes misused as a diagnostic label. Like any other state of mind, a predisposition does not indicate a pathology, it is all a question of degree. While there may be some objection to the fan claim that somehow fans are superior to the norm, not all fans are deviant. It is entirely likely that healthy, well-balanced individuals read, write and enjoy science fiction.



### Case Histories in Science Fiction

Up to this point, all material discussed has been speculative and anecdotal in nature. Various critics and writers have remarked on their personal experiences and/or have written about whatever features of science fiction fans or literature might come to their attention. Such observation may be very insightful and even true, but we should attempt to find systematic and empirical evidence of the appeal of science fiction to support these ideas.

Unfortunately within the realm of fandom little systematic information exists as to how many fans are active and the intensity of their interest in science fiction. But we can look to the sales of science fiction books and magazines as a rough indicator of fan interest. Del Rey (1979:40-120) points out that interest (and sales) in science fiction seem to undergo a cycle of boom and bust. The first boom occurred with the appearance of the Gernsback magazines in the 1920s. By the end of the 1930s the market for science fiction was in serious trouble until John W. Campbell assumed editorial control of *Astounding Stories* in 1938. Campbell encouraged a new stable of writers and attracted a new audience throughout the 1940s. During the early 1950s science fiction underwent another boom spurred on by a new market for paperback science fiction. But the market in books and magazines overextended itself and many publications collapsed. Currently, at the

outset of the 1980s, we seem to be entering bleaker times for science fiction in print; many magazines have been discontinued in the last year and publishers are cutting back on their stock of books.

From the cycle of "boom and bust" it can tentatively be suggested that participation in science fiction fandom follows a similar cycle. Fortunately one does not have to remain within the subcultural framework of fandom to witness the influence of science fiction on behavior.

The closest thing to a systematic study of the fascination and drawing power of science fiction is found in the Princeton study of the audience of the 1938 Mercury Theatre production of *The War of the Worlds* (*The Invasion from Mars*, Cantril, 1940). The study surveyed listeners of the broadcast using questionnaire and interview techniques. The characteristics of listeners who panicked upon hearing the simulated invasion from Mars and those who did not were measured and evaluated. Those in the audience who accepted the broadcast as factual tended to hold rigid fundamentalist beliefs (Cantril 1940:133-136).

Whether or not the results of a study over forty years old are still applicable one finding still holds true today: science fiction does have tremendous interest value and it has the power, if properly presented, to alter certain individuals' perceptions of reality.

A more personalized and detailed account of the appeal

of science fiction is found in a case history recorded by psychiatrist Robert Lindner. In this instance, the science fiction fan is a true fanatic; his interest in the escapist qualities have become so intense as to be pathological. The case is one of a psychotic missile scientist who, while working on a secret defense project, revealed to his doctor that he believed himself to be a superhero out of a series of science fiction novels. In his alternate existence, he controlled a galactic empire, conquering enemies and boldly exploring new vistas in the cosmos. Kirk Allen, the patient, spent much of his time writing entries and detailed diagrams in a logbook. When Allen began to devote most of his time to writing his journals, his real scientific research began to drop off. When he was criticized for his declining production, Allen apologized, explaining that he had been occupied with other matters. He didn't know how he could manage it, Allen said, but he would "try to spend more time on this planet" (Lindner 1955:157).

As a Freudian, Lindner uncovered certain factors in his patient's upbringing which might have contributed to his condition. Allen had a distant father and a neurotic and withdrawn mother. He was raised on a Polynesian island with a native nurse. He was so neglected by his parents that he was more Polynesian than American and spoke almost no English as a child. On reaching adolescence, however, he was abruptly removed from the native world and placed in

the culture of his parents. It was then that he suffered an extremely unpleasant sexual experience with one of his teachers. As a result of these unfortunate events, Allen became an alienated, uncommunicative person; he found himself between two worlds, belonging to neither;

the pivotal point of his contact with the universe was lost. He could not, that is to say, even communicate with others (111).

...threatened with permanent engulfment (by anxiety) (Kirk) strained to master it by the only means available at that stage: fantasy (183).

Kirk used his explorations in a fantasy world as a means of compensating for any feelings of inadequacy:

Converting his loneliness, his littleness, his feelings of rejection, his childish helplessness and his miserably deprived and inferior state to their opposites, then (as later) he was undoubtedly the obverse of these in his fantasied person: the mater rather than the victim of events and things (183-184).

Here then is found a use of fantasy similar to that described by Disch in his postulation of the relationship between frustration, resentment and science fiction.

Kirk Allen's pathological interest in science fiction is closely related to his psychological development. As an adolescent he was first exposed to science fiction, obtaining almost total identification with the hero of a series of science fiction books who also bore the name Kirk Allen.

The books gave Kirk a way of coping with his adjustment problems and any accompanying frustrations:

Through vistas evoked by the books, the endless scope of his impulses, urges and needs became available. With boundless universes of space and endless maneuverability in time at his immediate command, he could no longer be threatened by inner ragings (185).

It is interesting to note that in the case of Kirk Allen, we find an example of an exaggerated sense of rolelessness. If one recalls Panshins' statement that adolescents read science fiction as a means of exploring new roles and new situations, we see that it has a similar if not more intense function in the case of Kirk Allen. Allen's ignorance of what role he would fulfill was due to the fact that he was socialized as a child into Polynesian culture, but as an adult was expected to function in American society. To make such a transition even more difficult add a dead father and an apathetic mother who provided Allen with no counsel or aid. Allen was completely alone, without even a culture. Science fiction became his means, his only means, of guiding himself through reality. When Kirk as an adult entered a stressful situation (a female co-worker's sexual advances), he cut loose any tenuous links with our society and entered his own science fiction world (186-187).

When we consider Kirk's delusion, it might occur to

us that the form his psychosis took was due more to various accidents in his life-history than to any special quality of science fiction. To counter such an opinion, one must only read further into Lindner's work to note how Lindner himself, acting as a therapist, became caught up in Allen's fantasy. The reason such a singular event occurred is partly due to the technique that Lindner chose to treat Allen. Lindner found the patient's delusion so systematic and complete as to be impenetrable to any outside objections to its validity. The only way to break down the delusion was for the therapist to appear to accept the delusions of the patient. Once accepting the premises of the fantasy, the psychiatrist would search for any inconsistencies, demanding that the patient explain or "fix" them. Such a participatory treatment served two purposes: (1) it was hoped that in a rigid psychotic delusion like Allen's, the patient would find himself "crowded out" of the fantasy, there being room for only one person in most forms of psychosis; (2) seeing the therapist act in the delusion gives the patient a chance to perceive a reflection of himself and in turn to analyze objectively his behavior (119).

Lindner's descent into the patient's science fiction universe was gradual and almost imperceptible; he found himself eagerly anticipating Allen's sessions and felt anxiety when he discovered any inconsistencies in the log-books. The therapy reached a climax and conclusion when

in one session Allen revealed to Lindner that he had grown disenchanted with his pretense of a galactic empire, and was simply carrying on his symptoms for the sake of gratifying Lindner (205).

Lindner indirectly acknowledges the appeal of science fiction when he remarks on the fascination of Allen's delusion: "I had been attracted by the stupendous fantasy and felt, in myself, its magnetic pull" (206). Lindner also comments on his state of mind as he became a member of Kirk's "galactic empire": "I was not myself psychotic.... My condition throughout was, rather, that of enchantment developing towards obsession" (200).

While Lindner may have not been certifiable during this phase of Allen's therapy, he did share some of Allen's qualities. First Lindner mentions how he as an adolescent encountered science fiction and "rapidly acquired an insatiable appetite for the stuff...." This preference, while no longer his adult literary habit, persisted: "At forty I remain a rather reluctant addict" (197).

Secondly, the state of mind Lindner was in at the time he started treating Allen must be recalled. Lindner was feeling bored with his work, experiencing a general lack of direction in his life. Entering the science fiction fantasy allowed him to assume whatever role he wished, temporarily living a more exciting and stimulating existence. To a lesser extent, Lindner was experiencing the same

feelings of alienation, rolelessness and frustration that Allen had to cope with all his life. The important effect revealed in Lindner's document is how a person with certain tastes and dispositions can become caught up in a fantasy world of science fiction. In Lindner's words:

"...the material of Kirk's psychosis and the Achilles' heel of my personality met and meshed like the gears of a clock" (199).

It would be grossly inaccurate to use Kirk Allen as a model for all science fiction fans. It cannot be proven that all science fiction enthusiasts are maladjusted or psychotic. In fairness we must refer to the positive features of science fiction in Lindner's work; it was the first material to interest the young Lindner in the sciences, and through it he began to read other literature (197).

The relevance of the case history of Kirk Allen and Robert Lindner is that it illustrates just how appealing and alluring the world suggested by science fiction can be, in terms of actual events. Here Lindner, a successful professional man with a stable personality almost abandons reality to enter Allen's science fiction delusion. The case neatly encapsulates this chapter's central argument: it shows that as a genre, science fiction has a force over the minds and imagination of its readers. For those who are predisposed, science fiction can create alternate realities. These mental planes of existence are so vivid and alluring that



they may surpass in interest and gratification anything in the reader's mundane experience. Science fiction has the potential to attract large numbers of devoted followers, and in the case of fans who are extremely committed to the vision of science fiction, it separates them from those who have chosen to live in the real world.

More importantly for our purposes, the Lindner case shows how an inadequately socialized or marginal person with little structure in his world can have a structure provided completely and on a vast, literally cosmic scale by science fiction. Such an effect fits neatly with Colin Wilson's notion that science fiction ideas can compete with the deepest premises of our world and its organization. In this role of providing structure science fiction may also surplant many aspects of religion. Now the fact that some science fiction should eventually give rise to a sect or religious movement can be partially understood.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LORE OF SCIENCE FICTION

The preceding chapter has elucidated the manner in which fans are able to generate their own personal worlds of experience via the medium of science fiction. Taking this effect one step further, we may witness some of the consequences of such vivid fantasizing. The creative use of symbols and lore has implications beyond that of individual daydreams.

We can use the Lindner/Kirk Allen case as our departure point, as it shows that the alternate universes of science fiction can hold more than one person at a time in their sway. Allen and Lindner can be seen as prototypical science fiction fans. Because of a mutual interest they were able to nurture and support a common fantasy. The science fiction fans in this chapter display similar traits. Unlike Allen, fans may not be psychotic, but they do group together to elaborate and confirm each others' private fantasies. Once fans have started communication, however, these fantasies cease to be solely personal. Highly committed science fiction fans have created their own sub-cultural beliefs and values, a "science fiction

ideology".

This chapter aims to reveal how science fiction symbols and themes influence and appeal to groups, notably science fiction fandom from the 1930-50s. Examining the activities of fandom is necessary if we understand that many fans of this period were trying to attain science fiction fantasies of reaching utopias and unfulfilled human potential, a pursuit similar to the goals of the Church of Scientology. Here we shall see examples of attempts to bring about a science fictional millenium in the real world. The events outlined in the following pages are cases of several groups trying to transform private wish-fulfillment into public fact.

This overview of quasi-political and religious thinking in science fiction literature and fandom is also relevant because it reveals the social context in which Scientology began. Science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard's concept, originally Dianetics, was conceived as a theory using science fiction ideology, born out of the issues and concerns of fandom.

In this discussion of fandom, we shall review its history, how it originated and continues in its present form. As well as mentioning the formation and dissolution of various groups over time, we shall delve into the belief systems of many science fiction fans. Fandom is based upon science fiction literature, and certain themes are important

to the social configurations that comprise fandom, and to the ideology of science fiction fans. The purpose of this chapter is not simply to outline the history and nature of a rather curious occurrence in our society. Instead, it is hoped that the significance of science fiction and its accompanying readership as a social phenomenon and as a cultural force will be revealed.

### The History and Nature of Fandom

Science fiction fandom first organized itself in conjunction with the appearance of Hugo Gernsback's pulp science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories* in the 1920s. Included in its pages was a letters column. Interested readers were given the chance to comment on articles and stories previously published. Names and addresses of letter writers were also printed. Here an opportunity was provided for readers to exchange ideas and opinions among themselves. Fans came to see themselves as a distinct group when they first discovered the existence of others who shared their unusual tastes (Lundwall 1968:219-221).

Although letter writing is still an important component in fannish activities, fandom did not remain for long a relationship of correspondence only. Soon fans began to collect themselves into groups, forming clubs to discuss and appreciate their reading passion.

Lundwall suggests that the formal birth of science fiction fandom came about when Gernsback declared the formation of the Science Fiction League. This institution was probably a scheme by Gernsback to ensure additional magazine sales, since the only requirement for membership was to read regularly *Amazing Stories*. Many fans joined, believing that the *Amazing Stories* magazine was to be the rallying point for their special interest. Here would be a place for alienated adolescents to find soul mates.

Sadly for Gernsback's subscription department, the League quickly collapsed because of internal dissention. It must be pointed out that almost immediately following fandom's first act of self-realization, it reverted to a form that would prove to be more typical. After the disbanding of the League, fan clubs became tiny localized events. As a rule these small groups were short-lived and unstable. The attempts by some members to establish rules of order must have seemed futile, as most fan activities were very informal, idiosyncratic and irregular. Even the Futurians, perhaps the most famous collection of fans including such science fiction notables as Pohl, Asimov, Kornbluth, Knight and Wolheim, scarcely lasted ten years. The breakup of the group was marked by Wolheim's threat of a lawsuit against other members. Typically, this disagreement was precipitated by a violent personality clash (Knight 1977:121-125).

The dissolution and reformation of fan groupings is highly reminiscent of the fluid group membership in hunting and gathering societies. With hunters and gatherers, a small core of members may remain with the band, others in the group may leave or enter, according to the demands of the environment or the necessities of personal likes and dislikes. In the case of the Futurians, the analogy is quite apt, as many of its members came to earn their livelihood pursuing careers in science fiction, either editing or writing. Membership in the Futurian "band" provided the needed entrees and information to start their careers. As with hunting and gathering groups, the Futurians were able to meet their economic as well as their emotional and intellectual needs by being members.

Former Futurian Fredrick Pohl, in an account of his adolescence, gives a specific case in point. When he was totally destitute, he lived at home. When employed as an errand boy at some menial job, he lived with the Futurians, sharing some of his income with the group. Pohl left the communal aspect of the Futurians when he received his first position as editor of *Super Science Stories*. He received the job partly because he was in the right place at the right time, but also because of his work in printing the Futurian publication (Pohl 1977:82-110).

Partridge, in his ethnography of an urban hippie ghetto during the late 1960s, also uses a modified version

of Service's model of band society. The changing group membership, their informal ties and irregular subsistence patterns are considered indicative of a "quasi-band" social structure. As in fandom, there is some divergence in hippie social organization from the model of primitive band society:

The hippie group is called a quasi-band because in the ghetto this form of organization does not include some of the characteristics found among primitives and is linked to a simple technology of hunting and gathering. The writer is convinced, however, that this term drawn from anthropological terminology is the best for conveying the realities of the hippie ghetto social form: one in which membership is determined on the basis of residence and not kinship, in which group boundaries are carefully maintained and correct behavior enforced, which is an economic unit, and in which membership is periodically reinforced through ritual and ceremonial integration (Partridge 1973:28-29).

For the sake of simplicity we shall refer to fan-communities in this brief analogy as bands, although groups like the Futurians were closer in form to the groups found in the hippie ghetto than to primitive bands.

The comparison of fandom to band society is not merely an excuse for the inclusion of anthropological theory in this thesis. The intent is to point out how fandom does indeed differ in its nature and organization from exterior society. As with Partridge's study, Service's model is useful in that it at least gives us a starting point for

examining fandom's particular form. A perspective akin to the band society model allows us to discover that fandom saw itself as distinct and unique in relation to mundane culture. When the establishment deemed to notice fans, they were seen as marginal and distinct, because of their unusual qualities.

Viewing fandom as a form of band society remains productive when attention is turned to fandom's treatment of material in science fiction literature. Like a band society, fandom does not have a cultural store of literature and philosophy, but rather a body of mythology and folklore. Fans are famous for the production of amateur publications known as fanzines. These works first appeared in the 1930s and continue to flourish today. Fanzine content ranges over science fiction oriented artwork, book reviews of professional science fiction, fan fiction and material dealing with fan-related issues and activities.

Fans also frequently hold conventions, where fans and authors and editors from various parts converge and glorify the pursuit of this entertainment. The combination of fanzines and conventions is very much akin to the social scientist's concept of the "folkloric event", where the audience and the storyteller sit face to face, each influencing each other in the retelling or manufacture of a folktale. Fans closely interact with professional science fiction writers, influencing what sort of science fiction is printed.



Fan influence on professionally printed science fiction may have lessened somewhat in the last decade. Authors such as John Varley and Kurt Vonnegut write what critics label science fiction, but the writers themselves have little to do with fandom. Other personalities, Harlan Ellison, for example, seem to make a hobby of attending fan events and insulting those present (Ellison in Dicks 1979: vii).

Of greater importance is the presence of fan interests not directly related to science fiction literature, that is, a lore of fandom itself. Fandom has created a vocabulary of slang and expression, and even has its own unique mode of humour. Fans have also devised many behavioral institutions in fanzines and at conventions. Hoaxes are an example of fanzine custom; propellor beanies were a case of fan behavior at science fiction conventions (Warner 1969: 39-49).

One of the more interesting manifestations of fandom lore is the manufacture of hoax religions. Futurian Donald Wolheim created the religion of Ghuism, which espoused the wisdom of the god Ghu. The "doctrine" consisted of bizarre jargon and deliberate misspelling of English words (Knight 1977:13). Wolheim claimed to be Ghu, and displayed obvious contempt for his followers as the whole affair was an obvious hoax. Another fan deity was Roscoe, the invisible beaver god who flew over the heads of fans,

depositing his disfavours (Warner 1969:44). Fan religions, although often obvious jokes, do reveal certain attitudes towards religious symbols and belief.

We may conceive of all of these examples as lore if we recognize fandom as a culturally distinct group. "Fiawol" is a fan term which means "fandom is a way of life." Such a word implies a unique fan attitude and lifestyle.

Warner notes how intense the immersion into fandom can be when he writes of the fan who remarked how fandom had passed the point where it needed any interest in written science fiction. Nicholls (1979:206) writes that fiawol is considered a "half-joking" concept and shouldn't be taken too seriously. Others disagree with that option, as Wolfe notes:

The fans I have met derive something from science fiction that I suspect is quite extraliterary, that tends toward a system of belief and values that may be far more than what I have laid out in this book. Whether this constitutes nothing more than a secret mythology of initiates, or something deeper that serves an almost religious function, I do not know. I do know, however, that there are many who take the slogan "FIAWOL" (Fandom Is A Way Of Life) quite literally, who devote surprising amounts of time to convention and collecting activities, and whose devotion to the genre has never been satisfactorily explained in terms of the platitudes about "escapism" and "the new mythology" that so many of us in academia are so fond of tossing about (1979:227).

When the assertion is made that science fiction fans

occupy a culturally distinct group, that is not to say that all who read science fiction belong to a fringe group on the outskirts of society. Rather it should be believed that there is a continuum of enthusiasm and commitment to the alternate realities suggested by science fiction, with a qualitative difference between those at the two ends of the range. At one end we have the casual reader and watcher of science fiction books and films; at the opposite end resides the true hard-core science fiction fanatic who eats, sleeps, lives nothing but science fiction. It is the latter individual who constitutes the member of a science fiction subculture. A rough analogy to this continuum of commitment is available in a brief review of the "counter-culture" of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some individuals, like the people in *The Hippie Ghetto*, were highly committed to the ideals of the youth subculture, rejecting most material goods and regular employment and adopting their own standards of morality. At the same time, others dabbled slightly in counter-culture values and symbols (this writer included). We wore shoulder-length hair, granny glasses and army jackets, yet we rarely strayed far from our fathers' cars or our weekly allowance.

Perhaps when we study fandom we gain insight into the phenomena of folklore in general. Many fan institutions and customs arise simply because someone invents them, and surrounding fans find them appealing. R. Nelson takes credit for the beaver god and the propellor beanie (1978:

30) and Forrest Akerman is responsible for much of fan slang (Warner: 109-118). It may well be that folklore does not arise out of any mysterious "communal creation" process, but is the result of idiosyncratic and creative acts by individuals (Ben-Amos 1969:7).

Much fan lore also arises out of the experiences encountered when one is a fan. One example of this is the notion of "twonks' disease." Most fanzines are printed on mimeograph machines. "Twonks" are the errors that inexplicably appear on the duplicates. Twonks' disease is something that could arise only in a situation where the widespread use of mimeograph machines was an important part of daily experience. This is similar to much of traditional folklore, a part of which consists of recipes and remedies, all designed to cope with day to day life in a culture.

The last analogy between science fiction fandom and band society will permit the conclusion of this brief history of fandom. Following the dissolution of Gernsbeck's science fiction league, fandom has always existed in a fragmented and localized form. While fans in America may carry out correspondences with fans across the country, the area of actual face to face interaction between fans was quite small. With the exception of the occasional convention, fans rarely saw anyone outside their own group.

Fandom as a movement seemed to be limited to major cities, at least from the 1930s to the 60s. New York,

Chicago, Los Angeles, and even Toronto, all were centres for some fan activity. However, most fans were centred in the New York City area. Paradoxically, fandom may be a form of provincialism for urbanites. Even the literature has some parochial qualities. Science fiction seems to differ according to the region it is found in. Science fiction may exist in every industrialized nation, but its qualities are unique to each country. A most striking cultural difference in science fiction is found in the contrasting natures of British and North American science fiction. Perhaps the difference is so notable because both literatures share the same language.

Both forms of science fiction take as their prototype ideas found in the writings of H.G. Wells. The Americans borrowed his interest in technology and science as a redeeming force in the world. In Wells' novel, *The Shape of Things to Come*, the primary image is of the engineer acting as the leader of a better future world. Typically, in much American science fiction there is a highly individualistic technologist hero, fighting the forces of anti-technology in a futuristic setting.

The English, on the other hand, have derived their inspiration from the pessimistic train of thought found in such novels as *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *The World Set Free*. This tendency has led to a series of disaster scenarios in British science fiction. Examples

are found in almost all the works of John Wyndman and J.G. Ballard. Americans in the thirties to the sixties may have seen their society as expanding, requiring new forms of leadership, while British science fiction grew up at the time of the shrinking British influence throughout the world. The English may have perceived their society as diminishing. Like traditional folklore, science fiction deals with local concerns by means of local story-telling conventions.

As long as the focus of science fiction fandom has remained on science fiction literature, the nature of fandom, with its small band-like groupings remained unchanged. Recently the situation has altered. Mass-culture, in the form of such media successes as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* have attracted literally millions of new fans. Although the full implications of this effect are not fully understood, it could possibly transform fandom from a tiny sub-cultural group into a huge mass movement (Lichtenberg, et al., 1975:1-9). Conceivably, because fandom has become big business, many of the folkloric aspects of science fiction disappear. It is important to realize though, that from the 1930-50s an "in-group" mentality was still prevalent among fandom. It was because of the subculture's view of the world that various fringe movements in philosophy and politics came to the attention of fans. In 1950, when Hubbard first introduced Dianetics, he was able

to exploit the concerns of fandom. From this point he could bring Dianetics to wider public attention.

### Significant Themes in Science Fiction

Understanding fan concerns is impossible if certain important recurring themes found in science fiction literature are ignored. These themes provided central areas of interest and debate, influencing a fan perspective on reality. Fandom never reached the point of inversion where it completely ignored professional science fiction; rather, fandom obtained its ideas and inspiration from science fiction.

Wolfe (1979:16-19) argues that science fiction literature contains various "icons". In this case icons are defined as collections of symbols so frequently used that they should become cliches, except that these symbols bear an emotive inner significance to the reader. Similarly, we shall be examining two major themes or complexes that have affected fan debate and activity, later providing much of Scientology's symbolic base.

