



Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke

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More than half a century after the defeat of Nazism and fascism, the far right is again challenging the liberal order of Western democracies. Radical movements are feeding on anxiety about economic globalization, affirmative action, and third-world immigration, flashpoint issues to many traditional groups in multicultural societies. A curious mixture of Aristocratic paganism, anti-Semitic demonology, Eastern philosophies and the occult is influencing populist antigovernment sentiment and helping to exploit the widespread fear that invisible elites are shaping world events.

Black Sun examines the new neofascist ideology, showing how hate groups, militias and conspiracy cults attempt to gain influence. Based on interviews and extensive research into underground groups, **Black Sun** documents the new Nazi and fascist sects that have sprung up from the 1970s through the 1990s and examines the mentality and motivation of these far-right extremists. The result is a detailed, grounded portrait of the mythical and devotional aspects of Hitler cults among Aryan mystics, racist skinheads and Nazi satanists, Heavy Metal music fans, and in occult literature.

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke offers a unique perspective on far right neo-Nazism viewing it as a new form of Western religious heresy. He paints a frightening picture of a religion with its own relics, rituals, prophecies and an international sectarian following that could, under the proper conditions, gain political power and attempt to realize its dangerous millenarian fantasies.

Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity Details

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Sir Michael Röhm says

There's some quote I stumbled across on the Internets once before, from the Simpsons - to the effect of, "It's funny because they're serious about something so ridiculous."

Thus, this book.

While Goodrick-Clarke's book on the Occult Origins of the Nazi movement is still on my to-read list, this book is basically a sequel to it. Where the first book focused on the Nazi party in Germany, this book focuses on later neo-Nazi groups. The first two chapters consist of brief historical run-downs of the neo-Nazi movement in the US and in the UK.

Then, the author takes us on a tour of Neo-Nazi movements around the world (primarily in the Americas, England and, to a lesser extent, Germany itself). What began as an occult and eugenics fueled attempt to get rid of "social parasites" like Jews, Gypsies, Blacks, etc. and ended with the suicide of the "Führer" in his bunker gains new life in the crazy world of New Age Occultism in the Extreme Right.

While Goodrick-Clarke does not exclusively deal with 'esoteric' and 'occult' subjects (there are chapters about far less metaphysical things like black metal and Nazi punk bands such as Skrewdriver) much of the book is in fact about an almost insane cornucopia of beliefs regarding the Nazis that have sprung up after their defeat.

The book itself has no real unified whole except to examine the Neo-Nazi movement in the years since the defeat of the Axis - essentially, each chapter can be read on its own without needing to refer to earlier chapters in any way except to figure out the various acronyms of Neo-Nazi groups, most of which are given in the first two chapters.

Much of the world of Nazi occultism is based upon interpreting pre-existing through a Nazi world-view.

For example, the Hindu ideas of cyclical ages and gods manifesting in humans are given new twists. One example is the Kali Yuga. While Kali Yuga can be viewed as basically analogous to other views of "the end" (Ragnarok, the "days of Noah" in Christian apocalyptic doctrine), A Neo-Nazi named Julius Evola based it upon the "evil" Jews and "degeneracy" in modern society.

Instead of cruelty, avarice, lust and other common motifs of social decay in the eyes of religious authorities, they see the breakdown of society through a more political lens. Communism, Democracy, the loss of a strict social hierarchy, the divine right of Kings, revolution, etc. are instead the signs of the Kali Yuga. Jews, of course, are behind all of this in order to destroy the noble Aryan world and to render gentiles powerless when the Jews decide to take over the world.

Savitri Devi continued with the Hindu line of thought, but added other aspects to it - of course, the Aryans are the conquerors of the Dravidians in India and Vedic theology was seen as the only pure form of paganism left (many Neo Nazis reject Christianity because they see it as both egalitarian and Jewish in origin... both ideas which are, in my estimation, rather ridiculous). Therefore, both during the original Nazi era and in Neo-Nazism, the Vedic Hindu religion is often esteemed as the true religion of the Aryans. Savitri Devi

originated, among other things, the idea that Hitler was immortal, and more than that, that he was an Avatar of the God Vishnu.

