

= Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology =

Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology is a collection of essays and a short story by American Beat writer William S. Burroughs ( 1914 ? 97 ) . First published in 1971 as the short story " Ali 's Smile " , the book eventually contained a group of previously published newspaper articles as well , all of which address Scientology . Burroughs had been interested in Scientology throughout the 1960s , believing that its methods might help combat a controlling society . He joined the Church of Scientology later in the decade . However , he became disenchanted with the authoritarian nature of the organization . In 1970 Burroughs had published a " considered statement " on Scientology 's methods because he felt they were significant enough to warrant commentary . These pieces were later gathered together into Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology , which religious studies scholar Hugh B. Urban describes as a " nonscholarly popular exposé of Scientology " . Burroughs 's texts argue that while some of Scientology 's therapies are worthwhile , the dogmatic nature of the group and its secrecy are harmful .

= = Background = =

Beat Generation writer William S. Burroughs was an avant @-@ garde author whom several important critics consider the most important American writer since World War II . Sometimes called the " Godfather of Punk literature " , he adopted a persona that Matt Theado , a scholar of the Beats , describes as " a tormented but supremely curious person who explored the dark side of the human consciousness . " Burroughs often probed contentious social and political problems with " a cold @-@ blooded , almost insectlike presence " that influenced popular culture as well as literature .

Burroughs believed that readers needed to take an active part in reshaping their own reality through reading . For example , works such as the controversial novel Naked Lunch ( 1959 ) dealt with his concerns regarding " the battle against control , " and Burroughs wrote that others " might see the control that governments , religions , greedy human beings , and their own cravings for drugs , sex , or power often hold over them " . Theado writes that Burroughs saw words as " instruments of control that allow evil forces to impose their will over people " , and he attempted to use words themselves to combat this problem . He wrote in a way that would allow both him and his readers to redefine words and to create new levels of meaning , thereby liberating them from social control .

His concerns about social control and language led Burroughs to write at length about Scientology . He had been interested in Scientology since the early 1960s , having been introduced to the concepts of its founder L. Ron Hubbard by artist Brion Gysin . Burroughs 's early novels emphasized the power of Scientology to combat a controlling society . For example , in both The Ticket That Exploded ( 1962 ) and Nova Express ( 1964 ) , Scientology , along with the cut @-@ up technique , silence , and apomorphine ( which he believed was an extremely effective treatment for heroin addiction ) , allows the characters to resist social control . These works reflected Burroughs 's initial belief that Scientology could be an instrument of liberation from social control , much as he used his own cut @-@ up style of writing . He sought to use cut @-@ ups " to expose the arbitrary nature and manipulative power of all linguistic systems , " and connected cut @-@ ups to the theories of the self expounded by Hubbard 's Dianetics . As religious studies scholar John Lardas explains , " the cut @-@ up method was the evangelical counterpart of Scientology in that it was intended to alter a reader 's consciousness " .

In 1967 Burroughs became a more serious devotee to Scientology , taking several courses and in 1968 becoming what the Church of Scientology calls a " clear " ? a person who has eradicated the harmful influence of their reactive mind by removing engrams , traumatic mental images , from their subconscious through Scientology 's auditing process . In his works , Burroughs represented the process that Scientologists refer to as " clearing " memories as a step towards becoming an active rather than passive member of society . Scientology thus appealed to Burroughs because it " confirmed his belief that consciousness is akin to a tape recording that can be rewound , fast @-@ forwarded , or even erased " . Burroughs believed that Scientology 's practice of auditing had helped him resolve some traumatic life experiences , and " came to regard the E @-@ Meter as a useful

device for deconditioning ". However , he had " growing doubts about some of the other Scientology technology , and grave reservations about their policy as an organisation " . He became frustrated by the authoritarian nature of the organization , and as biographer Ted Morgan writes , " ... had hoped to find a method of personal emancipation and had found instead another control system . " In a similar vein , Burroughs was both intrigued by Scientology 's study of language , but felt distaste for the way it was being utilized :

They [ the Church of Scientology ] have a great deal of very precise data on words and the effects produced by words ? a real science of communication . But I feel that their presentation has been often deplorable and that as a science , a body of knowledge , it is definitely being vitiated by a dogmatic policy .

By 1970 , Burroughs had severed connections with the Church of Scientology . He was eventually expelled from the organization and declared to be in " Condition of Treason " . He became increasingly disenchanted with the group and wrote a series of critical articles published in Mayfair . Burroughs also forced one of their headquarters to relocate by publicizing photos of it .

