

Further Archeological and Ethnological Findings on the Obscure, Late 20th Century, Quasi-Religious Earth Group Known as “the Therapists” (A Fantasy About the Future of Psychotherapy)

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This article reviews the history of the field of therapy from the perspective of an extraterrestrial archeological survey team. By the time of their visit in the distant future, a collision between a comet and the planet Earth has wiped out civilization as a whole. The group discovers, however, that the field of mental health died out long before this cataclysm. A scheme for classifying the various schools of therapy is developed on the basis of the aliens' understanding of Earth religions and philosophical traditions. The emergence and eventual disappearance of the field is then explored and explained according to principles of evolutionary biology (including overpopulation, ecological competition, assimilation, and genetic drift).

Foresight is really hindsight, a reflection of the future revealed to the eye when it looks back upon the past . . . imagined futures are always more about where we have been than where we are going.— Neil Postman (Earth 1999, p. 5)¹

The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is a hill or high point of vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living.— G.K. Chesterton (Earth 1933)²

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¹These epigraphs taken from documents recovered at various archeological sites on Earth are included to provide the reader with an experience of the philosophy and depth of understanding of the human species.

²*Earth* in this context refers to citations from source materials taken from Tel Freud or other Earth sites.

Previous reports presented initial archeological and cultural discoveries regarding “the Therapists.” Briefly, these studies found that the obscure, quasi-religious group emerged toward the end of the human calendar’s 19th century (Star Date: 3210), experienced 100 years or so of dramatic growth in numbers and influence, and then vanished completely from the cultural landscape sometime during the first few decades of the 21st century (Star Date: 3462). These preliminary investigations further established that the group, like most of the dominant religions on the planet from the same time period, was monotheistic, confining worship to the deity “Talk.”

The present article recounts the latest findings from Tel Freud. The dig site (No. 432-T) is one of many archeological excavations located on Continent 7 (known to its inhabitants as *North America*). The principal researchers named the site in honor of a Doctor Sigmund Freud—now understood to be one of the cult’s founding and most enduring prophets. The recent findings from this location significantly deepen and broaden understanding of the group’s core beliefs and practices. They also provide the first insights into the factors responsible for the group’s eventual disappearance.

PRIMARY BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

It is the nature of our species to be territorial, to stake out our boundaries of private space with fences and other demarcations of ownership[,] . . . competing ideologies, religions, or life-styles are a “natural” way of life for human beings.— J. Kottler (Earth 1991, p. 24)

Movements start out with vibrant critical energy and wind up as new (oppressive) orthodoxies, complete with texts, heroes, and slogans.— S. Miller (Earth 2000, p. 7)

Initial findings appeared to suggest that “the Therapists” were committed to the set of beliefs and practices established by the aforementioned Doctor Sigmund Freud. This mistaken impression was perhaps inevitable given the large number of references made to Freud in writings by different authors, from various fields of interest, across the entire history of the group’s existence. Especially confusing was the consistent association of the word *Father* with Freud’s name in many of the source materials. Originally thought to be similar to titles reserved for authorities in other Earth religions, *Father* is now understood in this context to be emblematic rather than clerical in meaning. That is, Freud was considered the *founder* of the Therapists. He was not a priest in the religious vernacular typical for this period of time on the planet. The title *Doctor* (abbreviated *Dr.* in most sources) was reserved (even restricted legally) for a small segment of the

Therapists (specifically, psychologists and psychiatrists) who, for reasons unrelated to any measurable differences in effect, considered their line of ecclesiastical authority superior to all others.

The latest findings now make clear that the Therapists did not adhere to a single doctrine or liturgy. On the contrary, the group was divided into a large number of sects (known at the time as *schools*), each with a distinct set of doctrines (known as *models*) and body of rites for public worship (known as *techniques*). Additionally, each sect appears to have been founded and led by a charismatic leader commonly known to followers by his or her surname (e.g., Freud, Rogers, Bowen, Beck). As in other Earth religions, adding a suffix to the last name of a particular leader when making references to oneself was an indication of one's filial devotion to the sect. By way of illustration, one could be a *Lutheran*, *Freudian*, *Rogerian*, *Bowenian*, and so on.

As an interesting aside, most sects or schools appear to have been founded and led by male humanoids. This inequity is particularly curious given the consistent finding that throughout the movement's history, females outnumbered males both as therapists and as parishioners (termed, variously, *patients*, *clients*, and *people* by the competing denominations). Indeed, one might conceivably argue that the entire movement originated with female humanoids. In this respect, numerous historical sources indicate that the deification of Talk occurred after a 21-year-old woman known as Fräulein Anna O. was saved (known as "a successful outcome") through simple conversation (Breuer & Freud, Earth 1895). Recent discoveries at Tel Freud hint of a correction in this gender imbalance occurring immediately preceding the group's disappearance. The reason for the dominance of women before the end as well as the role this may have played in the demise of the group is discussed later.

A number of sources uncovered at the site now place the official tally of sects at the time of extinction somewhere between 250 and 400 (Garfield & Bergin, Earth 1994). Cataloging the various groups has been a rather daunting process. At first, the contradictions and confusions between the various sects defied classification—a bit like trying to hold on to a handful of sand. Over time, however, the factions began to fall into one of two basic clusters. Borrowing terms in use in the related Earth fields of philosophy and social science, the sects were classified as either (a) rational or (b) romantic in character (Postman, Earth 1999). These two major groupings were, in turn, further subdivided as either ritualistic or Gnostic, depending on the degree to which individual sects emphasized the form versus the experience of worship activities (see Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, this classification scheme can be represented graphically as two intersecting axes. One axis corresponds to the theory of the various sects, and the other to their practices. The categories are de-

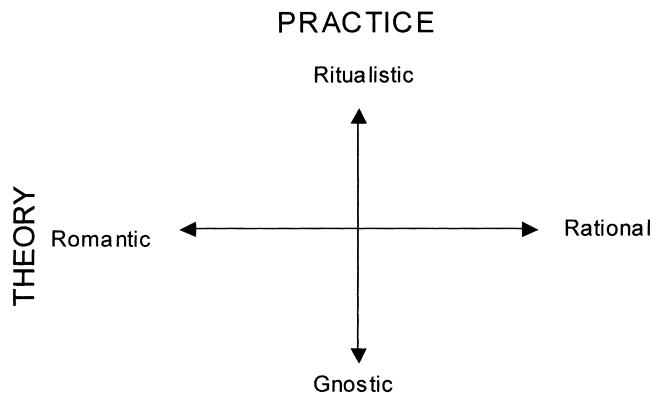


Figure 1. Cult classification.

fined below and illustrated with specific examples to highlight key differences in core beliefs and practices.

The Cults of Rationality

We have now to do a thing which is very objectionable to the faithful. They naturally resent any appreciation of cold analysis to what for them is the very fountain of truth.— J. Schumpter (Earth 1942, p. 3)

The origin of the sects in this group can be traced to a period in Earth history known as the “Enlightenment.” This term refers to a philosophical movement in the 18th century that rejected the authority of existing religions and offered reason as the alternative transcendent authority in human affairs (Windelband, Earth 1958). Central to all of the cults in this cluster are the Enlightenment values of objectivity, empiricism, individualism, and belief in universal human progress. As such, many of the sects in this cluster believed that the true nature of Talk could only be divined from complicated ceremonies (known as *experiments* or *studies*) conducted by specially trained clergy (known as *Researchers*) operating in secular temples (known as *Universities* or *Ivory Towers*).³

Removed from the demands of real parishioners and vagaries of day-to-day worship, the Researchers produced scores of numerological divinations (known as *statistics*) that, when gathered together, formed the canon of official scripture (known as *professional journals*). The leaders (and

³Originally, Universities were thought to be temples. This was due to the not infrequent reference to them as *Ivory Towers*. Further investigation has made clear, however, that they are better thought of as monasteries, as few Therapists and no parishioners went to these locations to worship.

followers) of the various sects then cited these journals with great frequency to promote their particular rites as *the* form of worship most likely to engender Talk's blessings. In other words, Therapists used "research" for the same purpose a drunk uses a lamp post; that is, for support rather than illumination. More will be said later regarding the role that fierce proselytizing may have played in the Therapists' eventual demise. What can now be said with certainty is that in the attempt to concretize the ineffable, the groups in this cluster created a vortex of arcane information that knew no limit.

