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Occult Beliefs and the Far Right: The Case of the Order of Nine Angles

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ABSTRACT
This article investigates the esoteric beliefs of the Order of Nine Angles (ONA) as one way of making sense of its politics. By analyzing the ONA's primary texts and archival data from the Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (Inform) we propose that, based on some recurring themes in the way the ONA is presented, it can be analyzed usefully as a new religious movement (NRM) with millenarian tendencies. At the same time, the aura of elitism, cool and danger-seeking that characterizes the larger Far Right milieu influences the selective appropriation of the ONA's symbols and publications amongst violent neo-Nazis.

This article explores the connection between belief and Far Right politics by focusing on the writings of the Order of Nine Angles (ONA), a secret society that several media reports have linked to neo-Nazi violence. The starting point for this study is some of the activist campaigning that has focused on the relationship between the occult and neo-Nazism, amid increasing concerns in Western liberal democracies about the rise of Far Right violence. In these discussions, the ONA has primarily been portrayed as an exemplar of occult neo-Nazi radicalization. In April 2021, for example, ahead of the U.K. government's announcement that it was banning the Atomwaffen Division, a U.S.-based neo-Nazi group, as a terrorist organization, the anti-fascist campaigning group HOPE not hate (HnH) criticized the government for not also banning the ONA.¹

HnH's position on ONA is well established. In early March 2020, it described the ONA as an incubator of terrorism and called for it to be proscribed. In its State of Hate report that year, HnH drew links between ONA and Atomwaffen as well as other neo-Nazi groups.² As an example, the report described Ryan Fleming as a National Action activist and an important figure in ONA, running its Yorkshire nexus³ and closely linked to the Tempel ov Blood in the United States. Fleming was jailed for the sexual assault of a vulnerable young man in 2011 and in 2017 he was jailed for sexually abusing a 14-year-old girl.

This article argues that, while claims about the ONA's links with neo-Nazi groups should be taken seriously, these claims should not overlook the ONA's esoteric dimensions, especially those presented within some of the texts that have been cited as...
inspirations for neo-Nazi violence. We propose that these aspects of the ONA can be analyzed more usefully as characteristics of a new religious movement (NRM) that blends eclectic occult elements within its worldview, namely Satanism, magical practice, millenialism and an esoteric interpretation of Nazism. We suggest that this analytical approach better enables us to assess not only how “occult” beliefs and practices and “Far Right” ideology might combine, but also the extent to which such combinations might result in characteristics that cause concern.

We begin by providing a brief background of the origins of the ONA and analyze its key beliefs, recommended practices, tenets and ideology. We frame this background with the theoretical insights on religious bricolage by Danièle Hervieu-Léger. We then summarize the evolution of the ONA and map the trajectory of the ONA and its associated groups after its founding figure Anton Long’s retirement from public engagement in 2011. The final section makes the case for analyzing the ONA partly as an NRM with millennialist characteristics, drawing upon Catherine Wessinger’s work. This NRM lens can add to existing evaluations about the ONA’s propensity for violence and its connections with Far Right ideologies.

Our sources are the online, “primary source” texts produced by the ONA and groups associated with it, all accessible via public domain. From the copious texts produced by ONA authors, we have selected those that have been cited in recent media coverage about violence associated with the ONA. Taking a similar approach to Olav Hammer, we treat this restricted set of texts as case studies through a “symptomatic reading”—“a mode of interpretation that uses empirical details to highlight a broader point”.

The esoteric aspects that we are analyzing are thus based on representations that can be found within ONA texts. These texts contain hybrid genres and, as is the case with other modern esoteric “movement texts”, contain biographical and doctrinal material, exegesis, and a combination of fact and fiction. It is beyond the scope of this article to draw hard conclusions about the reception of these texts amongst ONA followers or to claim definitively that the ONA is a bona fide movement. Rather, we are using these texts as internal or emic sources, i.e. produced by the ONA’s insiders or spokespersons, to develop an external or etic analysis of some aspects of the ONA through an NRM framework.

We intend our findings to supplement rather than contradict other studies of the ONA that draw upon other aspects of its texts, or that involve interviews with its members or spokespersons. We have also relied on existing academic research and redacted data held in the archives of the Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (Inform).

Ideology, Beliefs and Practices

This section summarizes the ONA’s emergence, including the role of its founder, Anton Long, and outlines its core beliefs and practices.

Founding and Introduction

According to its own texts, the ONA emerged in the early 1970s when Anton Long merged an underground pagan tradition, Camlad, with two similar societies—the
Noctulians and Long’s own Temple of the Sun. Little is known about these three precursor groups, but they probably shared a synthesis of hermetic, pagan and Satanic elements. The ONA made use of all three elements in its early texts to appeal to a broad range of potential followers. During this early stage, the Satanic elements were not as pronounced, and up to the 1990s, the ONA grew rapidly in mystical and occult circles.

Following this, the ONA entered into a second stage of development into the dawn of the twenty-first century, which focused less on recruitment and more on refining the Order’s teachings. According to George Sieg, the ONA developed its initiation system and its brand of Satanism in “novel directions” starting from around 2003, with its affiliation with the Temple of THEM in Australia and the formation of the Tempel ov Blood as a nexion in the United States. Apart from that, this period was relatively quiet and the Order even appeared to be defunct. Around 2008, however, the Order entered a new phase, where it promoted itself much more actively on various online channels, including YouTube, Facebook, and online discussion forums. According to its texts, the ONA’s “esoteric philosophy” was developed by Anton Long between 1984 and 2011, when he retired as “extant Magus.”

