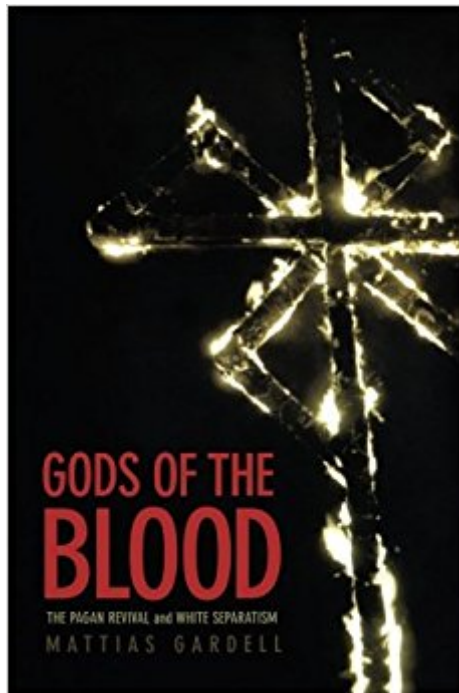


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# Gods Of The Blood: The Pagan Revival And White Separatism



## Synopsis

Racist paganism is a thriving but understudied element of the American religious and cultural landscape. *Gods of the Blood* is the first in-depth survey of the people, ideologies, and practices that make up this fragmented yet increasingly radical and militant milieu. Over a five-year period during the 1990s Mattias Gardell observed and participated in pagan ceremonies and interviewed pagan activists across the United States. His unprecedented entree into this previously obscure realm is the basis for this firsthand account of the proliferating web of organizations and belief systems combining pre-Christian pagan mythologies with Aryan separatism. Gardell outlines the historical development of the different strands of racist paganism—including Wotanism, Odinism and Darkside Asatru—and situates them on the spectrum of pagan belief ranging from Wicca and goddess worship to Satanism. *Gods of the Blood* details the trends that have converged to fuel militant paganism in the United States: anti-government sentiments inflamed by such events as Ruby Ridge and Waco, the rise of the white power music industry (including whitenoise, dark ambient, and hatecore), the extraordinary reach of modern communications technologies, and feelings of economic and cultural marginalization in the face of globalization and increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the American population. Gardell elucidates how racist pagan beliefs are formed out of various combinations of conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism, warrior ideology, populism, beliefs in racial separatism, Klandom, skinhead culture, and tenets of national socialism. He shows how these convictions are further animated by an array of thought selectively derived from thinkers including Nietzsche, historian Oswald Spengler, Carl Jung, and racist mystics. Scrupulously attentive to the complexities of racist paganism as it is lived and practiced, *Gods of the Blood* is a fascinating, disturbing, and important portrait of the virulent undercurrents of certain kinds of violence in America today.

## Book Information

Paperback: 456 pages

Publisher: Duke University Press Books; Advance Reader's Copy edition (June 27, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0822330717

ISBN-13: 978-0822330714

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #403,226 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #231 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Wicca, Witchcraft & Paganism > Paganism #326 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Radicalism #705 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Sociology

## Customer Reviews

Nazi skinheads and other groups proclaiming white supremacy represent a disturbing and frightening challenge to those advocating toleration and equality for all races. Historian of religion Gardell (*In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*) draws on interviews with white supremacist leaders to provide a startling and revealing view of many of these groups and their religious motivations. He contends that the increasing multiculturalism in the United States has led these groups to seek a racial purity that can be found only in pagan cultures. According to Gardell, individuals in these groups become religious racists when they claim that the Divine created the elements of an ancient, pure race. Gardell shows that pagan Nordic culture provides white supremacists with a model of legendary times in which the Aryan race was uncontaminated by the evils of modern global society. Thus, groups such as Wodan's Kindred, the Odinist Fellowship and the Church of Jesus Christ, Christian/Aryan Nations, see themselves as heroes whose task is to restore the lost purity of this bygone era. Gardell argues that members of these groups cannot be dismissed as hopeless dreamers; he calls them "romantic men armed with guns and determination" who have been throughout history a "dangerous species." Although Gardell's academic tone and sometimes torturous prose make for slow reading, his well-researched book offers never-before-seen glimpses of the visions and goals of racist pagans. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"*Gods of the Blood* will stand as the definitive work on white racist neopaganism in the United States, a movement virtually invisible until now. Mattias Gardell has gained remarkable access to this secretive religious subculture, mapping its feuds, factions, and rivalries." —Michael Barkun, author of *Religion and the Racist Right* • *Gods of the Blood* represents the culmination of the author's tireless fieldwork among America's radical right: race activists of every description, denizens of the occult underground, and adherents of a variety of small oppositional religio-political belief systems throughout the United States. Never before has a scholar had the means, the determination, or the unparalleled access Mattias Gardell has been accorded in the American radical right. —Jeffrey Kaplan, author of the *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*

