



The Order of Nine Angles in Contemporary Academic Discourse

A Concise Overview

Until 2009 the treatment, by established academics and post-graduate students, of the modern satanist group the Order of Nine Angles (O9A) was cursory at best and sometimes bordering on the ill-informed. For example, in the 2006 *Encyclopedic Sourcebook of Satanism* edited by James R. Lewis and Jesper Petersen, the Church of Satan, described as 'the founding form' of modern satanism is - together with the Temple of Set - given extensive coverage, with the O9A relegated to a few paragraphs - "the Order of the Nine Angles (ONA) is a secretive British Satanist group that acquired notoriety by openly advocating culling, namely human sacrifice..." - and dismissed as being merely the 'intended most sinister form of satanism today'. Others, such as the more extensive coverage by Goodrick-Clarke in his 2002 book *Black Sun*, described and concentrated on the O9A as an exponent of 'nazi satanism', even though several 1980s O9A MSS and the 1992 *Satanic Letters of Stephen Brown* explained that the O9A regarded politics as simply an exoteric 'causal form' that might be used as part of an aeonic 'sinister dialectic'.

Thus LaVey, Aquino - and Church of Satan and the Temple of Set - were extensively written about, with their writings extensively analysed and commented upon. For example, five chapters of the 2012 book *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity* are devoted to LaVey and his writings, with it being claimed that "the undoubtedly most important and influential Satanist group is the Church of Satan" {1} even though LaVey himself stated (and it is easy to prove) that his satanism was merely "Ayan Rand with trappings," and, more importantly, even though his satanism failed to meet most of the criteria specified by the complete Oxford English Dictionary {2} in the definitions of the words Satanic and Satanism {3}, a failing which has yet to be addressed in the contemporary academic discourse about modern satanism, focusing as such discourse hitherto has done on (a) satanism as some sort of modern sub-culture (claimed as the invention of LaVey) involving a 'self-spirituality' and/or as representing a particular 'humanist psychology', and on (b) something termed 'post-satanism' where self-styled satanists are apprehended in terms of a

broader Left Hand Path (LHP) milieu itself defined in terms of the likes of Crowley and Aquino and the qabalistic-indebted Western occultism invented by the Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn and Blavatsky.

In 2009, however, the O9A was the subject of two papers read at a conference entitled *Satanism in the Modern World* held at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, with a revised and updated version of the paper by Senholt forming a chapter of the 2012 book *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity* {4}; while in 2013, the O9A was the subject of a chapter in the book *Mysticism in the 21st Century* by Professor Connell Monette of Al Akhawayn University, Morocco {5}.

The work of Senholt and Monette in particular enable a better appreciation of the Order of Nine Angles, especially in the context of satanism and modern occultism, with Senholt, for instance and importantly, stating the the O9A represent a 'sinister tradition' quite distinct from existing LHP and satanic groups, and with Monette arguing that the O9A is a fascinating blend of "pagan and sinister hermetic currents". Monette also regards the satanism of the O9A as mostly cosmetic, asserting that the O9A is actually syncretic and pagan and owes far more to older Hellenic, and non-Western esoteric, traditions that it does to the modern qabalistic-indebted Western occultism of Crowley, LaVey, and Aquino; an assertion regarding older roots, un-linked to that modern occultism, which the O9A has long claimed, and which has been the subject of some interesting and recent O9A articles {6} but which other contemporary academic discourses, mentioning the O9A, have avoided, possibly because their authors were unaware of them, were more concerned with assertions regarding the apparently 'overwhelming importance and influence' of the likes of Crowley, LaVey, Aquino, and with claiming that the O9A is merely a minor part of some submilieu of the contemporary LHP/satanic milieu established by such individuals.

Thus, welcome as the work of Senholt and Monette is in pointing out the distinctiveness of the O9A tradition, it is only a beginning. For it does not address the two things about the Order of Nine Angles which should be addressed if contemporary academic discourses regarding esotericism are to get beyond unscholarly claims regarding Crowley, LaVey, Aquino, et al, and modern occultism in general and satanism in particular.

