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Religious Deprogramming and Subjective Reality*

Byong-suh Kim

Montclair State College

Unlike the psycho-physical interpretation of the Pavlovian approach (Hunter, 1953; Hinkle and Wolffs, 1956) or psychoanalytic notions (Lifton, 1961; Meerloo, 1956) on thought reform, we contend in this paper that contemporary religious deprogramming of American young "cultists" may be best analyzed in terms of ego-identity change as suggested by Schein (1961). The ego-identity change occurs in interaction with "significant others" who provide a unique plausibility structure through three specific stages: a shock treatment of "defreezing," "protective" or "coercive" persuasion to eliminate "floating" influence of the "cultist mind-control," and readjustment of the changed subjective reality to the larger society. A set of data was collected through intensive interviews with 17 deprogrammed youths and a few deprogrammers and rehabilitators, and through participant observations in the deprogramming-rehabilitation sessions. The data then were used as illustrative and interpretive materials in support of our contention.

Problem

This paper examines "religious deprogramming" as a social construction of subjective reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that subjective reality can be transformed and that in a nearly total transformation ("alternation"), the individual switches the worlds of subjective realities.¹ Religious deprogramming in this paper is understood as a process bringing a person the total rejection of those attitudes, beliefs and practices of a religious group or "cult" of which the individual was previously a loyal member. The deprogramming then may be seen as an alternation process through which one is led to dismantle and disintegrate the nomic structure of his/her subjective reality and, then, switches to another world—a new or the previously held reality.

My discussion in this exploratory study will be focused on what is apparent and what is concealed in the process of religious deprogramming. While the manifest objective of deprogramming explained by parents is to "rescue their children who have been 'brainwashed' in the cult and became incapable of making rational decisions," the latent function of deprogramming might be viewed as religious deconversion and reconversion—in other words, a process of social construction of subjective reality. This can be best examined through analysis of (1) the basic elements which constitute the plausibility structure of

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¹Berger and Luckmann in their work *The Social Construction of Reality* distinguished two basic types of realities: objective reality and subjective reality. In this paper, I took the concept of subjective reality as an analytical tool. For more detailed discussion on the concept, see Berger and Luckmann (1967:129-183).

religious deprogramming, and (2) the form and content of interaction in religious deprogramming.

Methods

Deprogrammers and rehabilitators generally perceive a "cult" as a deceptive and evil movement through which people are misled, "mind-controlled" and turned into robots of the cult masters. In this study, however, cult is defined in terms of a religious group that is characterized by intensive search for a mystical experience, presence of a charismatic leader with a tightly organized chain of command, beliefs and rituals which drastically deviate from those of the conventional religions and rigid behavioral guidelines. In this sense, I included four specific groups whose former members were the subjects of this study. They are the Unification Church, Hare Krishna, Children of God, and The Way of God.

Contemporary deprogramming started as a means to "rescue" sons and daughters of some parents from what are generally perceived as "deviant" religious groups, or "arcane cults." The drastic action which usually includes "kidnapping" and physical confinement during deprogramming and rehabilitation sessions takes place on the alleged notion that members of "arcane cults" were "mind-controlled" and turned into "zombies" of the cult masters. Such religious deprogrammings raise serious and complex issues—religious liberty, legality of conservatorship for deprogramming or illegal "kidnapping" by parents and deprivation of civil rights, brainwashing of sectarian groups.²

Subjects and Data

The data for this study were collected from several sources. A set of data was gathered primarily through intensive interviews with 17 youths on their deprogramming and rehabilitation experiences. The interviews were based on the open-ended questions unstructured, yet, focused on three specific stages of ego-identity change which they supposedly experienced when "fully deprogrammed": "unfreezing," "changing," and "refreezing" (Schein, 1961).

Of the 17 subjects interviewed 6 were being rehabilitated at the time of interview, 4 have been fully "rehabilitated," 3 were "healthy" enough to work as deprogrammers, and 4 were "recidivists" who escaped and returned to their cult while being detained and deprogrammed. Of those interviewees, 14 were former or present members of the Unification Church of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and each of the remaining 3 was a member of Hare Krishna, Children of God and The Way of God.

Additional informations were gathered through participant observations in the rehabilitation processes at the Carriage House, a Rehabilitation Center in Bradford, N.H. I spent four days from March 24 to 27, 1977 in the Carriage House at the Director's invitation. I participated in every phase of the entire weekly rehabilitation sessions. All the lectures and formal discussions were tape-recorded, and ethnographic informations could be freely documented. Ethnographic data from my interviews and observations were also compared

²For detailed information on the controversy of religious deprogramming, see *Deprogramming: Documenting the Issue* (ACLU, 1977).

with affidavits and statements made by those who had been deprogrammed and then returned to their cults.