This is one of the only monographs that I am aware of that deals with the recent pagan resurgence -- and as such, it is a valuable addition to academia. However, it is a tad dry and difficult to slog through in portions. Not exactly a beach read :)

The best book available on the dual subjects neo-paganism and neo-fascism. Fascinating connective dialog. If you want to understand the connection between these two phenomena.....start here.

As a Public Safety Leadership Doctoral Candidate this was a must read for myself as I study and on a personal level as my faith in Northern European Heathenry is affected by these very same issues. This book gives you useful knowledge of what groups you may encounter in day to day life, even for those not with the same religious view points. Recent news on television, as well as past international coverage of extremists and terrorists whom follow the leaders of these groups, has shown on us that these movements are still around to this day.

great read

Gothi Stephen A. McNallen's review from AFA Update/Bearclaw, June 25, 2003.....\_GODS OF THE BLOOD\_ Like many people, I've been awaiting the release of \_Gods of the Blood\_, the new book by Stockholm University professor Mattias Gardell. It arrived in the AFA post office box two days ago, and I've spent quite a few hours pouring over it since then. Dr. Gardell came through our area back in 1996, when he questioned me for hours about my beliefs, the history and structure of the AFA, and a thousand other things. I was one of a score of people he talked to all across the United States. One of the best things about \_Gods of the Blood\_ is that it is the result of thousands of hours of work in the field. This book was not pulled together in front of a computer, or through the mail. Ever since 1996, I've wondered if Gardell would treat us fairly or whether we were being set up for an attack. I can finally relax. The author quotes me extensively and accurately, giving me a chance to explain the AFA's stand as well as my own opinions on a multitude of issues ranging from the nature of the Gods to metagenetics to support for other indigenous cultures. But Gardell does something else that is very important. He draws a sharp distinction between "racist" Asatruar and "ethnic" Asatruar - and he puts us solidly in the ethnic category. To have a scholar acknowledge that the ancestral or folkish view is not in itself racist is a

major breakthrough, and it greatly undermines the attempts of those who want to picture us as some sort of Nazi-related cult. Almost as useful are the quotes from the hard-core racists denouncing the AFA and myself as "soft on race," "politically correct," or just plain cowardly. Nothing could make it clearer that these individuals do not consider us in the same category with themselves. Their candid quotes specifically demolish the lies about our alleged "extremist associations" that, every now and then, get floated around the cyber-Asatru community. But there's a lot in *\_Gods of the Blood\_* other than the AFA and Steve McNallen. You'll find plenty of material on the Asatru Alliance and Tribe of the Wulfings, as well as a whole chapter on Wotansfolk and a fascinating exploration of "darkside" Asatru, Satanism, and occult National Socialism. There are also discussions of paganism in general, the racist counterculture, and much more. I do wish he had taken a look at Theodism, however, and how it fits into the larger scheme of Northern religion. *\_Gods of the Blood\_* runs 445 pages, counting the notes and bibliography. Twenty-six photographs, mostly taken by Dr. Gardell in the course of his extensive interviews, give faces to what otherwise would just be names in the text. **BOOK OF THE MONTH** We've made *\_Gods of the Blood\_* our "Book of the Month" selection on the AFA website, and you can order it directly from there - go to <http://www.runestone.org>, then enter the main site, and you'll find the icon on the left-hand side. If you order through us, of course, we get a percentage! Hail the Gods! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA! Stephen A. McNallen Drighten, AFA

