

Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A) LIFE AND WORK OF JOHN CROWLEY

John Crowley was born in Presque Isle Maine on December 1, 1942. His father was an officer in the US Army Air Corps. He grew up in Vermont, north-eastern Kentucky and educated in Indiana, where he went to high school and college. He moved to New York City after college to make movies, and did find work in documentary films, an occupation he still pursues. He is an American author of fantasy, science fiction and mainstream fiction. He published his first novel - *The Deep* in 1975 and his 11th volume of fiction - *Four Freedoms* in 2009. He is best known as the author of *Little, Big* (1981), which received the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel and has been called "a neglected masterpiece" by Harold Bloom (Bloom, Harold 2003). Since 1993 he is teaching 'creative writing' at Yale University (faculty profile, Yale University, England. 2012). He has also taught at the 'Clarion West Writers' Workshop held annually in Seattle, Washington. In 1992, he received the Award in Literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

His writings are much influenced by his old and original mentor Nabokov. In an Interview in 2009, when he was asked about his ideas of fantasy and real world, he said that, 'My real Mentor Nabokov said that the great novels of the realist tradition, like War and Peace and Madame Bovary, are actually great fairy tales. "Genre" and "realistic" are not opposites, exactly, though they stand at right angles to one another. I have written novels labelled genre, and they follow genre rules; none of my books, so labelled or not, reflect the world as in a mirror – except the one that Alice passed through. I don't use fiction to present any beliefs of my own about the spiritual realm (if

any). I don't believe in fairies, astrology, or alien visitations, and I think it unlikely we will ever reach other stars in person. I write fictions.'

When he was asked about the similarity between him and other writers, he replied, 'I would think readers would be able to see the genetic relation between books of mine and Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*, Chesterton's *The Man who was Thursday*, Richard Hughes's *A High Wind in Jamaica*, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*, and Lewis Carroll, *Looking -glass* more than *Wonderland*. They may not, however. But they will see other true connections I can't. (Readers and reviewers have made comparison to Thomas Mann, Robertson Davies, and Ray Bradbury, none of which strike me as relevant.) I resemble Paul Park and Tom Disch in writing books within genre that are worthy of the most perspicuous reader's attention, though rarely getting it'.

About a real reader he says that, Someone who will read every word; who will read it twice, if he liked it once; who doesn't mind (and sometimes gets) my allusions to the body of Western culture and literature; who is willing to play a game with me, and pick up my clues, and follow my thought – and who laughs at my jokes – and *knows* they're jokes. I have the suspicion that most of them live in the Indian subcontinent, but since my books haven't reached there much, I can't be sure.

He has written total 11 novels.

1. The Deep (1975)
 2. Beasts (1976)
 3. Engine Summer (1979)
 4. Little, Big (1981)
- Aegypt Series (Tetralogy)
5. The Solitudes, (first novel in the Aegypt tetralogy) (1987); revised 2007

6. Love & Sleep (second novel in the Aegypt tetralogy)(1994) revised 2008
7. Daemonomania (third novel in the Aegypt tetralogy) (2000) revised 2008
8. The Translator(2002)
9. Lord Byron's Novel: The Evening Land (2005)
10. Endless Things (fourth and final novel in the Aegypt tetralogy) (2007)
11. Four Freedoms (2009)

When he was asked about his favourite book with reason out of all his above books, he said that, 'I feel fondly about several, for different reasons. *Engine Summer* (which was the first completed, at least in one form, though the third published) for teaching me to write, and for how I learned to make a world both personal and external to me. *Little, Big* for being all that I hoped it would be, and for the certainty and delight with which it was written. *Daemonomania* for being flawed and the hardest of them all to write, and yet (in my view) struggling to shore finally and bravely.' About 'Engine, summer' he adds, 'I don't think it is at all. I think it's an exploration of storytelling. At one point Rush says that there is no more unselfish love than that of a young speaker for the old saint he will someday become – a line I took from Nabokov (!), who said there is no more pure love than the love of a young writer for the old writer he will someday be. The ambition of Truthful Speakers to become saints – to become those who speak in such a way that, through the stories they tell of *themselves*, we see *ourselves*, and see that all people are the same – is the true ambition of a writer. I don't think I understood this wholly as I wrote the book, but it seems obvious to me now.

