

THE NEVERENDINGLY TOLD STORY: RECENT BIOGRAPHIES OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

MARCO PASI

Martin Booth, *A Magick Life: The Biography of Aleister Crowley*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2000. xv + 507 pp., 38 illustrations (ISBN 0-340-71805-6).

Lawrence Sutin, *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. viii + 483 pp., 8 illustrations (ISBN 0-312-25243-9).

Richard Kaczynski, *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley*. Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 2002. 555 pp. (ISBN 1-561-84170-6).

On April 27, 1900, the poet and occultist W.B. Yeats wrote a letter to his friend Lady Gregory. He was worried about the feud which was then opposing the London members of the Second Order of the Golden Dawn (of whom he was one), and the head of the Order, S. L. MacGregor Mathers. The conflict, which was reaching its climax, would soon lead the Order to a schism, the first and most disruptive of a long series. In his letter, Yeats refers to Aleister Crowley, who was then siding with Mathers against the London members, as 'a person of unspeakable life'¹. When Yeats wrote his letter, Crowley was a young man of 25, and had as yet no public reputation of his own, either good or bad. The exact reason why Yeats (and probably other Second Order members) deemed his life to be so "unspeakable" has never been ascertained, although it had obviously something to do with a perceived immoral behaviour on Crowley's part. The story might have ended there, with this obscure young man disappearing from history again, after having gained, as his only claim to fame, the dubious honour of a dismissive, contemptuous remark from a future Nobel Prize-winning poet. Yet, since that letter was written, no less than ten authors have shown, in as many biographies of Crowley, that his life was anything but unspeakable, at least in the etymological sense of the word. They have implicitly demonstrated that there were indeed many things to say about him, and it has taken them several thousand pages to do it. Yeats was probably the first important public figure to despise Crowley and his attitudes, but by no means the last. It is in fact well known that Crowley, during his life, came to be the most hated and vilified man in his own country. Of course it is not the aim of this review to try to explain why and how this happened. This has rather been the main purpose of virtually all of his biographers. What is more interesting

¹ Wade, *The Letters of W.B. Yeats*, 342.

here is the fact that, more than half a century after his death (which occurred in 1947), and a century after Yeats' letter, moral boundaries seem to have shifted to such an extent that Crowley does not seem to attract the same kind of public damnation that was levelled at him during his lifetime. It is perhaps telling that Crowley figured in 2002 in a top-100 list of "greatest Britons", based upon a BBC poll. Although his ranking was not particularly high (a mere #73, between Henry V and Robert the Bruce), it is perhaps ironic that Yeats was not in the list at all².

It is not for us to judge the inherent value of Crowley's religious teachings. However, it seems evident that he has become, especially after his death, a very influential author for several contemporary manifestations of that religious phenomenon which Anglo-Saxon bookshops define somewhat vaguely as "metaphysics", and is more precisely defined in the pages of this journal as "Western esotericism". It is indeed a fact that he is today looked upon as a source of inspiration by many people in search of spiritual enlightenment and/or instructions in magical practice. Thus, while during his life his books hardly sold and his disciples were never very numerous, nowadays all his important works are constantly in print, and the people defining themselves as "thelemites" (that is, followers of Crowley's new religion) number several thousands all over the world³. Furthermore, Crowley's influence over magically oriented new religious movements has in some cases been very deep and pervasive. It would be difficult to understand, for instance, some aspects of Anglo-Saxon neo-paganism and contemporary satanism without a solid knowledge of Crowley's doctrines and ideas. In other fields, such as poetry, alpinism and painting, he may have been a minor figure, but it is only fair to admit that, in the limited context of occultism, he has played and still plays a major role. His learning was, if not profound, certainly wide, he having received a standard upper middle-class education in British public schools and at Cambridge university. On the other hand, whatever one's judgment upon his morality and behaviour, he obviously did have some literary and intellectual genius.

² The complete list is on BBC's website: www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/greatbritons/list.shtml. It should be pointed out that Yeats was fully eligible, as the BBC's definition for the poll referred to 'anyone who was born in the British Isles, including Ireland; or anyone who lived in the British Isles, including Ireland, and who has played a significant part in the life of the British Isles'.

³ The so-called 'Caliphate' O.T.O. alone, the main group in the nebula of what may be defined as the Crowleyan movement, claims a world-wide membership of more than 3000 members. For the figure and a definition of 'Caliphate O.T.O.', see Zoccatelli, 'L'Ordo Templi Orientis in Italia', 111-116.

All this can be summed up in the quite simple conclusion that Crowley, independently from his achievements or failures in other fields, should be considered, as far as the history of Western esotericism is concerned, as an important and influential author. Therefore, he certainly deserves more attention from scholars specialising in our field than he has received until now. This is not to deny that he has already been the object of some scholarly treatment here and there. For instance, Massimo Introvigne's pioneering works should certainly be mentioned in this respect⁴. Introvigne has done much to place Crowley correctly in the wider context of Anglo-Saxon occultism. But many interesting and important issues concerning his life and works have not been studied in depth so far and a considerable amount of research remains to be done⁵. Elsewhere, I have reviewed at length the *status quaestionis* in Crowley studies, up to 1999⁶. Of that general survey, this article may be considered an update and a complement.

Actually, the new flood of biographical publications on Crowley was announced in 1998 by Roger Hutchinson's *Aleister Crowley: The Beast Demystified*, which appeared early enough to be included in my survey⁷. This book could certainly not pretend to supersede John Symonds' standard biography (as it is usually considered)⁸, but it did make one single interesting addition to previous critical literature. Hutchinson, in fact, had found the Scotland Yard dossier on Crowley, of which many suspected the existence, but no one had as yet seen. Although Hutchinson fails, unfortunately, to indicate clearly the exact location of the document, he quotes extensively from it, thereby providing not only some interesting insight on why and how Crowley's activities were filed by British police, but also some answers as to his controversial connection with various secret services (especially during his American period, 1914-1919). As for the rest, Hutchinson's book does not really add much, and I think

⁴ I am referring particularly to *Il Cappello del mago* and *Indagine sul satanismo*, which include lengthy discussions on Crowley.