In 2011, Inform contacted someone who identified as “Anton Long” who agreed to an email interview about the ONA. This individual was happy for the name of Anton Long to be associated with the email responses, but did not want to meet in person or be interviewed by telephone due a desire to engage in an “identity masquerade”. In this correspondence, Long claimed have spent his teenage years (pre-1960s) in the “Far East”, explaining:

My practical experience and study of Taoism, a Taoist based Martial Art, and the diversity of religions I encountered in the Far East, which all inspired me to ask questions, [led] me to read [Carl] Jung and thence led me to Western Alchemy and Western Occultism.

The true identity of Long has officially remained a mystery to academic researchers, journalists and members of the movement. There is enough textual evidence to suggest that Long is the *nom de guerre* of David Myatt, the founder of the British neo-Nazi National-Socialist Movement (NSM). Some of the ONA’s later texts appear to admit that “Anton Long” was Myatt’s *nom de plume*.

In 1999, NSM member David Copeland orchestrated a series of nail-bombing campaigns against ethnic and sexual minority groups in London, with his final attack on a gay pub in Soho, killing three and injuring 65 people. This incident put the spotlight on a possible connection between the ONA and violent neo-Nazism, a connection that was complicated by Myatt’s conversion to a militant version of Islam in the early twenty-first century.

According to material posted online in March 2021, David Myatt granted a recorded audio interview to Nick Lowles of HnH in 1988 in a pub in Shropshire. This interview was published by several ONA members directly in response to the HnH material calling for the ban of their organization. In this interview Myatt denied that he was Anton Long but admitted having some association with people in the ONA, primarily “over 20 years ago” (c. 1980s). He maintained that his primary involvement with the group was for “political purposes”, rather than religious—he wanted to recruit ONA members to the National Socialist cause to create a “politically revolutionary situation” and insinuated that Long was an established academic.
Other ONA texts overtly capitalize on this infamous legacy by presenting Long and David Myatt as chimerical personalities in a riposte to recent academic scholarship on the movement. For instance, A Modern Mysterium: The Enigma of Myatt and the ONA, published in 2018, discusses Long’s legacy through different essays, some arguing that Long and Myatt are the same person, others maintaining that they are not. The authors’ names might be pseudonyms of a new generation of ONA recruits or they might be Long’s fresh alter egos. The latter possibility would suggest that Long remains active, albeit via more behind-the-scenes updates to official ONA websites and publications.\(^{17}\) Alternatively, “Anton Long” could also have been a name adopted by a living individual which has morphed into a persona to which multiple people now contribute as the ONA’s aggregate “spokesperson”.

**ONA’s Bricolage of Beliefs and Practices**

According to the sociologist of religion Danièle Hervieu-Léger, blending religious beliefs and improvising them is not a recent phenomenon. This “playing with code” probably contributed to the durability of the world’s largest religious traditions across centuries and even millennia.\(^{18}\) What is distinctive now is that more people are asserting their individual right to create religious bricolage, and to attempt to win sympathizers and converts when they do so.

Based on an outsider’s or etic analysis of its texts, the ONA can be regarded as one of several exemplars of this modern expression of religious bricolage.\(^{19}\) In his 2011 correspondence with Inform, “Anton Long” explained that that the ONA does not have “a traditional hierarchy nor any dogma/theology which has to be rigidly believed in or adhered to”.\(^{20}\) A more recent quote by R. Parker,\(^{21}\) a writer associated with the movement (see Section 1.1), illustrates the blending of mysticism, Satanism and the Left Hand Path\(^{22}\) as part of the ONA’s cluster of beliefs:

> The Order of Nine Angles (O9A, ONA) is a sinisterly-numinous mystic tradition: it is not now and never was either strictly satanist or strictly Left Hand Path, but uses “satanism” and the LHP as “causal forms”; that is, as techniques/experiences/ordeals/challenges (amoral and otherwise) in a decades-long personal anados\(^{23}\) to engender in the initiate both esoteric, and exoteric, pathei mathos,\(^{24}\) and which pathei mathos is the beginning of wisdom.

The incorporation of elements of neo-Nazism into several ONA texts (and perhaps into undocumented practices and beliefs amongst its followers and spin-offs) can thus be analyzed as an example of religious bricolage. Working out the rationale for such a synthesis requires an understanding of the different dimensions through which a group tries to express and transmit its sacred identity. Hervieu-Léger\(^{25}\) suggests four “dimensions of identification” that could be useful to explore: the communal, ethical, cultural and emotional.

**The Communal Dimension**

The communal dimension refers to the social and symbolic markers that are used to identify those who belong to a particular tradition (its insiders) and those who do not (the outsiders). These markers might be expressed, for instance, as membership criteria.
The ONA complicates this line of analysis because, on one hand, its texts present itself as secretive and disdainful of the very concept of “membership”—many ONA writings castigate Satanic “posers” and “charlatans” such as the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set precisely because of their emphasis on growing the numbers of their followers or members. On the other hand, the ONA’s written materials and associated symbols are easily available online, disseminated by both curious neophytes and insiders on several social media channels. These characteristics are not entirely contradictory; the ONA sees itself as an “elitist” group, with highly demanding requirements that only the most dedicated individuals can fulfill, for example, as expressed in the following passage:

A Satanist seeks and makes real his/her fantasies and then masters the real-life situations and all those desires/feelings which give birth to those fantasies—they live them and then transcend them, creating from those experiences something beyond them: a new individual.

These demanding requirements include the completion of grueling physical ordeals. The second stage of the ONA’s Seven-Fold Way—the “Initiate”—involves the detailed study of esoteric symbols such as the “septenary system” as well as training either to run 20 miles in 2.5 h or less, or cycle 100 miles in less than 5.5 h, or walk 32 miles in less than seven hours. This combination of mystical study and physical trials is supposed to lay the groundwork for a race of superior human beings to evolve according to the “meaning and purpose of our lives”, which is to “evolve into a new, a higher, species” which will then “explore and settle other planets and star systems”.

