

THE SECRET OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

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*In the real world, the Great Beast was a sexual predator, life long junkie and
failed Christian mystic,
but he did have a cool sense of humor!*

Gather round, Minervals and Probationers. You've heard whispers that the real biography of Aleister Crowley has yet to be written. . .well, it's true. Now the early biographers (Stephenson, Cammell, Symonds) had, at least, met Crowley in person and added a few personal recollections. However, both friends and journalists basically retold

the stories which Crowley had invented about himself years before. The weird part is that Aleister kept inventing and retelling stories of himself, throughout his life, as a combination Bon Vivant, Scientific Rationalist, Mystic Ascetic and Supreme Master of the magickal arts. Most of the folks he met didn't understand his sense of humor and assumed his stories were true. Who would make up such rubbish? He redacted many of these tales of "magick and mystery" into the first 6 volumes of Confessions while editing his "Autohagiography" in Cefalu. These stories were repeated 50 years later by so many journalists and writers that the life of the Beast 666 has taken on a mythic quality which has little basis in fact. In fact, Crowley made sure that his disinformation about his life would be available for years to come by purposefully not copywriting his books so that, due to their author's notoriety, they would be reprinted and circulated repeatedly. Needless to say, the internet took A.C.'s self-promotional strategy to the next level.

His father died while Alex was an undergraduate at Cambridge University. The father had been a fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren Lay Minister who preached the gospel to rural Brits and made a fortune brewing (but not drinking) beer. With no constraints upon him from his family, young Aleck proceeded to adopt the life style of "university lad gone wild in Gay Nineties London". In turn-of-the-century England, he was seen by most as a pompous poser with little substance. His crude, nouveau riche background meant that he would never be accepted as an "English gentleman". His weaknesses and youthful naivete must have been an obvious source of amusement to the older boys at university whose approval he craved. Instead, he found acceptance with his opiated Buddhist roommate Alan Bennett, Jerome Pollitt (a performer in the English Music Hall tradition and sexual tutor) and a rough trade of prostitutes, opium fiends and starving artists. In the 1890's, drugs were legal but gay sex was regularly punished with long prison sentences. Young men like Aleck were targets for blackmail and intimidation. The cruel treatment which Crowley received throughout his youth and early adult life was replayed over and over again in his adult sado-masochistic sex acts.

Sorry folks, but Crowley wasn't a tough, savy kid. And, yes, he did have a secret world which he would escape into. At first, in the world of his literary imagination, Edward Alexander Crowley became a 19th century superhero, a romantic mix of Oscar Wilde, Flashman, Sir Richard Burton and Jesus Christ. Oh yeah---just read the Old Crow's diaries right up through April 1904. He's pursuing Christian Mysteries! He visualizes the Golden Dawn Adeptus Minor Ritual of Christian resurrection over and over in Mexico, Ceylon and everywhere he goes.



In 1904, when he buys Boleskine and marries Rose, he's just trying to fit in. He's thinking that his hated youth of Plymouth Brethren fundamentalism and the xenophobia of his upbringing is over. Now, by a supreme act of Will, like Nietzsche or Wagner, he will enter the Victorian Empire as a Poet Philosopher, an English Gentleman with wit and wisdom beyond his years. It is sad to imagine the humiliating response that Alex must have received for his troubles. From the few contemporary accounts of A.C. that we possess, his manner was pompous and his voice had a high, nasal pitch. He was "different" and people made fun of him behind his back.

Crowley was intelligent, though (King Jeremy the Wicked). He spent his money inventing himself as a Poete Maudit, privately publishing expensive editions of Swinburnesque poetry. This is hard, pounding erotic poetry with the scent and rhythm of flagellation and punishing sexuality. He wrote and published volume after volume of poetry, as well as his ten volume Journal of Illuminism, The Equinox, and expressed his opinions on

every topic under the sun. Most of his voluminous output tells the reader a subtle story of the (imagined) life of Aleister Crowley. He is writing first person fantasy in which Aleister Crowley is the Phallic Saviour of the World. Yep, that's his religious premise: that Aleister Crowley's Dick is so big and bad (The Great and Wild Beast 666), that it's gonna save the world. That's right. A.C.'s cock is Jesus and his sperm is the Holy Ghost. Of course, Aleck's dad is God the Father. In Crowley's most revealing work, "The Gospel According to St. George Bernard Shaw", A.C. interprets Jesus's cry on the cross, "Father, why hast thou forsaken me?" According to Crowley, this refers to Jesus refusing to enter the kingdom of His Father to join the elite ruling class of Heaven and preferring to remain on Earth among men. This was Aleister's personal interpretation of his own relationship with both God and his father.

So Crowley decides to get married to Rose Kelly, become Jesus Christ and save the British Empire. Now comes the honeymoon. This is where you have to believe in demons. Sure Crowley had been fooling around with the Abramelin ritual at Boleskine. In his version, he's pursuing this ritual with the methodology of a scientist. In reality, he uses the ritual to shock acquaintances and bully people with his supposed magickal powers and Book of



Magic Squares. In other words, he's doing it all wrong and without the discipline that Mathers taught him to be necessary. A.C.'s version of the events from the 1904 honeymoon in Cairo through to his establishment of the A.A. with Jones and publication of the first issue of The Equinox in 1909 is well known. However, the truth of Crowley's life during those most formative years of Thelema is almost completely unknown and, certainly, misunderstood.