⁵ It should be noted nevertheless that a certain number of articles devoted to specific aspects of Crowley's life or works have already been published, although not all of them have a direct relevance for the field covered by *Aries*. Among the most interesting and relevant in this respect, we may mention here: Introvigne, 'Between Religion and Magic'; Ryan, 'The Great Beast in Russia'; Owen 'The Sorcerer and His Apprentice'; Gilbert, *Baphomet & Son*; and Starr 'Aleister Crowley: Freemason!'. I have also published a book and an article on specific issues concerning Crowley, i.e. his relationship with politics, and his attitudes towards Christianity: *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*, and 'L'anticristianesimo in Aleister Crowley'.

⁶ See Pasi, *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*, 25-31.

⁷ Apart from the works reviewed in the present article, the only relevant monograph on Crowley that has appeared after my book was published is Christian Bouchet, *Aleister Crowley*. I already reviewed the book in *Politica Hermetica* 15 (2001), 94-96.

⁸ Symonds, *The Beast 666*.

it actually leaves Crowley's figure, despite the book's title, quite as mystifying as ever.

Considering that the general public already had at its disposal Crowley's own autobiography, *The Confessions*⁹, which runs to no less than 900 pages, and that the number of biographies devoted to him had already become very large indeed, it was hard to imagine that three new major biographies were about to appear. Yet, they are clearly the fruit of many years of research, and they invite an obvious comparison with John Symonds' book. Naturally, therefore, we may wonder whether any of them has succeeded in superseding it. The authors' task was admittedly not easy, because Symonds' book, fifty years after its first edition and despite its obvious flaws, has well stood the test of time. It is certainly true that Symonds' biography has a certain number of problems, which have been pointed out again and again, especially by authors who have also chosen Crowley's doctrines and teachings as a fundamental source for their own spiritual life¹⁰. Yet, Symonds had at his disposal all that was needed in order to produce a definitive biography. He knew Crowley personally (unlike all his later biographers) and, having been appointed as his literary executor, had access, at the time of Crowley's death, to practically all the extant documents, both published and unpublished. It should be noted here that, this was the case thanks also to the generosity of Gerald J. Yorke, for some time a disciple and a close associate of Crowley's, who put his enormous collection of crowleyana at Symonds' disposal¹¹. Symonds was also the first biographer to write on Crowley. He therefore had to break new ground, although admittedly his task was enormously facilitated by Crowley's own autobiography, which was then still partially unpublished.

⁹ Crowley, *Confessions*. This ponderous autobiography, whose narration breaks off in 1923, has of course been the fundamental source for all biographies of Crowley.

¹⁰ The obvious reference here is Suster, *The Legacy of the Beast*, which still stands today as the most apologetic, albeit not necessarily unintelligent, piece of work in the by now vast literature on Crowley. It was written with the explicit and polemic intent of countering the influence of Symonds' book and "correcting" the image of Crowley conveyed by it. Yet Suster was not the first in his attempt. Israel Regardie, at one time a disciple of Crowley's, had already published in 1970 his own study on Crowley, *The Eye in the Triangle*, which he explicitly presented as a response to Symonds. But Regardie did not really care to compete with Symonds on his own ground, i.e. a factual exposition of Crowley's life. His aim was rather to "explain" Crowley, and especially the aspects that Symonds, according to him, had missed or misunderstood altogether, such as his personal spiritual quest. In so doing, furthermore, Regardie chose to use interpretative tools borrowed from psychoanalysis, having become a psychoanalyst himself after his experience with Crowley. His book, therefore, although extremely interesting and thought-provoking, cannot be really considered a biography.

¹¹ This collection, as it is known, is now preserved at the Warburg Institute, University of London.

It remains true, however, that Symonds' assessment of Crowley appears tendentious and one-sided. Interestingly, this attitude seems to have been accentuated in each successive edition of the book¹². Sometimes his quotations from Crowley's writings are taken out of context and interpreted in a way that seems unwarranted when one reads the passages in full. He generally devotes little or no space to Crowley's inner motivations or feelings, and at the rare occasions that he does, he pictures them, as a rule, as hypocritical¹³. The resulting image is that of a flat individual, with no other dimensions than his search for immediate personal gratification, be it of a material or spiritual kind. That this image is incorrect is evident to those who study Crowley from a dispassionate, uncommitted point of view. One of the more interesting contributions provided by the new biographies under discussion here, Sutin's in particular, is that they allow a deeper understanding of Crowley's psychology, as will be seen. This having been said, I would argue that even sympathisers with Crowley should eventually acknowledge the importance of Symonds' biography. Although obviously unsympathetic towards its protagonist, it has played a fundamental role in keeping interest in Crowley's works alive after his death. Moreover, if compared to the wild rumours spread by tabloids during Crowley's life, it was undoubtedly an improvement that allowed a better assessment of his personality and human trajectory. Indeed I would suggest it is only fair to set Symonds' biography in the context of the popular image of Crowley prevailing at the moment of his death (it must be remembered that the book's first edition dates back to 1951), rather than comparing it with what we know about him today. Seen from that perspective, Symonds' book can be considered as a first attempt to 'set the record straight', albeit perhaps even against (or beyond) the purpose of its author. I also think that Crowley's fascination was not necessarily concealed, and may indeed have been enhanced, by Symonds' writing. Crowley's all-too-human shortcomings, so crudely empha-

¹² The second to last edition, *The King of the Shadow Realm*, contained some new chapters as regards to the previous one (*The Great Beast*, 1973), mostly based on long quotations from letters, diaries, or Crowley's unpublished writings. These additions are obviously very interesting, if only for the benefit of having this material made available, but unfortunately they are usually not followed by any critical discussion. The latest edition, *The Beast 666*, does not really add anything important to the previous one, and some of the new corrections seem quite inexplicable. For instance, the age of Leah Hirsig, a very important associate of Crowley's, having played the role of Scarlet Woman for several years, passes, at the time of her first meeting with Crowley, from 35 (as in all previous editions) to 19 (*The Beast 666*, 236; but also 407). While no explanation is given for this correction, it is clear from her extant pictures that she cannot have been 19 at the time, but much older. All other biographers agree on her having been 35 when she met Crowley.

¹³ See also my discussion in *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*, 26-27.

sized by Symonds, are presented side to side with his sincere spiritual aspirations in such a manner that he stands out in the book as a truly tragic figure. The result is likely enough to impress the reader¹⁴.

