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ROSE AND ALEISTER CROWLEY'S STAY IN EGYPT IN 1904
A STUDY OF THE CAIRO WORKING
AND WHAT IT LED TO

BY
PERDURABO ST



FRATER PERDURABO, to whom this revelation was made with so many signs and wonders, was himself unconvinced. He struggled against it for years. Not until the completion of His own initiation at the end of 1909 did He understand how perfectly He was bound to carry out this work. (Indeed, it was not until his word became conterminous with Himself and His Universe that all alien ideas lost their meaning for him). Again and again He turned away from it, took it up for a few days or hours, then laid it aside. He even attempted to destroy its value, to nullify the result. Again and again the unsleeping might of the Watchers drove Him back to the work; and it was at the very moment when He thought Himself to have escaped that He found Himself fixed for ever with no possibility of again turning aside for the fraction of a second from the path.

The history of this must one day be told by a more vivid voice. Properly considered, it is a history of continuous miracle.

THE EQUINOX OF THE GODS, 1936 E.V.

Edward Goldston soon left the Mandrake Press and financial problems caused that a consortium led by Crowley formed Mandrake Press Ltd. But this new consortium was unsuccessful when it came to money and the company was dissolved in 1930 E.V.³⁷⁴² The Mandrake Press announced Crowley's *Confessions* in six volumes – with a seventh volume offered to subscribers. Volume I and II were published in 1929 E.V.³⁷⁴³ Crowley had dedicated Volume I, among others, to Stephensen writing: "P. R. STEPHENSEN who saw the point".³⁷⁴⁴ The year after, in July 1930 E.V., Stephensen issued the book *The Legend of Aleister Crowley; Being a Study of the Documentary Evidence Relating to a Campaign of Personal Vilification Unparalleled in Literary History* wherein he defended 'The Beast' against the allegations made against him by his accusers, the hostile press.³⁷⁴⁵ P. R. Stephensen's book was, among other places, reviewed in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, August 15, 1930 E.V., who wrote about the book and Aleister Crowley:

*Those who are interested in the legend of Aleister Crowley – poet, mountaineer, occultist and, according to the sensational Sunday press, a devil incarnate, will find a certain amount of interest in this defence of one who Mr Stephensen alleges, is a wrongly maligned man. Crowley emerges from his pages as a clever but rather foolish fellow; one who belongs to the 'nineties (continuing) but really, it does not much matter. His work is caviare, not only to the general public, but to most readers. And Crowley's life is his own business – unless you believe all you read in the Sunday sensational newspapers; and if you do then your interest in it is likely to be less than a seven-days' one.*³⁷⁴⁶

As seen in previous chapters also Crowley's literary work was generally well received in Scotland [an aighh!]

In Volume III of *Confessions* Crowley gave an account of the Cairo Working and at one time he simply decided to publish a facsimile of the MS. of *The Book of the Law* together with the typeset edition and the historical account on the genesis of the Cairo Working. But as already mentioned so was the press dissolved in 1930 E.V. Volume III of his *Confessions* had reached page proofs. Two chapters of the main text were describing the Cairo Working and the book's appendix contained

³⁷⁴² See *Confessions* and Magick.I-IV.

³⁷⁴³ Aleister Crowley. *The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. • For the abridged 1-vol. ed. of *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley – An Autohagiography*, quoted in this book as "*Confessions*", see note⁴ above.

³⁷⁴⁴ Aleister Crowley. *The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. • Vol. I, p. [vi]. ("*To Three Friends; J. W. N. SULLIVAN who suggested this booklet; AUGUSTUS JOHN who first gave practical assistance; P. R. STEPHENSEN who saw the point*")

³⁷⁴⁵ P. R. Stephensen. *The Legend of Aleister Crowley; Being a Study of the Documentary Evidence Relating to a Campaign of Personal Vilification Unparalleled in Literary History*. London, UK: Mandrake Press Limited, 1930. • Whitaker's Cumulative Book List. Annual Volume – 1930. A classified list of publications issued from January to December, 1930, together with an extended index to authors, titles, publishers and prices. London, UK: J. Whitaker and Sons, Limited, 1930, p. 32. • "STEPHENSEN (P. R.) *The Legend of Aleister Crowley. Being a Study of the Documentary Evidence relating to a Campaign of Personal Vilification unparalleled in Literary History*. 8vo (8½ × 5½), swd., pp. 158. Mandrake Press....(July '30) 2/6" • A new edition of Stephensen's book was published in 2007 E.V.: P. R. Stephensen and Aleister Crowley. *The Legend of Aleister Crowley. A study of the Facts*. (With an introduction by Stephen J. King. Sydney, Australia: Helios Books and Ordo Templi Orientis, 2007.

³⁷⁴⁶ Aberdeen Press and Journal. Aberdeenshire, Scotland: Aberdeen Press and Journal. • Friday, August 15, 1930, p. 2. (Review of "*THE LEGEND OF ALEISTER CROWLEY: A Study of the Facts. By P. R. Stephensen. Mandrake Press; 2s 6d.*") (Among the Books from Day to Day, p. 2.)

"Genesis Libri AL" and a facsimile of the MS. together with the typeset edition but it was never published owing to the closing of the press.³⁷⁴⁷ Crowley had found it difficult to write the account of the Cairo Working in Volume III in 1923 E.V. and wrote about it in his diary:

*The Cairo Working does seem hard to write up satisfactorily. Three notable major attempts — & always the trouble that a few small incidents require explanation at such length that the main features of the narrative are smothered.*³⁷⁴⁸

Confessions is a unique work with a splendid title. As mentioned above Crowley originally referred to it as "The Hag" and we find him using the expressions "hag", "hagging" and "hagged" when referring to his work on it in his diary.³⁷⁴⁹ However, in August 1923 E.V. he decided to stop calling it "The Hag" and instead named it "The Spirit of Solitude". In his Tunis diary on August 8th he wrote:

*On the other hand, I can get on quite well at the T.P.H. [Tunisia Palace Hotel] if I have some one under my hand to work on The Spirit of Solitude with me. (Note: I instinctively avoid calling it The Hag any more.)*³⁷⁵⁰

"Hag" is a peculiar name which, at first sight, could give the idea that it derived from the word 'hagiography', however, as I shall discuss below, so is it to all appearances not the case. About "THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE", the book's final title, and Alastor, we find Crowley saying:

Nothing gives such a mean idea of the intelligence of mankind than that it should ever have accepted for a moment the imbecile illusion of 'free will'; for there can be very few men indeed, in any generation, who have at any time in their lives sufficient apparent liberty of action to induce them to dally with it. Of these

³⁷⁴⁷ The page proofs comprising *The Book of the Law* belonged to G. J. Yorke and are today at the Warburg Institute, University of London. Each of these (bound) 65 leaves, paginated from pp. 237-301, has a facsimile of each sheet of the MS. with the typeset version of the text at the foot of the leaf. One additional leaf contains "The Comment". These proofs were by Yorke misidentified as a part of an abortive edition in 1927 E.V. of *The Equinox of the Gods* – discussed by Timothy d'Arch Smith in *The Book of the Beast* (1991 E.V.) as "BL5.". However, the Editor of *Magick.I-IV.* identifies them as proofs belonging to *Confessions* and probably dating from 1930 E.V. ♦ For "BL5.", see: *Timothy d'Arch Smith. The Books of the Beast. Revised and enlarged edition. Oxford, UK: Mandrake, 1991, pp. 16; 18-9.* ♦ For the proofs identified as belonging to *Confessions*, see: *Magick.I-IV.*, p. 790, Note 381 (on p. 708.) ♦ For "Genesis Libri AL" and its galley-proofs, see note⁴¹⁰ above. ♦ The proofs comprising the main text are in Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. (*P. R. Stephensen Papers*). ♦ For this, see note³⁷⁹³ below. ♦ The portion of the main text giving the account of the Cairo Working is found printed in full length in *Magick.I-IV.*, pp. 693-708. (*Appendix IX*) The two chapters 49 and 50 of Volume III are here given under the title "On the Reception of The Book of the Law", a title provided for this publication by the editor of *Magick.I-IV.* (*Magick.I-IV.*, p. 789.) In the abridged edition of *Confessions*, these two chapters are fused into one chapter. (Chapter 49) ♦ For a detailed account of the above, see: *Magick.I-IV.*, *Editor's Introduction*, pp. xxiii-lxxxiv. ♦ A part of the unabridged Chapter 49 of Volume III is also found in the "Introduction" edited by O.T.O. Frater Superior Hymenaeus Beta to: *The Book of the Law – The Illuminated Edition. Received by Aleister Crowley and Rose Crowley. Illuminations by Susan E. Jameson. London: Neptune Press, 2004. (THE WRITING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW)* ♦ For this book, see also note³⁹³⁰ below.

³⁷⁴⁸ *Aleister Crowley. The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley 1923. Ed. Stephen Skinner. Jersey, Channel Islands: Neville Spearman Ltd., 1979, p. 83. [6 July 1923 E.V.]*

³⁷⁴⁹ See, e.g.: *Ibid.*, pp. 139; 151.

³⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.



FIGURE 44. *The Tunisia Palace Hotel, Tunis*

Postcard dating from the early 1920s of the Tunisia Palace Hotel in Tunis where Aleister Crowley stayed some three months in 1923 E.V. He was expelled by Mussolini from Italy and the Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù, Sicily, on May 1, 1923 E.V., and went to Tunisia and the City of Tunis escorted by the 'Ape of Thoth', Leah Hirsig. They only stayed a short time in Tunis and owing to Crowley's bad health moved on to La Marsa and Marsa Plage – a summer resort at the Mediterranean coast, some 22 kilometers northeast of Tunis – for sake of fresh air and quiet. Here they stayed at Marsa Plage in a small hotel on the sea-front named « *Au Souffle du Zéphir* » (see Figure 42). Crowley moved back to Tunis some two months later, and on July 25 he decided to stay at the Tunisia Palace Hotel in Avenue de Carthage. It was a good hotel equipped in Oriental style and with a small garden. In his diary he wrote: "*Moved to Tunisia Palace [Hotel]. It's all too strange to me, being treated decently – even reasonably – after all these years. It really does take a little time to settle down to the idea!*" There Crowley, among other things, dictated the last part of his 'Autohagiography' – *The Confessions* – dealing with the expulsion. Note the "*Pharmacie Anglo-Americaine*" at the corner of the hotel. © From the author's collection.

*few, I was one. When I left Cambridge, I had acquired no particular ties. I was already the Spirit of Solitude in embryo.*³⁷⁵¹

And in connection with the year 1901 he continues on the subject:

*Already there had arisen in me the aspiration to attain to states whose very possibility I did not suspect; already I was aware, in the abyss of my heart, secret and silent, that I was Alastor, the wanderer in the wilderness, the Spirit of Solitude.*³⁷⁵²

Later he says:

*Since I have understood that I am the Spirit of solitude, Alastor, I have learnt to look at life from a standpoint beyond it. The affairs of the parasites of the planet, including Aleister Crowley, appear abject and absurd. I cannot pretend to take them seriously. The only object in attaching oneself to an individual is to have a standard suitable for symbolic representation of certain phenomena which happen to interest one, though they cannot possibly possess any importance for one, and the only reason for interesting oneself in the welfare of any such individual is to increase the efficiency of one's instrument of perception. This, then, explains why the only intelligent course of action for a man is to obtain initiation. Even this is useless in itself. The highest attainment is insensate except in reference to the convenience of an intelligence who is not in any way involved in the individuality of its instrument.*³⁷⁵³

Crowley had read Percy Busshe Shelley's poem *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude* from 1816 and found that Alastor was Aleister as he writes in the 'New Comment' to *Liber Legis*.³⁷⁵⁴ Ἀλάστωρ, Alastor, is a name used especially by the Greek tragic writers to designate any avenging spirit, deity or demon who avenges wrongs committed by men, and according to Hesychius Lexicographus of Alexandria, et al., it is a surname of Zeus, describing him as the avenger of evil deeds.³⁷⁵⁵ I am quite sure that Crowley also knew the old Anglo-Saxon elegy "*The Wanderer*", discussed above. That he chose to call his autohagiography "*The Spirit of Solitude*" is, I think, summed up by the lines:

*I am afraid that my adventures have lost me the citizenship of the world. Alastor is my name, the Spirit of Solitude, the Wanderer in the Waste. I am only at home in the Elysian Fields, conversing with the mighty men of old.*³⁷⁵⁶

and enlarged on in the last paragraph of his prelude to *Confessions*:

³⁷⁵¹ *Confessions*, p. 172.

³⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 227-8.

³⁷⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 653-4.

³⁷⁵⁴ For Shelley's poem, see: *Percy Busshe Shelley. Alastor; Or, The Spirit Of Solitude: And Other Poems*. London: Printed for Baldwin, Cradock and Joy; and Carpenter and Son, 1816; and later reprints. • For Crowley on Ἀλάστωρ, "*Aleister*", see: *Aleister Crowley. The Law is for All. The Authorized Popular Commentary on Liber AL vel Legis sub figura CCXX | The Book of the Law*. Edited by Louis Wilkinson and Hymenaeus Beta. Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1996, p. 155. • See also note⁴³⁴⁷ below.

³⁷⁵⁵ For Alastor, see, e.g.: *William Smith (Editor). A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. 3 vols. London, UK: John Murray, 1873. ♦ Vol. I, p. 89.

³⁷⁵⁶ *Confessions*, p. 415.

*At least one claim may be made; nothing has been invented, nothing suppressed, nothing altered and nothing 'yellowed up'. I believe that truth is not only stranger than fiction, but more interesting. And I have no motive for deception, because I don't give a damn for the whole human race – 'you're nothing but a pack of cards.'*³⁷⁵⁷

Now, do not misinterpret TO MEΓA ΘHPION's statement about the whole human race, something that many have done. Read his works and *Liber L vel Legis*! "Every man and every woman is a star; Every number is infinite; there is no difference."³⁷⁵⁸ "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law!"³⁷⁵⁹ And nothing is more predictable than a full pack of cards (52-card deck (plus jokers), or, 78-card deck!), there is not much infinity there! (This is mathematics as well as mysticism.) But every man and every woman have the potentiality of gaining Infinity since: "there is a factor infinite & unknown!"³⁷⁶⁰ Crowley was indeed interested in his fellow men since: "the Law is for all."³⁷⁶¹

As regards 'autohagiography', it is a construction of 'hagiography' added the prefix 'auto'. 'Hagiography' turned up in English in the 1810s as a word used with the same meaning as hagiographa, the Greek name ἁγίόγραφα, which literally means 'sacred writings' and is the name of the last of the three great divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures comprising all the books not included under the two divisions of 'the Law' and 'the Prophet'.³⁷⁶² However, the use of it was rare and it is now obsolete. But in the 1820s hagiography also started appearing as a word with the meaning of 'the writing of the lives of saints'. Hagiography has its roots in the two Greek words, ἅγιος, hágios, 'devoted to the gods, holy, saintly', and γραφία, graphia, 'writing'.³⁷⁶³ A hagiography is usually a biography of a saint written to idealize or idolize the saint's life or justify the saint's sainthood. Prefixing 'auto' to 'hagiography' would then give the meaning of a hagiography written by the subject. The term 'autobiography' appeared around the same time as hagiography. Before this time autobiographies went by names, such as Journal, Memoirs, Life, Confessions, often preceded by 'My'. Crowley was the first to use the construction 'autohagiography' in English as far as my research shows and thus introduced it to the English language in 1929 E.V. I think that he most probably coined it from the French term 'autohagiographie', which had appeared in a course of lectures on the French archbishop of Cambrai, theologian, and man of letters François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon (1651-1715), by the French critic, playwright and short-story writer François Élie Jules Lemaître (1853-1914), better known as Jules Lemaître, held in Paris in 1910 E.V. The lectures were revised and published the same year both in a journal and a book form under the title *Fénelon*.³⁷⁶⁴ 'Autohagiography' occurs

³⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 34. (*Prelude*, pp. 31-4.)

³⁷⁵⁸ *Liber L vel Legis*, [I],[3-4].

³⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., [I],[40].

³⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., II,32.

³⁷⁶¹ Ibid., [I],[34].

³⁷⁶² These are: (τὰ ἁγίόγραφα) Psalms, Proverbs, Job; Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. • See: Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd Edition. 20 vols. + Supplement I-IV. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1971-85.

³⁷⁶³ See, e.g.: *Dr. Ernest Klein. A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. (First edition in one volume) Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1971, p. 330.

³⁷⁶⁴ *Jules Lemaître. Fénelon*. Paris, France: Arthème Fayard éditeur, 1910, p. 159. (*SIXIÈME CONFÉRENCE; Madame Guyon*, pp. [159]-88.) ♦ « Mais, avec tout cela, nul livre, mieux que cette espèce d'auto-hagiographie, ne peut nous faire connaître la personne même et l'âme de cette personne singulière. » ♦ Also in: *La Revue hebdomadaire*. Paris: Typographie Plon-Nourrit et C^{ie}. ♦ Vol. XIX, No. II, Février 1910, p. 421. ♦ *Jules Lemaître. Fénelon. Sixième*

in the final title given to *Confessions* but also several times in the work. Interestingly, as quoted in a previous chapter Crowley uses it in the description of his two acts play *The God-Eater; A Tragedy of Satire* from 1903 writing:

*This short play is singularly unsatisfactory as a work of art, but extremely significant as a piece of autohagiography.*³⁷⁶⁵

'Autohagiography' is now frequently found in scientific literature. Nevertheless, it was first added to *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) in 2011 E.V. and the on-line edition gives as first occurrence in English Crowley's *Confessions* from 1929 E.V.³⁷⁶⁶ At the time when I did my research on the word it was not listed in OED. 'Autohagiography' first appeared, as far as my research shows, in other relations than *Confessions* in 1953 E.V. John Symonds had in 1958 E.V. stated in his book *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*:

*There is, needless to say, no such word as autohagiography.*³⁷⁶⁷

Nevertheless, in spite of this it had turned up in an article in *The Cambridge Journal* in 1953 E.V. where the late British cultural historian Ronald Taylor (1924-2012), had used "autohagiography" about an autobiography by the Russian-born American composer Igor Stravinsky.³⁷⁶⁸ But it was first in the 1970s that its use expanded. A glossary of terms used in life-writing published in 1980 E.V. said about the term: "*Autohagiography*. A self-explanatory word, probably most useful in a humorous vein for the autobiographer who portrays himself as a saint."³⁷⁶⁹ An essay in a book on gender and text in the Later Middle Ages from 1996 E.V. defines autohagiography broadly as: "*an account of a holy person's life written or told by the subject.*"³⁷⁷⁰ In modern time some autobiographies have been looked on as autohagiographies.

leçon (I). Madame Guyon. (*Fénelon. Sixième leçon (I)*), pp. 421-44.) • The fortnightly Parisian review *La Revue hebdomadaire* published novels, stories, articles and criticism on current events from 1832-1939. • For the lectures arranged by the Société des Conférences, which started in February 1910, see: Los Angeles Herald. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Herald. ♦ Sunday Morning, February 13, 1910, Part III, p. 7. (*Cable News From European Capitals and Foreign Cities – "Lectures on Fenelon's Life; Jules Lemaitre Associates Him With Rousseau"*)

³⁷⁶⁵ *Confessions*, p. 360. • Aleister Crowley. *The God-Eater; A Tragedy of Satire* by Aleister Crowley. London, UK: Watts & Co., 1903. ♦ Also in: Aleister Crowley. *The Collected Works of Aleister Crowley*. Foyers, Inverness, Scotland: Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Volume II, 1906, pp. 130-9. (*The God-Eater | A Tragedy of Satire | 1903*, pp. 130-9.) • See also note¹⁷⁴⁴ above. • For the publication of *The God-Eater; A Tragedy of Satire*, see note¹⁷⁴⁰ above.

³⁷⁶⁶ Oxford English Dictionary. Third Edition, June 2011; online version September 2011. • Gives examples from 1929; 1964; 1984; 2003. But none of the examples listed by me nor the French version of the word.

³⁷⁶⁷ John Symonds. *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. London: UK: Frederick Muller, 1958, p. 26. (*Chapter 4. Magic, Sacred and Profane*, pp. 26-32.) • For the publication of *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*, see note²⁵⁸⁹ above.