(1) The Superman Complex. Fans for a time in the 1930s and 40s often suggested to each other that they were somehow superior beings. The notion of this superiority was based on a vulgar version of the theory of evolution,

as found in such classic stories as "The Man Who Evolved" (Hamilton: 1981 in Asimov 1974:25-43). Here evolution was not simply a means of environmental adaptation, or a way of explaining differing reproductive rates among a species. Instead, evolution takes on a "higher" moral and philosophical purpose. The process of evolution was a means where man moved from a brutal animal-like state to a superior condition of increased intellectuality. The theory of evolution had been turned into a doctrine of salvation. The suffering of man in his current brainless state would be alleviated and man's errors atoned for in the coming of a more cerebral, more rational future man. Fans, who to the outside world were the downtrodden youth of the depression, could nonetheless take solace in the belief that they were the "next step" in human development. Soon they would assume ascendancy over the rest of our "primitive" species.

The phrase that most succinctly summarizes this belief is the then current expression, "Fans are Slans". The term "slan" comes from the 1940 novel, *Slan*, written by A.E. Van Vogt, and serialized in *Astounding Science Fiction Magazine*. Slans were a persecuted race of telepathic supermen. They desperately fought the tyranny of normal humans, and they also attempted to speed up the course of human evolution and save the world. As well as possessing parapsychological abilities, slans were ultra-scientific and technological.



Fans readily identified with the novel. Perhaps the fear and poverty that Jommy Cross, the protagonist, must endure was something fans easily understood. It was in the area of advanced mental abilities that some fans believed their superiority would manifest itself. This is evidenced in their obsession with ESP and superior intelligence. Fans were interested in scoring high on IQ tests to demonstrate this advancement.

An example of the profound influence that Van Vogt's *Slan* exerted on fan thought and activity is found in the formation of the Slan Shack. This was a communal effort formed by science fiction fans in 1943 at Battle Creek, Michigan. The attempt was limited to one rented house and the project continued for a mere two years. Even so, the shack at one time had 25 members and a constant influx of visitors. At the outset, the shack was to act as the core for a large fan cooperative that would occupy an entire city block. The influence of science fiction symbols and fan lore could be found all through this dwelling, exemplified even in the names of the rooms in the house. One bedroom was the "temple of the old foo" (another fan "deity"), the dining room was referred to as the Nitrosyncretic Lab, and kitchen was called the "Control Room", and the bathroom was named the "Shottle Bop" (from a short story by Theodore Sturgeon). The trip to Slan Shack was considered a fan pilgrimage; fans from across the country constantly journey-

ing there. As a result, membership of the group constantly changed as people entered and left it (Warner 1969:35). Fans made this trip hoping to join a community of people more like themselves, perhaps wondering if this was to be the beginning of a new "superior" society. The address of the Slan Shack read: "civilization".

Advanced mental powers were not the only means of being superhuman. There was also the concept of the physically perfect man. The comic-book character, Superman, was created by two prominent science fiction fans, Siegal and Shuster (Moskowitz, 1966:101-117). The format of the comic was essentially popularized science fiction. Kal-El (Superman) began life on the planet Krypton; when his home planet blew up his father sent him to Earth in a space craft. Now as Superman (and in his secret identity as Clark Kent, a reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper) the protagonist acts as the champion of the underdog. Superman is an individual warring against those forces that terrorize and intimidate the small man. The co-creators of the comic were acting out science fiction fantasies to relieve their frustrations as young people growing up in the world of the Depression with little opportunity.

Physical perfection extended past the ability to look good in a pair of tights. Immortality, and transcendence of all physical limitations are also components of the Superman complex. Again the process of "uplifting"

metamorphosis involving movement to a higher evolutionary plane is a common theme. For example, although Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* post-dates most science fiction relevant to fan thought from the 1930-50s, the film can be interpreted as a summary of 'classic science fiction themes. In the film, the course of human evolution has been controlled by ill-defined alien intelligences since the appearance of primitive hominids. At the climax of the story, a lone space traveller is transformed into the Star-Child, another step in human evolution. The Star-Child is endowed with all manner of omnipotent power:

There before him, a glittering toy no Star-Child could resist, floated the planet Earth with all its peoples....A thousand miles below he became aware that a slumbering cargo of death had awoken, and was stirring sluggishly in its orbit. The feeble energies it contained were no possible menace to him; but he preferred a cleaner sky. He put forth his will and the circling megatons flowered in silent detonation that brought a brief, false dawn to half the sleeping globe.

Then he waited, marshalling his thoughts and brooding over his still untested powers. For though he was master of the world, he was not quite sure what to do next.

But he would think of something (Clarke 1968:220-221).

Again it must be emphasized that while *2001: A Space Odyssey* is not contemporaneous with science fiction literature in the 1930s to the 50s, it provides the first cinematic expression of many of the classic "transcendental" themes

found during these decades. *2001* was also based on a 1951 short story, "The Sentinel." Clearly, we see in these forms that the Superman in science fiction is not so much a human, but more an alternate god.<sup>4</sup>

The god-like powers of science fiction supermen suggest religious qualities in science fiction literature and in fandom. The science fiction version of the theory of evolution also suggests a doctrine of salvation. Evolution is a process through which man pursues perfection; this form of salvation is defined as the obtaining of a more advanced evolutionary state. The science fiction "religion" tells us that the purpose of existence is to attain salvation by further evolving. In attaining salvation, one becomes a god.

There is an alternate form of science fiction superman, one who does not metamorphose into something not quite mortal. Instead the model is the ultra-versatile and resourceful scientist/technician. This is the archetypal hero of most American science fiction. A blatant statement of this model is found in the 1973 *Writer's Guide* for those

submitting manuscripts to *Galaxy Magazine*: there would be little interest in overly literate or pessimistic entries. What was requested were stories where a scientist or technician in a near future society, similar to our own, encounters a problem, and through the use of scientific know-how and resourcefulness, solves this problem.

The superman in this case is simply someone who, through his own efforts and knowledge, gains mastery over the forces around him. He is defined as superior, not because of any quasi-mystical information, but because he is able to assert his will over others by scientific or technical means.<sup>5</sup>

Science fiction fans were not unique in their interest in Superman themes nor did the concept of the superman originate amidst science fiction fandom or literature.

In his discussion of the science fiction writing of H.G. Wells, McConnel elaborates on the social and philosophical climate of Wells' time. A pervasive influence on

Wells and other thinkers of his time was the widespread acceptance of the Darwinian theory of evolution. We find evolutionary themes in the early novels, *The Time Machine* (1896) and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1898). Evolutionary thinking had even wider implications in western culture at the turn of the century, particularly in the rise of the doctrine of "social Darwinism". Segments of society assumed a new set of values in opposition to prevailing Christian morality. The nature of the new values of social Darwinism is as follows:

The only law nature knows is the law governing the relation of the eaters and the eaten: what humans celebrate as "natural law" is no more natural, no more suggested or echoed by the rest of the universe, than the construction of high-rise apartment buildings or the invention of clothing.

The values of social Darwinism suggested a new way of behaving in society:

The first, simpler and more brutal one (value) is that, since morality and a decent respect for the opinions of mankind are "just myths", we can dispense with them and live our lives on the "true" ethics of the food-chain relationship, happily eating whatever we can kill, killing whatever looks even partially edible, and observing no hunting limit except the swift and self-ratifying one of not being eaten ourselves. The opinion that the cosmos underwrites rapine was mainly the philosophy of "social Darwinism" (McConnell 1981:61).

Implicit in social Darwinism is the notion of the

"survival of the fittest", from the constant struggle for existence would emerge only the strongest and the best. Nietzsche, possibly with a Darwinian perspective in mind, wrote of a superman or overman in his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche's overman was supposed to be some soon-to-arrive superior being above conventional morality. The prime cause of the overman's superiority was his "will to power", possibly that feature that gave him the strength to triumph in an evolutionary struggle. Social Darwinism and its resulting advocacy for supermen may have been one component in the Nazi propaganda doctrine of an Aryan "master race". If it is true that the Nazis and other historical figures have been influenced by the "spectre" of the superman, then we see how this theme has been relevant to western thought far past the time of H.G. Wells.

Others may have had their supermen, but the idea of a "master race" exerted great fascination over fans. Warner notes how the "fans are slans" trend intensified as did science fiction stories with superman themes whenever press coverage was given to a Hitler speech (Warner 1969:186).

The superman complex may have had its origins outside of fandom and it may exist independently of it; but fandom took an active part in creating and elaborating its own version of the superman. A common feature to both fan and non-fan versions of the superman is that this transcend-

ing figure often acts as a fore-runner of a new social order. Either the superman has a lack of concern for common morality or he hopes to use conventional morality to provide resources to those previously denied access. Comic book heroes are of the latter sort; Superman often acts to dispense justice to the oppressed. As an example of the former type, Nietzsche's overman was above the values of ordinary men, by virtue of his superior condition. Whatever the overman wished to come about was proper because *he was* the overman. Nietzsche urged his readers to "shatter the old law tables" in anticipation of the coming of the new order.

In some instances science fiction supermen offer little concern for what mundane society considers right or wrong. The Star-Child's first act was to detonate a series of orbital hydrogen bombs, thereby eliminating any nation's military strength. The superman in this context removed societal boundaries. Acting as a savior does not require a respect for humanity's values. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* has the hero, Valentine Michael Smith, the Martian-born founder of his own church, periodically killing his opponents by "discorporating" them. Heinlein represents this as a good and proper activity for the protagonist. The only justification for such behavior is, as critic William Atheling writes, that Smith is really good in bed (1964:69-70).<sup>6</sup> Again the



actions of the superman are justified by virtue of his condition and assertion of his will.

### The Utopia Complex

If we see the figure of the superman as the precursor of a new social order, "the man of tomorrow" to use Simon and Siegal's phrase, then it can be seen how much science fiction consists of utopian schemes. Many utopian plans involve either a rejection of contemporary conventional values or an effort to provide new and better resources to those presently denied them. People caught up in these millennial beliefs may perceive the existing society as oppressive, or believe that their situation is overly degraded. A new society would offer a solution to their current degradation. In Van Vogt's *Slan* we find such a pattern. Slans seem to be an oppressed race, pursued by a ruthless world tyranny of "normals" who are determined to exterminate the slans. The slans stay in hiding, hoping to overthrow the government by means of superior capacities. At the end of the novel the slans have secretly achieved their objective, operating a new world order, where slans are the controlling elite.

*Slan* is the classic example of the superman theme in American science fiction, and it also ends on a utopian note. Science fiction has its own form of utopia. Science

fiction is certainly not the only source of modern utopian thinking; many contemporary works fall outside the realm of science fiction. Witness such books as Huxley's *Island*, B.F. Skinner's *Walden II*, and even the pop culture *Harrad Experiment* of the late sixties.

Nonetheless science fiction does have a strong component of the utopian in it, simply because science fiction as a process of thought entails the postulation of alternate realities. The science fiction utopia is frequently a place for the science fiction superman to live and assume his rightful place in society. It is often contrasted with a previous, conservative community where the superman was rejected. If fans adhered to the notion that they were somehow slant-like, perhaps they would appreciate the concept of a new society where they might reside more comfortably. If we note the apparent low standard of living in the early Futurian group we find a case in point. Many of the group perceived themselves as living on the "knife edge of poverty" and they subsisted by procuring menial employment or through the occasional donations from parents. Of course fans on the whole were members of the middle class of society and probably experienced very little substantial deprivation. However, it is the fan's perception of himself which is important here. If fans believed themselves to be undervalued or degraded, then regardless of any objective criteria of the quality of life, fans will believe and act

in such a way as to relieve those feelings of degradation. In his study of Cargo Cults, Burridge notes a similar occurrence. The natives had a traditional economy perfectly capable of supplying all material needs. But with the introduction of a European cash economy, money became a means of measuring individuals in terms of "better" or "worse", more or less. So the Melanesian, noting his lack of money, sees himself as less than a European. Cargo behavior was an effort to procure European wealth through ritual means, and to become equal to or better than the colonialists. During the thirties any young person, especially one whose prime interest was in science fiction, would have had very limited opportunities. A fan's prospects in the "real" world were not promising; he was bound to experience some impatience with society at that time. This is not to say that the advent of the Great Depression was the sole factor in the rise of fandom and its feelings of dissatisfaction from mainstream society. Feelings of deprivation and degradation may be common to most youths at various times in our culture. The economic and social climate of the 1930s is relevant because it may have been an exacerbating factor in the desperation of some fans.

American science fiction was constantly influenced by the then still-living H.G. Wells. Many of his "scientific romances" and future histories proposed utopias

where society was organized on secular and socialistic lines. An important aspect of Wellsian socialism was the suggestion that society must be benevolently controlled by an elite of technologists and scientists.

American science fiction fans and writers did not often subscribe to the socialist formula (perhaps because of the influence of editors of right-wing persuasions like John W. Campbell). But they were very enthusiastic about the concept of a super-scientific elite. Fans such as John Michel and Claude Degler, to be discussed later on, saw themselves as likely candidates for this group.

Another important aspect of science fiction utopias is the tendency for these proposed societies to be highly technological in nature. This is understandable, as much of science fiction's appeal is its characteristic milieu of bizarre and wonderful machinery. In any science fiction utopia it seems only logical to populate the landscape with all of this fascinating equipment. A critic once wrote about how much of science fiction literature was devoted to assigning pseudo-scientific names to kitchen appliances (Shephard 1971:65).

Heinlein's *Methusela's Children* provides another model for a science fiction utopia. Here a group of science fiction superhumans, this time characterized by immortality, leave the planet Earth to find a new home in space. At the novel's conclusion, the travellers still have not found

their new destination, but it is still a utopian situation. They are free from the hatred of normal humans and have gained control over their destinies. The immortal government is elitist and autocratic. Lazarus Long, the oldest immortal, has absolute authority over the rest of the mutant crew. Also, they exist in the technological condition, being in the totally manufactured environment of the starship.

Much of science fiction does not conform to the superman-utopia theme. In reality, the body of science fiction literature contains a wide range of topics. However, a great deal of science fiction is influenced by two other major themes that can be considered counterpoints to either complex. The antithesis of the superman complex is the symbol of the monster. Monsters are very frequent in science fiction. Wolfe notes how the symbol and definition of the monster is often a question of perspective. Many of the societies portrayed in science fiction novels view science fiction supermen as monsters. In Van Vogt's novel the slans were hunted down and destroyed by the secret police, because they were believed to be "monstrous" mutations (1979:185).

Brian Aldiss suggests that the prototypical science fiction novel was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1973:7-45). Frankenstein's monster had much of the same genesis as Nietzsche's overman. He was conceived in an era of

increasing scientific insight and secularism. The monster embodies the negative alienated aspect of this era and its philosophical position. The monster is "unholy", apart from God, or family, or any aspect of human society. Throughout the novel the monster proceeds to destroy all of Victor Frankenstein's connection with normal society, his marriage, his home, and his professional standing. Frankenstein and his monster do "shatter the old law tables", rejecting the morality of conventional society, but instead of finding the truth and the higher level of existence promised by the prophet Zarathustra, they found only the emptiness of complete alienation.

The science fiction monster as a rule is a powerful and hostile entity of many different forms. He may have superpowers, but he is not interested in the furthering of the cause of humankind, but rather in our destruction. Illustrative examples can be found in Van Vogt's *Voyage of the Space Beagle* (1939), and perhaps in the recent film, *Alien*.<sup>7</sup> These monsters are either apathetic to human feeling or play on our worst fears, often attaining some form of 'monstrous perfection'.

A dramatization of the monster theme can be found in the screenplay of the film, *Alien*. Here we find a clearly superior being whose only purpose seems to be man's extermination. The crew of the spaceship *Nostromo* listen as the robot, Ash, informs them about the nature of a

dangerous creature aboard their craft:

Ripley: How do we kill it Ash? There's got to be a way to kill it. How?

Ash: You can't. You don't understand what you're dealing with; a perfect organism. Its structural perfection is matched only by its hostility.

Lambert: You admire it!

Ash: I admire its purity; a survivor unclouded by conscience, remorse or delusions of morality.

(O'Bannon 1979:157)

Dystopias in American science fiction also have their own peculiar form. Here technology and science are used to persecute helpless individuals. The elite is not more evolved, but often somewhat ignorant, and always very nasty. The tools of science are not controlled by an elite of supermen but by an elite of mundane men. The elite is often chosen to represent some faction of society the writer does not care for. In Pohl and Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants*, the world is manipulated and ultimately ruined by a controlling group of advertising men pursuing the very ordinary goals of profit and business as usual. The villains are those who typify the values of conventional society. The concept of a totalitarian elite is not under attack, but the issue of who comprises the elite is the problem.

The superman and utopian complexes and their antitheses, the monster and the dystopia, are important themes in fandom.

Expressing interest in these ideas has been the common course taken by fans who wish to transform their tastes in reading into a quasi-religious or political movement.

### Utopian Movements in Fandom: Case Studies

Reviewing the history of American fandom, we detect a trend of attempted wish fulfillment. Certain symbols and themes in science fiction literature hold special significance to fans. Some fans try to realize their science fiction fantasies on a level beyond that of literary expression. There is a drive among key, influential fans to take science fiction on a mission more important than the placing of printed words on a pulp page. For some, there was, and still is, the belief that science fiction should become a tool for improving the human condition.

These efforts may not be common to all fandom, but throughout its history utopian movements have persisted. This desire to attain a science fiction reality is important to us because the doctrine of science fiction utopia is similar to Scientology's formula for world salvation. We shall now briefly examine the history and substance of three fan utopian movements.



(1) William Sykora and the ICSC

In 1935, William S. Sykora assumed directorship of the International Cosmic Science Club. Sykora was, to use Moskowitz's terminology, a fan of the Gernsback school (Moskowitz 1954:38). Sykora believed that science fiction was useful only as a means of furthering the cause of "science" among its readers. To attain this pedagogical goal, Sykora constructed his own basement lab and led the group in several unsuccessful and illegal rocketry experiments. Such activities would lead the casual reader to conclude that the ICSC was more a group of slightly eccentric hobbyists than utopians. But the social context and ideological content of the group must be considered. The readers of Gernsback's magazines were heavily influenced by the editorial content and the fiction they found there. Gernsback espoused a simplified version of some of H.G. Wells' philosophies. In *Men Like Gods*, and *The Shape of Things to Come*, Wells portrays future "perfect" world states, controlled by elites of scientists and engineers. Wells' concept of the elite held sway when we note the belief by fans of the great predictive power of science fiction. The logo on Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* reads: "...fantastic fiction today, cold fact tomorrow." Many science fiction fans at the time of the ICSC fervently believed that the world of the immediate future would be

operated by technocrats and scientists. Regarding science fiction as the breeding ground for the next generation of scientists takes on more profound implications. In their proselytizing of science and scientific causes, fans believed that they were training themselves to enter this future elite.

Sykora's ICSC club was destined for dismal failure. New York public officials declared the club's rocketry experiments unsafe and ordered them stopped. Even before their conclusion, it was never certain just what the experiments were supposed to prove. Most of the projectiles exploded while still on the ground. Members also began to create problems. Fans, it seemed, were losing interest in "science" as a cause and consuming interest. It became apparent that many fans were clearly not scientist material; the pursuit of science and of science fiction are two very different things. Fans were more interested in the fictional and imaginative aspects of science fiction. Finally, the Wellsian plan for a technocratic world state did not appear to be in the making. The absence of the promised millenium was a severe handicap to Sykora's project.

## (2) Michelism

During the Depression of the 1930s numerous fringe movements within fandom continued to appear, all with the

intent of realizing science fiction fantasies. Various philosophies, technocracy, the use of esperanto as a universal language, as well as Communism and Facism were discussed to some degree in fan circles (Pohl 1978:55). One of the most controversial utopian movements in fandom at this time was the fan doctrine of Michelism. This philosophy took its name from its creator, Futurian John B. Michel. At the time, as well as participating in the Futurians, Michel was a member of the New York City Young Communist League. Other Futurian supporters of Michelism were Fredrick Pohl and Donald Wolheim. Of the Futurian group, only Pohl and Michel were active in the YCL. Other Futurians like Donald Wolheim saw themselves as too politically "advanced" to be considered communists (Pohl 1978: 52).

The political affiliations of the Futurians become relevant when we reveal the nature of Michelism. Michelism was a synthesis of science fiction utopian fantasies and the political propaganda of the YCL. Michelism made the claim once again that science fiction literature and fans should be urged to act as a force in shaping mankind's future.

Reading from the speech "Mutate or Die" (otherwise known as the Michelist Manifesto) presented at the third world science fiction convention, we see how current world problems were stated in terms of conventional Marxism:

And how sick we are at the base of this dull, unsatisfying world, this stupid, asininely organized system of ours, which demands that a man brutalize and cynicize himself for the possession of a few dollars in a savage, barbarous and utterly boring struggle to exist (Michel in Moskowitz 1954:118).

Essentially, this is the usual Marxist interpretation of the evils inherent in a capitalist system. We, the masses, are poor, miserable, and alienated. Michelism also subscribed to the belief held by members of the communist party at the time, that the forces of facism and those of democracy were preparing for the ultimate struggle to decide the future fate of the world. Adherence to the ideology of the communist party was espoused as one means of preserving freedom (1954:160).

Michelism, however, had some qualities that made it distinct from the propaganda of the YCL. Firstly, Michelism differed in the imagery it evoked to inspire faith in the international communist movement. Instead of using the usual "shining examples" set by programs in the U.S.S.R., or pointing out the personal merits of Marx as a thinker or Lenin as a leader, Michelism referred to science fiction as having the potential for creating the model of an ideal world communist state. Science fiction fandom was supposed to act as a tool for leading young people into the arena of communism.

Writing in a 1938 British fanzine, Wolheim defines

the movement:

MICHELISM is the belief that science fiction followers should actively work for the realization of the scientific socialistic world state as the only justification for their activities and existence.

MICHELISM believes that science fiction is a force; a force acting through the medium of speculative and prophetic fiction on the minds of idealistic youth; that logical science fiction inevitably points to the necessity for socialism, the advance of science, and the world state; and that these aims created by science fictional idealizing, can best be reached through adherence to the program of the Communist International (160).

Michelism's precepts are certainly not unique; it borrows extensively from vulgar Marxism, and from other then-popular ideas as well. Pohl mentions how in the drafting of the "Michelism Manifesto", he and Michel appropriated much of the thoughts of Orlin F. Tremaine (at that time the editor of *Astounding Stories*) and H.G. Wells. Wells' writing seems to have influenced almost all young people in the English-speaking world for the first half of the century (Pohl 1978:56). The intellectual foundations of Michelism are important when we consider the political affiliations of the Futurians. According to Michelism science fiction was to be used as a means of indoctrinating potential recruits into the principles of communism. As the president of a local branch of the YCL, Fredrick Pohl was supposed to acquire as many new members

as possible. Through articles on Michelism and socialist topics in fanzines, it was hoped that science fiction fans could be wooed into the YCL (Pohl 1978:55). While the Futurians may have been successful in generating a fan controversy, they did not manage to generate a movement to the political left among fan circles.

Michelism was not simply a ploy by the YCL to advertise the party to a new audience. The science fiction elements of the fan doctrine must be considered. Science fiction symbolism modified every party line ideology in Michelism. The traditional Marxist catch phrase, "workers of the world unite" became modified in the Michelist Manifesto to the slogan "Mutate or Die". The emphasis shifted from economics to evolution. In addition it must be pointed out how only two of the Futurian group were actually communists, but all of them at one time considered themselves Michelists. Wolheim is important in this respect as he was considered to be the prime promoter of Michelism to the fan community. Some saw Wolheim as more important to the movement than Michel himself (Moskowitz 1954:117). But Wolheim was never a member of the YCL, the Communist Party or any of its front organizations.

