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Scientology: The Religion of Religions

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Religion is the force that drives many of the actions of the masses of the world. It is an identity stronger than patriotism. It is the core essence of faith within all people. Religion holds the power to control, brings one inner peace, yet simultaneously catalyzes the catastrophic effects of war and violence from controversy. Religion is one of the most cherished and treasured aspects of societies worldwide, and throughout history, faiths have been altered, abolished and added. These changes have caused war and peace, unity and division, and realization and ignorance. Strong beliefs have sparked controversy, and that controversy has created a perpetual unrest since the dawn of time, from the ancient Greeks and Romans to the present-day Middle East. As new belief systems are created, the characteristics of religions and cults, which vary in terms of orthodox and unorthodox, have shifted to encompass the characteristics of the new belief system. Although the motives for creating Scientology are questionable, the fact that Scientology's teachings themselves are religious cannot be overlooked because Scientology encompasses the philosophical teachings of most other religions, it must be seen as a separate teaching from its followers' actions, and it portrays a monastic style of scriptural study.

L. Ron Hubbard founded the contemporary religion Scientology, which provides much more logical than superstitious answers for many questions related to self-improvement. The basic principles of study within Scientology refer to many questions about one's own origins and the purpose of life. In this belief system, the soul, or thetan, is considered separate from the body, and in order to achieve eternal bliss, the soul must be rid of engrams, desires and experiences from past lives, through the process of auditing (Hubbard 27). Since Hubbard's initial claim of

self-realization and the spread of his new religion, controversy regarding the religion's legitimacy has grown, and those who debate this belief system return to the question of what a cult truly is and if Scientology must be considered a cult or religion (Currie 1).

As cults are quite similar to religions, cults are contemporary religions created by and devoted to a living leader with strict dogma. Unlike the term religion, the term cult has a negative connotation, and this juxtaposition has been used to exaggerate the common uses of these terms. The term cult did not originally have a negative connotation, but the term's meaning was altered during the 1960's, a time of increase in new religious movements. Negative ideas of these groups were spread and exaggerated through the media's publicity, which has changed today's definition of cults. Today, this term is commonly used for organizations that promote secluded life styles and complete control over followers (Urban 357). Most often, cults are associated with the idea of unorthodoxy in comparison to other religions (Pike 1). Unorthodoxy is a very broad term, but when used in comparison with a certain religion, unorthodoxy describes a rebellious action that strays away from that religion's central dogma. If Scientology is another religion and was founded as a religion, it cannot be unorthodox, for the term unorthodoxy is used relative to other religions and not for a religion itself. If Scientology is to be considered a religion in the way society defines religions, it must be compared to religions in existence.

Although Scientology has faced much criticism when compared to existing religions, its promising aspects are supported by its many followers worldwide. Many sources say that only 200,000 followers are present globally, but other estimates suggest that millions of followers are dispersed internationally. Because this belief system is so prominent and is truly an existing force, one cannot trivialize its meaning and influence. The presence of Scientology as a religion amongst other world religions cannot be questioned, for it is already in existence, and with many

followers and supporters, it is not possible to immediately deny Scientology of its importance and validity. Scientology, be it a religion or a cult, does indeed hold a bona fide presence among the world's religions; therefore, questioning Scientology's existence is simply unthinkable (Currie 1). The large global following gives this debate much relevance, as it gives one the opportunity to question current religious views from a more open-minded perspective.

Having this outward viewpoint is imperative, as one must be able to detect the truth from the media's usually skewed interpretations. Since the public discovered that Tom Cruise and John Travolta are Scientologists, the media has been spewing article upon article about the topic. As many are dilettantes on the subject of Scientology, the easiest form of information is the media, which is usually biased, conveying exaggerated ideas. The HBO documentary, *Going Clear*, investigates many celebrities' relationships with the Church of Scientology, accusing Scientology of holding far too much control and involvement in these celebrities' lives and careers (Yahr 1). This topic must be discussed for those who desire to join the Church of Scientology, as one should have a proper understanding of a certain religion before becoming a follower. Because the media holds much power over the masses, Scientology's current leader, David Miscavige has been accused of controlling Scientology's celebrities in order to recruit members and raise money through the celebrities' fame (Yahr 4).