About the influence of writing a novel, he says that, 'More than by any books I have read, I think, it was influenced by books I have imagined reading. I wanted to write a love story; a book about two people, who meet, and love, and are divided, and lose one another, but not forever. I know there are a lot of books that tell this story, in

this way. I haven't read them, but I thought of this one as being a book like those. It was also influenced by my daughters doing the theme song from *Titanic*: one singing, one playing the piano. I thought: Yes, like that.'

He has written total 22 Short fictions

1. "Antiquities" (1977)
2. "Somewhere to Elsewhere" (1978 but printed as 1977, an earlier draft of part of the first chapter and all of the second chapter of *Little, Big*)
3. "Where Spirits Gave Them Home" (1978, later revised as "Her Bounty to the Dead")
4. "The Single Excursion of Caspar Last" (1979, later incorporated into "Great Work of Time")
5. "The Reason for the Visit" (1980)
6. "The Green Child" (1981)
7. "Novelty" (1983)
8. "Snow" (1985)
9. "The Nightingale Sings at Night" (1989)
10. "Great Work of Time" (novella, originally published in *Novelty*, 1989)
11. "In Blue" (1989)
12. "Missolonghi 1824" (1990)
13. "Exogamy" (1993)
14. "Gone" (1996)
15. "Lost and Abandoned" (1997)
16. "An Earthly Mother Sits and Sings" (2000, published as an original chapbook by Dream Haven, illustrated by Charles Vess)
17. "The War Between the Objects and the Subjects" (2002)
18. "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines" (novella, 2002, in *Conjunctions: 39, The*

New Wave Fabulists, edited by Peter Straub)

19. "Little Yeses, Little Nos" (2005)
20. "Conversation Hearts" (2008; published as a chapbook by Subterranean Press)
21. "And Go Like This" (2011, in *Naked City* anthology)
22. "Glow Little Glow worm" (2012, in *Conjunctions: 59, Colloquy*)

Awards on his credit

1. 1982: *Little, Big* received the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel (Locus 2012) And the Mythopoeia Fantasy Award (Locus 2012).
2. 1990: *Great Work of Time* received the World Fantasy Award for Best Novella (Locus 2012).
3. 1992: American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award in Literature.
4. 1997: *Gone* received the Locus Award for Best Short Story (Locus 2012).
5. 1999: "La Grande oeuvre du temps", the French language edition of "Great Work of Time" (translated by Monique LeBailly), won the Grand Prix de l'Imaginaire, Nouvelle estranger (Grand Prize for translated story) (Locus 2012, Grand Prix 1999).
6. 2003: *The Translator* received the Italian *Premio Flaiano*(Locus 2012).
7. 2006: World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement (Locus 2012, World Fantasy Convention 2010).

Some of his novels are nominated for Best novels by various agencies of the publication world. The novel *Engine Summer* (1979) was nominated for the 1980 National Book Award in one-year category Science Fiction (National Book Foundation anniversary blog, 2009). It was also appeared in David Pringle's *Science Fiction: The 100 Best Novels*. The *Little, Big* published in 1981, covered in Pringle's sequel, *Modern Fantasy: the 100 Best Novels*. The *Aegypt* series and *Little, Big* were cited when

Crowley received the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Literature.

He is also the recipient of the Ingram Merrill Foundation grant. James Merrill—the founder of organization, greatly loved *Little, Big* (Harold Bloom 2003), and was blurbed praising Crowley on the first edition of *Love & Sleep*. His recent novels are *The Translator*, recipient of the Premio Flaiano (Italy); *Lord Byron's Novel: The Evening Land*, which contains an entire imaginary novel by the poet; and the aforementioned *Four Freedoms*, about workers at an Oklahoma defence plant during World War II. A novella, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, appeared in 2002. A museum-quality 25th anniversary edition of *Little, Big*, featuring the art of Peter Milton and a critical introduction by Harold Bloom, is in preparation for late 2012.