Perhaps what occurred in 1937 and in 1938 was not the exploitation of science fiction fans by the Communist Party, but quite the reverse. The Michelists did not seem overly concerned with many of the issues that interested the 1930

American Communist Party. The latter were concerned with economic equity, racial prejudice, and so on. The Michelists may have given these questions passing notice, but their overriding preoccupation was with the attainment of a "scientific world state". Again, we only have to refer to Wells' *The Shape of Things to Come* as an example of a polemic for that state of affairs. This goal of a world state was considered by many fans as a utopian situation, but it is more reminiscent of Wells than the Communist Party.

What is suggested is that certain science fiction fans accepted portions of Marxist arguments and communist doctrine as a way of realizing science fiction fantasies of utopia. Science fiction fans may have accepted the YCL, if it provided them with the opportunity to fulfill the dreams generated by science fiction literature.

Michelism was never a major force in fan activity; aside from some initial heated debate it created in America and England, it gained no followers outside New York City, and no advocates outside the Futurian group. However, fans gave great attention to Michelism, regarding it as a very important issue. It caused so much controversy because of two major similarities between fan thought and the American Communist Party during the thirties.

First, both science fiction fans and party members liked to see themselves as "progressive". Both groups

wished to work for a better future and considered themselves "generally forward-looking" (Pohl 1978:50). Secondly, the communists in the YCL believed themselves to be just like any other American youth, except that they were smarter, more alert, more socially curious, and more politically aware of the needs of other people (Pohl 1978:50). Such a conception is very reminiscent of a central concern in fandom, related to the superman complex, that is, where fans somehow regarded themselves intellectually or morally superior to the general population. Fans often like to believe that somehow they were more "advanced".

This common ground between the YCL and fan concerns was enough to attract fans like Pohl and Michel into the party. But Pohl relates how eventually as a fan he began to feel more and more marginal in the YCL. Fans could never become orthodox communists (1978:52).

Michelism had a brief lifespan. Even at the manifesto's first reading, the motion it proposed bogged down in pointless debate (Moskowitz 1954:120). It was violently attacked in non-Futurian fanzines, and the doctrine also received a cool response from British fans. Michelism was a utopian movement within fandom that quickly failed. It failed for several reasons. Many fans were not committed enough to the concept of a science fiction reality to take the issues seriously. Perhaps more importantly, Michelism may have been too overtly political for most fans. The doctrine was



too much like the issues in the real world that fans sought to escape from by reading science fiction. Michelism also had to compete with other quasi-political and philosophical movements like Technocracy and General Semantics. Pohl writes that Michelism may not have been bizarre enough for fan tastes. He notes how fans enjoy toying with notions and strange situations. This attitude of playfulness and individualism would not be conducive to the recruitment of staunch party members. With the alliance of Russia and Nazi Germany, the remaining fans in the YCL left the party (Pohl 1978:80-81). Communism apparently was no longer thought by anyone to be the means to build a science fiction utopia.

The cool response given to Michelism set a trend in later fan movements. Politics was an area where fans had very little in common. Many fans protested that Michelism addressed issues that were outside the proper range of fan interests. At any rate it had been established that the use of ideologies from the "mundane" world was of little concern to fans.

### (3) The Cosmic Circle

The failure of Michelism did not mark the end of attempts by fans to organize themselves in such a way as to further the realization of their science fiction dreams. Another such movement can be seen in reading Warner's

account of the fan organization known as the Cosmic Circle. In typically fan fashion the Cosmic Circle was formed (by Claude Degler), generated a great deal of fanzine controversy, and then quickly faded. By 1945 Degler and his group had all but completely vanished.

The objectives of the Cosmic Circle were both utopian and political. In the first issue of *Cosmic Circle Commentator*, September 1943, Degler writes:

Declaration of existence: of a new race or group of cosmic-thinking people, a new way of life, a cosmology of all things. Cosmen, the cosmic men, will appear. We believe that we are actual mutations of the species (Warner 1957:185).

The "we" in Degler's editorial refers to science fiction fans. Fans were to be a new race of mutated supermen, who, because of their superior abilities and perspective on existence, should take a more active interest in the affairs of the world. Degler and his small group actively proselytized their philosophy in the hopes of increasing Circle membership. Degler stated that large numbers were needed so that "cosmic fandom will actually be some sort of power or influence in the postwar world of the near future" (1957:185).

Some of the Cosmic Circle's goals were fairly ordinary fan activities, like promoting science fiction literature, and arranging tours for fans of one city to visit fans of

another. But their plans went far beyond this. The most ambitious of their objectives involved the setting up of several science fiction communities. Cosmic Camp was supposed to be pitched in Arkansas, an Arizona ranch was going to be purchased for the purposes of rocketry experiments, and ultimately the Cosmic Circle hoped to obtain real estate where futuristic homes and parkland would be constructed for fans to enjoy.

The Cosmic Circle also hoped to broaden the base of science fiction fandom. Degler writes in the spring 1943 issue of *Cosmic Digest*:

We, Man is still evolving toward a higher form of life. A new figure is climbing upon the stage. Homo Cosmen, the cosmic men will appear, we believe that we are mutations of that species. We are convinced that there are a considerable number of people like ourselves on this planet, if only we could locate and get in touch with them. Someday we will find most of them, and then we will do great things together (1943:186).

The remarkable thing about the objectives of the Cosmic Circle is that, however bizarre and irrational their aims may seem to be (even to most fans), all of the goals had a precedent in earlier fan movements (1943:184).

The interest in rocketry experiments stems from the days of Sykora, where to be 'legitimate', fans had to strive to be amateur scientists. Rocketry is also reminiscent of the larger fan goal of bringing about a scientific world

state via advanced technology.

Plans for fan communities were not new either. The Slan Shack and the various Futurian apartments were all examples of communal-like formations that lasted for some period of time. Surely other fans discussed the possibility of living together as well.

The notion that fans were somehow superior "mutations" harks back to the superman complex found in so much science fiction literature. Important books to fans at this time were *Odd John* by Olaf Stapledon and of course Van Vogt's *Slan*. Another current influence was John Campbell's series of editorials in *Astounding Science Fiction*, all suggesting the existence of psionics (his own term for ESP). Psionics would be one of the qualities of the new breed of superior human beings.

Campbell was also discussing a peculiar version of the concept of mutations. To fans mutation was seen as a means by which humans would undergo a quantum leap in evolution. Such a notion is most likely based on Wells' novel, *The Starbeggotten* (1936), where Martians are covertly advancing human evolution through the use of cosmic rays. Fans did not seem to recall the fact that most radical mutations are detrimental, resulting in anomalies like hemophilia, rather than furthering human potential.

Cosmic Circle fans also gave evolution a purpose and a plan transcending any theory of natural selection, includ-

ing the 19th century doctrine of social Darwinism. To them, as with previous groups, evolution had religious significance. It created supermen who would rise up and create a utopia. Fans would redeem themselves and the world as well.

Warner states that because of its exaggeration of certain fan concerns, the Cosmic Circle reduced these fan issues to absurdity. No one would consider the phrase "fans are slans" seriously again (187). Warner's assertion may not be completely accurate. Perhaps the open belief that somehow fans were secret supermen would now only draw amused snickers, but the obsession with enhanced mental abilities and alternative world systems would continue. The issues would merely continue disguised in a modified form. One example is Hubbard's dissertation on a new mental therapy known as Dianetics, which promised to instill 'perfect' intellectual powers.

#### A Science Fiction Ideology

Fan movements such as Michelism and the Cosmic Circle share a common goal; to unite science fiction fans into a force to deal with problems in the outside non-fan world. These attempts suggest that somehow fans should have similar values; in effect these movements try to draw from a unified science fiction ideology.

Establishing the existence of a science fiction ideology

involves certain difficulties. Unlike membership in such organizations as the 4-H Club or the Progressive Conservative Party, membership in fandom does not require adherence to a formal set of rules outlined in a charter or constitution. Often the science fiction fan is not required to pay any membership dues; on the whole, membership in fandom is highly informal, based only on an interest in science fiction. This interest, rather than any political purpose, holds fandom together. Science fiction ideology also differs from other political ideologies in that it rarely involves any material action or concern.

If fandom is such a vague and informal event, how can we pin down a fan ideology? First it must be pointed out that the presence of a formal organization structure, or of a ratified set of rules does not determine the presence of an ideology. Neither does the presence of an explicitly stated group purpose act as a sufficient criterion for an ideology. Fandom today, and in the past, consists of a diverse group of individuals informally banded together for no other purpose than the enjoyment of an entertainment. Even so, there does exist among many fans a science fiction ideology which has implications outside the realm of this entertainment.

As its label suggests, a science fiction ideology springs from the reading of science fiction literature and participation in fandom. Some of the issues discussed in the literature become concerns to fans and a part of the

ideology. The ideology may be diffuse and vague in many cases, but it is nonetheless an ideology. A similar phenomenon can be found by examining the "Born Again" movements of the recent past. Born-again ideology expresses itself as a Christian belief, but it is different from other Christian religions. There is no central "born again" church or organization, no unifying goal or stated body of ethics adhered to by those claiming to be born again. The ideological orientation of those claiming to be born again is vague, inarticulate and highly idiosyncratic. But the label "born again" suggests some form of common ideology, no matter how difficult to define.

A major feature of science fiction ideology is its very general interest in the future. Any activity in the mundane world concerning the future or technological or scientific innovations associated with the future may be examined and reinterpreted in fan terms. Obviously this results in an interest in the manned space program, but it also includes the studies of futurists and even counter cultural elements like dome-building. The future orientation of fandom also allows the self-redeptive features of the superman and the utopian complex to enter into the ideology. Some time in the future all of this will come to pass...

The most important feature of science fiction ideology is the belief among some fans that somehow science fiction has qualities that make it more significant than a mere

entertainment. For some reason, then, fandom should be doing something to ameliorate the world's condition. Fans see themselves as a "progressive" force.

To paraphrase Geertz, science fiction ideology is an example of ideology as a "sub-cultural" system. Almost all aspects of life are modified to fit into a science fiction worldview. Knowledge and experience are reinterpreted so that they fit into a science fiction scheme of things. The principal value of most science fiction is the importance and desirability of the future. The future should be technological, it should be a unified scientific world state (preferably American) and often it should possess highly individualistic values. Extremely committed science fiction fans are never really living in the present; they are constantly living for the future. Experience is significant only if it points to the possible construction of the ideal future. That which is morally good or ideologically relevant is events and information that support and substantiate the model of an imminent "saved" future. Any data that appears to contradict or diverge from the science fiction plan of the world as a progressive entity moving towards a more evolved state is seen as irrelevant and discarded.

Beyond the preceding general description, it becomes difficult to outline further fan ideology because of the informal and personalized nature of fan phenomena. However, one final point must be re-emphasized in support of the



existence of a science fiction ideology. It is the drive by some to turn fandom to secular political ends. All of the previous fan movements had elements of this, and it remains a part of fandom today. Writer/fan Ray Nelson provides an example of contemporary science fiction ideology. Nelson wants to redefine fandom as membership in the "invisible city of Futuria", where all citizens are known as Futurians (not to be confused with the group in the thirties). Nelson goes on to set up a Futurian charter of beliefs and values which serves as a summary of a science fiction ideology:

As a Futurian I have values, goals and beliefs, much to my own surprise.

I find that one planet is not enough for the human race.

I find that I want a longer life, perhaps immortality. I find that I want to extend the powers of my mind. I find that I am groping for a better lifestyle that is in harmony with what's left of nature, that is decentralized, desynchronized, healthy, peaceful and free. I want a lot of trees around, and cats and books. I want the whales to live. I want women to get a fair break. I want a better future, and believe my own efforts can bring it closer.

I think most Futurians feel the same way.

Futuria is a hobby that is a way of life. Seen from the outer edge, Futuria is also a literary, even a philosophical movement. Since we Futurians got the U.S. government to name the space shuttle "The Enterprise", Futuria has become a political movement.

But if we come to understand ourselves as a world-city, as an open-texture matrix, as a

literary, philosophical, political movement, we can use the current science fiction boom to become a force in history, to take a hand in running things. We can actually get at least some of the things we have all these years only been reading and writing about (Nelson 1978:32).

Nelson's essay gives some insight into the syncretic nature of science fiction ideology. He borrows from an interest in the space program, the women's movement, ecological concerns and even refers to some of the communal movements of the late 1960s. Often the selection of issues in science fiction ideology depends on the particular interests of the fan(s) involved, but we find the same obsession with the future and with future technology. Note how Nelson claims that the major political victory for fandom was to persuade the Ford administration to change the name of the NASA test space shuttle from the "Columbia" to the "Enterprise". It is difficult to understand how this constituted any significant change in the world political climate. However, fans might see in this victory their science fiction fantasies starting to express themselves in real-world technology.

Nelson's essay contains the same recurring arguments to unite fans and create a better reality based on science fiction lines. One might wonder if such efforts to mobilize fans into widespread millennial cults will ever come about. If fandom as a cultural group ever became as large as some of

the more ambitious fans would have it, it might very well exert some influence on the outside world, although not, perhaps, in a way the fans would anticipate.

On the other hand, it must be emphasized that all of the previous movements failed. Fans tend toward internal squabbling once they undertake a mission. Perhaps the informal nature of fandom is the root cause. There is some doubt as to whether the goal of "uniting fandom" will ever come about. As one observer noted, fans are a highly individualistic and opinionated lot. They may ally with one another to strive for a future better for themselves as fans, but all seem to have very divergent ideas about how to attain this future. Such a disunified group might prove a poor choice for any effective action (Gerald Weir<sup>8</sup>, personal communication, 1980).

While hardcore members of fandom may be a poor base for any political movement, many of their strategies and symbols would prove useful to any utopian endeavour. Those adept at manipulating these symbols could use the notions of a better future and of increased personal power in the doctrine, but change the doctrine's base from that of fiction to that of religion. This is what Hubbard actually did in the creation of Scientology. In the manufacture of his religion, Hubbard may have used many fan concerns; but he moved gradually away from fandom, attracting a congregation less individualistic in its outlook and aspirations.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LORE OF SCIENTOLOGY

We have explored the creation of cultural symbols and the degree to which groups have adhered to them in recent history. At the level of the individual, I showed how science fiction imagery and fantasy provided comfort in the form of escapism and compensatory fantasy. I discussed how sub-cultural groups obtained revitalizing and redeeming perceptions of themselves and the world through the acceptance of a science fiction ideology.

At both levels we are dealing with the manufacture of new realities. To a greater or lesser extent, depending on the degree of commitment to science fiction ideology, we see in science fiction fandom the creation of a subculture with its own value system.

What distinguishes the enthusiastic reader of science fiction who may not see science fiction as a charter for salvation from the "Cosmic Man" who sees himself as the embodiment of the Superman, is the intensity of their beliefs. The casual reader simply appreciates science fiction as entertainment, not as something "real" or impending on his life. The extreme fan, on the other hand, takes science

fiction very seriously. He supposes it to be highly prophetic, revealing all manner of personal possibilities.

In the Church of Scientology, the degree of commitment and belief to science fiction ideology is even more intense. No longer are science fiction symbols and themes just an inventory of possible alternate futures and worlds. Further, they take on the role of religious doctrine. Science fiction now acts as previously undisclosed truth, surplanting the values of mundane society.

This chapter will be devoted to Scientology, a belief that defines itself as a religion. We shall note the beginnings of the Church of Scientology, the creation of science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, and the ways in which it attracted science fiction fandom. Then we shall trace the course of the Dianetics movement, from its early beginnings as a form of at-home mental therapy to its present incarnation, a multi-million dollar organization which has many churchlike trappings, and which has recently been charged with attempting to infiltrate the United States Department of Justice (Conway and Siegleman 1979:227). Scientology is an organization that does not lend itself to comprehensible first impressions.

Outlining the various changes and developments in Hubbard's creation does not lead to any departure from our study of the effects of science fiction on contemporary culture. Rather, it will enable us to observe how Dianetics

and Scientology were based on themes in science fiction literature, how they too originally attempted to address certain controversial issues in fandom. The connection between science fiction and Scientology has modified somewhat today, but they are still related by virtue of the common symbols they use. Christopher Evans refers to Scientology as the "science fiction religion" (Evans 1973: 15). This chapter will indicate that Evans' label is less superficial than it may initially seem. It will be shown how Scientology continues to draw upon science fiction symbols and themes to give itself the force of a religious doctrine.

When Scientology is treated as a religious movement certain questions arise. First, some wonder if Scientology truly is a religion. Hubbard launched Dianetics as a self-improvement method for the "common man" to use for enlightenment or profit. It has frequently been suggested by many critics that Hubbard and Scientology claim the status of a church simply as a tax dodge. As a church, Scientology can avoid paying full income tax on its proceeds. Also, many of the "therapies" and practices of the organization that might come under the scrutiny of medical and health officials would be exempted by the presumption of "religious freedom".

Here we shall argue that although Hubbard may have

somewhat cynically manipulated the conventions of a church, Scientology is still a religious movement. It can be classified as a religion primarily because it espouses teachings that attempt to transcend mundane reality, and because it offers its members a "doctrine of salvation." Scientology does not necessarily conform to a general typology of all religions, rather it has similarities with Judeo-Christian religions. It is in the area of church doctrine that Scientology leans most heavily into the literature and subculture of science fiction.

By considering the teachings of Scientology and their symbolic origins, we can answer a second related objection toward treating Scientology as a religion. That is, many of Scientology's present-day activities do not seem religious in nature. Their therapies, such as personality testing and attempting to raise individual IQ, seem to be pseudo-medical or psychotherapeutic in nature. Other activities appear to be of a covert and subversive nature. Examples are found in Scientologists' efforts to infiltrate control of the Australian Labour Party, the British Mental Health Organization and the U.S. Justice Department. Hubbard has also tried to form political alliances with several governments during the sixties, notably the Australians and Ian Smith's Rhodesia. Hubbard apparently hoped to advance Scientology's influence by becoming a trusted advisor to these groups. Why Scientology embarks on such projects is

indeed puzzling. We cannot assume that Hubbard is simply an eccentric crank; he has been able to mobilize thousands of people world-wide to assist him in his goals. Again, by considering Scientology's symbolic base, we shall be able to understand some of its motives.

### History and Nature of the Movement

Hubbard pervades this study; discussing Scientology without mentioning L. Ron Hubbard is impossible. Scientology is still largely controlled by its creator. Its doctrines and practices reflect many of Hubbard's personal beliefs and opinions.

The pre-guru Hubbard seems to have had a turbulent past. He has had numerous occupations which range from serving in the U.S. Navy, to piloting a commercial aircraft, to undergoing a brief stint as a student in college where he flunked out of an engineering program, to writing scripts for a children's movie serial. As a young man Hubbard also entered into two unsuccessful marriages.

However many upsets and changes Hubbard may have experienced, he was still an unqualified success in one area. That career was writing fiction for the pulp magazines so popular when science fiction fandom was first coalescing. Hubbard wrote for several genres, but it was in pulp science fiction that he earned his greatest popularity.



In 1938, another popular science fiction writer named John W. Campbell assumed the position of editor of the prominent *Astounding Stories* (Asimov 1974:952). *Astounding Science Fiction* was one of the most highly regarded science fiction magazines during the 1940s, and under Campbell's leadership it went on to become the single most important science fiction publication in America. The principle reason for *Astounding's* popularity was Campbell's talent for nurturing a stable of new innovative writers. He was capable of recognizing originality and exploiting to to the fullest.

While Campbell edited *Astounding*, many of today's best-known science fiction writers made their premier appearances. Notables were Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, James Blish and A.E. Van Vogt. Hubbard also numbered among the most popular and prolific writers of the forties. However, unlike other writers, Hubbard is not widely read today. This may be due to his subsequent controversial activities, or he may not age well in the reading. Knight suggests in his review of Hubbard's *Typewriter in the Sky* that while the author is obviously able to write well, his work is slick and crass (Knight 1956:40).

Hubbard's ability to write quickly probably made him invaluable to Campbell. Malko remarks (1970:48) how Hubbard typed his work at such tremendous speeds that he used a special IBM electric typewriter with the words "the", "and" and "but" placed as single keys. A continuous role of paper

was placed in the machine to avoid the bother of changing paper sheets. By virtue of his sheer output Hubbard was bound to achieve attention as a writer. Campbell was able to use Hubbard as a constant reliable source of fiction. To a certain extent then, the tone and the mood of *Astounding Science Fiction* was set by Hubbard during the 1940s. Hubbard's career as a science fiction writer becomes important when we discuss how he used science fiction as a means of announcing Dianetics.

In the late forties, Hubbard wrote his first non-dramatic book, *Original Thesis*, which presumably contained much of the same material Hubbard would draw upon for Dianetics. The book never found a publisher, but Hubbard remained undaunted in the pursuit of his new calling. Although there is not full documentation of this event, there is good reason to believe that long before Dianetics became known to the public, Hubbard announced his intentions to fellow science fiction writer, A.E. Van Vogt: "One of these days I'm going to come out with something that's going to make P.T. Barnum look like a piker" (Malke 1970:41).

It is significant that this statement was supposed to have been made to A.E. Van Vogt, as he also showed interest in cultic ideas. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Van Vogt was the major source of the superman story in science fiction. Van Vogt was also deeply involved in the pseudo-scientific movement known as General Semantics. Created by

Alfred Korzybski during the 1930s, this body of thought suggested that mental illness and all human suffering were the result of bad thought habits. We acquire these faulty conventions because we use in our thinking concepts created by Aristotle. Aristotle, Korzybski argued, was mistaken about many things. To counteract our flawed perceptions, Korzybski claimed he had invented a new form of thought referred to as Non-Aristotelean thought, or Null-A ( $\bar{A}$ ). For a brief time General Semantics was yet another one of the concepts toyed with by science fiction fans. It was of extreme interest to Van Vogt, who used *Astounding* as a vehicle to further popularize it with fans. Van Vogt wrote two novels based on Korzybski's notions, *The Players of  $\bar{A}$*  and *The World of  $\bar{A}$* , both published in *Astounding*. Van Vogt also suggested that General Semantics should protect itself by going underground, even establishing a Church of General Semantics. A church structure would have the advantage of state protection and greater exemption from taxation (Gardner 1953:199). Van Vogt lost interest in Korzybski and moved on to Hubbard's organization in the 1950s, eventually operating the California branch of the Dianetics Foundation. Van Vogt's presence on the foundation's board of directors acted as an inducement to many fans to join (Laney 1970:14). Perhaps people in science fiction circles like Hubbard and Van Vogt were exploiting fandom's tendency to form pseudo-religions.

The first published version of Hubbard's ideas made its appearance in the May 1950 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*.<sup>9</sup> Campbell previewed the essay in the previous issue:

...the item that most interests me at the moment is an article on the most important subject conceivable. This is not a hoax article. It is an article on the science of the mind, of human thought, it is not an article on psychology--that isn't a science. It's not General Semantics. It's a totally new science called *dianetics*, and it does precisely what a *science* of thought should do. Its power is almost unbelievable; it proves the mind not only can but does rule the body completely; following the sharply defined basic laws dianetics sets forth, physical ills such as ulcers, asthma and arthritis can be cured, as can other psychosomatic ills.... It is quite simply, impossible to exaggerate the importance of a true science of human thought (Campbell 1950:80).

Also in the April issue of that year, Campbell wrote on the subject of human memory and in the June issue he editorialized on the issues of education. In both editorials Campbell endorsed Hubbard's theories on the human mind, suggesting how this new "science" could be applied to improve learning.

While writing for Campbell, Hubbard had become skilled in the art of hypnotism. Using this ability in conjunction with his own Dianetic jargon, Hubbard succeeded in temporarily curing Campbell of chronic sinusitis, and so he made his first important convert.