Science typically involves cold, hard, straightforward facts, but adding science to religion creates a stigma of control and secrecy, reducing the necessity for faith. Although many of Scientology's beliefs are strictly scientific, the facts have a sense of mysticism. As Scientology is very secretive, the facts that are seemingly well known have been proven inaccurate, such as the follower count stated by the Church of Scientology. The Church of Scientology states that approximately a million Scientologists live throughout the world, when "other sources have

reported a ... membership of fewer than 200,000 people”, thus causing skewed facts to cause the ignorant to fall for many of Scientology’s lies (Currie 1). Unlike most religions that are straightforward and less secretive, in the time of the Cold War, Scientology’s surveillance and security “rivaled and in fact mirrored that of the FBI”, causing much suspicion about this secretive and private group (Urban 356). Hubbard claimed that the FBI “acted illegally ... when it seized ... material allegedly stolen [from] ... government files”, but the United States District Court did indeed rule that the FBI’s actions were illegal, as their search warrants were too broad, supporting Hubbard’s claim (“Back in Time...” 1).

In contrast to existing religions, Scientology’s auditing processes do not come without a price. Auditing is the suggested way one can clear the thetan of engrams, and that itself provides a large profit for Scientology. These auditing steps are long and expensive, leading one toward what Scientologists call self-realization, termed the Clear, and this high cost outweighs the religious fulfillment of Scientologists. Aside from the process itself, the E-meter instrument used in auditing alone costs over \$4,000.000 (Urban 370). Hubbard himself stated that “if a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion”, which is exactly what Hubbard did. Scientology has indeed “grown into an enterprise today grossing an estimated \$100 million a year worldwide”, proving Hubbard’s original statement true (Methvin 1-2). Since many aspects of his religion are based on earning money, how can one know if Scientologists have all been brainwashed into mandatory donations? Though these aspects of Scientology are very much like those of a cult, and in some aspects immoral, Scientology itself cannot be denied the identity of a religion because other established religions also survive as a result of its followers’ financial contributions.

Secrecy and mysticism, similar to that of Scientology, lie in the hearts of all religions, be it called “the ‘Way of the Tao that is unnamed’ or the ‘secret rebirth of Christian mystics’”, and although these secrets are present, the identity of these religions is not denied (Urban 360). Although religions may be seemingly different, they are all essentially the same. Since the dawn of time, it has been seen that humans create deities or symbols to explain the unexplainable events in nature (Fontaine 6-7). Even in a modern world of scientific facts and explanations, people continue attending sermons at church or prayers at temples. Religion remains a vital part of society. Why? Why is religion so important when scientists have answers for most all of the world’s phenomena? Fulfillment. As always, human nature seeks fulfillment and answers for what science cannot answer (*Self-Unfoldment* 18-19). If most religions and belief systems contain answers that cannot be proven, then Scientology cannot fit in any other category than that of a religion.

According to the scholar Friedrich Max Muller’s theory on the origin of religion, religion was first created to give supernatural meaning for the mystical properties of life. In their most basic forms, all world religions, including Scientology, have been created for the same purposes (Fontaine 7). If religions are faith systems created by humans, then they are all merely different paths toward the same goal. All the holy texts in existence are essentially the same (*The Science of...* 5). Whether it be Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Scientology, all religions hold a belief in a self-realization of some sort in order to gain an understanding of truth and eternal bliss. If that realization is the core foundation behind all religions, then Scientology too is a religion (Swahananda 14). According to *A New Slant on Life*, one of the texts considered holy in Scientology, Hubbard explains that “the mission of Scientology is to raise the knowingness of [the] spirit to such a degree that it knows ... of [its] own identity”, which is a similar principle to

those of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity (Hubbard 27). Although Scientology does indeed use a more mathematical approach, it holds the same aspects of other religions in merely a different format, just as the other religions of the world have merely trivial differences (Hubbard 25).

Although the established religions are quite similar overall, the main reason for how skewed they have become is a result of the portrayal of them by the media, as the media many times reports false ideas of the religions. Just as one does not identify all Christians by the Crusaders or all Muslims by terrorists today, Scientology must not be identified by the wrongdoings of the Scientologists worldwide. As religion is an inherent set of ideals and rituals toward a supreme power, Scientology cannot be denied the label of a religion (Fontaine 1). If one is to use this definition of a religion, then the original meaning of a cult, which was actually positive prior to the 1960's, would apply to Scientology. The debate itself on whether or not Scientology is a religion is mainly a debate on the positive and negative terms, respectively, religion and cult. As the modern connotation of a cult is negative and the meaning of religion has always been positive, the cause of the debate itself has been based on the actions of Scientologists rather than the original philosophy.

