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## Ordo Templi Orientis: clarifications, criticisms, and corrections from a Minerval



MONDAY 10 PM - 11 PM ET/7 - 8 PM PT

### About Madison Ruppert



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A young Aleister Crowley

Full disclosure: I am a Minerval (a “welcomed guest”, not a full initiate) in the OTO who is ever glad to discuss Crowley beyond the bounds of conspiracy theory (not to deny his flaws and failings) in order to help you and others to better understand Thelema. Although “Fouly Crowley” may perhaps be a Brother, I feel his approach does a disservice in the promulgation of the Law, and I welcome to opportunity to set that right. So thank you for responding cordially, and inviting a respectable discussion.

“Very good points. The fact that Aleister Crowley is associated with the modern NWO (fallacious though it may be) is undeniable. Why do you think it has been associated so if it is completely unrelated.”

There are a lot of reasons. First off, his Masonic credentials, which freak a lot of people out; however, they were never “official” in that they have never been

recognized by the Grand Lodge of England (GLE).

Two unnamed Golden Dawn colleagues pointed him to one Don Jesus Medina, a Scottish Rite freemason in Mexico (whose body the Grand Lodge of England refers to as “irregular” and therefore unrecognized). Medina was so impressed by Crowley’s command of the Holy Qabalah that he saw fit to acquire special powers (the source of which I don’t know) and initiate him to the highest degree he was able; this is how Crowley attained his Scottish Rite 33° (unrecognized by GLE because conferred by an “irregular” body). He joined a French lodge in 1904 after being refused recognition by a regular body based on a difference in the grip (the “handshake” of his degree); he seems to have believed that lodge to be regular, as its Secretary (I believe) held official masonic credentials.

It should be made clear that Crowley was evidently unimpressed by the esoteric knowledge afforded him by his 33°, and generally felt that the symbolism of Freemasonry was muddled. Further, he claims “even our eighth degree wipes its arse with the thirty third. As you and I need toilet paper, they can give us or sell us their dirty sheep skin” (referring to the masonic apron) – and even further, that Freemasonry (especially in the U.S.) was “either vain pretence, tomfoolery, an excuse for drunken rowdiness, or a sinister association for political intrigues and commercial pirates”.

The OTO was founded by Theodor Reuss, who initiated Crowley based on his understanding of esoteric knowledge (a specific secret, which I’ve heard some conspiracy theorists – especially Christian ones – describe as ritual pedophilia, if not “Satanic Tantric sex magick”). Their goal seems to have been to combine the esoteric knowledge of the following rites (as well as other esoteric groups of lesser recognition) into a sort of recognized “super-masonry” by obtaining charters for each:

The Gnostic Catholic Church, The Order of the Knights of the Holy Ghost, The Order of the Illuminati, The Order of the Temple, The Order of the Knights of St. John, The Order of the Knights of Malta, The Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail, The Rosicrucian Order, The Holy Order of Rose Croix of Heredom, The Order of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch, The Antient and Primitive Rite of Masonry, The Rite of Memphis, The Rite of Mizraim, The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Masonry, The Swedenborgian

Rite of Masonry, The Order of the Martinists, The Order of the Sat Bhai, The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, and The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. (This list available at <http://oto-usa.org/history.html>)

Crowley would later remove the vast majority of masonic symbolism from OTO rituals after being denied again by the GLE. You don't hear a lot of conspiracy theorists mention that, only that he was "the granddaddy of all masonic evil" or whatever (pfft).

Secondly, Crowley was openly bisexual (instant no-no for a great deal of religious types); he was also an avid drug experimenter and addicted to various drugs at various points in his life (notably cocaine and heroin), which is frankly overblown. Heroin was a legal pharmaceutical at that time, prescribed by his doctor to treat his severe asthma; cocaine was also legal then (it was only regulated by tax in 1917, not quite sure when it was made fully illegal).

Thirdly, he wrote an essay – perhaps his most infamous and easily his most widely misunderstood – entitled "Of the Bloody Sacrifice: and Matters Cognate", in which he appears to be advocating child sacrifice, claiming in a footnote "It appears from the Magical Records of Frater Perdurabo that he "made this particular sacrifice on an average about 150 times every year between 1912 e.v. and 1928 e.v. Contrast J.K.Huyman's "La-Bas", where a perverted form of Magic of an analogous order is described."