= = Publication and contents = =

Ali 's Smile , Burroughs 's short story on Scientology , was originally published in a limited @-@ edition run of 99 copies by Unicorn in 1971 . A recording of Burroughs reading the story was simultaneously released . Two years later , Expanded Media Editions issued a revised and enlarged version titled Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology , which contained a series of articles , most of which had been previously published in newspapers and magazines . In 1970 Burroughs had published a " considered statement " on Scientology 's methods because he felt that they were significant enough to warrant commentary . This statement articulates what he calls the group 's " precise and efficient " therapeutic methods , however he also criticizes the authoritarian nature of the institution , describing Hubbard 's statements as fascistic and comparing their internal surveillance methods to that of the FBI and CIA . He also condemns the " unquestioning acceptance " demanded of Scientologists as well as the institution 's secrecy . These pieces were later gathered together into Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology , which religious studies scholar Hugh Urban describes as a " nonscholarly popular exposé of Scientology " . In 1985 , Expanded Media Editions published a bilingual German and English edition .

" Burroughs on Scientology " is an opinion piece originally published in the Los Angeles Free Press on 6 March 1970 . It begins " In view of the fact that my articles and statements on Scientology may have influenced young people to associate themselves with the so called Church of Scientology , I feel an obligation to make my present views on the subject quite clear . " Burroughs states that some Scientology practices have value : " Some of the techniques are highly valuable and warrant further study and experimentation . " He is critical of the Church of Scientology 's organizational policy and organizations in general , and Scientology 's attempts to keep many of its counseling methods secret , and writes " On the other hand I am in flat disagreement with the organizational policy . "

" William Burroughs : Open Letter to Mr. Garden Mustain " was originally published in the East Village Other on 7 July 1970 . The East Village Other introduction to Burroughs ' piece notes that the open letter " is Mr. Burroughs ' final answer to his critics and to Mister Gorden Mustain who attacked him for his position on Scientology in the pages of the L.A. FREE PRESS . In it he asks the inevitable question to be faced by us all , whether we be in a professional status or not : ' We would like to know where Scientology and Mr. Hubbard stand on the Vietnam war , on sexual freedom , militant students , Black Power , pot , Red China , the politics of the American Narcotics department and the CIA . If it comes to a revolution : which side would you fight on ? ' "

" William Burroughs on ' Inside Scientology ' by Robert Kaufman " was originally published in Rolling Stone on 26 October 1972 . It is a book review of Inside Scientology , which was embroiled in a legal controversy . In the review , Burroughs relates his personal experiences as a Scientologist and describes himself as an anthropologist . Burroughs begins by praising Kaufman 's decision to reveal confidential upper @-@ level Scientology teachings in the book : " Mr. Kaufman has shown

real courage in publishing Hubbard 's so @-@ called confidential materials for the first time in Inside Scientology . "

" Letter to Rolling Stone " by R. Sorrell ( Church of Scientology ) was originally published in Rolling Stone on 5 December 1972 . Sorrell wrote on behalf of the Church of Scientology to Rolling Stone , asserting that statements made by Burroughs in his review of Inside Scientology were inaccurate . Sorrell noted that the book had been involved in legal controversy and commented : " I have included here an itemization of these inaccuracies with documentation to show that Mr. Burroughs may be a writer but cannot always be trusted to be an accurate one . "

" Answer to R. Sorrell 's Letter " by William Burroughs is a point @-@ by @-@ point response to Sorrell 's letter in Rolling Stone . In total , Burroughs addresses 28 issues , including " Scientology 's security checks " , Fair Gaming , excommunication , the financial dealings of Scientology , Scientology terminology such as " Wog " , and the efficacy of the E @-@ meter as a lie detector .

" Ali 's Smile " by William Burroughs is a short story originally published by Unicorn in 1971 and later republished in Burroughs 's collection of short stories , Exterminator ! ( 1973 ) . At the opening of the story , Clinch Smith , a former colonial official , is living in an English town overshadowed by a giant slag heap . He is upset when he receives a letter from a Scientologist friend saying that he will " disconnect " from Smith , describing him as a " suppressive person " . A kris hanging on the wall of his room reminds Smith of Ali , whom he had met 30 years ago in Malaya . Ali had been put under a latah spell by an old woman , forcing him to dance in the marketplace . Smith rescued Ali , making the young man his houseboy . Ali returned to the market , however , and ran amok , killing several of the women with the kris . Smith was forced to shoot Ali , and kept the kris as a souvenir . Back in the present , Smith feels compelled to take the kris from the wall and goes to town , where there is a fight going on between hippies and locals , with members of Scientology 's Sea Org in the crowd as well . Smith goes on a killing spree with the kris , which seems to have a life of its own . He stabs Lord Westfield , a Home Office official who has asked a private investigator to infiltrate a Scientology organization , a woman , and several Sea Org members , and then a bystander shoots him dead . Police and more combatants prepare to join the fight . As they do so , the slag heap collapses and buries everyone . At the end , the " ghost face " of Ali smiles over all .

= = Reception = =

In Michael B. Goodman and Lemuel B. Coley 's 1990 bibliography of the works of and criticism on Burroughs , described as " the most comprehensive and up @-@ to @-@ date guide to Burroughs ' primary and secondary materials " , there are no contemporary reviews listed for Ali 's Smile : Naked Scientology .