

Hubbard was not a scholar

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Hubbard was not a scholar

L Ron Hubbard was a bright man with a talent for 'sounding' educated. In reality, Hubbard was not well read in the academic subjects he pretended to have mastered. According to Hubbard's first wife Sara, Hubbard was a "cut and paste" scholar who plagiarized encyclopedias and abridged texts in order to pass himself off as a learned man.

He was too erratic. He was too neurotic to sit down and study. He never went into anything in depth. He would pick up the jargon. He was a dilettante.

Source: *Corydon, Bent*. [Messiah or Madman?](#). 1987. p. 290.[1]

To impress audiences, Hubbard had a constant habit of making false references to philosophers and philosophy. Hubbard bragged that his ideas surpassed all the great thinkers, name-dropping individual philosophers to suggest he was deeply familiar with their work. Since most general audiences have little background in philosophy, it's probable Hubbard expected few would call his claims into question.

It is significant that Mr. Hubbard never made references to original philosophical texts. Given Hubbard's flamboyant ego and penchant to impress audiences, it's hard to imagine him mastering original texts like Plato's "Phaedrus" and NOT referencing them directly.

Whatever knowledge Hubbard had of philosophy was gained by skimming popular books and encyclopedias, In fact Hubbard dedicated "Dianetics" to the historian Will Durant. Durant's popular "Story of Philosophy" likely being a favored source of Hubbard's plagiarism of philosophy. Interestingly, Hubbard's references to philosophy only include 'thinkers' outlined in Durant's work and his indictments of philosophy rarely fall on anyone not included in Durant's books.

It also seems that Hubbard preferred to skim easier textbooks rather than read more in depth works.

According to one biographer, Hubbard:

...complained that the contemporary Encyclopaedia Britannica was too difficult for him, it was written by experts for experts, so he used the pre-World War One edition... This parallels his self-confessed method of story research, described in a 1930s article called "Search for Research." He would read the Britannica entry, and then skim through any readily available books referred to in the entry's bibliography.

Source: *Atack, John*. [Part 9 Chapter 1: The Founder: A Piece of Blue Sky](#). 1990.[2]

"Education and Dianetics"

Hubbard's limited knowledge of philosophy and his method of co-opting the subject for personal aggrandizement is made clear in these examples from his 1950 lecture, *Education and Dianetics*.

In it, Hubbard says:

Nobody ever bothered to point out to Kant that he too was human, so what he was writing about was obviously way beyond the bounds of his own experience—so of course he couldn't know anything about it. This reductio ad absurdum of his own argumentation—if somebody had had brains or nerve enough to have done it 162 years ago—would not have left the whole subject of epistemology rotten for 162 years.

Actually the reason Dianetics has suddenly come into this society depends on that pivot point. It is the fact that 162 years ago Hume, Locke and Kant decided that they were going to delineate the basic laws of all philosophy and particularly epistemology. And when they got through, it was so resounding, and everybody was so frightened, that nobody thought for 162 years in this field.

Source: L. Ron Hubbard. [*Education and Dianetics*](#) (Transcript). November 11, 1950.[\[3\]](#)

These two paragraphs reveal Hubbard's typical m.o. Setting up famous thinkers as a "straw men", Hubbard claims the superiority of his work, "Dianetics". Inevitably, Hubbard's factual references to Hume, Locke, and Kant are incorrect and misleading.

Immanuel Kant never collaborated with Hume and Locke's attempts "to delineate the basic laws of philosophy". David Hume and John Locke were 'empiricists' distrustful of Kant's "metaphysical" approaches. This makes these three an unlikely trio and as such it's doubtful that any one was ever "frightened" by these philosophers.

Hubbard's lecture continues:

Therefore we have 162 years of accumulated data which has never been sorted out. You pick up 162 years of accumulated data, integrate it and give it a good solid testing, and you can't help but come up with something that will practically shake the society, because you have 162 years of backlog of smart people. Yet not one of them had ever thrown away formalized epistemology. They were still in the state of mind of "the laws have all been drawn up on this so we're not going to touch it anymore.

Source: L. Ron Hubbard. [*Education and Dianetics*](#) (Transcript). November 11, 1950.[\[3\]](#)

Hubbard consistently indicts philosophy for failing to perfect society, misrepresenting philosophers, throughout history, as somehow holding the reigns of power. Using this conceit, Hubbard presents himself as the first philosopher to solve the world's problems.

Ironically, in the period Hubbard cites in these paragraphs philosophy had a rather profound impact. In the 162 years comprising the 19th and early 20th century, radical changes in political structures, social organization, concepts of democracy, materialism, individual rights, and jurisprudence were fostered by such thinkers as: Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, J. S. Mill, Arthur Schopenhauer, S. Kierkegaard, Frederiech Nietzsche, Auguste Comte, William James, Ludwig Wittgenstein, E. Durkheim and F. H. Bradley to name a few.