Plausibility Structure of Religious Deprogramming

A fundamental prerequisite for the occurrence of an alternation process is the existence of what Berger called "plausibility structure" (Berger, 1969). Plausibility structure consists of credible views of reality with "conversation fabric" and moral community through which a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation is provided (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). What, then, constitutes a plausibility structure for religious deprogramming? My data indicate that there are two basic elements which seem to be contradicting each other, yet functioning for deprogramming operations: (1) the *presupposition* that the belief system of the cult member results only from "mind-control"; thus, taking "mind-control" as a point of legitimation, and (2) the *belief system* of the cult member as a substantive target of deprogramming.

Contemporary deprogramming in the United States always presupposes the existence of a preceding process of "brainwashing" or "mind-control" imposed on the youths by the cult masters. The parents and their hired deprogrammers presuppose that the selfhood of their son or daughter has been reframed or "programmed" through brainwashing techniques of the cult leaders. Such a presupposition was most dramatically expressed by Ted Patrick, a widely known deprogrammer, in his book *Let My Children Go* as follows:

Moon's a crook, plain and simple. They're all crooks. You name 'em. Hare Krishna. The Divine Light Mission. Guru Maharaj Ji. The New Testament Missionary Fellowship. Brother Jullius. Love Israel. The Children of God. Not a brown penny's worth of difference between any of 'em . . . You are not dealing with your son at this point. You're dealing with a zombie. You have to do whatever is necessary to get him back (1976:20-21).

Dr. Smith,³ a rehabilitator of the deprogrammed youths said, "to me, it is the greatest obscenity to let our youth be mind-controlled by the cult masters like Moon, losing ability to think. I would rather have my child in the drug scene than in the cult. In the drug scene, she might be easily rehabilitated, but within the cult, it is very difficult to come out" (Interview, 3/21/77). Various former members of the Unification Church also stated that they have been mind-controlled and acted like robots in the cult movement.

Steve E. Lotz who has been deprogrammed after spending over two years as a loyal member in the Unification Church best described such a phenomenon of mind-controlling as follows:

NEDS (New Educational Developments, a front organization of the Unification Church) had almost a complete monopoly on the way I perceived my environment. NED's requirement of total physical and mental involvement in order to be a solid member almost completely restricted my capability to acquire and assimilate any information about the purpose, activities and actions regarding itself and its sister

³All the names in this paper have been changed for the purpose of anonymity unless they have been released in published documents or articles.

organization of the Unification Church. In effect, I was involved in "mind-control" type situations where my perceptions and beliefs were guided and reinforced by NEDs in a certain direction such that I could not gain and understand dissenting perspectives of reality, and in essence had no power to question or change the direction of my life . . . I was under mind-control while a member of NEDs and the Unification Church and this is the reason why I supported the activities of these groups in the past. (A sworn testimony to the Supreme Court of the State of California, 3/1/77).

A. T. Wood, a former leading lecturer of the Unification Church who came out from the Church voluntarily without being deprogrammed also testified to the process of mind-control as follows:

They give 4 or 5 hours of lecture on the Principle every morning and afternoon. It is not really to teach the Divine Principle, but to empty your brains out and confuse you. They are trying to make you see that their picture of the world is real, and the former picture (of yours) is unreal. This is an absolutely intentional design. It wears you down and at the same time, it builds up your pride; that is, they want to build up a sense of pride that you've gone through this. It's like a primitive initiation rite. The more intense the initiation rite is, the more that the people who went through it tend to be bound to the group (Interview 3/27/76).

Those who advocate deprogramming thus point out that isolation of the new recruits from the past life situation, mingling them with the smiling and kind "cultists," and exposing them to a new authority figure, wearing them down physically and mentally, and then lecturing them with new beliefs all produce effects of "mind-controlling."

Robbins (1977) observed the process of legitimation for deprogramming as the following:

The term "brainwashing" is an ideal weapon for legitimating repression because: (1) it can never be disproved (how is the abdication of free will measured?); (2) it implies that authorities are concerned, not with the content of belief but with the manner in which it was induced (they're not suppressing opinion); (3) it implies that devotees are passive victims of conditioning rather than seekers of meaning exercising their constitutional rights.