What sets the ONA apart from other Satanic or antinomian spiritual groups is that its initiation rites include the adoption of “insight roles”. Adepts are encouraged to seek roles that radically challenge their comfort zones. For example, adepts who are left-wing or anarchist are asked to infiltrate extreme right-wing organizations, while those who enjoy sex and alcohol are encouraged to infiltrate a Buddhist religious order or join a Christian organization. From this brief example, however, it is clear that, while meant to be disruptive and subversive, insight roles are not exclusively aimed at neo-Nazism and militant Islamism. Rather, the ONA regards movements such as “National-Socialism” and “jihadism” as only superficial vehicles (or “causal forms”, in its terminology) that can effectively cause the “destruction of the old as a prelude to the emergence of a New Aeon.” Nazism, jihadism or even Buddhism are not unique tools to create the New Eon—rather, it is the “insight” that individuals gain from infiltrating these groups that will allow them to gain evolutionary superiority, which will then open the channel for the coming of a new age.

The flexibility of this approach means that specific beliefs might differ within particular ONA offshoots and can vary from place to place. At the same time, through its written texts, the ONA prides itself as a practical movement that calls for action. According to these texts, the most important learning point from insight roles is the acquisition of knowledge through adversity and experience. This is how these texts distinguish the ONA from what some of its authors dismiss as the overly theoretical or ritualistic Satanism of groups such as the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set. There appears to be tension, however, in terms of the scope and pace of change sought by the ONA—on one level, the coming of the New Aeon seems to require nothing
short of a cataclysmic revolution yet, on another level, “insight roles” can only produce a superior elite very gradually.

**The Ethical Dimension**

The ethical dimension encapsulates the values that can be discerned through the ONA's texts. While Long insisted in his Inform interview that he opposed the “deification of the individual”\(^{36}\) several ONA writings present an individualist ethos, for example: “The quest of an individual can only and ever be individual, that is, unique.”\(^{37}\)

This individualistic ethos means that ONA texts contain vehement opposition toward institutional authority, hierarchy, or social conformity. This is why ONA writings are particularly scathing of the Church of Satan and Temple of Set, which are dismissed as “fake” Left-Hand Path groups because of their institutional structures and attempts to present Satanism as an “ethical religion”. According to the ONA, this is tantamount to justifying and replicating the status quo, which is currently under the control of the “Nazarenes” and “Magians” (the ONA’s terminology for Christians and Jews or Zionists). Long has emphasized that the essence of the ONA is its dedication to “practical personal sinister experience and learning from that experience…and thus the individual must live a practical sinister life”.\(^{38}\)

This “sinister” anti-ethics stance is expressed most controversially in the ONA's endorsement of the “culling” of “opfers”, or human sacrifice, which can be voluntary or involuntary.\(^{39}\) Voluntary ofpers “are always male (and usually twenty-one years of age)” but “there are no restrictions concerning involuntary sacrifices other than the fact that they are usually in some way opponents of Satanism or the Satanic way of living.”\(^{40}\) Involuntary sacrifices can be carried out via “magickal means” (for example, in the Death Ritual), by “direct, personal sacrifice” or “by assassination”. They can be carried out by the group's members or by proxy, which involves the “Master or Mistress finding a suitably weak-willed individual and then implanting in their mind by hypnotic means a suitable suggestion”. Official ONA literature qualifies that direct sacrifice and assassination “are no longer undertaken and are given for historical interest”. Elsewhere, the ONA stresses that sacrifices can be conducted upon a “symbolic” representation of the chosen ofper, for example, “a wax figurine named after the actual ofper”.\(^{41}\) Ofpers are also never children.

Yet, the anti-ethics justification of culling as a return to “natural justice” in ONA texts suggests that this is the group's view of ethics—culling is the appropriate punishment for the “dross” of humanity, as opposed to the purportedly lenient sentences by “Magian”/“Nazarene”-corrupted courts. In one ONA essay, an example of an ofper is a “young man of weak character” who lives off social security, shows “loutish behaviour”, is “often drunk”, and breaks into the house of a veteran of the First World War and beats him up.\(^{42}\)

According to Della Campion,\(^{43}\) this elitist strategy of “natural justice” can be seen as a form of “status elevation” to demonstrate that members of the ONA are “superior to mundane people”. The “status elevation” in these culling texts involves the ONA’s deliberate projection of negative qualities upon itself, which Campion\(^{44}\) refers to as self-marginalization. The rhetorical strategy within these writings is therefore also a way for the ONA to “out-dark” other Satanists, and to present itself as the darkest and therefore most genuine expression of Satanism.
The Cultural Dimension
This dimension covers the cognitive, symbolic and practical elements of a particular religious tradition, and includes its doctrines, books or texts, practices and ritual codes, and art and esthetics. As already observed by other scholars, the ONA has a plethora of cultural materials which it has produced since its beginnings in the 1970s, including:

- Descriptions of magical rituals (including the Star Game)
- An elaborate and evolutionary concept of history and time (divided into Aeons, with a particular focus on ushering in the Galactic Imperium, in which humans will evolve into a superior species which will colonize this solar system and other star systems beyond it)
- Physically demanding initiation rites (captured in the Seven-Fold Way)
- Music (in the form of chants and the sinister tarot)
- Symbolism (notably of Baphomet, the Tree of Wyrd, and the Abyss), and
- Copious amounts of fiction and nonfiction texts.