As the characteristics that define a religion are all based on non-worldly explanations to life, religion is not an identity defined by the actions of the religious group. The term cult, unlike the term religion, is merely a way to negatively describe a belief system. If people of cults identify their belief system as a legitimate religion and not a cult, then the identity lies in the believer. If anyone were to believe that a religion was a cult, calling the belief system a cult would not define it as a cult, for there is no set definition of a cult in existence (Pike 1). Mere actions of the followers of a belief system do not deem that belief system is negative because the belief system itself is separate from the followers (Fontaine 1).

To find the real meaning behind the religions of the world, one usually turns to the idea of pilgrimages or seclusion to reflect upon the meanings of life and how they apply to the world today, and the most well-known and usual form of this purely orthodox way of practicing religion is monasticism. The key aspect of monasticism is seclusion from daily life in order to completely follow a religion (Falk 1). One of the major accusations toward cults or seemingly cult-like belief systems, such as Scientology, is a secular lifestyle. This secrecy and solitude sparks much controversy and inquisition, as many fear the control over the followers that forces them to give up attachments like family and work (Pike 1). Although many believe this secretive or secluded lifestyle is one only that of cults, it has been present since 500 B.C. as practices of religions that are yet respected in today's society (Falk 1-2). Monasticism has been present in Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism from the very origin of those religions, and these monastic organizations are questioned less than the communes of cults (Pike 1). In the monasteries and convents of Christianity, the nuns and monks were to swear poverty, chastity, and obedience. Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, enforced Buddhist monks to follow similar rules of self-deprivation from materialistic desires (Falk 2). Since these practices are so similar to the secluded lifestyle of Scientology, then how can Scientology be defined as a cult based on such accusations? If religions of the world hold the same aspects of Scientology, then how can Scientology not be considered a religion?

If a religion itself is separate from its followers' actions, then Scientology is a religion. It is a fact that most religions hold monastic aspects of seclusion, which allows Scientology to be termed a religion. If most religions of the world are inherently the same, and Scientology values the same ideals, then Scientology is indeed a religion. How can one question the legitimacy of a religious entity as a result of disbelief? If everyone in the world were to look at every other

religion other than his or her own, then would all other religions seem to be an unorthodox cult? This debate as well as all other religious debates are based on perspective, and perspective shifts with one's faith and core beliefs. If Scientology has the same ability as Christianity, Islam, or Hinduism to fulfill the unrest in one's heart, so be it. If a religion is a system of faith, a core set of values, a source of hope for so many, and those aspects do reign tall in Scientology, then who is to deny Scientologists of that fulfillment? Scientology deserves and does indeed hold a place among the religions of the world, and whether society wishes it to be destroyed or wishes it to be exalted, that place will and will always be righteously theirs.

"Back in Time: Religion (1977)." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web. 20 Oct. 2015.

This article from *World Book* provides an objective viewpoint on the many controversial events that have included modern religions or cults. It includes information on cults other than Scientology, but the information helps the reader look away from only the subject of Scientology. This source offers pure information separated from any bias, and that gives a clearer window to read about the information on Scientology. As it includes information on questionable occurrences by many different suspicious groups, one does not have a biased viewpoint on the information relevant to writing a research paper.

Although this article only includes a small amount of information on Scientology, the information is given in an unbiased approach. When one is writing a research paper from a biased and almost opinionated point of view, unbiased information is key. This sort of factual information is essential because it is a rare form of finding information on a topic so controversial as Scientology's identity. As it states both sides of Scientology's battles against the U.S. government, it is up to the reader to create opinions or perspectives of the text.

The text's unbiased approach is refreshing, and when one would be in need of evidence for either side of the issue, this article is handy. As versatile as the article is, it also provides room for interpretation. Since the article itself has not been skewed or misinterpreted, one can use the facts to support either side of the argument. The article can be used to support the ideas of already biased evidence, which gives the writer credibility.