("Frater Perdurabo" was a magical name Crowley chose for the Golden Dawn; "perdurabo" is Latin for "I will endure to the end". The term "e.v." stands for Era Vulgaris, or "Common Era".)

There are two important things to remember here.

One: this was an essay about sex magick techniques, written during a time in which literature dealing with sex could get the author arrested (in fact, Crowley's sex magick writings were burned in customs at least once); oddly, writing about something as grim or grisly as murder had no such repercussions (how little our perception of obscenity has changed!). In that light, he opted to change the words "semen", "ecstasy", and "ejaculation" to "blood", "death", and "kill".

Two: common in esoteric literature is that a different meaning can be perceived by an initiate, whereas the uninitiated will miss that meaning entirely; and the essay was meant for his disciples. Of especial note is the last line in the essay, which reads "You are also likely to get into trouble over this chapter unless you truly comprehend its meaning" (this is verbatim). I'd wager that few people are literate enough to understand what Crowley means when he speaks clearly, never mind when he writes to be purposefully misunderstood to the uninitiated.

"Out of curiosity, how do you morally justify the law "do as thou wilt"? Do you really think everything you want is right?"

I don't need to morally justify it; Crowley explains the meaning of the phrase in his own writings. "It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond."

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" is NOT "do whatever you want", as so many conspiracy theorists insist. The phrase "Every man and every woman is a star", also in The Book of the Law, suggests our divine nature within the symbolic framework of a universe replete with stars orbiting in harmony; one star may not interfere with the orbit of another star without inflicting harm – or worse, creating catastrophe. This "orbit" is one's True Will, which has nothing to do with earthly desires but rather the purpose of the individual soul's choice to incarnate. It is that True Will that is referred to in "Do what thou wilt". Qabalistic meditative exercises ("pathworking", e.g. astral projection through the Tree of Life) and other magical (it is not spelled "magicKal") and mystical work are used as tools to help one deprogram from conflicting institutional brainwashing and control, which create psychological complexes that come to supersede direct communication with the soul.

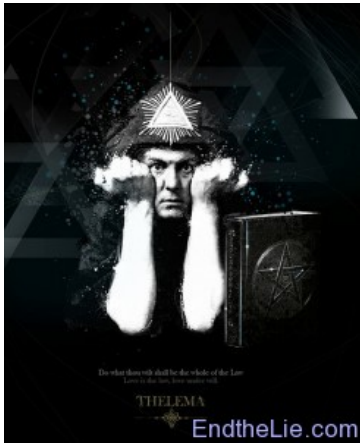
My following comment will address the dismissiveness and disregard evident in your post and prior comments. I will add that most of your misunderstanding of the concepts you address in this post could be rectified by even a cursory study of Crowley's work, provided it is honest inquiry rather than an attempt to prove what you already think.

Before I say anything else, I feel it's important to point out that you've lumped OTO in with a bunch of other groups that you disregard. Given that this article was supposed to be about the OTO, it contains surprisingly little about the organization, which is (to completely

understate) a bit of an oversight.

"In reality, OTO is just a group of disenfranchised individuals who gather together in order to perpetuate their shared delusion of "magickal" powers."

OTO is a small (but international) organization of people who seem to be generally disenfranchised by idiotic and oppressive religion and social mores... like MOST people. The difference is that they study and practice ceremonial magick, Hermetic sciences, and yoga. The personal development and insight they receive from their practices of these is not shared "delusion": it is spiritual attainment.



“All of these groups and individuals are no more dangerous than kids gathering in their parents’ basement, putting on some costumes and playing Dungeons and Dragons.”

BLATANTLY dismissive. The point you intended to make was “the OTO isn’t dangerous”, but your insulting tone gets in the way.

“The OTO and all of the Crowleyian buffoons can cast all the “black magick” they want and they will continue to be powerless (and likely mentally unstable) marginalized individuals.”

Just so I understand, what do you think “black magick” means?