With his book, Symonds succeeded in setting a standard to which subsequent works had to be compared. His research, at least as far as the factual side of the story was concerned, was done conscientiously. That is confirmed also by the fact that practically all subsequent biographies, including those reviewed here, have followed his reconstruction of events – if not his judgments – on many points, often without either quoting him or checking his sources. An interesting example of this will be given after a detailed discussion of each biography.

As I have said, all three biographies considered here are the result of patient research, involving several years of work in each case, as is made explicit in their respective forewords or acknowledgments. The authors deserve praise for the efforts they have put into their work, while being perhaps also aware that others were working at similar, concurrent projects at the same time. Although I find that each book has something new to add to previous Crowley literature, each of them calls for some criticism, especially from a scholarly point of view. This having been said, I have to admit that, in reading them, I sometimes wondered whether they are really intended for the same readership. There is in fact a remarkable difference in style, especially between Booth's book and Kaczynski's. From a purely formal point of view, the former seems more destined for a general public, whereas the latter is obviously an attempt to produce a definitive, scholarly biography. Sutin's book may be seen, in this respect, as being somewhere in the middle.

Martin Booth is not a new name for Crowley aficionados, having already edited an anthology of Crowley's poems in 1986¹⁵. This was certainly a good idea, because Crowley's poetry, although a central aspect of his literary output, is less available to the general reader, who can access more easily Crowley's

¹⁴ An interesting example of the effect this book produced upon readers is offered by Mircea Eliade. In his journal, he mentions reading Symonds' book as early as 1952: 'Le Dr Hunwald me prête *The Great Beast. The Life of Aleister Crowley* par John Symonds, que je lis en deux jours. Depuis *The Search for Corvo*, que j'ai lu d'un trait pendant l'hiver 1940-1941, à Oxford, je n'avais jamais rencontré une biographie aussi passionnante. J'avais entendu parler de Crowley depuis longtemps, mais je ne connaissais presque rien de lui. Je savais seulement qu'il avait été "sataniste", qu'il s'était adonné à la magie noire et au tantrisme. Sa biographie par Symonds me révèle un homme étrange, mi-fou, mi-farceur, mais non dépourvu de grandeur' (Eliade, *Fragments d'un Journal I*, 193).

¹⁵ Crowley, *Selected Poems*.

magical and esoteric writings in prose. Among the three biographies reviewed here, it must be said that Booth's is the most disappointing, at least from a strictly scholarly point of view. Booth has chosen, as a general rule, not to include notes indicating the sources of his copious quotations. In this respect, it cannot be considered an improvement on Symonds' biography at all. What could have been a strong point of his research, i.e. his discovery of obscure sources not used by previous authors, is considerably weakened by this lack of references. To give a few examples: on p. 421, Booth mentions 'a circular' whereby Crowley 'officially repudiated' Leah Hirsig, his former Scarlet Woman. It would of course be interesting to know Booth's source for this document, which, to my knowledge has never been published¹⁶. On p. 96, Booth states that Eliphas Lévi and Edward Bulwer Lytton had read the famous book of Abramelin. I wonder if Booth has any other source on this point than S.L. MacGregor Mathers' preface of the book, which of course cannot be accepted at face value by any serious scholar¹⁷. For similar reasons, even the bibliography at the end of the book (all three biographies have one) is a source of frustration rather than a help to the reader. Of the two kinds of bibliography usually found in monographs – a guide for further readings or a complete list of all works cited in the book – Booth seems to opt for the second. However, since the quotations in his book are not referenced, it is impossible to know which book mentioned in the bibliography has been used for what. It is rather annoying to spot unfamiliar titles in it, without being able to find out not only where they have been used in the book, but also what is their relevance to the study of Crowley's life and ideas. Conceived in this way, a bibliography becomes a mere list of titles, of little use for the scholar as well as for the general reader. And it is indeed puzzling to see the works by Crowley himself hastily dismissed at the beginning of the bibliography in a few summary words, as if they were too numerous to mention.

Other problems concern Booth's rare attempts to set events of Crowley's life in their historical context. For instance, one learns with some amazement that Gilles de Rais was just a 'medieval French occultist' (p. 437). Booth also seems to have odd ideas concerning the Gestapo, the German secret police of the Nazi period, which he describes at one point as an 'occult fraternity' (p. 446). Later, when he briefly discusses the relationship between Nazism and

¹⁶ Symonds, however, had already mentioned the document in his book. Unfortunately, sources are not referenced in his book either. See *The Beast* 666, 408.

¹⁷ Mathers, *The Book of the Sacred Magic*, xvi. Incidentally, in the same passage Booth also conflates Edward Bulwer Lytton, the famous novelist and politician who strongly influenced English occultism, with his son Edward Robert, 1st earl of Lytton, who was appointed viceroy of India in 1876.

the occult, he surprisingly adds that 'the Gestapo even maintained their own black magical lodges' (p. 471). Still concerning Nazism, his chronology is wrong as well: Booth states that Gerald Hamilton, an adventurer and a close friend of the English novelist Christopher Isherwood, reported on Crowley's activities to the Nazis while they were both living in Berlin in the early '30s. He continues by stating that the Nazis were then 'beginning to exterminate or incarcerate particularly homosexuals and freemasons in concentration camps, of which the world was then ignorant' (p. 446). The problem is that, at that time, the Nazis were simply not in power yet. Crowley left Germany in 1932: he returned to England and did not leave the country again until his death, in 1947. Hitler seized power in 1933, and by that time Hamilton had left Germany as well. He had reasons to do so, since he was a communist and a homosexual, which makes it highly unlikely as well that he was ever an informer for the Nazis¹⁸. Booth's discussions of magical and esoteric material are sometimes quite superficial, if not downright incorrect. For instance, at p. 101 he mentions a typical Golden Dawn practice defined as 'skreighing in the spirit vision'. The spelling is a little odd, because in the Golden Dawn documents I have seen, it is rather spelt as 'skrying in the spirit vision'. However that may be, it is obvious from the original Golden Dawn instructions that the formula referred to the practice of "astral travel", and that 'skreighing', or 'skrying', stands for a particular form of clairvoyance¹⁹. But Booth interprets 'skreighing', quite fantastically, as 'shrieking or screeching', which does not make any sense at all. The problem here is that "magic", however it may be understood, is at the core of Crowley's ideas and activities. He himself considered this to be the case, and without a clear grasp of what magic is all about for him, anything else will be less easy to understand.

