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Persuasive Writing is researched by individuals interested in the topic, but what if they were to look at what persuasive writing looks like in the High-Profile religion of Scientology? To be able to grasp why people associate Scientology with negative connotations, we must first look at what attitudes or beliefs Scientologists hold. The persuasive tactics used by members of the church to encourage others to join, and the negative as well as positive experiences people have had as a result of these persuasive tactics.

Described in depth by the article *Scientology* published by Britannica, The Church of Scientology was founded by an American Author named L. Ron Hubbard. In 1950. Hubbard published a book called *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. It discussed his ideas of how to overcome issues people suffered from being in negative mental states. Counter-survival actions Hubbard viewed as destructive versus Survival actions were to be perceived as good. His book attracted followers because it appealed to individuals seeking spiritual clarity. Hubbard assigned terms for the religion he developed. A “*Reactive Mind”* Hubbard claimed, occurs when part of the brain is blocked from full functionality. “*Thetans”,* is described as a person’s core and immortal being that has lived in past bodies that have become corrupted by negative memories. He prescribed that “*Engrams”* are negative images (memories) stored in the brain that must be eliminated for the Thetan to be fully functioning and achieve the level of “*Clear*” in the religion.

Scientology has many levels that an individual must climb to reach the highest level of the spiritual ladder. There are organizations where members receive training to surpass OT levels: VI, VII, & VIII. Members are encouraged to attend sessions of “*Auditing”* where they are counseled by one person in a private meeting to help them rid themselves of Engrams*.* In these meetings, a device called an E-meter is used to measure the Engrams. Hubbard’s writings are considered sacred words and truth to Scientologists, so they follow his teachings.

The Religious Technology Center in the Scientology church approves licenses to members and ensures that devices used in Scientology are used for their spiritual purpose. The Scientology church reaches out to people internationally and promotes its beliefs through ads and accessibility to purchase books on its website. If a person has watched the 2024 Superbowl which had the 49ers competing against the Chiefs in football, they would be able to see that there was a Scientology commercial present that encouraged people to experience the church for themselves. The advertisement had people transferring devices to one another while smiling. It showed a large community in the background with background music repeating “*See for yourself”.*

Some people report a negative experience within the Church of Scientology. For instance, the actress Leah Remini who left the Church’s organization in 2013 has been an advocate for speaking out against the Church. Remini grew up with Scientology and had firsthand experiences discussing procedures the Church would have her perform. The article *Leah Remini, Vocal Scientology Critic, Files Suit Against Church* describes that in the period during which she was a member of the church Remini “Was forced to sign a billion-year contract, in keeping with the church’s belief that Scientologists are immortal, and to perform manual labor, study the teachings of the church’s founder, L. Ron Hubbard, and undergo training that included “verbally, physically, and sexually abusive” practices.” (The New York Times)An individual might question why Remini would make this claim when her reputation could be at stake. Remini has spoken out against the church by publishing books on her perspective of Scientology and even had a hit show on Netflix titled “*Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath”* which encourages other members who have left the church to talk about their experiences and how it has affected them.

However, I cannot reference verbatim what individuals said on the show because it is no longer accessible on Netflix’s platform. Ex-members spoke about similar experiences regarding being cut off from their families and still involved within the organization because of them leaving the Church. Reflecting on their time within the organization, many members recall that it was encouraged to shun individuals who left the church because they would be seen as an enemy. Remini is filing a lawsuit against the organization because she is subject to harassment and stalking and believes an organization within Scientology is responsible, other former Scientologists on her Netflix show report that they have experienced similar instances. Ex-members describe going into financial ruin because they felt pressured to purchase literature from Scientology that was deemed necessary by the Church for them to reach higher levels.

Scientologist Elizabeth Moss who starred in the popular series ‘*The Handmaid’s Tale’* has stated that she believes that Scientology is incorrectly viewed by the public. Just like Remini, Moss grew up within the religion of Scientology except at an early age Moss was awarded the level of Clear and has stayed faithful to the organization throughout her life thus far. Moss credits Scientology for granting her the ability to communicate effectively, though she does not go into detail about how she acquired this skill within the organization. It is also apparent that Scientology has given her an upper hand when pursuing a successful career as an actress through her access to Networking with other Scientologists within the Hollywood community, as her manager was a Scientologist. In an interview with The New Yorker magazine, Moss states “It’s not a closed-off religion. It’s a place that is very open to, like, welcoming somebody who wants to learn more about it. I think that’s the thing that is probably the most misunderstood.” The article describes that Moss believes that there are many negative connotations associated with the religion of Scientology because many people believe the negative reports they see in the media as factual. On the contrary, it might be difficult for an individual to not feel a provocation of negative reactions when Moss herself is reported to have completed “A purification Rundown, A detox treatment that involves prolonged heat exposure and ingesting large quantities of niacin.” (The New Yorker). This could certainly raise red flags among individuals who are foreign to the procedures of Scientology. Niacin is a Vitamin B supplement that helps food turn into energy but can cause negative side effects if taken in high doses. Some side effects include vomiting, dizziness, and liver damage.

Furthermore, what are the persuasive tactics that could be identified by reviewing the church of Scientology and its actions? Upon studying the *Dynamic of Persuasion* Book written by Richard M. Perloff a few terms of persuasion could be applied to the analysis of Scientology and its functions. First, the concept of Nature vs. Nurture could be discussed. Remini and Moss both grew up in the Church but had different experiences and thus held different attitudes on the topic. Remini views Scientology as a harmful Organization and Moss views it as a positive, welcoming environment. The overall concept of Scientology appeals to individuals because it promotes ethical ideas of spiritual growth and community involvement, insinuating that they provide “A loving home” (Perloff 42). Perloff describes *The Cult of Persuasion, Coercion, and Social Influence,* in this section it describes how cults are perceived to function. To most individuals the knowledge in this section is the connection most people have when they think of a cult, this could explain why most people have negative associations in their mind when it comes to Scientology. Individuals are persuaded to inquire more information about the religion through advertising of Scientology that promises a positive experience for those who decide to join. Like the Jonestown cult which followed their charismatic leader, Jim Jones, Scientologists influence others through their display of devotion to L. Ron Hubbard’s teachings. With his creation of a religion based on immortality, it is fair to say that Hubbard conveys that his teachings and procedures have “Supernatural powers” that will free an individual spiritually. Coercion is used by a persuader to imply that harm will come to an individual if they do not choose to do or believe what the persuader says. Scientologists persuade those who might have a difficult time finding their purpose to seek them out and grow spiritually within their Church offering that the negative consequence is that a person could not reach the level of clear if they do not complete the different OT levels. The negative consequence of being shunned by family members is also apparent through the lens of other’s experiences within the coercion tactic. It is not too difficult to see how one might view Scientology in a negative light and disagree with its persuasion tactics.

In conclusion, Scientology is a complex religion to consider, but it might be easier to see how the religion functions after reviewing this research. Persuasive tactics are used in various ways to encourage others to join but the religion is viewed by others as a negative Organization. Individuals have had good and bad experiences throughout their time in Scientology, which can be interpreted by how it has affected the Individual in their life.

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