Publications West, 1975. Print.

The book *Self-Unfoldment* offers an introspective and logical view of where humans fit in the world. Although it is written by a Hindu saint, the author himself was originally an atheist. As he once questioned the meaning of religions in general, Swami Chinmayananda takes the purpose of religion to a very logical and straightforward level. The book itself is not specifically a holy text, and it is not confined to only one religion. The text itself is applied to better understand the meanings of all religions as a whole in order to find the truth within all religions. The source itself is not biased in the expression of information, but it is explained from the viewpoint of a person who believes in the truth of all religions of the world. Even though it may include spiritual explanations for human nature, the meanings are logical enough for the understanding of all people of any religious or spiritual beliefs.

This analytical viewpoint is imperative to be present when one tries to identify a seeming cult as a religion. If what many call a cult is to be called a religion in a clearer voice, the simple, broken down analysis from Swami Chinmayananda is easy to follow. The explanations of religion from a less factual level are key in this issue because religion and faith systems are not easily understood from a mere informational view. As faiths are deeply rooted in human value systems and emotions, one must look at religion from the perspective of a religious person. This source is necessary, for the author is able to believe and look at all religions from the perspectives of people who solely follow that religion.

As Swami Chinmayananda analyzes the differences and similarities of science and religion, the reader is subject to find where cults fit within that spectrum. The selected section of the text itself strictly analyzes the purposes of both science and religion in relation to the world and human nature. Although not all of the book was used in the research paper, reading the

sections on religion give one a better understanding and a clarified view on the definition of the term religion itself.

Chinmayananda, Swami. *The Science of Sciences*. Piercy, California, United States of America: Chinmaya Publications, 2006. Print.

This source is a source with many authors, but the part of the text used is that of the writing of Swami Chinmayananda. As this source is more scientific and spiritual than religious or ritualistic, it provides a spiritual but not superstitious view on how science is useless without religion and how religion is useless without science. This text mainly explains that religion is merely superstition when not accompanied by science. As the full book encompasses the views of many religious and scientific scholars, after reading the text, the full scale on the logistics behind how science and religion intertwine are much clearer.

Unlike many other sources of the bibliography, this source is not purely scientific or religious. This text is a beautiful blend of the two seemingly controversial or different topics, but the dichotomy between the two is not necessary. This source explains to the reader that both aspects of controversial issues must be seen from scientific and religious perspectives. As this source concisely explains the two main questions that are asked in all religions and all versions of science, it is easier to find the mix of both within Scientology's holy books. It is easier to analyze holy books with a source that is far from anything near a holy text.

This source fit very well with the other sources used, as it was written by the same author. Because of the same authors, it was easy to compare the sources together for a better analysis. As this was from the same author, the information was quite similar, but the information could be used differently because of the author's different approach on the same subject. It addressed similar points to my other sources, but since the text took a more scientific view on religion, the information could be applied to the analysis of a belief system that has a questioning identity.

Currie, Sean E. "Scientology." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web 24 Sept. 2015.

This source is another database source, and as it is from an encyclopedia, it is an unbiased article. As it is not from a magazine or online blog, the source is unbiased and merely states simple information on Scientology. The article does not delve very far into Scientology's philosophies, but it merely scratches the surface. Although only a small amount of information is present, the facts are presented straightforwardly. The reader does not have to sort through biased commentary in order to find information. It simply states all the main parts of Scientology's timeline of both positively and negatively seen occurrences.

Much information supports both sides of the issue at hand, but the source does not state that any side of the debate is more important than the other. It could be seen as a biased source if one were to look at the information that was not shown in this article, but there is no proof of bias. As the information was fairly easy to understand, there was no confusion, and it was a good source for basic knowledge on Scientology.

Information from this article is very useful to state basic points about Scientology and its meaning in today's society. Through the research paper, it has been used multiple times, and even though the text itself is extremely short, it holds much information. The facts are pure facts without any commentary, which makes most all the information in the article vital to support opinionated claims about Scientology's identity. Since the source includes information, be it meager, that could be used to support either side of the debate, this article could be used by anyone who were to support the side of Scientology being a cult rather than a religion.

Falk, Nancy E. Auer. "Monasticism." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web. 1 Nov. 2015.