However, on some points Booth adduces new, valuable information. Having done his research mainly in England (unlike Sutin and Kaczynski, who rather seem to be based in the United States), he has been able to find interesting information concerning Crowley's family, birth, and early years. Furthermore, the best treatment so far of the affective relationship between Crowley and Deirdre O'Doherty (also known as MacAlpine) is to be found in his book. This story has been little known or explored so far, probably because it belongs to the last period of Crowley's life, and lacks the intensity, both from an affective and a "magical" point of view, of the relationships with his first wife

¹⁸ On the relationship between Crowley and Hamilton, and especially the complicated issues concerning their political involvement during their stay in Berlin, see my *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*, 120-127.

¹⁹ The definition of 'Skrying in the Spirit Vision' as clairvoyance appears in the 'Flying Roll' no. XI, written by MacGregor Mathers. See King, *Ritual Magic of the Golden Dawn*, 75.

Rose or Leah Hirsig. Yet, it is important, because O'Doherty gave Crowley what he had always considered an essential goal in his life: a male heir. Booth's account of the story seems more accurate and complete than that of any other biographer.

Finally, in one respect Booth's biography is certainly superior to the two others reviewed here. It is enriched by a large set of illustrations, including some images either never published before, such as one of Crowley's birth-place (Booth seems to have traced the actual building), or quite rare, such as the legendary Boleskine house, which is shown both as it existed in Crowley's times and as it is now.

In conclusion, Booth's book will be of limited use to the scholar, particularly if he is already a specialist of Crowley. But in fairness it should be said that it does not seem to have been Booth's aim to produce an impeccable scholarly study. His book remains a fair introduction to Crowley for the general reader, providing at least a more balanced account than the one by Symonds.

If Lawrence Sutin's biography seems to be his first incursion in Crowleyn territory, science-fiction readers will perhaps know him as the author of a much praised biography of Philip K. Dick²⁰. Taking this into account, it might perhaps be argued that Sutin, as a biographer, likes hard challenges. If so, it seems to me that Sutin has been succesful in meeting this one. The book is pleasant to read, and compares favourably to Symonds'. His style is as gripping, but his treatment of the subject is much more balanced and controlled. Also, the book has been set on a higher scholarly standard than Booth's, because quotations are referenced. It is a pity, however, that he has chosen to omit note indexes, and instead puts references of quotations at the end of the book, with the first sentence of each quotation to identify them. This is a sort of compromise which has become trendy, of late, for books of this kind, and is probably imposed by editors and publishers rather than wished for by authors. The casual reader, who does not care for notes at all, will like it, as it makes for smoother reading. But those who need (or simply like!) to check each and every source will be excused for detesting it heartily. Another disadvantage of this method consists in the fact that only actual quotations are referenced. Therefore the source for documents which are just mentioned in the text, but not quoted from, are not given. But a bigger problem lies in the fact that Sutin has chosen to indicate the O.T.O. archives as the sole source of practically all unpublished documents related to Crowley. This point needs some explanation. What has been usually referred to as the "Caliphate" O.T.O. has gathered,

²⁰ Sutin, *Divine Invasions*.

since its (re-)foundation in the mid-70s, a very large archive of documents, including both originals (either bought or received through lines of transmission from the various branches of the Order) and copies of documents from other collections. It is therefore possible now for a scholar, if he has access to this archive, to undertake serious, wide-ranging research on Crowley without having to explore the countless other archives, both public and private, that are scattered around the world. All three biographers discussed here have had access to documents preserved in this archive thanks to Hymenaeus Beta, the current Frater Superior (i.e., international leader) of the Order. Sutin's choice to indicate the O.T.O. archive as sole reference for all unpublished documents quoted by him is to be regretted. The student needs to know whether an author is quoting from an original or from a copy. And, if the quotation is not from an original but from a copy, he needs to know as well where the original is, whenever this information is available, of course.

These very formal problems have not hindered my appreciation of the book. I found some of Sutin's psychological insights very valuable, and as thought-provoking as those of Regardie's²¹. Two aspects in particular have been treated with considerable sensitivity by Sutin, much more so than by other biographers – Symonds in particular: Crowley's homosexuality and his relationship with Christianity. It is not only that he treats these issues in a dispassionate way, avoiding prejudice and condemnation – this has been done by other biographers as well. Going beyond such earlier efforts, Sutin succeeds in breaking the rhetorical shield built by Crowley to protect himself and hide his weaknesses. He shows convincingly that, despite his occasional flippancy concerning homosexuality, he was never able to completely accept his bisexual nature and his attraction for men. A sense of unease, perhaps even shame, always remained with him, and made his attitudes ambivalent. This would also explain his inconsistencies in discussing the issue in his writings, where he sometimes censures and sometimes defends homosexuality. Similar observations can be made about his anti-Christian attitudes. Sutin confirms and expands upon Regardie's assumption that Crowley's attachment to Christianity lasted long after he had decided to revolt against it and became convinced he was a prophet of a new religion²². The Crowley depicted by Sutin is much less self-confident, both in his religious and sexual choices, than the one described in earlier biographies. This image is, in my opinion, much more

²¹ See n. 10 above.

²² Regardie's thesis was presented in his aforementioned study of Crowley, *The Eye in the Triangle*. See also my article on Crowley's relationship with Christianity: Pasi, 'L'anticristianesimo in Aleister Crowley', which should now be updated taking into account the new elements adduced by Sutin.

convincing than the one based on Crowley's writings (especially the published ones) taken at face value.

Sutin's analysis of the *Book of the Law*, the fundamental text of Crowley's new religious revelation, is likewise original and intelligent (p. 133-140). He rightly dismisses Crowley's "irrefutable" rational arguments for proving its authenticity, pointing out – if need be – that they convince only those who wish to be convinced from the beginning. But he also compares Crowley's book with two other "inspired" texts of about the same period, Yeats' *A Vision* and Jung's *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*, showing their analogies as well as their differences. This is extremely interesting, because it helps to set Crowley's book in a wider context, to understand how texts originating from similar experiences can be understood, and how they may be used in different ways by those who have materially (even if unconsciously) written them. The comparison is particularly stimulating in the case of Yeats, given the famous mutual aversion between him and Crowley. These personal feelings between the two authors notwithstanding, Sutin shows that the texts present some interesting analogies. The reason is easy enough to see, although Sutin does not dwell on it at length: to some extent at least, the two authors shared the same culture, the same readings, the same interests and pursuits.