Yet these elements are only the exoteric materials which are disseminated for public consumption through the ONAs texts. These texts imply that adept-ship also involves the transmission of oral tradition and personal guidance within its inner circle, in keeping with the ONAs elitist and individualist ethos.

The cultural elements that can be discerned from the ONAs published materials are highly eclectic and reflect a diversity of viewpoints and approaches. For example, according to Chloe 352, an “Outer Representative” of the ONA, the relationship between the Dreccian Way she espouses and earlier manifestations of the ONA could be likened to the “Dharmic Traditions”:

In a sense, we can say that ONAs Traditional Satanism corresponds with Hinduism. Both are very full and robust forms which are alive and should be allowed to live and continue to evolve on its own. And the Dreccian Way would thus correspond with Buddhism. Like Buddhism the Dreccian Way is Non-Theistic, not into magick, and more into putting the many basic concepts into living practice, and also more simply into the pursuit of experience, pathei-mathos, and Understanding.

Chloe 352s writings are examples of how ONA texts are marked by different authorial tones of voice. While she uses more “Dharmic” analogies, Long’s contributions are usually characterized by an aura of scholarly rigor, with elaborate footnotes and annotations to demonstrate the author's mastery of classical Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

The Emotional Dimension
The ONA’s emotional dimension is the most difficult to evaluate through its texts. This dimension is also paradoxical—how could the demanding, elitist, secretive and individualist ethos promoted in ONA texts encourage people to identify with it as a solid group via different nexions? According to texts produced by different ONA authors, the ONA’s secretive and demanding nature is precisely what should make its followers feel special and superior. On one level, this feeling of uniqueness is engendered by its uncompromising defense of total individual independence.
Satanism is an individualized defiance and affirmation: one of the fundamental aims of Satanism is to produce or develop proud, strong, unique, individuals of character who possess “spirit” or “elan”, and who possess insight and genuine esoteric knowledge. The aim is not to develop subservient, obedient sycophants who cannot think for themselves.

On another level, this elitism and individualism also appears to create tensions and rifts within the ONA, as can be gleaned from different texts. For example, these tensions were alluded to by Chloe 352 regarding the formation of the Dreccian Way: “As with any number of factions, there will always be rivalries and sentiments involved between Forms. And in accord with the spirit of the ONA, we say, let the competition and rivalry be, and let each faction express and live their chosen Form with dedication and fierce resolve.” The writings of the Temple of THEM also expose disagreement with the ONA which resulted in a brief dissociation between the two groups in 2009. 50

In the ONA's own texts, a lack of cohesive group feeling does not seem to pose a big problem, as this would merely be another way for it to separate the wheat from the chaff and preserve its elite and secretive pedigree: “The choice of practical action is the novice’s: they must use their understanding to select Satanic tasks…. They will either learn from this, or not. If not, they have basically failed—shown themselves to be not suitable.” 51 This also suggests that there are no penalties or costs for leaving the group—membership, according to ONA texts, is a self-selecting process. However, some nexions are reported to only accept family and closely known friends, which may make it hard to leave for practical reasons. 52

The ONA as a Fluid New Religious Movement (NRM)

Without dismissing current concerns about violent Far Right radicalization, including the possible threat of neo-Nazi terrorism, the ONA's writings also display the characteristics of a New Religious Movement (NRM). This does not mean that the belief system espoused in these texts is devoid of political content. Rather, mentions of neo-Nazism or Far Right involvement in ONA literature need to be understood alongside the way that the ONA blends elements of Satanism, mysticism, and a strong disdain for conformity and “mainstream” values. The next section extends this analysis by considering recent developments within the ONA.

The Contemporary Context

This section summarizes the growth of the ONA and its associated groups on both sides of the Atlantic. It then juxtaposes this summary with the previous section's insights on bricolage to introduce a typology of individuals and groups who could be interested in the ONA.

The Emergence of sub- and Splinter Groups

The ONA was originally rooted in British paganism but has since spread beyond the United Kingdom, with “nexions” (cells) or associated groups in America, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, and
South Africa. Affiliated or partially associated groups include the Tempel Ov Blood and the Astral Bone Gnawers (ABG) Lodge.

Whilst the recent U.K. cases mentioning the ONA were related to the involvement of teenagers in neo-Nazi groups, mentions of ONA in the context of the United States have mostly linked them to active military personnel, via the associated group Atomwaffen Division. According to journalist Nate Thayer, at least nine members of the Tempel ov Blood (which he claims is part of ONA) are now in key positions in Atomwaffen Division, and the Tempel requires its members to infiltrate other groups.

Interest in the ONA: A Typology

The four dimensions of identification discussed in the first section—communal, ethical, cultural and emotional—can be used to discern the different aspects of the ONA that might appeal to different audiences. While it is beyond the scope of this article to provide concrete or comprehensive evidence of patterns of ONA membership or support, our analysis of the ONA’s writings allow us to suggest a typology of potential intended and unintended audiences to open up further avenues of research. This framework is also relevant since the ONA’s bricolage of beliefs and practices has strong affinities with David Myatt’s understanding of Nazism, for example, as seen in *The Dreccian Way*, a collection of articles compiled by Chloe 352. Chloe 352’s juxtaposition of ONA writings and Myatt’s essays on “ethical National-Socialism” intentionally highlights their common values and traits, including their:

- Reliance on a code of honor that can be characterized as ruggedly individualist,
- Philosophical and quasi-religious pluralism and eclecticism,
- Anti-institutional and anti-state ethos,
- Opposition to Zionism, capitalism, Marxism and Christianity, and
- Goal of pursuing galactic exploration and the colonization of outer space to establish a “Galactic Empire”.

