



Order of Nine Angles

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Introduction

The Order of Nine Angles (ONA) is a secret religious movement that originated in Britain in the 1970s and combines elements of occultism, Satanism, and mysticism in its beliefs and practices. In the late 1990s, it gained notoriety when it became associated with neo-Nazi violence and then, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, with militant Islamism. The ONA's unusual blend of Satanism, mysticism, and purported neo-Nazi sympathies has attracted growing academic and political interest, including the anti-racist anti-fascist campaigning group HOPE not hate's campaign in early 2020 for the UK government to proscribe it.

Based on recent academic scholarship, the ONA can be understood as a contemporary religious movement linked to the emergence of modern Satanism in the second half of the twentieth century. As will be explained below, the ONA's mystical understanding of Satanism contains strong elements of apocalypticism (through its belief in the impending, cataclysmic rise of a new, superhuman civilization) and millenarianism (by placing cycles of civilizational progress and decay within specific timeframes, or Aeons). In broad terms, the ONA's members believe that the superiority of Western civilization in this Aeon has been weakened by Magian (its term for Jewish) and Nazarene (its term for Christian) forces. Overcoming this Magian and Nazarene interference will require the ONA's adepts to engage in a combination of 'magick' (as the ONA styles it) and political action. This combination of magickal and direct action will then open the nexion (channel) between the 'causal' realm (this world, where the laws of physics and of cause and effect apply) and the 'acausal' realm (where dark forces reside). It will then be possible for humankind to evolve into a superior civilization that will usher in a Galactic Imperium in which this new species of superhumans will start 'seeding [themselves] among the stars' (Chloe 352, various dates, 24).

Historical Origins and Development Over Time

The ONA emerged in the 1970s when its founder, Anton Long (b. 1950?), merged Camlad, an underground Pagan tradition, with the Noctulians and Long's own Temple of the Sun. While little is known about these three movements, they probably shared elements shaped by the nineteenth-century Western occult revival. Most relevant to the subsequent development of the ONA is the occult revival's distinction

between the Left Hand Path, commonly associated with 'evil' or 'black' magic, and the 'good' or 'white' magic of the Right Hand Path (Senholt 2009, 8–9). The ONA's three precursor movements also probably incorporated some Satanic aspects. For the purposes of analysis, this article dates the emergence of the modern Satanic milieu from the founding of the Church of Satan in 1966, as suggested by scholars of modern Satanism Asbjørn Dyrendal, James R. Lewis, and Jesper A. A. Petersen (2016, 3).

Three phases can be discerned in the development of the ONA, beginning with the publication of its foundational texts in the 1970s, which were intended to appeal to a broad range of followers (Monette 2015, 95). The Satanic elements were not as pronounced during this stage and the ONA grew rapidly among mystical and occult circles. During the 1990s and the early 2000s, the ONA was not prominent as a movement as it focused on refining its teachings and placed little emphasis on recruitment. During this period, it was even thought that it might be defunct. Starting from 2008, however, the ONA began having a more active presence on social media, promoting itself on YouTube, Facebook, and other online discussion forums. According to the ONA's own manuscripts, its 'esoteric philosophy' was primarily developed by Long in his writings between 1984 and 2011, when he retired as 'extant Magus' (Nexion 2018, 11, 60).

The ONA has made its publications and materials easily available on the Internet and its manuscripts have been adopted and appropriated freely by offshoots around the world, including the Tempel ov Blood in the United States and the Temple of THEM in Australia.

Global Spread

While originating in the United Kingdom, the ONA now boasts nexions (cells) or offshoots in Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, and the United States (Monette 2015, 95). Its original cell, known as Nexion Zero, is in Shropshire, England, and the majority of its traditional nexions are in the British Isles, Ireland, or Germany.

The 1990s saw many of these groups becoming increasingly active in their contributions to each other's magazines and discussion groups (Senholt 2009, 36). The ONA sees these offspring groups as 'tribes', each with their own interests, personalities, and ways of doing things, but each also connected to the traditional ONA family (Senholt 2009, 37). The conception of a tribal network within the ONA might have been Eurocentric initially, but the movement now includes the spiritual vocabulary of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, perhaps with a view to expanding its coverage beyond the 'regular' underground subcultures of Western Europe and North America (Monette 2015, 115).