Another major thinker in the book, Miguel Serrano, combined Marcionite gnosticism (which holds that the god of the Jews is little more than an evil half-wit who is ignorant of the True God - naturally, since Jews serve this figure, Jews are devil worshipers!) with Hitler Avatarism and Evola's Kali Yuga ideas, and his own unique views on Hinduism (seeing the Heil Hitler salute as a Yogic position) in a truly bizarre Hitler and Nazi mythology. That isn't all, though, as he was also a fan of the idea of an eternal Hitler, who lived in a Nazi UFO outpost in Antarctica. Despite his disavowal of Christianity, he saw Hitler as an almost Christ-like figure - the God-Man who was opposed by the ignorant (and, of course, by the Jews) and was defeated, but who still lives and bides his time to re-conquer the world.

In a lot of ways, Serrano is the "star" of the book to me, simply because his Hitler and Nazi mythology is so immense and so bizarre.

The book is not perfect - as I noted, it can easily be read more as a series of essays on individual subjects rather than as a complete whole.

Another fault I found was that, when discussing Heathenry, Norse Neo-Paganism and skinheads, the author seems to be relying less on his own research and more on the research of others.

Even worse, there is little attempt to differentiate between Heathens, Germanic/Norse neo-pagans and skinheads who are NOT racists and NOT neo-Nazis and those who are. There are plenty of people who practice Asatru and Vanatru or various forms of German paganism and heathenry who are opposed to the bastardization of their religious path by Neo-Nazi goons. Ditto for many skinheads who like the fashion and Oi! music, but know that the culture originated from British fans of rasta, the Rude Boy subculture, etc. and are absolutely opposed to the Neo-Nazi elements as well.

Nevertheless, it's essential reading if you're interested in the metaphysical beliefs and underground culture of modern-day Neo-Nazi groups. This book covers the whole gamut, from black metal to Christian Identity, from British racist movements and their origins in the National Front and other groups to the world of Neo-Nazi Satanists.

It's a fascinating, hilarious and disturbing read. Despite my only giving it three out of five stars, I highly recommend it.

Charlie says

I may eventually finish this but the writing style and amount of errors put me off I did learn stuff but when you find repeated facts that are simply wrong you wonder how much of the rest is completely accurate.

Liz Wright says

I first need to say that I didn't finish reading this. I rented this from the library, rather excitedly, because I had wanted to read it since it was published. Unfortunately Goodrick-Clarke's style of writing was overly

ostentatious for me, a person who was only reading this text to learn about something they were very interested in learning about. His academic writing style, along with his use of non-lay phrasing and unapproachable aura gives the reader the feeling that the writer's goal was to play the part of the expert (and thus make you feel in awe of his work). Although the book (at least the 3 lengthy chapters that I read) has the opportunity to be extremely interesting as a social history of Nazi-ism, there is too much here in too small a space to make any of it digestible. It leaves the reader with the overall view that the book is too much and too haughty. (

Alex Sarll says

Well, that was a depressing read. It should come as no surprise that Nazis can believe some really stupid shit, and the common ground with islam is old hat, but one can still be taken aback by some of the other hybrids; at first Nazi Hinduism seems like a stunner, but the attempt to find common cause between Nazism and Communism must be one of history's most head-slapping examples of "You had one job..". The chapters are split thematically, and some of them have a bingo card quality, as one nutjob after another recombines the same set of tokens into a newer and dafter theory; Hitler is waiting underground, or in Antarctica, or the Elders of Zion are underground and Hitler's taken his flying saucer to Aldebaran for reinforcements (they were due last decade, by the way, so I think we're safe).