Sutin also tackles an aspect of Crowley's life that will be of great interest for *Aries* readers, i.e. his relationships, late in his life, with Dion Fortune and Gerald Gardner. Sutin does not really bring new information to this, as other authors have already written at length about these issues in recent biographies of Fortune or histories of the Wicca movement²³. But Sutin is the first to treat these relationships in the context of a biography of Crowley, with the specific point of view required by this. Strangely enough, Symonds had ignored them altogether.

On some other points, however, Sutin's analyses remain disappointing. The "overview of the magical tradition", which opens his book by way of an introduction, is somewhat superficial and smacks of popular histories of magic, which do not provide necessarily the best frame for Crowley's pursuits and ideas. Sutin also seems a keen proponent of the famous Tantra thesis, first introduced and developed by Crowley's former disciple Kenneth Grant. Like Grant and many others after him, he seems to suggest in various places that Crowley was influenced by original Tantric practices or ideas, and that the

²³ There is a certain number of biographies of Fortune. About her relationship with Crowley, see especially Chapman, *Quest for Dion Fortune*, 143-160; and Knight, *Dion Fortune, passim*. On Wicca there now exists a very large literature, but the best and most updated general treatment is Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, where the relationship between Crowley and Gardner is discussed as well (see esp. p. 216-223).

origin of his sexual magic is to be found here as much as in Theodor Reuss' O.T.O. teachings. The origins and the evolution of sexual magic in contemporary Western esoteric currents still remain largely unexplored, so that many questions are as yet unanswered. But as far as Crowley's magic is concerned, I fail to be convinced by Sutin's evidence in favour of a direct Tantric influence (especially p. 92-93; but see also p. 28, 141 and 188). His argument refers to Crowley's stay in Ceylon in 1901, where he practised yoga with his friend and former colleague in the Golden Dawn, Allan Bennett. During that period, soon after the Golden Dawn break-up of 1900, Crowley had become more and more disillusioned with magic, and, under the influence of Bennett, was drawn to Buddhism and Yoga. Sutin quotes from Crowley's diary of this period, parts of which were later published in 'The Temple of Solomon the King', a serialized account of Crowley's spiritual experiences appearing in his review *The Equinox*. In a passage quoted by Sutin, Crowley refers to 'these follies of poetry and Vamacharya [*sic*] ("debauchery", i.e. normal life) and health and vain things' (p. 92)²⁴. Sutin thinks that 'Vamacharya' refers here to a probable (but unspecified) encounter of Crowley with left-hand Tantra²⁵. But if one reads the passage in its context, it seems much more likely that Crowley, having had a break from his daily practices of Yoga, was just referring here to "normal" sexual intercourse, which (among other things, such as poetry) was probably seen by him during this period as a dangerous distraction from his training²⁶. If this were really a reference to Tantric ritual practices, the specification 'i.e. normal life', would be quite inexplicable. A further reference to 'secret rites, evidently of a sexual nature (and related to Tantric practices)', in which Crowley would have engaged with his first wife Rose around 1904 (p. 141), sounds utterly unconvincing, since Sutin fails to quote relevant sources to sustain this assertion. More generally, Sutin does not care to explain the fact that explicit mention of Tantra, as a body of teachings concerned, among other things, with sacred sexuality, is extremely rare in Crowley's writings, whether

²⁴ Fuller & Crowley, 'The Temple of Solomon the King', 161.

²⁵ Incidentally, Sutin does not seem to notice that Crowley is misspelling the word, which should actually be 'vāmācāra'. It is not just a matter of different methods of transliteration, because Crowley here is probably misquoting the final part of the compound word, confusing -ācārya, i.e. "preceptor", "teacher" (a very common word, often found in the final part of Indian surnames) with -ācāra, i.e. "conduct", "way of behaving" (therefore, 'vāmācāra': "left[-hand] conduct"; I thank Elizabeth de Michelis for her advice on this point). This alone would show that Crowley was at that time far from having a clear idea of the Eastern concepts he was making use of.

²⁶ It should perhaps be pointed out that I write "normal" sexual intercourse to distinguish it from what would be defined as "ritual" intercourse in the context of Tantric practices, and not as opposed to "deviant".

published or unpublished²⁷. Sutin might also have asked himself why, if Tantra is so important in the development of Crowley's own brand of sexual magic, he never mentions the works of Arthur Avalon, who was then (i.e., since the mid-10s), translating original Tantric texts and introducing the philosophy of Tantra to a Western public. This is all the more relevant given the fact that, in the reading lists for members of his magical orders, Crowley does mention a wide range of Buddhist and Hindu classics. Further research is obviously needed to clarify the issue, but I would suggest that most of what Crowley knew about sexual magic came from Theodor Reuss' instructions, further developed by way of personal reflection and experimentation; and that his direct knowledge of original Tantra was next to nil.

Finally, Sutin seems uneasy (much like Booth and Kaczynski, it must be said) with classical culture. Whenever there is some Latin or ancient Greek in sight, he seems to be walking on slippery ground. The problem is that classical culture *is* an important part of both Crowley's education in particular, and of esoteric traditions in general. For instance, "Lux e Tenebris" (the magical motto of one of the Secret Chiefs who delivered, according to Mathers, the magical teachings of the Golden Dawn), does not mean 'Light and Darkness', but 'Light *from* Darkness' (p. 61). 'Konx Om Pax', the formula of dismissal pronounced, according to some traditions, at the end of the ceremonies of the Eleusinian Mysteries, certainly does not mean 'Light in Extension', as the Golden Dawn tradition would have us believe (p. 55). It is just a barbarous formula (usually spelt as 'Κόγξ ὄμπαξ' in the original Greek) of unknown origin, and its meaning in Greek is more or less equivalent to that of "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo" or "Abracadabra" in English²⁸.

In conclusion, Sutin's book has much to offer to those who are already acquainted with works on or by Crowley, and are looking for a fresh approach to him. Some minor problems notwithstanding, specialists will find much interesting material that invites further research.

²⁷ The only explicit mention I have been able to find so far is in Crowley's instruction (written in 1914) for the IXth degree (heterosexual magic) 'De Arte Magica', 391. But it is interesting to note that, in this text, Crowley clearly and explicitly demarcates his method of sexual magic from what he defines as "Tantra".