Neo-Nazism

The question of the ONA's association with neo-Nazism came to prominence after the 1999 London nail bombings in Brixton Market, Brick Lane, and the Admiral Duncan pub, which targeted the city's Black, Bengali, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) populations, killing three and injuring 129 in total. The culprit, David Copeland, was a neo-Nazi militant who was allegedly inspired by the *Practical Guide to Aryan Revolution*, a 1997 pamphlet written by David Myatt (b. 1950?), founder of the neo-Nazi

National Socialist Movement (Senholt 2009, 42). The year before the attacks, the left-wing magazine *Searchlight* published an article on the ONA claiming that Anton Long was David Myatt's pseudonym (Senholt 2009, 18). After the attacks, Myatt was arrested but then acquitted of the charges of conspiracy to murder and incitement to racial hatred. Myatt then pursued the study of Islam and is believed to have converted to a militant interpretation of the religion soon after this (Senholt 2009, 44).

Aside from this speculation about the true identities of Anton Long and David Myatt, positive references about neo-Nazism can be found within the ONA's own manuscripts (Sauvage 2013, 326, 330). This flirtation with neo-Nazism is controversial within mainstream Satanic circles, since the majority of Satanists report being opposed to Nazism (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 173). At the same time, many Satanists have a generally favourable view of the ONA, especially those who lean politically to the right (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 194-95).

In March 2020, the ONA experienced a resurgence in notoriety when HOPE not hate, an anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigning group, called for it to be proscribed by the UK Home Office. The campaign alleged that the ONA's supposed blend of Satanism and neo-Nazi ideology was radicalizing a new generation of far-right activists into violence and terrorism (Lawrence, Hermansson, and Lowles 2020, 37). HOPE not hate singled out the ONA as uniquely dangerous within the wider network of White supremacist and neo-Nazi groups within the United Kingdom.

While the ONA has repeatedly made favourable references to 'National Socialism' in its manuscripts, there is no conclusive evidence of that ideology's influence in neo-Nazi circles. Neither is there evidence that the ONA is significantly recruiting members from neo-Nazi ranks. Rather, the ONA shares much in common with other groups within the 'Satanic milieu' (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 47), many of which eagerly flaunt transgressive beliefs and practices for shock value. Pride, nonconformity, antagonism towards law and order, and rebellion against many social and sexual mores are cherished values within the ONA as much as they are within other movements associated with modern Satanism.

Anton Long

Despite the ONA eschewing a leadership structure, its growth and philosophical direction have clearly been driven by Anton Long. While Long's identity remains a mystery, he does reveal some details in his biographical notes (Monette 2015, 94). We know that he was born a British citizen who, as a youth, travelled to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Upon returning to England, Long apparently studied classical languages (including Greek and Latin) and studied the occult and the paranormal. Long's scholarly claims and reputation partly contribute to the ONA's elitist appeal for some adepts.

Even though Long announced his retreat from the public eye in 2012, recent activity on ONA sites suggests that he remains active behind the scenes. It is equally possible that 'Anton Long' has served as a mask for several individuals in the past decade (Monette 2015, 100).

The ONA continues to play up this ambiguity in its more recent publications, especially *A Modern Mysterium: The Enigma of Myatt and the O9A* (Nexion 2018). This manuscript discusses Long's legacy through various essays, some arguing that Long and Myatt are the same person but others maintaining

that they are not. These essays are attributed to several authors, including 'June Boyle', 'R. Parker', 'Rachael Stirling', and 'Morena Kapiris' (Nexion 2018, 7, 14, 18, 45). Part of the ONA's construction of its own mystique is therefore this chimerical aspect of the identity of Anton Long (and David Myatt).

The ONA's Beliefs

The ONA's blend of Satanism, neo-Nazism, and elements of Paganism or Western Esotericism is unique, but the selective combining of seemingly contradictory elements is not unprecedented among religions. Rather, the world's largest religious traditions have probably remained durable because they, too, benefited from this 'playing with code' over centuries and even millennia (Hervieu-Leger 1998, 217). What many religious movements share now—whether they are older or newer—is a trend towards asserting their right to engage in this sort of blending. Furthermore, while this religious bricolage can be highly selective, it is rarely haphazard.