Another major figure in the Dianetics movement was Dr. J.A. Winter, a general practitioner who acted as *Astounding's* medical columnist. Winter observed the use of Dianetics, and served on the foundation's board of directors with Campbell and Van Vogt (Wallis 1976:22).

When Hubbard's article "Dianetics: Evolution of Science" appeared in the May *Astounding*, it bore an introduction by Winter, who referred to the text as "one of the most important articles to be published in *Astounding Science Fiction*." Almost immediately afterwards a book version of the article appeared. *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* was distributed to bookstores across the nation. In the introduction Winter referred to the publication in even grander terms: "The creation of Dianetics is a milestone for Man comparable to his discovery of fire and superior to his invention of the wheel and arch."

Winter also defined the term Dianetics and explains its significance to humanity:

Dianetics (Gr., dianoua-thought) is the science of the mind. Far simpler than physics or chemistry, it compares with them in the exactness of its axioms and is on a considerably higher echelon of usefulness. *The hidden source of all psychosomatic ills and human aberration has been discovered and skills have been developed for their invariable cure.* Dianetics is actually a family of sciences embracing the various humanities and translating them into usefully precise definitions.

...With the techniques presented in this handbook the psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst and intelligent lay man can successfully and invariably treat all psycho-somatic ills and inorganic aberrations. Most importantly, the dianetic *clear*, an optimum individual with an intelligence considerably greater than the current normal, or the dianetic *release* can be done in less than twenty hours' work and is a state superior to any produced by several years of psychoanalysis, since the release will not relapse.

Dianetics is an exact science and its application is on the order of, but simpler than, engineering. Its axioms should not be confused with theories since they demonstrably exist as natural laws hitherto undiscovered (Winter in Hubbard 1950:ix).

Winters provided the basic precepts of Dianetics as stated by Hubbard in the first article in *Astounding*. The human brain is considered the most complex and sophisticated piece of machinery in the universe. It is the ultimate and infallible computer. How then, are we to account for the fact that human beings are fallible and imperfect? We make physical and intellectual blunders, we are not proficient enough in math to become engineers, we don't know enough biology to become doctors.

The goal of Dianetics was to remove all human imperfections and limitations to create an optimum brain. The reason we make mistakes is that somehow the exterior world has become an internal aberration.

When discussing the terminology of Dianetics and Scientology, one must take care not to be overwhelmed by

the immense amount of terminology that Hubbard invented. For a comprehensive summary of scientological terms, refer to the appendix of Robert Kaufman's *Inside Scientology* (1969). For the purposes of minimizing confusion, only basic terms and concepts in Scientology will be elucidated here.

Hubbard proposed two forms of human mind: (1) "The Analytic Mind"--this was essentially the rational conscious mind of man. Unfettered, it was alleged to be perfect, capable of tremendous intellectual feats. (2) "The Reactive Mind"--this portion of the mind operates when the conscious mind is inoperant. Unlike the Analytic Mind, the Reactive Mind is very primitive, operating according to the basic drive of all living things. "Survive"--the indiscriminate property of the reactive mind is a potential trouble source for the Analytic Mind and future potential for development.

We can understand the significance of Hubbard's model if we use Hubbard's example of a small boy knocked unconscious in a tricycle accident. The boy's mother rushes up to the limp figure, crying out, "He's always getting hurt, it's his nature," and then adds, "don't worry, Mother will protect you always." The conscious analytic mind is not operating, but the reactive mind is absorbing all this and is misinterpreting it in a literal, indiscriminate manner. This misunderstanding results in later maladaptive behavior. The boy becomes "locked in" the notion that "Mother will always protect him" and that

"he's always getting hurt." The reactive mind has programmed him with faulty information. The results of this traumatic locking in of faulty information are referred to as "engrams". Because of engrams instilled during his accident, the boy may grow up into a man inordinately dependent upon his mother, or chronically accident prone.

Dianetic therapy was proposed as a means of eliminating aberrant behavior caused by engrams. Entering a condition known as Dianetic Revere, a hypnotic trance, the patient's engrams are erased from the reactive bank of the mind. The analytic mind will no longer be the reactive bank of the mind. The analytic mind will no longer be impeded by engrams (Hubbard 1950:67-86).

A review of basic Dianetic terminology is in order at this point.

- (1) A "release" is an individual who has had major engrammatic misinformation removed. Essentially this person has had all his current problems alleviated; he may feel much better but there is much more to be done through Dianetic therapy.
- (2) "Clear"--is the ideal condition. This individual is free of all engrammatic experience from the present to his prenatal experience. Hubbard claimed that according to his research prenatal engrams are recorded as early as twenty-four hours after conception (1950:82).

A "clear", then, was supposed to be a superhuman



being. His powers of perception and comprehension were greatly increased; mental computations that were previously impossible were now going to be simple matters. A major claim of both Dianetics and Scientology is that their methods will result in a significant increase in a person's intelligence quotient.

Hubbard's book and article, at least at the superficial level, bear some resemblance to the work of Sigmund Freud. Freud postulated the existence of a conscious and unconscious or subconscious mind, the subconscious often subverting and inhibiting the activities of the conscious mind. However, he does not acknowledge prenatal "engrams"; according to Freud, most neuroses are generated by sexual impulses suppressed in childhood.

Another important difference between Hubbard and Freud lies in the fact that Dianetics claimed to be an "exact science" governed by verifiable laws. A psychoanalyst might argue that the id, ego and superego are very real and important factors in human behavior while shunning the idea that they could be subject to empirical measurement. At its best, Freudian analysis is admittedly an inexact and intuitive process.

Perhaps the major difference between Hubbard and Freud centred on treatment. While they share a basic paradigm--"unconscious factors influence behavior, often as psychosomatic illness"--they violently disagree as to

who is qualified to treat these problems. Freudians would argue that only licensed physicians with years of training and specialization in the study of the mind can be qualified as psychotherapists. Dianetics was somewhat looser in its qualifications as to who could be a therapist. Any reasonably intelligent layman would be capable of practising Dianetics after reading Hubbard's book.

In the general case, however--the psychotic, neurotic, or merely sub-optimum individual--dianetics will probably be practised by people of intelligence and good drive on their friends and families. Knowing all the axioms and mechanisms, dianetics is easy to apply to the fairly normal individual and can relieve his occlusions and colds and arthritis and other psychosomatic ills. It can be used as well to prevent aberrations from occurring and can even be applied to determine the reactions of others (Hubbard 1950:85).

On its publication, *Dianetics* enjoyed an immediate success with the select readership of fandom and with much of the wider general public. Following the appearance of the article, *Astounding's* letter column was filled with endorsements and objections to Hubbard's dissertation. A typical response is found in the June issue. It thanks Campbell for giving Hubbard the opportunity to publicize his findings, then the letter continues to reveal how Dianetics improved the writer's life at work, at home, etc.

Not all of the readership's response to Dianetics was favorable. One eloquent correspondence was featured in the

*Astounding* column, "Brass Tacks":

Dear Sir:

I am writing to comment on the article by L. Ron Hubbard on "Dianetics". After reading I am very confused. It sounds very much like the kind of talk I hear from some of the patients in the mental hospital where I am taking psychiatric training....The real danger in such articles is that readers with real mental diseases will first, be frightened away from recognized effective treatments, and second, they will waste precious time on whatever dianetics is when they should be getting proper psychiatric treatment.

J.S. Horan, M.D.  
(*Astounding Science Fiction*  
1950:152)

It is interesting that straight away one of Campbell's readers was able to articulate the major criticism of Dianetics and of Scientology today.

Another perhaps more typical response from disgruntled fans is found in a letter from C.E. Howard:

...Regardless of whether Dianetics is the Evolution of a new Science or sheer rubbish, it is inconsequential. What does matter is that we buy your magazine for the pleasure and entertainment which it gives us, and I for one, feel cheated, when I open it and find that one-third of it is given over to the promotion of some screw-ball hypothesis, or obscure question which is not of general interest (1950:161).

Apparently Howard interpreted the Dianetics article in a typically fannish manner; he saw Dianetics as yet another hoax religion and pseudo-controversy so familiar to

fandom. Some fans apparently resent their entertainment being used to save the world.

Objections notwithstanding, Dianetics found many converts in science fiction fandom. Much of its acceptance was due to Campbell's constant editorializing and advertising of Hubbard's book and of the newly formed Hubbard Dianetics Research Foundation in the pages of his magazine. One advertisement reads:

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY  
ONE CENT FOR  
DIANETIC THERAPY

This non-profit membership organization invites you to participate in its seminars on Dianetic theory, with demonstrations of technique. If you wish, we will also help you to obtain a co-auditor (1950:157).

Fans took an interest in Dianetics as it became a matter of controversy in their sub-culture. The prestige of Van Vogt and Campbell impressed many Dianetics fans (Laney 1970:14). Dianetics also influenced the fictional components of *Astounding*. Athleing writes of how during the early fifties only stories containing some ingredients like telepathy, telekenesis, or other concepts related to Dianetics were of any interest to Campbell and his magazine (Athlein/Blish 1957:86-87). Most famous of these stories is Van Vogt's *The Universe Maker* (1951), where the plot of the novel, and all the concepts and terminology in it are taken directly from Dianetics. Van Vogt was writing his

traditional 'superman story, but this time he was using Hubbard's jargon.

Dianetics was also an issue of some interest and controversy within the larger American public. Unexpectedly, *Dianetics* became a bestseller soon after its release in book form. All over the United States, notably at the Elizabeth, New Jersey Dianetics Center, and in Los Angeles, groups of amateur Dianetians formed, trying to "clear" themselves (Wallis 1976:43).

It seems unusual that Dianetics would appeal to both science fiction fans and to the general reading public. At the time both groups had a certain amount of antipathy towards each other. But we must consider the notion that different concepts were emphasized in two versions of Dianetics. In effect, there was a different version of Dianetics for each audience. The science fiction version emphasized the "scientific and technological" aspects. Dianetics, Campbell assured his public, was based on verifiable scientific results. Further, Campbell invited critics to objectively test Hubbard's thesis.

I am most anxious to publish articles confirming or disproving Hubbard's material; whether right or wrong, that is unimportant. He *has* got some provable, demonstratable results: these must be explained. The only scientific method of examination is to have many scattered workers repeat Hubbard's experiments, using precisely the method Hubbard specifies,

and record results. Then following the scientific method, vary the experiments on logically deduced consequences of the theories, and see what results occur (Campbell 1950:5).

The science fiction version of Dianetics also emphasized the machine-like quality of the human mind. In a subsequent editorial Campbell compares a model of computer function with Hubbard's theory of mind:

Hubbard's approach to the mind, as he specifically stated, was purely a matter of finding what worked in trying to straighten out minds--not an effort to find out the structure of the mind. Coupling's current article is, in essence, an effort to get some inkling of the sort of mechanism required to think--a totally different approach to the general field of mind and thought! (Campbell 1950:4).

The article Campbell refers to was "The Perfect Thinking Mechanism", by J.J. Coupling. This was a discussion on cybernetics and computer function. To the science fiction fan then, Campbell presented a Dianetics model of the mind as a machine based on an initially "pragmatic and practical" attitude toward psychological events. In *Astounding*, Dianetics was portrayed as ultra-rational and scientific, a true hard science uncluttered with any confusing vestiges of the humanities or social sciences. It seems that Campbell and Hubbard endeavoured to cater to fans' special interests and attitudes.

What Hubbard presented to his wider public was some-

what different. *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* was a bestseller and sparked a nation-wide fad. Involvement reached far beyond the confines of fandom. Many enthusiasts were young, middle-class people, often newly married, hoping to gain any sort of advantage in a race for upward mobility (Wallis 1976:54-55). Festinger et al. mention in *When Prophecy Fails* (1956:35-57) how many of the "seekers" group of housewives and amateur mystics, who combined UFOlogy and seances gained their introduction to the occult through Dianetics. The involvement of so many housewives and amateurs was due to the structure of the Dianetics Research Foundation and to the advantages membership conferred. Anyone who for a certain fee received Dianetics training from a certified Dianetics therapist could become an authorized practitioner himself. Thus, individuals were able to improve their self-esteem by attaining a degree in the science of Dianetics, while at the same time using their own creative energies. One could mix whatever occult or mystical notions one held into one's personal Dianetics practice. The seekers illustrate such mixing. The Dianetian was able to exert power over individuals by controlling the symbols he or she would use to order his/her patients' lives and worlds in a legitimate fashion. Moreover, since a therapist could charge not insignificant fees for his services, attaining a command was a means of supplementing personal income.

It has been established that participation in Dianetics must have entailed some rewards, but we may wonder why readers found Dianetics so initially attractive that they seriously considered taking Dianetics training. Robert Kaufman writes of the early appeal of Hubbard's book:

My story begins in 1950, with the appearance on the bookstands of L. Ron Hubbard's *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. The assertions on its bright green cover hit one like a black jack. Hubbard claimed to have discovered nothing less than the "hidden source of all psychosomatic ills and human aberrations, and skills for their invariable cure". I read it avidly (Kaufman 1969:xi).

Hubbard also owed much of his popularity to the similarity of his writings and the theories of Freud:

The basic theory is simple enough. Hubbard maps out the human psyche in a manner reminiscent of the id, ego, and super-ego (Kaufman 1969:xi).

During the 1950s, psychoanalysis gained widespread attention among the general American populace. Part of Hubbard's fame may have been the result of a growing interest in the psychological factors of human personality and behavior. People were becoming increasingly fascinated with the mind.

Wallis in *The Road to Total Freedom* (1976) thoroughly outlines the theoretical similarities and differences of Hubbard's book and the early research of Bruer and Freud.



The following paragraphs deal more with the public impressions of Freudianism and psychoanalysis than of Dianetics. One distinction between Dianetics and psychoanalysis made Dianetics extremely attractive to the layperson. Dianetics allegedly could do anything psychoanalysis was capable of, only better. The patient did not have to suffer the high cost and painful personal introspection of many years of psychiatric care. Instead, any "reasonably intelligent person" with a minimum of Dianetics training would be able to cure all neurotic and psychosomatic disorders. The cure would be effected in a matter of days, with no remissions, and relative to the cost of years of sessions on the analyst's couch, it was inexpensive. In a sense Dianetics was advertised as a no-frills form of psychoanalysis.

The form of Dianetics presented to the general public differed from that found in *Astounding* in the emphasis of its data. With the science fiction version Hubbard continually affirmed the scientific "validity" of Dianetics, referring to general rules and laws that supposedly governed mental processes. In the book form of *Dianetics*, Hubbard did maintain that his was an absolute science, and all of the rules and terminology found in the *Astounding* article are elaborated there in greater detail. The most significant portion of the book, however, is the discussion of "case histories" Hubbard claimed he had encountered during his

research. Here is possibly the most important similarity between Freud and Hubbard. One of the most fascinating aspects of studying Freud is reading the accounts of the various forms of deviant behavior and strange delusions of his patients. Since Freud's theoretical focus was on human sexuality, much of his research, if misrepresented or exposed to immature minds, might appeal to the prurient interests of the readership. Such an example is the case history of Dora, a young neurotic. At one point Freud presents his medical colleagues with the startling revelation that sexual excitation and even orgasm can be attained through oral contact with the male sex organ (Freud 1905, Rpt. 1979:68). During the 1950s with their repressed sexual mores, when even James Joyce was placed out of view, a reading of Freud's work would prove to be a rather titillating experience. The emphasis on sexuality may have been a principle reason for Freud's popularity in America.

Hubbard exploited any salacious elements in his "case-history" approach, until his writing in *Dianetics* became blatantly lewd. "Right or wrong, Hubbard was fun to read. I frankly enjoyed *Dianetics*, and thousands of others were sufficiently curious to make the book a runaway bestseller" (Kaufman 1969:xiii).

Hubbard used all manner of cheap melodramatic device to make his work seem important and controversial. For example, many of the engramic inhibitions were the results

of prenatal traumas; "Daddy gets passionate and baby feels like he's going through a washing machine" (Gardner 1953: 179). Many more of these prenatal disasters were the results of AA, attempted abortions perpetrated by the majority of expectant mothers. Hubbard suggested that some would try this procedure twenty or thirty times, using bottles, knitting needles, and whatever other distasteful appliance he could dream up. Abortion still remains one of the most controversial and provocative topics of our time. In the fifties it was a useful device for Hubbard to gain attention.

Reviewing *Dianetics*, we see that many of Hubbard's "case studies" used themes like sado-masochism, reminiscent of much pornography:

Hubbard's "case-studies" contain a constant repetition of torture themes in which people are held in bondage, inflicted with pain or violently killed. He often attributes (or projects) the cause of neurosis or engrams to the father's committing violent physical acts against the mother while she was pregnant or in the act of conceiving, as in the following "case-study" Hubbard presented.

Fight between mother and father shortly after conception. Father strikes mother in the stomach. She screams, and he says, "Goddam you, I hate you!" Mother says, "Please don't hit me again. Please don't hit me again. Please don't. I'm hurt. I'm frantic with pain" Father says, "Lie there and rot, damn you, goodbye."

An even more violent example which one of his research subjects allegedly remembered, occurred when the child in the womb got an engram when her father knelt on her mother and started choking her before raping her.

FATHER: Stay here. Stay down, damn you, you bitch! I'm going to kill you this time. I said I would and I will. Take that! (his knee grinds into the mother's abdomen). You better start screaming. Go on, scream for mercy! Why don't you break down? Don't worry, you will. You'll be blubbering around here, screaming for mercy! The louder you scream the worse you'll get. That's what I want to hear! I'm a punk kid, am I? You're the punk kid! I could finish you now but I'm not going to!... This is just a sample. There's a lot more where it came from. I hope it hurts! I hope it makes you cry! You say a word to anybody and I'll kill you in earnest!.... I'm going to bust your face in. You don't know what it is to be hurt! I know what I'm going to do to you now! I'm going to punish you! (Cooper 1971:166-167).

Such a case study has extraordinary dramatic effect, and although the academic and medical merit of this presentation is at best questionable, it certainly holds one's attention. Through an examination of the similarities of popular notions of psychoanalytic theory and Hubbard's books we see the relevant quality of the "public" version of Dianetics. In *Astounding*, Dianetics was a "pure, hard science", an alternative to the frustrating vagaries of conventional psychology and social sciences. The mass audience may have interpreted Dianetics as vulgar Freudianism. The paradigm of reactive vs. analytic mind was understood, not in terms of computer technology, but in a framework of psychological development. Dianetics was vulgar, not only in that it appealed to research data that provided as much insight as most pulp romance magazines, but also in that it

grossly simplified psychoanalytic concepts and exaggerated the effectiveness of any treatment for neurosis.

By the end of 1950, Dianetics had established itself as a nation-wide fad; many people had quickly accepted the premise that Dianetics was an important means of treating mental illness and achieving self-improvement. Hubbard had not yet recreated the movement into a religion.

Wallis (1976) provides an excellent summary of the many changes that occurred following the establishment of Dianetics. The Hubbard Dianetics Research Foundation was formed. Its board of directors included Campbell, Winters and Van Vogt. At the heyday of the fad, Hubbard lectured across the country, and centres sprang up in many cities. A.E. Van Vogt became an influential figure at the Los Angeles Dianetics Center.

Dianetics at this time was a grass-roots movement; people, reading the text and setting up their own practices, synthesized Hubbard's ideas with any others they might care to use. Wallis points out how the communications between lay practitioners of Dianetics took place in home mimeographed publications on the same order as fanzines. In its informal or cult form, to use Wallis' definitions, Dianetics enthusiasts used much the same media as science fiction fans.

For several reasons, primarily Hubbard's inability to produce a single "clear",<sup>10</sup> his poor fiscal management of

the Foundation and the public's general loss of interest in Dianetics, the craze waned. At the end of 1951, the Foundation and Hubbard were close to bankruptcy. Hubbard parted company with the Foundation and its board of directors. By 1952, Hubbard had moved his operations to Phoenix, Arizona, where he no longer exclusively taught clearing practice. Dianetics in its original form had an extremely short lifespan. One of the major factors in its collapse was a lack of ideological control. The birth of Scientology, based on the doctrine of Dianetics, depended on Hubbard's efforts to obtain and retain total control over the movement. By 1951, Hubbard had almost lost all influence over his ideas, as well as any profits they may have generated. Most of his activities after 1951 can be understood as part of a plan to avoid any future challenge to his authority and income. Hubbard revealed and espoused the religion of Scientology. Also at this point, he endeavoured to gain control of all Dianetic practice and concepts. In the official Dianetics and Scientological bulletins, Hubbard condemned any deviant variations of his work as "Black Dianetics".

During the 1950s and early sixties Scientology was transformed by Hubbard into a sect, with a strictly controlled religious doctrine. Members were highly committed and organized, and formed a smaller, more dedicated community. These members contrast sharply with dabblers in the

occult and the dilettantes of the early Dianetics movement. Most of the church's activities from 1956-66 were of the same nature. Hubbard was preaching essentially the same material, but all the while extending his sphere of influence: Orgs were being established in smaller centres of America and the rest of the English-speaking world. The organizational bureaucracy was a growing complex.

In 1966 Hubbard moved to his base in England, a Sussex mansion. Here the Saint Hill College of Scientology was the centre for training and processing recruits into the church. The congregation of Scientology was expanding and the constant influx of new recruits to be "cleared" was viewed with some alarm by British immigration officials. Hubbard's devotees also tried to gain influence over political parties in Rhodesia, South Africa and Australia.

New innovations in Scientology included the suggestion of a series of past lives, in which each individual has undergone "the time track", and the introduction of the essential spiritual nature of the individual, the "thetan". Dianetic therapy survived, but auditing sessions were augmented by the use of the "E-meter". This device was essentially a crude implement for measuring galvanic skin response.

Hubbard now claims that he has relinquished control of the church, but he still heads HASI, the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International. All therapists and "clears"

must be officially approved and certified through the central HASI office. HASI also controls the distribution of all Scientology literature, which all Scientology branch offices must carry if they are to remain officially sanctioned. By operating HASI, Hubbard is able to maintain total control over the church doctrine and practice. Hubbard is also the sole source of all Scientology religious literature.

By the late sixties and early seventies a series of scandals focussing on church practice, and on Scientology's strict system of "ethics" led British authorities to ban Hubbard from re-entering England. Because of the American Food and Drug Administration's longstanding court battles with Hubbard regarding the E-meter and the allegedly radiation-proof drug Dianazene, as well as some dispute concerning back taxes, Hubbard did not feel it prudent to return to the United States. Likewise he could not enter Australia or South Africa, owing to ongoing investigations by their governments. Perhaps in anticipation of these difficulties Hubbard moved himself and the central office of the church on board a series of yachts, referred to by Scientologists as the "Sea Org". The purpose of the move, Hubbard said, was to "search for lost civilizations." The Sea Org is also a convenient means of avoiding prosecution by various national authorities. At present, Hubbard keeps in touch with the world Scientology organization through an



elaborate teletype system. The church now has branches on every continent.

### Defining Scientology

It has been argued by some that by virtue of its origins and activities, Scientology cannot be considered a religion in any true sense of the word.

Cooper (1971:115-121) makes this case, noting Scientology's political activities with regards to Ian Smith's government, and the Australian Labour Party, as well as its effort to seize control of the mental health movement in England. Cooper also points out that large sums of money that are required for members to participate in auditing sessions and training courses. His argument suggests that such activities are not those of a legitimate church. The problem of religious legitimacy is worthy of discussion for it often seems that Scientology does take a cynical attitude toward its own religious status. In the christening ceremony of a child into the church a pastor speaks to the child in a very informal manner, usually introducing it to its parents. In one such ceremony the pastor was quoted as informing the neonate "Don't worry, it could be worse" (Malko 1970:65-66).