Crowley's short fiction is collected in three volumes: *Novelty* (containing the World Fantasy Award-winning novella *Great Work of Time*), *Antiquities*, and *Novelties & Souvenirs*, an omnibus volume containing nearly all his short fiction through its publication in 2004. A collection of essays and reviews entitled *In Other Words* was published in early 2007.

Collections

1. *Novelty* Bantam (1989); collects "The Nightingale Sings At Night", "Great Work of Time", "In Blue" and the previously published "Novelty".
2. *Antiquities: Seven Stories*, Incunabula (1993); includes all of his stories to that point which were not included in *Novelty*
3. *Novelties and Souvenirs: Collected Short Fiction*, Perennial (2004); collects all of his short fiction up to that point, including "Great Work of Time", except "The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines".

Omnibuses

1. *Beasts/Engine Summer/Little Big*, QPBC (1991)
2. *Three Novels by John Crowley* (1994) later published as *Otherwise: Three Novels by John Crowley*. It includes *The Deep*, *Beasts*, *Engine Summer* (2002).

Screenplays

1. *The World of Tomorrow* (1984)
2. *Fit: Episodes in the History of the Body* (1990, with Laurie Block)

Non-fiction book

1. *In Other Words*, (2007)

Audio books

1. *Aegypt*, Blackstone Audio books (2007; unabridged reading of *The Solitudes* by the author.)
2. *Little, Big*, Blackstone Audio books (2011; unabridged reading by the author.)

Critical work on his novels

Snake's-Hands: The Fiction of John Crowley, edited by Alice K. Turner and Michael Andre-Driussi, Cosmos (Canton, OH), 2003.

In 1989 Crowley and his wife Laurie Block founded 'Straight Ahead Pictures' to produce media (film, video, radio and internet) on American history and culture. Crowley has written scripts for short films and documentaries, many historical documentaries for public television; his work has received numerous awards and has been shown at the New York Film Festival, the Berlin Film Festival, and many others. His scripts include *The World of Tomorrow* (on the 1939 World's Fair), *No Place to Hide* (on the bomb shelter obsession), *The Hindenburg* (for HBO), and *FIT: Episodes in the History of the Body* (faculty profile, Yale University, England. 2012).

Crowley's correspondence with literary critic Harold Bloom, and their mutual appreciation, led in 1993 to Crowley taking up a post at Yale University, where he teaches courses in Utopian fiction, fiction writing, and screenplay writing. Bloom claimed on Contentville.com that *Little, Big* ranks among the five best novels by a living writer, and included *Little, Big, Aegypt(The Solitudes)*, and *Love & Sleep* in his canon of literature (in the appendix to *The Western Canon*, 1994). In his Preface to *Snake's-Hands*, Bloom identifies Crowley as his "favourite contemporary writer", and the Aegypt series as his "favourite romance...after *Little, Big*".

When he was asked about his lifestyle and writing mania, he replied, 'Readers, even those who aren't necessarily going to read or even think of reading my book, would still like to know how I go about it -- mildly curious anyway -- as I would be... Well let's see: I write when and where I can, and have almost no requirements. I write in libraries and on trains (but not planes.) I don't mind noise and sort of like a burble of voices; I used to write in coffee shops, when I lived near coffee shops. I can't write at night, unless I'm panting down the home stretch. When my daughters were young and took up every loose moment, I would get up at 4:30 in the morning and write till they woke up. I used to write my books with a fountain pen, because I couldn't type; I could only bear to type one final draft, and it took me forever. Now I write less with the pen, more with the laptop, an old DOS word-processor; but still I go almost as fast with the pen, and have more time for thought between words. For a couple of summers I worked in a beautiful stone cabin on top of a high hill under a huge Apollonian oak; it once was Archibald McLeish's hideaway. Now I work in a storefront office on Main Street and get just as much done.'