It has been argued, for instance, that modern Satanism's bricolage of Western occulture extends to the values that it espouses—pride, self-reliance, nonconformity (or 'rugged individualism'), transgression, elitism, and vigilantism (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 8). In this sense, while modern Satanism differs greatly in some ways from New Age beliefs, it too can be seen as a variety of 'self-religion' (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 4). In other words, Satanism and New Age systems share the perception that dominant societal values are repressive; thus, they seek individual self-realization through practices that have been untethered from traditional institutional control.

Within the Left Hand Path, the ONA and the Church of Satan represent two different strands of Satanic beliefs. The Church of Satan's beliefs are atheistic or 'rational' in that they take Satan to be purely symbolic and practise magic as a form of psychodrama (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 48). The ONA is theistic, believing in the actual existence of Satan and the Dark Gods, and its members deem magick to directly influence human history (Sauvage 2013, 343).

The ONA's brand of theism is highly esoteric. For example, the number seven underpins the ONA's cosmology via its focus on the 'Septenary System' (Monette 2015, 111). Among the main features of this system are a model of the cosmos is based on the Tree of Wyrd, an Anglo-Saxon equivalent of the Tree of Life in the mystical Kabbalah tradition (which the ONA rejects because of its Jewish origins). The Tree of Wyrd incorporates seven planets—the moon, Venus, Mercury, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—whose energies can be manipulated through magick. The 'Nine Angles' in the order's name could refer to these seven planets (i.e. as seven 'angles'), plus the entire system as a whole (the eighth 'angle') and the mystic as the ninth 'angle'. The nine angles could also refer to seven 'normal' alchemical stages, in addition to two processes that involve esoteric time, or it could refer to the nine emanations of the divine as recorded in ancient Sufi texts.

According to the ONA, civilizations emerge, advance, and decay in Aeons, or historical periods lasting 1,500 to 1,700 years (Sauvage 2013, 170). Civilizations achieve greatness because of a successful opening of a nexion (channel), enabling supernatural forces from the acausal realm to influence the causal realm. The ONA argues that the current Aeon should rightfully see the ascendance of Western, European civilization but that this has been disrupted by Magian and Nazarene interference (Monette 2015, 114).

Magick is therefore required to remove this obstacle to Aeon transformation, and it takes three forms (Senholt 2009, 32–33). The first, external magick, consists of ceremonial (ritual) and hermetic magick; the latter is more spontaneous and can be performed solely by individuals, and includes sex magick and emotional magick. The second, internal magick, produces altered states of consciousness that can enable the opening of the nexion between the causal and acausal worlds. The third, Aeon magick, is the most advanced and is intended to influence large numbers of people over a long period of time (i.e. an Aeon) to change humankind's evolutionary trajectory. These magickal workings will allow humanity to evolve into a superior species that can fulfil its ultimate purpose, which is, to 'spread...the present civilization beyond the confines of the Earth – out into Space' (Sauvage 2013, 328).

To help this evolutionary trajectory, the ONA encourages 'culling' to remove human 'dross' or 'scum', which is arguably the most controversial of the group's beliefs. Culling can be voluntary or involuntary (Sauvage 2013, 77–79). Voluntary sacrifice 'usually occurs every seventeen years', and it is held that the 'one chosen' becomes immortal and goes on to live in the acausal realm. This sacrifice can also be performed through a symbolic offering. Involuntary sacrifice is directed at individuals whose activities are 'detrimental to the Satanist spirit'. They can be sacrificed magickally (via the Death Ritual) or via direct sacrifice or assassination. According to the ONA's interpretation, direct killings or assassinations were a reality within historical 'Satanism' but 'are no longer undertaken' and are described in their manuals 'for historical interest' only (Sauvage 2013, 79).

The ONA's apocalypticism and millenarianism are expressed in the organization's desire to disrupt and displace this world's existing social and political order so as to establish a new order of being through supernatural influence. These are evident in the ONA's desire to fulfil what it regards as the rightful destiny of the current 'Western Aeon', which is to give birth to a superior civilization of humans (*'Homo galactica'*) that will go on to colonize outer space and to remove the obstacles to this coming 'stage of imperium'—including Nazarenes, Magians, 'Marxism/communism', 'capitalism', 'Zionism', and laws guaranteeing 'equality'—by employing magickal, political, and violent means to create the 'chaos from which a New Aeon will emerge' (Sauvage 2013, 184–85, 225, 326).