Even beyond the material, a suspicion gradually dawns that this simply isn't a very good book. Some concepts and locations are not explained until long after their first appearance (the Council on Foreign Relations, the World Ice Theory); others are introduced repeatedly (Wewelsburg castle, ZOG). Spellings and names change from one paragraph to the next. There are three uses of 'trenchant' on one page. At the lowest ebb, the myth that the Trenchcoat Mafia were Marilyn Manson fans is repeated as fact, making one question whether anything else herein can be trusted. Which is a shame, because at the very least one hopes the gem about Nick Griffin's past involvement with the Pol Pot-style 'Smash the Cities' movement is kosher (pun very much intended). One could forgive this sort of thing at the micro level if the macro made up for it, but it doesn't. At times the author seems insufficiently appalled (on immigration and its consequences, he dances worryingly close to using his subjects' language); at others, insufficiently amused (hippy-Nazi Jost Turner preaches a series of Aryan meditations which, combined with a macrobiotic diet, can prevent all ageing and disease; he barely has time to establish this movement before dying of cancer. Goodrick-Clarke doesn't even muster a chuckle). Big questions are raised, but this seems to be done pretty much by accident, and they are never really addressed. Consider, for instance, the porous boundary separating dodgy acts normal people nonetheless like, from pariahs, and the gradual shifts people can make around that zone. The book set me thinking about that, but not deliberately; it's a side-effect of Goodrick-Clarke's easy references to Ezra Pound as a fascist, and casual listing of Motörhead among non-fascist metal bands. And in both cases, I think, really? Because Ezra Pound is not as tainted as 'Ragnar Redbeard', and Lemmy is not as clean as Gene Simmons. Similarly, *Four Lions* did better in addressing the ridiculous paradox that the same people who claim atrocities like the Holocaust never happened, are the precise people who are in favour of them. How do they reconcile taking Hitler as a hero of the white struggle against the Jews with the belief that his genocidal skills have in fact been massively overstated? I want some illumination of the logical contortions that must involve, but Goodrick-Clarke seems content merely to catalogue a series of dismal, pernicious idiocies. Worse, when something does deviate massively from the general field, it tends to be brushed past - there's a passing reference to a gay occult Nazi group, then no follow-up. The combined effect suggests nothing more than a trainspotter at the atrocity exhibition.

Tim Pendry says

The death of Nicholas Goodrick-Clark last year (2012) deprived us of an important historian of political irrationalism.

Unlike many others in the field, he neither accepted irrational claims as anything other than fictions nor allowed himself the luxury of huffing and puffing about their presumed evil in a liberal society.

He simply told the story and expressed, with discretion (pages 303-304) legitimate concerns about the course of events if these cruel and stupid irrationalisms had their ground watered for them by our own cultural stubbornness.

He was evidence-based and measured. This got him direct access to some of the key figures who espoused the ideologies covered in this remarkably useful book - political racism, esoteric national socialism and white identity politics. What he writes rings true as a result.

The book was written in 2002 and published in 2003 so his death holds the additional tragedy for us that he was never able to bring matters up to date in a Second Edition. His judgments are cautious and wise but he may have revised opinions about a moving political feast.

Each chapter is a fact-based essay in a different aspect of Far Right politics within the West (with only passing reference to other theatres). He begins by covering national socialism (essentially radical extremist conservatism) in the US and the shifting sands of the British Far Right in the face of immigration and multiculturalism.

He then moves on to review the influence of particular Far Right 'intellectuals' - Julius Evola, Francis Parker Yockey and Savitri Devi (on whom he had already written a book) - before moving on to the post-war construction of an association between the Nazis and the occult.

The next set of sections look at the myth of the esoteric SS, those surrounding Nazi UFOs and other extraterrestrial links and the very peculiar figure of Miguel Serrano who was not alone in merging South Asian ideas with the Nazi mythos.

Goodrick-Clark then reviews the two cultural phenomena of black metal and racist rock music and Nazi satanism and transgressional spirituality before coming full circle and returning to politics.

The book closes with reviews of Christian Identity and its 'allied opposite' racial paganism. The final chapter looks at a cultural phenomenon of considerable importance in the 1990s - the overlap of conspiracy theory, new age cultural pessimism and far right ideology.

What do we learn from all this and how might Goodrick-Clark have adapted his analysis in the wake of the 2008 crisis. Naturally, I cannot speak for him so these are just some lines of thought for others to follow and accept or reject.

The first thing we learn is the startling absurdity of much Far Right thought. We can leave you to read his extended accounts of extremist theory in the book for the evidence of that statement.