³⁷⁶⁸ Ronald Taylor. Stravinsky and the Problems of the Twentieth Century Music. ♦ The Cambridge Journal. Cambridge, UK: Bowes & Bowes, Vol. VI, No. 6, March 1953, p. 365. ("*This autohagiography, Chroniques de ma Vie,*") (*Stravinsky and the Problems of the Twentieth Century Music*, pp. 363-73.) • Ronald Taylor (1924-2012). Emeritus professor of German at the University of Sussex. He also held an advanced degree in music. • Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky (1882-1971).

³⁷⁶⁹ Donald J. Winslow. *Life-Writing: A Glossary of Terms in Biography, Autobiography, and Related Forms*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii for the Biographical Research Center, 1980, p. 3-4.

³⁷⁷⁰ Kate Greenspan. *Autohagiography and Medieval Womens' Spiritual Autobiography*. ♦ Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages. Edited by Jane Chance. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, 1996, p. 218. (*Autohagiography and*

I noticed that a Professor of English at Texas Tech University James Whitlark (1948-), stated in an essay in *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (2001 E.V.) that Crowley's reason for writing *Confessions* was to "reveal iniquities in order to revel in them":

*Exposure of corruption obviously flourishes more in biography than autobiography, though it is not absolutely absent from the latter. Holmes's self-expose ["Holmes's Own Story (1895), an autobiography of a 19th-century serial killer who claims that the devil inspired his crimes."] was probably designed to make money, and many pious autobiographers disclose their own transgressions to convert other malefactors, as in John Bunyan's Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners (1666). Less common are autobiographies that reveal iniquities in order to revel in them. One of the best known of these is Aleister Crowley's ironically titled The Spirit of Solitude: An Autohagiography (1929). It present him as the Great Beast predicted in the Book of Revelation. For a modern work, another unusual feature of Crowley's is his claiming to have acquired magical powers through supernatural revelations.*³⁷⁷¹

Crowley was in fact obeying the words of *Liber L vel Legis*:

*All this and a book to say how thou didst come hither [...]*³⁷⁷²

– and furthermore, he badly needed the money!

Crowley seems to have had various motives for using the title "*An Autohagiography*". Autohagiography was a new term in English but Crowley did not explain the word or his motives for using it. He probably hoped that some instead of jumping to conclusions would take up the challenge and look for a deeper explanation, something which often is a key in the understanding of his writings. There was his "*boyhood in hell*" and what followed but on the plane of the mystic and the magician it clearly had a very different meaning. I imagine that if a brother or sister of the A.:A.: had asked him about the title he probably would have answered by saying that it simply meant "from hood to head", and if the questioner on getting this answer looked inquisitive he would have added "from sainthood to godhead"! When Crowley added 'auto' to hagiography he thereby stated that the book was written by the subject. By stating this he 'crowned' hagiography by the fact that he when he wrote the volumes of *Confessions* had taken the oath of an Ipsissimus, 10°=1° – an initiation concluded in the spring of 1924 E.V.³⁷⁷³ Therefore, in this special case, 'auto' means in fact '*Autotatos*', Αὐτότατος, the Greek equivalent to Ipsissimus or 'His very self'! Moreover, it is also important to mention that Crowley by the publication of *Confessions* fulfilled certain of the obligations laid upon him by *Liber L vel Legis*. What Crowley did in *Confessions* was in some respects what Ankh-af-na-khonsu had done on his stele and other funeral parts more than twenty-six centuries before and more than a thousand years before Aurelius Augustinus, better known as St. Augustine of Hippo, wrote his spiritual autobiography *Confessiones*. The *Confessions*, around 397-401 C.E..³⁷⁷⁴ Ankh-af-na-khonsu wrote his autobiography on his funeral equipment at a

Medieval Womens' Spiritual Autobiography, pp. 216-36.)

³⁷⁷¹ *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*. Edited by Margaretta Jolly. 2 vols. London, UK, and Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001. ♦ Vol. I, p. 746. (*Revelation and Life Writing; By James Whitlark*, pp. 745-6.)

³⁷⁷² *Liber L vel Legis*, III, 39.

³⁷⁷³ For the grade of Ipsissimus, see note¹⁴⁶ and note¹²¹⁹ above.

³⁷⁷⁴ Aurelius Augustinus or St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.). Born in 354 C.E. in Thagaste located near present day

time when autobiographical production had reached a climax in Egypt among the priestly class and, as seen above, we find them stating their parents and giving long lines of family succession in a specific office. Autobiographies occur throughout Egyptian history and can appear on tomb walls, rock inscriptions, stelae, statues, temple walls and sarcophagi. There are various types of autobiographies. Some are very detailed but the autobiographical part of a text, for instance, on a stele, could be reduced to only a few phrases or sentences. In Egyptian autobiographies the narrator who is also the protagonist of the self-presentation usually speaks in the first person and therefore the texts are called autobiographies rather than biographies.³⁷⁷⁵ In the beginning of *Confessions* we find Crowley stating:

*Previous to the death of Edward Crowley, the recollections of his son, however vivid or detailed, appear to him strangely impersonal. In throwing back his mind to that period, he feels, although attention constantly elicits new facts, that he is investigating the behavior of somebody else. It is only from this point that he begins to think of himself in the first person. From this point, however, he does so; and is able to continue this autohagiography in a more conventional style by speaking of himself as I.*³⁷⁷⁶

The book was “re-Antichristened” *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* by Stephensen³⁷⁷⁷ and as Crowley’s first lines of the prelude indicated:

“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”

*Not only to this autohagiography – as he amusedly insisted on calling it – of Aleister Crowley, but to every form of biography, biology, even chemistry, these words are the key.*³⁷⁷⁸

so alluded ‘confessions’ to confession of faith but also conversion, as this book clearly demonstrates, and not to any serious extent acknowledgment of sins, wrongdoings or shocking and scandalous revelations. Following the title page were two quotations by Algernon Charles Swinburne. The first was from the lyrical tragedy *Atalanta in Calydon* (1866) modeled on the Greek drama:

*“Things gained are gone, but great things
done endure.” – Swinburne, Atalanta in Calydon*³⁷⁷⁹

Souk Ahras in Algeria. Rhetor, Christian Neo-Platonist, North African Bishop and Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church. • St. Augustine became the patron of brewers in the Roman Catholic Church owing to his conversion from a former life of loose living. • For St. Augustine, see also note¹⁶⁴⁰ above.

³⁷⁷⁵ See: The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. • Vol. 1., p. 184.

³⁷⁷⁶ *Aleister Crowley*. The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. • Vol. I, p. 38.

³⁷⁷⁷ See: *Craig Munro*. Wild Man of Letters: The story of P. R. Stephensen. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1984, p. 96.

³⁷⁷⁸ *Aleister Crowley*. The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. • Vol. I, p. [1]. (*Prelude*, pp. 1-6.) • Confessions, p. 31. (*Prelude*, pp. 31-4.)

³⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, • Vol. I, p. [v]. • *Algernon Charles Swinburne*. *Atalanta in Calydon*. A Tragedy. London, UK: John Camden Hotten, 1866, p. 28. • The words are said by “*Meleager*” – “*Althæa, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, Queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son*” • *Ibid.*, p. [xiii]. (*Arguments*, pp. [xiii]-xiv.) • For Swinburne, see note³³⁹¹ above.

In the Autumn 1929 E.V. catalogue of the Mandrake Press P. R. Stephensen wrote about *The Spirit of Solitude*:

*The most extraordinary manuscript of modern times has appeared at the offices of the Mandrake. Weighing more than half-a-hundredweight, and measuring nearly 600,000 words, this modern "autohagiography" is too colossally interesting to be viewed in perspective at the moment. A brief summary will be issued in due course.*³⁷⁸⁰

The first volume of *The Spirit of Solitude* was published in November 1929 E.V. as stated by *The Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record* in their issue of November 16, 1929 E.V. The following information concerning the book and its publication had been supplied by the publisher:

Crowley (Aleister) – The Spirit of solitude: an autohagiography. Subsequently re-Anti-christened "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley." (In 5 vols.) Vol. I. 4to, 11¼ × 7¾, pp. 284, ea. vol., 42s. net

MANDRAKE PR., Nov. '29³⁷⁸¹

The weekly's main trade rival at that time, J. Whitaker & Sons, had not listed the publication of *The Spirit of Solitude* in their weekly *The Publisher and Bookseller* (the 1928 E.V. renaming of *The Bookseller*), but it appeared in their yearly cumulative book list, *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List*, for the year 1929 E.V.:

CROWLEY (Aleister). The Spirit of Solitude. An Autobiography. Subsequently re-antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley. Vol. I. To be published in 5 vols 4to (11¼ × 7¾), pp. 284. Mandrake P.

(Nov. '29) ea. vol. £2/2/³⁷⁸²

– what is very interesting here, apart from the official publication date, is that when the publisher had supplied the information of the book it was not yet called an "Autohagiography" but an "Autobiography"! The eight-page prospectus for the work, which was dated "Autumn 1929", stated on the upper cover:

³⁷⁸⁰ Quoted in: *The Mandrake Press 1929-30: Catalogue of an Exhibition*, Cambridge University Library, September-November 1985; Arranged, with an Introduction and a Summary Tabulation of Items Published by the Mandrake Press and Mandrake Press Ltd. by R. P. Carr; With Prefatory Essay by Jack Lindsay. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Library, 1985, p. 33. (53. *Aleister Crowley, The Spirit of Solitude. An Autohagiography. Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley.*, p. 33.)

³⁷⁸¹ *The Publishers' Circular And Booksellers' Record*. London, UK: *The Publishers' Circular*. ♦ Vol. CXXXI, No. 3307, Saturday, November 16, 1929, p. 723. (*Books of the Week*, p. 723.)

³⁷⁸² *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List. Annual Volume – 1929*. A classified list of publications issued from January to December, 1929, together with an extended index to authors, titles, publishers and prices. London, UK: J. Whitaker and Sons, Limited, 1930, p. 18.

Autobiography of a Remarkable Man

THE CONFESSIONS

OF

ALEISTER

CROWLEY

TO BE ISSUED IN SIX VOLUMES

at TWO Guineas a Volume

[...]

Volumes I and II will be issued immediately

The remaining volumes will appear next year³⁷⁸³

This is thought-provoking and suggests that Crowley decided to use the word "Autohagiography" in the title very late in the process, however, included in the prospectus, which had on the upper cover Augustus John's pencil drawing of Crowley from the seventh number of *The Equinox*, was a short essay entitled "Is Aleister Crowley a Saint?" written by P. R. Stephensen and here we find the book spoken of as an "Autohagiography":

IS ALEISTER CROWLEY A SAINT?

☆ James Douglas has described him as a "monster of wickedness." Horatio Bottomley has described him as a "dirty degenerate." The successors of Horatio Bottomley (John Bull, May, 1929) have described him as "England's worst man." Crowley describes himself as the Master Therion, and terms his Confessions an "Autohagiography."³⁷⁸⁴

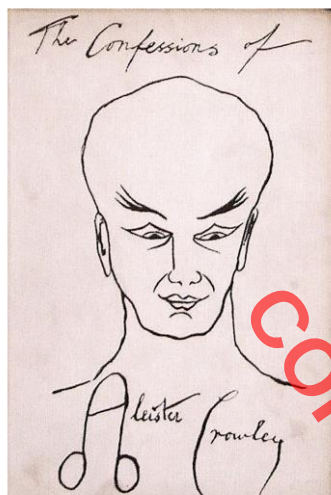
As seen in the prospectus the work was originally planned to appear in six large volumes and that it on the publication of the first volume was reduced to five volumes probably reflected the financial difficulties etc. at The Mandrake Press. The information given in *Whitaker's Cumulative Book List* is clearly more up to date than the prospectus and dates probably to shortly after its printing. Before The Mandrake Press edition an abortive six-volume edition to be issued by the Paris-based English printer and publisher Herbert (Edward) Clarke (1867-1931), owner of the Imprimerie Vendôme in rue Saint-Honoré, had a supplementary seventh volume to be distributed gratis to subscribers.³⁷⁸⁵ Herbert Clarke, then known as Clarke & Bishop, had printed Crowley's **בראשית** (Berashith) back in 1903 E.V.³⁷⁸⁶

³⁷⁸³ [Prospectus of] *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, "Autumn 1929", p. [1].

³⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., p. [2]. ("IS ALEISTER CROWLEY A SAINT?"; signed "P. R. S." [P. R. Stephensen], p. [2].)

³⁷⁸⁵ See: *Timothy d'Arch Smith*. *The Books of the Beast*. Revised and enlarged edition. Oxford, UK: Mandrake, 1991, Note 114 on p. 125. (*Notes to Chapter One, Pages 9-35*, pp. 119-26.) • Herbert Clarke was married to the English journalist and author Maria Elvins Clarke, née Pountney (1869-1958), Paris fashion correspondence for the *London Times* who wrote under the name Moma Clarke.

³⁷⁸⁶ See: *Aleister Crowley*. *The Collected Works of Aleister Crowley*. Foyers, Inverness, Scotland: Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Volume III, 1907, p. 236. ("[BERASHITH: 1903] A. B. 2447, | Paris | **בראשית** [sic, **בראשית**] | an Essay | in | ontology | with | some remarks on ceremonial magic | by | Abhavananda | (Aleister Crowley) | Privately printed for the Sangha of | the West. [...] Imprint at foot of last page, "Clarke & Bishop, Printers, Etc., 338, Rue St. Honoré, Paris."") (Appendix A. Notes Towards an Outline of a Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of Aleister Crowley, pp. 233-9.)



Upper cover of *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, 1929 E.V.

The bevelled boards (bevelled edges) of the two volumes published by The Mandrake Press were bound in white buckram. The front boards of the handsome volumes had in black a self-portrait of Crowley, a line drawing, and written in his hand, also in black, "*The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*" – the 'A' of "*Aleister*" phallus-shaped. The spines had the title stamped in gilt together with the Mark of the Beast within the seven-pointed star of Babalon. The pentagram-framed title page, constructed of 170 pentagrams, exhibited the Mark of the Beast. The publication of the second volume took according to *The Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record* place in December 1929 E.V.³⁷⁸⁷. Very interestingly, on his visit to Aleister Crowley in Hastings in the end of March 1947 E.V., James Laver was told about the third volume of *Confessions*:

[...] it was withdrawn on the eve of publication. Only two or three copies existed; he [Crowley] did not possess one himself and could not tell me where to find one. The fourth and fifth volumes, he said, existed only in manuscript – 'deposited with trustworthy friends'. They carried the story 'up to Cefalu'.³⁷⁸⁸

John Symonds wrote in *The Magic of Aleister Crowley* in 1958 E.V. about his conversation with Crowley in Hastings regarding the *Autohagiography*:

I asked him about the remaining volumes of his Autohagiography.

He told me that the third volume was on the point of being printed, when the Mandrake Press went bankrupt.

'What happened to the proofs?' I inquired.

'I don't know,' replied Crowley. 'I had two sets. One I corrected and returned, the other I destroyed; I saw no point in keeping it when the book was due to appear shortly.'

I asked him if he had thought of looking for a set in the ruins of the Mandrake Press.

³⁷⁸⁷ The Publishers' Circular And Booksellers' Record. London, UK: The Publishers' Circular. ♦ Vol. CXXXI, No. 3311, Saturday, December 14, 1929, p. 829. ("**Crowley** (Aleister) – *The Spirit of solitude: an autohagiography*. Vol. 2. 4to, 11¼ × 7¾, pp. 308, 42s. net MANDRAKE PR., Dec. '29")(Books of the Week, p. 829.) ♦ The publication of both volumes was stated in *The English Catalogue of Books for 1929: The English Catalogue of Books For 1929; Giving in One Alphabet, Under Author and Title, the Size, Price, Month of Publication, And Publisher of Books Issued in the United Kingdom, etc., etc.* 93rd Year of Issue. London, UK: The Publishers' Circular, Limited, 1930, p. 82. ("**Crowley** (Aleister) – *The Spirit of solitude: an autohagiography*. Subsequently re-Antichristened "*The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*." (In 5 vols.) Vols. 1-2. 4to, 11¼ × 7¾, pp. 284, 308, ea. vol., 42s. net MANDRAKE PR., Nov., Dec. '29")

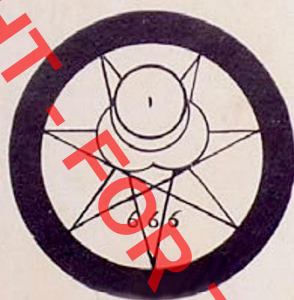
³⁷⁸⁸ James Laver. *Museum Piece or the Education of an Iconographer*. London, UK: Andre Deutsch, 1963, p. 227. (Chapter 11; *Familiar Spirits*, pp. 216-33.) ♦ The sale catalogue of J. F. C. Fuller's book collection *Bibliotheca Crowleyana* issued by the British bookseller Keith Hogg in 1966 E.V. stated about "*THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE*": "Vol. 3 reached page proof stage, and is said to have been lost, except for a German translation; Vols. 4-6 remained in typescript, and are believed to be in the U.S.A., and have been examined by General Fuller." ♦ 666. *Bibliotheca Crowleyana*. The Collection of J. F. C. Fuller with a Preface by Richard Kaczynski. Edmonds, WA: Sure Fire Press, 1989, p. 12. ("*THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE*. An Autohagiography, subsequently re-Anti-christened *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. Vols. 1 & 2 (all published).")(THE WORKS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY; Part III; Plays, Novels, etc., p. 12) ♦ For James Laver's visit, see also note⁸⁹⁷ and note³⁵⁵⁴ above. ♦ For Keith Hogg's catalogue, see also note⁹¹² above.

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

An Autobagiography

Subsequently re-Antichristened

THE CONFESSIONS OF
ALEISTER CROWLEY

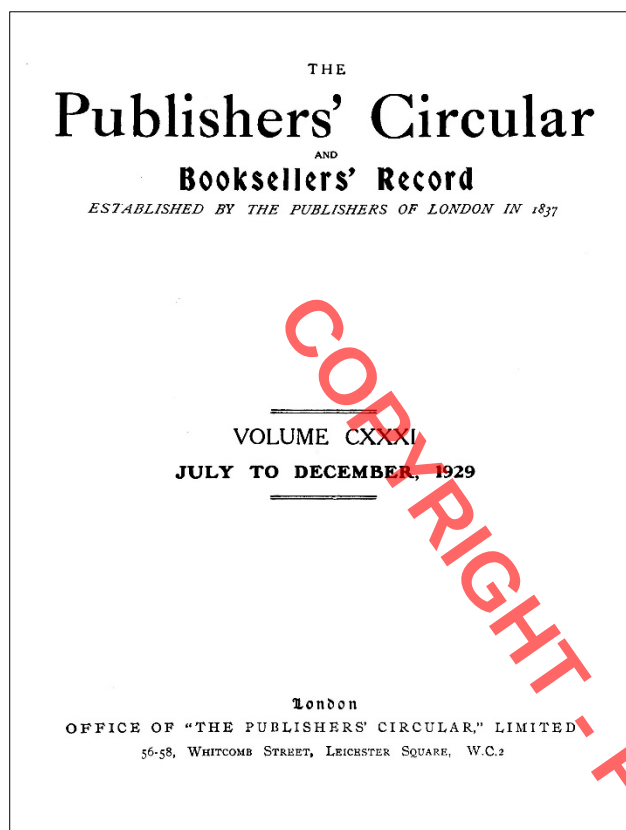


Volume One

London 1929

THE MANDRAKE PRESS

41 Museum Street W.C.1



The Publishers' Circular And Booksellers' Record. London, UK: The Publishers' Circular. ♦ Vol. CXXXI, No. 3307, Saturday, November 16, 1929.

