

## Western Underground ¶

About the English magician, occultist, and novelist Aleister Crowley ¶

and the traces he left in the history of literature ¶



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It seems difficult, if not impossible, to me to discern the actual figure of Aleister Crowley behind his mystification by his followers and the slander of his adversaries. The roughly 20 biographies that have appeared over the past five decades, most of them 500 pages or more in length, tend to reinforce the legends surrounding this occultist. ¶



Crowley was, in many respects, an exceptional person. He bestowed upon himself the epithet the Great Beast 666 in reference to the 'Book of Revelation', and founded the religion of Thelema, which was to replace the rule of Christianity to enable all people to materialise their inner desires freely. ¶



In a pioneering renewal of the Western occult movements, the teachings of Thelema synthesised various magical, mystical, spiritual, and philosophical ideas and practices from both the Orient and the Occident. His tireless work as a prophet of Thelema made Crowley a leading figure in 20th century occultism. Crowley's writings also influenced most contemporary magico-esoteric and neo-pagan movements. ¶



For Crowley, it was clear: the future depends on society's success in undergoing a fundamental change of attitude. He fought for more than just a spiritual change, but it was naturally in vain. The Great Beast 666 died a heroin addict, primarily abandoned and impoverished, in a cheap