²⁸ The classical source concerning this formula is Hesychius' *Lexicon*. An incredible number of theories have been advanced during the last three centuries to explain its meaning and etymology, linking it to Sanskrit, Tibetan, Egyptian, or several other ancient languages or cultures. It is no surprise that the Golden Dawn, given its Egyptophile tendency, had a preference for the Egyptian theory. I know of no satisfactory recent scholarly study of the formula and its possible origin.

Richard Kaczynski, like Booth, is not a new name in Crowley circles. He has edited, together with Hymenaeus Beta, *The Revival of Magick*, a very useful anthology of articles which Crowley originally published in various periodicals during his stay in America (1914-1919). Over the last fifteen years, a school of research seems to have taken shape in close association with the American O.T.O. This school, which might be called “Caliphate school”, by the name which is usually attributed to this branch of the O.T.O., has given a tremendous impulse to the publication of new, critical editions of Crowley’s writings and to the study of his life and ideas. The authors share some common characteristics: they are all based in the United States; they are in close contact with, or members of, the Caliphate O.T.O., whose archive is naturally one of their main research facilities; they have adopted a high standard of scholarship in their publications; and they have an obvious sympathy for Crowley and his teachings, which may sometimes verge on an apologetic tendency. The main exponents of this school may be considered Hymenaeus Beta himself, Martin P. Starr, and J. Edward and Marlene Cornelius²⁹. Their achievements deserve respect, and often praise, even if their point of view may sometimes not coincide with that of scholars working from a strictly historico-critical perspective. In reading Kaczynski’s biography I found some hints of an “air de famille” with this group of independent scholars, and perhaps he would not mind being considered one of them. Certain, in any case, is that Kaczynski has produced the first biography of Crowley that displays a really accomplished scholarly apparatus. The very copious endnotes will satisfy even the most demanding scholar. Not only do they include complete references for direct quotations, but they do so also for documents only mentioned in the text, and they discuss controversial points in depth. Furthermore, Kaczynski provides an excellent list of manuscript collections that hold material related to Crowley, which is obviously of great practical use for the student. The bibliography at the end of the book, running to almost thirty pages, is extremely rich – probably one of the best presently available. It contains many obscure items, some of which were unknown to this reviewer, and which are certainly very rare and difficult to find. Finally, as a rule, dates of birth and death are given for persons men-

²⁹ Hymenaeus Beta has edited several new editions of Crowley’s works, the most recent being *The General Principles of Astrology*. All these publications have lengthy introductions, editorial notes and bibliographies by him. Starr, beyond publishing studies on Crowley such as his article mentioned in n. 5, has created The Teitan Press, based in Chicago, which has reprinted rare or unpublished writings by Crowley, all introduced by Starr himself. The Corneliuses edit, since 1994, *Red Flame*, a journal of “Thelemic research” based in Berkeley, of which nine issues (each covering a different topic) have appeared so far. One of the issues, *The Aleister Crowley Desk Reference (Red Flame #4)* is an important step towards a comprehensive bibliography of Crowley’s works.

tioned in the book (there are a few exceptions, one of which will be pointed out below).

Having published his as the latest one in this new wave of biographies, Kaczynski has had the opportunity of integrating in his reconstruction some of the findings of Booth and Sutin, but on some issues he has gone farther and has added a wealth of new details. Some material on friends and acquaintances of Crowley's is not to be found in other biographies. Yet, sometimes one may notice strange disparities of treatment. For example, Kaczynski provides interesting new biographical information on Julian L. Baker (p. 43-44), the analytical chemist who acted as the initial link leading Crowley to his initiation into the Golden Dawn. However, no such details are given on George Cecil Jones (not even dates of birth and death), although he played a much more significant role in Crowley's life, and was an associate of his for many years. On the other hand, valuable information is given, for instance, on many members of the A.:A.:, Crowley's initiatic Order based loosely on the Golden Dawn system (p. 149-151, and 170-172). This helps to get a better idea of the kind of people who were attracted by his teachings and were willing to accept him as a spiritual master. Also very interesting is the story of Crowley's relationship with a group of high-ranking freemasons in Detroit, during his American period (p. 270-275). Crowley had summarised it in his *Confessions*, but Kaczynski adds new material not to be found elsewhere. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Kaczynski quotes from a wide range of unpublished writings by Crowley, which bring further insight into the evolution of his ideas, especially regarding magic and other "occult" matters.

Less convincing are the parts where Kaczynski slips into some sort of fictionalized account and tries to reconstitute dialogues between individuals as they might have taken place in reality. While this might be seen as a harmless literary device, it contrasts too strongly with Kaczynski's efforts at producing a scholarly work of high quality. More seriously, although Kaczynski appears to be the most knowledgeable of the three authors reviewed here regarding esoteric and magical matters, his book contains questionable statements and a few naiveties. In particular, Kaczynski seems sometimes insecure when he discusses occultist organisations or groups, such as the Golden Dawn, the O.T.O., Crowley's A.:A.:, and the Stella Matutina. For instance, saying that the Golden Dawn 'espoused no particular religious belief, seeking only to transmit knowledge gained from comparative study of religions and philosophies the world over' (p. 47), means overlooking the fact that this initiatic organization was founded partly in reaction to the "Eastern wisdom" expounded by H.P. Blavatsky's Theosophical Society. The Golden Dawn, as has been emphasized convincingly by Joscelyn Godwin and R.A. Gilbert, tried to develop

an alternative approach on the lines proposed by Anna Kingsford inside the Theosophical Society itself. This approach was based upon a Western esoteric tradition as opposed to an Eastern one³⁰. This makes its ‘comparative study of religions and philosophies’ less global than Kaczynski seems to think. Also, Kaczynski’s account of the origins of the O.T.O. is somewhat confused. There is no evidence that William W. Westcott or Annie Besant were ever members (or even ‘supporters’) of the Order, and if there is, Kaczynski fails to show it (p. 204). And unless hard evidence shows up (which is extremely unlikely), the Order’s claim of 1000 members around 1904-1905 should be considered as pure fantasy. Kaczynski gives “Argenteum Astrum” as the meaning of the initials A.:A.:, thus following a common usage (another popular version is “Astrum Argentinum”) (p. 147). Yet, he should perhaps have pointed out that Crowley never publicly revealed the exact meaning of the initials, and in fact he fails to provide a source for his version. As to the Stella Matutina, its rituals, based on those of the Golden Dawn, were not ‘revised, polished and Christianised’ by A.E. Waite (p. 404), but by R. W. Felkin. Waite was never actually a member of the Stella Matutina, and his own revision of the Golden Dawn rituals was made for his own Order, the Independent and Rectified Rite. Both Felkin’s and Waite’s Orders were the product of the second major schism of the Golden Dawn, in 1903.