Scientology is also unusual in that, although it uses religious symbols like the cross in the frontispiece of all

its texts, it never directly deals with the question of God. Hubbard elucidates eight urges or "Dynamics" which control life. The seventh and eighth dynamics are related to religious concerns.

THE SEVENTH DYNAMIC--is the urge towards existence as of spirits. Anything spiritual, with or without identity, would come under the heading of the Seventh Dynamic. This can be called the SPIRITUAL DYNAMIC.

THE EIGHTH DYNAMIC--is the urge towards existence as Infinity. This is also identified as the Supreme Being. It is carefully observed here that the science of Scientology does not intrude into the Dynamic of the Supreme Being. This is called the Eighth Dynamic because the symbol of infinity stood upright makes the numeral "8". This can be called the INFINITY or GOD DYNAMIC (Hubbard 1956:38).

Scientology is in a peculiar position in that as a religious science, it acknowledges the existence of the spiritual and mystical, even of a Supreme Being; but it refuses to deal with any issue pertaining to God.

Recalling Van Vogt's argument for the adaptive advantages that church status would have lent to General Semantics (page 5) we might wonder if a similar strategy was responsible for the formation of the Church of Scientology. Perhaps Hubbard merely wanted to obtain the advantages afforded an institution of worship. As a church, its taxes would be less, Scientology branches could be established in countries with greater ease, and certain practices that

might be curtailed if labeled psychiatric or medical practice would be exempt as part of religious practice. Freedom of worship would provide Hubbard with greater license.

It cannot be denied that these factors were influential in the formation of the church. When Hubbard likened himself to P.T. Barnum he did display a manipulative attitude toward the credibility of his audience. However, the central thesis of this work is that symbols influence attitudes and behavior; Hubbard's appropriation of religious trappings had certain consequences. By assuming the label "religion", a group becomes subject to redefinition within the surrounding culture. Hubbard may derive considerable structural power from his position as absolute head of the church, but because the institution he runs is a church, there are certain appropriate rules and behaviors. At least to a limited extent, any experience in the outside society determines the types of symbols employed by religion and their legitimate use. Once Scientology began calling itself a church, it had to incorporate church-like symbols and activities. Individuals began to relate to Scientology as a religious institution. Christopher Evans (1973:116-134), referring to Scientology as "the science fiction religion", further writes of how Scientology has softened a great many of its strict organizational constraints and modified many of its stands on secular causes. Recently the teachings and

practices of Scientology have assumed a more overtly religious form. Evans notes how the *Axioms* and *Dynamics* of life as written by Hubbard have been set to music and are sung during church services (1973:132).

### Scientology Doctrine

Scientology also contains a religious doctrine built upon, but separate from, the "science" of Dianetics. The frontispiece of most Scientology publications bears this brief description of Scientology:

Scientology is a religious philosophy containing pastoral procedures intended to assist an individual to gain greater knowledge of self. The Mission of the Church of Scientology is a simple one--to help the individual achieve greater self-confidence and personal integrity, thereby enabling him to really trust and respect his fellowmen. The attainment of the benefits and goals of Scientology requires each individual's positive participation as only through his own efforts can he achieve these.

Aside from the brief phrase, "a religious philosophy", the aims of Scientology appear fully secular in nature. This may provide one means of understanding the many political and non-religious activities of the church. By definition the church attempts to deal with very pragmatic and worldly concerns encountered in day to day living. *The Problems of Work* (1968) is Hubbard's dissertation which

attempts to apply the Scientological concepts of affinity and communication to the work place. The photo-essay found in *What is Scientology* (1978) contains several examples of what Scientology suggests it can rectify. It says it can prevent alcoholism and drug addiction, mend broken homes, prevent depression, prevent criminal behavior. The organization's methods, it states, can be used by corporations to improve efficiency. Finally, governments based on the principles of Scientology would supposedly bring about world peace.

It is apparent that the goals of Scientology move from the personal level of self-improvement through a series of increasingly complex problems. The final claim of Scientology, that it can bring about universal peace and happiness, seems utopian if not religious in nature. It does contain one key element of the Christian doctrine of salvation--the belief that a universal state of grace can be attained only through the redemption of the individual.

Scientology does have an articulated body of beliefs that suggest an aspect of reality that transcends mortal experience. Here Scientology sheds its preoccupation with the problems of living. This is the realm of "para-Scientology". In order to understand para-Scientology we must return to Dianetic theory. The object of Dianetic auditing is to erase all of an individual's engramatic inhibitions in order to make him clear, able to use his perfect mind at full

capacity. Recall that engrams could be formed anytime following the very instant of conception. It is a small step from this position to the proposition that individuals might be suffering from engrams obtained during previous lives. Believers then have taken a giant leap into the rich and mystical universe suggested by the notion of reincarnation.

Reincarnation takes on a special form and meaning for Scientologists. Church doctrine asserts that human beings experience because the conscious and sentient component of personality, the "Thetan", is spiritual and immortal. Thetans are primal causes in the universe, according to Hubbard (Wallis 1976:103-104); their existence predates that of matter in the universe. Thetans are essentially playful entities; they assumed corporeal form as a type of game-playing behavior. Scientology considers the spiritual component of man to be the only relevant aspect of humanity. The physical body is treated as "meat". Thetans are the drivers of our bodies, physical form merely furnishing a vehicle for the thetan's play. In their liberated state Thetans are all-powerful beings--spirit being more powerful and more pure than matter. Problems arise for the Thetan when it forgets that it is a spiritual entity. It becomes trapped within the degraded condition of the meat. Once the Thetan suffers this unfortunate lapse of memory it becomes the victim of all manner of engram-inducing traumas through

the course of its many lifetimes. The Thetan suffers so because it is an agent that acts upon others, but is not acted upon by others. Losing its primary function perverts the Thetan and makes it act in self-destructive ways.

The task of training devotees of the Church of Scientology is far more involved and complex than the "clearing" process of Dianetics. Engrams from the subject's entire series of lives must be erased. The individual must learn that he is a spiritual being, and he must learn to transcend his physical limitations. A common training technique is to suggest that the initiates attempt to be "three feet in back of your head", thus moving the Thetan outside of their bodies. The E-meter is also important to this process as it is supposed to be a necessary tool in tracing past lives.

Once the trainee has been acknowledged to be independent of his body, he attains the rank of "Operating Thetan". As such, the person is alleged to possess all manner of superhuman abilities. He is no longer confined by matter. The pursuit of the Thetan is far more of a religious quest than is the desire to become "clear". Scientology may claim to be a religious science, but it has moved into the realm of the spiritual and mystical, while Dianetics' focus never transcended the merely pseudo-scientific.

Wallis discusses the mystical and spiritual beliefs of para-Scientology by first pointing out common features

between Scientology and the Buddhist Yoga. Yoga propounds a metaphysical outlook, where ideally the spirit could be fully disassociated from matter. Also the Yoga belief involves a tracing of the past lives of the spirit. Once the spirit is given primacy over the body, the individual believer acquires superhuman abilities (Wallis 1976:113-114). For a science, Scientology has little in it that enters the scope of observable empirical data. The theory rests on the postulation of spiritual entities and mystical factors. For an example, ponder Hubbard's definition of reality as that body of rules which all sentient beings agree to follow in order for things to exist (1976:115). Scientology entails an ideational cosmology, where all observation of external reality is reduced to internal subjective experience. No concept suggested by Scientology is testable and therefore none can be called a scientific theory. Scientology is not a science and not even an epistemological perspective. With Scientology's doctrine of personal salvation transcending mortal limitations and its utopian approach, the ideas found in para-Scientology do not stray from the arena of religion.

As previously mentioned, any attempt to view Scientology as a religious-mystical phenomenon becomes difficult because of the church's preference to publicize the more "practical" applications of its ideology. The details of para-Scientology are kept secret, especially from new recruits.



Now, in talking to a group, steer off from para-Scientology. Lay off the whole track stuff, huh? Lay off the fantastic. If you have some chap around who insists on telling people about these things, just note him down; he isn't working for us, fellahs. The quickest way to lose a beset person or group is if you load him down with phenomena. Talk, instead, about the fact that there is a spiritual side to man. Talk about the fact that Scientology solves social problems. When they are very initiate and it's all good fun and they've also got their HPA or HCA\*, do what you like with the whole track. Or use it in private sessions. Don't hand it out the the public raw. It's too strong (Hubbard 1955:2).

Here we see the work of a skilled propagandist and crowd manipulator. Hubbard is using his story-writing skills in what can be interpreted as a deceptive undertaking.

He is instructing his followers to sell something to the public without telling the potential consumer what it actually is. Here then is more evidence of Hubbard's P.T. Barnum approach to religion. The church at one level exists for administrative purposes, to maximize power and profit for Hubbard and to minimize interference from possible critics. The control of belief involves the cynical use of science fiction symbols which allow Hubbard to present a mystifying element to the congregation.

Hubbard is probably correct in his belief that the general public would find para-Scientology too bizarre to take seriously. Part of the fantastic quality of Scientology

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\*Degrees in Scientology

doctrine derives from the borrowing of science fiction folklore for church ideology. We can detect the science fiction elements of para-Scientology in the experiences of former Scientologist, Cyril Vosper. Vosper points out how in the course of Scientology "instruction" the particulars of students' past lives were supplied:

No one even bothered to verify or not, the recent past lives which should be traceable from extant records. Hubbard had mentioned Zapp Guns, Tractor and Repeller Beams, Flying Saucers and Mother Ships and Galactic Empires in his lectures. His son...(Nibs) was one of the instructors on the memorable course. When a student was having a lot of difficulty in making his story, or rather, past life gel, Nibs would helpfully fill in bits. Amazingly, many of the past lives sounded like pulp comics "Flash Gordon meets the Brain from Galaxy X", complete with Zapp Guns, et al. (Vosper 1971:64).

Hubbard himself has been known to use science fiction concepts to suggest that what is accepted as conventional knowledge in mundane society is not true--the "everything you know is wrong" effect. *The History of Man* (1952) is Hubbard's attempt to set the record straight. The book professes to be a "cold-blooded and factual account of your last sixty trillion years". Para-Scientology argues that the "written history of Earth is all lies." Historians have "studiously ignored" such interesting and significant occurrences as several invasions from space, incumbent insect monsters and the Markab Confederacy, a galactic empire (Vosper 1971:68-71).

Clearly Hubbard is trying to attack outside society's worldview much as evangelical science fiction fans do when they try to articulate a science fiction ideology. Hubbard uses science fiction to support his scientological cosmology.

Victor Turner writes in *The Ritual Process* (1969) of the Mexican revolutionary Hidalgo and how through the selection of the proper symbol from Catholic belief he was able to unite the divergent factions in colonial Mexican society to resist the Spanish. Hubbard's use of science fiction in Scientology is reminiscent of such selection and exploitation of symbols. It is important that two of the most prevalent themes in science fiction, the superman and utopia complexes, are central to Scientology doctrine.

"Evolving" into something more than mortal is the Scientologist's main goal. The subtitle to former church member Kaufman's personal record, *Inside Scientology*, reads: "How I Joined Scientology and Became a Superhuman". People in Scientology are under constant pressure to become "clear" and then to move onto the "Operating Thetan" stage. The aim of Church membership seems to be the attainment of superhuman powers, to become superior to those around you. This drive may be similar to the one lauded by Degler and his Cosmen, the will to ascend over others who believe you to be their inferior. Scientology seems to be yet another avenue in the pursuit of the science fiction superman.

Scientology has utopian elements as well. Universal

happiness and peace will ensue, if only, the Scientologists tell us, they can implement their beliefs on a world-wide scale. Scientologists express the same interest in evolution as a redeeming force as science fiction fans, on both a personal and a collective level:

We seek no revolution. We seek only evolution to a higher state of being for the individual and society (Hubbard 1965:113).

Malko refers to Scientology's plan for world unity as a "brave new world" (1970:143), and while Malko may see this as a danger, Scientology propaganda would argue for a saner, more "scientific" rearrangement of the world. Scientologists have an explicitly stated goal: to change what they see as a degraded and decaying world into their version of a saved condition.

A civilization without insanity, without criminals, and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where man is free to rise to greater heights, are the aims of Scientology (Hubbard 1965:113).

Scientology shares with science fiction lore an interest in science and technology, or rather pseudo-science and the thought technology of utopian schemes. We find an example of this in Kaufman:

Last night I left the body behind for three hours. And Dissem is effortless when you're not tied down by MEST. We will get standard Tech on this planet and Clear the Galaxy! (Kaufman 1972:vii).

Standard Tech is the basic Scientology training needed to "clear" an individual. Training is expressed as a technology. The E-meter used in auditing is another invaluable piece of machinery added to the scientific trappings of the church. Hubbard is conforming to a classic science fiction theme: the technologist uses his machinery to change the world.

The counter-forms of both complexes are also found in church ideology; monsters and dystopias abound in Scientology texts. Scientology is often viewed by its members as in constant struggle with forces which would bring about the destruction of mankind.

The use or neglect of this material may well determine the use or neglect of the atomic bomb by man. Scientology is already winning in this field. In the same period in history, two of the most sweeping forces Man has known have come to fruition: a knowledge of himself and others with Scientology, and a means of destroying himself and all others by atomic fission. Which force wins depends in a large measure on your use of Scientology (Hubbard 1965:8).

Populating the possible dystopia are the monsters, those who would wish to prevent Scientology from achieving its lofty goals. The belief in monsters is demonstrated aptly in the label, "suppressive person", which is applied to anyone who might be at odds with the church. The mental

health organizations of various nations, who may have acted as critics of Dianetics in the past, are singled out as hordes of evil-doers. Hubbard would have us believe that the mental health movement comprises a worldwide conspiracy designed to rob us of our souls.

For "scientists" who regard man as wholly animal, it is only natural that he should be a *laboratory* animal.

What kind of a future, then, do these creators of a new society envision? Ultimately, a genetically engineered, rigidly controlled race of humanoids, subject to the scientific whims of their masters in white smocks? (Garrison 1974: 116).

This scenario recalls descriptions of villains in science fiction melodrama. The archetype of the "mad scientist" is used to argue against the perceived enemies of Scientology.

Reviewing the origins and content of Scientology, we observe that much of the movement's ideological content has been appropriated from the themes and symbols of science fiction. Even Scientology's jargon, full of E-meters, Dianazene and Standard Tech, bears a great resemblance to fannish slang. We have introduced Scientology and discussed its religious organization. It is now appropriate to explore more closely the symbolic connections between science fiction and this "futuristic" religion.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CULTIC CONNECTION

One cannot fully understand the relationship between science fiction fandom and the Church of Scientology merely by reviewing the histories of both movements. If we accept the premise that behavior and social forms are greatly influenced by ideas and creative acts, in other words that culture is to a greater or lesser extent "invented" by its participants, then we may use this opportunity to illustrate this effect further.

So far, I have made a case for considering fandom as a subculture with its own lore. In addition, the nature of Scientology has been discussed with some brief suggestion as to the symbolic connections between science fiction and the church. Here, then, is the first indication of how Scientology and science fiction are relevant to each other, both in their histories and in the present.

The material presented in this chapter is an effort to discuss further the social and symbolic context of the invention of Scientology. First, I shall detail some of the previous dispositions towards cultic movements in science fiction literature and fandom. Next I shall note how after their inception movements such as Dianetics and Scientology

are modified by their symbols and their environment. I will discover how processual symbology, a change in symbols and ideology, is bound to an evolution of social forms.

First, the concept of *communitas* will help us to comprehend the context of fandom and Scientology. It applies to the social configurations of both fandom and the early Dianetics movement. Turner introduces the concept of *communitas* in his discourse on the condition of liminality outlined in Van Gennep's model for rites of passage. In this case Turner wants to situate liminality in terms of wider social organization (1968:94):

What is interesting about liminal phenomena for our present purpose is the blend of homogeneity and comradeship. We are presented in such rites, "with a moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structured ties. These are ties organized in terms either of caste, class or rank hierarchies or of segmentary oppositions in the stateless societies so beloved of political anthropologists. It is as though there are two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structural, differentiated and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less". The second which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured and undifferentiated *communitas*, community, or even communion of equal individuals...

I prefer the Latin term *communitas* to community to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an area of common living (Turner 1968:96).



To more rigorously define Turner's terminology, we can refer to his later work where the concepts of "societas" and "communitas" are completely summarized. Societas entails the functioning of society in "normal" time, how a culture proceeds with all the structural boundaries present in a social hierarchy. Communitas is a rejection of the normal operation of society; the hierarchy is at least temporarily overthrown. Individuals no longer relate to one another in terms of positional roles in a structure, but on the basis of intimate personal contact. "All men are brothers" or "all men are equals" are notions familiar to a situation of communitas (Turner 1974:53).

Some question arises as to whether fandom and science fiction literature can be regarded as liminal phenomena. Science fiction is clearly a marginal event. With its postulations of alternate realities and its vague ideology, science fiction resides outside the boundaries of conventionality. Its subject matter is not within the range of everyday experience and in turn the everyday mind may have little use for science fiction. So to non-fans, science fiction fans and their ideology are marginal to society.

Fandom, with its own set of unarticulated values, resembles a condition of communitas more than one of societas. The critic may argue that marginal groups in society may possess the characteristics of communitas (informality, lack of structure) not because they are passing between any two

stages, but because they remain outside the scope of larger society's definitions. Liminality entails a passage from one stage to another. It seems difficult to view the fringe group of fandom as "betwixt and between" any two stages.

Fandom can be interpreted as a liminal phenomenon if we make the distinction between social structure and cultural events. In terms of social structure, fandom is a marginal phenomenon. Fans participate at the edges of the status quo. Seen from the perspective of the conventional mind, fans are simply a body of eccentrics.

If we consider the ideology of fandom, however, believing it to be a cultural system, then science fiction fandom can be interpreted as liminal. Science fiction ideology has as its prime focus, the future. Fans are liminal in that they see themselves as moving from the status of the degraded and undervalued in the primitive present to the "saved" condition in a more advanced and scientific future. The notion of progress puts fans in the self-perceived state of movement from one status to another.

Thomas M. Disch's proclamation that science fiction is the "literature of resentment" implies that science fiction fandom and science fiction literature are marginal to much of conventional society. Some readers may become intense fans because they are dissatisfied with their own lives, they dislike their positions in the social structure, perhaps feeling that their status is too low, or that they have too

little access to prestige and material resources. Science fiction fandom allows the fan to reject any perceived injustices of everyday life. Fans are able to establish new and more rewarding identities for themselves in their subculture. The social hierarchy among fans is rudimentary; there is some distinction between the neophyte fan and the more experienced "big name" fans, but any advanced status in fandom is the result of managing to attract the group's attention over a protracted period of time. Any reputation is based on the support and interest of other fans. Fans never become so "distinguished" that they become inaccessible to most members of the fan community. Fans do, however, tend to differentiate themselves according to media. Fans of science fiction literature for decades had little to do with science fiction film enthusiasts, and the huge legion of Star Trek fans form a subculture all their own.

Within distinct fan groups a condition of *communitas* exists; fans are bound together on a personal level because of a common consuming interest in science fiction. All social distinctions from the outside world are minimized. Regardless of occupation, financial background, and sex, all reside together in the "family of fandom".

Should an individual become socially distinct or obviously monetarily ingratiated by virtue of his interest in science fiction, he no longer stays in the realm of fandom but assumes the status of a "filthy pro". Science

fiction is no more an escape from the inequalities of everyday life; to the pro, it becomes a means of earning a living in the mundane world. The professional science fiction writer may maintain his connections with fandom, but his relationship with the community of devoted amateurs has become more distinct. By earning his livelihood from science fiction, the writer has moved away from the marginal condition of fandom.

Because marginality and liminal states have much in common, perhaps the marginal material of science fiction stories have many of the same characteristics and functions of what Turner labels the "liminal figures" of much traditional folklore.

Folk literature abounds in symbolic figures, such as "holy beggars", "third sons", "little tailors", and "simpletons", who strip off the pretensions of holders of high rank and office and reduce them to the level of common humanity and morality.

...Again in the traditional "western" we have all read of the homeless and mysterious "stranger" without wealth or name who restores ethical and legal equilibrium to the local set of power relations by eliminating the unjust secular "bosses" who are oppressing the smallholders. Members of despised or outlawed ethnic and cultural groups play major roles in myths and popular tales as representatives or expressions of universal human values. Famous among these are the good Samaritan, the Jewish fiddler Rothschild in Chekhov's tale, "Rotschild's Fiddle" and Doestoevsky's Sonya, the prostitute who redeems the would-be Nietzschean "superman" Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* (Turner 1968:110).

The liminal figure that haunts so much of science fiction literature is the character of the superman. He may represent a "superior, more evolved" individual, but because of his superiority, he exists outside normal society. Often his origins are of degraded stature, or he may be persecuted by the establishment, as was the character Jimmy Cross in *Slan*. The superman or the highly individualistic techno-hero of much science fiction is a figure with whom the fan identifies. Here is a spokesperson who assures the fan that he is a worthwhile person and he will overcome his difficulties despite what others in the "ordinary world" may think. The hero appeals to the common human values found in the state of *communitas*.

Science fiction in its postulation of utopias, dystopias and alternate realities suggests world views different from those of mainstream society. Again science fiction places itself in a marginal and liminal position. Science fiction can often be interpreted as a rejection of ordinary secular knowledge. It offers a secret wisdom that is somehow superior and more insightful than everyday values. Returning to Disch, we can remark that not only is science fiction a literature of resentment, but it also provides some reassurances to the frustrated reader. These assurances often take the form of marginal ideas.

Scientology, too, can be considered as marginal in its relation to society. Through its doctrine it also dis-

cards commonly held assumptions and suggests that it alone possesses the "real" truth. This position allows Hubbard to rewrite the history of the universe. Scientology argues for its own version of the ideal society, again placing itself outside the scope of contemporary values. The figures of the "clear" and "operating Thetan" are superhuman and resemble science fiction heroes. They serve a similar function to their audience as well. As superior beings, Scientologists are engaged in a mission to save the world, but the establishment in the form of wicked politicians and psychiatrists is attempting to suppress this holy endeavour. The Scientological doctrine of salvation asserts that, like all heroes, the church members will triumph over all opposition and become free to exercise their will.

In its present form the church is less akin to Turner's concept of *communitas* than was the original Dianetics fad. In 1950, all Dianetics practitioners were essentially equal in their qualifications. Here was a grassroots movement full of individual innovation and eccentricity. Presently Scientology has far more complex internal structure with its hierarchy of orgs, degrees and certificates. Still the church member is given the opportunity to attain status and prestige within the community of Scientologists. Such opportunities may be unavailable in outside secular institutions.

The concept of *communitas* provides only a basic orientation to the environment of fandom and Scientology. This approach may be supplemented by other theoretical perspectives. Whitehead (1973) proposes that science fiction and Scientology are both "occult" in nature. In Weberian terms, Whitehead suggests that occult interest stems out of a frustration with alienation from the rational and secular character of much modern religion. Afficiandos of the occult turn to this pursuit out of a desire for a more personal and charismatic approach to spiritual matters (1973:551-553). Whitehead also provides a means of viewing Scientology as a religion rather than as a self-improvement club:

When I say "religion" I am using Robert Bellah's simple working definition: "A set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence." ...Another commonly associated feature of religions which is of more immediate interest to us here is that of conceptions of a transcendent or "supernatural" order--a higher level of reality--to which the mundane or commonsense order of experience is somehow meaningfully related (Whitehead 1973:550-551).

Whitehead states that there are two fundamental features to occult belief:

- (1) An emotional aspect the desire to obtain a more personally rewarding relationship with transcendent events;
- (2) An intellectual aspect, entailing behavior much like the activity of medieval alchemists.

Using a mixture of empirical observation, speculation and marginal knowledge (e.g., magic) the devotee attempts to create his own system of knowledge, his own world view, differing with the establishment's.