These affinities with neo-Nazism—as with the affinities with Satanism discussed above—may or may not be cosmetic. With this in mind, the four dimensions of identification can help to make sense of the evolving landscape of groups that are attracted to particular aspects of the ONA.

Based on available media reports, ONA texts, and Inform’s archival data, a list of “ideal types” can be constructed based on whether these dimensions are present or absent. This list is a heuristic device for analytical purposes—we cannot say decisively that these dimensions are present or absent, since many of these groups are secretive and many of their teachings might only be transmitted orally (Table 1).

It is beyond the scope of this article to ascertain whether the ONA is responsible for the recruitment and radicalization of particular individuals or groups. It is evident, however, that the ONA’s symbols and publications remain potent resources that are publicly accessible. Our typology provides an analytical framework to test the extent which the appropriation or adoption of the ONA’s symbols and teachings matches the ways in which these aspects are presented within the Order’s own texts.
This section analyses the ONA by using a definitional strategy of religion that draws upon the work of the American scholar of religion Catherine Wessinger, based on her work on religiously-motivated violence. It probes the millenarian aspects within this combination of beliefs to suggest some new ways of thinking about the ONA’s main motivations as a fluid, quasi-religious group. This enables us systematically to evaluate the ONA’s characteristics that may cause concern for wider society, including its propensity for violence.

### The ONA’s Ultimate Concern

One effective way of examining the relationship between some minority traditions and their propensity for violence is by discerning their “ultimate concern”—the most

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONA dimensions present</th>
<th>ONA’s inner circle and “Old Guard”, e.g. “Anton Long”, or members of offshoots such as the ABG Lodge</th>
<th>Post-1990s generation of ONA adepts</th>
<th>“Passive” inner circle, i.e. who only rely on one-to-one transmission and contact</th>
<th>“Lapsed” inner circle or outer representatives (an under-explored category of ONA followers)</th>
<th>New grassroots members of local nexions</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unlikely combination</td>
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<td>Unlikely combination</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Newer nexions</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Occult practitioners, e.g. pagans, Satanists</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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#### Table 1. Dimensions of identification with the ONA and likely associated groups and individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communal (have gone through the Seven-Fold Way)</th>
<th>Ethical (agree with ONA’s ‘culling’ and elitism)</th>
<th>Cultural (familiar with ONA texts and teachings)</th>
<th>Emotional (have a sense of group belonging to ONA)</th>
<th>Examples: individuals and groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>“Lapsed” inner circle or outer representatives</td>
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<td>Offshoots, e.g. of the Tempel ov Blood</td>
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<td>Current or recent neo-Nazi groups</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Occult practitioners, e.g. pagans, Satanists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Academic researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unlikely combination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
important thing in the world for an individual or group”. As a religious goal, this ultimate concern encompasses cosmology, or a view of the universe and its source, and an understanding of human nature (for example, how humans were created, and beliefs about life after death).

A tradition’s teachings about human nature will describe whether humans can achieve the religious goal through human effort or whether they must rely on divine assistance. When combined with the group’s cosmology, this will determine the range of methods that can or should be used to achieve this goal, for example, “prayer, faith and worship, meditation, yogic disciplines, God’s grace, the guru’s grace, asceticism, community-building, or social reform”.

Based on this definitional strategy, the ONA’s ultimate concern is two-fold as gleaned from its literature:

- It aims to fulfill the destiny of the current “Western Aeon”, which is to enable the evolution of a superior civilization of humans that will eventually colonize “the solar system and the star systems beyond”.

- To fulfill this destiny, it will remove the obstacles to this coming “stage of imperium” set by the “religion of the Nazarene”, “Marxism/communism”, “capitalism”, and laws and policies guaranteeing “equality”—in some ONA essays, a “Magian” or “Zionist” enemy is also explicitly named.

Many ONA writings portray the Western or Aryan civilization as the true vanguard of humanity, which needs to evolve into a superhuman species (“homo galactica”). This superhuman civilization will then open the channel between this “causal” world and the unseen “acausal” world (where the Dark Gods reside). The sinister nature of the Dark Gods provides a template for the ONA’s stated methods to achieve change—criminality, chaos and violence.

This summary of the ONA’s two-fold ultimate concern equally applies to its own core “culling texts”, which express a goal of creating a “new human species” and to its nexions, including those that have disagreed in other areas, such as the Temple of THEM.

**The ONA’s Apocalypticism and Millennialism**

Some ultimate concerns are distinctively millennialist—they entail “the belief in an imminent transition to a collective condition consisting of total well-being (salvation), which may be earthly or heavenly”. It is possible to distinguish between two varieties of millennialism:

- **Catastrophic millennialism**, which is based on a pessimistic view of human nature—i.e., we are so corrupt that we need to be destroyed for a new world to emerge, which will be achieved by a divine or supernatural force, with or without human assistance,

- **Progressive millennialism**, or a more optimistic view of human nature—i.e., that social work, in harmony with the divine will, can affect non-catastrophic and progressive changes.

According to Wessinger, the term “apocalypticism” is more familiar to observers and is most often applied to what she conceptualizes as catastrophic millennialism.
However, technological and scientific advancements, alongside an increasingly Darwinian understanding of human evolution and progress, have discernibly given rise to a progressive variety of millennialism since the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{71}

The two varieties are not mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{72} Both characteristics can co-exist, or a particular movement could shift from one manifestation to the other over the course of its history. Wessinger\textsuperscript{73} gives the example of Baha’i millennialism, which was more catastrophic in the nascent phases of the movement, whereas the progressive variety has grown more dominant in contemporary times.

