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Nordicism Revisited

IT HAS BEEN SAID of the Bourbons of France that neither in times of prosperity nor adversity did they forget anything or learn anything. The same might well be said of the "Nordicists" of our time, who, if they have not forgotten anything, have certainly succeeded in not learning anything.

Nordicism involves the belief that men of the "Nordic Race" — tall, slender, fair-skinned, blond, blue-eyed, narrow-faced, narrow-nosed, long-headed individuals — are qualitatively superior to the remainder of mankind. They are the creators of civilization, and their passing marks the passing of civilization.

Now the heyday of Nordicism is, of course, long since past. The impression which Madison Grant¹ and Lothrop Stoddard² made upon American thought has all but vanished.

Europe enjoyed a similar period of Nordicist literary ascendancy and, of all the authors who devoted time and diligence to the "Nordic Hypothesis," it was one Hans F. K. Guenther who led the most aggressive "scientific" wing of the movement. During the interwar years Germany, and subsequently Europe, were veritably inundated by books and tracts from his pen.³

In 1927, to meet the quickened demand for Nordicist literature in the Anglo-Saxon countries, Methuen published an English rendering of the second German edition of Guenther's *Rassenkunde Europas* and called it *The Racial Elements of European History*. By 1934 the name of Hans F. K. Guenther had been inscribed in the pantheon of National Socialist Science.⁴

While it is true that in the decade and a half of Nordicist ascendancy innumerable trenchant criticisms of their theses had been advanced,⁵ it could still be said that, given the state of anthropological, biological

¹ M. Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York, 1921), *The Alien in Our Midst* (New York, 1930), *The Conquest of a Continent* (New York, 1931).

² L. Stoddard, *Revolt Against Civilization* (New York, 1922), *Racial Realities in Europe* (New York, 1925).

³ H. Guenther, *Ritter, Tod und Teufel* (Munich, 1920), *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* (Munich, 1923), *Adel und Rasse* (Munich, 1927), *Rasse und Stil* (Munich, 1927), *Der Nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen* (Munich, 1927), *Rassenkunde Europas* (Munich, 1929), *Rassengeschichte des hellenischen und des roemischen Volkes* (Munich, 1929).

⁴ Cf. Foreword to Rudolf, *Nationalsozialismus und Rasse* (Munich, 1934), pp. 13 ff.

⁵ F. Hertz, *Rasse und Kultur* (Leipzig, 1925); F. Hankins, *The Racial Basis of Civilization: A Critique of the Nordic Doctrine* (New York, 1931).

and social science of the period, a seemingly plausible defense of their position could be conjured up.

Since that time a quarter of a century has passed; the world and science have not stood still. But, apparently by dint of admirable self-discipline, the Nordacists have succeeded in accomplishing what the world could not. The Nordacists have stood still. They have neither forgotten nor learned anything.

In one of the more recent issues of a sometimes publication, *Northern World*, there appeared an unsigned essay, of some length, entitled "Nordic Civilizations of the Past."⁶

Northern World is but one of the publications, of recent vintage, which has given itself over to the revival of Nordicism.⁷ In the United States itself, because of prevailing racial tensions, there have been some desultory attempts to resuscitate Nordicism.⁸ None have, however, pretended to "scientific" stature. Most have been frankly publicist. *Northern World* has, on the other hand, announced itself a "non-political," "cultural" enterprise, devoted to the dissemination of "scientific" findings relative to the contribution of "Nordics" to the civilization of the West.

It is interesting that, after these sober pronouncements, dissemblings and protestations, *Northern World* should publish an article such as "Nordic Civilizations." For the unsigned article reveals itself to be nothing more, nothing less, than paraphrased excerpts from Hans F. K. Guenther's *Racial Elements of European History* (which itself was translated from the second German edition of 1925), first published in 1927!

The article commences with material culled from the beginning of Chapter VII, page 122, and ends with material found on approximately page 190 of the *Racial Elements*. The footnotes referring to the professional literature in the field are taken, without the least effort to bring them up to date, from the 1927 *Racial Elements*. Even the expository footnotes which dignify this article with the air of academic sobriety are taken literally from the thirty-three year old text.⁹

As a consequence, the article repeats, without qualification, all the fables with which Hans Guenther has regaled Nordacists from the foundation of the cult.

