Read It, April 2015: Progress Report 2



Figure 1: Word Cloud

Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief by Lawrence Wright

This is a quick update. I have finished Lawrence Wright's Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief. I was already somewhat familiar with the history of Scientology, having read many articles on the subject over the years, but Wright's book really takes it to the next level. I found his details about the life of Hubbard and the story of the Sea Organization especially interesting. Since most of my reading on Scientology was done decades ago, I also was not aware of the stories involving David Miscavige. It's also fascinating and disturbing to read about how Scientology now has so many adult members who have grown up in the organization since birth. It's weird to consider the notion of a "cradle Scientologist."

I think it's a very well-researched and interesting book, but I do feel that it suffers just a bit from a fundamental problem: how do you organize such a huge amount of material spanning so many years and about so many people? In order to fit things into chapters organized by theme and specific key people, Wright often sacrifices chronology, so you might find yourself getting confused as the text jump back and forth in time. With so much testimony from so many people, I realize that a single chronology would be very hard to read, because then you'd be jumping constantly between people and places. So I'm not quite sure what

Wright might have done differently; I think he did a heroic job presenting the material, but still find myself wishing it was easier to follow as a story. But even so, I think it is very much worth reading, and I hope that between this book at the HBO movie, Scientology's supporters will have to confront the truth about its past (and present).

The Fox in the Attic by Richard Hughes

I'm now working on Richard Hughes' novel *The Fox in the Attic*. This is a really dense and dark piece of writing and I won't rule out possibly setting it aside to finish later, and moving on with something lighter.

Saginaw, Michigan April 9, 2015

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