Nazism can be seen as a form of progressive millennialism which is revolutionary in outlook.\textsuperscript{74} Other examples include Maoism in China and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. The ONA’s texts display some characteristics of progressive millennialism, especially those that are aligned with esoteric Nazism. Besides, the ONA believes that human action is necessary to open the channels of Aeonic change, for example, via the Seven-Fold Way, culling, and the adoption of insight roles.

At the same time, however, in many ONA writings, there is an emphasis on particular symbols or entities that are ultimately in charge of “finishing the job”. These include the Vindex, analogous to the anti-Christ; Baphomet, “the archetypal dark goddess with strong parallels to the (Irish) Morrigan and (Indian) Kali”,\textsuperscript{75} and other unnamed elements in the ONA’s pantheon of Dark Gods.

The ONA’s ultimate concerns display a distinctive millenarian component which are reiterated in many of its texts, albeit without being expressed in these terms explicitly.\textsuperscript{76}

The goal of the ONA’s Adepts is therefore to reverse this Nazarene influence through sinister rituals and practices to create “chaos from which a New Aeon will emerge”.\textsuperscript{77}

Thus, depending on the emphasis in different ONA writings, the movement displays progressive (practically social Darwinist) and catastrophic millennialism. Members or supporters of the ONA might draw upon different aspects of this millenialist ethos depending on key variables, including their social location, political environment, internal motivations, and external pressures.

**Leadership and Authority**

Catastrophic and progressive forms of millennialism may or may not involve messianism—the belief in a *messiah*, or superhuman agent with the power to create a millennial kingdom.\textsuperscript{78} In the Hebrew scriptures, a messiah is distinct from a prophet, i.e. someone who receives revelation from an invisible source, for example, God, angels, or other divine masters. Not all prophets are messiahs, but all messiahs are prophets. Both possess charismatic authority as leaders—their followers believe that they are endowed with special powers or gifts to receive divine revelation. Whilst many millennial groups are led by charismatic leaders, this is not a feature that necessarily defines a millennial group.\textsuperscript{79}

This insight on messianism can be complemented by David G. Bromley’s idea that apocalyptic movements can be seen as radical social organizations employing an
anti-structural “prophetic method” to repudiate an existing status quo.\textsuperscript{80} According to Bromley,\textsuperscript{81} this can be contrasted with a pro-structural “priestly method” in non-apocalyptic movements that relies on reinterpretation of key texts and apologetics to reinforce the stability of the status quo.

Whilst we do not make definitive claims about ONA founder Anton Long’s real identity, Long’s \textit{persona} can be usefully analyzed using a combination of these insights from Wessinger and Bromley.

In several ONA texts, Long seems to be more prophet than messiah—in his writings, he implies that he has accessed the acausal realm but stops short of claiming to be a superhuman agent himself. When juxtaposed with the characterization of the “Magians” or “Zionists” in several other ONA texts as the enemy, these aspects of Long’s writings can be viewed as part of a prophetic method “to support the creation of a Western Imperium”.\textsuperscript{82}

Long also appears to possess some kind of charismatic authority—publications from other ONA nexions often cite and pay homage to him. At the same time, Long inverts the classic stereotype of the charismatic cult leader—his motto seems to be “do as I do, not as I say,” something quite uncharacteristic of so-called cult leaders:\textsuperscript{83} “...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....”

The presence of these characteristics does not necessarily mean that the persona of Anton Long is clearly prophetic, messianic, both, or neither. It might be more useful to view Long as a “movement spokesperson”\textsuperscript{84} who produces large amounts of movement texts for the ONA, sometimes adopting a prophetic voice. Long also intentionally presents himself as a “trickster figure” through contradictory claims and positions.\textsuperscript{85}

\textbf{Responses to Failure}

More relevant than the precise definition of leadership for our purposes is how millennial groups respond to threats or failure, whether these originate internally or externally. Catastrophic millennial groups appear to be more prone to violence because of their radically dualistic views of good and evil which directly affect their responses to failure or threat. Three sub-categories of catastrophic millennial groups are particularly prone to violence:

- \textbf{Fragile millennial movements} which are beset by internal weaknesses and stresses, for example the Peoples Temple in Jonestown and Aum Shinrikyo in Japan,\textsuperscript{86}
- \textbf{Assaulted millennial movements} which become the target of exceptional, external hostilities from surrounding society, such as the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas,\textsuperscript{87}
- \textbf{Revolutionary millennial movements} which have an inherent potential for violence because they seek to overthrow what they view, rightly or wrongly, as a persecuting government.\textsuperscript{88}

These categories are not static and should rather be regarded as distinct moments on a continuum of millennial beliefs and the potential for violence. On the surface,
all three descriptions could apply to the ONA at different moments according to the writings of its spokespersons:

- Judging by the writings of Chloe 352 and other online commentators, it would appear that the ONA has its share of internal rivalry. Whilst this does not necessarily make ONA fragile, it does raise questions about the level of cohesion among its loose “membership”, and within its philosophy and tactics.

- The HnH campaign to ban the ONA, culminating in its petition to the Home Office, could be a harbinger for some factions within the ONA to adopt a more solid identity and the defensive stance of an assaulted millennial movement. The ONA’s publicly accessible writings are indeed defensive—they vehemently deny the HnH’s accusations and regard these as “prejudice”, “ignorance” and “propaganda”, albeit with no threat of violent retaliation. These writings deny that the ONA is even a movement, seeking to absolve it of culpability in the actions of those who take interest in its materials.89

Since the O9A is an esoteric philosophy, or sub-culture, and not a group or organization with members it cannot be linked—directly connected or joined—to groups who do have members just as the possession by individuals of O9A material is not evidence of a link, only of an interest in the O9A by such groups and individuals or who personally associate themselves with O9A philosophy mostly on the basis of misunderstanding that philosophy.