This necessary study explores the alliances of the American pagan revival with white separatism. This Stockholm-based historian of religions claims at the outset (ix) he's been open to all he has encountered as a researcher. (This has been challenged by some, so I document it at the start of my review, to be clear.) Gardell explains a crucial point (29) a browser may overlook: "racist" in his terms equals an essentialist view, that biology and spirituality are linked among adherents genetically. However difficult this may be to verify, Gardell adapts (73) British sociologist Colin Campbell's "cultic milieu" to define a considerably more disparate conglomeration of practitioners than the stereotype of a white power movement indulges in. Ideologically often at odds, with cantankerous followers and (too many autocratic, self-aggrandizing) earnest leaders of miniscule bands, the organically fragmented list of those professing separatist notions reflects reality, not some monolith. The parallel to New Age spiritualism may not please these cohorts, but Gardell regards (78) the "white-racist counterculture" as akin to a smorgasbord. That is, 11 items of ideological familiarity appear as main dishes, but there's no set menu. Those with an appetite can choose as they wish. Much of the book predictably recites, with admirably deadpan fashion at times,

the theories and expositions of various factions. Such may weary a general reader, although the scholar will find valuable primary sources underlying these cosmologies justifying Aryan or Indo-European primacy. There's highlights that spark interests. The Nation of Islam served for Gardel's previous analysis. Therefore, its rather congenial ties to the Klan (who by the way number 5,000-6,000 in his estimate in their "fifth" incarnation as of this 2003 publication date) naturally capture one's eye (115-116). "Asatru" occupy a central place in Gardel's survey (151-164; 258-283). There's more coverage of them here than in previous scholarship. He interviews the key proponents. However, I wish he'd also taken time to discuss the ideas the everyday follower holds. Solitary members of many of these paths get marginalized in a thesis aimed at organizations, too, and facing much misunderstanding and press sensationalism, may choose to stay silent in public. Additionally, while the press favors a focus on the fifth (at that time) of those "Asatru" incarcerated, Gardell does not offer an in-depth look at them. Still, he differentiates the non-racial (as in discriminatory) elements from those excluding those not of the ancestry deemed by "racial purity" as worthy of admission. Gardell incorporates Stephen McNallen's "metagenetics" and links it to Jung's "Wotan" analogy. The professor sums up (270) this approach as "spirituality is hereditary" to assert the primacy of genetics over culture or language. He also asks prominent "Asatru" (ritual leaders) how they'd respond if a seeker of "mixed" or non-Northern European lineage wanted to join. This enriches one's understanding of the variety of views out there. Additionally, the parallels with Native American and indigenous peoples struggling to secure their traditions against "religious theft" (280 ff.) provide a striking defense. At this time, the Kennewick Man legal battles were still ongoing, by the way; they earn some coverage. McNallen in a 2000 e-mail to the author asserts: "The existence of my people is non-negotiable." (qtd. 283) This defense for heathens remains overlooked by many who critique this school of thought, and merits investigation. Finally, there's a lot more in these pages. Wotanswalk in a more diasporic situation. darksides, the music scene, and armed militia occupy portions or all of other chapters. The index in my opinion is not as complete as it could have been, and there are a few typos. The reliance on the SPLC data to counter separatist activity is accepted as fact, but that organization's (and others)' controversial self-interest in fundraising by enumerating "hate groups" so as to inflate totals is absent from this volume. I realize there's something in this work to enrage anyone. I attempt a balanced evaluation. I harbor my own bent towards the content. But I tried to examine Gardell's work without too much my own filter. Overall, here's your rough guide to this terrain, to be consulted by one aware of the author's biases and one's own. A curious reader unfamiliar with many divisions within a too-loosely classified realm may find some contents distasteful, but the range Gardell aims at including in his work invites

scrutiny. Few academics strive to interpret this field, and we need examinations of it beyond self-published and fringe-press attempts, His five years of research may be slightly dated by now, but the relevance of this scholarship cannot be gainsaid. Gardell enters an enduring spectrum of blood-belief.

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