Of the cults of rationality catalogued thus far, none is a clearer reflection of the values and characteristics noted above than the First Church of "Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy." Findings indicate that this denomination experienced dramatic growth in numbers and influence in the years immediately preceding the Therapists' disappearance. Indeed, competing sects are essentially buried in the avalanche of references to the Cognitive–Behavioral liturgy in the latter part of the official canon (circa Earth 1970–2020).

It is interesting that the conflation of numbers of citations with assertions of superior authority by the Cognitive–Behavioral Therapists apparently went unchallenged or was undetected by other faiths. Some recently unearthed documents even suggest that disciples of competing sects engaged in a kind of doctrinal legerdemain. Specifically, they publicly claimed to have converted to the Cognitive–Behavioral faith while secretly continuing to practice their own liturgy!

The documents in question were actually discovered by accident when investigators broke through what at the time was believed to be the floor of Tel Freud. To the surprise of researchers, a cavernous, subterranean room larger in size than the entire dig site was exposed. Contained in the space was a virtual mountain of official-looking forms and certificates entitled "Treatment Plans." The documents were remarkably well preserved, looking as if they been completed and then never referred to or used again. Subsequent laboratory analysis showed that the forms were handled for the most part by low-level functionaries. Apparently, neither Therapists nor parishioners (presumably the people whose worship the treatment plans were designed to help) valued the forms. More to the point, however, the materials made clear that Therapists from competing sects chose to perform this initiation ritual central to the Cognitive–Behavioral faith. Although results are preliminary, radio carbon dating indicates that the behavior originated at the same time dramatic changes were occurring in the way the ministry as a whole was funded. This strongly suggests some kind of economic incentive for the ruse.

The emphasis on the form over the experience of worship in the Cognitive–Behavioral sect places the group nearer the ritualistic end of the

practice continuum (see Figure 2). An important doctrine of the cults at this end of the scale is *technosubstantiation*—the belief that human suffering was literally transformed into change via various therapeutic rituals even though individual parishioners or the circumstances in which they lived kept the same appearance (i.e., did not change).

As an example, adherents to the Cognitive–Behavioral faith were promised salvation in the form of improved life satisfaction and redemption from personal suffering if they were willing to perform rituals such as “thought stopping”—an activity which, at this point in the investigation, appears to have involved parishioners shouting “Stop” or “No” at demonic thoughts said to be in possession of their mind. Although the list compiled by ethnographers at the site is far from exhaustive, Arbitrary Inference, Selective Abstraction, Overgeneralization, Catastrophizing, Compulsion, and Obsession are a few of the virtual pantheon of demons believed by the sect to have inhabited the cognitive realm.

It is curious that belief in technosubstantiation among the various cults became more pronounced shortly before the time of the Therapists’ extinction. Unlike some of the findings presented in this article, there is little question regarding the veracity of this assertion, as the physical evidence in support of it appears at the shallowest levels of the dig site (e.g., the “latest,” or the “newest”). For example, at the most superficial level, a cache of printed material was found that documents dramatic growth in sects that bypassed Talk altogether. These groups promised rapid salvation to anyone willing to subject himself or herself to or follow the groups’ highly circumscribed set of rituals. For as yet undetermined reasons, these

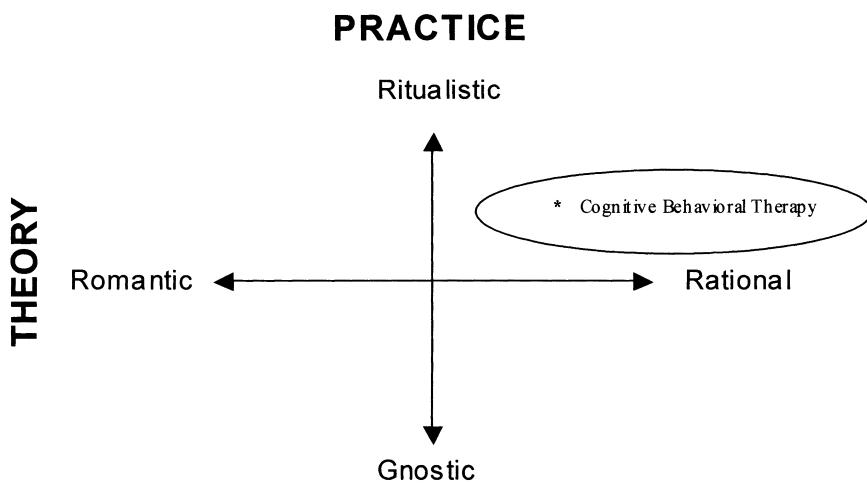


Figure 2. Cognitive–behavioral classification. * = major classification.

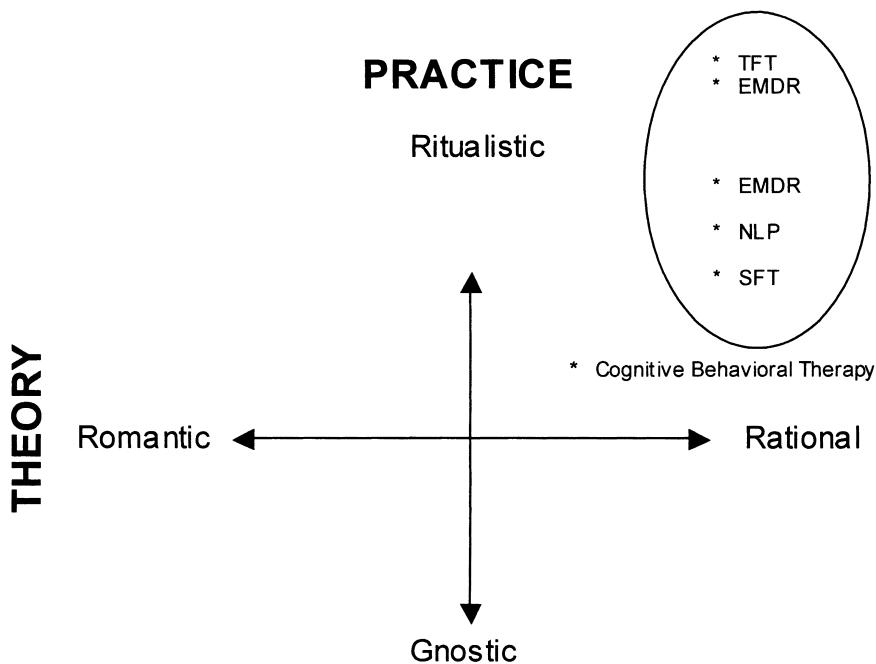


Figure 3. Classification of the “Mindless Experience” cults. * = major classifications.

groups were often known by acronym only (e.g., NLP, SFT, EMDR, TFT, EFT). Perhaps they adopted this convention to highlight the short time they believed their magic took to work. In any event, because of their zealous devotion to speed and technique in these late-appearing groups, researchers at the dig site have dubbed them the “mindless-expedience” cults (see Figure 3).