Overall, Kaczynski shows a tendency to present Crowley’s activities, and discuss them, in a way that is most favourable for him. He also tends to rely, perhaps too much, on *The Confessions*, Crowley’s own autobiography. If Symonds had been one-sided in one way, Kaczynski seems sometimes to be so in the opposite one. A good example may be the controversial issue concerning blood-sacrifices that Crowley supposedly performed at the Abbey of Thelema, during the Cefalù period (1920-1923). These sacrifices were said to have involved at one occasion a cat, whose blood was drunk by the participants in the ceremony, and at another occasion a goat. While practically all other biographers tend to give credit to both stories, Kaczynski prefers to disbelieve them (p. 295, 303, and 526, n. 6, for the goat; p. 308-309, and 526, n. 15, for the cat). The only reason he offers appears to be the fact that, in his eyes, these “rumours” are too “wild” to be credible, and that, in the case of the cat, Crowley on one occasion explicitly denied the story. Kaczynski has of course the right to express his personal opinion on this issue, but it would have been preferable to present first all available evidence in an impartial way, and let the reader decide, instead of dismissing the case as already settled. In fact, the evidence is not

³⁰ On this point, the obvious references are Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, 333-379; and Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn and the Esoteric Section*.

decisive either way, and there is no reason to give preference to Crowley's testimony when it conflicts with that of others. To understand this point better, two remarks may be useful. Firstly, Crowley is sometimes an unreliable source, both about himself and about others. There is ample evidence to substantiate this, and Crowley himself, in moments of acute self-awareness, recognised that lying was an ineradicable component of his personality³¹. Therefore, *on controversial points* Crowley's statements should not be taken as decisive, and further evidence should always be looked for. Secondly, we know that Crowley did perform ritual sacrifices at other occasions, which, unlike the other two, have never been considered as controversial³². Consequently, I do not see any particular reason to dismiss out of hand the episodes of sacrifice in Cefalù. There is nothing in them that is inherently unbelievable or inconsistent with other facts in Crowley's life.

Another interesting example may be Kaczynski's treatment of *Amphora*, a collection of poems Crowley published in 1908 (p. 146-147). On the face of it, these poems, originally published anonymously, were inspired by a most orthodox Catholic devotion for the Virgin Mary, but combining the first letters of the verses yielded edifying acrostics such as 'The Virgin Mary I desire, but arseholes set my prick on fire'. Roman Catholic circles failed to notice these typical Crowleysque pranks, and the poems were unanimously praised until the author's identity became known. Kaczynski curiously comments that, in writing this book, 'Crowley's intent was not to blaspheme' (p. 147). Why, of course it was! Kaczynski is perfectly right in saying that Crowley wanted to experience the world from all possible points of view, including those of persons having convictions completely different from those he held. Crowley himself makes this clear in his *Confessions*³³. Kaczynski is also right in remarking that there was probably some real religious sentiment behind his poems, as Crowley was revering in Mary an image of what he perceived as the divine feminine present in all religious traditions. And then, of course, for Crowley the acrostics were also a funny joke. But Kaczynski fails to highlight the ambiguo-

³¹ Sutin convincingly tackles the issue, also quoting an interesting passage by Crowley. See p. 283-284 of his book.

³² Two sacrifices at least are recorded by Crowley as having been performed personally by him: one during a ceremony in a Hindu temple at Madura, in 1901, when he was allowed to sacrifice a goat to the goddess Bhavani; the other involving the crucifixion of a toad, during a ritual of self-initiation to the grade of Magus. Both episodes are mentioned in the *Confessions*, 256 and 808. We also know that Crowley was a dedicated big-game hunter during his exotic travels. We may therefore infer that killing animals, even independently from a ritual context, was not a source of moral concern for him.

³³ See the much quoted passage (also quoted by Kaczynski in this context) in Crowley, *The Confessions*, 559.

ous nature of this sort of enterprises. Crowley's intent *was* most certainly to blaspheme as well, because, at this point in his life, he had come to hate Christianity and to despise all those who recognized its set of values as their own. This aspect of real, concrete hate cannot be overlooked if one wishes to convey a complete image of Crowley. Crowley was a man of strong passions: "hate" was certainly one of them, and "blasphemy" (in the specific context we are referring to) one of its effects. Several other examples might be given of Kaczynski's tendency to provide a "politically correct" image of Crowley. At times the reader might even prefer Symonds' cold-blooded, callous Crowley to Kaczynski's sanitised one: both may be one-sided, but at least the former makes for funnier reading. The last chapter, which contains Kaczynski's final assessment of Crowley, seems at times more a paean than a critical evaluation of Crowley's character, work, and influence. For Kaczynski, Crowley 'stands as one of the most remarkable and innovative figures of his century' (p. 461). This opinion is perfectly respectable, but when Kaczynski tries to demonstrate the importance of Crowley's contribution by stating, among other things, that 'in laying out the parallels between all systems of symbolism, Crowley prefigured the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss' (p. 463), one may indeed wonder whether he is not going a little too far. This kind of remarks, without any further, thorough discussion, will appear to the dispassionate reader as far-fetched claims rather than as well-pondered conclusions. These problems notwithstanding, for many years to come Kaczynski's work will remain a treasure trove of useful information for the specialist, and an irreplaceable source of references.

If we finally take all these three new biographies together, it is obvious that our knowledge of Crowley's life and ideas has greatly improved since Symonds' book. Yet even these later biographers, while lamenting the flaws of Symonds' book (or pretending to ignore him altogether), have sometimes followed him closely, even when this was not warranted by the available sources. A very interesting example is the famous episode of Crowley's expulsion from Italy in April 1923. Like many other episodes in Crowley's life, this has been the object of much speculation. Since the actual order signed by Mussolini has not surfaced yet, it has not been possible so far to ascertain his exact motives. In his biography, Symonds gave his own explanation, writing that:

The regime of Mussolini had arrived. Secret societies, centres of dissension, had been outlawed in Italy during the previous year [i.e., 1922]. The Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy, Domizio Torregiani [*sic*], was banished for five years to the Lipari Isles [*sic*]³⁴.