Where it is logical, Radical Rightist theory is always based on 'essentialist' philosophical assumptions that

bear little scrutiny although they may be no more absurd (just 'nastier' and more anti-social) than other 'spiritual' traditions.

Too often, radical right ideology is simply auto-didactically stupid. Even the most cogent analyses are based on a clear misreading of Nietzsche to the extent that almost every claim to the mantle of Nietzsche is, in fact, merely a variation on the 'resentiment' that the great philosopher excoriated in the desert religions.

Perhaps the only thinker capable of getting beyond absurdity to the first rank was Evola and even he sunk into the sort of mythologising that may have worked in the age of Jung and Spengler but scarcely cuts the mustard today.

But the second thing we learn is that these theories are perhaps intellectually absurd but they represent a genuine political problem that the liberal community has swept under the carpet for far too long.

Even in 2002, there was a growing resentment, which I think had more justification to it than liberals are prepared to admit, that the white working class in general and white males in particular were somehow personally guilty for the crimes of the past.

It would seem that it was convenient for imperialism and capitalism to be expiated by the profiting middle classes through an offering to the gods of political correctness of their own underlings.

Like the Aztecs with bodies, the Western high bourgeoisie has offered a hecatombs of souls in order to rewrite cultural norms in a way that will sustain their power. Of course, the souls they offer are never their own. One class of poor has simply been brought in to replace another as favoured grunts of the system.

We have a combination of invented history, a surge of immigration tolerated by the middle classes to drive down wages and solve the 'servant problem', and active cultural engineering behind affirmative action and multiculturalism.

The result is the growth of a cynical and aggressive political class, an alliance of liberals (social and economic) and block minority votes that has created the atomised and unorganised opposition outlined in this book, waiting for its time in the sun.

American culture knows it has a problem. Compare the world of the X-Files - mass suspicion of Government - with new popular TV series like the Walking Dead, Revolution, Defiance and Falling Skies.

Whether produced by Spielberg or JJ Abrams, the tone is one of liberal fear at complete social breakdown and each series questions how far the liberal is going to have to work with some rough-hewn Okie with a heart of gold if he is going to survive.

It is all subliminal, of course, but it is there. The most intelligent of the liberal elite knows that things have gone too far, wants to step back and include the new excluded but doesn't know how.

Meanwhile, the cult of San Muerte appears in the American prison system and hispanic, black and aryan brotherhoods may find they have more in common with each other than they do with the federal government that posits itself as last line of defence between the 'nice' middle class and brutal chaos. If divide and conquer ends, that class is stuffed.

From being a majority in society in the US, the white working class has felt itself under enormous economic

and cultural pressure. The Far Right emerged as the element that said what it was not permitted to say within what amounted, ironically, to a liberal totalitarian culture dominated by the educated.

The educated, of course, are now under their own pressure from the internet. The steady pauperisation of the privileged knowledge worker will be the grand factor underpinning the politics of the first half of this century

The situation is not quite the same in the UK and Europe where the perceived 'threat' is feared rather than actual. It centres perhaps more on the denial of particular national and tribal feeling and the 'unfair' tolerance of alien tribes in the cause of universalism and equality.

But the scale of the potential for the active politics of resentment is probably hidden by the incompetence of the Far Right itself. Its language of national socialism, its thuggery and its intellectual stupidity have all alienated the population at large (which is basically tolerant and decent). It has allowed 'liberal' middle class hegemony a length of life that it probably does not deserve.

Indeed, in the UK, the 'Sun' has probably done more for the survival of liberal democracy in the UK than any single force simply because it articulates national feeling and diffuses the anger. If you want a Rightist revolution in the UK, all you have to do is force the removal of 'Page 3' from the paper and please the tiny minority of religious loons and feminists.

Certainly, the BNP's electoral results were derisory. However, a cynical or inspired person could work through this book, sweep away the nonsense, come up with an inspired radical conservatism that did not mention Hitler, flying saucers or race once (as truly irrelevant) and cause serious problems to the complacent hegemony of the political elite.

Fortunately for liberal democracy, there is not a thinker in this book that 'gets' what is happening. A change is beginning to happen in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis - but not the predicted one.