While human action is necessary to usher in the New Aeon, the ONA also emphasizes particular symbols or entities that are ultimately in charge of completing the process. These include the Vindex, analogous to the Antichrist; Baphomet, 'the archetypal dark goddess with strong parallels to the (Irish) Morrigan and (Indian) Kali' (Monette 2015, 110); and other unnamed elements in the ONA's pantheon of Dark Gods.

Prophecy, Divine Inspiration, and Revelation

The ONA's combination of rugged individualism, mysticism, and apocalypticism complicates the concepts of prophecy, divine inspiration, and revelation. On one hand, Anton Long claims that he has some experience of the acausal realm but stops short of giving too much detail or suggesting that he is a superhuman agent himself. Also, while many ONA manuscripts pay homage to Long (and many of them are probably self-authored), he inverts the classic stereotype of the charismatic cult leader by espousing a 'do as I do, not as I say' ethos, for example:

No one individual—not even myself—has some sort of ‘final authority’ in or over the individuals who belong to or who associate with the ONA, or who use the methodology of the ONA. (Chloe 352, various dates, 23)

Having said that, the ONA does hold that individuals can become nexions of the acausal realm through *pathei mathos* (the Greek for ‘learning through adversity’). *Pathei mathos* is part of the ONA’s philosophy of initiation, which includes the adoption of ‘insight roles’ (akin to a covert internship) in which adepts are pushed out of their comfort zones for an extended period—for example, by joining violent criminal or underground organizations, including neo-Nazi or militant Islamist groups, or, as recommended in some ONA writings, by adopting Buddhist monasticism (Monette 2015, 103–4).

Sources and Evidence Available About the ONA

While the ONA remains coy about the identities of Anton Long and its other senior members, it has produced thousands of pages of fiction, theory, and practical guides for its initiates (Monette 2015, 111). The ONA’s ambivalence about copyright means that the great majority of these texts are freely available online. It is extremely difficult, however, to verify the contents of these manuscripts, as can be seen in the debates about the identities of Anton Long and David Myatt. This manipulation and distortion of fact is not unique to the ONA—a hallmark of modern Satanism is the blurring of boundaries between fact, fiction, and satire (Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen 2016, 223).

There are no book-length academic monographs about the ONA, but a few insightful standalone book chapters and sections in books are worth referring to. The seminal work that analyses the origins, beliefs, and practices of the ONA remains Jacob Senholt’s 2009 study, which has been referred to in subsequent writings about the movement by Massimo Introvigne (2016, 357–64) and Connell Monette (2015, 93–120). Senholt, in turn, critically builds upon the work of Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (2002, 216–26), which carries substantive analyses of the ONA in its later sections.

These works employ different but equally useful frameworks to analyse the ONA. Goodrick-Clarke situates the ONA within the milieu of ‘Aryan cults’ and ‘esoteric Nazism’, and Senholt builds upon this by investigating the unusual convergence of neo-Nazism, Satanism, and militant Islamism in the ONA’s belief system. Monette (2015, 93) takes a slightly different approach, analysing the ONA as an ‘antimonian’ mystical order, and Introvigne provides a brief summary of the ONA within the wider landscape of contemporary Satanism. It is also worth noting the helpful observational asides about the ONA by Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen (2016), which they repeat in relation to the wider Satanic milieu, albeit by focusing on the Church of Satan. However, these studies do not systematically analyse the apocalyptic or millenarian components of the ONA’s belief system.

The paucity of literature on the ONA is thus compensated by the quality of these works. Even the ONA engages critically with many of these works in its own manuscripts, dismissing most of them but reserving special praise for Senholt (Nexion 2018, 34). The HOPE not hate report mentioned in the opening of this article, *State of Hate 2020: Far Right Terror Goes Global*, appears to rely on a brief, selective reading of Senholt’s work and does not cite the more recent publications by Monette, Introvigne, or Dyrendal, Lewis,

and Petersen (Lawrence et al. 2020, 37).

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