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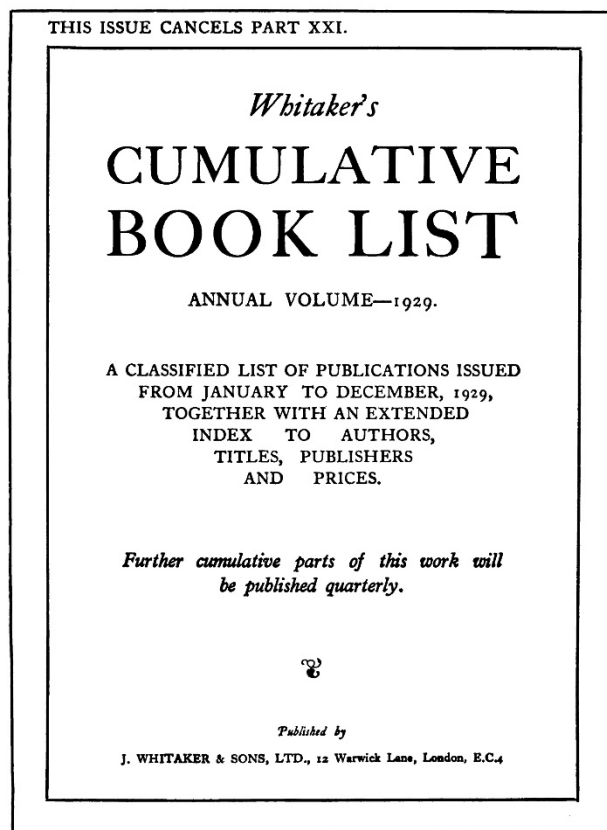
Crowley (Aleister)—The Spirit of solitude: an autohagiography. Subsequently re-Antichristened "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley." (In 5 vols.) Vol. 1. 4to, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, pp. 284, ea. vol., 42s. net
MANDRAKE PR., Nov. '29

The Publishers' Circular. Vol. CXXXI, No. 3307 ♦ Ibid., p. 723. (*Books of the Week*, p. 723.)

*

Crowley (Aleister)—The Spirit of solitude: an autohagiography. Vol. 2. 4to, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, pp. 308, 42s. net MANDRAKE PR., Dec. '29

Ibid., Vol. CXXXI, No. 3311, Saturday, December 14, 1929, p. 829.



Whitaker's Cumulative Book List. Annual Volume – 1929. A classified list of publications issued from January to December, 1929, together with an extended index to authors, titles, publishers and prices. London, UK: J. Whitaker and Sons, Limited, 1930.

*

CROWLEY (Aleister). The Spirit of Solitude. An Autohagiography. Subsequently re-antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley. Vol. I. To be published in 5 vols 4to ($11\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$), pp. 284. *Mandrake P.* (Nov. '29) ea. vol. £2/2/

Whitaker's Cumulative Book List ♦ Ibid., p. 18.

93rd Year of Issue

The
English Catalogue
of Books
FOR
1929

GIVING IN ONE ALPHABET, UNDER AUTHOR AND TITLE, THE
SIZE, PRICE, MONTH OF PUBLICATION, AND PUBLISHER OF
BOOKS ISSUED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM,
BEING A CONTINUATION OF THE "LONDON" AND "BRITISH" CATALOGUES; WITH THE
PUBLICATIONS OF LEARNED AND OTHER SOCIETIES AND DIRECTORY OF PUBLISHERS

EDITED BY
JAMES D. STEWART

Crowley (Aleister)—*Moonchild : a prologue.* 8vo,
9×5½, pp. 336, 10s. 6d. net

MANDRAKE PR., *Sept.* '29

Crowley (Aleister)—*The Spirit of solitude : an
autohagiography.* Subsequently re-Anti-
christened "*The Confessions of Aleister
Crowley.*" (In 5 vols.) Vols. 1-2. 4to,
11¼×7¾, pp. 284, 308, ea. vol., 42s. net

MANDRAKE PR., *Nov., Dec.* '29

Crowley (Aleister)—*The Stratagem, and other
stories.* Fcp. 8vo, 6¼×4½, pp. 140, 3s. 6d. net.
(*Mandrake booklets.*) MANDRAKE PR., *Sept.* '29

Three titles by Aleister Crowley, published by The Mandrake Press in London in 1929 E.V., as stated by *The English Catalogue of Books for 1929*, on page 82: *Moonchild : a prologue*, published in September 1929; The two volumes of *The Spirit of solitude : an autohagiography. Subsequently re-Antichristened "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley."*, published respectively, in November and December 1929; and finally, *The Stratagem, and other stories*, published in September 1929.

'They hadn't a set; it was, if anywhere, with the printer.'

The account of the disappearance of the typescript and proofs of the third volume of the Autohagiography was all too vague.

'What was the third volume about?'

*'Mainly The Book of the Law, and the expedition to Kangchenjunga.'*³⁷⁸⁹

[...]

*a month or two later, the post brought a large and carefully packed parcel from Hastings. Inside were four bound type-scripts, Crowley's Autohagiography from 1906 to 1923; the Beast had taken my advice.*³⁷⁹⁰

Symonds was searching for the missing page-proofs of the third volume in 1948 E.V. The Australian paper the *Truth* had, October 24, 1948 E.V., the following notice:

HELP? John Symonds, of 19 Arkwright Road, Hampstead, London, has dropped us a line in the following terms:

"I am preparing a life of the late Aleister Crowley, poet, mountaineer and magician who made me his literary executor. I should be extremely grateful if any of your readers would let me see any early letters (before 1919), parts of 'Magical Diaries,' the page-proofs of the third volume of the Confessions which was never published, or any other material."

*We always thought a literary executor was an editor.*³⁷⁹¹

– 'Inky', P. R. Stephensen, who had the page-proofs of the third volume had returned to Australia in 1932 E.V. where he together with the Australian artist and writer Norman (Alfred) Lindsay (1879-1969), had established the Endeavour Press in Sydney.³⁷⁹² P. R. Stephensen prepared in the 1950s a carbon typescript (100pp.) of volume three from the galley-proofs in his possession – both the galley-proofs and the carbon typescript are now held by the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.³⁷⁹³ The question is whether John Symonds and P. R. Stephensen were in contact with each other after Crowley's death. I have not been able to trace any written communication between them. However, P. R. Stephensen died in Sydney in May 1965 E.V. and Symonds and Grant's abridged edition of *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* appeared in 1969 E.V. without any mentioning of P. R. Stephensen in Symonds's introduction to the book, so the answer is perhaps no.³⁷⁹⁴

³⁷⁸⁹ John Symonds. *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1958, pp. 29-30. (CHAPTER FOUR; *Magic, Sacred and Profane*, pp. 26-32.) • The third volume's Chapter 49 and Chapter 50 contain Crowley's description of the events in Cairo 1904 E.V.

³⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 31. • See also note²³⁵³ above.

³⁷⁹¹ Truth. Sydney, NSW: Truth. ♦ Sunday, October 24, 1948, p. 4. (*Truth To Tell*, p. 4.)

³⁷⁹² For P. R. Stephensen's return to Australia in 1932 E.V., the Endeavour Press in Sydney, and Norman Lindsay, etc, see: Australian Dictionary of Biography. 16 vols. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966-2005. ♦ Vol. 12 (1990), pp. 70-1. (**Stephensen, Percy Reginald (1901-1965)**; By Craig Munro, pp. 70-1.)

³⁷⁹³ See: http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/transcript/2007/D00007/mss1284_Stephensen.pdf ♦ PERCY REGINALD STEPHENSEN [– papers, 1905-1965]; ML MSS 1284 [Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW], [pp. 22; 69.] • See also note³⁷⁴⁷ above.

³⁷⁹⁴ Apart from Crowley's dedication of the books to P. R. Stephensen, Symonds only mentions his name once in a note which mentions P. R. Stephensen's 1930 E.V. *The Legend of Aleister Crowley*. • Confessions, pp. [27]; 932 (Note 6 to Chapter 67) • P. R. Stephensen biographer, (Colin) Craig Munro (1950-), does neither mention any contact between the two men in his noted 1984 E.V. biography, *Wild Man of Letters: The Story of P. R. Stephensen* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1984.)

As to “*The Hag*”, the name used at first by Crowley, one should immediately think that it derives from the word *hagiography* but when he finally in his diary says: “*I instinctively avoid calling it The Hag any more.*” then there seems to be more to it, and let us not forget that we are dealing with a master as well as a master mind and I am more inclined to believe that it has to do with other mysteries, which Crowley seems to have given us the key to in his supreme prelude to the work. Here is, among other things, said about the work:

PRELUDE

CONCERNING THE ART OF BIOGRAPHY, IN GENERAL, AND THE
PECULIAR CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT
ATTEMPT TO PRACTISE THE SAME UPON ALEISTER CROWLEY

“*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*”³⁷⁹⁵

[...] *It should be the True Will of this book to make plain the truth about the man. Yet here again there is a lion in the way. The truth must be falsehood unless it be the whole truth; and the whole truth is partly inaccessible, partly unintelligible, partly incredible, and partly unpublishable – that is, in any country where truth in itself is recognised as a dangerous explosive.*³⁷⁹⁶

As mentioned in my introduction to this work I firmly believe that “*The Hag*” springs from Fra. P.’s study of Arabic in Egypt in 1904 E.V. In Arabic and Persian we find حق, hag(h) or haq(q), which means ‘true’, ‘real’, and as a substantive, ‘truth’.³⁷⁹⁷ *Al-Hagh* (the Real, the True) is the 51st of the 99 names of God in the Koran and can be found in Arabic (without English transliteration) in Crowley’s notes to the tables in 777 and was, of course, a word and a name learned during his study in Egypt.³⁷⁹⁸ Furthermore, the third stage of a Sufi is called hag (hagh) or hagigat (haghighat). 777 was, as mentioned earlier, published in 1909 E.V. and the year after, in 1910 E.V., appeared the ninety-nine names of God also in *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz* and here the word had been given the transliteration “*al haqu truth*”.³⁷⁹⁹ I firmly believe that the

³⁷⁹⁵ Aleister Crowley. *The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. ♦ Vol. I, p. [1]. (*Prelude*, pp. 1-6.)

³⁷⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 3. (*Prelude*, pp. 1-6.) ♦ Confessions, p. 32. (*Prelude*, pp. 31-4.)

³⁷⁹⁷ For Fra. P.’s Arabic study, see the diary entry from Cairo/Helwan, dated “Feb. 19.” [1904] above. ♦ For حق, see, e.g.: Donald Andreas Cameron. *Arabic-English Vocabulary; For the Use of English Students of Modern Egyptian Arabic*. London, UK: Bernard Quaritch, 1892 p. 62. ♦ Sulayman Hayyim. *New Persian-English Dictionary, complete and modern, designed to give the English meaning of over 50,000 words, terms, idioms, and proverbs in the Persian language, as well as the transliteration of the words in English characters. Together with sufficient treatment of all the grammatical features of the Persian Language*. 2 vols. Teheran, Librairie-imprimerie-Beroukhim, 1934-6. ♦ Vol. I, p. 649-50.

³⁷⁹⁸ [Aleister Crowley, et al.] 777 vel Prolegomena Symbolica ad Systemam Sceptico-Mysticae Viae Explicandae, Fundamentum Hieroglyphicum Sanctissimorum Scientiae Summae. London and Felling-on-Tyne: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1909, p. 38. (*NOTES TO TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES; COL. V., p. 38.*) ♦ Aleister Crowley. 777 Revised vel Prolegomena Symbolica ad Systemam Sceptico-Mysticae Viae Explicandae, Fundamentum Hieroglyphicum Sanctissimorum Scientiae Summae. A reprint off 777 with much additional matter by the late Aleister Crowley. London: The Neptune Press, 1955, p. 139. (*NOTES TO TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES; Col. V., p. 139.*)

³⁷⁹⁹ [Aleister Crowley.] Translated From A Rare Indian MS. By The Late Major Luty And Another; *The Scented Garden Of Abdullah The Satirist Of Shiraz*. London, UK: Privately printed, 1910. ♦ Aleister Crowley. *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz. A Facsimile Edition with an Introduction by Martin P. Starr*. Chicago, IL: The Teitan

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Arabic and Persian hag(h) or haq(q).

Arabic meaning of "Hag" is the true explanation of Crowley's first naming of the book. The above quote from the prelude in my opinion clearly confirms this and explains why he stopped calling it 'The Truth', and there also seems to be a connexion between the dropping of "The Hag" and the choice of "An Autohagiography". I also notice that Crowley once in his American writings uses the Arabic "el Haqq" in an article in *Vanity Fair* in October 1916 E.V. entitled "Mystics and Their Little ways; One Is Nothing, While Two Is – In Reality – One":

*Mansour, the Persian mystic, was stoned for saying "I am The Truth, and within my turban I wrap nothing but God." His blood is said to have traced "An' el Haqq" – I am the Truth – upon the sand.*³⁸⁰⁰

– Husayn ibn Mansour [Mansur] al-Hallaj (c. 858-922), was a controversial early Sufi who was crucified in Baghdad in 922 A.D.

In the first three "Stanzas" of *Confessions* we find Aleister Crowley speaking of himself in the third person:

*Previous to the death of Edward Crowley [on March 5th, 1887], the recollections of his son, however vivid or detailed, appear to him strangely impersonal. In throwing back his mind to that period, he feels, although attention constantly elicits new facts, that he is investigating the behaviour of somebody else. It is only from this point that he begins to think of himself in the first person. From this point, however, he does so; and is able to continue this autohagiography in a more conventional style by speaking of himself as I.*³⁸⁰¹

Alick, as Alexander was called, was nearly eleven and a half years old when his father died. I notice that the above use of the word "autohagiography" is the first in the book's chapters, which in the original edition are called stanzas – it has only been used in the book's title as well as one time

Press, 1991, p. 127. (XL. *The Naming*, pp. 122-32.) • Most copies of the book are said to have been destroyed by H. M. customs. However, it was revealed by the English journalist, socialist writer and historian Peter James Fryer (1927-2006) in 1966 E.V. that the British Museum had a 'secret' copy of the work, which Peter Fryer, not entirely correct, styles "a shameless imitation of Sir Richard Burton's annotations on eastern sex life." Peter Fryer published in 1966 E.V. his book *Private Case – Public Scandal; Secrets of the British Museum Revealed*, a discussion of the collection of pornographic books in the British Museum. • Peter Fryer. *Private Case – Public Scandal; Secrets of the British Museum Revealed*. London, UK: Secker & Warburg, 1966, pp. 115-6. (VIII. *Homosexual and Sado-masochistic Literature*, pp. 109-24.) • For *The Scented Garden of Abdullah* and its publishing history, see Martin P. Starr's fine introduction to his 1991 E.V. facsimile edition: *Aleister Crowley. The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz. A Facsimile Edition with an Introduction by Martin P. Starr*. Chicago, IL: The Teitan Press, 1991, pp. 5-13. (INTRODUCTION, pp. 5-13.)

³⁸⁰⁰ *Vanity Fair*. New York City: The Vanity Fair Publishing Company, Inc., Vol. 7, No. 2, October 1916, p. 144. (*Aleister Crowley. Mystics and Their Little Ways*, pp. 142; 144.) (Miscellaneous) • Also in: *Aleister Crowley. The Revival of Magick and other essays*. (Oriflamme 2). Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications in association with Ordo Templi Orientis International, 1998 E.V., p. 67-8. (*Mystics and Their Little Ways*, pp. 64-9.) • Mansour or Mansur, is also mentioned by Crowley in *Moonchild* and *Little Essays Toward Truth*. • *Aleister Crowley. Moonchild: A Prologue*. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929, pp. 255-6. (Chapter XVIII – *The Dark Side of the Moon*, pp. 250-63.) • *Aleister Crowley. Little Essays Toward Truth*. London: Privately issued by the O.T.O., BCM/ANKH, 1938 e.v., p. 43. (Trance, pp. 41-5.) • Second revised edition. Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1991, p. 53. • For the article in *Vanity Fair*, see also note¹³⁷⁴ and note³⁴¹⁶ above, and note⁴²⁹⁴ below.

³⁸⁰¹ *Aleister Crowley. The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. 2 vols. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, 1929. • Vol. I, p. 38. (STANZA III, pp. 25-38.)

in the prelude! As we have seen in Chapter 7 Johannes Meursius in the beginning of the seventeenth century also wrote about himself in the third person.³⁸⁰²

Crowley had apparently tried various publishers before he found the Mandrake Press, and the American-born bookseller and publisher, founder and owner of the American bookshop 'Shakespeare and Company' in Paris Sylvia Beach (1887-1962), describes in her book *Shakespeare and Company* (1959 E.V.) how a blonde lady (probably the blonde American silent film character actress Jane Wolfe (Soror Estai)³⁸⁰³) one day came to the bookshop, opened a portfolio and produced a prospectus:

announcing the "Forthcoming memoirs of Aleicester [sic] Crowley" under my imprint and the draft of a contract with Shakespeare and Company requiring only a signature. Everything had been taken care of in advance, even to the provision that Shakespeare and Company turn over 50 per cent of the book's earnings to Mr. Crowley and give him our mailing list as well!³⁸⁰⁴

Frank Harris had, in fact, also tried to persuade Sylvia Beach to publish his biography *My life and Loves*.³⁸⁰⁵ Shakespeare and Company was a small but famous bookshop located at 12, Rue de l'Odéon, a side street in the sixth arrondissement, near St.-Germain-des-Prés. Shakespeare and Company had become known in 1922 E.V. when Sylvia Beach published James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a novel which by many is considered to be the greatest novel of the twentieth century.³⁸⁰⁶ The bookshop was shut down in 1940 E.V. during the German occupation. One may wonder why Crowley not went to the Black Manikin Press and its wealthy owner Edward W. Titus who had published *Little Poems in Prose* for him in 1928 E.V., however, perhaps he did. The main reason behind that the publication of *Confessions* not took place in France is probably the expelling of Crowley from France on April 17, 1929 E.V.³⁸⁰⁷

I discovered some years ago that in 1949 E.V. P. R. Stephensen's *The Legend of Aleister Crowley* was used as source material for an article in an encyclopedia. I do not think that Crowley in his last days in Hastings was aware that an eighteen volume Dutch encyclopedia which started appearing in 1947 E.V. had planned to give his name as head word. When the sixth volume appeared in 1949 E.V. Crowley figured in the book but without any mentioning of his death (quotation in English translation):

Crowley, Aleister, English poet and novelist (Leamington Oct. 12, 1875), attended Malvern College and Cambridge.³⁸⁰⁸

³⁸⁰² For Johannes Meursius speaking of himself in the third person, see note¹⁰³⁴ above.

³⁸⁰³ For Jane Wolfe, see note⁴³⁶⁷ below.

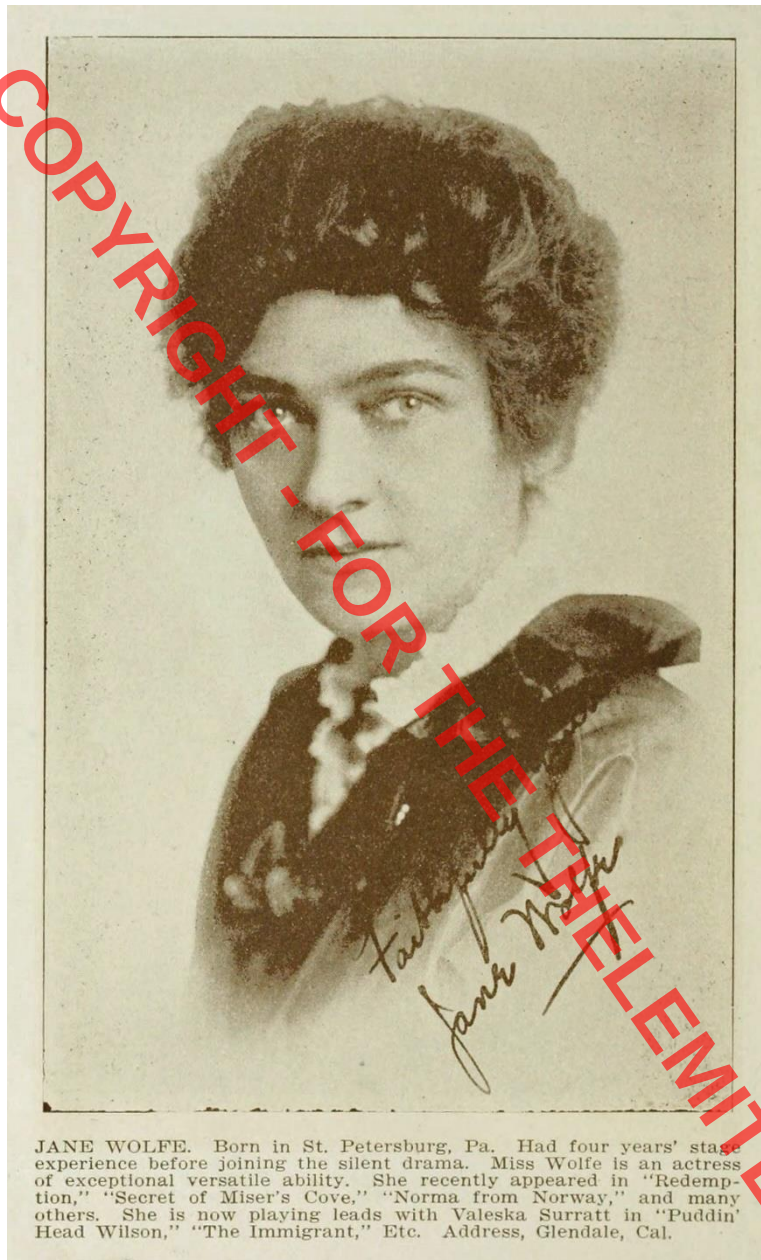
³⁸⁰⁴ Sylvia Beach. *Shakespeare and Company*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959, p. 94. (Chapter Ten; *Shakespeare and Company Regrets ...*, pp. 90-5.)

³⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 91. • For *My Life and Loves*, see note²⁷⁹⁹ above.

³⁸⁰⁶ James Joyce. *Ulysses*. Paris: Shakespeare & Company, 1922. • See also note²⁴⁹² above.

³⁸⁰⁷ For the expelling, see: *Le Petit Parisien*. Paris, France: Le Petit Parisien. • N° 19.041, mercredi 17 avril 1929, p. 1. ("MAGER? ESPION? Le mystérieux visage d'Aleister Crowley qui va être «refoulé» de France", p. 1.) • Ibid. • N° 19.042, jeudi 18 avril 1929, p. 2. ("Ainsi que nous l'annoncions hier, le fakir Aleister Crowley, à qui la préfecture de police avait retiré sa carte d'identité, s'est vu dans l'obligation de quitter Paris. Son état de santé le lui permettant, il n'a pas voulu profiter du délai de dix jours que l'administration lui avait accordé et, hier matin, s'est rendu à la gare du Nord, où il a pris le rapide de Bruxelles.") ("LE FAKIR ALEISTER CROWLEY A QUITTÉ PARIS, p. 2")

³⁸⁰⁸ Winkler Prins Encyclopaedie. Zesde druk. (6th ed.) Hoofdredactie (Chief editors): E. de Bruyne, G. B. J. Hiltermann,



JANE WOLFE. Born in St. Petersburg, Pa. Had four years' stage experience before joining the silent drama. Miss Wolfe is an actress of exceptional versatile ability. She recently appeared in "Redemption," "Secret of Miser's Cove," "Norma from Norway," and many others. She is now playing leads with Valeska Surratt in "Puddin' Head Wilson," "The Immigrant," Etc. Address, Glendale, Cal.

Jane Wolfe (1875-1958), American silent film character actress.
(From: *Filmland Favorites*, 1915 E.V.)

The short article, of a little more than one hundred words, further mentions that he mainly wrote about magic and that he published his works at his own expense. Mentioned are also his poetry and the Essay Competition together with that he lived in America during World War I where he 'played a very ambiguous role'. This work was the 6th new edition of the *Winkler Prins Encyclopaedie* published by Elsevier in Amsterdam³⁸⁰⁹, an encyclopaedia founded by the Dutch writer and poet Anthony Winkler Prins (1817-1908). It would have pleased the old man in his last days, I think, to have known of this reference that in a way prophesied the later interest in him and his work. But I am sure that he knew that The Law and its Word were secured owing to his work and magick and would grow and flourish. As to Crowley and encyclopaedias, I notice that the British writer and Cambridge linguist Charles Kay Ogden in 1926 E.V. in a review of the 32 volumes of the 13th edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* in *The Saturday Review of Literature* on mention Britannica's sins of omission wrote:

*Even necrophily avails Aleister Crowley naught, though his claims as poet are at least equal to those of Edna St. Vincent Millay; and it is a pity that Rudolph Valentino lived and died in vain.*³⁸¹⁰

Ogden is evidently alluding to the 'amorous cannibalism' found in Crowley's poem *Jezebel* which he published in 1898 under the pseudonym of Count Vladimir Svareff.³⁸¹¹ Crowley and Ogden were acquaintances. Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), American poet and playwright, wrote numerous books, among others, *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* in 1923 E.V., which received the Pulitzer Prize, and in 1931 E.V. *Fatal Interview*, a volume of fine love sonnets. Millay has been mentioned as perhaps the premier American lyricist of the twentieth century. At the time of writing *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* still not has Aleister Crowley as a head word although several European encyclopaedias have it. Perhaps it does not make much difference but Crowley's name was added to a "catch-up" volume, 'Missing Persons', of the *Dictionary of National Biography*

H. R. Hoetink. 18 dln. (vols.) Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1947-54, vol. 6, p. 525: "**CROWLEY, Aleister**, Engels dichter en romanschrijver (Leamington 12 Oct. 1875), bezocht Malvern College en Cambridge. Hij schreef vooral over de magie, gaf zijn werken op eigen kosten uit, loofde zelfs een prijs uit voor de beste studie hierover. Zijn gedichten getuigen van grote eruditie en hij drukt zich gemakkelijk uit in allerlei versvormen, zonder echter veel oorspronkelijks te produceren. In Wereldoorlog I woonde hij in Amerika en speelde daar een zeer dubbelzinnige rol. Door het verlies van zijn geld moest hij ten slotte met zijn pen aan de kost zien te komen. Bibl. o.a.: *Collected Works* (1905-'07); *The Equinox* (verscheen jaarlijks v. 1908-'14) [sic]. Lit.: P. R. Stephenson [sic], *The legend of A. C. (1930).*" • As a matter of fact, an edition of this Encyclopaedie from 1914 E.V. had briefly mentioned Crowley's attempt to climb Mt. Kanchenjunga in 1905 E.V. – the world's third highest peak, a huge snowclad uplift located in the Himalayas on the border between Sikkim in India, Nepal and Tibet. Kanchenjunga derives from the two Tibetan words, 'kanchen' and 'dzonga' meaning 'The five treasures of the snows' with reference to the mountain's summit which splits into five separate peaks of which the highest is 28,169 ft. or 8,586 m. • For the 1914 E.V. 'Encyclopaedie', see: Winkler Prins' Geïllustreerde Encyclopaedie. 16 dln. (vols.). Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1914-22, vol. 2, p. 405. • For the expedition to Kanchenjunga, see *Confessions*, and note⁴⁷⁴ and note²⁷⁶² above. • For the previous expedition to Chogo Ri or K2, see note⁸¹ above.

³⁸⁰⁹ In addition later a supplement in 3 vols.

³⁸¹⁰ "*The New Britannica (Inside and Out); By C. K. Ogden*" • Saturday Review of Literature. New York, NY: The Saturday Review Co., Inc. ♦ Vol. III, No. 13, Saturday, October 23, 1926, p. 235. (*The New Britannica (Inside and Out); By C. K. Ogden*, pp. [229]-31; 235-6.) • For Ogden, see also note¹⁸⁴² above.

³⁸¹¹ *Count Vladimir Svareff. Jezebel and other Tragic Poems.* By Count Vladimir Svareff. Edited, With an Introduction and Epilogue, by Aleister Crowley. London, UK: Privately printed at the Chiswick Press, 1898. • For *Jezebel* and 'amorous cannibalism', see note⁴²⁷⁰ and note⁴²⁷² below. • For the book, see note³⁴⁷¹ above.

(DNB), published by Oxford University Press in 1993 E.V., forty-five years after his death.³⁸¹² However, it was an interesting article written by Crowley biographer Gerald Suster who in 1988 E.V. wrote *The Legacy of the Beast; The Life, Work and Influence of Aleister Crowley*.³⁸¹³ As to the DNB, I recall Crowley mention it in a chapter of *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*:

*Lou stooped over the table, her long thin tongue shot out of her mouth like an ant-eater in the Dictionary of National Biography or whatever it is, and twiddled it round in that snow till I nearly went out of my mind.*³⁸¹⁴

I do not recall any mentioning of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* apart from a reference to it in a footnote in the second volume of *The Collected Works of Aleister Crowley*. Nevertheless, I notice Frank Harris's sudden appearance in the encyclopaedia's 15th edition, 1977 E.V., forty-six years after his death! I notice with interest that recently two reference works mention Crowley. There is a volume of the large *Brill's New Pauly; Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* from 2008 E.V. where Aleister Crowley and the Thelemites and their Egyptian heritage are being mentioned.³⁸¹⁵ And back in 2005 E.V. appeared in the *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism* a large article about Aleister Crowley together with one about *Ordo Templi Orientis*, both written by Marco Pasi.³⁸¹⁶ Regarding Ogden, in 1912 E.V. Ogden founded the intellectual weekly *The Cambridge Magazine* and I notice that the issue of the magazine published on October 19, 1912 E.V., had a review, perhaps by Ogden, of the seventh number of *The Equinox* published in March 1912 E.V.:

*The Equinox, Vol. I, No. VII, March 1912 (10s 6d. net), contains between 400 and 500 pages, largely the work of Mr. Aleister Crowley. "The Ghools [sic, but Ghouls]" is a truly haunting production, and perhaps the best in the volume. There is also a striking full-page sketch of Mr. Crowley by Augustus John.*³⁸¹⁷

³⁸¹² Christine S. Nicholls (Editor). *The Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 162-3. ("CROWLEY, Edward Alexander ('Aleister') (1875-1947)", signed "GERALD SUSTER", pp. 162-3.) • Later, in 2004 E.V., appeared in Oxford DNB: Ronald Decker, 'Crowley, Aleister (1875-1947)'

³⁸¹³ Gerald Suster. *The Legacy of the Beast; The Life, Work and Influence of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: W. H. Allen & Co., 1988. • For Suster, see note¹¹⁹ above.

³⁸¹⁴ Aleister Crowley. *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*. London, UK: W. Collins, 1922, p. 55. (*Book I – Paradiso. Chapter IV. AU PAYS DE COCAINE*, pp. 46-62.)

³⁸¹⁵ Brill's New Pauly; *Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World. Classical Tradition*. Edited by Manfred Landfester in collaboration with Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. 5 vols. Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill nv, 2006-2010. • Vol. III (Jap-Ode), p. 381. (**MAGIC. E. The 20th Century**, pp. 380-1.)

³⁸¹⁶ *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*. Edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, et al. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2005 • Vol. I., pp. 281-7. (*Crowley, Aleister (born Edward Alexander), * 12.10.1875 Leamington, † 1.12.1947 Hastings [By Marco Pasi]*, pp. 656-8.) • Ibid. • Vol. II, pp. 898-906. (*Ordo Templi Orientis [By Marco Pasi]*, pp. 898-906.)

³⁸¹⁷ *The Cambridge Magazine*; Edited by Members of Cambridge University. Cambridge and London, UK: The Cambridge Magazine. • Vol. II, No. 1, Saturday, October 19, 1912, p. 19. (*Reviews*, pp. 18-20.) • [*Aleister Crowley, et al.*] *The Equinox. Vol. I., No. VII. London: Wieland & Co., March MCMXII O.S. (1912 E.V.)* • The play "THE GHOULS; CROQUIS DE CROQUE-MITAINE PAR ALEISTER CROWLEY." • Ibid., pp. 159-78. (*THE GHOULS; CROQUIS DE CROQUE-MITAINE PAR ALEISTER CROWLEY*, pp. 159-78.) • For reviews of *The Equinox, Vol. I., No. VII*, see note⁹¹⁷, note⁹¹⁸ and note⁹²¹ above.

Appendix.

“Aleister St. Edward Crowley”

Most people will probably think that the designation “Saint” used by Aleister Crowley dates from his joining of the Ordo Templi Orientis, however, this is not correct! In the prospectus of *“The Confessions of Aleister Crowley” – “The Spirit of Solitude”* – issued in the Autumn 1929 E.V., the work’s publisher, and Crowley’s friend, P. R. Stephensen of the Mandrake Press in London, had contributed a short essay titled *“Is Aleister Crowley a Saint?”*, and whose last lines stated:

*Is Aleister Crowley a saint? Readers of his Confessions will be able to judge for themselves. And whatever their conclusions, they will not deny the tremendous energy and versatility of the man, or that he is a subtle and unique personality who has lived colourfully in our drab age.*¹

Eleven years before, in New York City in 1918 E.V., Crowley had added “St.” between “Aleister” and “Edward” when he gave his full name to an assistant to the Attorney General who examined him: “Aleister St. Edward Crowley”.² However, the earliest use of “Aleister St. Edward Crowley” that I have seen dates as far back as 1900 where an entry of “Crowley, St. Edward Aleister” in *The Literary Year-book And Bookman’s Directory 1900* listed the three books, *Jephthat, and Other Mysteries* [1899]; *The Tale of Archais* [1898]; and *Jezebel, and other Tragic Poems* [1898]³ – The ultra-rare, privately printed *Jezebel* (a total of 52 copies printed) was distributed by Kegan Paul, and priced 15s. net. In July 1904 E.V. we find the name “Aleister St. Edward MacGregor Crowley” on Nuith Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith Crowley’s Birth Certificate, and added to the former name was “Boleskine Khan commonly known as Lord Boleskine, Author”.⁴ Rose and Aleister Crowley’s daughter was born on July 28th at Boleskine House after the couple’s return from Egypt. Two years later, in 1906 E.V., “St.” also appeared on the birth certificate of Lola Zaza Crowley (born on December 2, 1906 E.V.), where the father’s name stated: “St Edward Aleister Crowley”, information supplied by the mother, Rose Edith Crowley!⁵ Returning to America and WW1, in 1917 E.V. and 1918 E.V. approximately 24 million men living in the United States of America completed a World War I draft registration card, thus also Aleister Crowley who on September 12, 1918 E.V., signed his registration card: “Aleister Saint Edward Crowley” (the ‘A’ of “Aleister” phallus-shaped!), and gave his present occupation as a “Poet”!⁶



¹ [Prospectus of] *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: The Mandrake Press, “Autumn 1929”, p. [2]. (“*IS ALEISTER CROWLEY A SAINT?*”; signed “P. R. S.” [P. R. Stephensen], p. [2].)

² Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation – Old German Files, 1909-1921. ♦ Aleister Crowley, #365985, pp. 24. ♦ FRANK X. O’DONNELL; N.Y. City; July 30th, 1919. IN RE: ALEISTER CROWLEY (*Radical Activities*), p. 4.

³ *The Literary Year-book And Bookman’s Directory 1900*. Edited by Herbert Morrah. London, UK: George Allen, 1900, p. 176. (AUTHORS, pp. 145-258.)

⁴ Record of her birth – National Records of Scotland. ♦ 1904. BIRTHS in the District of Boleskine in the County of Inverness, No. 20, p. 7.

⁵ GRO – Copy of her Birth Certificate. (Born at 106 Saint Marys Mansions, Paddington, London, the address of Rose’s parents.)

⁶ WWI Draft Registration Card – Aleister St. Edward Crowley, Sep. 12, 1918.

A FORGOTTEN CASE

In the summer of 1930 E.V. Aleister Crowley had tried to exhibit his paintings in London, but it came to nothing. However, it turns out that Crowley for the exhibition had hired a photographer to copy a pencil portrait of him drawn by Augustus John – apparently the portrait that appeared as frontispiece in the seventh number of *The Equinox*, March 1912 E.V. (below). But the photographer did not deliver, and Crowley sued him, as narrated by the London *Daily Herald* on August 1, 1930 E.V. [p. 7.], in a notice headed “AUTHOR’S PORTRAIT” – “JOHN DRAWING THAT WAS KEPT TOO LONG”:

A pencil portrait by Mr. Augustus John, R.A., valued at £100, was the subject of an action at Westminster County Court yesterday. Mr. Alistair [sic] Crowley, of Park-mansions, Knightsbridge, S.W., sued Mr. J. W. Maycock, a photographer, of Maiden-lane, for the value of the portrait or its return, and damages for its detention.

Mr. C. Gallop, for Mr. Crowley, said the plaintiff was an author, and a portrait of himself in pencil was to be used in connection with an exhibition.

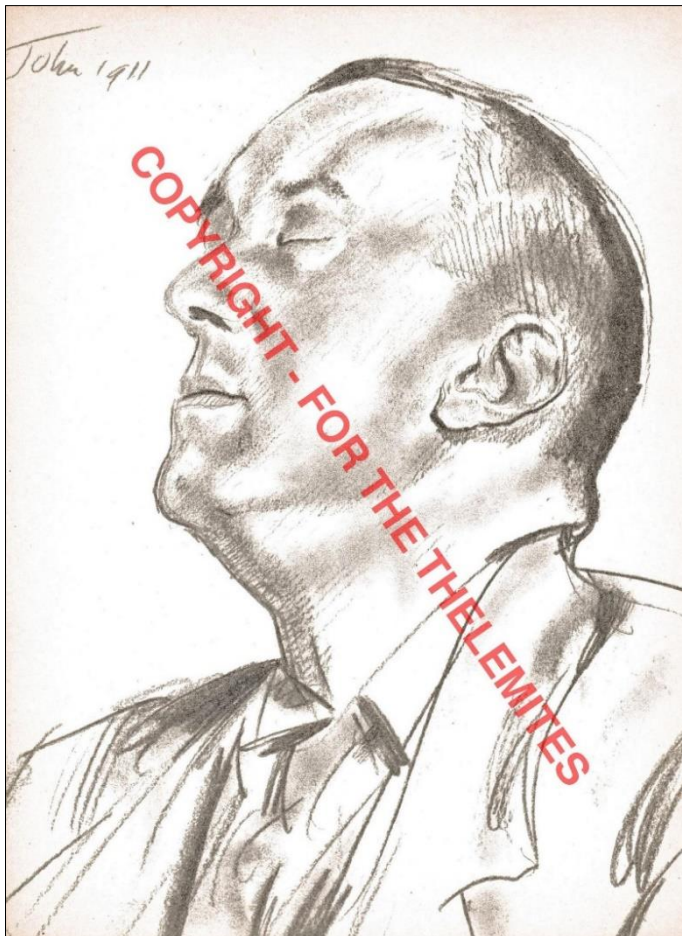
The picture had been returned, and it was a question of costs and whether there was wrongful detention.

Mr. J. R. O. Jones, for the defence, said there was no question of illegal detention. The portrait, with other pictures, had been removed to Mr. Maycock’s studio at Mr. Crowley’s request to be copied.

Judge Sir Alfred Tobin found that there was undue delay in returning the portrait and entered judgment for Mr. Crowley for costs.

Perhaps the portrait together with some of Crowley’s works were illustrations for an exhibition catalogue.

The same day that the notice appeared in the *Daily Herald* Crowley departed for Berlin together with some 160 of his paintings and drawings. Some of these works (73) were exhibited in October 1931 E.V. at the Gallery Neumann-Nierendorf (Porza) in Berlin – the exhibition opened on October 11, 1931 E.V., and had according to the exhibition catalogue no drawing/photo of a portrait of Aleister Crowley by Augustus John. [Ausstellung Aleister Crowley: vom 11. Oktober bis 5. November 1931 in den Ausstellungsräumen der Porza, Landeszentrale für Deutschland E.V., Berlin W 62, Budapeststrasse 3 / Galerie Neumann-Nierendorf. Berlin W 35 und Porza. Berlin, 1931.]