Let's call this period (as Crowley did) "The First Period of Silence". Here are some of the facts. Crowley proposed to Rose Kelly after a brief acquaintance with her and made plans for a honeymoon in Cairo, a popular resort in the British Colonies. Then, three great tragedies struck Aleister in succession. First is the honeymoon. This is the period of the "writing of the Book of the Law", from March 20

through April 8, 9 and 10. Little is known of this period, except for Uncle Al's version. My guess is that "Prince Chioa Kahn" enjoyed being bugged by Arab men more than celebrating the nuptials with his besotted bride. This would be a more likely explanation of Aleister hearing a dark man's voice over his left shoulder, as he reported. It is clear that a shattering self-realization occurred. His identity as a god-fearing X-tian ended at that time.

Next, A.C. answered an invitation to climb K2 mountain (Chogo-Ri) in the Himalayas with a professional climbing expedition. During the first attempt at the mountain, Crowley pulled a pistol on the climbing party. On the second attempt, several members of the party died and the effort failed. Crowley was blamed for the tragedy by the other climbers. His identity as an English gentleman was over.

Finally, while in Egypt, Rose found out that she was pregnant. As the couple traveled from Cairo through Asia, Rose gave birth to a daughter, Lola Zaza (the name opens

the “gates of Hell”, according to Aleister). As the trek progressed through Vietnam, Crowley sent them back to England, however, and his daughter died of typhoid on the voyage. Crowley blamed the tragedy on Rose and her increasing alcoholism. After her baby’s death, Rose went insane and was committed to an asylum. The marriage was dissolved.

Eventually, Crowley found his way back to London where he pursued young undergrads like Victor Neuberg as well as closeted queens like J.F.C. Fuller, whose erotic praise for his master in “A Star in the West” is a telling tribute. At this time, Aleister organized the A.A. and began his career as a sexual predator who lured his victims with drugs, poetry and dreams of magickal powers. It was his reaction to the triple tragedy. He chose Aiwass, the satanic guardian angel who represented the erect phallus “per vas

nefandum” (in Crowley’s butt) over Jesus. His sacramental name for the RR et AC, “The Rosy Heart of Jesus” was changed to The Beast 666. In Qabalistic terms, A.C. had failed to achieve the heart center of Tiphareth and had been thrown down to the sex center of Yesod. This is the secret theme of The Book of the Law, which in fact was composed and edited some time after April 8, 9, and 10, 1904. It is rumored that A.C.’s diaries of this period of Silence survive and prove that Liber “Al”(eister) is a prose poem which was constructed to seduce Captain Fuller with military ardor as well as impress a few Cambridge lads with pagan decadence. Among other sources, Aradia (published by Leland 1899) is an obvious conscious borrowing. It seems that most of Crowley’s makeover from Golden Dawn Christian



Mystic to Thelemic Pagan Satanist was “worked out” during his journey with Elaine Simpson on a steamship cruise from Hong Kong to British Columbia. This was recorded by the Master Therion in a special series of vellum notebooks at the time. It is interesting to note that, during the First Period of Silence, Crowley seems to have represented his Thelemic, anti-Christian sentiments to Fuller by which the latter was repulsed. At the same time (1907), we find A.C. maintaining his Golden Dawn Christian mysticism with George Cecil Jones when the two performed their version of the Adeptus Minor Crucifixion in 1907 to found the “A.A.”.

So things are sweet for a while. Aleister publishes The Equinox, runs around London and Paris and snags more booty than Sir Francis Dashwood at a country weekend. He evokes the Demon Bartzabel and holds the public Rites of Eleusis. Aleister thinks he is Faust and he’s just sealed a deal with the Devil. He even starts his own branch of the O.T.O. (after hooking up with spymeister, Theodor Reuss) and starts collecting dues. Now, this is the part that I hate to tell the Probationers about. WWI hits Europe and England and the Age of European Colonial Privilege is over. Many wealthy Brits leave England to wait out the war in America. Crowley goes too. The only problem is that Aleister has been living the hedonistic life of an English Rake as a response to his inability to fit into Edwardian society. He’s also spent most of his inheritance. Crowley has to sell his library and anything else of value that he can in order to get to America. He thinks: America is the land of opportunity. I can use my guru skills, attract a cult of followers and live easy while the lower classes fight the world war. Of course, when he gets to America, he runs out of money. New York in



the winter of 1918 must have been a pretty lonely place (vide Liber Aleph). Naturally, he takes lots o' drugs and adapts to the American habit of scamming people out of money and partying in the Gay Bathhouses. The "Roaring Twenties" are just around the corner. At this point, "Alice" continues the cycle from his sexual past and becomes a hard core sex predator, junkie and mooch. His writing for the "International" reflects his depressed and cynical state of mind. This is the beginning of A.C.'s down-going. Soon he finds Leah (sublime). She will nursemaid him through the depths of his personal hell, otherwise known as The Abbey of Thelema in Cefalu. He is dubbed "the wickedest man in the world" as a joke by the yellow press. Former friends make fun of him. When he sues for libel, he finds out that he has no reputation to protect. Then he dies in poverty and addicted to Heroin at age 72. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

So, here's the irony. Crowley is still seducing young men from beyond the grave. Everyone in occult bookselling knows that the people who buy Crowley books are disaffected young men, often college students. Some will continue their interest throughout adulthood. They are often homophobic, have few sex partners, keep to themselves and create their own special interpretation of the XI degree of the O.T.O. They don't go to gay bathhouses or march on Pride Day. But they spend their hard earned money on Aleister Crowley and they masturbate to his rituals. Hell, they even celebrate Mass with his poetry and honor him as a Saint! It's all in the name of freedom and art. Crowley can still lure them in. Nice job, Aleister. There is no law beyond do what thou wilt.