This source is another database source from an encyclopedia, which makes it more factual and historical than opinionated. There is very little commentary present, which gives the article itself much more credibility in information. The text leads the reader through the history and relevance of monasticism throughout the development of many religions, and it touches on monasticism today. As it explains the history, the author skillfully shows the importance monasticism held in the past and currently without creating much bias. As it briefly touches on women's monasticism, the source approaches all aspects of monasticism since the first records of monasticism in most major religions.

Since this source explains the history of monasticism, there is no room or necessity for unnecessary and irrelevant commentary on the subject. Therefore, there is very little bias on the subject. As this topic is hard to opinionate, it is easy to use to support one's opinions in such an argumentative research paper. Because it states historical points in order of where monasticism began instead of when, the organization of the article can be hard to follow. It seems to focus more on European monasticism, rather than Asian monasticism, but that is to be expected, as many texts focus on European civilization.

Although this text is merely informational, it is key in supporting facts. As one of the main accusations toward belief systems that are referred to as cults is a secluded lifestyle, the idea that monasticism has long been present since the dawn of time is extremely relevant. Since this article does not skirt around the seemingly controversial sides of monasticism in major religions such as control and oaths, the text can be used to support even negative views on monasticism. As it is purely historical, it has many versatile uses as evidence.

Fontaine, Carole R. "Religion" *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web. 25. Sept. 2015.

This source contains much relevant information on the religion of history and religions' major characteristics. Although it explains what indeed seems to encompass a religion, it fails to give any secure doctrine that makes a religion a religion. This text also includes examples of the main dogmas of world religions through observing and analyzing similar processes in the three major world religions, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, as well as other branching religions. Since the article explains seemingly simple aspects of religion such as the organization of major religions, the reader can fully analyze the makings of any religion. After looking at the makings of all religions, the origin of religions is key, and many theories are addressed through this article. In the end, the text goes through many main religions of the world, narrowing the key points and core values of each religion.

This article is extremely necessary for the topic of this research paper, as it contains straightforward information on the basic characteristics of a religion. This information is vital in order to prove a belief system is a religion, and with such a daunting task, straightforward and clear information must be used. When using extremely confusing ways of explaining the definition of religion, the reader can easily become lost, which causes the writer to lose credibility. Also, if one is to prove that all religions are inherently the same, then the origins of all world religions must be analyzed. According to this text, most all religions formed for the same reasons in ancient times, and this further supports the similarities of religions in their current forms. When one is to identify a belief system as a religion or deem all religions synonymous, one must look at the earliest beginning and origin of those religions. Since the article takes a more unbiased and unprejudiced approach, which is usually hard to avoid, it is extremely useful for writers in need of evidence. When one is trying to approach all religions

from an open-minded and outward viewpoint, sources like this factual article are imperative to be found. Since this article is an encyclopedia article, it is extremely credible for information on various theories and historical facts. This also explains for the lack of bias in the article.

The facts and theories listed in this text are extremely important to be used to support opinions of those analyzing religion or debating the relevance of Scientology in comparison with those religions. Since this source addresses a wide range of material, the evidence is quite versatile and can be used in multiple ways throughout an argumentative research paper. Since the information is purely factual, it can be used to support either side of the Scientology debate. Without unnecessary and irrational commentary, the length of this text makes every sentence valuable evidence for support.

Hubbard, Ron L. *Scientology: A New Slant on Life*. Commerce, California, United States of America: Bridge Publications, 2007. Print.

This source is quite different from the other sources listed in the bibliography of this research paper, as it is considered a holy text by Scientologists worldwide. This book includes much information on the basic principles of Scientology, delving deeper into the abyss of philosophical information contained by Scientology. As it is written by Scientology's original founder, L. Ron Hubbard, the source is naturally biased toward the side of Scientology. The part of the source used in this argumentative research paper merely explains Scientology's relation with other religions and the fundamental structure of Scientology, going further than the Currie evidence explained further above. Because it is written by the founder of Scientology, the information is credible and less skewed than interpretations of Scientology's foundations by followers and the media alike.

This view on Scientology in comparison with other religions is vital in an argument that Scientology is a religion. As this text was written for religious purposes, it explains the spiritual and religious aspects of Scientology, explaining Scientology's meaning of life and explanations for unexplainable phenomena of the world. Since this text takes Scientology from a more religious than purely cynical scientific approach, it is useful when supporting Scientology. This source shows the writer's credibility in using information about Scientology from a source written by the founder of Scientology himself. The use of this evidence provides for less chances of the use of skewed or exaggerated information.