It's notable that Mr. Hubbard's guiding principle for Scientology, "The Greatest Good For The Greatest Number of Dynamics" is plagiarized from Jeremy Bentham's "Utilitarian" catch-phrase "Greatest Good For The Greatest Number". Bentham and J.S. Mill's normative ethics had enormous influence on the laws and institutions of western society in this period that Hubbard denigrates.

Karl Marx and Charles Darwin also lived during the 162 years that Hubbard had deemed moribund. However, it's rather hard to picture these men as the 'stuck-in-the-mud - backwards' thinkers Hubbard portrays as:

...still [stuck] in the state of mind of "the laws have all been drawn up on this so we're not going to touch it anymore.

Source: L. Ron Hubbard. [*Education and Dianetics*](#) (Transcript). November 11, 1950.[\[3\]](#)

Nonetheless, Hubbard claims that the failed notions of these 162 years became a pivotal point and the "...reason Dianetics has suddenly come into this society..." Touting his own intellectual superiority Hubbard concludes *Education and Dianetics* by discrediting every thinker from the period:

...if somebody had had brains or nerve enough to have done it 162 years ago—[they] would not have left the whole subject of epistemology rotten for 162 years.

Source: L. Ron Hubbard. [*Education and Dianetics*](#) (Transcript). November 11, 1950.[\[3\]](#)

It would seem that for all those years, philosophic 'epistemology' had been waiting for Mr. Hubbard to push aside Bentham, Marx, et. al. and (in Tom Cruise's words) "clean this place up"!

Mr. Hubbard's lecture, *Education and Dianetics* typifies the manner in which Mr. Hubbard manipulates the subject of philosophy to elevate himself and the false claims of Scientology. Hubbard names a famous thinker and then fabricates a rhetoric to enlarge his own point.

Hubbard: Philosophically superficial?

Mr. Hubbard's references to philosophy are rarely accurate and could be deemed to be superficial. For a man pushing a reputation for profound intellect, there is startlingly little evidence to his reading habits. There are no footnotes in "Dianetics" or other books Hubbard wrote. Only three serious texts are mentioned in the many Hubbard biographies, Machiavelli's "The Prince", Alfred Korzybski's "General Semantics" and several essays by Sigmund Freud.

Hubbard's favorite reading material, which he devoured, were pulp fiction novels, the same genre he himself authored.

The only subject Hubbard studied lifelong and closely, appears to be magic and the occult. 'On the lam' in the 1980's, Hubbard spent hours in the Library of Congress researching occult materials. Hubbard was also a lifelong follower of the Satanist, Aleister Crowley, reading and referencing Crowley's writings throughout his career.

Aside from these works, the evidence suggests that Mr. Hubbard was not heavy reader, but rather a collator of encyclopedia articles and reference texts.

Biographer, John Atack said of Hubbard:

He would read the Britannica entry, and then skim through any readily available books referred to in the entry's bibliography. The story had to be written in a couple of days, so research had to be fast. Whole sections of Scientology seem to have been fashioned in a similar way. The original Dianetic techniques can be derived almost entirely from three short Freud lectures.

Source: *Atack, John. [Part 9 Chapter 1: The Founder](#), A Piece of Blue Sky*. 1990. [\[2\]](#)

Former accolyte, Bent Corydon wrote of Hubbard:

... the extent to which he borrowed from others - "cut and pasted" - takes much of the luster from his claims of originality.

Source: *Corydon, Bent. [Messiah or Madman?](#)*. 1987. p. 290. [\[1\]](#)

In actuality, throughout most of his life, Hubbard had little time to read academic texts. He spent innumerable hours writing pulp fiction, as well as the voluminous tracts and policy letters pertinent to Scientology. Hubbard was a driven entrepreneur, traveling, giving lectures, and promoting his money making ventures. He was a 'hands on' manager of his enterprises, disinclined to delegate much authority to others. These activities, along with Hubbard's lifelong drug abuse, mitigate against the likelihood that he devoted much time to study.

Hubbard was a promoter. A man with abundant energy, a vivid imagination, and a relentless drive to succeed. Hubbard was not a scholar and not even especially well read. Caroline Lettke wrote that Hubbard 'cobbled up' whatever ideas he found, probably the best summation of this "intellectual".

References

1. ↑ [1.0 1.1](#) *Corydon, Bent. [Messiah or Madman?](#)*. 1987. p. 290. [\[External Link\]](#)
2. ↑ [2.0 2.1](#) *Atack, John. "Part 9 Chapter 1: The Founder", [A Piece of Blue Sky](#)*. 1990. [\[External Link\]](#)
3. ↑ [3.0 3.1 3.2 3.3](#) L. Ron Hubbard. *Education and Dianetics* (Transcript). November 11, 1950. Archived at: Mediafire. [\[External Link\]](#)

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