- At the same time, in several of its other writings, referred to above, the ONA exhorts its adepts to engage in political mobilization and direct action, especially in “extreme” organizations such as Far-Right neo-Nazi and jihadi groups—displaying the characteristics of a revolutionary millennial movement.

In other words, the ONA’s texts contain different positions and differ in their calls to action against the perceived enemy of a supposedly degenerated “Magian”- or “Nazarene”-controlled world order. Yet there is enough textual content that displays a propensity for violent, catastrophic millennialism, with some important caveats:

- The ONA’s theory of change is revolutionary in parts, but gradualist and elitist in others—the coming of the Galactic Imperium must begin with individual self-mastery (a demanding process that takes years to achieve) before the channel (“nexion”) to the acausal world can be opened.

- The ONA’s theory of violence is also incremental—it starts with magickal practices to catalyze psychic contamination, and gradually progresses to acts of petty criminality (such as anti-social behavior, theft and pornography) before it reaches full-blown violence (most controversially through culling).

- Gradualism and incrementalism work alongside a high degree of secrecy, especially in the group’s insistence on infiltration of extreme and/or unexpected groups (such as Buddhist orders or the police force) to create chaos and instability.

These three preceding points are repeatedly expressed in the group’s writings, for example in the following paragraph:90
Satanism can never become (until the “New Aeon” arrives at least) respectable: for to become so would destroy its numen, its viability as a way to genuine Adeptship. It is dark, evil—for the few who genuinely dare…. While society and other structures restrict and deny the promise of Satan, this dark defiance is [required] as a working system which achieves results, both personally and aeonically. What will change, is the number of individuals who can try this way to liberation—and while this will increase, it will do so only slowly over a period of decades.

Thus, while several ONA writings endorse covert, violent, direct political action in the service of sinister ends, these are accompanied by a philosophy of action that is elitist and gradualist.

**Characteristics that Cause Concern**

Wessinger\(^91\) summarizes 13 “characteristics that cause concern” in regard to catastrophic millennial groups. She cautions that these characteristics neither predict that these groups will engage in violence nor preclude the existence of other characteristics that might “offset” these problematic dimensions. It is useful to review these characteristics in relation to the aspects of the ONA's writings that have been discussed in this article, namely:

1. The combination of catastrophic millennial beliefs with “belief in reincarnation” and “with the members' conviction that the group is being persecuted”.
2. The theological conviction that “one's home is not on this planet”, combined with “social alienation due to a sense of persecution and lack of social acceptance”.
3. A “sense of persecution” expressed in a belief in conspiracy theories.
4. A “radical dualistic view of good versus evil that dehumanizes other people”.
5. Beliefs that “expect and perhaps promote conflict”.
6. Resistance to investigation and withdrawal to an isolated refuge, “and/or a very aggressive battle against its enemies”.
7. Dependence on a charismatic leader “as the sole means to achieve the ultimate concern”.
8. A charismatic leader who sets “impossible goals for the group”.
9. A group that gives up on proselytization and “turns inwards to preserve salvation for its members alone”.
10. The above characteristics combined with “high exit costs” for withdrawing membership, in terms of “personal identity, associations, and livelihood”.
11. A leader who bestows “new identities” to followers, including “new names” and a drastic rearrangement of family and marital relationships.
12. A leader who controls the group’s access to information about the outside world, blocking their exposure to alternative interpretations of reality.
13. Relatively “small acts of violence” repeated in a ritualistic manner so that the “scale and intensity of the violence increases”.

In addition to Wessinger's caveats, these characteristics may or may not be mutually aligned between what the ONA's texts express and what the majority of its followers are actually interested in. From the texts we have examined above, it is clear that ONA spokespersons, especially Anton Long, hold that:
• The ultimate home of a “pure” human species—\textit{homo galactica}—is not on this Earth (characteristic 2)
• There is a Magian and Nazarene conspiracy to thwart the rightful progress of Western civilization (characteristic 3)
• There are entire groups of people who deserve to be dehumanized, e.g., opfers and Jews (characteristic 4), and
• Violence—including the “liturgical unrest”\textsuperscript{92} marked by the ONA’s ritual magick—will catalyze a cosmic conflict that will undo the Magian-Nazarene conspiracy (characteristic 5).

While the persona of Anton Long is surrounded by a sinister aura of mystique, we cannot conclude definitively that he is the sole charismatic leader who controls the beliefs, actions and relationships of ONA followers. We therefore do not find support for characteristics 7, 8, 11 or 12. Nor do we find textual evidence that supports the idea that the ONA has given up on external proselytizing and is turning inward for the “salvation” of its own members (characteristic 9), or demonstrates the existence of high personal exit costs for leaving the group (characteristic 10). And while Anton Long and other ONA spokespersons maintain secrecy about their identities, their publicly accessible writings do not suggest complete resistance to investigation or social withdrawal (characteristic 6). There is, however, textual support for a Social Darwinist idea of the evolution of a currently threatened, ‘pure’ human species that calls to mind the ‘belief in reincarnation’ outlined in characteristic 1.

In summary, thus far we find definite support for four of Wessinger’s characteristics that cause concern (2, 3, 4 and 5), partial support for one characteristic (1), and lack of support for seven characteristics (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). There is, however, much evidence of calls for “repeated acts of violence” in the ONA’s texts that are intended to escalate (characteristic 13). Our findings therefore suggest that current research should investigate, from a follower’s (rather than spokesperson’s) perspective:

• Whether the documented acts of violence perpetrated by individuals who are purportedly affiliated with or inspired by the ONA are \textit{specifically} and \textit{directly} inspired by these texts and/or by other neo-Nazi or Far Right literature?
• If they are \textit{directly} inspired by these ONA texts, then do their concerns also align with characteristics 2, 3, 4, and 5?