Wallis in his discussions of Scientology, also writes of the "occult" origins of the church. Dianetics arouse under specific social and cultural conditions found in the so-called "underground" of western culture. This underground is referred to as the cultic milieu:

Colin Campbell (1972) has proposed the very suggestive notion of *cultic milieu*. By this he means to refer to the network of individuals, groups, practices, institutions, means of communication and beliefs that embody what we might term "rejected knowledge". Ideas which have not been accepted and incorporated into the legitimate operation of a society tend to percolate down to a kind of underground typified by the occult bookstore.

Cults emerge toward a synthesis of ideas current in this underground, supplemented and refined by the researches or insights of their founder (Wallis 1978:44).

Examining Whitehead's and Wallis' work, one may note that occult phenomena or ideas in the "cultic milieu", are areas of social marginality and *communitas*. Science fiction fandom and Scientology can be fruitfully studied as fringe occurrences. Once this is understood, it becomes possible to view both movements as related in this context of marginal ideas--the cultic milieu. Several specific



similarities and connections between science fiction and Scientology will be discussed from this perspective.

Here we shall be considering how the symbols generated in a field of entertainment became modified within a "cultic milieu" to act as the doctrine for a religion. We are viewing a situation of "processual symbology", how ideas and symbols take on new meanings in different contexts.

This discussion will probe how science fiction provided symbols and ideas for the cultic milieu. Related to this topic we shall review American science fiction attitudes toward religion. In addition we shall note the importance of John W. Campbell and how his influence contributed to the field of science fiction and to cultic ideology. We shall compare the Dianetics movement with another cultic event in science fiction, the "Shaver Mystery", in order to demonstrate the numerous occult events that have come about in the past history of science fiction. Finally, we shall explore the current organizational structure of the Church of Scientology to illustrate how the manipulation of symbols on the part of Hubbard led to a change in the social form of the group.

### Science Fiction and Religion

Since the central concern of this work is to demonstrate how science fiction has acted as a symbolic contributor

to a religious movement, it is necessary to examine how science fiction literature treats religious themes. From the genre's outset, science fiction has often functioned as a critic of orthodox religion. Evidence of this can be found in the early fiction of H.G. Wells, notably in the passages of the *War of the Worlds* (1896) where the novel's narrator and a curate find themselves trapped beneath a Martian encampment. The curate, a representative of conventional religious piety, panics utterly, interpreting the inter-planetary invasion as the "Wrath of God" and "The Day of Judgement." Throughout these chapters Wells goes to great pains to point out how the curate is unable to adapt to this totally novel crisis (Rpt. 1978:341-360). In his later career Wells continued to act as a critic of religion, portraying himself as an enlightened atheist, and champion of evolutionary theory.

During the 1940s religion continued to be discussed in a rather unflattering light in John W. Campbell's magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*. In Asimov's short story, "Trends" (1939, Rpt. 1972:59-75), a future America's interest in space travel is curtailed by ignorant evangelical masses. With Heinlein's 1940 serial, *If This Goes On* (the 1953 novel version, *Revolt in 2100*, reprinted in 1967) a corrupt media clergyman seizes control of the United States and sets up a predictably corrupt religious tyranny.

Campbell's school of science fiction created a

dichotomy of science and religion in which science represents reason, freedom and progress. Religion embodied such backward notions as superstition, ignorance, irrationality and totalitarianism.

If we recall the hoax religions of the Futurians and other fan groups and the quasi-Marxism of the Michelist movement, we may conclude that certain factions of fandom were openly disrespectful of conventional religious belief and practice. Just as fans of the time may have considered themselves "too evolved" to engage in mundane political matters, they may have applied the same disdain to religious concerns as well. Such a "heresy" may be reminiscent of Weber's notion of rational as opposed to charismatic religion (Weber in Elderidge 1971:229). Secular churches did not provide science fiction devotees with a gratifying religious experience, so a more personal, more meaningful belief was created, embodied for example, the transcending figure of the superman.

It is crucial to note the so-called "brass tacks" approach to science fiction prevalent during the 1930s and 40s. Science fiction was still supposed to be a serious and important pursuit because of its hypothetical predictive value and its reflection of science and technology. One illustration of this "brass tacks" orientation to fantastic material is seen in the graphic logo on the August 1956 edition of *Astounding Science Fiction*. Here we see a

draftsman's drawing of a screwdriver fitting into the head of a screw (Emsh in Siegal and Soares, 1978:47). The implications of such a graphic suggest to the purchaser that whatever unusual material found in the magazine is supported at some level by a "nuts and bolts" empirical base.

Perhaps the nuts and bolts, brass tacks vision of much of American science fiction can be viewed as the basis for a counter religion suggested by science fiction themes. Again, we can refer to Kubrick's *2001* as a cinematic summary of technological thematic patterns found in earlier science fiction, despite its 1960s vintage. The start of the future time of the film contains many probable predictions of future technology. The commonality of these devices is heightened by the almost excessive use of corporate logos. We are travelling in space and Pan Am and Bell Telephone are taking us there. All events in the Clavius and Discovery sequences are scientifically accurate down to the last detail, to prevent any events in this futuristic setting from becoming too divergent from the world view of the present. In actuality, the central portion of the film can be interpreted as a deification of the mid-sixties, middle American society; everything we value today is made bigger and better in *2001*.

The situation alters radically when the spacecraft Discovery reaches Jupiter and the protagonist enters the Stargate. The story takes a literal quantum leap from the

scientifically explainable to the mystical and inarticulate. The bizarre and ambiguous quality of the film's final segment represents the mystery and strangeness of the universe, and implies that the infinite bears directly on the human condition. Please recall how this theme conforms to Bellah's and Whitehead's definition of religion.

The pattern of moving from almost tediously detailed science and technology to mystical/religious revelation is common to much science fiction. Again this relates to the preoccupation with future progress which is entrenched in science fiction ideology. Fans like to see their fantasies vindicated by "scientific" sources. The fan version of the future makes the future marginal to society.

The claimed scientific basis of science fiction's critiques of established religion acts as only one portion of what we might loosely term the science fiction heresy; that is, science fiction wishes to tear down what it perceives as outmoded spiritual experience and replace it with what it considers more meaningful and valid symbols. Science fiction is not solely a destroyer of old beliefs; it also wishes to construct newer, and perhaps more charismatic transcendental experience for its audience. What makes science fiction unique is that it attempts to use the "cold", objective, and impersonal approach of science to evoke the condition of religious awe. The claim of "scientific truth" is made to support a new type of faith.

The perspective present in much "religious" science fiction can be summarized in what writer Arthur C. Clarke calls his third law: To any culture of a lower level of scientific development "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic", hence the marginal quality of much science fiction (Clarke 1972:139).

Science fiction's pursuit of a religious state, often referred to as the "sense of wonder" has a peculiar and distinct form. Through the proper use of an ethic of scientism, and especially through the presence of and respect for technology, fans hope to enter a new utopian condition of existence. They hope to escape the confines of mundane reality. It is in this sense that fans who reach this degree of commitment to science fiction ideology are the first transcendental engineers. Cultists like Hubbard, who claim that the use of "science" and his "technology" will remediate human failings, clearly join these ranks.

The science fiction ideology of fans as committed as, for example, the Cosmic Circle, is akin to the revolutionary/marginal doctrine of the millennial groups outlined in Cohen (1970). Like the early Anabaptists in Europe, science fiction ideology tries to redeem man in our lifetime, by bringing about the superman, by building futuristic dream cities, by making heaven on earth, or, as in *2001*, by travelling in space and meeting God.

After the 1950s and the eventual decline of Campbell's

brand of science fiction literature, that which contemporary critics labelled the "new wave" of science fiction appeared. Fiction of this type appeared not to conform to the "hardware to heaven" pattern. A greater part of the new wave in American science fiction can be interpreted as an attempt to break the Campbellian model of science fiction. New wave fiction does not seem to conform to the older pattern but it still retains an interest in religions and mythologies.

We encounter a number of writers who focus on the problem of meaning.

...This seems to be the trend of much contemporary science fiction. Here we find the use of old myths and legends or the apparent creation of new myths by combining fantasy and science fiction either in a far future setting or some timeless milieu. Such writers as Samuel Delany, Roger Zelazny, Charles Harman, Kit Reed and Kat Wilhiem have made various attempts in this direction with varying success. The problem here is that merely because one uses names from mythology or casts a story in a vague setting does not mean that one has created a valid myth (*The Shattered Ring* 1971:24-25).

What makes these pseudo-mythologies important is their efforts to use two narrative devices:

- (1) Giving the story greater depth by using mythological settings;
  - (2) Giving traditional myths found in other cultures greater relevance to western audiences by placing them in a technological context.
- Zelazny's novel *Lord of Light* exploits Hindu

mythology, but gives a "scientific" justification to all the characters in order to maintain the interest of an American science fiction readership.

Perhaps the belief that traditional mythologies require embellishment by technical jargon stems from the influence of Campbellian science fiction. Faith in technology surpasses the state of scientism and takes on mythical, transcendental significance. By modernizing old myths, writers hope to give these tales new reality to the science fiction audience, with technology exerting far more power on fandom than any previous mythology.

#### Minor Cultic Events in Science Fiction

If we assert that science fiction literature and fandom contribute to a marginal cultic milieu by creating new symbols and ideas in the place of the body of rejected belief, then it would seem very peculiar if Scientology were the only cult to arise from this social condition. In fact, there are numerous cults and deviant belief-systems with science fiction overtones. Scientology is just one of the more successful of these phenomena. In this section we shall review several occult-like concepts propagated by *Astounding* editor, John W. Campbell. Also, we shall examine the brief cult surrounding what is known as the "Shaver Mystery".



John W. Campbell

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Campbell and his influence on American science fiction. His magazine, *Astounding Science Fiction*, revitalized the genre when it was close to disappearing altogether, and Campbell reared an entire generation of science fiction writers, most of whom are still producing and widely read.

There are many people whom one might cite as being the "father of science fiction...."

...But all these put together only laid the foundation. The man who took that foundation and built the structure of modern science fiction upon it and shaped it to what we now accept as such, was a tall, broad, light-haired, crew-cut, bespectacled, overbearing, cigarette-holder waving, opinionated, talkative, quicksilver-minded individual named John Wood Campbell Jr. (Asimov 1973:xii).

Campbell was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1910, and spent most of his life in the eastern region. His career in pulp magazines began in 1930 as an author with *Amazing Stories*. Throughout the decade Campbell was a popular writer in the space opera formula set by E.E. Smith. The details of Campbell's personal life and education are as follows. As the son of an engineer he went to study at MIT, but was unable to complete his degree because he failed to meet his language requirement. Campbell finished his education at Duke University, the same institution where Joseph Banks Rhine conducted his research into the field of

para-psychology. (1973:xiii). As an author, Campbell's fiction portrays many of the same characteristics that were to become prevalent in later science fiction. Above all, Campbell was one of the transcendental engineers. He earnestly discussed the theme of science and technology, at the same time opening the realms of religious experience and mystical knowledge to mankind. Machinery or technology was the means to these spiritual ends:

In those first few years of Campbell's domination of the field, the basic pattern was set for the next twenty years: the application of technological development to human problems; the application of human development to technology (Merril 1971:60).

Del Rey further explores the image of redemptive technology in Campbell's fiction:

...They are also stories of the wonders of the wonderful machine, through which his (man's) destiny was to be shaped.

At the time when Campbell's stories first appeared, many men were in love with the machine. It was this love which first inspired the writing and publishing of that field which came to be called science fiction. It should probably then have been called technological fiction since the achievements of *engineering* were almost everything to it, while science was used only as a means to let man learn how to build greater and more wonderful machinery....

With its knowledge, the last mysteries were to be removed, leaving man almost a god (Del Rey 1973:xi-xii).

Very obviously, we find the hardware to heaven pattern in Campbell's novel, *The Mightiest Machine* (1935). Here the protagonists have manufactured a spacecraft with a revolutionary new stellar drive. The superior means of propulsion hurls the crew into an alternate dimension where they counter a parallel earth. On this world, however, the inhabitants are the descendants of the founders of the cities of Mu and Atlantis. The population is also engaged in a bitter interplanetary war and mankind is forced to innovate technologically for survival. In the novel *Invaders From The Infinite*, machinery is designed to amplify the mental energy of the human mind. The heroes are able to manufacture weapons by the power of sheer thought alone.

His thoughts, far faster than hands could move, built up the gigantic hull of the new ship, and put in the rooms, and the brace members in less than twelve hours (Campbell 1930/1973:471).

This mind-powered spacecraft is the planet Earth's source of salvation from extraterrestrial destruction. At one point the protagonists decide that the ship must be named:

"The swiftest thing that ever was *thought!* The most irresistible thing, *thought*, for nothing can stop its progress. The most destructive thing, *thought*. Thought, the greatest constructor, the greatest destroyer, the product of the mind, and the producer of powers, the greatest of powers. Thought is controlled by the mind. Let us call it *Thought!*"

"Excellent, Arcot, excellent. The *Thought*, the controller of the powers of the cosmos!" cried Morey (479).

At the novel's conclusion the heroes use the powers of their thought-amplified machine to destroy an entire solar system. With this act they realize that their device has given man the power of gods.

Man alone in this space is Creator and Destroyer....And he looked out toward the mighty starlit hull that had destroyed a solar system--and could create another (528).

We find remarkable parallels between Campbell's fiction, especially *Invaders from the Infinite* and Kubrick's *2001*. In all his fiction, Campbell is sure to clearly and lengthily discuss all the scientific and technical principles of all props used in the story, at least until some character builds the "mightiest machine", a device so transcending normal reality that it defies all attempts at explanation. The thought actualization machine, the monoliths and the stargate of *2001* all enter the category of magical machines. The transcending device then takes us into the realm of mystical/religious experience. In *2001* man evolves into the god-like Starchild, and in *Invaders from the Infinite*, the starship "Thought" gives god-like potential to man.

From this it can be observed that there is a religious aspect to Campbell's vision that strongly influences his "brass tacks" approach to science fiction. As a major figure in the field, Campbell's perspective was bound to permeate the entire genre of American science fiction.

Whatever success Campbell may have enjoyed as a

writer, his most important role was that of the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* during the 1940s. As critics, Brian Aldiss and Isaac Asimov, both agree that Campbell had tremendous ability as an editor. Dealing with Heinlein, he was able to restrain himself from editing already good material. With Van Vogt, Campbell found a kindred spirit and gave the author a free hand and an editorial endorsement. "John W. Campbell has said editorially more than once that *The World of A* is 'one of those once-in-a-decade classics' of science fiction" (Knight 1967:47). Campbell also demonstrated the ability to recognize potential talent before it had matured. Asimov writes that under Campbell's guidance he was able to launch a career as a sellable writer. Campbell, shortly after assuming editorial control over *Astounding*, fostered an entirely new school of science fiction writers.

By his own example and by his instruction and by his undeviating and persisting insistence, he forced first *Astounding* and then all science fiction into his mold...

He began to develop new talents in a new generation of writers, those plastic enough to learn of newer and much harder skills, and he succeeded (Asimov 1973:xiv).

Asimov continues to write of how Campbell's input affected the young Asimov's writing, but this influence was also felt by the entire stable of *Astounding* writers:

He always talked to me, always fed me new ideas, always discussed my stories to tell me what was right and what was wrong with them (Asimov 1973:xv).

Campbell's approach worked very well. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that the works of Asimov, Heinlein and Van Vogt remain in print over forty years after their first appearance.

By the end of the forties Campbell's prestige began to wane. There are several reasons for this decline. Heinlein and Asimov were moving on to more lucrative markets, and Van Vogt was publishing a new kind of fiction. *The World of A* created a certain amount of dissension and displeasure among some of the science fiction audience. The book had some supporters but many detractors as well:

I offer the alternative judgement that far from being a "classic" by any reasonable standard, *The World of A* is one of the worst allegedly-adult science fiction stories ever published (Knight 1956:47).

*The World of A* was seen as a poor work by many because of its confused construction and characterization but also because it acted as an introduction to the principles of General Semantics. Campbell often used the editorial column of *Astounding* as a springboard for new developments in the field of scientific research. A combination of his interest in technology and in the all-pervasive power of thought led Campbell to discourse on such subjects as para-

psychology, and other topics that some would consider pseudo-science. Predictably, many of his established writers tended to shy away from *Astounding* in their quest for more respectable markets.

Campbell championed far-out ideas: dianetics, the Hieronymus machine, dowsing, psionics. He pained very many of the men he had trained (including me) in doing so, but he felt it was his duty to stir up the minds of his readers and force curiosity right out to the border lines (Asimov 1973:xvi).

Not only did his old stable of writers find his editorials hard to take, but the requirements for publishing fiction in *Astounding* changed. Atheling (Blish 1957, Rpt., 1970:86-92) points out how during the early 1950s it was nearly impossible to sell Campbell a story that did not contain some element of telepathy, telekinesis or para-psychology. Merrill comments on the general decline of Campbell's magazine:

Because Campbell thought like an engineer, because there was a specific kind of information he was after, rather than knowledge in general, he was able to give shape and direction to the science fiction of the forties, and it was precisely the shape and direction it most needed. Because he was a *good* engineer, he kept his mind entirely open about the nature of the answers he would find, except that he wanted things that *would work in practise*.... It was when Campbell began to think he had found the answers that the "Golden Age" of *Astounding* was over. (I think in retrospect, that Dianetics was the line of demarcation)....

...He has stopped asking questions and examining the available equipment, and started making designs and building models (Merrill 1971:71).

When Campbell began writing his editorials as though he had the "answers" to problems in the human condition, he frequently entered the realm of pseudo-science, generating ideas for many cultic events. A fan poem describes Campbell's many editorial enthusiasms.

Oh, the Dean Machine, the Dean Machine,  
 You put it right in a submarine,  
 And it flies so high that it can't be seen--  
 The Wonderful, wonderful Dean Machine!

Oh, the Therapy, the Therapy,  
 That Hubbard gave to JWC  
 And it took him back to his infancy--  
 The wonderful, wonderful Therapy!

The magnetic flow, the magnetic flow  
 That Ehrenhaft sold him so long ago,  
 And he swore up and down it was really so--  
 The wonderful, super-magnetic flow!

Oh, the psi folderol, the psi folderol--  
 It never needs fixing, whatever befall,  
 For there's nothing inside it at all, at all  
 The wonderful, wonderful psi folderol.  
 (Knight 1956:34).

Satirical as the poem may be, it provides us with a summary of a few of Campbell's occult-like interests. The Dean Drive was a concept that can be viewed as an effort to actualize a standard piece of fictional hardware found in science fiction. The drive supposedly was an anti-gravity device that was suitable for propelling vehicles through space. Campbell would argue that the Dean Drive could start interstellar travel in our lifetime, if only certain suppressive governments and vested interests in industry would



consent to release the device to the general public. Somehow Campbell neglected to recall that the principles of the Dean Machine's operation were contrary to basic laws of physics, that is, the machine violated the conservation of momentum by pushing against itself (Nicholls 1979:532).

Like Dianetics, many of Campbell's revelations dealt with the question of the human mind, notably in the area of para-psychology. "PSI" was a term popularized by Campbell in the fifties. It is probably an abbreviation of the phrase 'psychic powers'. PSI was a concept familiar to Campbell and science fiction fans. After all, super-normal mental ability was a hallmark of science fiction supermen. In a sense Campbell's enthusiasm for PSI phenomena may have been an attempt to realize his own fantasy, that of thought acting as a physical force. "All psi powers involve the manipulation of matter or the manipulation of minds by the power of the mind alone" (Nichollus 1979:480). On the June 1956 editorial page of ASF Campbell introduces us to the science of psionics, or psychic electronics. In his explanation of the principles of psionics, Campbell tells us how to construct a Hieronymus machine. This device was a simple diagram on paper, with several pencilled-in "circuits". By tracing along these circuits one was supposed to communicate telepathically. The Hieronymus machine is similar to the starship "Thought" in *Invaders from the Infinite*; both devices derive their power from the mind of the operator

(Nichollus 1979:480). Campbell was again asserting his faith in technology. The Hieronymus device was another "thought machine".

Campbell's interests were not the sole factor in the popularity of PSI. ESP studies have always been placed on the fringes of the scientific paradigm. In exploring this region Campbell was dealing with marginal ideas, the stock of most science fiction. In his editorializing of his thought technology, Campbell argued that the established powers of industry and government were withholding revolutionary technological advances to avoid upsetting the status quo. Again Campbell was drawing on a prevalent science fiction theme, but in his belief that somehow these ideas were true and real at some level, he moved progressively deeper into the realm of marginal ideas.

According to Whitehead (1973) it is this interest in rejected knowledge that connects science fiction with cult-like occurrences. Surveying the spiritist movement in North American subculture known as the "occult", Whitehead concludes that there are two impulses present in occult thought:

The only two features that consistently mark the Occultist are (1) his interest in the more immediate forms of the charismatic, so long neglected in the Protestant West and (2) the repugnance, both moral and intellectual, which he feels towards the personal God-Heaven-Hell theodicy of the established churches (Whitehead 1973:560).

Campbell's work and much of the fiction he influenced acted as a severely criticism of traditional western religions. It also pursued more charismatic forms in that, through its pursuit of fringe science and through the fictionalizing of scientific principles, science fiction attempts to make science more exciting and more meaningful to the reader. Using Weber's model of the rationalization of a religion, we note that churches and religious belief have become more inward seeking and aesthetic, but other systems of knowledge have become more objective, until we reach the impersonal perspective of science (Rpt. 1968:266-267). Much science fiction is the effort to create "charismatic science."

Whitehead continues to note that in any occult movement the sole pursuit of charisma is not sufficient. Keep in mind the belief by many fans that they are "reasonable and intelligent" people.

The occultist rejects the emotional sects because they do not meet his intellectual demands. Modern science, on the other hand, while strongly appealing intellectually, is charismatically sterile (Whitehead 1973:562).

As a dealer in rejected, marginal concepts, Campbell was placed in the role of occultist. On the one hand, science had to be altered in order to give it some personal meaning; there was to be some intimate personal relevance

to scientific truth. Campbell could not simply dispose of all notions of systematic and verifiable information. He drew upon pseudo-sciences like Dianetics and psionics to make his subject matter meet both the emotional and intellectual needs of himself and his audience. Being of a similar frame of mind, Hubbard's church doctrine contains many so-called "scientific truths" to support his claims about spiritual experience. Scientology also displays the dichotomy of intellectual and emotional qualities.

If one examines the evaluations that have been made of medieval Alchemy, a subject which, while it still defies thorough decoding, is regarded with an understanding respect in contemporary Occultism, one senses that there is a system in which the practitioner could simultaneously, or separately, be a chemist, and Adept, and a mystic. The same sense of unity is betrayed in the definition of Scientology, which is defined informally as a "technology of the spirit" and formally as "the science of knowing how to know". It is part of Hubbard's genius to have invented a system which like Alchemy, can move from the mundane to the mystical with a long stretch of wizardry in between (Whitehead 1973:565).

Hubbard's 'genius' may have been modelled after and augmented by the occult model of thought found in Campbell's editorials. The area of rejected knowledge was crucial to most of Campbell's editorial projects, including Dianetics:

The rallying cry of the Occultist world is this: that certain experiences do not cease to exist simply because there is no place for them in our customary order (Whitehead 1973:560).

The occult's rallying cry was also the constant theme of Campbell's editorials throughout the 1950s, and as a dealer and popularizer of fringe movements and pseudo-sciences, Campbell acted as an important supplier to the cultic milieu.

### The Shaver Mystery

It would be a mistake to assume that all cultic events in science fiction can somehow be attributed to the influence of John W. Campbell. Of course Campbell was important in this area, but if we are to accept the argument that science fiction with its predilection towards unusual ideas contributes to a cultic milieu, then one might expect that similar deviant ideologies and their followings might crop up elsewhere in science fiction. Reviewing the history of science fiction pulps, we find that other publications were advocating fringe concepts as fact at roughly the same time as Campbell.