‘Aleister Crowley. A Lithograph by Auguste Clot from the Sketch made by Augustus John’ (left), was frontispiece of the seventh number of *The Equinox*, March 1912 E.V. The lithograph was also used on the front page of the prospectus of *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, which was issued in the Autumn of 1929 E.V. Augustus John’s original pencil drawing “Alistair [sic, Aleister] Crowley in a Trance, 1911,” which measures 16 × 10 3/8 inches (40.64 × 26.35 cm), is today in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, a drawing received in 1953 E.V. as a gift of Anson Conger Goodyear (1877-1969), a Buffalo local business man, military officer, author and collector of modern paintings, rare books and historical manuscripts. A. Conger Goodyear was a director, 1911 E.V., of the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, and a founder and president, 1929-39 E.V., of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The drawing was originally in the collection of the Irish-American New York lawyer, collector, and patron John Quinn (1870-1924). However, John Quinn must have sold the Augustus John drawing of Crowley before his death in 1924 E.V., since the drawing not is listed in the catalogue *John Quinn 1870-1925; Collection of Paintings, Water Colors; Drawings & Sculpture* – a catalogue that was published in 1926 E.V. Among the many works of Augustus John appearing in this catalogue is a drawing with the title: ““Portrait of a Poet,” 19½ × 16 in.”, however, the size of this drawing shows that it is not the one in question, which measures 16 × 10¾ inches, and none of the other drawings have these measures. [John Quinn 1870-1925; Collection of Paintings, Water Colors; Drawings & Sculpture. Huntington, NY: Pidgeon Hill Press, 1926, pp. 18-9.]

Augustus John apparently made two drawings of Aleister Crowley in 1911 E.V. The other one, which originally was exhibited in London in December 1911 E.V., is now at the Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The drawing that appeared in the seventh number of *The Equinox* was clearly Crowley's favourite Augustus John portrait of him – there are four known portraits of Aleister Crowley drawn by Augustus John, the three of them are apparently from the 1910s, and the last one dates from shortly before Crowley's death and appeared in *OLLA* in 1946 E.V.

The Welsh painter and draughtsman Augustus John (1878-1961), exhibited in December 1911 E.V. at the Chenil Gallery, Chelsea, London, and among the works was a drawing of Aleister Crowley. However, it was not mentioned that it was Aleister Crowley, and its title just stated: "*THE HEAD OF A POET*" (below, right). It seems that none of the newspapers and magazines that wrote about the exhibition knew that this poet was "The Beast 666". The drawing – graphite on off-white wove paper, measuring 44.9 x 27 cm – is today at the Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was bought by Grenville L.(indall) Winthrop (1864-1943), a New York City lawyer and art collector, in 1924 E.V. He bequeathed his entire art collection to the Fogg Art Museum in 1943 E.V.



Augustus John, 1911 E.V.



"THE HEAD OF A POET", 1911 E.V.

The above photograph of "*The Head of a Poet*" appeared in the British illustrated weekly newspaper *The Graphic*, December 23, 1911 E.V., in an article headed "*THE ENGLISH POST-IMPRESSIONIST: The Art of Mr. Augustus John.*" (*The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*. London, England: Graphic ♦ Vol. LXXXIV, No. 195, Saturday, December 23, 1911, p. 1013.)

The mentioned 1930 E.V. exhibition of Crowley's paintings was apparently the short-lived exhibition at the Aquila Press in London, or a planned exhibition at Langham Chambers. In 1930 E.V. Crowley had tried to buy the newly founded Aquila Press in London which was for sale. Aquila Press, located at Lenthall Place, Gloucester Road in Kensington, had been founded in January 1929 E.V. by the English publisher, printer and art journalist, and later art gallery director Winifred (Ellen) Henderson, née Lester (1896-1976), known as Wyn Henderson. Wyn Henderson would later write in a memory of Nancy Cunard about Aleister Crowley and his attempt to buy the press:

I can see her [Nancy Cunard] now with her delicate shapely head, rolling her pretty blue eyes with the mischievous expression of a naughty child she so often assumed, in this instance at the sight of the atrocious and horrifying paintings by Aleister Crowley with which he had temporarily plastered the walls of the press he had in vain hoped to buying. Her keen visual sense was very properly outraged but not at the expense of her lively sense of humour. [Quoted from: Nancy Cunard. Brave Poet, Indomitable Rebel; 1896-1965. Edited by Hugh Ford. Philadelphia, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1968, p. 158.]

A couple of years before World War 2 started Wyn Henderson ran gallery Guggenheim Jeune, 30 Cork Street, London W. 1, for the American art collector and bohemian Marguerite "Peggy" Guggenheim (1898-1979).

Aleister Crowley's old enemy the rag *John Bull* – still owned by Odhams Press Ltd., and directed by Julius Salter Elias, 1st Viscount Southwood – published on July 26, 1930 E.V., under the heading "*The WORST MAN in BRITAIN*" the following garbage about Crowley's art exhibition in London:

The WORST MAN in BRITAIN

An exhibition of most unpleasant pictures will be on view in London shortly.

They are the sinister works of Aleister Crowley, a self-confessed super-degenerate who, since we exposed him years ago, has been keeping very much in the background.

Dope-friend, devil-doctor and disciple of "black magic," he is back again in England, after having been deported from many countries.

Crowley, although he can only be interviewed by appointment, has since his arrival in London been using three addresses – at Yeoman House, Hay-market, S.W.; at All Souls' Place, W.; and at Park Mansions, Knightsbridge, S.W.

Degrading pictures

We have before us as we write photographic copies of some of the "work of art" which Crowley intends to hang for the pleasure of the degenerates and the dupes.

There are grotesque impressions of women for which he would be lynched in certain parts of the Empire.

His own face – the face of "Beast 666," as he calls himself – is prominently featured, bloated and coarse.

Our present warning is all the more real and urgent since we know that Crowley, for once in a way, is financially embarrassed.

Crowley knows only one way of making money – the corruption of manhood and womanhood.

We will not again stress in detail his record.

Our readers will recollect our many exposures of his "black magic," his dope carnivals, of how he was banished from France and Italy, of how he was driven from his free love "temple" in Sicily.

Mystic writings

But we consider it our duty to expose this new Crowley menace – the "art" exhibition, not so much the exhibition itself, but the incidentals that will, if not prevented, surrounds it.

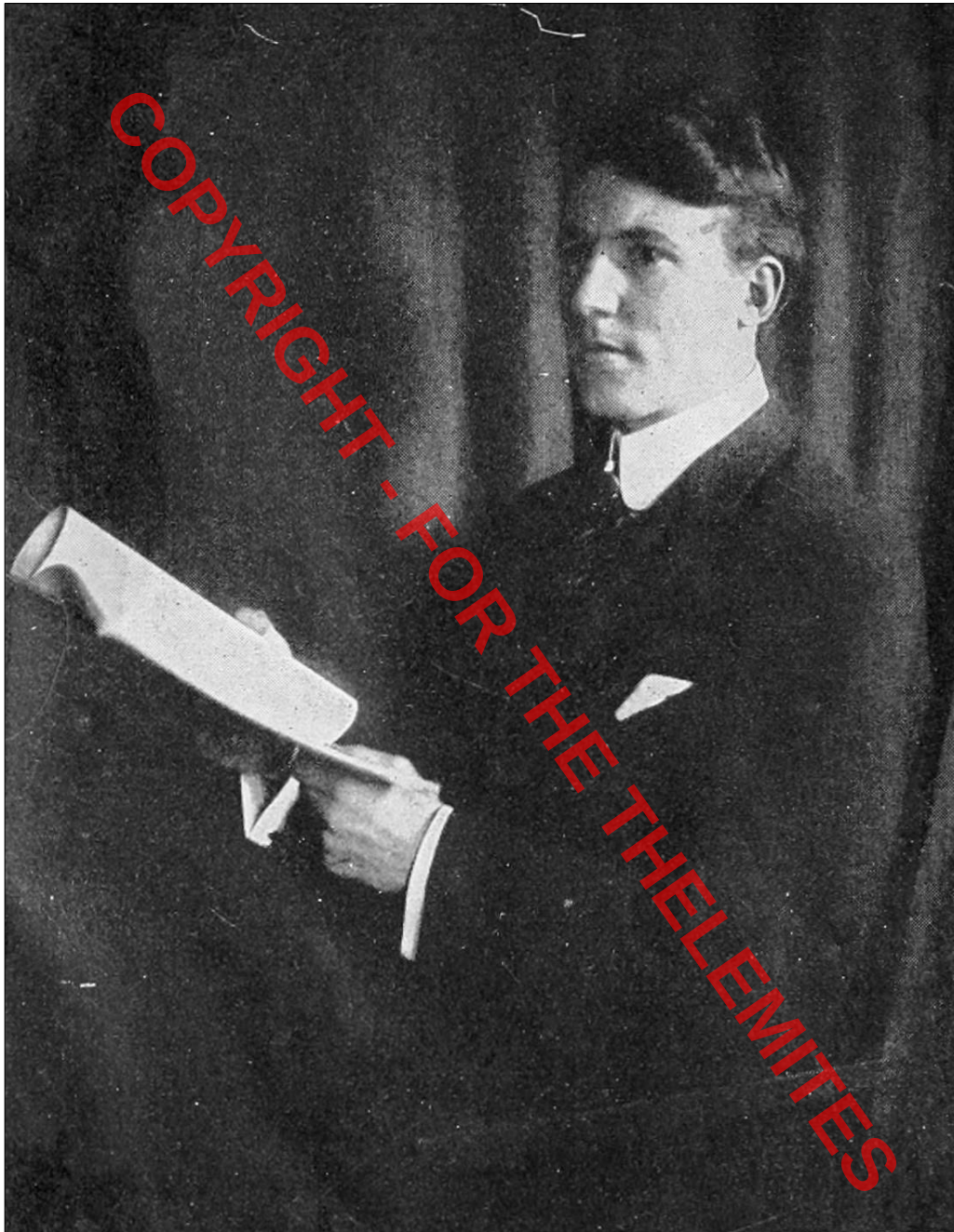
When Crowley is engaged in his despicable business, as he is now, scores are in peril.

Young undergraduates and impressionable women are particularly at his mercy.

His insatiable greed will bleed from them every penny of their money if they are seduced by his wiles. [...]

(John Bull. London, England: Odhams Press Ltd. ♦ Saturday, July 26, 1930, p. 10.)

That it is stated that *John Bull* had "*photographic copies*" of some of Crowley's pictures suggest that the photographer J. W. Maycock in all probability must have contacted the journal shortly before the action! As to photographer J.(ames) W.(illiam) Maycock, he was in fact Labour candidate for Ealing, and stood unsuccessfully for the Labour Party for election to parliament at the general elections in 1929 E.V. and 1931 E.V., however, he later became Mayor of Richmond (Surrey) from 1936-37 E.V., and was also Chairman of the Richmond Trades and Labour Council.



Hereward (Hubert) (Lavington) Carrington (1880-1958), British-born American psychic investigator and author, c. 1909 E.V.

Hereward Carrington published in 1952 E.V. an interesting book entitled *Psychic Oddities: Fantastic and Bizarre Events in the Life of a Psychical Researcher*²³²⁹ where he also mentioned the people whom he knew and worked with over the years as psychical researcher. In the book he gives a very spectacular description of Crowley whom he clearly respected and was impressed by and he had of course a deep interest in his extraordinary powers and mentions that he undoubtedly was one of the most brainy, versatile and extraordinary men who ever lived, and further that he also was, in the opinion of many, one of the world's most sinister characters. Carrington also speculates about how much truth and how much fiction there are in the tales told about Crowley – almost every crime in the calendar had been attributed to him. However, I observe that there seems to be one exception – which may seem strange all things considered – since no one, as far as I know, have thought of that the thirteen years old school-boy Edward Alexander who happened to be tall and strong of his age in 1888 could have been Jack the Ripper.²³³⁰ Joking apart! Carrington's description in *Psychic Oddities* of Crowley based on his acquaintance with him in America during the war was thus surprisingly positive and as Carrington wrote he came to know him well and was impressed by him:

*In fact, I never ceased to marvel at the man's versatility and many-sided genius. Nowhere could you ever meet another like him. Of all the characters I have ever known, he was the most bizarre and unforgettable....*²³³¹

– The English author (Lytton) Burgo Partridge (1935-1963), wrote in *A History of Orgies* in 1958 E.V. about Crowley:

Crowley lived seventy-two years, throughout which he devoted himself with obvious sincerity to his magical practices. The witch-cult still lives in 'civilized' Europe, but it does so furtively, and with less glorious and exotic trappings than those of the Thelemites. Not many men have the inclination or patience to carry their games so far, and anyway, in Crowley's case it was not a game.

If we compare the life of a roughly contemporaneous and apparently similar figure, we get a different impression, and realize the extent to which Crowley was unique.

*Gregory Efimovitch 'Rasputin' was born of humble parents at a village called Petronovskoye in Siberia, in the year 1871. [...]*²³³²

Carrington's description of Aleister Crowley in *Psychic Oddities* had, in fact, appeared the year before Crowley's death in the mentioned article "*The Strangest Man I Have Ever Known*", which first was published in *The Kalpaka; An Occult Quarterly* in October 1946 E.V.²³³³ At the time it appeared

²³²⁹ Hereward Carrington. *Psychic Oddities: Fantastic and Bizarre Events in the Life of a Psychical Researcher*. London, UK: Rider and Company, 1952.

²³³⁰ Some years after that I wrote this a DNA test which was published in September 2014 E.V. revealed that Jack the Ripper was a Polish immigrant named Aaron Kosminski (1865-1919), one of six key suspects.

²³³¹ Hereward Carrington. *Psychic Oddities: Fantastic and Bizarre Events in the Life of a Psychical Researcher*. London, UK: Rider and Company, 1952, p. 60. (3: *Famous Researchers I Have Known*, pp. 47-61.) • *The Kalpaka; An Occult Quarterly*. Coimbatore, S. India: The Latent Light Culture. ♦ Vol. XXXXI, No. 4, October, November, December, 1946, p. 150. (*The Strangest Man I Have Ever Known; Dr. Hereward Carrington*, pp. 143-50.)

²³³² Burgo Partridge. *A History of Orgies*. London, UK: Anthony Blond Ltd., 1958, p. 223. (*THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*, pp. 209-31.)

²³³³ *The Kalpaka; An Occult Quarterly*. Coimbatore, S. India: The Latent Light Culture. ♦ Vol. XXXXI, No. 4, October,

Crowley was awaiting in Hastings the publication of what became his last book *OLLA; An Anthology of Sixty Years of Song*, issued by the O.T.O. and officially published at the winter solstice, December 22, 1946 E.V. at 10.54 a.m.²³³⁴ Crowley most probably never read the interesting and sober eight-page piece, however, here are some bits from it:

*It was soon after World War I started that I received visit from the most remarkable man I have ever known. His eyes first attracted my attention, for, though he looked at one while talking, they appeared to remain parallel, instead of focusing, as most eyes do. The result was the unpleasant impression that he was looking right through you, bid perhaps reading your innermost thoughts!*²³³⁵

[...]

Crowley greeted every acquaintance and began every letter with the same phrase; "Do What Thou wilt shall be the Whole of the Law." Naturally this brought a storm of criticism from many quarters, people accusing him of promulgating unlimited license. Crowley's reply was that his critics couldn't even understand in English language, that "do what thou wilt" did not mean "do as thou wilt," and that the inner significance of his remark was that, when once you have determined your ideal course of action in life, you should let nothing and no one stand in the way of fulfillment. Another favourite dictum of his was, "every individual is a star," meaning that every human being is an individualized spiritual entity, differing in toto from every other individual in the world today.

When sauntering along the street with him, Crowley might occasionally stop in the middle of the bustling sidewalk, and his lips would move in silent utterance. He was saying a prayer to the Sun, or to some god in his magical hierarchy. That Crowley possessed real magical power of some sort I have no doubt. I have attended invocational ceremonies of his, at which strange and fantastic things happened. I well remember one of these – when William Seabrook was also present – which lasted the greater part of the night. Crowley, Seabrook, Waddell and I were in the Magic Circle; the young man who was the subject of the experiment sat cross-legged in a triangle, drawn on the floor, some little distance away. The room was filled with the fumes of incense, and the chanting of the ceremony – in English and 'Angelic' – went an hour after hour. Under such circumstances one could not be sure that his senses were not deceiving him. All the same we all saw (or thought we saw) a strange phenomenon occur at the same time, and for approximately the same length of time. It was then about 3 a.m. The God Taurus was being invoked. As I looked, the young man in the magic Triangle seemed slowly to resolve into an amorphous mass – a sort of brownish-gray mud-pie. I glanced at the others, and saw that they too were observing something phenomenal. The droning of the chant grow louder; then, after an interval of time hard to calculate but probably only some seconds, the mud-pie again resolved itself into our entranced young man. Had my senses deceived me, in that smoke-filled room? Undoubtedly they had. But we afterwards compared notes, and found that we had all seen something

November, December, 1946, pp. 143-50. (*The Strangest Man I Have Ever Known*; Dr. Hereward Carrington, pp. 143-50.) • Hereward Carrington stated in *Psychic Oddities* that the article appeared in "Reach magazine (which I edited for a couple of years)". Reach, "The Magazine of a Thousand interests." (Hollywood, CA: Reach.) was founded in 1946 E.V. with Carrington as editor, so the article evidently appeared the same year in both magazines. I have not been able to trace the article in Reach but Carrington's words suggest that it was published in one of the first issues of the new magazine in 1946 E.V. • Hereward Carrington. *Psychic Oddities: Fantastic and Bizarre Events in the Life of a Psychical Researcher*. London, UK: Rider and Company, 1952, p. 54. (3: *Famous Researchers I Have Known*, pp. 47-61.)

²³³⁴ OLLA. An Anthology of Sixty Years of Songs by Aleister Crowley. London: Published by the O.T.O., An Ixx. Sol in 0° Capricornus. Dec. 22, 10.54 A.M. [1946 E.V.].

²³³⁵ The Kalpaka; An Occult Quarterly. Coimbatore, S. India: The Latent Light Culture. ♦ Vol. XXXXI, No. 4, October, November, December, 1946, p. 143. (*The Strangest Man I Have Ever Known*; Dr. Hereward Carrington, pp. 143-50.)

most unusual happen – through our descriptions of it varied. After a session of this character, strangers who called the next day often noted a peculiar trembling of the nervous system, when they approached Crowley. I noted this myself on more than one occasion, and commented upon it to him. It was purely physiological. "Yes," said Crowley, "that's very curious; many people have noted that after a Ceremony."

During the last months of his stay in the States, Crowley suddenly branched forth – without any previous impulse or training – as a painter in oils! The number of canvases he turned out within a few weeks was prodigious. Most of them were highly erotic, but several of them were symbolic and beautiful. His color-effects were startling. The subject-matter was indescribable. Perhaps this strange urge – and his weird painting – resulted from the drugs he was taking in considerable quantities during the latter part of his stay here. At the last meal I had with him, I remember, we had only soup, entre and salad (he was alternately rolling in money and completely impoverished). He shook a capsule from a small box and swallowed it. "Ah" he said, "some heroin and a cup of coffee; a delicious dessert!" I did not indulge in the dessert.²³³⁶

[...]

How much of all that was said and written about Crowley was truth, and how much fiction? I often asked myself that question. Almost every crime in the calendar had been attributed to him, and, as I have said, he was publicly denounced as "the wickedest man that ever lived." That he was a sinister, feared, dangerous character I have no doubt. As opposed to this, there was his scientific knowledge, his industry, his profundity of occult knowledge (like Cagliostro), his exotic artistic and universal genius (like Cellini), his extraordinary influence over people (like Rasputin), and his mystically beautiful poetry (like Baudelaire). That is why I have characterized him as a compound of these four men.

My own estimate of him is that it would be impossible for any one human being to have crowded into one life all the activities which had been attributed to him. Hatred and fear combined to manufacture many charges and create many myths. Discounting all this, however, he undoubtedly remains a fabulous character – one who indelibly impressed itself on everyone who encountered him.²³³⁷

Crowley's scepticism in occult matters clearly appealed to Carrington's scientific flair. *Psychic Oddities* was published in England in 1952 E.V. the year after that John Symonds had published the biographical *The Great Beast*, which gave a critical and often very coloured portrayal of Crowley's life and person. Subsequently, John Symonds published four other biographical books, which more or less were reedited editions of *The Great Beast* under various titles²³³⁸ – Symonds's first publication on Aleister Crowley was apparently an article in the English monthly magazine *World Review* in July 1949 E.V. headed "ALEISTER CROWLEY; THE DEVIL'S CONTEMPLATIVE", and which, among other things, stated:

I first met Aleister Crowley when he was already old. He was living in retirement in a boarding-house on the outskirts of Hastings, a large and – to me – sombre house, standing in its own grounds, and hidden from the road by stalwart trees. A year before, Mr. Clifford Bax had said to me: 'You should meet Aleister

²³³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-9.