The range of rites used by the groups at the outer edge of the rational-ritualistic quadrant closely parallels that of Earth religions based in animism or magic. For example, some groups developed what can only be thought of as incantations or spells. Specifically, they believed specific words or phrases, spoken in the correct order and manner, would propitiate Talk. To illustrate, one group advocated asking parishioners to “suppose a miracle happens?”⁴ Other groups believed in touching, tapping, or encouraging repetitive movements of various parts of the anatomy. These acts might include tapping certain parts of the face, arm, and wrist or passing fingers in front of parishioners to induce voluntary left-right move-

⁴Consider the following quote from the founders of one of these cults, “In modern time [sic], the mantle of wizard is most often placed upon . . . practitioners of psychotherapy . . . if you wish to increase the effectiveness . . . of your therapeutic work . . . magic is hidden in the language we speak” (Bandler & Grinder, Earth 1975, p. xiii, 19).

ment of the eyes. Warnings have been found in the source materials of untoward consequences believed to attend any mistakes in the order of words or movements.⁵ Xenoanthropologists reporting similar repetitive physical motions among sports figures from this same time period—especially in a protracted activity known as *baseball*—will no doubt attribute such behavior to a pancultural predilection toward superstition in the human species.

Unfortunately, in spite of an abundance of source materials referencing the mindless expedience sects, little more can be said about the actual nature of their rituals. The printed matter examined thus far is limited to announcements for “Workshops” and “Continuing Education.” Apparently, these were special gatherings for Therapists⁶ similar to tent or revival meetings typical of other Earth religious from the same time period. Scriptural references (*journal* articles and advertisements) have also been found extolling the exceptional healing power of the various rites. The lack of information regarding the actual form and sequence of the movements together with warnings about their power to inflict tremendous damage if used by the uninitiated (i.e., Therapists not ordained by a recognized cult leader) suggests they were carefully guarded secrets. Some investigators have even suggested that as part of their formal induction into the cult, catechumen may have been required to take an oath not to reveal the ceremonies to others. Though no direct evidence has been uncovered, such pledges are known to have been quite common among other quasi-religious Earth-groups, such as college fraternities and the Masons.

At this point, readers may rightly wonder why these sects have been categorized as *rational*. Perhaps a more accurate description would be *rational-sounding*, as each of these groups went to extraordinary lengths to adopt the language and rhetoric of the hard sciences popular at the time. For example, because the human brain was the focus of much scientific activity during the late 20th century, several sects adopted neurological-sounding terminology to describe their rituals and beliefs. Thus, “lack of communication between the front and back of the nervous system,” “bi-lateral activation of energy meridians,” and “electromagnetic polarity reversal within the brain” were passed off as accurate descriptions of brain

⁵For example, the group that asked parishioners to “suppose a miracle happened” defined the spell as “a centerpiece of [their] approach” even noting where “very important” pauses were to be inserted into the question so that the magic worked (de Shazer, Earth 1994; G. Miller & de Shazer, Earth 1998).

⁶In one area of the dig site, huge numbers of glossy trifold paper leaflets were found stuffed into small square boxes (approximately 15 cm × 15 cm) announcing visits to the local area by various itinerant preachers. Initially, these boxes were thought to be part of the general postal service. However, as most contained no other mail—there simply wasn’t room given the volume of workshop announcements—they are now thought to be part of some special kind of cult awareness network.

function—language that even Earth scientists from that time period would have considered more neologism than neurology. In truth, the tendency to borrow rather than forge an identity and language befitting the field was a problem that plagued the Therapists throughout their short existence. The ways this chronic “identity crisis” contributed to their eventual demise are explored later.

Figure 4 shows the classification of another of the mainstream rational cults and the last one to be presented in this report. The Psychoanalysts, as they were known, might rightly be deemed the Original, Holy, Apostolic, and Catholic Church of Talk. Indeed, virtually all Therapist sects are the direct lineal descendants of this group and the teachings of their founder, the aforementioned Father Sigmund Freud. As Earth ethnologist Robin Lakoff (Earth 1990) recognized at the time, “Freud’s original and brilliant vision embrace[d] . . . all the schools of ‘talking’ therapy: the realization that communication [was] the clue” (p. 62).

For reasons yet to be understood, the Psychoanalytic sect spawned the sectarian conflict that came to characterize the field of therapy throughout its brief sojourn on the planet Earth. Early disciples, once loyal, came to protest Freud’s insistence on the infallibility of his view. They also resented

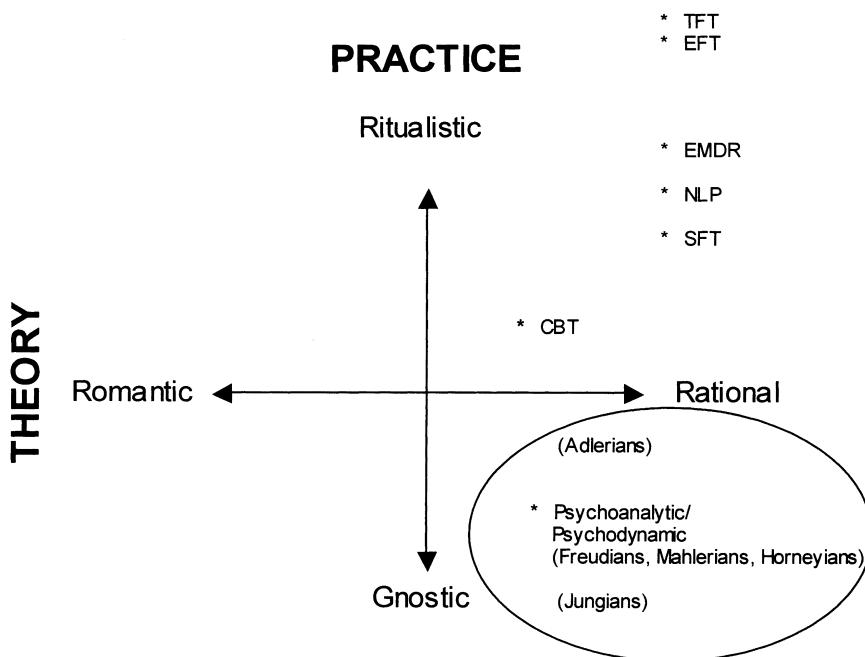


Figure 4. Psychoanalytic classification. * = major classifications.

the veneration eventually extended to Freud and his doctrines by human society. Threats of excommunication for heresy, however, only appear to have led most of these *protestants* to break away from the Church and form their own competing religions. Where Freudians once were, *Jungians*, *Adlerians*, *Rankians*, *Reichians*, *Horneyians*, *Kleinians*, and *Mahlerians* soon came to be. Ironically, Freudian doctrine actually predicted much of this jockeying for position and parricidal hostility. Yet, for all of Freud's perspicacity, it was not enough to stem the tide of revolt—a fact that proves once and for all that insight was no guarantee of changing human behavior.

As to specific doctrines, a key tenet of the Freudian faith was *original kin*—the belief that human beings suffered or were estranged from meaningful lives through no fault of their own but rather because of the actions or characteristics of their ancestors. Salvation from the stain of others' misdeeds was possible but considered a long and difficult process. Unlike the cults falling nearer the ritualistic end of the practice continuum, the Psychoanalysts promised no immediate results. Rather, redemption was only available to those parishioners willing to adopt the life of a religious ascetic. According to the words of one of this group's leading practitioners, the blessings of Talk were reserved for those few “willing to spend a considerable amount of money and time . . . and also forego quick and temporary results” (Greenson, Earth 1967, p. 359).⁷ As the astute may already have surmised, this emphasis on the experience over the form of worship places the group nearer the Gnostic end of the practice continuum.