Campbell was not the only editor of a science fiction magazine to succumb to the "rejected knowledge" of the occult. In 1945, Ray Palmer, a long-time fan and later a professional editor of *Amazing Stories*, began to publish articles by Richard S. Shaver regarding a novel interpretation of world prehistory. These articles were collectively known as the "Shaver Mystery". Palmer and Campbell were in

very similar positions with regard to the fan world. Both had longstanding relationships with fandom and both became important editors. During the Second World War, *Amazing* was a close competitor of *Astounding*, even outselling Campbell's magazine on occasion. Palmer did not have the same respect and reputation as Campbell for turning out quality fiction, but his formula of fantasy and high adventure proved popular with fans.

In March 1945, *Amazing Stories* featured the first installment of the Shaver series, "I Remember Lemuria". Over the next few months all the components of the alternate world-history would come to print:

...Richard S. Shaver put forward the theory that long, long ago this Earth was the home of several races, of which the major two were the Titans and the Atlans. Both were god-like immortals who had created tremendous civilizations. Over the centuries the sun began to emit harmful radiation, so the super-beings built massive underground caverns, there to escape the rays. But to no effect: the rays were causing them to age and die. There was no answer but to leave the Earth, abandoning their civilizations, and leaving behind the inferior race of humans. Some of the humans found their way down to the underground caverns and discovered the wonderful machinery built by the super-beings; but meddling released harmful energy from the machines. The radiation affected the explorers making them degenerate. Shaver called these humans "deros" (detrimental robots) and it was they who came to control the underground machinery whose harmful rays are the direct cause of all evil. Thereby Shaver explains away all the mysteries of the world--the wrecks, disasters and accidents; they are all the work of the deros who continue to operate in the caverns to this day. In

addition, Shaver claimed that the Titans and Atlans continue to keep watch on the Earth and periodically visit the planet-- thus explaining the mysteries of flying saucers and UFOs (Ash 1977:336-337).

The Shaver Mystery and para-Scientology bear some important similarities. First, the belief systems suggest the existence of advanced super-races in the world's distant past. In effect Shaverism and Scientology postulate that the visions found in science fiction of man's future are the real events of our prehistory. Also Shaverism and Scientology assert that the relevant forces in all human affairs are spiritual entities. To the Scientologist Thetans influence our lives because they are the "primal causes" of all events in the universe; Thetans are our true identities. Shaver's Deros are not the reserve of unlimited potential that is supposed to constitute a Thetan, but instead are the source of all human misery. The Deros are Shaver's attempt to deal with the problem of evil in the world. Whether malicious or beneficial, the concepts of Deros and Thetans imply that the major influence on human life are unobservable mystical entities from the distant past.

The course of the Shaver Mystery movement is interesting because of how much it differs from the fate of Dianetics. Initially the Shaver series was received with some favour by fans, but it was then thought that the articles

were intended to be fiction. It was when the audience was informed that the Shaver Mystery was "The Most Sensational True Story Ever Told" that the controversy began. For around five years Shaverism was a steady and increasing success. At its heyday the circulation of *Amazing* reached 250,000 per issue, which constituted a high level of sales for the time (Geis 1974:38). In contrast to the mainstream of fandom, many readers who were not initiated into the world of fandom and what Warner calls the subculture within fandom, actively supported the revised history of our planet:

Years later, Eva Firestone recalled her own tolerance that might have been typical of many non-fan readers of *Amazing*. "We were thrilled with Shaver's stuff even though we screamed at him for the sexy slant to much of it. We didn't care two hoots whether his theory was true or imagination. Some of my correspondents did believe the story true and some still do" (Warner 1968:182).

As with Dianetics, a fanzine devoted to Shaver material, *Maxin-96*, appeared in 1945. The June 1947 issue of *Amazing Stories* was completely lacking in stories, but consisted solely of Shaver articles. Shaverism was a marketable phenomena (Warner 1968:184).

The popularity of the Shaver mystery was an issue of extreme concern to fandom as a whole. Most fans recognized Shaverism as a derivation of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction and viewed *Amazing's* new editorial policy as a perversion of the genre. Fans referred to Shaverism as "psychopathic" and "a



pathetic mixture of fact and fancy, no proof whatever being offered for any of the statements" (Warner 1968:182).

Eventually negative fan pressure and a diminishing interest on the part of the wider public led to Palmer's removal as editor of *Amazing*. The controversial Shaver stories no longer appeared in *Amazing*. Palmer did continue to publish Shaver material in his own smaller scale magazines until the mid-fifties, but they failed to make much impact. Palmer made several attempts to re-enter fandom's good graces, but none succeeded and finally Palmer abandoned science fiction projects. He did attain some notoriety by editing other magazines that contributed to the cultic milieu. After starting his own publishing house, Palmer produced the magazine, *Fate*, "devoted to the strange and inexplicable." *Fate* is also credited with being the earliest and most influential promoter of flying saucer cults (Ash 1977:339).

Richard Shaver's fate was far less enviable. Following Palmer's demise at *Amazing*, Shaver disappeared from public attention. It was not until 1974, a year before his death, that Shaver reappeared, proclaiming that rock music was part of a Deros invasion:

(from) their tunnels underground they creep on and across the land...inserting their sound tentacles into every home (Shaver 1974:38).

The Deros were still trying to bring about the imminent collapse of civilization and Shaver was now trying to sell photographs of Atlan and Titan history imprinted in rock.

In comparing the similar qualities of Shaverism and early Dianetics, it is clear how both bodies of ideas exploited science fiction ideas and symbols and themes, and both attracted surrounding believers in cults. Shaverism drew upon the genre of fantasy and lost continents. It was the lack of the "brass tacks" facade of Dianetics that led to the swift rejection of Shaver's theories. It was the "scientific" front of Dianetics that led to its initial acceptance by many fans, yet it too came to be abandoned by fandom. A change in ideological form allowed Dianetics to continue as Scientology, seeking new believers outside fandom. Shaverism lacked such necessary ingredients as a doctrine of salvation for it to remain popular. Shaverism was simply an alternate view of the world with few ideological and moral implications. True, Shaverism attacked the conventional version of reality, but it had no real model of what should replace the old world view. It proved to be a sterile medium for cultic growth and change.

### Cultic Evolution

If one considers Scientology in its present form, it seems rather peculiar to compare it to a minor fad like the Shaver revolution. After all, Shaverism was merely a pseudo-history and Scientology claims the status of religion. However, if we compare early Dianetics and the Shaver mystery, we will find relevant similarities. They were both occult phenomena generated by the science fiction world; both philosophies may have moved on to different audiences, but they originated in science fiction publications and fandom. Further, as occult phenomena, both movements existed in the socially marginal context referred to by Colin Campbell as the "cultic milieu". Campbell elaborates further on the nature of this milieu, the cultural underground where cults make their start.

...(the cultic milieu) includes all deviant belief systems and their associated practices. Unorthodox science, alien and heretical religion, deviant medicine, all comprise elements of such an underground. In addition, it includes the collective institutions, individuals and media of communication associated with these beliefs. Substantially it includes the worlds of the occult and the magical, or spiritualism and psychic phenomena, of mysticism and new thought of faith healing and nature cure. This heterogeneous assortment of cultural items can be regarded despite its apparent diversity as constituting a single entity--the entity of the "cultic milieu" (Campbell in Wallis 1976:14).

Wallis (1978) articulates two major characteristics

which typify this entity:

First, there prevails in the milieu an attitude of "epistemological individualism", that is a belief that the individual is the ultimate locus for the determination of truth. Secondly, there prevails an ideology of "revelational indeterminacy", that is a belief that the truth may be revealed in diverse ways and through diverse agents. No individual or collectivity possess a monopoly of the truth (Wallis 1978:48).

The two qualities of the social environment of cults have implications for cult organization. Because of their attitude of epistemological individualism--members of a cult are free to innovate and alter cult symbols and ideology as they please--no firm ideological boundaries exist. Likewise membership in cults is typically fluid; people can switch groups or belong to several different cults. An attitude of revelational indeterminacy also allows for much variation in the acceptance and interpretation of cult doctrine--the cultist would always argue that "there are many different roads to the truth".

Individualism and indeterminacy pose problems to cult leaders. The cult by its very nature is an extremely fragile institution. If leaders impose too many restrictions on its philosophy and on its members, they risk offending their clients and losing their status as leaders. Wallis notes the advantage for cult founders of the process of sectarianism, which transforms the cult into a sect with a

central authority on doctrine and the congregation. Here the leader finds a solution to cult fragility.

An example of a fragile and transient cult is found in Festinger's study, *When Prophecy Fails*. In this case, "The Seekers", a cult, bands together to await rescue from doomsday by flying saucers. Individual Seekers typify Wallis' and Campbell's model of a cult member:

Mrs. Keech is the archetypal seeker....She attended the lectures on Theosophy had read the writings of the I AM movement and much other occult literature. She had become involved with Dianetics and Scientology and shortly prior to her revelations had become interested in the controversy concerning flying saucers (Wallis 1978:46).

As our representative cultist, Mrs. Keech displays certain qualities. In her quest for the "real" truth, she is extraordinarily syncretic. The belief system of the Seekers was a mixture of numerous cult philosophies:

The ideology of the group, Festinger, et al., tells us, was an eclectic synthesis. Flying saucer lore mingled with theosophy, lost continents and spiritist practice (Wallis 1978: 47-48).

It is here that one can see how Dianetics and Shaverism are related. At this early cult stage, both act as symbolic resources to be exploited in the syncretic ideologies. Shaverism never moved past the stage of presenting a deviant world-view; Dianetics did progress under Hubbard's careful guidance.

The behavior of the Seekers is again typical of cult behavior. The group was created through informal means, when Mrs. Keech started having revelations; news of them was spread by word of mouth, through networks of personal contacts. A small group of housewives, interested in Dianetics, spiritism and the occult, were brought together by informal means and acted as the core of the Seeker cult.

From its inception, Dianetics was victim to the many vicissitudes of ideologies existing in the cultic milieu. As already evidenced, Hubbard's writings were re-interpreted by individuals who had earned the auditor's certificate. As a grassroots movement, Dianetics was a medium for a person to express his own creativity and occult theories. This innovation resulted in direct challenges to Hubbard's importance in Dianetics. By 1951, it was apparent that public interest in Dianetics was fading and the fortunes of the Research Foundation were floundering. Some Dianetics fanzines suggested that perhaps the movement could continue very well without Hubbard (Wallis 1976:80). The Research Foundation's co-directors also began to express their dissatisfaction with the manner in which the movement was progressing. Winters and John W. Campbell left their positions, claiming that Hubbard had become authoritarian and irresponsible (1976: 77-78). A.E. Van Vogt made the Los Angeles Dianetics Foundation independent of Hubbard. This organization continues today as the only remaining pre-Scientological

Dianetics group. Greater challenges to Hubbard came in the form of supposed advances on Dianetic therapy. Several therapies appeared in Dianetic circles: carbon dioxide therapy, new thought, orgone therapy, nutritional regimes; all of these were based on Dianetics but were somehow superior (1976:82). Hubbard's position of influence was in doubt.

Hubbard's response to these difficulties was to abandon the Dianetics Research Foundation and move to the Dianetics Center in Phoenix, Arizona. From this vantage point, Hubbard disassociated himself from the first Dianetics organization and proclaimed the discovery of the religious philosophy known as Scientology. Like many of Dianetics' competitors, Scientology was based on Dianetics, only somehow it was more "advanced". Hubbard was attempting to gain control over his remaining followers by stating that he alone had access to this superior revelation; any knowledge of Scientology would be through Hubbard and on his terms. Once Hubbard had established a centralized doctrine, with all authority stemming from the founder, he proceeded to remove the amateur grass-roots base of the Dianetics movement. After 1951, all auditors and practitioners of Dianetics/Scientology were required to be trained and certified at a central office. Through this process of "professionalization" Hubbard was able to control what would be taught in any and every Scientology organization, thereby eliminating deviation from doctrine. In addition,

from his new position of authority, Hubbard was able to prevent the rising of any new charismatic figure in the church.

The creation of an established bounded ideology applies the label of heresy to ideas which do not conform to the institutional doctrine. As early as 1950, Hubbard wrote of any practices that combined his ideas with other occult concepts as "Black Dianetics." Black Dianetics was allegedly one of the reasons auditors failed to produce "clears", and presented a great danger to patients (Wallis 1976:83-84).

From his position in the Phoenix group, Hubbard used the "official" Scientology publications (those sympathetic to him or controlled by him) to attack the heretics of the cultic milieu. Individuals were urged and sometimes harassed into conforming to Hubbard's new standards. One Scientology newsletter reads: "If you are not a Hubbardian Scientologist, then you are not a Scientologist at all, as Hubbard coined that word to fit HIS science" (1976:93).

Nonconformists are subject to more than mere censure in Scientology publications. Part of the Scientological organization consists of a board of "ethics". These "ethics" officers are selected, sometimes personally by Hubbard, and empowered to take whatever action they see fit to stop the actions of "suppressive persons", i.e., any within or outside the church who disagree with Hubbard.



Ethics can instigate raids on Scientology offices that appear to be deviating from Hubbard's instruction. Ethics also are responsible for the distribution of loyalty oaths to be signed by church members (Wallis 1976:142-148). Scientology, then, not only controls the output of any doctrinal information for the church, but it also has an institutional "arm" to further ensure that the central office's directives are carried out.

Wallis points out how the present form of Scientology's organizational structure conforms to Weber's model of a rational bureaucracy. It has officials, a hierarchical system of offices and volumes of files. What makes Scientology an exception to Weber's model is the presence of a charismatic leader. Members of the church have a personal commitment to "Ron" and they hold the mutual utopian goal of helping Ron "clear the planet". Over the years, Hubbard has performed several doctrinal reversals, but these contradictions go unquestioned; the doctrine is subordinate to the charisma of the leader. But Hubbard's charisma, in Weber's terms, has become routinized. The day-to-day operation of the church is performed according to a strict set of rules and positions are divorced from personalities.

Hubbard's activities over the past decades are a demonstration of the transformation of a cult into a sect, the qualities of a sect being:

...those dimensions of sectarianism are related to the characteristic which underlies sect organization--"epistemological authoritarianism". Sects possess some authoritative locus for the legitimate attribution of heresy. Sects lay a claim to possess unique and privileged access to the truth or salvation (Wallis 1976: 17).

It may well be that Hubbard's most tremendous and impressive task had nothing to do with any sort of religious philosophy. Instead his greatest achievement was the ability to manipulate a disorganized cult following into a cohesive and unified bureaucracy.

#### Scientology and Structure

What makes the transformation of the cult of Dianetics into the sect of Scientology fascinating is how Hubbard, through his manipulation of symbols, was able to alter not only the ideology of a social movement, but radically alter its organization. It is in the area of science fiction symbols that we can most readily view the changes that have occurred in Scientology. Cultic events like Shaverism and Dianetics were the victims of "consumer demand" in the cultic milieu. With the communitas-like arrangement of the milieu, those seeking the occult truth could very easily assume new marginal philosophies, but they could just as easily reject them. Science fiction fans as actors in this milieu were able to attack various cultic events like Shaverism. From

its very beginnings, Shaverism, and Dianetics shortly after its inception, violated fan values of individualism and scientism. Both cultic events had their origins in the futuristic and other worldly symbols of science fiction, but the social climate of fandom became less tenable for these philosophies. The important finding from the study of the Cosmic Circle is that any attempts to actualize science fiction fantasies must proceed carefully to avoid offending the fan sense of credibility.

Adverse fan reaction eventually silenced Shaver and Palmer and caused Hubbard to seek followers in new circles. The fact that a tiny sub-culture of amateur enthusiasts was able to influence these events is indicative of the fragility of cults.

As a sect rather than a cult, Scientology's relationship with the science fiction world is very different. For several reasons to be discussed later, fandom and the church have little to do with each other. However fandom still engages in various attempts at fantasy fulfillment, and Scientology still exploits many science fiction themes in its doctrine, especially in the formulation of church members' past lives. The difference today is that Scientology has nothing to fear from adverse fan reaction. The institution has total control over any science fiction symbolism it uses. Hubbard, as a former member of the science fiction world, is able to use science fiction in

his teachings and is exempt from any critical analysis of this usage. By obtaining ideological control over the movement, Hubbard has succeeded in separating himself from the scrutiny of fans. Scientologists tend not to be fans; they are not familiar with science fiction in any literary context.

Lastly, it seems appropriate to consider Scientology as it exists today in the context of *communitas* and social marginality. With all its bureaucratic structure and impersonal enforcement of Hubbard's will, the church cannot be considered an unstructured community of individuals bound together by intimate ties. Dianetics as a grass-roots movement was a situation of *communitas*; Scientology is not.

Wallis points out that in the process of transformation from cult to sect, the group's behavior is viewed by outsiders as cruel and overly authoritarian (1976:14). Also in this process, the group often strictly enforces an ideology that radically diverges from that of the surrounding society. Such a strategy of nonconformism, combined with authoritarianism, tends to place the group in the bad graces of the establishment. The sect can be seen as dangerous and deviant.

Wallis' model seems to fit the recent history of the Church of Scientology. It has been the target of official investigation by the FDA, and the subject of parliamentary inquests in Australia, England, and South Africa. Currently,

the church is being investigated by the United States Department of Justice.

Scientology may exhibit corporate structure, but it is not likely to be assimilated into our corporate society. Instead it will probably always remain on the margins of social acceptability. Scientology may not exhibit *communitas*, but it does exist in a state of marginality. With the church doctrine and its directive to help Ron "clear the galaxy" and assist social evolution, Scientology places itself into a model of "progress". The ideology of the movement makes the group liminal.

## CHAPTER V

### SYMBOLIC AMBIVALENCE

The prevalence of cult movements which arise in social situations associated with science fiction might lead one to suspect that science fiction fans are prone to espouse cultic beliefs. If the reader agrees that "cults", or to use Wallis' model, sects, can pose a danger to society, then we might wonder if fans and fan activities constitute a social problem. Here I will argue that such fears are groundless and I shall suggest that fandom may in fact serve as a check on the growth of some cult movements.

The label of deviancy has been attributed to persons fascinated with fantasy outside the realm of science fiction fandom. In his book, *Seduction of the Innocent* (1952), psychiatrist Fredrick Wertham launched a tirade against comic books, notably those of the crime, horror, science fiction, and superhero categories. Comics of this type, we are admonished, arrest emotional and intellectual development in children, contributing to maladjustment and juvenile crime. In addition, the publications in question are generally repulsive, full of wanton violence and twisted sexuality. *Seduction of the Innocent* started a massive campaign on the part of educators and parents to ban fantasy

comics outright. Admittedly, Wertham has uncovered several examples of grotesque material, unsuitable for children. But it seems unjust to single out comics as the offending medium. Extremely violent stories, needlessly brutal heroes and sultry, large-breasted female characters are common to many forms of melodrama in popular western culture. In fact, the particular comics attacked by Wertham were published by smaller houses such as William Gaines' EC comics. Larger publishers like National (Superman), Red Circle (Archie) and Timely (later to become Marvel comics), all had their own internal standards of good taste and suitability of material. It seems likely that it was the re-occurrence of fantastic themes in comics that many adults objected to. This intense lobbying can be understood as an hysterical over-reaction, perhaps a function of the American Puritanical reflex that LeGuin discusses (1979:41).

These types of comics are still with us, with the exception of crime stories. However, all comics published for the juvenile market are strictly controlled by a board of censors, the Comics Code Authority. Cartoonist and critic Jules Fieffer comments that since the advent of the board, comics have lost all their originality and charm, becoming endless reams of bland platitudes (1965:19).

Appreciators of comic-art have been fortunate in the years since Fieffer voiced his despair. Underground comics and European magazines like *Metal Hurlant*, operating outside the authority of the Comics Code, have been the source of

many new innovations in the field. But the situation with juvenile colour comics, the largest and most prominent sector of this media, remains unchanged since the mid-1950s. Storylines, characters and costumes are rigorously scrutinized before they reach an audience.

Further support of the puritanical reflex is derived from childhood accounts written by science fiction fans. Many fans tell of how their parents discovered their collection of pulps and destroyed them in a fit of rage.

Public concern over the possible dangers of the proliferation of what the media refers to as "cults" is great. It has been suggested that the creative activity that engenders them, such as science fiction, should be suppressed. If science fiction can act as a possible symbolic source to cults and delusional belief systems, concerned citizens might suggest that society censor science fiction in an effort to curtail the activities of certain cults. It is a point of conscience on my part that requires me to insure that any discussion in these pages cannot be interpreted, however freely, as a justification for censorship.

The purpose of this thesis has been to point out how much of science fiction lore and Scientological beliefs arose out of a single "cultural background". But it is a mistake to assert that science fiction is simply a source for bizarre and potentially harmful groups in society. Science fiction did provide the forum for Dianetics to gain



public attention, but some qualifications must be made regarding their symbolic relatedness.

Disch remarks that science fiction does generate a "counter-culture" in that it postulates a world view that opposes that of conventional society. By such a function, science fiction is able to gratify the power-fantasies of powerless individuals. Because of this property, science fiction performs a function similar to Scientology and para-Scientology; it creates an alternate reality more favourable to its subscribers.

Deny outright the wisdom of the world and be initiated to a secret wisdom. Become a true believer--it matters not the faith, so long as it is at variance with *theirs*. All millennialist religions have their origins in their need for creating a *counter-culture*. As religion loses its unique authority, almost any bizarre set of beliefs can become the focus of a sense of Election. Whatever the belief, the rationale for it is the same: the so-called authorities are a pack of fools and frauds with minds closed to their own ideas. Just because they've published books doesn't mean a thing. There are other books that are in complete opposition. Beginning with such arguments and armed with the right book, one may find one's way to almost any conclusion one might take a fancy to: hollow earths, Dean Drives, the descent of mankind from interstellar visitors. For the more energetic true believer there are vaster systems of belief, such as Scientology. I select these examples from the myriad available because each historically has been a first cousin of science fiction. And for this good reason: that SF is a virtual treasury of ways of standing the conventional wisdom on its head. Only sophisticates will make a fine distinction between playing with ideas and adopting them. For a naive reader the imaginative excitement engendered by a new notion can easily crystallize into faith (Disch 1976:151).

Because of its tendency to play with unusual concepts, many of the ideas in science fiction have the unfortunate predisposition of becoming accepted by the naive as a previously undisclosed truth. Science fiction can lose the distinction of being regarded as fiction and as a result, people who read it may assume unusual world views and ideologies. Not even considering Scientology and all its implications, we can still see how the acceptance of an 'alternate world' can have unfortunate consequences:

I've been viting India every year for many years now. Each year, fear, corruption, and violence have increased, but this year they seem to have become a way of life....

...Signs of backward-looking political and religious nationalism are everywhere.... There is constant talk about the glories of ancient India--about how the Hindus in Vedii times travelled around in flying machines, talked to each other on "skyphones" and constructed "bridges of stone" spanning oceans.

...The foreign book most widely discussed among students at Delhi University is Erich van Daniken's "Chariots of the Gods."<sup>7</sup> The students take it as proof that in antiquity not only India but also other parts of the world lived through a technological age more advanced than that found in the West today (Ved Møhta 1975, in Brunner 1976:81).

One had been accustomed to expect that India, with her rich history and vast population would become one of the great nations of the twenty-first century, wielding power and exacting influence commensurate with her magnificent heritage. Instead, it is infinitely saddening to be told that her best minds are falling under the sway of a pseudo-scientific charlatan (Brunner 1976:81).