Although I would not label religious deprogramming as either "repressive" or "rescue," it is correct to state that the assertion of "mind-control" is in fact a major basis for legitimation of deprogramming activities. The deprogrammers, thus, insist on granting conservatorship to parents who want their "children" deprogrammed—a legal arrangement originally devised to protect people—typically, the senile and elderly incompetent to take care of themselves.

To the allegation of "mind-controlling," the sects usually respond with statements that the youth were voluntarily converted and joined with the movements. In an official Newsletter of the Unification Church, for instance, they said, "because of the dramatic transformation in the lives of his (Moon's) followers, some people have accused Rev. Moon of using techniques of mind-control or brainwashing to gain disciples. No doubt racial stereotypes of Orientals play a role in these allegations." Rejecting the mind-control allegation, Judge L. J. Lawarus (NYT 2/19/76) of a California State Appeals Court who overturned the decisions of lower courts said: "We may think it unwise for someone to give up a promising

way of life for a religion. But isn't it their right as young adults" (Newsweek 4/25/77)?

Whether becoming a member of an arcane sect or "cult" is a result of "mind-controlling," or "inspiration," as Moonists assert, one thing seems clear; that is, it is a process of conversion or an alternation—a radical change of an individual's world view accompanied by abandonment of previously held perspectives of the world. It is a fundamental change of one's self-identity resulting from internalization of a new belief system—arcane or not, making him/her confess "I am a completely new person!" This is indeed a religious conversion, in an unusually and tightly controlled situation, exposing the recruits to only one channel of belief, perhaps, through "thought reform techniques" or "heavenly deceptions."⁴ Undoubtedly, the presupposition of "mind-control" is a key element for plausibility structure in which a religious convert could transform his/her subjective reality. A careful analysis of the form and the content of deprogramming and rehabilitation however, shows that a latent, yet, palpable element of the deprogramming plausibility structure is derived from the belief system the deprogrammees hold. Most parents and deprogrammers I interviewed would not admit that their action is in any way intended to change the religious beliefs of their "children." They all profess, however, that they could observe the "brainwashed state of mind in the bizarre behavior of their children in the cult." What they failed to understand and would not consciously admit is the fact that "such bizarre acts" are in fact behavioral consequences of the cult's belief system or a mere ritual expression of doctrinal orthodoxy. Let us now examine the process of deprogramming to discuss the importance of belief as a significant element of the plausibility structure for deprogrammings.

Process of Deprogramming-Rehabilitation

One of the most useful analytical models for the study of coercive persuasion was suggested by Schein (1961). In the symbolic-interactionist tradition of Mead and Cooley, Schein introduced three stages of ego-identity change: *unfreezing*, *changing*, and *refreezing*. Schein explains his formulation as follows:

Unfreezing. An alteration by the agent of influence of the forces acting on the person such that the existing equilibrium is no longer stable. Subjectively one can think of this as the induction of a need or a motive to change; i.e., the person who has been unfrozen with respect to some belief desires to change or abandon that belief.

Changing. The provision by the agent of influence of information, arguments, models to be imitated or identified with, etc., which provide a direction of change toward a new equilibrium, usually by allowing the person to learn something new, redefine something old, re-evaluate or reintegrate other parts of his personality or belief system, etc.

Refreezing. The facilitation by the agent of influence of the reintegration of the new equilibrium into the rest of the personality and into ongoing interpersonal relationships by the provision of reward and social support for any changes made by the person (1961: 119-20, underline is mine).

⁴The concept of "heavenly deception" is frequently used by the Moonist trainers to refer to "telling a lie" for promoting chances of successful proselytization. See Kim (1977).

Unfreezing: There are two ways of arriving at the stage of unfreezing, that is, "opening up one's locked mind" or "beginning to see one's own subjective reality critically." One way is "kidnapping by the parents and their hired deprogrammers" and the other is "picking up" by the police with conservatorship warrants. In both cases, however, forced "abduction" and physical confinement are usual steps for arriving at the unfreezing stage. The following cases are typical examples:

Cathy, 22, a former member of the Unification Church for 2 years, said: One day (March 15, 1977) while I was riding a subway, 2 cops and a sheriff approached me to show conservatorship papers. Suddenly, my parents, brother and brother-in-law came in and carried me down to my father's car. They took me to a motel in New Hampshire and locked me in a room. The deprogrammer named Chuck and my brother verbally attacked me till 2:30 a.m. . . . I could go to the bathroom only with my Mom. All the windows were closed with crank handles removed . . . On Friday, March 18, for the first time I could go out being accompanied by my brother . . . I was very, very angry at them as they confined me for three days . . . (Interview, 3/21/77).