Crowley has this to say about it: “To practice black magic you have to violate every principle of science, decency, and intelligence. You must be obsessed with an insane idea of the importance of the petty object of your wretched and selfish desires. I have been accused of being a ‘black magician.’ No more foolish statement was ever made about me. I despise the thing to such an extent that I can hardly believe in the existence of people so debased and idiotic as to practice it.”

“I’d welcome anyone who thinks they’re a powerful “warlock” or anything of the sort to do their worst to me. I would love to see someone in their hilarious robes thinking they are in control of some evil life force chant for hours in their chalk pentagram while I chuckle at their imbecility.”

Straw man characterization and SWEEPING generalization of magical practitioners, whose views range from completely superstitious to scientific and scholarly.

“The Church of Satanists, Luciferians, Rosicrucians and Setians along with hundreds of Covens, Grottos, and other groups across the world share one grand delusion that their organizations actually have power.”

OTO holds no such delusion, and actually acknowledges itself as a new religious movement, as it deals with the same difficulties of any emerging religious movement. It does not regard itself as a powerful organization, although it certainly regards the Law of Thelema as powerful.

“You are not influential just because you meet behind closed doors, model yourself after an Egyptian mystery school of which you know actually know nothing about while appropriating occult symbology and “magickal” rituals.”

How does one appropriate occult symbology? Any symbol can become occult by attaching interpretations to it. OTO does not model itself after “Egyptian mystery schools”. It is the first esoteric fraternity to accept and disseminate the Law of Thelema, which was received by Crowley in 1904.

“Just because a group seems secretive and mysterious, one should not assume that the given group is at all powerful.”

Agreed, but neither should one assume that a given group embraces or accepts labels applied from external sources.

“Throughout the ages there have always been those poor mislead fools who believe that a certain star aligned with a certain planet effects one’s brain”

Jim Witt, the Weather Wiz, achieves 85% accuracy in weather predictions (such that he can produce calendars listing expected weather patterns) by including the sun and planets of our solar system. To say the forces of “heavenly bodies” have no effect on us is like saying the Sun has no effect on our planet. I’m not saying I agree with everything astrologers say, but you’re basically ruling out something NOBODY understands as if you’re an expert on the matter. The truth is that a lot of new-agers have done to astrology what was done to Howard Rourke’s designs in Ayn Rand’s The Fountainhead – the ones he blows up. (Please don’t take this to mean I endorse Rand or Objectivism – I don’t.)

“or that saying gibberish phrases will somehow manifest something in the real world.”

E=MC2 is same kind of “gibberish”. “Magical Formulae” similarly express laws of nature, and are the basis upon which such “gibberish phrases” are created.

“These individuals are usually those who, in psychological terms, operate with an “external locus of control”. This means that they fallaciously attribute all causative factors to originate outside of themselves, allowing them to shift blame and never assume responsibility for their actions.”

This is another generalization. Nietzsche is a recognized saint in the Gnostic Catholic Church (he was one of Crowley’s influences); existentialist philosophy calls us to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions. Also, the doctrine of the microcosm (the body) and macrocosm (the universe) essentially states that they mirror each other. Therefore, what change we experience

internally will be reflected in our experience of the outside world.

Paraphrasing a very instructive quote I read once on adepthood (specifically, yogis): “The yogi understands that the body is a mirror of the universe, and that therefore control over oneself equates to control over the universe”.

“This is an extremely childish way to live”

As is dismissing what you disagree with on superficial bases, no?

“More people blame someone else for their problems, be it the government, their parents, the “system”, school, their boss, etc. than ever before. Why? Because it is easy.”

OTO recognizes that institutions have generally defined themselves (by action) as the primary unit of society (rather than the individual), which places such institutions in the oppressive patriarchal paradigm. Such institutions insist that they know what is better for us than we do, and thereby marginalize us. I’m sure you can think of a billion examples of your own.

“However, these individuals who believe they can manifest their will, use “magick” to their advantage, or twist events to better suit them think they are operating with an internal locus of control. They think that they are somehow exerting their individual power over the events in their lives.”