India faces far more complex and difficult problems than the acceptance of unfounded theories. Brunner to a certain extent is guilty of being superficial in his judgment. Nonetheless, there is a valid point to his argument; no society has much to gain if any segment of its population is being deliberately misled in the nature of its present situation or past history.

Science fiction can be considered to share loosely a common ground with religion in that many religions entail a pursuit of some state of enlightenment or serenity. The Scientology version of this is the condition of Operating Thetan. A Thetan has become fully free of matter, energy, space and time; this individual has become fully spiritual. Perhaps we can view the insights gained in the reading of science fiction as something similar to this type of transcendent religious experience. The science fiction version of these moments of profound insight is the so-called "sense of wonder". The meaning of the "sense of wonder" is still a matter of fan controversy. To simplify, the sense of wonder is the feeling of amazement and the experience of becoming totally engrossed in the fictional universe of a science fiction story. Science fiction fans find the sense of wonder an issue of some concern. One of the panel discussions at the 1962 World Science Fiction Convention reveals further connections between the sense of wonder and the phenomena of religious insight. First we might consider

the following statements bearing in mind the notion that much religious faith and revelation cannot be understood in terms of empirical criteria, but they are still held by individuals as deeply-felt truths. Religious experience may be a profound event, but often the believer cannot explain exactly what happened to him and just why he feels the way he does.

Dean Grennell: ...The sense of wonder is, to a very large degree, a personal thing (1962:51).

Ethel Lindsay: ...The definition of a "Sense of Wonder" is very difficult. It is one of those things like *what is your happiness*, which is so insubstantial and very difficult, really to pin down...whenever you try to concentrate on it, it vanishes and is gone (1962:47).

The sense of wonder also resembles religious experience in that it vividly portrays an alternate reality, however briefly and vicariously it allows its followers to experience this wonderful new world. So the faithful Christian might, after years of devotion, catch a glimpse of "the kingdom to come" and the Hindu holyman may speculate on the thrill of the release from the eternal cycle of death and rebirth. The fan, when enjoying science fiction at its optimum, also sees new dimensions of experience and for a time, believes them to be real.

One fan argues that for a story to evoke a sense of wonder, it must display a consistent internal vision.

Perhaps this explains the insistence by older fans that all good science fiction must be based on scientifically accurate principles. For them to accept the alternate world as "true", they must be reassured of the possibility that "someday all of this may come to pass..."

Richard Eney: ...The point, I think, is that in a genuine "Sense of Wonder" story the author himself believes what he creates. His images are solid and they are internally consistent. The authors know their stuff and don't have to fake it (1962:46).

Common to much religious phenomena is the notion of the church, or religious congregation. In order to gain access to religious favours, a community of the faithful must together work for the group's salvation. We find similar notions in fandom:

Phyllis Economou: ...I find my greatest "Sense of Wonder" now in fandom; in the writings of fandom, the activities of fandom, etc. (1962:49).

It is neither sufficient nor wholly accurate to view science fiction as religion and science fiction fans as a religious congregation. Fans are a diverse and complex group. An additional perspective is required, in this case we may consider fans as a group of devotees to an eclectic synthesis of ideas, a situation similar to that of the witchcraft practising Zande. Fandom, whatever its numbers, is at least a private experience. Just as with Zande

witchcraft, fandom involves many partially adhering to a system of ideas, but if the entire system of belief were made public it could not continue. As Evans-Pritchard's study revealed, most Azande had some knowledge of witchcraft, but none had complete insight. In fact many erstwhile Azande sorcerers, self-confessed frauds, believe that other sorcerers could possess more knowledge and might be the genuine article (Gluckman 1944:68).

Azande witchcraft maintains itself because of its vague and incomplete nature. The informal and unstructured nature of fandom is similar in some respects to the Azande situation. Fans may subscribe to science fiction ideology, but their experience of it is ill-defined and inarticulate. Because of their individualistic character, fans can never be fully familiar with all of fan belief and convention. It is likely that much of the mystery and "sense of wonder" encountered in fan participation is the result of fandom's ambiguous nature.

Such a perspective allows us to understand that while hard-core fans may deal with occult-like concepts, their participation in other cults is not significant. Fandom may have symbolic connections with Scientology, but few fans express any interest in the church. Hubbard may be too authoritarian in his use of fantastic symbols and concepts. By claiming to know too much, he obliterates the sense of wonder.

Scientologists may be unsure that they really are clear, or that they have in truth detached their minds from their bodies, but they perceive with certainty that at least one person has done so, otherwise Hubbard could not act as the final arbitrator of church doctrine. Fans, on the other hand, participating in an informal and loosely defined social and cultural situation, are repelled by the role of a clearly defined and visible prophet/savior.

And yet, in some hard-to-pin-down way, this phenomenon has always been *foreign* to SF. A case in point: when one year, the World SF convention in America found itself sharing the hotel with a convention of Scientologists, many of the latter assumed (because of Hubbard's connection with SF magazines of the forties and fifties) that fans would be easy targets for Scientology propaganda. In the upshot, the grapevine later reported that the main contact between the two conventions occurred on Saturday night when a number of SF fans found a back with into the Scientologists' dance-hall and took advantage of their band and their bar (Brunner 1976:77).

Fans' current disinterest in Scientology can be seen as an example of symbolic ambivalence; the two groups may have common aspects in their symbols and ideology, but certain differences cause them to view each other as heretical. The social context of these symbols creates a crucial difference; the superman, the utopia, and technology are the entertainment of today's fan and the religious dogma of the Scientologist. Because the fan is familiar with all of these concepts in the context of fiction, he

finds it difficult to re-interpret the same ideas as gospel truth.

Another related feature that alienates fandom from Scientology is the process of "toying with ideas". Pohl (1978:80-81) mentions the tendency of fans to derive great pleasure from playing with various unorthodox ideas. Such activity is easier if the concepts are presented in an entertainment medium. The creative manipulation of ideas is also possible in grassroots movements like Dianetics. Individuals could add whatever notions they pleased to their own Dianetic practice; they also had science fiction fan-like institutions like fanzines and the manufacture of jargon. If we accept Wallis' definition of cult, where the relevant activity is based on the innovations and interpretations of individuals, then Dianetics and fandom share important attributes of cults. Fans of the 1950s could easily move into the realm of Dianetics; they would still be free to invent and speculate as they pleased.

The luxury of individual creativity is lost in the Church of Scientology, a sect with a rigidly defined doctrine. Supermen and utopias may be concepts found in both science fiction and para-Scientology, but in the church, their meaning and importance is defined by Hubbard alone. Any individual innovation or re-interpretation is likely to result in a charge of heresy.

Franklin (1980:18), in his study of the writings of



Robert A. Heinlein, notes the constantly recurring theme of the lone individual's activity as the only source of worthwhile behavior. Further, Franklin argues that this theme is central to most American science fiction. Individualism certainly seems to be a central value to fandom, and this value makes Scientology intolerable to fans. The only person allowed freedom of ideas and flights of fantasy in Scientology is Hubbard; the congregation may be given fantastic notions, but they have no influence on their presence or form. Playfulness, so important to fans, is forbidden to church members.

Scientology's attitude toward science fiction is also ambivalent. Hubbard, perhaps in an effort to justify his past as a pulp writer, has called science fiction the "only relevant literature written" (Garrison 1974:44). But Hubbard has also dismissed science fiction as just "track" (material from past lives), mistaken for fiction about the future (Whitehead 1973:399).

Unlike fans, many Scientologists find science fiction themes and imagery rather disturbing and threatening because they are so similar to church doctrine. Symbolic ambivalence led British Scientologists to declare Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* as "suppressive" and they banned members from viewing the film (Vosper 1971:153). Also, Kaufman writes of how he experienced absolute terror while watching a science fiction program on television at the

Saint Hill Manor, almost immediately after attaining the rank of Operating Thetan (Kaufman 1969:149). Fans and Scientologists may share a great deal of common ideology, but it drives them apart rather than drawing them closer.

In some fan circles, members are quite aware of the science fiction tendency to fuel the imagery of cultic movements; they are also aware of the potential social dangers of this effect. Fan lawyer Marvin W. Mindes, in his speech, "Science Fiction, Mental Illness and the Law" at the 1962 World Science Fiction Convention, remarks:

I think we should be interested in understanding and maturing socially; in the way public problems are dealt with, in the way these groups that I have mentioned are treated. In other words, I think science fiction should help people who read it, write it, or edit it to understand and deal with the real world.

Fantasy helps us escape from reality in a controlled fashion. It just makes it more the actual world. But every once in a while one of these fantasies gets out of hand; it develops legs, horns, underarm odor. It starts tromping around as if it were real.

I am referring to such phenomena as the "Shaver Mystery", "Hieronymus Machines", psionics, dianetics, scientology, etc., etc. These are just bad jokes gone sour. Possibly they *were* legitimate speculations. At worst they are possible hypotheses by untrained people. But the fantasy escaped the limits of the fantasy land, then it became something else; it became considerably more dangerous. They became obstinate speculations, intended to divorce people from reality (1962:88).

Mindes' speech reflects opinions differing from fans

who are obsessed with utopian thinking. The utopian speculation of fans like R. Nelson in his article "On the Edge of Futuria" suggest using science fiction as a model for curing society's ills, in effect, modelling reality after science fiction. Mindes suggests the contrary, that science fiction should move away from its own internal issues and symbols and be used as a tool to discuss and understand processes and problems in the outside world. Instead of attempting to transform reality into fantasy, fantasy should be used as an educative device to broaden our understanding of the world around us. The positive vs. negative use of fantasy set out by Mindes suggests a more mature outlook on the part of some fans. Perhaps repeated exposure to fan utopian doctrine and controversy has led some fans to conclude that science fiction is more productive as an imaginative and creative exercise than as a model of an idyllic future kingdom of the machine.

Mindes' approach to science fiction was not held by many fans at the 1962 convention. The Hugo Award for best science fiction novel of the year was presented to Robert A. Heinlein for his book *Stranger in a Strange Land*. During the sixties this novel, with its portrayal of Messianic Martian Valentine Michael Smith, became a bible to many involved in the counter-culture. Perhaps the most famous adherant to *Stranger in a Strange Land* was Charles Manson, who used the book's water-sharing ceremonies and group sex

ethic as models for his homicidal commune, "The Family. It cannot be proven that Manson was making a deadly attempt to actualize a science fiction fantasy. It is unknown whether when Manson ordered the Tate and LaBianca murders he was mimicking the hero Smith's disincorporations. But it is certain that the ideas presented in *Stranger in a Strange Land* were a part of Family ideology and hence one means used by Manson to control those around him.

Since some science fiction fans and writers are aware of the problems caused by science fiction-like imagery, it can be suggested that this awareness can be turned to serve a useful purpose to society as a whole. John Brunner, in his lecture "Science Fiction and the Larger Lunacy", expresses the anguish that science fiction writers undergo when they find that what they write as fiction is misrepresented as fact. Brunner also brings to our attention the further abuse of science fiction by religious frauds. Brunner quotes a small-ad found in the classified section of *Algol* magazine:

NEED someone who can create a new church, based on a combination of Velikovsky, Heinlein, Rand and optimistic futurology. An active, live-wire promoter is needed and compensation will have to come from the results as no cash is available. Charter and tax exemption, already arranged. Church of the New Revelation (1976:78).

Brunner proceeds to act as a social critic, using

his position as science fiction writer and his experience with fantastic concepts in the fictional sense to criticize various occult and pseudo-scientific values. Brunner hopes to arrest "the symptoms of a sort of mass psychosis" and thus he provides society with what can be termed a "Houdini Function." The famous escape artist and stage magician devoted much of his career investigating the authenticity of mediums and seances; spiritism was an important issue in the society of his time. Because of his experience in the creation of illusion, Houdini was able to expose numerous frauds who used their supposed "occult powers" to steal from their clients.

Conway and Siegleman discuss the dangers inherent in the rise of cultic groups and modern religious sects in the last thirty years (1979:250-253). Firstly, because many of these groups, including Scientology, claim the privilege of religious freedom, there is no way for officials to examine possible hazards that a group's practices may entail. The second hazard, also related to the claim of religious status, is that these groups often engage in activities that violate not only the civil rights of group members, but also the rights of individuals who are not members of the cult. Conway and Siegleman relate the case of journalist Paulette Cooper, who after the publication of her book on Scientology, was wrongly prosecuted by church members and even made the victim of psychological harrass-

ment. In their raid on the New York City mission of the church, FBI agents discovered documents discussing methods to "get P.C."

Scientology is only a small part of what has been called the "cultic revolution". However, it is in the area of Scientology that science fiction fandom becomes capable of performing a social good. If fandom is able to produce mature and comprehensive critics, it can perform a "Houdini" function. By virtue of their experience with fantastic concepts and also with older fans' recollections of the career of L. Ron Hubbard, fans may be able to discover fictional elements when they are presented in a factual context. If the fan can point out to others outside his group how doctrines like Scientology or Shaverism are similar to and even rooted in science fiction, it may lead members of the general public to scrutinize proselytizing organizations such as Scientology with greater care and attention. Let us hope that in the near future, a more disciplined and experienced imagination will be able to act as a guide to those unfamiliar with fantasy, protecting the naive from delusion and exploitation.

### Conclusion

Considering this work as a whole, the reader might notice an important shift in the focus of discussion. At

the outset of the work, I considered how science fiction influenced people at the level of personal fantasy, and the qualities of the literature and reader which made science fiction especially attractive. In a sense this exercise was a discourse on the psychology of science fiction. As the thesis progressed, I discussed science fictional manifestations in informal groups of devotees, in diffuse cultic circles, and finally in the context of a bureaucratically organized sect with a rigidly controlled religious doctrine. The course of the argument led to a discussion of the widespread proliferation of cults and the potential dangers, both personal and societal, that this phenomenon could entail.

The structure of the thesis reflected the most important aspect of the material under study; that is, the transformation of ideas at the level of personal fantasy to the behaviors and organization of real groups in society and the implications they may have for the rest of society.

At the outset, one might conclude prematurely that science fiction fandom and its symbolic relatedness to Scientology were purely ideational events, consisting of models and ideologies extending no farther than the insides in the actors' heads. However, when I take the position that culture is "created", as an invention of its members, I do not mean that culture and its symbols are purely mentalistic and subjective experiences. Of course, it is

one of my central arguments that some science fiction fans and Scientologists have generated their own "realities", with their own world views and ideologies, but these fantasies are not pure fancy, bearing little relevance to any other social processes and events. The rise of science fiction and Scientology are related to the nature of our society, both movements grew out of a specific set of circumstances in the last 150 years.

The implications of science fiction are evident in the fact that the movements of science fiction and Scientology can influence many of us who have elected to reside in the ranks of conventional society. As pointed out in the introduction, a large portion of popular entertainment is now in the form of science fiction. If someone is so unfortunate as to hate science fiction, he may have a difficult time avoiding all of it.

On a more serious level, I have discussed the problems of the extreme and possibly harmful effects of some of the more bizarre cult behaviors. Here again is an area where, in the case of Scientology, science fiction symbols and ideology can influence people who have no interest either in science fiction or in any "occult" material. When I was researching this work, a friend of mine referred me to a co-worker in Toronto. This person was a middle-aged woman who devoted considerable energy and affection to the raising of her two teenage daughters. Several years ago, the eldest



girl became heavily involved with the local branch of the Church of Scientology. At the time the mother felt that her participation in the group was harmless, giving an ordinarily rebellious child the opportunity to focus her energies on something that seemed to be self-improving and productive. The mother's feelings of confidence remained unchanged until she discovered that her daughter had attempted to cash a cheque for over 1500 dollars bearing a forgery of her mother's name. Training for Scientology at the advanced levels is very expensive. The girl was told by the local branch to procure the month for further auditing at the Sussex org. Fortunately the mother was able to hold onto her chequing account funds and managed, through a direct conflict at the Toronto offices, to extract her daughter from what seems in reality to have been a negative influence. It is peculiar that a group professing to improve both the individual and society would motivate a young girl to steal from her own mother.

Here was a person who knew very little about L. Ron Hubbard and his predilection to use science fiction imagery, yet her own life and that of her daughter were profoundly affected by this man's creation. This woman also knew little about the theoretical perspective of my study, or of any science fiction elements in church history or doctrine. Indirectly, however, the cultural influence of science fiction was a contributing factor to the predicament

encountered by this parent and possibly many other people in similar positions.

Here then, we are able to see the more profound implications of processual symbology, how symbols can change their meaning and context as the result of manipulations by individuals. There are consequences to changes in the meaning of symbols. As far as the experience of the single science fiction fan is concerned, a science fiction reality is mostly an ideational happening. No one else can truly enter his fantasy world, so the fan does not receive validation of his peculiar outlook. Once science fiction symbolism is adopted by a group a new situation arises. The adherant receives social support for his fantasy, and so it becomes more "real" to members of the group. A more intense expression of this effect is found in the Church of Scientology, an organized group of people who behave as if their form of science fiction ideology were real. These beliefs have become realities in that they are the basis of the church's activities and we outside the movement must react to and deal with its members.

The overall assertion of this study is that cultural material can affect social events, that is, ideas can influence social forms. Cultural material can be viewed as beliefs, values, world views, ideologies, concepts such as editorial rhetoric, drama, art, music and even the entertainment of science fiction. Social forms and events are the

roles, institutions and organizations, the arrangements of individuals and groups that compose a society. In the course of this thesis we have seen how science fiction symbolism, a body of cultural material, has contributed to the formation of two social groups, the vague and informal arrangement of fandom, and the more exactly defined organization of Scientology.

If the section on symbolic ambivalence in this chapter seems didactic, then perhaps the matter deserves further qualification. Scientology has a history of rather controversial and sometimes criminal activity, and it seems to me somewhat irresponsible to refrain from pointing out its poor record. Part of the problem posed by the church is its utopian goal of creating a "saner, more scientific" society and its efforts to "clear the galaxy". As it was pointed out, these goals are derivations of themes found in science fiction ideology. So then, at least in part, science fiction symbolism contributes to an "end justifies the means" mentality. The utopia promised by Hubbard permits him to perpetrate all manner of abuses.

Perhaps it is inaccurate to leave the impression that science fiction symbols are the only source of teleological ethics. Utopian and millennial thought in general may at times lead to similar problems. Sacrificing the rights, even the lives of individuals in the cause of a grand utopian scheme has frequent precedent in recent history. Examples are found in the racial policy of Nazi Germany,

which resulted in genocidal institutions whose purpose was to rearrange the world in conformity to a misguided notion of "racial purity." Closer to home, we might consider the Quebec provincial government's James Bay Hydroelectric Project, where politicians have sacrificed the livelihoods of native peoples for the sake of surplus exportable energy and a brief moment of public attention. Perhaps the most terrifying example of utopian thinking, very reminiscent of science fiction ideology in its technological fix-all orientation is an energy/agribusiness project currently advocated by one Ontario resident, Sam McGregor. Sam's suggestion is that all of Ontario's energy and agricultural needs can be fulfilled through the intensive use of nuclear reactors. All electricity would come from generating plants, and all agricultural could continue year-round, enclosed in greenhouses, heated by the warm steam and water pumped out by the reactors. What is disquieting about this proposal is that officials in the provincial government have seriously listened to McGregor. Administrators are ignoring the obvious dangers of radiation contamination and the tremendous upheavals in agriculture and business, in entertaining this technological pipe-dream.

My conclusion has not transformed itself into a polemic against nuclear power and Nazis. Instead, I am questioning the values and goals of utopian thought. Admittedly, these thoughts are matters of opinion, but at least they may

generate some ideas and discussion among readers. As I compiled my data for this thesis I found the greatest error committed by Hubbard and his followers, and even extreme fans such as Ray Nelson, is that in their proposed solutions to society's problems, they do not deal with any immediate difficulties, but instead argue for a new kind of society, circumventing existing problems. Utopianists make this central flaw in their ideologies: they propose the "final step" in human action, rather than the best next step. Such an attitude, which Scientologists in particular are guilty of, puts their followers farther out of touch with reality, rather than allowing them to address its true nature.

It is very easy to formulate yet another pressing social problem for readers to consider, but it is more difficult to suggest how we should deal with them. Academic musings seldom make any major impact on these matters, but I do believe that this work serves a useful purpose in the course of its disclosure and analysis.

Burridge notes how myths and folktales in Melanesia contribute to millennial cults, and to some extent I have made a similar argument: that science fiction themes have contributed to the formation of a deviant religious sect. Possibly one's means to avoid some of the negative effects of organizations like Scientology is to critically analyze their nature and content, regardless of their protestations.

Although fans familiar with science fiction ideology and symbolism may act as a check on some of the proselytization by Scientologists, we cannot leave them to shoulder the burden alone. Scholars and analysts could also study various movements in society which might pose threats to the rights of its members. Such studies would at least provide people with information that would allow them to make better choices in their actions and attitudes.

No single study could ever reveal enough information to bring about such an ideal state of affairs. It would only be through the cumulative efforts of many forms of analysis that adequate facts could be made available. If the reader wishes to categorize this thesis, then it should be considered as a contribution to such an endeavour.

## FOOTNOTES

1. To the general public "Star Trek" fans are referred to as "trekkies"; fans find this term highly offensive, believing it a label forced on them by an unsympathetic press. The expression "trekkers" is considered far more flattering and acceptable.
2. Fans tend to differentiate themselves according to the particular media where science fiction appears. Fans of science fiction literature might object to being characterized in the same manner as "Star Trek" fans. However, the differences between fans are relevant only to fans, the emersion of consciousness into fantasy is an event common to all kinds of fans.
3. The image of positive constructive action in science fiction literature is often reinforced by editorial policy. Many science fiction magazines inform potential contributors that stories with depressing formats or tragic endings will not be considered.
4. Clarke's novel is reminiscent of the text from Genesis I. However, Clarke's bibliocal update is interesting in its imposition of a little boy in the role of God. the climax of *2001* is a classic example of the adolescent regressing under the stress of conflict. According to Clarke, however, such regression transforms one into a superhuman rather than a neurotic.
5. Melanesian cargo movements have similar archetypal models of the "new" redeemed man. Often the characteristics and teachings of the prophet act as a charter for a new sort of moral being who is worthy of salvation. In both science fiction and in Melanesian revitalization thinking, a new sort of assertive man is required to take his suitable place as controller of a future, promised millenium (Burridge 1968:12-14).
6. The novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961) and the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) were, of course, written well after the appearance of Dianetics or the fan events discussed in this chapter. They are referred to because both works can be considered watersheds in the lore of science fiction, that is, they neatly capsulize and summarize themes found in numerous earlier science fiction works. Also, I believe, when referring to fictional works to formulate an argument, I consider it more effective to use works that the reader may be familiar with.

7. Again, we encounter the problem of using a recent film to try and establish the thinking of fans from the 1930-50s. I use the 1979 film *Alien* because it provides an effective summary of the monster theme. Also, we should keep in mind Wolfe's remark that the visual medium of film is far more effective in its portrayal of monsters than written science fiction (1979: 198).
8. Real name withheld by request.
9. According to Hubbard, this first serious work of non-fiction was an opus called *Excalibur*. Supposedly written in 1948, Hubbard hid the book, believing it to be too dangerous for the general public. Hubbard claimed that of the first six people to read *Excalibur*, four had committed suicide and the other two had to be institutionalized for insanity.

There is some question as to exactly when *Excalibur* was really written. It has been suggested that the work was composed as a money-making scheme after the Dianetics fad had lost popularity. This suspicion gains more credibility when it is added that Hubbard would let the interested seeker read the manuscript, for \$1500 a glance.

10. Hubbard's one attempt to publically demonstrate the superiority of a "clear" individual was a dismal failure. In front of hundreds in California, the "clear" was unable to perform simple arithmetic, or even identify the colour of Hubbard's tie. Hubbard explained this disaster by claiming that he had accidentally forced his subject into a present experience track by phrasing his introduction improperly (Malco 1970:74).



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