This source's use is mainly to support other claims by the media that support Scientology in its identity as a religion. As it is a primary source of Scientology, it can be trusted as a pure explanation of Scientology's values. Also, since the text is relatively modern, there is less chance

for the holy text itself to have been rewritten or misinterpreted in any way. Since this source is one in support of Scientology as a religion, it could be mainly used for the side of the argument that states Scientology is a religion. If it were to be used by the opposing side of the issue, the information has a chance of being misinterpreted or skewed through the process itself.

Pike, Sarah M. "Cult." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web. 24 Sept. 2015.

This source, like a few of my other sources found, is from a database as well. It is extremely credible information, for it is an article from an encyclopedia. This text begins with explaining the meaning of the term cult, and it addresses how similar cults are in comparison with the definition of religion. The article skillfully addresses and explains the changing of meaning in the term cult, and how through time the term has received a negative connotation. This text also mentions some modern cults, but it does not mention Scientology. The article itself was relatively useless with the research paper at hand, but it contains some relevant information regarding the definition of a cult.

As the article does not mention Scientology, it is hard to use many times, but the information was necessary when clarifying the definition of cult in comparison to the definition of the term religion as well as the belief system Scientology. The topic is addressed in an unbiased manner because it is from an encyclopedia, and that makes it useful in many different sections of the research paper. Even though this source was used many times to support opinions, the purely informational and unbiased facts are versatile; therefore, the information used was not necessarily repetitive.

Because of the lack of bias and unnecessary or irrelevant commentary, this source could be useful for anyone arguing either side of this debate on Scientology's true identity. Since it provides examples of modern day cults, it could prove more useful for those arguing that Scientology is a cult, as there is a plethora of example of other cults. Those examples could be used in comparison with Scientology to support the idea that Scientology should be identified as a cult.

Methvin, Eugene H. "Scientology: Anatomy of a Frightening Cult." *The Reader's Digest* May 1980: 1-6. Print.

This article on Scientology is from the famous magazine *The Reader's Digest*, and since it is not from a completely factual and credible source, the information portrayed in the article is extremely biased. The author Eugene Methvin is extremely against the acts of Scientology, and she believes that Scientology is a cult and anything but a religion. The information lists occurrence after occurrence and happening after happening to explain and fully analyze every negative aspect of Scientology. There is no counterargument included in the information, which shows no open-minded view from the author.

Since it is mainly written against the topic of the research paper, it is not extremely helpful in supporting one's own position points. As it thoroughly explains the counterargument, it gives a clearer understanding of what the opposing argument is. The information in this article gives examples for what information one must prove incorrect or invalid. Since it is extremely biased, it is not very credible, and the commentary is much more prominent than factual information, there is very little factual evidence to use in a research paper.

Much of this information can be used to support one's own commentary and opinions in the counterargument, but since these points are proven wrong through the argument points, the bias can easily be approached from an opposing angle to the article. This article would be more useful to a research paper addressing the side of the argument that states that Scientology is a cult, rather than a religion. It is less vital in the religious argument toward Scientology, but its main use in this research paper is to fully address the counterargument and the opposing opinions.

Swahananda, Swami. *Mananam: Reflection Upon Truth*. Piercy, California, United States of America: Chinmaya Publications, 2003. Print.

This source is very similar to the other sources used from Chinmaya Mission, but it is by a different author. Although the authors are different, Swami Swahananda uses a very similarly logical and straightforward voice like Swami Chinmayananda. Instead of speaking of religions in general, this source seems to discuss religions in context with Hindu philosophy, which usually analyzes all philosophies. This text mainly clarifies the philosophies in most major religious texts. As the voice of the author is both unbiased and spiritual, it provides a refreshing difference from the unblended sources found in many other databases.

As it explains many world philosophies, it is easier to compare the philosophies with Scientology's holy texts and philosophies. Without the ritualistic influence of religion in the text, it is easier to use evidence from this source to support the points that specifically state that Scientology's philosophy should be observed as a separate entity from the ritualistic parts of all religions in general. If all religions' ritualistic sides are present as a result of the original philosophy, then the most unbiased way of addressing the topic is to view purely philosophical analysis of religions rather than ritualistic interpretations of philosophy.