Crowley said “every willed action is a magical action”, and defined “magick” as “the Science and Art of causing change in conformity with Will”, laying it out in a set of postulates and theorems that are irrelevant to this statement, which is a great oversimplification with no bearing on the use of magick as a means of spiritual attainment.

“This is especially relevant to Satanists and Luciferians who believe that the individual is the ultimate power. Sorry to break it to all of you sorcerers and warlocks out there, your magical chants and symbols won’t save you from a gigantic meteor strike, a stray bullet, or an unfortunate car crash.”

Find one OTO initiate who thinks otherwise!

“You are no more in control of your life than anyone else, in fact you are probably less in control as you go around falsely attributing things in your life to meaningless phrases uttered in front of a candle bought from the local store that profits off such idiocy.”

As it relates to the OTO, this is such a misguided statement that there is no way to address it. The phrases are not meaningless, the attributions are not false (if anything, they are interpreted for personal insight and therefore subjectively useful in one’s personal journey).

“Contrary to what most people on the internet believe, most of these secret societies are no more powerful or influential than your local seniors-only bingo club. Put simply, Aleister Crowley created a group of delusional people performing dramas written by “the beast” himself, all of which have no actual basis in Egyptian mystery schools whatsoever.”

Where did you ever read that any of Crowley’s organizations have any basis in Egyptian mystery schools? For as much as you’ve trotted this out, I’m really hoping you can offer a source for a good giggle.

“In reality, Crowley was a mentally unstable young man who thought he was endowed with magical knowledge in an experience he had at the Great Pyramids of Giza.”

This is just ASTOUNDINGLY wrong. He had a mystical experience in Cairo while on honeymoon with his new wife that led to the reception of The Book of the Law. Furthermore, he was a polymath, and surely much more brilliant than you or I; to reduce him simply to “a mentally unstable young man” is unfair and unscholarly.

“The fact of the matter is that he completely made up everything that people think is evil, powerful, or magical and used by secret societies.”

This is untrue. Theosophy preceded him, Freemasonry preceded him, and he liked neither and was uninfluential in both. Golden Dawn existed before him; and he was responsible for the fall of that Order. Qabalah existed LONG before him, as did Enochian magick (received by John Dee and Edward Kelley during the reign of Elizabeth I), and yoga; and Hermeticism is a direct precursor to Christianity. And Crowley was very well-studied in I-Ching and tarot, which also predate him.

“The Ordo Templi Orientis, Rosicrucians (AMORC) and others are nothing other than a bunch of social outcasts gathering together in order to give themselves the false impression that they matter and have control over the world around them.”

And I’m sure you understand that after extensive research, right?

Let me make this clear: the path of Adept hood is a personal spiritual journey of self-development and self-discovery that leads to the realization of one’s potential. Spellwork along the lines of thaumaturgy is akin to prayer; theurgy or any other work with “spirits” (embodiments of



psychological forces, or perhaps uniquely existent entities not manifest in the physical plane) is meant for personal insight and spiritual attainment. It has nothing to do with controlling the world around you.

“The Secret film and book are an extension of this delusion, the entire idea of the Law of Attraction and “manifestation” is based upon these occult ideas that have shown some of the most powerful people in the world to be weak-minded imbeciles.”



I feel the major failing of The Secret is that it is a horrendously commercial perversion of snippets of valid metaphysical thought. For the original source material of The Secret (which was simply lifted and profanely repackaged), and manifestation, I recommend the book “The Wisdom of Florence Scovel Shinn”. It’s not my bag, but it’ll give you a much less consumer-whore interpretation of what The Secret is getting at.

“These organizations simply collect dues and continue the group delusion.”

The OTO collects dues to keep lodges running, pay for initiations (which include a feast for the initiated party), and to continue publishing Aleister Crowley’s MASSIVE body of work – which is both expensive and exhaustive.

“Here is a ritual of the Golden Dawn. If you don’t laugh at this, you take these people far too seriously.”

Golden Dawn is not OTO, and your view of esotericism is obviously as extreme as those you claim take magical fraternities as “far too seriously”, albeit in the opposite direction. There is nothing wrong with taking esotericism seriously, but seriously misinterpreting it is another thing altogether.