Frankly, the popularity and longevity of the Psychoanalytic sect elude comprehension at this point in time. Evidence indicates, for example, that some Earthlings participated in their services for a very long time with dubious results. Readers of previous reports will recall that researchers first became aware of the existence of the Therapists while studying the 20th Century form of human entertainment known as film—in particular, the works of Woody Allen, a well-known member of the Psychoanalytic faithful who, in spite of years of analytic devotion, not only did not stop fantasizing about but actually went on to marry a relative.

To be fair, no creed or denomination of Therapy ever specified the desired outcome of Talk with much precision. Rather, like their counterparts in mainstream Earth religions, Therapists were much more specific about sins (known as *psychopathology*) requiring redemption (known as *treatment*) than the Heaven (known as *mental health*) to which worshippers

⁷As with most psychoanalytic doctrine, beliefs about the duration of devotion required for redemption are directly traceable to the Founder Doctor Sigmund Freud, who deemed the topic “unwelcome” but indicated was “always a matter of long periods of time . . . longer . . . than the patient expects” (Freud, Earth 1914/1953, p. 347).

aspired.⁸ Indeed, discoveries at the site evince a pattern of increasingly apocalyptic warnings coming from various Therapist sects and organizations regarding the sinful, unredeemed nature of the human race. In 1 decade alone, they claimed that plagues of eating disorders, multiple personalities, satanic ritual abuse, depressions, deficits of attention, and addictions of all kinds (alcohol and drugs, gambling, the Internet, etc.) were infecting the populace. They even maintained that extraterrestrial beings (whom they called *aliens*) were abducting humans and conducting hideous experiments. (This latter finding triggered much amusement among investigators in the field. As if we aliens had nothing more important to do. If nothing else, the terracentrism of this species was a source of much needed comic relief.)

The Therapists' apocalyptic vision spawned other peculiar practices. For example, in a rare spirit of ecumenism, Therapists of competing sects set aside their differences and stood together on street corners and in supermarkets for whole days (known as "National [state the current plague here] days") devoted to warning the public (called "screening for mental disorders") about such problems and calling them to repentance (in other words, recommending treatment). The effect that the resulting "eschatology exhaustion" had on the eventual extinction of the Therapists is discussed later.

The Romantic Cults

The meaning, I concluded, was perhaps less important than the conviction.—Mick Brown (Earth 1999, p. 278)

On the opposite end of the theory continuum from the Rational are the Romantic cults. The intellectual heritage of these sects can be traced directly to an 18th century philosophical and literary movement known as Romanticism. Briefly, this tradition came into existence as a reaction to and was very much the antithesis of the Enlightenment. Proponents of this point of view eschewed the values of objectivity, empiricism, and universal human progress, believing that "reason, when unaided and untempered by poetic insight and humane feeling, turns ugly and dangerous" (Postman, Earth 1999, p. 35).

Congruent with such historical roots, cults in this cluster believed in the

⁸The Therapists did not limit the number of sins to the 10 or so routinely associated with the four dominant Earth religions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism). Rather, a special book of life known as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (fourth edition) spends 886 pages detailing over 300 disorders—everything from shyness to playing video games (Malingering, V65.2)—that require the intervention of a Therapist.

perfection rather than perfectibility of humankind and valued feeling, intuition, and imagination over thinking, measurement, and objectivity. For the romantic Therapist, the true nature and meaning of Talk varied from individual to individual and could only be known when an atmosphere of love and total acceptance allowed the naturally good person residing inside each human being to emerge free from the corrupting and oppressive influences of family, society, and culture.

Of the Romantic cults catalogued thus far, none is a clearer reflection of the values and characteristics noted above than the group known as the Humanists. Like other Therapist groups, this one is easily linked to a particular time and context in human events. As Therapist Robert T. Fancher (Earth 1995) noted in what must now be seen as a prescient though largely overlooked warning of the field’s impending extinction,

Our schools of care . . . have not been born of advancing understanding. . . . Effectiveness of treatment seems to have little to do with the various bodies of knowledge and techniques that constitute . . . claims to expertise . . . [Rather] we can understand mental health care better if we explain it in terms of cultures that have been created to meet a social need and wish. (pp. 27–28)

Thus, as will be discussed in detail in an upcoming article, the Psychoanalysts with their corresponding emphasis on sex appeared near the end of the repressive Victorian era. The Behaviorists, on the other hand, with their machine-like interpretation of human functioning, arrived on the heels of the Industrial revolution. Strategic Therapists, with their secret moves and manipulations, surfaced during the spy-dominated period known as the “Cold War.” Finally, the Cognitive Therapists, with their focus on mind and processing of sensory data, accompanied the appearance of computers and dawn of the so-called “Information Age.”

For their part, the Humanists emerged in the years immediately following a worldwide war. The human species, as has already been documented in a series of earlier reports (see Yaqua & Tckulliwqr, Star Date: 4106.4), was capable of exceptional violence. In the conflagration known as World War II, the lives of an estimated 61 million people in 28 different countries were lost. (The relationship between the disappearance of the Therapists as a whole and their failure to appreciate the larger cultural context in which their beliefs and practices emerged and evolved is discussed later; Stokes, Earth 2001.)

Where the Rational cults tried to engineer salvation in a series of logical and measurable steps, the Humanists (and Romantic cults in general) were more akin to cheerleaders on the sidelines of the game of life. Indeed, they practiced what might best be referred to as “liberation theology,” acting as missionaries preaching the good news: “I’m OK, You’re OK. It’s Society and Big Corporations that suck.” In the temple of Hu-

manism, formal intercession of a Therapist was not required for deliverance from sin; rather, *selfvation* was a matter of parishioners freeing themselves of culture's corrupting influence by "getting in touch" with their "true feelings." Available evidence indicates, for example, that this aim was often accomplished by sending worshippers to *purge-atory* to "speak in throngs" (also known as groupolalia) of others also seeking selfvation. In pursuit of total acceptance, some Therapists even advised purging clothing—considered a symbol of the repressive influence of society and culture.⁹ In such instances, 15–20 nude people would meet together in a hot tub to massage, suckle, or examine the genitalia of each other either until the "restrictive preconditioning" of society washed away or their skin became too wrinkled to continue worshipping (Bindrim, Earth 1972). As may be obvious, such an emphasis on the experience over the form of worship places the Humanists nearer the Gnostic end of the practice continuum (see Figure 5).

It is curious that source materials uncovered at Tel Freud indicate that Therapists, regardless of their professed beliefs or particular cult allegiance, were more apt to seek out a Humanist when looking for personal help. Indeed, as late as the turn of the millennium, surveys showed that therapists themselves were *overwhelmingly* avoiding the very forms of worship—specifically, Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy—that they and their professional organizations recommended to parishioners as "the only scientifically-validated" form of Talk (Norcross, Geller, & Kurzawa, Earth 2000, 2001).¹⁰ This apparent "do what I say, not what I do" hypocrisy may be attributable to the potent appeal of the Humanist doctrine known as *immaculate reception*—that is, relating to parishioners as if they are free from sin regardless of who they are or what they actually may have done. In the words of one of the Humanists' most popular and visionary leaders, Carl Rogers, "the therapist . . . avoid[s] any behavior that is overtly or covertly judgmental . . . does not express disapproval . . . genuinely accepts . . . and completely trusts the client's resources for . . . positive change" (Meador & Rogers, Earth 1979, p. 152).