²³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

²³³⁸ *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*. (London, UK: Rider and Company, 1951.) • *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. (London, UK: Frederick Muller, 1958.) • *The Great Beast: The Life and Magic of Aleister Crowley*. (London, UK: Macdonald & Co. Ltd, 1971.) • *The Great Beast: The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley* also appeared under the title: *The Great Beast: Sinister Life of Aleister Crowley*. (London, UK: Mayflower, 1973.) • *The King of the Shadow Realm. Aleister Crowley: his life and magic*. (London, UK: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1989.) • *The Beast 666 (The Life of Aleister Crowley)*. (London, UK: The Pindar Press, 1997.)

Crowley. He will die soon and then you would have lost your chance.' He added with a smile: 'I will have him sent to London for you', as if Aleister Crowley were some fine old vase or piece of carved ivory. I didn't bother Mr. Bax to pack up Crowley for me, but instead made the journey to Hastings, taking with me my friend, Rupert Gleadow, the astrologer and poet.

[...]

The 'Wickedest Man in the World', as Crowley had been called, did look a little wicked, but mostly rather exhausted – whether from wickedness, or from old age, I did not then know.

It was an awkward meeting in rather mediocre circumstances – the drawing-room of the average boarding-house is not, after all, either the most diabolic or the most romantic of surroundings. I remember that we began talking about astrology, a subject which Crowley said he hardly believed in. This opinion rather surprised me, in view of the fact that he had been casting horoscopes for himself and others all his life and could more easily tell you what degree and sign of the zodiac the sun was in, than whether the day was Tuesday.

But astrology is a good subject for strangers to get together over, and by the time we had dropped astrology and gone on to magic, we had begun to feel at home.²³³⁹

That Crowley said that astrology was a subject which "he hardly believed in" I find very interesting, especially also since it could have been my own words! The way astrology often is used is foolish, and I remember that Crowley once wrote in *Magick Without Tears*:

*The prophecy must announce itself as such. We cannot have people picking up odds and ends which may be perfectly irrelevant, and insisting that they conceal forecasts. This excludes Great Pyramid lunatics; it would be quite simple to do the same sham calculations with the Empire State Building; when the architects protested, it is simple to reply: why, but of course! God was most careful not to let them know what they were really doing, or they would have died of fright!*²³⁴⁰

However, astrology is often used in the same way as calculations on the Great Pyramid – the future of the world is based on a table and a calendar. "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."! However, there are aspects of astrology which prove very useful, as also observed by Crowley who wrote a fine book on astrology for Evangeline Adams.²³⁴¹

In forty-six years John Symonds published his books about Aleister Crowley. It becomes clear when reading these books that Symonds was prejudiced against Crowley and his motives and thus mainly had a negative attitude to him. It is therefore not surprising to discover that Symonds totally ignored the existence of this prominent researcher's judgment of Crowley in *Psychic Oddities*, which he of course must have known together with Carrington's articles published in the 1940s-50s and a pamphlet from 1950 E.V.²³⁴² dealing with Crowley and giving the

²³³⁹ World Review. Incorporating Review of Reviews. London, UK: Published by the Proprietor, Edward Hulton. ♦ July 1949, New Series No. 5, pp. 54-5. (*Aleister Crowley; The Devil's Contemplative*. By John Symonds, pp. 54-7.) • Clifford Bax (1886-1962). English author and playwright. • Rupert Seeley Gleadow (1909-1974). English astrologer and poet. • See also note²⁵⁶⁴ below.

²³⁴⁰ *Aleister Crowley*. *Magick Without Tears*. Ed. Karl J. Germer. Hampton, NJ: Thelema Publishing Co., 1954, p. 176. (CHAPTER XXXIX: Prophecy) ♦ Also as: *Aleister Crowley*. *Magick Without Tears*. Abridge Edition. Edited by Israel Regardie. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1973, p. 255-6. (39. Prophecy) • See also note⁴³⁷³ below.

²³⁴¹ Published in 2002 E.V. as: *Aleister Crowley with Evangeline Adams*. *The General Principles of Astrology*. Liber DXXXVI. Edited by Hymenaeus Beta. York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 2002. • See note²⁷²⁰ below.

²³⁴² *Hereward Carrington*. *Strange People I Have Known: Aleister Crowley, Poet, Eccentric, Erotologist, Mystic, Exotic*

same views as found in *Psychic Oddities*. A man of Carrington's scientific calibre and reputation who wrote about Aleister Crowley and his work as Carrington did was too much for Symonds who probably feared that it would place Crowley and his work in a positive light, something that Symonds clearly not wanted. And since he chose to ignore these articles about Aleister Crowley he was also forced to ignore Hereward Carrington in his biographies although he of course knew of Carrington's presence in *Confessions* and the 'Blue' *Equinox*! (And probably also was aware of two reviews by Crowley of Carrington's books in "The Big Stick" in *The Equinox* together with the mentioning of him in *Book Four, Part Two* by the words: "By and by you reach the state of which Mr. Hereward Carrington makes his proud boast: your sole food is chocolate, which you chew unceasingly, even in your dreams."²³⁴³) This also falls in line with that Symonds's books sometimes contain assumptions instead of facts, as we have seen above. However, he seems to have tried to compensate by mention William Seabrook instead.²³⁴⁴ In *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (1951 E.V.) John Symonds mentioned P. R. Stephensen's fine book of facts of Crowley's literary career etc., *The Legend of Aleister Crowley; Being a Study of the Documentary Evidence Relating to a Campaign of Personal Vilification Unparalleled in Literary History* (1930 E.V.), as:

*an arid apologia of Crowley, The Legend of Aleister Crowley by one P. R. Stephensen, a director of the Mandrake Press.*²³⁴⁵

But it must be said that Symonds in his odd way managed to keep Crowley's legacy alive, and the positive interest towards Crowley and his work that later came evidently shocked him and the rise of this interest likely puzzled him greatly. In 1992 E.V. the 78 years old Symonds wrote in his introduction to a facsimile reprint of *OLLA; An Anthology of Sixty Years of Song*:

*Crowley's fame has vastly increased since his death in 1947. The enfant terrible of the Victorian age has become a cult hero of today. Standing everything on its head was considered outrageous during Crowley's lifetime, but now such behaviour would scarcely raise an eyebrow. He was one of the prophets of our brave new world.*²³⁴⁶

As to the words "Standing everything on its head", due to an error of the binders Crowley's 'Mark of the Beast', gilt-stamped on the upper board of *OLLA*, was upside down! Symonds succeeded in giving a negative picture of Aleister Crowley and his life in *The Great Beast*, and the book sold well.

Artist and Fabulous Character: "Koresh," the Man Who Believed That We Live on the Inside of a Hollow Sphere: A. Brigham Rose, and other Characters. Girard, KAN: E. Haldeman-Julius Publication, 1950. • See also note²²¹⁹ above.

²³⁴³ *Frater Perdurabo and Soror Virakam [Aleister Crowley and Mary Desti]*. Book Four. Part II – Magick [(Theory)]. London, UK: Wieland, n.d. [1913 E.V.], pp. 169. (CHAPTER XVI. THE MAGICK FIRE; WITH CONSIDERATIONS OF THURIBLE, THE CHARCOAL, AND THE INCENSE, pp. 165-71.) • For the review of Carrington's book *Palladino And Her Phenomena* in the third number of *The Equinox*, March 1910 E.V., see note²²⁶⁰ above.

²³⁴⁴ For William Seabrook, see note³³⁶⁰ below.

²³⁴⁵ John Symonds. *Gerald Yorke. The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: Rider & Co., 1951, p. 269. (CHAPTER XXVII; THE BEAST AND THE MONSTER, pp. 268-79.) • P. R. Stephensen. *The Legend of Aleister Crowley; Being a Study of the Documentary Evidence Relating to a Campaign of Personal Vilification Unparalleled in Literary History*. London, UK: Mandrake Press Limited, 1930.

²³⁴⁶ *OLLA. An Anthology of Sixty Years of Songs by Aleister Crowley*. London: Published by the O.T.O., An Ixx. Sol in 0° Capricornus. Dec. 22, 10.54 A.M. [1946 E.V.]. • Reprinted in facsimile: Essex House, Thame, Oxon, UK: Mandrake Press Ltd and Edmonds, WA, USA: Holmes Publishing Group, 1992. (*First Impressions Series*, Vol. N° 2)

For instance, the English-American novelist Christopher (William) (Bradshaw) Isherwood (1904-1986), who had known Crowley briefly in Berlin in the beginning of the 1930s, was reading the book in November 1955 E.V., and disillusioned wrote in his diary:

*Am reading John Symonds's The Great Beast. What a dreary mess! Am disinclined to take mescaline at present. The circumstances are all wrong. No calm. The truly awful thing about Crowley is that one suspects he didn't really believe in anything. Even his wickedness. Perhaps the only thing that wasn't fake was his addiction to heroin and cocaine.*²³⁴⁷

John Symonds was born in Battersea, Wandsworth, London, on March 12, 1914 E.V., and he died at the age of ninety-two in Camden, London, on October 21, 2006 E.V.²³⁴⁸ He was the son of Robert Wemyss Symonds (1889-1958), architect and expert on antique furniture and clocks, however, the architect refused to admit paternity of the child until many years later. Robert Wemyss Symonds married twice, but he never married John Symonds's mother. John Symonds was brought up by his mother Lily Sapzells, née Lury (born c. 1885)²³⁴⁹, a Lithuanian Jew who ran a boarding-house in Margate, Kent. Interestingly, in 1911 E.V. Lily Sapzells as a widow with private means was living at 1 Spencer Mansions in West Kensington, London, with a female servant (who was born in Margate, Kent).²³⁵⁰ John Symonds married twice and had two sons with his second wife. Symonds happened to be chosen by Crowley in his will as his literary executor and some have pointed out that many decades of royalties from his late benefactor's works²³⁵¹ and Symonds's own works dealing with him fuelled his many other writings, which were novels, children's stories and plays etc. Symonds met Crowley only some 18 months before Crowley's death. At first Symonds was fascinated by him but it changed mainly owing to Crowley's views on sex and drugs. Symonds writes in *The Magic of Aleister Crowley* (1958 E.V.) that it was the English writer and journalist Hugh Kingsmill (Lunn) (1889-1949), who suggested to him that he should be Aleister Crowley's biographer:

It was Hugh Kingsmill who suggested to me that I should be Crowley's biographer.

We were walking from Camden Town to Primrose Hill.

'A life of Crowley should sell well,' said Kingsmill enthusiastically, 'One would have to wait till he's dead, though.'

'That won't be long.'

'Is anyone going to do it?'

'I don't think so.'

'Why don't you?'

I was accompanying Kingsmill to Margaret's [K. Margaret Binetti] flat. Margaret was typing a book for him. Crowley seemed indifferent to my suggestion. I can think of one reason for this: he thought I wasn't

²³⁴⁷ Christopher Isherwood. *Diaries*. Volume One: 1939-1960. Edited and Introduced by Katherine Bucknell. London, UK: Methuen Publishing Ltd., 1996, p. 550. (*THE POSTWAR YEARS; April 11, 1948 – April 13, 1956. November 14 [1955], pp. 549-50.*)

²³⁴⁸ See also note¹¹⁶ above.

²³⁴⁹ According to the birth register ("John Sapzells"/"John Symonds") Lily Sapzells's maiden surname was "Lury" • Lily Sapzells also gave birth to a daughter named Elinor, born in Fulham in 1911 E.V. Lily Sapzells later married again.

²³⁵⁰ Information found in the *Census of England And Wales, 1911* • 1 Spencer Mansions, West Kensington, London.

²³⁵¹ See note²³⁷⁰ below.

serious. However, a month or two later, the post brought a large and carefully packed parcel from Hastings. Inside were four bound type-scripts, Crowley's *Autohagiography* from 1906 to 1923; the Beast had taken my advice.²³⁵²

James Laver in his *Museum Piece or the Education of an Iconographer* (1963 E.V.) recalls that shortly after Crowley's death he was present at a conversation between Louis Wilkinson and a young man who to all appearances was John Symonds since the latter remarked:

*'You know, I would like to write the Life of Crowley now he's safely dead.'*²³⁵³

Symonds was not alone in his negative views of Crowley. When John Symonds and Kenneth Grant's abridged edition of *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* appeared in its American edition in January 1970 E.V.²³⁵⁴ it was reviewed in the American weekly magazine *Saturday Review* by the English historian John Wyon Burrow (1935-2009) – a scholar educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, and later holding the chair in European thought at Oxford University – which among other things stated about Crowley:

The mountaineering feats seem to have been genuine enough, and Crowley took part in several Himalayan expeditions, but the poetry is poor stuff:

*By palm and pagoda enchanted
o'ershadowed, I lie in the light
Of stars that are bright beyond suns
that all poets have vaunted
in the deep-breathing amorous bosom
of forests of Amazon might ...*

[Introductory 'Rondel' from *AHAB And Other Poems*, 1903.²³⁵⁵]

*As for the prose, neither hashish nor divine dictation could do much for it; its only distinction is an addiction to crude alliteration. Crowley is a footnote in the literary history of his time, but more for the interest he aroused than for his own literary achievements.*²³⁵⁶

²³⁵² John Symonds. *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1958, p. 31. (CHAPTER FOUR; *Magic, Sacred and Profane*, pp. 26-32.) • See also note³⁷⁹⁰ below.

²³⁵³ James Laver. *Museum Piece or the Education of an Iconographer*. London, UK: Andre Deutsch, 1963, p. 231. (Chapter 11; *Familiar Spirits*, pp. 216-33.)

²³⁵⁴ See: Publishers' Weekly; The Book Industry Journal. New York, NY: R. R. Bowker Company. ♦ Vol. 197, No. 3, January 19, 1970, p. 75. ("THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY | *An Autohagiography* | Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Illustrated with 24 pages of photographs and drawings. \$14.95")(HILL & WANG; January, p. 75.) • Aleister Crowley. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography*. Edited by John Symonds & Kenneth Grant. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1970.

²³⁵⁵ Lines which the British scholar Tobias Churton (1960-) forty years later mentioned as "magical lines" in his 2011 E.V. biography *Aleister Crowley; The Biography*. • Tobias Churton. *Aleister Crowley; The Biography; Spiritual; Romantic Explorer; Occult Master – and Spy*. London, UK: Watkins Publishing, 2011, p. 80. (SEVEN; *Son of Man; 1901-03*, pp. [75]-90.) • Tobias Churton holds a Master's degree in Theology from Brasenose College, Oxford, and he is an Honorary Fellow of Exeter University and Faculty Lecturer in Western Esotericism and has written many books on Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, Hermeticism and Gnosticism.

²³⁵⁶ *Saturday Review*. New York, NY: Saturday Review, Inc. ♦ Vol. 53, February 14, 1970, pp. 39-40. ("THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY: *An Autohagiography* | edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant | Hill & Wang, 960 pp. \$14.95.")(Review by J. W. Burrow, pp. 39-40.)

The American book reviewer Stephen Kitt Oberbeck (1937-), wrote about Aleister Crowley and the book in *Newsweek*, January 26, 1970 E.V.:

Compared with Charles Manson, the guru in the Sharon Tate case, Aleister Crowley was something of a Boy Scout, but the popular press of his day called him "the wickedest man in the world" anyway. Mystic, magus, esthete, libertine, Crowley, a wealthy English brewer's son born in 1875, called himself "Beast 666" and his numerous concubines by names such as Ape, Camel, Snake or Monkey. The "Ape of Thoth" (mistress Leah Hirsig) took down much of Crowley's wrighty, gamy, "Confessions" as the master dictated. They portray an oddly gifted, acutely eccentric figure who epitomized the freewheeling, kinky mysticism spawned by Victorian morality. In that weird mix of "magick" and Freemasonry, the bald, bullet-headed Crowley tried to take over one large occult society, then founded his own based on doctrine received from his "guardian angel" – notions like "The word of Sin is Restriction" or "Ordinary morality is for ordinary people." [...] But for all his humbug and longwinded ego, Crowley was a serious scholar of the occult and a sharp social critic. He characterized the England of Victoria as: "A sovereign of suet, a parliament of putty, an aristocracy of alabaster, an intelligentsia of India rubber, a proletariat of pulp; it was impossible to shape such material." Of his countrymen, he said simply: "...all Englishmen keep their brains in water-tight compartments." Love (the Fifth House) and Marriage (the Seventh) had nothing in common, he argued, And women? "The stupidity of having wasted uncounted priceless hours in chasing what ought to have been brought to the back door every evening with the milk!" As a Gnostic, he loved citing Blake's epigram: "The lust of the goat is the glory of God." His cosmology, explained in "The Book of the Law," was that we have known two eons in history: matriarchy and patriarchy, the worship of Mother Earth succeeded by the paternal religions of suffering and death. The next, which began in 1904 when "666" got the Word from his angle, was that of the child, emphasizing true self and one's own will, and repudiating gods and priests. Thus, his ceaseless battle against Victorian morals and his preaching of latter-day do-it-in-the-roadism. No wonder his face stares out from the cover of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper" album, right next to Mae West's. The "Confessions," which Crowley called "an hagiography" (or "the Hag" for short), ramble all over the world – both real and supernatural. Yet they yield some marvelous insights into his times and the frantic, fey pursuits of his fellows. Whether "feeding the leeches" in Kandy, floating down the Yuno in a zak or driving through the Maidan in a tum-tum, Crowley always exudes that puckish élan of the raconteur who knows he can keep the clubmen on the edge of their overstuffed chairs. No doubt he was vilified. No doubt he deserved much of it. He was that product of his age who took full advantage of every anachronistic chink in Victorian mores to do exactly what he damn pleased. He ended sick and frail in a shabby boardinghouse, his magick wand gathering dust in a corner, still believing: "If I turned down the light, it must be to conceal my crimes. If I turn it up, it proves my shamelessness."²³⁵⁷

The American monthly *The Library Journal* had a review of the book in February 1970 E.V. by the late American library consultant and editor Lee Ash (1917-1993):

The first two parts of this very interesting, stimulating, self-centered, frank "autohagiography" were published by Mandrake Press in 1929 as The Spirit of Solitude. Now the whole, including the previously unpublished third section, appears as dictated to Crowley's mistress and scribe, Leah Hirsig, "The Ape of

²³⁵⁷ *Newsweek*. New York, NY: *Newsweek*. ♦ Vol. LXXV, No. 4, January 26, 1970, p. 77. (Review of "THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. 960 pages. Hill and Wang. \$14.95." signed "S. K. OBERBECK") (BOOKS; **Beast 666**, p. 77.)

Thoth." As with many of his occult and literary works, the book was written while the author was intermittently under the influence of heroin or other drugs, and the modern editor's task was to remove inevitable redundancies and provide explanatory notes. Crowley (1875-1947) early rejected the Victorian hypocrisies. Always a strong-minded man, sex-driven and hedonistic, he developed an intensely hypnotic personality. He was creatively literate, a chessmaster, and an expert mountaineer and explorer-adventurer in many lands. His dominating personality attracted a limited but worldwide following, while his well-known debaucheries infuriated contemporaries and governments alike – there are similarities to our hippie generation. Crowley's curiously erudite occultism and complex cosmogonies, always fluid, may perplex a reader who is not steeped in his other writings. Nevertheless, the sincerity of the man is not to be doubted, through his potential for greatness is more often reflected in his self-appraisals than in his actions. This book is an essential tool in any effort to understand the influence of The Beast 666, as he chose to be known to his cult. No matter what one thinks of his amazing performances, Crowley's impact upon "magikcal" theories seems to have been a lasting one in many occult circles (though he is ignored or maligned in others). His book of the Law, inspired in 1904, is neither specific nor explicit, but his coda do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law satisfies many of his followers and may, indeed, interest other people today, for he wrote – as many of our own youth sincerely proclaim – "As a God goes, I go." And, as the editors comment, he used the I Ching for probing the future long before that work became popular in intellectual circles in the West. Thus because of the relevance of Crowley's philosophies to the present scene, this may readily become one of the most widely read autobiographies of the next few years.²³⁵⁸

The New York Times Book Review had, February 8, 1970 E.V., a negative review by the English playwright, screenwriter, and novelist (Charles) Julian (Humphrey) Mitchell (1935-), who wrote about the book and Crowley:

*The most astonishing thing about the book is that it is being published at all. Crowley died in 1947. His reputation was already faded then, who cares about him now, in England or America? Reluctantly, I have to admit that probably lots of people do.*²³⁵⁹

The last part of the review stated:

[...] one looks again at the photographs. Aleister Crowley wasn't Superman, he was an absurd bore of a peculiarly English kind, the man who lives for being a "gentleman" – which no real gentleman naturally, ever does. He is the apotheosis of the amateur. His prose is all pomp and circumstance, just as his verse is all Swinburne. His vehement boasting rings in the ear like a beggar's whine. He is a snob, and like all snobs, suffers from terrible social insecurity. What it all springs from is never explained, though it's easy to guess that Plymouth Brethren and two public schools had a lot to do with it. Despising the public schools, he is a

²³⁵⁸ The review appeared later in: The Library Journal Book Review 1970. New York, NY: R. R. Bowker Company, 1971, p. 118. (Review of "CROWLEY, Aleister. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: an Autohagiography*. ed. by John Symonds & Kenneth Grant. 960p. photogs. index. Hill & Wang, 1970. \$14.95. SBN 8090-3591-X. LC 79-88013. AUTOBIOG"; signed "Lee Ash, Library Consultant & Editor, "American Notes & Queries"")(BIOGRAPHY & PERSONAL NARRATIVE, p. 118.)

