



# PRIVATE EYE

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## Literary Review

### A profit without honour

Bare-Faced Messiah  
Russell Miller

Michael Joseph, £12.95  
(copies available from  
Church of Scientology,  
Tottenham Court Road)

CULTS require their members to believe three impossible things before breakfast. But a successful cult's adherents can't afford breakfast because they've given all their money to the guru.

And, of all the gurus in the world, none was as opportunistic, mendacious, paranoid, miserly and psychopathic as Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, inventor of Scientology and Dianetics. Every story he told about himself was a lie — and some were several. He was a "war hero" whose only action was dropping depth-charges on a nonexistent target on his maiden voyage as commander; his only war wounds were imaginary ones, undetectable by Navy doctors. Subsequently he claimed to have healed these "wounds" by superior mental powers.

Homophobe and misogynist, he blamed the women in his life for all his problems — after he'd finished with their bodies and bank accounts. His first wife he simply abandoned, and he denounced his second, bigamous, wife to the FBI for allegedly having communist connections. His third wife he tried to divorce to protect himself when she was gaoled for conspiring to burgle government files.

He amassed a tax-evaded personal fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars, while his followers worked around the clock for buttons. The only salvation for those freezing dupes outside the Scientologists' shops is to recruit more dupes to take their place and fill the coffers of the "church". With the posed innocence of the paranoid, he and his successors invoke the "freedom of religion" to protect their right to cozen, brainwash and cheat.

He and his acolytes have squawked "witch-hunt" at every adverse comment. But then they follow his clear instructions to thwart his opponents by unleashing private detectives and instigating slanders, burglaries and campaigns of harassment that have the infantile malice and in-

dom of religion" to protect their right to cozen, brainwash and cheat.

Miller is objective, providing evidence that Hubbard was not always wrong. For example, he opposed lobotomies and EST — after all, he'd proved with thousands of converts that brains could be damaged without surgical intervention. He also opposed Nixon in 1960 and at around the same time recalled a visit to

Khmer Rouge and the Church Militant.

Despite the "Church's" customary harassment of Miller and its subsequent attempts to litigate the book off the shelves, it has not given the lie to this meticulously documented information. Miller does not theorise, nor even very often moralise. The reader must provide his own interjections, laughter and gasps of astonishment. There is barely a printed tremor of the dimples when Miller recounts how Hubbard, the saviour of the world, successfully stood as the road safety organiser for East Grinstead in 1960.

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hiding, terrified that his super-human powers would not keep him out of clink if the FBI or Inland Revenue got hold of him, Scientologists have been waiting for his reincarnation to provide them with a leader. They need someone who is personally avaricious, who opposes paying taxes, makes impossible and contradictory forecasts, fears women and is sexually predatory.

Any offers?



## BOOKS & BOOKMEN

INDIGNATION is still running high about the preposterous £625,000 paid out by Carmen Callil to her former lover Michael Holroyd for his projected six-volume life of George Bernard Shaw.

Since my references last week to Holroyd's reliance on Princess Michael-style plagiarism, I have been sent some further examples of his questionable habit of passing off as his own passages from the works of Hugh Kingsmill.

Holroyd's *Lytton Strachey* contains a number of highly perceptive remarks about Strachey, but many of them, it transpires, are not his own. For example, on Strachey's *Queen Victoria*:

"His analysis of Albert's character does pierce some way below the surface, and, in portraying a man partially akin to himself he reveals something of his own loneliness."

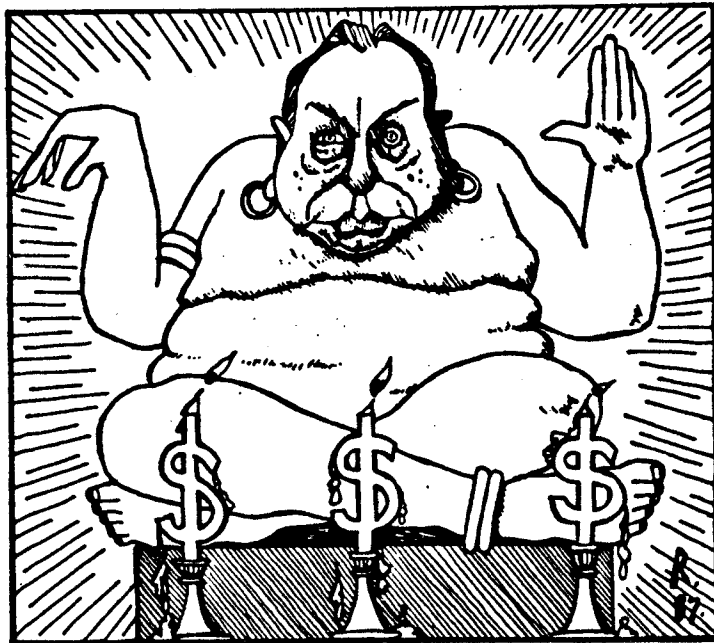
Michael Holroyd  
"Only in the Prince Consort does Strachey pierce below the surface, and in analyzing a man in some ways akin to himself reveal his own melancholy and loneliness."

Hugh Kingsmill,  
*English Review*, 1934

ANTHONY Masters, whose book *Literary Agents: The Novelist As Spy* has just been published by Basil Blackwell, seems to be suffering from an interesting form of Holroyd's Syndrome. Consider the following:

"He [Aleister Crowley] was well dressed and middle-aged with the voice and manner of an Oxbridge don. He said his own grace, inflating Rabelais' 'Fay ce que voudras' (Do what you like) into 'What thou wilt shall be the whole of the law'."

(From *Literary Agents*.)



ventionness of a children's comic book villain.

Equally unsurprising is the rush of gullible Christian clergy to defend the Scientologists as a new religious movement. It is true that cults draw upon the accidental discoveries of mystics and mythogues over the centuries, but Hubbard added to these the modern totalitarian techniques of mind-bending and the marketing skills of a Saatchi & Saatchi to produce a destructive synthesis of the

heaven. He could be forgiven a temporary amnesia as this occurred some 42 trillion years before, and memories — even the happiest — seem to fade with time.

Miller's book doesn't try to explain the success of an obvious charlatan who had often recycled the aphorism that the way to make money is to invent a new religion. Perhaps his success depended on his concentration on the money-raising aspect.

Ever since Hubbard died in