According to Meador and Rogers (Earth 1979), a warm, accepting, respectful, and genuine relationship with a Therapist allowed Talk to release "an already existing capacity in a potentially competent individual"

⁹Behind every paranoid idea is a kernel of truth. Recall that earlier published reports noted a trend that developed in the late 20th century and continued unabated until the complete destruction of human culture to wear clothing adorned with corporate logos. This trend grew to include advertisements on automobiles and billboards on homes. In the end, tattooing on the human body made sure that advertising was even available during the act of human reproduction.

¹⁰The frequent association of science and empiricism with the Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy cult has led some researchers to suggest that the group be dubbed the First Cognitive–Behavioral Church—Scientist or the Cognitive–Behavioral Scientologists.

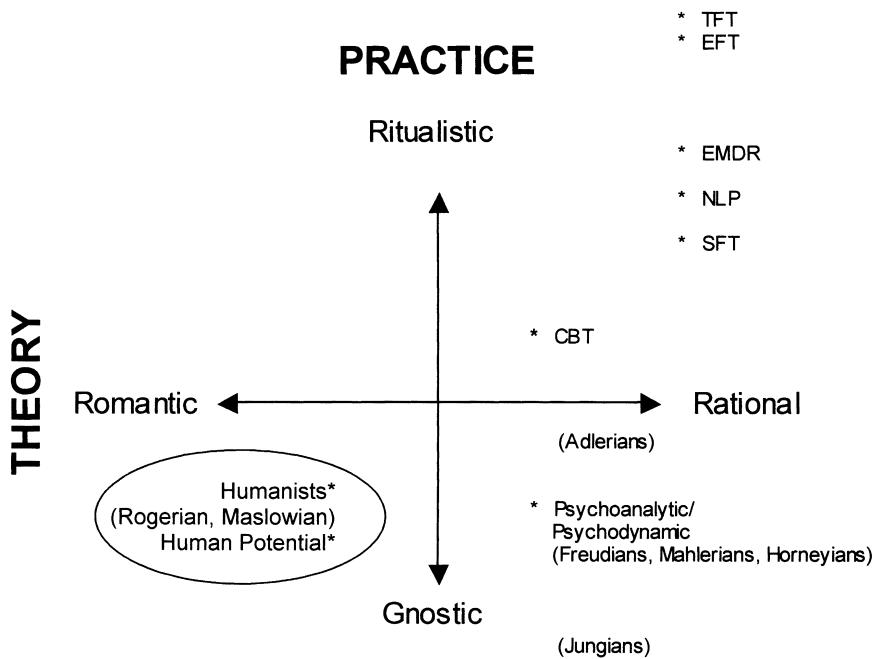


Figure 5. Classification of the Romantic–Gnostic cults. * = major classifications.

(p. 134). And, as a matter of fact, evidence pieced together by researchers at the dig site indicates that studies conducted by Therapists of all creeds consistently supported the nondenominational healing power of the therapeutic relationship. Indeed, large compilations of results (known as “Bibles” or “Handbooks”) from the specialized ceremonies (known as “experiments” or “studies”) noted earlier failed to find any more potent way to engender Talk’s blessings. It is interesting that Rogers (Earth 1951) appears to have foreseen these very results, noting long before the studies were conducted that a therapist who “tries to use a ‘method’ is doomed to be unsuccessful” (p. 19).

On the opposite end of the practice continuum from the Gnostic–romantic are the ritualistic–romantic cults (see Figure 6). It is sad that less is known about these groups at the present time than those in the other three quadrants, as the cults in this cluster had such hyperattenuated life-cycles. Drawing from studies already published by ethnomusicologists on late 20th Century pop music, these sects could be considered the therapeutic equivalent of “one-hit wonders.” This refers, of course, to musical groups that burst onto the charts with a hit song and then, almost as quickly, disappeared, never to be heard from again. For example, one

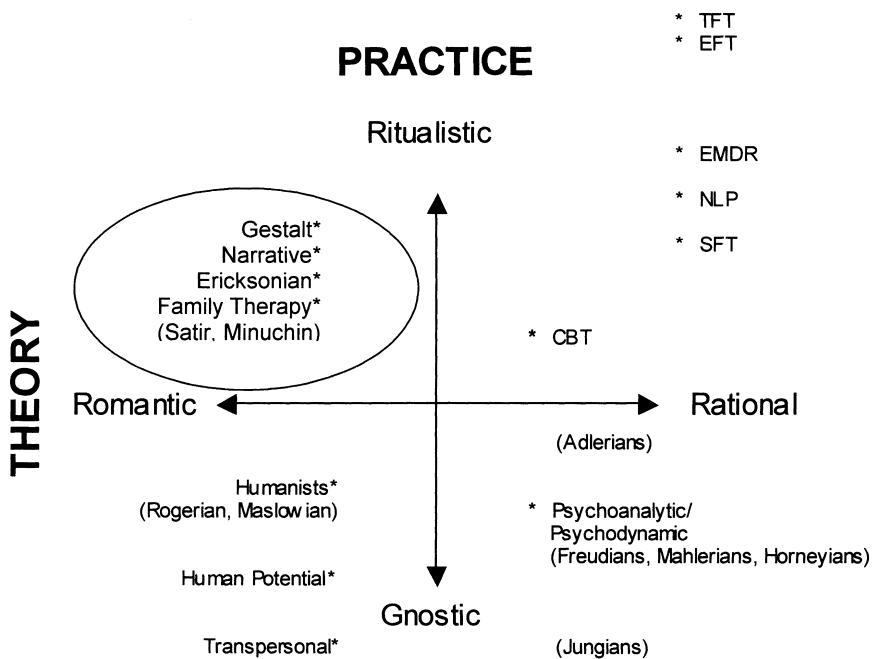


Figure 6. Classification of the Romantic–Ritualistic cults. * = major classifications.

denomination, the Family Therapists, organized their own separate church based solely on their addition of family members to worship services! Other examples abound, including a group that worshipped an empty chair (the Gestalt Therapists), Therapists who spoke in complicated, multilayer parables to their parishioners until the parishioners either fell asleep or were saved (Ericksonian Hypnotherapy), and even those who advised parishioners to keep sinning or even exaggerate their sins (Paradoxical Therapy)!

The recent discovery of a small cache of writings by a sect known as the Narrative Therapists initially raised hopes of providing a detailed picture of at least one of the ritualistic-romantic cults. However, the peculiar use of language in these materials has thwarted all attempts at translation. Plans have been made for an expedition in the coming year to Continent 10 (known at the time as "The Land Down Under"—an example of the very Up-Over-ist Eurocentrism the group resented), where the sect is believed to have moved to escape oppression by other sects and the world in general. Hopefully, excavations there will result in the discovery of a Rosetta stone that will aid in deciphering the code used by the members to communicate with each other.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

In analyzing history, do not be too profound, for often the causes are quite superficial.— Ralph Waldo Emerson (Earth 1990)

More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly.— Woody Allen (Earth 1980)

Initially, the Therapists were thought to have perished in the same planetwide cataclysm that caused the extinction of the human species (known to themselves as *homo sapiens*). As has been detailed elsewhere (Xzud & W9.6, Star Date: 4098.2), a comet struck Continent 6 (known at the time as Europe) some time during Earth’s 23rd Century (approximate Star Date: 3800). Estimates of the size of the comet cluster are around 3.5 Earth kilometers in diameter. The blast alone destroyed all inhabitants on Continents 6, 1.5, 1.0, 3, and 5 (known respectively as Europe, Northern and Central Africa, the Arabian subcontinent, and contiguous parts of Asia). Related debris clouds, firestorms, and volcanism, in combination with the shifting of the planetary axis, finished the destruction of all major life forms, including humans, within 2 years of impact.