³⁴ Symonds, *The Beast* 666, 332-333.

In this case Symonds, who is usually accurate in his historical contextualizations, gets confused with dates. As was already remarked by the editors of the Italian translation of Symonds' book, secret societies were banned in Italy only in 1925, two full years *after* Crowley's expulsion³⁵. It is only after this date that actual, "legal" persecutions against freemasons became possible, although episodes of violence had already occurred. Domizio Torrigiani was confined to Lipari island in April 1927. He was later assigned to other places of detention, and liberated only a few days before his death, in 1932³⁶. Symonds' interpretation, based on a wrong dating, should therefore be used with extreme caution. In April 1923, Mussolini's government was just a few months old and, not having yet completed its evolution towards dictatorship, was still in the process of consolidating. It is therefore highly unlikely that any concern for the "danger" of secret societies was at the origin of the expulsion. This is also indirectly confirmed by the fact that the measure was *ad personam*, and not extended to the community then residing in the "Abbey", founded by Crowley only three years before. The extant documents in the Italian State Archive in Rome show that the reason for the expulsion is more likely to be found in the campaign of vilification against Crowley then raging in the British press, and especially the related accusations of immoral behaviour³⁷. Crowley was certainly not seen as a concrete danger by Mussolini's regime, but rather as an embarrassing nuisance to get rid of as soon as possible. The correct historical data we have referred to are of course easily available in any average history of Italy focusing on the Fascist period. It is therefore disappointing to find both Booth and Kaczynski uncritically following Symonds on this point, and even expanding on his mistaken dates. Booth's treatment of the affair deserves to be quoted in full:

Mussolini was terrified of secret societies: they had been the bane of Italian life for centuries. In particular, he was concerned with freemasonic societies, which often espoused politically dissident, anti-Fascist ambitions, and occult groups, which could greatly influence the superstitious Italian people. It was no wonder that the appearance of a foreign-led occult community in Sicily greatly disturbed

³⁵ See Symonds, *La Grande Bestia*, 367, n. 1. The Italian editors were Gianfranco de Turreis and Sebastiano Fusco.

³⁶ There is a vast literature on Italian freemasonry during the Fascist period (1922-1945). As an introduction, see Vannoni, *Massoneria*; and Mola, *Storia della Massoneria italiana*, 485-658.

³⁷ I have made some researches at the Italian State Archive in Rome, and at its dependance in Palermo, but have not been able to trace the actual document containing the order. I have however found later official documents mentioning it. For the interesting story of these documents, see my *Aleister Crowley e la tentazione della politica*, 172-178. The documents are published in full in the appendix of the book, 196-199.

Il Duce. Leaders of Italian secret societies were readily arrested. Freemasonic grand masters [...] were exiled or held under house arrest on Lipari Island [...]. Where Crowley was concerned, there was only one option open to Mussolini's Fascist authorities. It was deportation (p. 396).

It is evident that Booth is following Symonds' explanation closely, only somewhat elaborating on it and thereby adding further inaccuracies. It would be interesting to know which "secret societies" have been the "bane" of Italy for centuries. And the reference to the easily manipulated, "superstitious Italian people" can even appear derogatory if left without further explanations. Kaczynski, although more sober than Booth, fares no better. He writes that, on being summoned by the police commissioner, 'Crowley learned that Italy's dictator, Benito Mussolini, had outlawed secret societies. He had already banished the O.T.O.'s Italian Grand Master, Domizio Torregiani [*sic*] to the Lipari Isles [*sic*] for five years. Although no such punishment could be meted out to a visitor, Crowley had one week to settle his affairs and leave the country' (p. 312). In this case, Kaczynski not only relies wholly on Symonds, but misreads him in quite an astonishing way. Symonds in fact was absolutely correct in identifying Torregiani as Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy, which was (and still is) Italy's largest masonic Obedience. Torregiani had, however, no connection whatsoever with Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis. Furthermore the O.T.O., even if it had had, before the First World War, Italian representatives such as Eduardo Frosini and Arturo Reghini, never had an 'Italian Grand Master'³⁸. In both cases, it is easy to see that Symonds has been used uncritically to discuss an event one cannot consider as minor, since it had profound consequences for Crowley. As for Sutin, he is the only one of the three to drop Symonds and his secret societies theory altogether, tackling the matter afresh the way it should have been. He comes closest to the truth in writing that 'the negative publicity' of Crowley's presence in Italy, while British tabloids were attacking him relentlessly, 'was viewed by the Fascists as reflecting poorly upon their regime' (p. 308). Sutin also adds a judicious discussion of Crowley's attitude towards Italian Fascism, which was quite ambivalent to say the least.

This does not mean that on any given issue Sutin is more correct than either Booth or Kaczynski. There are other points where the roles are inverted, with all possible combinations. Therefore, it is frustrating to realize that, instead of having one definitive biography finally superseding Symonds, we have three

³⁸ The history of the connections of the O.T.O. in Italy under Theodor Reuss' leadership is relatively obscure and still needs to be studied in depth. No Italian representative seems to have been active during Crowley's leadership, which ended with his death in 1947.

which need to be constantly compared to each other in order to have a correct view on any given issue. And furthermore, we will have to beware of particular issues where Symonds' book, far from being superseded, remains more reliable than those of his later emulators. This kind of labour will not scare the scholar, but it will perhaps confuse the non-specialist and the general reader.

Finally a further question might now be asked by the non-specialist. Is it fair to assume that, after so many hundred pages devoted entirely to Crowley's life and works, all that could be said about him has been said? Ought scholars still working on the unspeakable occultist just give up their efforts and look for more rewarding objects of research? The answer – I am happy to say – is no. One example among many is the issue I have just skimmed over in discussing Sutin's book, that is to say sexual magic. A comprehensive study of this central aspect of Crowley's activity is still waiting to be written. We need more studies on this and other specific aspects of Crowley, and no general biography will ever be able to answer all questions concerning him. Therefore, one may be permitted to express the hope that the time for full-scale biographies of Crowley is now over, at least for some time and that attention will now shift to detailed, scholarly studies of particular aspects of his life and works. Perhaps it is time to move on, from a neverendingly told story to a search for as yet untold stories.

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