Career fascists like Griffin are being shunted aside in favour of radical populisms like the Tea Party in the US, UKIP in the UK and Marie Le Pen's second wave National Front in France.

Even Die Linke in Germany is developing a 'German workers first' strategy while the Italian Right and East European populist parties teeter between interwar fascism and bloody-minded populism.

The Far Right has failed simply because it is stupid. The populist Right which treats race as irrelevant but takes culture seriously and emphasises the rights of the individual over the rights of the collective is not.

This shift is recent. The global economic crisis was not something that Goodrick-Clarke was in a position to analyse a decade ago. The conspiracy theory obsessions of the 1990s staggered along through the 2000s but merely made Occupy a laughing stock amongst serious radicals of the Left and Right. A new game is afoot.

The New Age generation of irrational thinkers are moving inexorably towards the grave. Their successors are pragmatists whose prime concern is not maniacal amoral hysterical violence but a cultural resistance that is sustainable and that does not need the nightmare of a strong state.

History has also taught us that Hitler was far less demonic, far less interesting and far more incompetent than the 'romantics' of the second half of the twentieth century had liked to think. He was not the 'avatar' but simply a source of memes for political culture.

The final degeneration of the Nazi cult of Serrano lies in the disappointing Euro-comedy 'Iron Sky' and the far from disappointing use of the meme in films like Hollywood's 'Hell Boy'. Now we can all say with Indiana Jones "Gee, I hate those Nazis" without having someone whisper in our ear that the film was made by the 'Juice'.

The Nazis are now just a blip in history, another cruel and incompetent collectivism. They were in power about the same length of time as Tony Blair, another blip in history. But, and this is the rub, not only were the Nazis cruel and incompetent collectivists, it would seem that liberal democracies have proven to be as well.

States (we refer back to De Jouvenel) have taken to themselves the right to conscript labour (enslave) in peacetime on dubious arguments about citizenship or duty since the time of the Jacobins.

This is what the Nazis did and the liberal democracies also accrued that right to themselves. Even today, when most have given up or suspended that right, the Norwegians now temporarily enslave women on the dubious grounds of 'gender equality'. Hmmmmmmmm!

In other words, much of Goodrick-Clark's book refers to the slow unwinding of a *total* culture of authoritarian statism of which the ideology Far Right was merely a part. This is not to be complacent. The author refers to Golden Dawn, simply as a journal, once in passing, yet, a decade later, this same organisation received global news coverage as a contender for power in a collapsing Greece.

Only a day or so ago, I noticed the National Anarchists proudly posting on Facebook pictures of their lamp post stickers on the streets of Britain and, only months ago, liberal transhumanists were rightly getting exercised about the infiltration of their cultural movement by new wave fascists.

But in other respects, things are getting better. The correct analysis of the Far Right about the rise of liberal totalitarianism (merely a mirror image of their own aspirations to absolute power) has not resulted in a wider appreciation of various national socialisms but quite the opposite.

The rebellions in the Turkish and Brazilian street are cultural but anti-traditionalist. Military and bureaucratic elites are being asked to intervene to protect private life and individual freedom from authoritarians and communitarians. This would be unthinkable in the West where military and bureaucracy are locked into political correctness on their own account.

Similarly, as noted above, the new populist right is far more ambiguous than earlier versions of the right and, in some respects, it represents a libertarian reaction to the Big State with its public sector and positive discrimination welfarist clientage. Right and Left have partly switched places in a process that started with the Reagan Republicans.

The modern libertarian rightist is more likely to be sex-positive and secularist now - more so than the totalitarian liberal who will crush desire under radical feminist ideology and make contingent alliances with religious groups in order to hold on to an urban power base.

Things are, in short, confused but Far Right essentialism has driven itself into a corner of absurd ideas and its violence and culture of cruelty alienates its own potential base. Nordic Social Democracy was strengthened and not weakened by the insane slaughter of kids in Norway by Breivik. The American security state has been strengthened and not weakened by McVeigh's angry terrorist reaction to the atrocity at Waco.

It is a strong recommendation that you should read this book as contemporary history. In 2002, Goodrick-Clark raised his concerns that the cultural war on one part of the community by another would result in the rise of the Far Right and a form of reaction would set in.