Subsequent research has revealed, however, that the Therapists ceased being a force in human affairs long before the destruction of the species as a whole in the aforementioned catastrophe. In the material that follows, the disappearance of the Therapists is examined according to a variety of well-known causes for extinction, including (a) climactic/environmental change, (b) overpopulation/habitat destruction/exhaustion of natural resources/ecological competition, and (c) assimilation/genetic drift. The writers recognize that conjecture enters more in the material that follows than in other sections of this report. Any inferences made, however, are tied as closely as possible to the surviving evidence. In areas where the data are less than complete, experience guides. Conclusions that are more speculative are identified as such in the text.

Climactic or Environmental Change

Dinosaurs . . . were less malleable. They had changed before, in previous ecological crises, but this time the stresses were overwhelming.— John Noble Wilford (Earth 1985)

Whether sudden or gradual, changes in the climate or environment in which a particular species emerges and evolves are recognized causes of extinction. Even a small change in these areas can dramatically affect

survival. For example, archeogeologists have spent years excavating the submerged remains of several populous cities off the West Coast of Continent 7. Briefly, their studies indicate that rising ocean waters resulting from pollution-induced global warming of the Earth's polar ice caps overran these areas. To their credit, inhabitants identified the threat of such warming as well as its various causes a long time before its eventual impact on the environment. However, efforts to solve the problem were stymied by arguments over the best method for confronting the problem, those best qualified for implementing any plan, and questions about how the operation would be funded. Such short sightedness, as will be shown shortly, is also implicated in the decline and fall of the Therapist community.

Discoveries at Tel Freud provide strong evidence of a significant cooling of the atmosphere in which Therapists evolved and practiced beginning somewhere near the middle of the 8th decade of Earth's 20th century. At that time, the warm climate of acceptance to which they were accustomed dramatically reversed. In short order, followers and supporters once amenable to and tolerant of therapeutic services of all varieties suddenly grew hostile. Financial support diminished significantly, and the freedom to attend worship services was greatly curtailed. By Decade 9, the entire field was gripped in a kind of economic "Ice Age," the advance of which dramatically eroded (i.e., wore away) the once fertile Therapeutic landscape.

To understand why this dramatic change occurred, consider the following brief history of funding for therapeutic services. In the beginning, Therapists, like clergy for other Earth religions, were principally supported by their parishioners (a custom known as "out of pocket" payment). Obviously, such an arrangement tended to limit services to the privileged members of society. Over time, however, the rising notoriety and legitimacy of Talk among common people eventually led to support for Therapists by state and national governments. (Whether such patronage makes the Therapists the last known form of state-sponsored religion is currently being debated by researchers at the Tel.) Funding was also provided through an entity known as an "Insurance Company" or "Third Party." In this system, parishioners or the parishioners' employer made installment payments to a company or party in exchange for a promise to pay a therapist to invoke Talk should the need arise.

Decades 7 and 8 ushered in the "Golden Age of Reimbursement." During this time, Governments, Insurance Companies, and other Third Party payers provided funding to Therapists at unprecedented levels for an increasing number and variety of parishioner worries. Indeed, the official list of problems requiring the formal intercession of a Therapist—known as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*—doubled in length! Ecological niches that before were the exclusive domain of other social institutions and traditions yielded to their influence (i.e., church,

judicial system, marriage, parenting). Few problems, it came to pass, lay outside the power of Talk.¹¹

The broad penetration of Therapists eventually led those paying for services to ask questions. Specifically, what proof was there that Talk actually helped? How much Talk was enough? And, what qualifications were actually required to invoke Talk successfully? For the most part, Therapists responded with warnings that such questions heralded the coming of the Great “Anti-Talk” (known variously as “Managed Care,” “DRGs,” “JCAHO,” “CARF,” etc.), a beast that would require all—small and great, rich and poor—to have the number HCFA 1500 marked on their forehead. Using words such as *preauthorization, external case review, treatment guidelines*, and *quality improvement*, the creature, the Therapists prophesied, would promise “more for less” but actually end up delivering less to fewer while keeping more for itself. All would suffer, they warned.

The passion in the source materials from this period is striking, reminiscent of the field’s early days. For all the Therapists’ emoting, however, the apocalypse simply didn’t occur. That is, despite their predictions of doom, the curtailment of Therapists’ practices and numbers did not unleash a wave of the mental and behavioral plagues. On the other hand, the resulting eschatology exhaustion did cause the Therapists to lose credibility. More important, they lost favor with the payers, the very people whose goodwill they needed for survival. But although the changing economic climate did have a significant impact on the Therapeutic community, research to date indicates that changes in funding are more parsimoniously viewed as a symptom of rather than *the cause* of their eventual decline. The principle factors implicated, and not merely associated with, the Therapists’ collapse are now explored.

Overpopulation

There is very little demand for supply.—B. J. Hunnicut, *M*A*S*H**

Research in the biosciences indicates that the probability of extinction depends on both population size and fine details of population demography, including but not limited to age-specific birth (graduation/certification) and death (retirement) rates, sex ratios (males: females), and age structure. When all other variables are held constant, groups with higher birth than death rates, high female to male sex ratios, and a positively skewed age structure (e.g., more young than old) soon exceed the

¹¹If one has any doubt, one should consider the following quote from two leading Therapists: “Everything a patient does and says, including what he does and says as a participant in a social system, falls within the therapists’ purview” (Duhl & Leopold, Earth 1968, p. 579).

carrying capacity of their natural environment. The resulting overpopulation increases habitat destruction, exhaustion of natural resources, and ecological competition, which in turn threatens the long-term survival of the group.

Field teams have amassed compelling evidence that overpopulation played a primary role in the decline and fall of the Therapeutic community. Consider findings on the three largest Therapist disciplines—a distinction somewhat similar to that drawn between the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist religions. Between the 4th and 7th decade of the 20th century the number of Psychologists grew by more than 1,100%, and their counterparts in the field of psychiatry increased 760% (Herman, Earth 1995). This trend only continued during the “Golden Age of Reimbursement” (Decades 7 and 8), with Social Workers tripling their numbers, Psychologists doubling their ranks, and Psychiatrists increasing by an additional 25%. From the middle of Decade 8 onward, Psychologists doubled in number every 10 years, Social Workers every 14, and Psychiatrists every 20 (Dawes, Earth 1994). This is startling but true.

At the same time, new programs were launched and even disciplines created to meet the increased demand of those seeking to wear the mantle of Therapist. Marriage and family Therapists, art and music Therapists, addiction counselors, pastoral counselors, body Therapists, licensed professional counselors, spiritual and transpersonal Therapists, and more joined the old mix of Therapists—Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Social Workers. In Decade 8 alone, the number of people qualified to call themselves *Therapist* increased 275% (Duncan & Miller, Earth 2000). Field specialists have yet to catalogue all their forms, much less distinguish any meaningful differences. In fact, the characteristics that cosmetically divided the various groupings fade before the claim they all shared. *Each* group believed it was uniquely entitled to invoke the power of Talk.