Paul, 20, joined the Unification Church in May of 1975, said: My parents kidnapped me (without conservatorship) while I was walking on the street, and transported me from Kansas to Ohio in the back of a station wagon . . . Taken to a motel room which had been specially prepared for my arrival. The doors were securely locked behind me . . . two locks on the door, two double beds, a chair and a Gideon Bible . . . (Testimony, 1/30/76)

The above two cases of Cathy and Paul exemplify the pattern of arriving at the unfreezing stage of deprogramming which consists of "abduction," "physical confinement" and "verbal attack" without allowance of adequate sleep. What then is the content applied in the early stage of deprogramming? Let us first examine the stories of verbal attack from two Moonists who returned to the Unification Church after being deprogrammed. Pam describes her experiences as follows:

I was mocked, degraded, accused of sexual crimes and prostitution, Bible verses are constantly being hurled at me plus lengthy and boring testimonies of individuals who had been deprogrammed from various other religious groups. Only twice during the entire three days did we carry on even a half-way intelligent conversation. Both of these conversations were quickly terminated by the deprogrammers because various things that individuals said were too supportive of my religious beliefs (Testimony, 1/30/76).

Andy Wilson, another Moonist who escaped during the deprogramming sessions, described his experiences this way:

Ted Patrick (deprogrammer) used a combination of techniques to break one down: 1) rational argument, to get me to admit things he could later twist and use against me; 2) 3rd degree sessions of Mr. Patrick cursing and accusing Rev. Moon of being Satan incarnate, a pimp, a snake, ripping up his picture, and much more, accusing me of being insane, a zombie, a prostitute, and everything under the sun. These often ran 4 or 5 hours at a time, and one night they kept me up 24 hours straight, throwing water on my face if I started to sleep . . . I began to relax, to talk more and more, and to play their game, while internally, my faith was still strong . . . When I asked them any

questions about the deeper aspects of the Principles, they could only argue that it is not Bible . . . Since I could not deny what I knew to be true, and they had no logical arguments to prove it false, I could keep my sanity and strong faith in God, in the Unification Church, and Rev. Moon (Sworn testimony, 1/28/77).

The above two reports of deprogramming sessions illustrate that the unfreezing efforts of deprogrammers by “verbal attacks” were intended to induce motives to change one’s ego-identity as well as to influence the deprogrammees to change their belief system. Obviously, the “verbal attacks” on both psychological and religious doctrinal levels failed to “unfreeze” in the above cases of Pam and Andy.

The following two accounts are from two ex-Moonists who have been successfully deprogrammed and returned to their homes.

Jerry (23) described his experiences this way: I was taken to a motel in Richmond, California. Ted Patrick started to humiliate me, playing childish gesture, (choo, choo, etc.), insulting me with obscene languages. I felt very much bitter . . . I was locked in and a detective (private) guarded me . . . I was very angry. Later, I was moved to a home of my father’s friend in Connecticut and two ex-Moonies worked on me explaining how false my belief in Moon was, especially that “Moon was not a Messiah.” Gradually, I began to realize how false my belief in Divine Principle was (Interview, 2/14/77).

Steve E. Lotz in his Affidavit filed at the California Supreme Court also states:

(when) I was picked up by deprogrammers . . . I was furious—I thought my rights were being violated. I fought them back, finally was handcuffed and put in a car . . . later, I began to think, there might be a whole other valid perspective that I hadn’t been aware of—that I’d been cut off by NED’s (a front organization of Rev. Moon) . . . For the first time, I heard the phrase “religious cult,” I also thoroughly studied mind-control techniques and how they actually entrap the mental processes, and I learned how to differentiate between a religious cult and a true religion (Testimony, 3/1/77).

The above four cases indicate that the deprogrammers in the initial stage of defreezing use two major techniques in order to “crack down the programmed state of mind”: 1) arousal of anger by applying physical discomfort and verbal attack—mocking and insulting, etc., 2) continuous discussions on how false the belief system of ‘the cult’ is in light of the Bible.