I think he was right about the overall trend but he may have failed to see (simply because a decade is a long time in generational politics) precisely what would happen under the twin pressures of changes in political technology and sustained exposure of the moral turpitude and incompetences of our elites since 2008.

The ability of the mass not to be a 'herd' (as in the ideology of many of the frustrated activists in the book) but a wise crowd of individuals empowered by technology and interest is simply not in the mental tool box of resentful working class and declasse petit bourgeois authoritarians.

The paradox is that the hegemony of the liberal elite is coming to an end. This is why they are intensifying their attack with a range of tools such as porn filters and mass surveillance. But this is not to the benefit of either the authoritarian Right or the loons of Occupy.

Something new is stirring - a revolutionary moment perhaps where flawed 'saints' like Julian Assange and Bradley Manning sit alongside cheeky chappies like Nigel Farage and Berlusconi and doctors and market traders in Tunis, Cairo and Istanbul.

Above all, the age of identity politics is coming to an end - we are complex persons with private lives and not merely things defined by our race, our gender, our jobs or our sexual orientation.

This book is, therefore, a vital introduction to an insane but oddly legitimate protest on its own terms to liberal totalitarianism. It is a profoundly wrong and ignorant revolt but its right to revolt must be recognised. This will be uncomfortable to left-liberals but they are creating their own nemesis if they continue along their current path.

Fascist identity politics is simply the shadow side of the identity politics that has infected Western civilisation since the 1960s from the Left. Remove the identity politics of the hegemonic post-Marxist Left and fascist identity politics will die with it. Remove the clinical managerialism and 'federal bureaucratism' of liberal totalitarian thought and esoteric Nazi cults and New Age cultural pessimism will also disappear.

The Nazis are not the problem - they are noisy, nasty but tiny - we are the problem.

6655321 says

Outside of organizational problems (the entwined histories of various groups are weirdly separated and organized) & Goodrick-Clarke provides a significant and powerful history yet simultaneously seems to have some very strange sympathy for the subject of his investigation. An excellent reference and a poor read.

AC says

This is a fairly good book, a rapid (rather than sustained) review of a wide range of figures and far-right

phenomena (internationally): from Rockwell to occult nazism (Savitri Devi and Miguel Serrano) to Christian Identity, Odinism, and New World Order ('Illuminati') conspiracies. Helpfully, the book is well bibliographed. Goodrick-Clark is always sober, and authoritative. This book forms, as I said before, a good compliment to Gregor's richer (but somewhat quirkier -- I never cease to be amazed by his defense of the Salò Republic!):

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/30....> About the only overlap between the two books is Julius Evola -- As Gregor himself started life as a devotee of Evola, his account is more authoritative; Goodrick-Clarke's is much easier to read, though.

tom bomp says

I don't remember what made me want to read this but I've been interested for a while and finally opened it up and (this may seem counterintuitive) checked out the short conclusion. And my jaw dropped. It's a 4 page polemic on how multiculturalism is 1) inherently dangerous and destructive to Good White Nations (general implication) 2) responsible for the rise of neo-nazi groups. He imputes a terrifying level of reasonableness in neo-Nazi views, imo. He attacks affirmative actions for "discriminating against Whites" and complains about white guilt. Try this paragraph on for size:

"But liberal support for affirmative action has gone further in producing a climate of white guilt. The causes of black crime, drug involvement and welfare dependence are often sought in white racism. Black on white crime in terms of murder, rape and robbery with violence is many times greater than white on black crime. However, the national media typically highlight instances of white racial attacks, while many reports of black crime are "color- blind" and mostly confined to the local press. The massive overrepresentation of blacks in the penal system, evident testimony of black crime, violence and underperformance are largely ignored by the liberal media, or otherwise invoked as further evidence of black disadvantage and white racism... This disabling of white criticism through accusations of individual and "institutional" racism, coupled with a compensatory attitude toward black identity, has been a further factor in the stimulation of the racist far right."

This is some thoroughly vile shit. In his mythology, racial minorities' struggles for rights is what causes the rise of neo-Nazis and therefore these struggles deserve strong criticism!