Judging from the source materials studied to date, the Therapists as a whole did not appreciate the consequences, much less act to arrest their dramatic growth. Such lack of foresight is stunning given the relatively simple calculations required for estimating the impact of such expansion on the probability of long-term survival (J. Brown, Dreis, & Nace, Earth 1999). As an example, consider demographic data from Continent 7. Evidence gathered at Tel Freud indicates that at the turn of the millennium there were approximately 400,000 qualified Therapists in a country of 260,000,000 potential parishioners. If 10% of the total population sought services at any time during a given year—a very generous assumption given that the standard utilization rate appears to have been about 5–7%—there would be a total of 26,000,000 total parishioners, or 65 parishioners per Therapist per year. A full-time Therapist meeting 30 parishioners a week, 48 weeks out of the year, would have the capacity to provide 30×48 or

1,440 total hours of service in a year. Making the generous assumption that parishioners would worship an average of 12 times in total—the average number, it appears, was actually much closer to 6—then each Therapist would have the capacity to invoke Talk with 120 cases per year ($1,440/12 = 120$). If the actual number of parishioners available annually per Therapist (65) is then divided by the annual capacity of each Therapist (120), the results show that at the time Therapists were multiplying like rabbits there were already twice as many as the existing environment could accommodate!

This excess number of Therapists soon resulted in all the predictable, if not tragic, consequences. Specifically, ecological competition increased as natural resources became scarce. For example, struggles intensified among the various Therapist guilds, with each group fighting the others for control over a larger portion of the rapidly shrinking habitat they all shared. Thus, Psychologists wrestled with Psychiatrists for the right to dispense the magic potions and pills that had always been the sole province of physicians and their patrons in the Elixir industry. At the same time, alcohol and drug Therapists, professional counselors, and marriage and family Therapists fought for funding parity in a state-by-state guerilla war with Social Workers and Psychologists.

Meanwhile, Therapists’ incomes began to plummet, dropping by as much 50% in the time between Decades 9 and 10. With earnings dwindling and far too many Therapists competing for work, conditions favored the buyer rather than the seller. In response, some Therapists left to find other sources of income (e.g., in a specialty called “real estate”). Others tried to remain. Of these, a few abandoned State and Insurance support in favor of the old “out of pocket” system. Still others set up services for Therapists leaving the fold or, believing that Talk could increase efficiency and profits, became “personal coaches” to members of industry. For a short while, such “boutique” practices were the one oasis in an otherwise arid economic climate. As it turns out, however, there were simply more Therapists than parishioners or business executives willing to pay for Talk. The bubble of optimism soon burst.

By this time, the male to female sex ratio of Therapists had also grown dangerously imbalanced. Male Therapists abandoned the field *en masse* in search of greener pastures. Following the precedent seen in other fields, including everything from secretarial work to medicine, the entrance of women and exodus of men resulted in further declines in income (for unknown reasons, Earthlings did not like to provide equal pay for equal work).¹² Additionally, the number of experienced male *and* female Thera-

¹² Suggestions have been made that men of this species liked to make the women happy, whereas women were intrinsically more self-sacrificing; therefore, they ended up paying women less so that they would be happy.

pists began to decline, thereby skewing the age structure of the field as a whole toward the very young. From this point on, therapists would never recover their previous glory. With the downward spiral thus set in motion, their numbers plummeted.

Assimilation or Genetic Drift

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: For I the LORD thy God
am a jealous God.—Exodus 20:5

Finally, species may disappear either by being assimilated into a more successful, competing group or through a process known as “genetic drift.” Most readers are likely acquainted with the first process, popularly referred to as natural selection, but may lack awareness of the latter. Briefly, *drift* refers to the random mutations in genetic code that occur during reproduction. Small, isolated populations are particularly prone to negative consequences of this process because their smaller gene pool risks the accumulation of deleterious mutations that, in turn, reduce the reproductive capacity of the group. Unable to reproduce, the species eventually dies out. As far as the Therapists are concerned, both processes are in evidence.

Consider the process of genetic drift (known by Therapists as “peer review”). As noted earlier, the number of sects catalogued thus far hovers somewhere between 250 and 400. Depending on the way the groups are counted, some estimates are even higher—up to 1,000 (S. Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, Earth 1997)! This number of denominations is theoretically large enough to prevent the accumulation of dangerous mutations *if* the groups engaged in cross breeding. As was also noted previously, however, the various cult groups for the most part tended *not* to mix with each other. Indeed, promiscuous members of a cult risked having a scarlet *E*—standing for eclectic—hung around their neck for all the faithful to see. Worse yet, they risked expulsion from the group and a lifetime of professional isolation.

Some of the exiled assembled under the banner of “integration.” Other disaffected Therapists sought a sense of community in a variety of nondenominational activities and publications. In spite of the tremendous potential for cross breeding in these groups, however, neither ended up introducing needed variation into the gene pool. Indeed, in a relatively short time, the “inclusive” integrative movement became just another isolated, “exclusive” cult with its own distinct doctrines, membership requirements, and canon of official scripture supervised by faithful members of the sect.

For a brief period, an itinerant nonsectarian group gained some adherents with its message that all denominations were, at their core, the

same. Ultimately, however, this and other nondenominational efforts simply failed to inspire much passion for either merging or seeking out new perspectives. If anything, individual supporters took the message to mean that their personal beliefs and practices were as good as any other and so no intermingling was required. Over time, the resulting lack of drift reduced reproductive capacity. In short, these and other Therapist sects failed to attract and maintain followers whose differences would broaden the appeal of the group enough to attract and maintain additional followers, and so on. Eventually, the denominations died out—most often within a single generation!

As noted at the beginning of this section of the report, assimilation also played a role in the decline and eventual disappearance of the Therapists. Information pieced together from source materials recovered at the site indicates that this destructive process was set in motion in two ways. First, as strange as it may sound, the Therapists were in many ways the victims of their own success. An initially skeptical public was soon convinced of the power of Talk. Over time, however, Therapists lost control of the very forces they introduced. Individual and group therapy gave way to Talk shows, Talk radio, Self-Talk, and even a diminutive form of the deity known as Chat that could be accessed anonymously via an extensive network of computers known as the Internet. The Therapists' own research seems only to have fueled the process, finding again and again that everything from an unemployed mother living in the inner city to a computer program was capable of summoning the palliative powers of Talk. In short, people were using Talk; they just weren't doing it with a Therapist.

The existence of an identity crisis that dogged the Therapeutic community throughout its history further hastened the process of assimilation. Some 100 Earth years after the founding of the field, for example, psychologists—legally recognized representatives of Talk in most nations and states—were still debating the question, “What is a psychologist?” (Benjamin, Earth 2001, p. 741)! Having no distinctive identity, the field, like adolescents the galaxy over, first rebelled against existing social institutions. Traditional beliefs and practices that had for millennia provided literally millions of humans with a sense of purpose and meaning were subjected to especially harsh criticism. For example, Freud branded religion “illusory,” adding that “the whole thing is so patently infantile, . . . it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life” (cited in Jones, Earth 1957, p. 358). Nearly half a century later, the founder of another popular sect, Albert Ellis, claimed mental health was actually “antithetical to a truly religious viewpoint” because “religiosity, to a large degree, is masochism” (Ellis, Earth 1962, p. 1)! A call to “get rid of organized religion. It doesn’t matter which” (Murphy, Earth 2001, p. 20) at the annual meeting of the American Psychological

Association indicates that this adolescent hostility toward authority was still present at the turn of the millennium.

Therapists also worked to quell chronic feelings of inferiority by imitating groups they admired. Thus, the theories, language, and behavior of evolutionary biologists, art and literary critics, Zen Buddhists, chaos theorists, physicists, and so one were all emulated at some point in time. Near the end of their existence, the record shows that the Therapists had grown particularly fond of the field of medicine. Documents from the time period, for example, show an increasing fascination with and use of medical language and terminology. Beginning with psychologists, an increasing number of Therapeutic orders even bestowed the title “doctor” on their members. And whereas the field of medicine often pooh-poohed Talk, Therapists appear to have embraced Biology with a passion, first encouraging and then later ethically obliging their members to refer parishioners for communion with the god of medicine.