About his native place New York City he says that, 'New York: imaginary city with real people in it. Since I moved out 25 years ago and now visit less and less often

I'm afraid my picture of it would lack verisimilitude, but maybe the city does too, and no one would mind. When I spent some time there in the late nineties (so long ago!) working on a film project, I was astonished by how glamorous and rich and replete and splendid it was, like the 20s, or the 50s, and of course conscious that it was "doing" the 20s or the 50s. Grand Central, which appeared in a book of nine years ago in its shabby decline. Whole neighbourhoods that had been devoted to dreary wholesaling the last time I'd passed through them had become crowded scenes of high life, huge restaurants with smart names and great graphics, upscale stores covering acres. Amazing and moving. I'm a little afraid to go back now, and see what became of it all.'

B) SIGNIFICANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF PRESENT STUDY

The present research work entitled "FANTASY IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF JOHN CROWLEY" deals with the aspect of fantasy in John Crowley's three novels *The Deep, Beasts and Engine summer*. The study of these novels help to understand complicated fantastical adventures featuring brave heroes, heroines, androids, Beasts and secret arcane realms. Fantasy in these novels is social literary phenomenal.

The primary objective achieves by the present study is the study of nature of the fantasy fiction of *John Crowley*. There are different forms of fantasy included in studied novels. The study has unfolds the viewpoint of *John Crowley* and the nature of fantasy. However the concept of fantasy and fantasy in the select novels of *John Crowley* are discusses in separate chapters.

C) SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

John Crowley has been writing since 1975. There are many written documents to his credit which includes about eleven novels, twenty two short fictions, three collections, two screenplays, one non-fiction book, some documentaries and reviews and articles. He is prolific writer with variety in themes so it was not possible to analyse

each and every novel and other writings as that might have widened the scope of the study of present research work. Therefore the novels -‘*The Deep*’ (1975), ‘*Beasts*’ (1976) and ‘*Engine Summer*’ (1979) have been taken in to consideration for present study.

D) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the studies is as follows.

- To study life and work of John Crowley.
- To study the concept of fantasy.
- To analyse the select novels of John Crowley in the light of fantasy.

E) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the synopsis research methodology used for present study is the close reading of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are three novels of John Crowley-‘*The Deep*’ (1975), ‘*Beasts*’ (1976) and ‘*Engine Summer*’ (1979). Omnibus copy entitled ‘*Otherwise: Three Novels by John Crowley.*’ published in 2002 is referred as a primary source. It includes *The Deep*, *Beasts*, *Engine Summer* these were read to understand the fantasy. Further secondary sources were collected which mainly includes critical book-*Snake’s-Hands: The Fiction of John Crowley*, edited by Alice K. Turner and Michael Andre-Driussi, published by Cosmos Books of Wildside press (Canton, OH), in 2003. Use of internet for secondary sources is also the major contribution in the study and preparation of present research work. Analytical and interpretive methods are used for the present study.

F) HYPOTHESIS

John Crowley is a prolific American writer. He is a writer of fantasy. His all novels seem to be fantasy dominant. By the through reading of selected novels *The Deep*, *Beasts* and *Engine Summer* the researcher has understood John Crowley’s ideas

of fantasy. His first novel *The Deep* shows 'Heroic fantasy'. The hero of this novel, Visitor is an android man with supernatural powers who works for the society to establish peace and solves the battle for crown. *Beasts* is a 'Science fantasy' novel with two genetically engineered animals Lion headed man, Painter-a Leo and Fox headed man, Reynard-a fox. They fight for their existence and freedom. Third novel *Engine Summer* is a story of a hero namely Rush that speaks, who is a truthful speaker. He lives in a society which is full of truthful speakers.

References

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3. *Beasts* (1976)
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5. *Daemonomania* (third novel in the *Aegypt* tetralogy), (2000)
6. *Endless Things* (fourth and final novel in the *Aegypt* tetralogy), (2007) -- Locus Award nominee, 2008
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14. *Lord Byron's Novel: The Evening Land*, William Morrow (2005)
15. *Love & Sleep* (second novel in the *Aegypt* tetralogy), (1994) -- WFA nominee, 1995
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