“Keep in mind their entire system is not based on anything relating to the Egyptian mystery schools they think they derive themselves from.”

The Golden Dawn was an attempt by a few Freemasons and Rosicrucians to consolidate a broad swath of esoteric knowledge under one body, largely rooted in the Holy Qabalah (which is, obviously, not Egyptian).

“They are just repeating the insane ramblings of Crowley thinking they are actually doing something other than wearing silly masks and robes while waving around wands and chanting meaningless phrases.”

SIGH. Golden Dawn existed before Crowley. It was founded by Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, Dr. William Wynn Westcott, and William Robert Woodman. They do not accept or disseminate the Law of Thelema or Crowley’s work.

“A former high-level OTO member writes, ” ... Islamist fanatics have had far more influence on world events than the OTO has had in all of its history since McMurtry’s activation of his emergency powers. It is not competitive in either the world of ideas or the world of practical activities.””

Thelemic thought is actually startlingly relevant to the world of ideas, including a notable section of the population (at least of the United States) – and this is not least evidenced by the popularity of Ron Paul’s political platform, up to and including anti-abortion (it may surprise you to learn that Crowley found abortion to be abhorrent – as did early feminists).

“Look at these fearsome warlocks!”

“Warlock” means “oath-breaker”. This is an especially inappropriate label for higher initiates. Incorrectly using jargon you don’t understand does not help your credibility.

“If you do, I recommend you do a tiny bit of research, visit the local website for your closest OTO group and see for yourself.”

You are apparently saying, “If OTO websites disagree with the assertions of conspiracy theorists, they are full of shit”. What OTO believes, supports, and disseminates is a completely separate matter from the accusations made against them by detractors, and it is intellectually dishonest (but probably common and unintentional) to muddle these two issues.

“I didn’t even get into their sordid sexual rituals in this article. I will have to do that in the future.”

You don't learn those techniques until the higher degrees, and therefore your insistence the these sexual rituals are "sordid" is questionable. Source?

"I was considering infiltrating the OTO to be able to write a much more detailed and revealing account of their activities but I could not bring myself to shell out money to these inutile persons in exchange for their "secret knowledge" and whatnot."

I went to my first Gnostic Mass having read some Crowley but knowing little to nothing about the OTO, and after further inquiry and study I came to realize that it encompasses my spiritual and political beliefs in totality – and without alteration. Frankly you have done so much to mischaracterize the OTO and its members that even if you could stomach the infiltration process, your experience would be fruitless as you apparently have no interest whatever in figuring out what Crowley, the OTO, and Thelema are actually about.

Based on what you've expressed here, I'd guess you wouldn't make it past the good report requirement for even Minerval initiation. Infiltration and revealing secrets could potentially do harm to your sponsors if you did make it through, as the actions of the sponsored party reflects on the sponsor, and can even get them kicked out, so you would actually be doing harm to those you write off as disenfranchised and delusional, which is flatly unethical and even cruel.

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### 9 Responses to *Ordo Templi Orientis: clarifications, criticisms, and corrections from a Minerval*



**a**

June 2, 2011 at 9:50 PM

As the author of this commentary, I'd like to thank M. Ruppert for being open to discussion despite his obvious dislike for esoteric tomfoolery. 😊

I welcome any corrections, and in no way claim to be an authority, however widely read.



**M. Ruppert**

**Twitter: [endtheliedotcom](#)**

June 2, 2011 at 10:43 PM

Don't thank me, I thank you for putting forth your ideas in a rational and intelligent format for us to read. I am open to every discussion, always.

I think restricting your free speech is akin to me coming to your house and cutting out your tongue so you can't talk. While the latter would be a little more extreme, I think controlling anyone's speech is nothing short of criminal.

I'm far from an authority as well, I am always learning. Anyone who claims to be the ultimate authority on any subject is either a narcissist, deluded, or just plain dumb in my opinion.



**Foully Crowley**

June 3, 2011 at 12:53 AM

Its nice you have the patience to respond like this, I don't about your comment, "I feel his (Foully Crowley's) approach does a disservice in the promulgation of the Law." Wait until you've been around for a while.

-FC