²³⁵⁹ The New York Times; Book Review. New York, NY: New York Times Company. ♦ Vol. 75, Sunday, February 22, 1970, Section 7, p. 8. (Review "By Julian Mitchell" of "THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY. An Autohagiography. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Illustrated. 960 pp. New York: Hill & Wang. \$14.95.", p. 8.)

typical obsesses product. He needs no instruction in anything; he is a gentleman; he knows how to teach himself.

As a result, he knows nothing worth knowing. It is all conceit and how to spell Abracadabra and Magick. It is twaddle.

[...]

This vast tome should settle his reputation once and for all. It is a sharp stake through the heart of the Beast 666. But God knows what monsters are stalking in his steps.²³⁶⁰

The American book reviewer and Pulitzer Prize juror John Barkham (1908-1998), ended his review of the book, February 8, by stating:

It is impossible to describe this "autobiography" beyond saying it combines autobiography with the wildest flight of a mystic mind. Crowley was a fine writer with a genuine gift for narrative and description (his comments on the United States are amusing), but I fancy the major audience for this book will be among neo-mystics and would-be mystics young and old.²³⁶¹

The New York Review of Books reviewed the book in March 1970 E.V., a review written by the English writer, critic and editor Nigel Dennis (1912-1989), who, among other things, stated:

"I find no fault in this man," said Pontius Pilate on a certain occasion, and I must follow him on the present occasion. I find no fault at all in the book under review; if it was not sent into this world to redeem man it was sent certainly to fill man with hilarity. Moreover, the author agrees with the reviewer as to the faultlessness of his work – and when I says "agrees," which is the present tense, I say it deliberately. In a previous incarnation, in the period of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, Aleister Crowley was a priest named Ankh-f-n-Khonsu and a stele depicting him as such may be seen any day in the Boulak Museum in Cairo (ask the man for "Exhibit No. 666"). So I cannot believe that after his reincarnation in Warwickshire (A.D. 1875) and death in Hastings (A.D. 1947), this excellent time-traveler has merely gone the way of all flesh: it would not be in character. Either he is with us now, or he is enjoying a rest before his next reincarnation: in view of his energetic nature, the first alternative is the more probable. [...] The whole tone of this tome is expressed in one remark of Crowley's: Like all great men, I have never lost my humility." Readers who are too insensitive to appreciate this remark had better hand on the book to someone else. This is easier said than done. It is extremely heavy. About half a million words are compressed in very small print into nearly 1,000 pages, and the whole work was clearly one of those struggles between greatness and humility in which the latter was obliged at last to make room for the former.²³⁶²

The review was illustrated by a caricature drawing of Crowley by the American artist and illustrator David Levine (1926-2009): A Buddha figure sitting on an extremely thick tome with the head of a long pipe smoking Aleister Crowley in the style of Napoléon Bonaparte with a bicorne

²³⁶⁰ Ibid.

²³⁶¹ Times-Union. Albany, NY: Times-Union. ♦ Saturday, February 8, 1970, p. 7. (Review "THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Hill & Wang. 960 pp. \$14.95.", by "John Barkham.") (Sunday Times-Union Book Reviews. Writings of English Mystic, p. 7.)

²³⁶² The New York Review of Books. New York, NY: New York Review of Books. ♦ Vol. 14, No. 5, March 12, 1970, p. 3-4. (Review of "The Confessions of Aleister Crowley; edited by John Symonds, edited by Kenneth Grant; Hill & Wang, 960 pp., \$14.95" by "Nigel Dennis") (Marks of a Buddha; By Nigel Dennis, p. 3-5.)

hat exhibiting an eyeless, radiant triangle.²³⁶³ David Levine clearly got his inspiration to the drawing from the many photographs of Crowley included in the book. The American bimonthly *Parapsychology Review* stated in a review of the book in July 1970 E.V. by the American author on parapsychology and the occult Susy Smith, (b. Ethel Elizabeth Smith) (1911-2001):

*Aleister Crowley was an absolutely outrageous man. One could only think that his entire life was a gigantic put-on, except for the revealed fact that he took himself and his magic very seriously. [...] It is nice to know that twenty years after his death Aleister Crowley finally achieved suitable distinction.*²³⁶⁴

The late English poet, novelist, critic, and teacher D.(ennis) J.(oseph) Enright (1920-2002), reviewed the British edition, published by Jonathan Cape in December 1969 E.V., in the BBC's weekly magazine *The Listener* in October 1969 E.V., writing, among other things:

*Crowley is by no means a figure of fun, and much of this book (though far from all *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Cape £5 5s. its 1,000 pages) is extremely readable. Besides being many other and different things, he was a bit of a John Bull, a man of common sense and forthright response, with a British contempt for British hypocrisy.*

[...]

*The declining market-value of Crowley's autograph indicates the low esteem into which he had fallen before his death in 1947. This 'autohagiography' is unlikely to establish him as anything more than another English Eccentric, fin-de-siecle variety, graded unsuitable for promotion by the British Council. It will not raise his stock in the literary world; as for the arcane world, it is hard to judge, for on the showing of Crowley's confessions this world is as disorderly, mean and shabby as the literary one. Crowley had no doubts whatsoever about his super-Vincian genius, so at least his autobiography is utterly free from common vice of self-pity.*²³⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the book received a positive review in March 1970 E.V. in the British Council's monthly book magazine *British Book News* – a review which, among other things, stated:

*Crowley was one of those enigmatic characters whose life's work is difficult to assess. Expert mountaineer, poet, chess player and self-styled magician, he was the head of several magical orders and his book on magic remains an important contribution to the occult arts. The importance of an almost complete edition of his confessions lies in the fact that here we can see a Crowley who clearly does not entirely deserve the evil reputation which he has gained on account of his flamboyant exploits, his hectic affairs and his interest in drugs. For, apart from his account of his adventurous life and sinister activities, these confessions are full of fascinating details about his contemporaries and the countries he visited and about his hatred of the evils of Christian civilization.*²³⁶⁶

²³⁶³ Ibid., p. 3. ("Aleister Crowley; drawing by David Levine", p. 3.)

²³⁶⁴ Parapsychology Review. New York, NY: The Parapsychology Foundation, Inc. ♦ Vol. I, July/August, 1970, p. 14. (Review of "*THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY: An Autohagiography*. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. New York: Hill and Wang, 1969", signed "Susy Smith | New York, N. Y.", pp. 12-4.)

²³⁶⁵ The Listener. London, UK: British Broadcasting Corporation. ♦ Vol. 82, No. 2117, Thursday 23 October 1969, p. 563. (Review of "*The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Cape £5 5s.")(More Autumn Books; A sound magician is a mighty God by D. J. Enright, pp. 563-4.)

²³⁶⁶ British Book News. London, UK: National Book League. ♦ March 1970, p. 244. (Review of "*THE CONFESSIONS OF*

Jonathan Cape advertised the book as: "*The autobiography of one of the most notorious mystics of the 20th century*", and quoted the British newspaper *The Guardian* for saying: "'*Outrageously readable*'".²³⁶⁷ The book, designed by Mon Mohan and printed by Michael Stephen Press, was exhibited at the exhibition 'British Book Production' held in London in the spring of 1970 E.V.²³⁶⁸ The market-value of Crowley's autograph had increased dramatically when *The Oxford Book of the Supernatural* was published by Oxford University Press in 1994 E.V., chosen and edited by D. J. Enright and including some extracts from Crowley's *Confessions*.²³⁶⁹ Between 1969 E.V. and 1989 E.V. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* was published in various editions by five different publishers in England and America – some of these editions were reprinted and some appeared in new editions.²³⁷⁰ When Routledge & Kegan Paul's corrected edition of *Confessions* appeared in 1979 E.V. the British weekly magazine *Country Life* had, July 5, a review of the book by the British scholar Christopher McIntosh (1943-), which, among other things, stated:

There are many people who still think of Crowley as a kind of Dennis Wheatley villain, the so-called black magician whom the Daily Express in 1934 dubbed "the Wickedest Man in the World". A reading of these memoirs should quickly dispel such a view. They reveal a complex, sensitive and many-faceted individual – by no means a saint but a man who followed his quest with his own kind of courage and honour.

*[...] His end at the age of 72 was, like Swinburne's, curiously prosaic, for he spend his last years in a quiet boarding house at Hastings, an eccentric old gentleman in tweeds and a goatee beard, revered to the last by his remaining disciples.*²³⁷¹

Finally, I notice that the American novelist and poet Alex(ander) Louis Theroux (1939-), in 1977 E.V. stated that he found Aleister Crowley's *Confessions* underrated.²³⁷²

ALEISTER CROWLEY. *An Autohagiography*. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Cape, £5 5s. 1969. ", p. 244.)

²³⁶⁷ Encounter. London, UK: Encounter Ltd. ♦ Vol. XXXIII, No. 6, December 1969, p. 57. (Advertisement from Jonathan Cape of "*The Confessions of Aleister Crowley. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant*", p. 57.)

²³⁶⁸ British Book Production. Catalogue of an exhibition held at 7 Albemarle Street London W1X 4BB from 21 April to 8 May 1970. London, UK: National Book League, 1970, No. 21. ("**Jonathan Cape**; [...] 21 *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*; Designed by M. Mohan; Printed by Michael Stephen Press. Litho")

²³⁶⁹ The Oxford Book of the Supernatural. Chosen and edited by D. J. Enright. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 120-1; 487-8. (*Magic and Magicians, Possession and Exorcism, Spells*, "ALEISTER CROWLEY (1875-1947), *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography*", pp. 120-1.)(*High Spirits and Low*, "CROWLEY, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*" pp. 487-8.) ♦ The extracts are found in *Confessions* on the following pages: "I worked also at acquiring the power of invisibility. [...]", p. 204. ♦ "I thought it polite to impress them [Algerians] with my majesty as a Magician. [...]", pp. 625-6. ♦ "When he [Allan Bennett] was about sixteen, the conversation in the laboratory where he was working turned upon childbirth. [...]", p. 180.

²³⁷⁰ Jonathan Cape, London. ♦ Hill & Wang, New York. ♦ Bantam, New York. ♦ Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. ♦ Arkana/Penguin, London.

²³⁷¹ Country Life. Vol. CLXVI, No. 4278, July 5, 1979, Supplement, p. 49. ("THE CONFESIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY. *An Autohagiography* edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £15).")(BOOK REVIEWS. DEMONIC PASSIONS; By CHRISTOPHER McINTOSH – MEMOIRS OF A MAGUS, Supplement, p. 49.)

²³⁷² Esquire. New York, NY: Esquire Magazine Inc. ♦ Vol. 88, No. 76, August, 1977, p. 81. ("**Alex Theroux**; Novelist; Underrated: [...] Aleister Crowley, *Confessions*;")(American Writers: Who's Up, Who's Down?, pp. 77-82.)

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Pages 564-615 are not part of this book preview.

John Symonds's various biographical books gave rise to that some authors started mention Crowley in their works. I note that in 1967 E.V. the American novelist, journalist, and anti-Vietnam War **demon**strator Norman Kingsley Mailer (1923-2007), mentioned Crowley in his novel, *Why are we in Vietnam?*:

*Herbs are the nerve to a fearsome underworld – listen, baby, I didn't get fucked by Aleister Crowley for nothing, those passes at the Black Masses," said Hallie, putting a gloved finger up to her dear chin – she is incidentally now lying her ass off because she's too young to know Aleister Crowley, but she's like her son D.J., she's got to brag, better believe it.*²⁵⁶²

Mailer had likely not read Crowley, but Symonds. John Symonds had in the summer of 1949 E.V. written in the *World Review*:

*Crowley was a man who turned everything upside down. What others repressed, he wore as a mask and an outer garment. He was every man's evil shadow – the demon Crowley with his black masses and orgies, drugs and satanism.*²⁵⁶³

This rubbish, not founded on facts, was written by John Symonds some two and a half years before the publication of *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* – and at that time he probably only had gone through a fraction of the Crowley material, but he knew of course what had been stated about him in the Sunday papers:

*Crowley with his witches, vampires and familiar demons was accepted for the very reason that he was absurd – credo quia absurdum [I believe because it is absurd]. He was the bogey-man who terrified the bourgeoisie – university undergraduates and old ladies who read about him in the Sunday papers.*²⁵⁶⁴

Nevertheless, John Symonds also wrote:

*[...] Crowley, au fond, was not really a terribly wicked man. He threw out Christ, but in Christ's place he did not put some lukewarm agnosticism or blunt materialism. The Hidden Masters – he called them the Secret Chiefs – were set up instead; and he continued to seek wholeness through community and prayer.*²⁵⁶⁵

I notice that when one of Symonds's stories, "The Mathematician", appeared in 1950 E.V. in the literary magazine *Points, the Magazine of Young Writers* published in Paris in English he was introduced by the words:

JOHN SYMONDS: 36, English. Literary editor of LILLIPUT. Author of the picaresque novel "William Waste". Has just finished a biography of Alesteir [sic] Crowley: Symonds says: "...that the

²⁵⁶² Norman Kingsley Mailer. *Why Are We in Vietnam? A Novel*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967, p. 22. (Intro Beep 1, pp. 7-22.)

²⁵⁶³ *World Review*. Incorporating Review of Reviews. London, UK: Published by the Proprietor, Edward Hulton. ♦ July 1949, New Series No. 5, p. 57. (*Aleister Crowley; The Devil's Contemplative*. By John Symonds, pp. 54-7.) • See also note²³⁴¹ above.

²⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

revelations in this book are too scandalous and bizarre for the publishers to whom I have so far shown it, but I am confident that this book will appear one day and that the inside, sex-magical life story of Crowley, an Adept of the left hand path, will create a big enough sensation to satisfy even the shade of that Mystic Master himself."²⁵⁶⁶

It was clearly not John Symonds's intention to write a carefully researched and fair biography of Aleister Crowley but to compose a 'scandalous' work that could give him enough money to fuel his own publications, his payment for wasting time on writing a book about a man that he did not liked or respected – after all, a life that he was not interested in when it came to the crunch! As to the promotion of Symonds 'scandalous' work, the book whose front dust jacket exhibited a coloured part of a drawing by Crowley, a 'self-portrait' as the Taoist philosopher Kwan, was sold with a promotional band that stated:

THE PRESS CALLED ALEISTER CROWLEY:

"The Wickedest Man in the World"

"The King of Depravity"

See back of band————→²⁵⁶⁷

Regarding Norman Mailer, later he apparently started studying some of Aleister Crowley's works – Aleister Crowley whom he styles the "master magician" and "mediocre writer" – at least *Magick in Theory and Practice* since we find him stating in the *Pen International Bulletin of Selected Books* in 1986 E.V.:

*Aleister Crowley, the master magician, mountain climber, Faustian pansexualist, fantasist, and mediocre writer informed us nonetheless that the secret of invocation is to "enflame thyself in praying." Not inflame; enflame. "Enflame thyself in praying." Where is the serious writer who does not know the force of those four words? Our works are – we may hope – exquisitely constructed elucidations of our most private prayers – obscene, atheistic, or devotional, but still our prayers, close to curses.*²⁵⁶⁸

The quote "Enflame thyself in praying" is from "OF THE INVOCATION" (Chapter XV) where Crowley states:

In the straightforward or "Protestant" system of Magick there is very little to add to what has already been said. The Magician addresses a direct petition to the Being invoked. But the secret of success in invocation has not hitherto been disclosed. It is an exceedingly simple one. It is practically of no importance whatever that the invocation should be "right". There are a thousand different ways of compassing the end

²⁵⁶⁶ Points, the Magazine of Young Writers. Edited by Marcel Bisiaux and Sindbad Vail. Paris, France: Points. ♦ No. 7, July-September 1950, p. 102. (NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS, p. 102.) ("JOHN SYMONDS The Mathematician, pp. 17-21.)

²⁵⁶⁷ John Symonds. *Gerald Yorke. The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: Rider & Co., 1951, promotional band around bottom of dust jacket.

²⁵⁶⁸ Pen International; *Bulletin of Selected Books*. London, UK: International PEN. ♦ Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, 1986, p. 46. ('The Writer's Imagination and the Imagination of the State' Two Views; By Norman Mailer and Nadine Gordimer, pp. 42-8.)

proposed, so far as external things are concerned. The whole secret may be summarised in these four words: "Enflame thyself in praying."²⁵⁶⁹

Why are we in Vietnam? was Mailer's ninth book, a provocative novel about the Vietnam War where "Vietnam" is mentioned only two times, apart from the title, in a story of a group of Texans on a hunting expedition in Alaska because a man is not a man until he has killed a grizzly bear – and in the end of the novel the protagonist informs the reader that he is soon to serve in Vietnam! Very symbolic the book's dust jacket, which stated: "A scandalous, ribald, hilarious, frightening account of a hunting expedition in Alaska's Brooks Mountain Range", showed a photo of a seated Mailer sporting a very black eye and with the text below: "Will the real Norman Mailer stand up?". 1967 E.V. was also the year when Crowley appeared on the cover of the Beatles' record "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" as one of the 'People We Like'.²⁵⁷⁰ Crowley was placed between the Indian Hindu guru Sri Yukteswar Giri (1855-1936), and the American actress Mae West (1893-1980), on the cover created by the British pop artist Sir Peter Blake (1932-), and his American then wife pop artist Jann Haworth (1942-). It is also worthy of mention that forty years later, in 2007 E.V., ex-Beatles Sir Paul McCartney (1942-), gave an oblique reference to Crowley in an interview in *Rolling Stone* where he in answer to a question about what he think continues to speak to people in Beatles' music after all these years says:

*I think it's basically magic. There is such a thing as magic, and the Beatles were magic. [...] Something alchemic. Something that must be thought of as magic – with a "k" [laughs].*²⁵⁷¹

As to Norman Mailer's black eye it apparently still influenced him when he in 1983 E.V. stated in an interview with the American author and teacher Robert J. Begiebing (1946-), in the *Harvard Magazine*:

[Mailer:] *Now I think I've written the best novel about magic that's ever been written. [Robert Begiebing:] But where are the others who have been writing about it? [Mailer:] I don't know of a serious writer who's devotes himself to writing about magic. I mean, Aleister Crowley has written a novel about magic. Dion Fortune has written about magic. Other people have written magical novels, but they are not writers who are highly regarded. But I will say once again, that I've taken a field – I'm a bully – where there's no competition.*²⁵⁷²

An example of Aleister Crowley and his teachings appearing in a book in the 1970s is in bestselling *The Female Eunuch* by the Australian feminist author and English professor Germaine

²⁵⁶⁹ *The Master Therion* [Aleister Crowley]. *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Being Part III of Book 4); By The Master Therion. 4 vols. (Sections). Printed: Paris, France: Privately printed at The Lecram Press, nd [1929/30]. Distributed in wrappers: [London, UK: Mandrake Press Ltd., 1930]. ♦ Section 2 [Vol. 2.], p. 129. (CHAPTER XV; I; OF THE INVOCATION, pp. 129-32.)