All references to the Therapists as a separate and distinct group cease at this point in the archeological record. For this reason, it must be concluded that the Therapists were simply assimilated into the field of medicine. Several findings support this inference. First, there is clear and convincing evidence of the existence of medicine at higher geological strata (i.e., later points in the archeological record). Second, in spite of warnings from their own Researchers that “the scientific evidence . . . shows that psychotherapy is incompatible with the medical model and that . . . the medicalization of psychotherapy might well destroy talk therapy as a beneficial treatment of psychological and social problems” (Wampold, Earth 2001, p. 2), many leading Therapists were pushing the field to give up trying to carve out a unique sense of meaning and purpose and instead carve into the well-established identity of medicine. And finally, one of the field’s most visionary members, Nostradamus Cummings, predicted as early as Earth 2001 that Therapists of the future would be the handmaidens of medicine, spending “most of their time . . . leading time-limited, protocol-based, psychoeducational groups . . . designed for people with . . . extremely frustrating conditions for traditionally trained primary care physicians” (p. 39).

SUMMARY

Well, if the shoe fits, kick yourself with it.—Gloria Stivick, *All in the Family*

Rage against the dying of the light.—Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”

The current report presents further findings on the quasi-religious Earth group known as the Therapists. The group emerged near the end of the

19th century, offering secular solutions to the needs of the populace or certain segments of the population whose difficulties or problems could not be or were not addressed by traditional religion. Evidence gathered to this point suggests that the group enjoyed a brief period of influence in human affairs before succumbing to the effects of overpopulation, ecological competition, assimilation, and genetic drift.

Although the official role of archeologists and ethnologists is to reconstruct, compare, and analyze lost cultures and civilizations, one cannot help but wonder what might have been had the Therapists dealt with the problems that eventually led to their extinction. For example, what might have happened had the Therapists managed to heed their own research, which showed little practical difference in effect between the various sects? That the relationship with parishioners was the key to salvation? Would they have then been able to join together to create a common vision and purpose? Might this, in turn, have vanquished the chronic confusion the group exhibited regarding their identity and role in society? Having established a clear center with known boundaries, would they have been able to curb the excesses that ultimately led to their disappearance? Although the serious minded would likely dismiss such questions as hopelessly romantic, their exploration, like the study of history in general, may serve as an object lesson that enables others to avoid repeating mistakes of the past.

POSTSCRIPT

. . . and, uh, just one more thing . . . —Peter Falk, *Columbo*

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the reviewers and, specifically, the editor of the *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* (JPI), Jerry Gold, PhD, for supporting the publication of this atypical article. We are also grateful for the opportunity to respond to a number of important questions raised by both Dr. Gold and the reviewers that would be difficult to address in the body of the text while remaining true to the literary style of the piece.

As one might expect, chief among the questions asked was, "Why?" Specifically, what were our reasons for writing the article and choosing to write it in this way? Additionally, what were we hoping that therapists and, specifically, those interested in integration might take from it? And, finally, is there anything the field can do to stave off the extinction predicted in the article?

Taking the questions in order, the answer to the first is that we were

dismayed by the continued Balkanization of therapy and had grown increasingly pessimistic about the field's capacity for creating a meaningful, coherent, and therefore enduring discipline. We had followed the debate among the various factions chronicled in the scholarly literature and felt there was little to be gained from adding one more academic article to the heap. By approaching the subject matter in a different way, using humor and writing from the point of view of a naïve, alien observer from the future, we hoped to anticipate the kind of perspective that will come with time and distance from the issues at hand.

What were we hoping that therapists and, specifically, those interested in integration might take from the article? That the decades-long debate between this or that model, specific versus common factors, technical versus theoretical integration, and so on misses the point because it focuses almost exclusively on the means of production (e.g., theories and methods) rather than the product of therapy—that is, the creation of meaningful and lasting personal change. Simply put, it has proceeded as if the field were in the therapy business rather than in the business of change.

Because potential consumers care most about the latter and little about the former, they are seeking other options when it comes to matters of personal fulfillment. As evidence of this, consider research showing that over the last 10 years, the number of people taking psychotropic medication has increased tenfold, while numbers of visits to outpatient therapists during the same time period dropped by 30% (Duncan & Miller, 2000). Although it might be comforting to some to attribute this decline to the advertising largesse of pharmaceutical companies or restrictions imposed by managed care, other studies suggest something more unsettling. Recent focus groups found that 76% of people identified low confidence in the outcome of therapy as the major reason for *not* seeking treatment, which far eclipses variables traditionally thought to deter people from seeing a therapist (e.g., stigma [53%], length of treatment [59%], lack of knowledge [47%]).

Numerous examples from the business literature point to the loss of customers that occurs when industries become caught up in the means of production and lose sight of the product they have to sell. In his now classic article on the subject, Harvard business professor Theodore Levitt (1975) showed how various industries, including everything from the railroads to Hollywood, suffered dramatic reversals in fortune when they confused the means and the ends. Movie moguls, for example, were caught totally off guard by the television industry because they saw themselves as being in the movie business rather than the entertainment business. As a result of this lack of foresight, numerous studios were forced to close, and many high rollers in the industry lost their shirts. The same is true of the railroads, whose focus on trains rather than transportation led customers to

abandon the rails in search of alternatives. As a result, the railroads languished while the trucking and airfreight industries flourished.

Although perhaps painful, such examples, together with the data cited earlier, suggest that the flagging fortunes and prestige of psychotherapy are not due to a decline in the need (or demand) for fulfillment and meaningful personal change but rather because the field is not viewed as fulfilling that need. Such a "no confidence" vote by potential consumers of therapy services is especially difficult to accept given decades of research showing that the average treated client is better off than 80% of the untreated sample in most studies (Asay & Lambert, 1999). Nonetheless, this is the perception of potential therapy consumers. We think it has little to do with failing to find the right method or combination of theories and methods and much to do with the overall lack of focus on outcome.

So, is there anything the field can do to stave off the extinction predicted in the piece? In response to this question, let us first state that the article does not actually conclude that the field became extinct but rather that all references to therapists as a separate and distinct group ceased. By ending the article in this fashion, we were not attempting to read the tea leaves of therapy's future so much as express our concern about the increasing medicalization of the field. Although we are committed to parity (e.g., equal pay for equal work) and integration with the broader healthcare system, we are troubled by what seems more like *assimilation* of the field into medicine. Professional discourse and practice increasingly parrot the medical model. The wholesale adoption of the randomized clinical trial and *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* are but two examples of the field being absorbed instead of accommodated into a larger healthcare framework.

In this vein, we believe that establishing an identity that fits the unique history and research of the field is the first step toward ensuring its survival. To fail in this endeavor, we believe, will leave therapists unable to associate with equality, making permanent the second-class status that they, as non-medical professionals, have suffered from the beginning. Consistent with the point we made earlier, we also believe that focusing more on the benefits of therapy rather than therapy itself would be a boon to the field. Some progress has been made in this area. For example, several systems have been developed for monitoring client progress and then using that information to enhance treatment outcome (Duncan & Miller, 2000). A recent study found that providing such feedback has an effect size on the order of .4 to .6 on cases most at risk for a negative or null outcome *without* any efforts aimed at dictating the "brand" of therapy practiced (Lambert et al., 2001)!

Whether such work will receive wider attention or remain the proverbial "voice in the wilderness," given the overwhelming rush toward medicine, remains to be seen.

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