If the answer is yes to both questions, then this would demonstrate a direct correlation, or even causation, between the beliefs and practices espoused by the ONA texts and those expressed by this segment of ONA followers. If, however, no link can be demonstrated, then we need to ask how else the ONA’s symbols and texts relate to other sources of inspiration for Far Right or neo-Nazi violence.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Based on its writings, it is useful to understand the ONA as an eclectic, fluid NRM. As an NRM, some of its more popular texts display the characteristics of a
millenarian movement, but its strategies for ushering in the apocalypse are contradictory—the ONA’s writings seem revolutionary in some parts, but gradualist and elitist in others. From its existing writings and publications, the ONA appears to exhibit some characteristics that cause concern in relation to religiously or ideologically motivated violence. However, more research needs to be done to ascertain whether these teachings have specifically and directly inspired recent cases of violence involving individuals who are purportedly affiliated with or inspired by the ONA, and whether these individuals also adhere to the other beliefs and practices espoused in ONA texts.

**Disclosure Statement**

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**Notes**

3. Connell R Monette, Mysticism in the 21st Century, 2nd edition (Wilsonville: Sirius Academic Press, 2015), 94, 105. In ONA terminology, a nexion is a gateway that connects the world we experience with our senses and a realm beyond this one – what it refers to as the “causal” and “acausal” world – as well as a term used to refer to its sub-groups/cells.
5. Ibid., 37–40.
6. Inform is an independent educational charity which researches and provides information about minority religions and sects which is as accurate, up-to-date and as evidence-based as possible. It has been based in Theology and Religious Studies at King’s College London since 2018 and was founded by Professor Eileen Barker at the London School of Economics in 1988. Since its inception, Inform has been funded by a mixture of grants from academic research councils and charities, the UK government and donations. It has a strict policy of not taking money from any group about which it provides information. For more information, contact Inform directly: https://inform.ac/
8. Ibid., 95.
11. From Inform’s ONA files.


16. Ibid.


20. From Inform's ONA files.


22. Sieg, "Angular," 276–277. A term that emerged out of nineteenth century Western esotericism, in which the Right Hand Path was associated with white or good magic whilst the Left Hand Path was linked to black or evil magic. According to some ONA texts, the Right Hand Path is restrictive, hierarchal and conformist, whilst the Left Hand Path is egalitarian, elitist and individualistic. At the same time, ONA texts also encourage the appropriation or subversion of Right Hand Path forms, such as radical Islam, National Socialism and Christian Identity. Recent ONA texts also suggest the possibility of evolving into a “non-dual esoteric tradition”.

23. Richard Parker, (2013, November 30), “Anados.” *ONA*. [https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/anados/](https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/anados/). Quoting David Myatt, an ONA text explains that this term refers to "the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise) [and which] sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth".

24. In Greek, “learning through adversity”, which the ONA regards as necessary for spiritual growth e.g., through the adoption of “insight roles” (akin to covert apprenticeship and/or infiltration).


29. Whilst ONA texts acknowledge that it is an internally diverse Order, all the groups associated with it purportedly subscribe to the Seven Fold Way, which is influenced by Western occultism but also embellishes it. The “Seven” refers to the seven grades of the path (Neophyte, Initiate, External Adept, Internal Adept, Master/Mistress, Grand Master/Mousa and Immortal) and the seven planets which are understood to have esoteric significance. Unlike many other mystical orders, the ONA does not offer initiation to its students – rather, the students must initiate themselves through personal grade rituals and challenges. For the ONA, the process is self-selecting: “the strong survive, and the weak perish. Good riddance to the weak”.


31. ONA. (n.d.). *Introducing the Order of Nine Angles*. ONA.


33. From INFORM's ONA files.


35. A vast time span that encompasses the emergence, advancement and decay of a civilization. In the ONA's understanding, a civilization lasts between 1,500 and 1,700 years, and there could be a time-lag of about 400 years between the start of an Aeon and the beginning of a civilization. According to ONA texts, the current Aeon should rightfully see
the ascendance of white European civilization, but this has been disrupted and weakened by Magian and Nazerene (its terminology for Jewish and Christian) religion and culture.

36. From Inform’s ONA files.
37. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 227.
38. From INFORM’s ONA files.
40. Ibid., 78–79.
41. Ibid., 128.
42. Ibid., 123–24.
44. Campion, “Culling,” 70.
45. Monette, _Mysticism_, 111.
46. Ibid., 101.
48. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 311.
51. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 324.
52. From INFORM’s ONA files.
53. Monette, _Mysticism_, 95.
54. Ibid., 97.
57. Ibid., 105.
58. Ibid., 112.
59. Ibid., 97–112.
60. Ibid., 118.
61. In this paper, our ideal types are generated from different combinations of Hervieu-Léger’s four dimensions, i.e., whether each is present or absent, and we suggest some real-life examples that might fit particular combinations.
63. Ibid.
64. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 184–85.
65. Ibid., 326.
68. Wessinger, _Millennium_, 12.
69. Wessinger, _Millennium_, 16.
71. Ibid., 50.
72. Ibid., 51.
73. Ibid., 51–52.
74. Wessinger, _Millennium_, 282.
75. Monette, _Mysticism_, 110.
76. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 314.
77. Sauvage, _Hostia_, 225.
78. Wessinger, _Millennium_, 17.
79. Ibid., 8.

81. Ibid., 37–38.
87. Ibid., 20.
88. Ibid., 22–23.

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