This text helps one better understand the meaning of religion, and when trying to provide the reader of the research paper with sufficient background information on religions and cults before delving into the counterargument and position points. The evidence from this text was mainly used to support the fact that all religions indeed hold the same values. Since this is a very similar text to the other Chinmaya Publications, one can have multiple viewpoints on the seemingly abstract idea that all religions are merely different paths toward the same goal.

Urban, Hugh B. "Fair Game: Secrecy, Security, And The Church of Scientology." *Journal Of The American Academy of Religion* 74.2 (2006): Print.

This source is a journal written by a professor of religious studies, so the information is very valuable. Since the information is written by an expert who has much research behind his writing, one can know that the journal is exceptionally credible. The text mainly explains the secrecy behind Scientology and its affairs with the FBI during the Cold War in America. The source emphasizes on Scientology's more cult-like aspects, but it does not straightforwardly deny Scientology of the identity as a cult. The text explains in depth reasoning as to what controversial legal issues originally gave Scientology a bad political name as a mainly financial enterprise. It seems to hold a bias that Scientology is more cult-like than religious, but the source itself does not clearly state the position point of the author.

Although this source is slightly biased, the information is stated objectively and is purely factual, which makes the source very valuable. It is a versatile source, but it does include commentary and opinion starters, which also helps the writing process. Much information from this text is highly historical, but the way the information is in a crisp and clear tone. This makes the source useful to support claims on either side of the Scientology identity debate. It is a valuable source because unlike many other chosen sources, this text's focus is factual information from history. Because this history is specific to Scientology's political timeline, the one can better understand the change in Scientology's legal positions over time.

This source was used many times to support claims in both the focus argument's position points as well as the counterargument, and although there are slight hints of bias in the text, the information presented in the journal is versatile and can be shifted to support either side of the Scientology identity debate. As the side of the issue in this research paper is that Scientology

should be considered a religion, information on the few winning court cases of Scientology were used to support that even the government finds Scientology worthy of the status of religion. This source is vital to give credibility and emphasize that even in the technical world of law, Scientology has been deemed a religion rather than a cult.

Yahr, Emily. "How Scientology controls John Travolta and Tom Cruise, accor." *Style Blog*. The Washington Post, 30 Mar. Web. 27 Oct. 2015.

<<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/style-blog/wp/2015/03/30/how-scientology-controls-john-travolta-and-tom-cruise-according-to-going-clear/>>.

This source is an article from a blog, and this blog is focused on the HBO documentary *Going Clear*, and the documentary's analysis of Scientology's control over two popular celebrities: John Travolta and Tom Cruise. The blog entry focuses on the controlling aspects of Scientology, be those claims real or phony. Since it merely analyzes the suspicions of Scientology controlling celebrities, there is no hard information or evidence that proves this source credible. This article is extremely biased, and after doing research into Scientology in other sources, one can see that many imperative facts have not been addressed in this article. Although the bias is extremely prominent, the article itself holds much information on the accusations that make Scientology seem cult-like to the general public. Since the general people of today's society look to the media for most information because it is simply easier than research, addressing Scientology's effect on celebrities is necessary. Since most people today only know of Scientology from the media, this view of the topic is extremely relevant and makes an educated discussion on the topic all the more important.

This source was useful because it could be used multiple times to explain to the reader of the relevance of the topic, even if the reader is an educated person who would not judge controversial topics with mere information from the media. Since it is a source from a blog, the text is not the most credible, but the lack of credibility gives one a better understanding of the opposing side and the ideas of those who oppose Scientology's religious identification. Also,

since the source is very biased, there are many important topics that could have been introduced in the source. There is no clear acknowledgment of the counterargument in this source.

The main purpose of this source was to have a clearer understanding of the opposing side of this research paper. Also, this blog entry is an imperative type of source because it is a less educated source than the previous sources. It is almost a representation of the masses and general society who fall for completely skewed information. Since this blog does not even address the counterargument, it would not be useful for the position points supporting Scientology's religious identity, but this would be extremely helpful for a research paper on the opposing topic to support claims that Scientology's controlling aspects are much more important in the identity of Scientology.

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