First, and apropos the work of Monette, the ancient hermetic roots of the O9A. For Myatt's recently published translation of and commentary on the Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum {7} provides a direct link between ancient Greek Hermeticism and not only the O9A's septenary system but also its ontology of causal and acausal. As I noted in my essay *Anton Long and The Exeatic Quest*

for *Gnosis*, a lot of what Anton Long has written

"is (i) a modern restatement of the hermetic septenary *anados* - of the quest for gnosis - evident in the ancient Greek text that forms the Pymander section of the Corpus Hermeticum; (ii) a modern praxis established to achieve that gnosis; and (iii) a modern, and rational, understanding of gnosis in terms of *sans denotatum*, of causal and acausal (and not of gods or of God) and of what such a gnosis may mean, which is of a possible acausal, immortal, existence beyond the realm of the causal."

Second - and relevant to both the foregoing and to what others have written about the Order of Nine Angles - it is the esoteric philosophy of Anton Long, as outlined for instance in essays such as 'The Radical Sinister Philosophy of Anton Long: A Review of The Contemporary Secret Society Known As The Order of Nine Angles', that should, academically, be discussed, analysed, and commented upon, and not something called 'the order of nine angles'. For as the O9A have been at pains to point out, the 'order of nine angles' it is not really like other occult groups (ancient and modern) being as it is only (a) the occult philosophy of Anton Long; (b) those who use or who apply that philosophy (in whole or in part) in their own lives; and (c) those who are influenced or who have been influenced by that philosophy, in whole or in part.

That this practical, distinct, esoteric, adversarial, philosophy - with its ontology, epistemology, and theory of ethics, and its roots in a Hellenic hermeticism (and possibly in Arabic, Indic, and Persian, sources) thousands of years old - has not been mentioned, let alone discussed, analysed, and commented upon, in academic discourses is certainly indicative of how such discourse is and has been focused on assumptions regarding the 'importance of LaVey' and on a Left Hand Path defined in terms of the likes of Crowley and Aquino and a qabalistic-indebted Western occultism invented a mere century or so ago.

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{1} Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen (editors). *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012. p.6

{2} 20 volumes, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1989

{3} See Anton Long. *Toward Understanding Satanism*, dated 122 yfayen. As

Anton Long notes in that text,

"What is lacking [...] are the following standard attributes of Satanism, of the diabolical, and of the Satanic:

- (a) practising or disposed to practise evil;
- (b) actually or potentially harmful, destructive, disastrous, or pernicious; baleful;
- (c) malicious; mischievous, sly;
- (d) bad in moral character, disposition
- (e) hard, difficult, misleading, deadly, amoral."

Anton Long goes on to argue that, of all groups describing themselves as satanist, only the Order of Nine Angles correctly merits the description satanist given that it is the only one to actively promote and incite what is "actually or potentially harmful, destructive, evil, disastrous, pernicious; baleful; malicious; mischievous, sly," and given that it is "bad in moral character, disposition; hard, difficult, misleading, deadly, amoral."

Understood thus, the satanism of the O9A not only pre-dates the 'satanism' of LaVey, but is obviously adversarial and heretical in nature, with Anton Long, for example, stating in his polemical essay *ONA Style, O9A Chic*: "That we in the text *Toward Understanding Satanism* use the standard definitions of Satanism and the Satanic, as given in the complete Oxford English Dictionary, to differentiate ourselves from others who claim to represent Satanism - and who claim to be Satanic - is deliberate, although it is only to be expected that (a) only a few will understand why, and (c) many or most will regard it as confirming what they in their delusion believe in, and accept about both themselves and us."

{4} Jacob Senholt. *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition in The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012

{5} Connell Monette. *Mysticism in the 21st Century*. Sirius Academic Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1940964003

{6} Among these recent articles are (i) *The Order of Nine Angles Rite of The Nine Angles*. A Comparison with the Ceremony of Nine Angles by Aquino And A Brief Study of The Meaning of The Nine Angles (2013); (ii) *Roots and Organization of the Order of Nine Angles* (2013); (iii) *Hebdomadry - Exeatic Way of The Order of Nine Angles*.

{7} David Myatt. *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*. 2013 (ISBN 978-1491249543)