At this stage, the deprogrammers attempt to establish two ideas in the mind of the deprogrammees: first, that he/she is a “robot or zombie,” incapable of thinking independently, and, second, that the belief system he/she holds is absolutely false. This is certainly a deliberate attempt to create dissonance. The data further show that “success” (returning to home after being deprogrammed) or “failure” (returning to the “cult” after or during deprogramming) results not from how much anger is aroused, but rather from how much the belief system altered in the deprogramming sessions. Among all the cases I investigated, although a strong degree of anger was aroused for every deprogrammees, those who “succeeded in pulling out all the way” and returned home had undergone change in their belief system. Those who had returned to their “cult” after or during deprogramming did not change their belief in the “cult” doctrine.

Changing: The most potent sources of changing (or alternation) in contemporary deprogrammings are provided through what deprogrammers call "rehabilitation." The data in this section were primarily collected at a rehabilitation center in Bradford, N.H. during my four-day visit (March 24-27, 1977), participating in every major program of the rehab-center. The center is located in mountainous country where the deprogrammed youths are sent to "live and reorient for new life," for three to four weeks.

In most cases, deprogrammed youths are sent to the Center after about three days of intensive deprogramming sessions in a physically confined setting. After being subjected to abduction and "verbal attack" without adequate sleep and rest, the youths are extremely tired and psychologically drained when they arrive at the rehab-center. The following account of Linda, who had been there only four days at the time of my interview, describes the beginning of residence in the Center.

Upon arrival, I was met by Dr. Smith (rehabilitator), his staff (ex-cult members), and other residents who were all very kind to me. Dr. Smith talked with me alone for about an hour. He told me to be honest with him, staff and other youths in the Center, but most importantly, be honest with myself. Next day, after breakfast, Dr. Smith showed us an NBC documentary on Moon Church. In the afternoon, we started Bible Study. I was asked to share our understanding of Biblical verses as the "cult" leaders interpret them. Then he interpreted by his theological points of view. After dinner, I sat in another lecture of Dr. Smith's on "Psychology of Cult." It was very boring and I felt too tired to concentrate . . . the next day, I thought about escaping to my Family (the Unification Church Center). They had everything locked. All the windows, doors, even the telephone. Besides, Bradford, N.H. is in the boondocks. I was constantly watched . . . (Interview, 4/2/77).

As Linda's story indicates, the first attempt by the rehabilitation staffs is to create *trust* between the newly arrived youth and the other residents in the Center. Then Dr. Smith's lecture and discussion on Bible usually follows. As Linda experienced, most of the youth are required to re-evaluate their belief system as soon as they arrive. In such a session for re-examination and re-orientation of the belief system that was held in the "cult," a set of Biblical passages are compared with the Divine Principle of the Unification Church. Later in the second and third day, more detailed Bible study is conducted. One segment of such an approach, for example, is titled as "Stewardship Means."

The Biblical verses used for this approach⁵ according to the Rehab-Director, show what the Biblical concept of work means. This segment of Bible study is clearly aimed at destroying the Moonist concept of Stewardship—"working for the Father, Moon, and for building the Kingdom of God on earth." Undoubtedly, such a Bible study provides the influence of information, arguments and models to show a Biblical concept of work which further provides a direction of change.

⁵Various Biblical verses are used to compare and contrast the concept of work and stewardship between Rev. Moon's doctrine and the Bible. *Time:* worship—Lk. 4:16, Heb. 10:23-25, work—Eph. 4:28, II Thess. 3:6-13 rest. *Talent:* Matthew 25:14-30, James 1:17, Romans 12:4-8, I Peter 4:10, I Corinthians 12:1-14:14. *Treasure:* Malachi 3:6-12, Heb. 7:4-10, Leviticus 27:30-33, Matthew 23:23.

Another segment of the lecture on Bible which is given usually on the third day is specifically designed for destroying and changing the core of the Moonist belief,—namely, “Moon is the Lord of the Second Advent—the Second Messiah.” This lecture is called “Unification Distinction” which consists of three parts as the following:

1. Sinless perfection of believers here and now.
(cf. I John 1:8–2:1,2; Phil. 1:6)
2. World unity (cf. Rev. 13:)
3. Worship of a man, the Lord of the Second Advent
(cf. II Thess. 2:3,4; Rev. 19:20, 20:16; Matt. 24:24)

As illustrated above, all the youths who came to the Center are required to study various sections of the Bible in comparison to the doctrine of the “cult”—usually Divine Principle of the Unification Church. Through such an intensive Bible study, the rehabilitator attempts to show “distorted interpretations and contradictions of the Bible” in Divine Principle. When the Center residents begin to accept new understandings of the Biblical passages in place of the interpretations of the “cults,” there appears a sign of “changing” which is further reinforced by study sessions on “psychology of cult.”

