Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, a British academic, has shown himself to be one of the leading scholars on the relationship between the Third Reich and the Occult. His 1985 publication *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* has become a seminal work on the subject. *The Occult Roots of Nazism* convincingly illustrates that part of the powerful appeal of Nazism lay in its essentially religious, millenarian and occultist elements. Goodrick-Clarke investigates the life and works of German Ariosophists with particular reference to Guido von List (1848-1919) and Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954). The Ariosophist doctrine advocated a theocratic society ruled by gnostic elites and occult initiate orders selected for their racial purity. Liebenfels and List and other Ariosophists created a heady mix of völkisch nationalism, occultism, mythology, anti-Semitism, racial superiority and theosophy that was to be influential upon Heinrich Himmler’s (1900-1945) SS and wider Nazi ideology.

It is perhaps tempting to imagine that these religo-political ideas had died with the Führer, Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) in his bunker at the end of the Third Reich. *Black Sun, Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, Illustrates otherwise, tracing these influences, now re-envisioned in post war Europe and America. He shows that within some groups the mythology of Hitler and the Nazis is far from dead. It has continued to progress, viewing Nazi Germany as an idealised civilization destined to rise again. *Black Sun* is an in-depth, wide ranging study of Nazi Occultism in post war culture. The title and
front cover design are a reference to an esoteric symbol, originating in ninth century alchemy, also related to the Theosophical notion of the Invisible Sun around which the universe is supposed to revolve. It was used on some Nazi airplanes during world War Two and is also found inlaid to a marble floor of the Gruppenführer hall at Heinrich Himmler’s SS staff college in the Wewelsburg castle near Paderborn, Germany. It is now used by some post war esoteric Nazi groups (instead of the tainted swastika), it is said to have the power to rise up and unite the Aryan people.

Changes in demographics and the consequences of globalisation across Europe, the United States and elsewhere has sometimes developed into what the author describes as “new folkish religions of white identity.” Goodrick-Clarke begins his book with a survey of American neo-Nazism then moves on to investigate, with clarity, the web of extreme right-wing groups in Europe and the United Kingdom that include black-metal bands and anarchist movements. He describes the work of influential leaders and writers such as American, Francis Parker Yockey (1917-1960) and Baron Julius Evola (1898-1974) who created a grandiose, metaphysical anti-Semitism. Black Sun also investigates those who deified Hitler, seeing him as a Messianic figure, most notably the former Chilean diplomat, Miguel Serrano (b.1917) who has styled himself as an important ideologue for the post war Nazi Movement world wide. Savitri Devi (1905-1982), the subject of Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke’s 1998 Publication Hitler's Priestess: Savitri Devi, the Hindu-Aryan Myth, and Neo-Nazism, identifies Hitler as a Hindu avatar returning to lead his chosen Aryan people to a new and perfect era. There are also the early American neo-Nazis, such as

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James Madole, (1927-1979) who combined Nazism and Theosophy to create a vision of America as the New Atlantis.

In his chapter “White Noise and Black Metal” Goodrick-Clarke describes how increased immigration to Western economies has caused tensions. Intolerance and racism is growing amongst the young, urban, white working classes who resent the multicultural agendas of liberal governments, which, in their perception are not representing their interests. Goodrick-Clarke shows that some members of this social group have found a voice within the Nazi music scene. Characterised by a male fifteen to twenty something following, Black metal and industrial music bands such as Slayer, Satanel, Venom, and Mayhem have developed a significant following among skinheads and fringe radicals, providing a popular outlet for Nazi philosophy amongst the young. Goodrick-Clarke devotes an interesting chapter to “Christian Identity and Creativity”. Here he looks at, amongst others, the ideology of the Reverend William Butler and the Aryan Nations. His White Power Christianity parallels esoteric fascism in its ontological rejection of the Jews and its expectation of a racial apocalypse in the future.

*Black Sun*’s penultimate chapter is titled “Conspiracy Beliefs and the New World Order.” Here, Goodrick-Clarke summarises Milton William Cooper’s (1943-2001) 1991 work, *Behold a Pale Horse* which describing the neo-fascist fear of a liberal, Jewish, Illuminati networks that include aliens in spaceships creating a New World Order. *Black Sun* serves to show that the doctrines of the post-war Nazi occultists have an almost eschatological feel about them in their zealous use of esoteric divine justification for the hatred of the Jews. *Black Sun* also provides the reader with sixteen pages of photographs, depicting figures
such as American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell (1918-67). Neo-Nazi magazine covers and posters are also reproduced. Two diagrams of Hindu-Nordic esoteric anatomy from Miguel Serrano's *Adolf Hitler, els Último Avatāra* (1984) are of particular interest.

Goodrick-Clarke deftly illustrates that during the 1970s the development of the New Age Movement and the general increase in mysticism around this time created an intellectual environment in which Nazi occultist ideas could proliferate. This new atmosphere stimulated the publication of some interesting books, for example Trevor Ravenscroft's *Spear of Destiny* (1972), which investigates Hitler’s fascination with the spear that pierced the side of the crucified Christ, said to possess immense power. Goodrick-Clarke shows that the accuracy of the information contained within this book is very dubious. However, the effect of this publication, and other like it was to give Nazism a new mythology with reference and appeal to New Age ideals attracting the attention of Satanist groups, which were starting to expand around the 1970’s, which Goodrick-Clarke focuses a chapter (Nazi Satanism and the New Aeon) of his book on.

Another chapter of the book is devoted to “Nazi UFOs, Antarctica and Aldebaran”. Goodrick-Clarke outlines the development of the UFO phenomena and its surrounding mythology, he then goes on to discuss the proliferation of an ideology that said UFOs were Nazi super weapons put into hiding after 1945 in the far reaches of Antarctica, The Artic and South America. To rally forth at a later date in a technological army to rid the world of the ‘scourge’ of liberalism and democracy. In later years advanced by the writing of German conspiracy theorist, Jan Van Helsing, myths have come about connecting Nazi
super technology with Aldebaran, a plant far into the solar system inhabited by aliens.

Goodrick-Clarke focuses his conclusions on the events of September the 11th 2001 pointing out that neo-Nazi groups have sympathy with the actions of extremist Muslim terror groups, seeing them as allies in their fight against the Jew and the New World Order. Goodrick-Clarke draws parallels between the conditions that bred the Nazi party of Adolf Hitler and the unstable global environment of the 21st Century, where increased immigration has caused a backlash against multiculturalism. *Black Sun* ends with a stark question – could Aryan cults and Nazi esoteric groups pose a real threat to Western democracies by 2020 or 2030?

It is easy to scoff and say that the activities of a few radical fringe extremists mixed up with esoteric occult philosophy could never be a real threat to the world order; some may have said the same about a small group of thugs in 1920's Germany. Goodrick-Clarke’s *Black Sun* is a well researched and readable publication that investigates the underbelly of religio-political ideology. His conclusions leave the reader with an uneasy feeling, that there are groups out there that have a very different agenda from the current mainstream – those who see Adolf Hitler as their Messiah.

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