²⁵⁷⁰ *The Beatles*. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. U.K.: Parlophone, 1967.

²⁵⁷¹ *Rolling Stone*. San Francisco, CA: Straight Arrow Publishers. ♦ The Fortieth Anniversary; Issue 1025/1026. May 3-17, 2007, p. 61. ('Paul McCartney' by Anthony DeCurtis, pp. 60-2.)

²⁵⁷² See: *Conversations with Norman Mailer*. Edited by J. Michael Lennon. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1988, pp. 326-7. (*Twelfth Round: An Interview with Norman Mailer*. Robert Begiebing/1983; *From Harvard Magazine*, 85 (1983), 40, 42-50, pp. 306-29.)

Greer (1939-), one of the major voices of the second-wave feminist movement. Germaine Greer's book, which appeared in October 1970 E.V. stated:

*When mystics say that God is love, or when Aleister Crowley says 'Love is the law', they are not referring to the love that is woman's destiny.*²⁵⁷³

[...]

*The misunderstood commandment of Aleister Crowley to do as thou wilt is a warning not to delude yourself that you can do otherwise, and to take full responsibility to yourself for what you do. When one has genuinely chosen a course for oneself it cannot be possible to hold another responsible for it.*²⁵⁷⁴

There were also them who apparently used *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (1951 E.V.), or *The Magic of Aleister Crowley* (1958 E.V.), in their works without any mentioning of Symonds's books or Aleister Crowley:

The Cult of the Meaningless

The emphasis on sex is probably no greater in modern life than it was a century or more ago, when the Great Experiment in universal literacy was begun. But it is different. Sexual matters are discussed in literature which have never previously been common knowledge. [...] In a social sense, the present widespread enlightenment about sexual matters has probably done far more good than harm. But in literature it has provided a great number of writers with themes which they use extravagantly, clothing them in a debased romanticism which does duty for thought, for artistic synthesis, and for a reasonably coherent morality.

*Whether or not they find their own lives meaningless, they write as though they found life without meaning. Whether their hero is the Angry Young Man of English fiction, or the Holy Goof of Kerouac and the Beat Generation, he lives for the moment. It is not as though 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' was a precept from which splendid fiction could not be drawn; it is rather that what these small-time rebels choose to do is so trivial, so cheap, and in the end, so dreary.*²⁵⁷⁵

This was published in 1960 E.V. by the Canadian novelist, playwright, critic, journalist and professor Robertson Davies (1913-1995), in his book *A Voice From the Attic*, a collection of the professor's essays about reading! Crowley later appeared in the pages of a short story by Robertson Davies titled "*The Ghost Who Vanished by Degrees*", which was published in 1982 E.V.²⁵⁷⁶

The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley was published in Great Britain by Rider & Co. in November 1951 E.V.²⁵⁷⁷ – an American edition was published on October 5, 1952 E.V., by Roy

²⁵⁷³ Germaine Greer. *The Female Eunuch*. London, UK: MacGibbon & Kee Ltd, 1970, p. 139. (LOVE: THE IDEAL, pp. 139-48.)

²⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 152. (LOVE: ALTRUISM, pp. 149-52.)

²⁵⁷⁵ Robertson Davies. *A Voice From the Attic*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, pp. 108-9. (III, OVID IS NOT THEIR MASTER, pp. 108-9.) • Initially published in 1960 E.V. in Toronto by McClelland & Stewart. • Published in 1961 E.V. in England as: Robertson Davies. *The Personal Art; Reading to Good Purpose*. London, UK: Secker & Warburg, 1961, p. 79. (III, OVID IS NOT THEIR MASTER, p. 79.) • Since it was a collection of essays an "Informal Bibliographical Note" had been added to the end of the book together with an Index.

²⁵⁷⁶ Robertson Davies. *High Spirits; A Collection of Ghost Stories*. Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1982, pp. 13-21. (*The Ghost Who Vanished by Degrees*, pp. 13-22.)

²⁵⁷⁷ The British National Bibliography; Annual Volume 1951. Edited by A. J. Wells. London, UK: The Council of the British National Bibliography, Ltd., 1952, p. 637. ("Symonds, John. *The Great Beast: the life of Aleister Crowley*. London, Rider, 21/- Nov 1951. 316p. front., plates(incl.ports.), bibliog. 23½cm. (B51-14336)") (BIOGRAPHY;

Publishers in New York City.²⁵⁷⁸ *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* was, among others, reviewed in *The Hibbert Journal; A Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology and Philosophy* by a B.A. (Cantabrigiensis) Arthur Denner Howell Smith (1880-?), who two years before had published the book *Thou Art Peter: A History of the Roman Catholic Doctrine and Practice*, a review whose first line stated:

*Mr. Symonds has done his work pretty thoroughly; but, except as a pathological study, the life of Aleister Crowley was hardly worth writing.*²⁵⁷⁹

Another kind of review of the book appeared in the British weekly humour and satire magazine *Punch*, December 12, 1951 E.V.:

Beastly to the Beast

*In the Great Beast Mr. John Symonds has written a detailed and authentic biography of Aleister Crowley, poet, poseur, erotomaniac and mystic, compiled largely from Crowley's own diaries and those of his followers, and incomplete only where the obvious legal difficulties of writing about the Beast's surviving disciples compel discretion. It is easy to shudder, easier to laugh, at Crowley, but neither attitude can quite deal with a personality that could draw into its orbit men of the calibre of J. W. N. Sullivan and General J. F. C. Fuller. Mr. Symonds has chosen mockery as his standpoint, descending from it sometimes to fatuity and occasionally to spite. Yet for all the scoffing, Crowley's life emerges as, in its perverse way, a work of art, consciously created on a predetermined pattern with considerable success; and even those of whom it is asking too much to demand admiration for such a life may still derive from it wonder, amusement, and possibly a moral.*²⁵⁸⁰

Another review of *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* was by the occult interested English chemist, playwright and author Anthony Borrow (1923-), in the *World Review* in January 1952 E.V. – a magazine that John Symonds, as seen above, himself contributed to²⁵⁸¹:

Aleister Crowley, who died in 1947, is to most people a legend, a figure of monstrous but ill-defined depravity. Like Baudelaire, whose prose-poems, he translated, he seemed to enjoy exaggerating his own legend, and to some extent to feed upon notoriety. Apart from the undeniable irregularity of his mode of life, there is another, subtler reason for the legend. Long after Christianity became the dominant orthodoxy, pockets of resistance remained scattered throughout Europe, owing an allegiance to such older and darker gods as Pan and Priapus, who were equated in the Christian ethos with diabolism, not through any innate

920.9133 – Occultists; 920.9133 CROWLEY, ALEISTER, p. 637.)

²⁵⁷⁸ The Publishers' Weekly. New York, NY: R. R. Bowker Co. ♦ Vol. 162, No. 11, September 13, 1952, p. 1160.

("Biography [...] | THE GREAT BEAST: | The Life of Aleister Crowley | by John Symonds | October 5 \$4.50")(ROY PUBLISHERS – New Books, Fall 1952, p. 1160.)

²⁵⁷⁹ The Hibbert Journal; A Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology and Philosophy. Edited by L. A. Garrard. London, UK: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. ♦ Vol. L, No. 3, April 1952, pp. 307. ("Review by A. D. Howell Smith (Weymouth)" of "The Great Beast. The Life of Aleister Crowley. By John Symonds. London: Rider. Pp. 316, Bibliography and Index, illustrated. 21s.", pp. 306-8.) ♦ A. D. Howell Smith, B.A. (Cantab.). *Thou Art Peter: A History of the Roman Catholic Doctrine and Practice*. London, UK: Watts & Co., 1950.

²⁵⁸⁰ *Punch*. London, UK: Punch Office. ♦ Vol. CCXXI, No. 5799, December 12, 1951, p. 690. (Review of "The Great Beast. John Symonds. (Rider, 21/-)" signed "B. A. Y.")(Books Reviewed Above, p. 690.)

²⁵⁸¹ See note²³⁴¹ above.

viciousness in their mysteries, but because they were non-Christian. It was in this sense that Crowley proclaimed himself as Evil, a grandiose way of emphasising that he wished to return to a revelation older than that of the pale Galilean. It is all the more ironic that he should be condemned by a tradition initiated by the orthodoxy to which few in this country now pay more than lip service, and that the popular press should play a role similar to that of St. Dominic towards the Albigenses. His erudition in the arcana of occultism was profound, his greatest contribution being the marriage of Tantric teaching to the Cabalistic tradition of the West. Nevertheless this contribution tends to be overshadowed by the selfish megalomania of the man, and by such distasteful incidents as his crucifixion of a toad, or the Serpent's Kiss, for the bestowal of which he had his front teeth especially filed. John Symonds has wisely refrained from passing any judgment, moral or analytical. He has written what is far from being a gentle book, but it is a supremely honest one. The facts are presented without shame or prurience; they are often far from pleasant facts, but there are also moments of pathos, particularly the picture of Crowley's later years, dogged by ill-health, failure, and public opprobrium. It is a truism that what one man can bring himself to do, another can surely bear to look upon. Without such facts no rational assessment of the man is possible. They are presented in a dry, whimsical prose, reminiscent of Mr. Symonds's picaresque novel, *William Waste*, which is exactly right for such a narrative. Both the publishers, and the author, who has been to considerable pains to uncover records from obscure newspapers in many parts of the world, are to be praised for supplying an antidote to excessive sensationalism. The book also includes a number of remarkable and sometimes disturbing photographs, and an excellent bibliography of the writings of Aleister Crowley compiled by Gerald Yorke.²⁵⁸²

The reviewer's statement that: "John Symonds has wisely refrained from passing any judgment, moral or analytical. He has written what is far from being a gentle book, but it is a supremely honest one.", is a facile assumption without basis in reality. As to the reviews of the American edition, I notice, for instance, that a review in the *Californian Oakland Tribune* in February 1953 E.V. had the heading:

'Wickedest Man in World' Provides Unique Study of a Psychopath and Mountebank²⁵⁸³

Whitaker's *The Bookseller* announced on April 19, 1952 E.V., that Symonds's book was banned in Eire – something that likely had increased sales figure in other countries:

Books Banned in Eire

Under Order made on March 14th and April 11th, the following books have been banned under the Censorship of Publications Act: [...] *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*, by John Symonds (Rider);²⁵⁸⁴

²⁵⁸² World Review. Incorporating Review of Reviews. London, UK: Published by the Proprietor, Edward Hulton. ♦ New Series No. 35, January 1952, pp. 74-5. (Review of "*THE GREAT BEAST; The Life of Aleister Crowley; By John Symonds. Rider. 21s. Reviewed by Antony [sic, Anthony] Borrow*") (*NEW BOOKS*, pp. 74-5.)

²⁵⁸³ Oakland Tribune. Oakland, CA: Oakland Tribune ♦ Sunday, February 1, 1953. Editorials Knave Features, Vol. CLVIII, No. 32, p. C2. (Review of "*THE GREAT BEAST, by John Symonds; Roy Publishers, N.Y.; \$4.50. Reviewed by Nancy Barr Mavity*")

²⁵⁸⁴ The Bookseller. London, UK: J. Whitaker & Sons, Limited. ♦ No. 2417, Saturday, April 19th, 1952, p. 1025. (*Books Banned in Eire*, p. 1025.) ♦ The Irish Times. Dublin, Ireland: Irish Times, Ltd. ♦ Tuesday, March 25, 1952, p. 5. (*CENSORSHIP BOARD BANS 33 BOOKS*, p. 5.)

This banning of a trade edition in a European country took place only some sixty years ago! In 1988 E.V. John Symonds and Kenneth Grant's Routledge edition of the first three parts of Crowley's *Book Four*, titled *Magick*, was challenged at the Dalles-Wasco County Public Library in The Dalles, Oregon, since they claimed that the book promoted criminal activity in its depiction of human and animal sacrifice!²⁵⁸⁵ As to *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley*, I further notice that one of the most influential scholars of religion of the 20th century the Romanian religious historian and author Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), wrote in his journal in the autumn of 1952 E.V.:

Dr. Hunwald loans me a copy of *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* by John Symonds, and I read it in two days. Not since *The Search for Corvo* [A. J. A. Symons. *The Quest for Corvo. An Experiment in Biography*. London, UK: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1934], which I read hastily during the winter of 1940-41 at Oxford, have I run across such a captivating biography. I had heard of Crowley long ago, but I knew almost nothing about him. All I knew was that he was a "Satanist" and that he was involved in black magic and tantrism. Symonds's biography reveals a bizarre individual, half madman and half humbug, but not devoid of grandeur. I am especially impressed by his struggle to break himself of his addiction to opium, cocaine, and heroin. Amazing sexual and vital capacities. He ingested eight times more heroin than the amount sufficient to kill a man. His "magical rituals" were, in reality, sexual rites. Undoubtedly, he applied some of the techniques of tantrism, but I don't know how he discovered them. On one page of his journal he records that "the magical rite" lasted six hours. Such a thing could not be done except by means of a precise, tantric technique – but how did he manage to learn it, since he accepted no discipline and could not claim any Indian "initiation"? Am amused to discover that he too was in Lisbon, Estoril, and Cascaes, that he had there an adventure and tried to deceive everybody, making it seem he had committed suicide by throwing himself into the Boca do Inferno – when, in reality, he had left Portugal and had rejoined his lady friend in Berlin. He had been invited to Portugal by that strange poet, Fernando Pessoa, whom I once liked very much. All I read from his private diaries fascinated me. Robust, vigorous, concentrated prose. Even when he records cruelties, profanities, and demented acts, his language does not lose its density or precision. I admire especially the lucidity with which he notes both the symptoms of intoxication and his frequent failures in his battle with the temptation of heroin. He records the hour – sometimes even the minute – when he was drained of all strength or overcome by melancholy.²⁵⁸⁶

Finally, I also notice that the American writer of science fiction, fantasy and biography L.(yon) Sprague de Camp (1907-2000), reviewed the book in the *Science Fiction Quarterly* in August 1953 E.V.:

THOSE OF you who read my piece on "The Great Charlatans" in one of Bob Lowndes' magazines can learn the rest of the incredibly lurid, uniquely-fantastic story of Aleister Crowley, the master occultist, in a full-length biography of him that has just appeared, "The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley" by

²⁵⁸⁵ See: Robert P. Doyle, *American Library Association. Banned Books Week '93: Celebrating the Freedom to Read; Resource Book & Promotion Guide*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1993, p. 15. ("Crowley, Aleister. *Magick in Theory and Practice*. Routledge. Challenged at the Dalles-Wasco, Oreg. County Public Library (1988) because the book promotes criminal activity in its depiction of human and animal sacrifice. Source: 7. Jan. 1989, p. 15.") • Aleister Crowley. *Magick*. Edited, annotated and introduced by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. London and Henley, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

²⁵⁸⁶ Mircea Eliade. *Journal*. 4 vols. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1989-90. ♦ Journal I; 1945-1955. (1989) Translated from the Romanian by Mac Linscott, pp. 176-7. (5 October [1952], pp. 176-7.)

John Symonds. My copy is the English edition (London: Rider, 1951, 316 pp., 21s.) but the book was published last fall by an American publisher as well. The book is mature, well-written, and impartial, with flashes of ironic humor. It goes into such matters as Crowley's satyriasis and his drug-addiction; during his later life he was he was daily consuming enough heroin and cocaine to kill a roomful of ordinary men. I may add two minor corrigenda: Mr. Symonds, who interviewed Crowley himself before the latter's death – as well as all of his friends, foes, and victims that he could locate – changed the names of two of the women in Crowley's life, Leila Waddell to "Edith Y-" and Leah Hersig [sic, Hirsig] to "Leah Faesi." One of them was still alive when he wrote, and he thought the other was; English libel-law being what it is, he had to be careful.²⁵⁸⁷

Symonds's next book about Aleister Crowley was *The Magic* [sic!] of Aleister Crowley. It was published in March 1958 E.V. by London publisher Frederick Muller.²⁵⁸⁸ This book was also reviewed by the *Punch* which, April 16, 1958 E.V., wrote:

"It is to be noted that since the beginning of this operation the Bank Rate has fallen to 3 per cent and Consols improved from 71½ to 76¼ ...," wrote Aleister Crowley in his magical diary (about 1912); so that here we have an additional aspect of the Stock Market which the Tribune seemed to have missed. Mr. John Symonds, who has already written a life of the well-known magician, here returns to Crowley's psychology and methods, which he combines with a portrait of the mage in old age at a Hastings boarding house. Mr. Symonds is no doubt right in suggesting that Crowley's chief peculiarity was his power of projecting his own subconscious life. He was all subconscious, and no will. Those interested in that talented, ludicrous, and unquestionably sinister figure will enjoy this study, which has some excellent moments but inevitably becomes a bit bogged down in magical technicalities.²⁵⁸⁹

Two days later, April 18, the book was reviewed in the London weekly magazine *The Spectator* by Gerald (Bernard Francis) Hamilton, née Gerald Frank Hamilton Souter (1890-1970), British memoirist and critic, who had known Crowley, and who at one time himself had been described as 'the wickedest man in Europe'²⁵⁹⁰:

How much did Crowley himself believe in all the ritual and rigmorle of his magic? That is what I have always wanted to know and now indeed never shall. He always seemed a typical bon bourgeois, fond of good eating, rare wines, ladies, and fine cigars. To me he seldom spoke of magic, because he knew I was a disbeliever, and I found him a witty and enjoyable associate. Mr. Symonds, who is Crowley's literary executor, leads his readers along many a thorny path when he describes some of the magic ceremonies. Crowley believed firmly and, I think, sincerely in reincarnation. He pretended to himself that the first he could remember was when he was a Theban priest who flourished during the twenty-sixth dynasty in

²⁵⁸⁷ Science Fiction Quarterly. Holyoke, Mass: Columbia Publications, Inc. ♦ August, 1953, p. 74. (*Readin' and Writhin'*; Book Reviews by L. Sprague de Camp, pp. 1972-4.)

²⁵⁸⁸ For its publication date, see: The Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record. Croydon, Surrey, UK: The Publishers' Circular, Ltd. ♦ Vol. 172, No. 4783, March 1, 1958, p. 313. ("*Symonds (John) – The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. 21/- . Rel.Muller") ♦ John Symonds. *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. London, UK: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1958.

²⁵⁸⁹ Punch. London, UK: Punch Office. ♦ Vol. CCXXXIV, No. 6159, April 16, 1958, p. 524. (Review of "*The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. John Symonds. Muller, 21/-" signed "A. P.")(BOOKING OFFICE, p. 523-5.)

²⁵⁹⁰ For Gerald Hamilton, see: Tom Cullen. *The Man Who Was Norris*: Gerald Hamilton. Cambs, UK: Dedalus Ltd, 2014.

ancient Egypt. Later he was a temple prostitute at Agrigentum, and then the slave of a rich Roman. His incarnations continued through history. He paused for a moment en route to be Pope Alexander VI and his final incarnation was that of Eliphas Levi. When, however, it was pointed out to him that Eliphas Levi died exactly six months before he was born, Crowley remarked that Levi's spirit would not have entered his mother's body until she was three months pregnant. What Mrs. Crowley, the wife of an austere Plymouth Brother, must have thought of these magical happenings within her womb, history does not relate. The pity is that Crowley seemed to have nothing new or interesting to say about the persons whose bodies his spirit was alleged to have occupied. This is a better book than John Symonds's previous one on Crowley, well written and adequately illustrated.²⁵⁹¹

Gerald Hamilton and John Symonds later became friends, and Symonds published in the autumn of 1974 E.V. the book *Conversations with Gerald*.²⁵⁹²

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²⁵⁹¹ The Spectator. London, UK: The Spectator. ♦ Vol. 200, No. 6773, Friday, April 18, 1958, p. 494. (Review of "*The Magic of Aleister Crowley*. By John Symonds. (Frederick Muller. 21s.)" signed "Gerald Hamilton.") (Bon Bourgeois, p. 494.)

²⁵⁹² John Symonds; Gerald Hamilton. *Conversations with Gerald*. London, UK: Duckworth, 1974.