"Writing after the First World War, the American racial theorist Lothrop Stoddard perceived the threat of immigration in both economic terms — forcing down the level of wages—and its cultural consequences, affecting religion, rules of conduct, laws and customs. By 1940—in the middle of the Great Restriction of immigration—Time found it fashionable to mock Stoddard's fear of the "yellow peril" as a delusion. Nowadays, the same magazine predicts the inevitable eclipse of the white, Western world."

Is he referencing Stoddard *approvingly* here?

There's more along the same lines, although I don't know how much I can quote. To me, it shows strong sympathy with the racial aspect of the neo-Nazi project, which is horrifying. I don't see how I can read the rest of the book without knowing where his views lie. I'm now open to suggestions on books about post WW2 Nazi groups which are written by like you know anti-fascists

Jordan West says

"A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum. . ."

Somewhat uneven, but still a fascinating and profoundly unsettling read; illustrates that people will believe in anything, regardless of how irrational, ignorant, and inane it might be.

". . .shows that faith alone proves nothing."

-Friedrich Nietzsche

Peter McLoughlin says

I feel like I need to take a shower after reading books like this. As far as scumminess goes you don't get scummier than Nazis and add in their batshit conspiracy theories and creepy esoterica one wants to clean oneself off. After a brief history of neo-Nazi and far-right movements in the postwar period, we delve into the lunacy. Be it theosophy, voodoo history, UFOs, Satanism, bizarre Christian sects, weird esoteric belief, Atlantis you name the conspiracy theory there is a batshit nazi counterpart. It as if nazis want to appeal to the nutcases by seamlessly adapting the batshit for their own ends. The book gets tiresome towards the end although that is not the author's fault when cataloging a list of mean-spirited and crazy beliefs out there one can grow weary of the sheer number of insane conspiracy theories. Anyway, it is good to know what toxins are floating around out there.

Katharine Kerr says

What a puzzling book! Goodrick-Clarke was an academic, a scholar and the head of the Esoteric Studies program at a British university. He wrote several very good books before his untimely death in 2011. This particular work, however, published in 2001, reads like a first draft. It repeats information and names, it rambles, and the chapters read more like individual essays than parts of a whole argument.

As a survey of a wide field -- the persistence of Nazi ideas into modern times -- it needs to cover a lot of information, particularly names and book titles. Yet it could have been much better organized. What's more, in at least one place it's inaccurate. I was in San Francisco in the 1960s and '70s, and I have a bit of first-hand knowledge about a very small portion of the history G-C covers. He gets a number of things wrong. For example, Kenneth Anger's film is *SCORPIO RISING*, not *LUCIFER RISING*. The film *INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME* is silly, not threatening, and based much more on mescaline ingestion than Aleister Crowley's writing. His view of Crowley is more than a bit off-base, but then, Crowley's habit of setting up false personae for publicity purposes is partly to blame for that.

These details may not seem important, but they throw the reliability of the rest of the information into doubt. IE, if he's wrong there, is he right elsewhere? Overall, I'd suggest that the British material is likely to be much sounder than his scanty references to what happened in America. It's obvious G-C did an enormous amount of research on this material. His summaries of novels and tracts that most of us will never find or read are invaluable.

But I do wish he'd had a really good editor.

Jeremiah Genest says

I won't claim that Black Sun was a fun read, but it was a good read. There's a lot of information here, I learned much about Evola and Savitri Devi and Miguel Serrano and more about Christian Identity that I probably wanted to. These people are scary, and like everything else that gives me nightmares I turn it into gaming. In this case I have one player whose 1937 incarnation was a fascist organizer and I finally got around to reading this book for ideas. Since the same player has invested heavily in mystery cult stuff and there is a corrupted branch of said mystery cult, this book seemed a natural read, and it has certainly given me some ideas.

I recommend this book on two fronts. The first is to attempt to gather information on the persistent dark side of our humanity that, for whatever reason, chooses to destroy what it dislikes rather than attempt to resolve the differences. The second is for gamers who want to move beyond cardboard pulp Nazi villains. I wish I had read this book a few years back when I was running Pantellos for that very reason.