Refreezing: Toward the latter part of the rehab-residency, the youths are requested to re-evaluate and critically examine their past experience of “being mind-controlled,” after going through several hours of study sessions on “psychology of cult” which primarily deals with theories on self-formation of Freud, Rogers and Lifton. While studies on Freud and Rogers seem to be ineffective, Lifton’s theory on “totalism” appears most convincing to the residents in their reaffirmation of the past “self under the mind-control.” The following eight psychological themes of Lifton (1961) are thoroughly discussed and, in fact, the resident youths are urged to recite them.

Milieu Control: the most basic feature of the thought reform environment, the psychological current upon which all else depends, is the control of human communication.

Mystical Manipulation: this manipulation assumes a no-holds-barred character, and uses every possible device at the milieu’s command, no matter how bizarre or painful.

The Demand for Purity: absolute purity is attainable, and that anything done to anyone in the name of this purity is ultimately moral.

The Cult of Confession: an obsession with personal confession. Confession is carried beyond its ordinary religious, legal, and therapeutic expressions to the point of becoming a cult in itself.

The “Sacred Science”: an aura of sacredness around its dogma, holding it out as an ultimate moral vision for the ordinary of human existence.

Loading the Language: the thought-terminating cliché. The most far-reaching and complex of human problems are compressed into brief, highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorized and easily expressed, “language of non-thought.”

Doctrine Over Person: the subordination of human experience to the claim of doctrine. The underlying assumption is that the doctrine—including its mythological elements—is ultimately more valid, true, and real than is any aspect of actual human character or human experience.

Dispensing of Existence: the total environment draws a sharp line between those whose right to existence can be recognized, and those who possess no such right. Totalists thus feel themselves compelled to destroy all possibilities of false existence as a means of furthering the great plan of true existence to which they are committed. (Lifton: 1961, 419-437)

After the study sessions on the basis of Lifton's eight themes of thought reform as described above, one or two movies are shown to illustrate how cult members are being "mind-controlled." Consequently, the interpersonal relationships among the residents intensify and they begin to experience social rewards and support as a result of the awareness that "they had been mind-controlled." The fabric of a new interpersonal relationship which stems from their awareness of common life experience further reintegrates them toward a new or renewed equilibrium with the total society.

Conclusion

Since the publication of E. Hunter's study on Chinese brainwashing (1953), various approaches have been suggested for understanding of thought reform process. While Hunter (1953) and others (Hinkle and Wolffs, 1956) relied on Pavlovian conditioning of psycho-physiological stresses to explain the mechanisms of brainwashing, Lifton (1961), Meerloo (1956) and Moloney (1955) emphasized the psychoanalytic approach which took "guilt-anxiety" as a major psychological factor responsible for thought reform. Although psycho-physical and psycho-analytic approaches may explain the Chinese style of "brainwashing," recently practiced deprogramming of American "cultists" may be more adequately understood in terms of ego-identity change. The ego-identity change as explained by some social psychologists, notably Schein (1961) and Goffman (1959, 1961), occurs in interaction with "significant others" who provide a particular plausibility structure for alternation.

In contemporary deprogramming, the plausibility structure is formed under the firm assumption that the youths in the "cult" are totally "mind-controlled"; thus, an individual became incapable of thinking, behaving and believing independently. The beliefs and attitudes of the youths in the "cult" are, according to the deprogrammers, totally "false" and should be destroyed in order to free the mind controlled by the cult. Therefore, what is actually involved in the entire operation of religious deprogramming is an attempt to remove that belief system which was perceived as the function of the "mind-controlling."

Accordingly, those who abandoned the belief system of the "cult" through deprogramming and rehabilitation could change the ego-identity and switch from the world of the "cult" to the world of total society. In the initial stage of deprogramming, a technique of "anger-arousal" is applied to "defreeze" the controlled mind; yet, a gradual change occurs from intensive learning of the Bible and an awareness of the fact that there are serious contradictions and distortions in the doctrine of the "cult." Finally, in the final stage of rehabilitation, the perception of the old role as a "true believer" of the cult-doctrine is totally removed when he/she admits that such a role was in fact the function of the mind-control of the cult masters. Thus, a "successfully" deprogrammed person regains a viable social role which permits him/her to organize a new

world view, making a meaningful contact with parents, former friends and others as arranged and expected by the total society.

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