Friedrich Mencken says

This could have been a great complement to Kerry Bolton's book *The Psychotic Left*. Unfortunately Goodrick-Clarke's extensive use of morally charged epithets throughout is... tiresome to say the least. Do we really need to be told how bad and irrational these eccentric fringe political sect leaders are at every instance?

Goodrick-Clarke repeatedly makes unsupported claims throughout the text. For a text to have academic merit your claims have to be supported somehow not just stated "as a given", that's the very minimum criteria for scholarly work, regardless of the subject matter.

I also reject his hypothesis that pseudo-religious fringe groups are precursors to popular politics in that they are harboring, for the time being, unpopular beliefs that given the right circumstances will spring to life. In my opinion Goodrick-Clarke has not made a very convincing case of The Occult Roots of Nazism as he would like to claim. Basically Hitler had one book in his 2000 volume library and had allegedly read some völkisch magazines in his youth, Karl Maria Wiligut's association with Himmler and the existence of Thule and Ahnenerbe all of which are circumstantial and do not show the influence on NS ideology or politics.

Guttermutter says

This would-be encyclopedia on a bunch of phenomena that essentially come down to a postbellum acid reflux of nazism is a mixed bag. While providing solid biographical and theoretical info on then-leading "thinkers" such as Miguel Serrano and Savitri Devi, the more thematical chapters (Nazi UFO mythology, white nationalism in rock/metal subcultures, etc) feel like little more than (albeit extensive) wikipedia articles vaguely sketching nebulae, not knowing where to stop or what to mark as essential. The author too seems to at some points lose critical distance: while it would of course get tiring if he'd preface every theoretical examination of racist rhetoric with an "I do not espouse and find this abhorrent" and the volume

would triple in breadth if he were to offer point-by-point repudiations of said worldviews, his taking at face value (and in a sense cherry-picking) the adolescent outings of the Columbine school shooters, Varg Vikernes and other then-youngsters betrays either a lack of insight into teenage rebellious behaviour or a lot of bad faith in the service of a central thesis he doesn't quite seem able to erect.

It's indeed this lack of a theoretical backbone or any sort of analytical framework going further than pure documentation which struck me whilst reading. The introduction promises to not shirk the proclamation of harsh truths unpalatable to The Left, but these only show up at the very end, in the brief appendix titled 'Conclusion'. Without ever referring to or taking into account economic factors, state ideology or mass media, Goodrick-Clarke points to multiculturalism, affirmative action and establishment distaste of populism as the only impulses behind neo-nazism worth mentioning. In consistently describing them -- in a biting tone -- as failed and doomed, he even appears to be vindicating some of the racist precepts his objects of study adhere to.

Tread carefully within this.

Nathan says

Goodrick-Clarke's subject sometimes works against him; many of these ideologies are truly esoteric, and thus difficult to place in a recognizable ideological context.

However, that obscurity is precisely what gives this book its limited value. This volume contains the most thorough examination of the links between Indo-Aryan mysticism and Nazi occult doctrine that I have ever read. While many studies of Nazi occult practices go no further than acknowledging the existence of secret rituals and recording the involvement of 1940s- era Nazi officials with the occult, Goodrick-Clarke explains how Indo-Aryan concepts of caste and karma have been subsumed into the ideologies of separatism and racial purity that mark modern Aryanist movements.

Not all of the text is so revelatory. It travels some well-trodden ground in this area of study, including the links between racial ideology and the punk and black metal subcultures (and the perhaps inevitable connection to school shootings), as well as the links between Christian nationalism and the more prevalent rightism espoused in the political mainstream. So, the usefulness of this book depends largely on the familiarity of the reader with the subject. Many of these connections have been made before and since.

What Goodrick-Clark proposes we do about the solution is jarring: he asserts that multiculturalism is to blame for inflaming racial resentments, a claim not remotely connected to or substantiated by the preceding 305 pages. In effect, he argues that separatism is best fought with isolationism; a solution that seems to me to come dangerously close to apathy or capitulation.

Of limited usefulness and dubious in its proposed plan of action, this book is best avoided or read in conjunction with a more forward-thinking text.