Thus, according to this abbreviated version of the catechism, the Hellenes, the Kelts and the Italicis (Romans!?) are all classified as "Nordics"¹⁰ despite the fact that all anthropological evidence indicates

⁶ *Northern World*, IV (Spring, 1960), 16-41.

⁷ C. G. Fife, *The Five Races of Europe* (London, 1949).

⁸ Cf. R. Hoskins, *Our Nordic Race* (Richmond, 1958); W. Stephenson (ed.), *The Virginian* (Newport News, Virginia); C. Smith (ed.), *Truth Seeker* (New York). The two latter are monthly publications.

⁹ Footnote 2 of the article is found on p. 123 of the *Racial Elements*, 15 on p. 140, 19, 20 on p. 157, 22 on p. 161, 28 on p. 177 and 30 on p. 188.

¹⁰ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 17.

that the Hellenes were a compost of ethnic strains,¹¹ as were the Kelts,¹² and that the Italicis were predominantly Alpine.¹³

This "Nordic" "vitalizing wave" swept southward and made the Mediterranean "flourish"¹⁴ according to our text, which ignores the fact that the non-Indogermanic Mediterranean boasted a civilization and a culture of hoary antiquity while the Northern "vitalisers" remained considerably retarded¹⁵ — a fact which Professor Keiter remarked upon with the comment: "The dynamic main stream of culture proceeded from the South northward."¹⁶

As Professor Guenther's voice echoes and reechoes down the years, it repeats the same nonsequiturs and evidences of ignorance which rang in its first utterances.

Wherever even the most superficial evidences of depigmentation (blondism) are discovered, a racial affinity with the "Nordics" is conjectured.¹⁷ Conveniently forgotten is the fact that incipient blondism and sporadic instances of the trait have been found throughout the world and can hardly be ascribed exclusively to Nordic genes.¹⁸

This kind of mischief is further compounded by philological abuses of still greater magnitude. The Sanskrit word *hari* is translated, without qualification, as "blond"¹⁹ — while as a matter of fact the word in the *Rig-Veda* is used to denote yellow, red, crimson, bay, chestnut or even green.²⁰ Like the Latin *flavi* or the Greek *xanthos*, *hari* is a generalized color term with a variety of alternate meanings. *Xanthos*, which our shadow-Guenther translates, with equal certitude, as "blond" was used, by the Greeks of antiquity, to designate "any hair color short of jet-black, and the color was in all probability not lighter than auburn."²¹ When the Greeks came into contact with real blonds they were at a loss as to how to describe them. Ultimately they employed the adjective ordinarily used by them to describe the hair of old age.²² In fact, there are many instances when the word can only be translated as "beautiful" rather than with any specific color designation.²³ At best the word meant "blondish," "sandy" or "chestnut."²⁴

Similarly, when Guenther cites the evidence of painted terra-cotta

¹¹ J. Angel, "A Racial Analysis of the Ancient Greeks," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, N. S. II, 329-76.

¹² T. Powell, *The Celts* (New York, 1938), p. 67; C. Coon, *The Races of Europe* (New York, 1954), pp. 186 ff.

¹³ Whatmough, *The Foundations of Roman Italy* (London, 1937), pp. 52 ff.; G. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race* (London, 1901), pp. 176 ff.

¹⁴ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 18.

¹⁵ I. Schwidetzky, *Das Problem des Voelkertodes* (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 33; A. Mosso, *Le origine della civiltà mediterranea* (Milan, 1910), pp. 327, 331 ff., *Escursioni nel Mediterraneo e gli scavi di Creta* (Milan, 1910), Chap. XIX.

¹⁶ F. Keiter, *Rasse und Kultur: Eine Kulturbilanz der Menschenrassen als Weg zur Rassen-seelenkunde* (Stuttgart, 1940), III, 371.

¹⁷ "Nordic Civilizations," pp. 18-19.

¹⁸ Cf. A. Gregor, "The Logic of Race Classification," *Genus*, XIV, 6 ff.

¹⁹ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 22.

²⁰ Cf. *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, trans. H. Wilson (London, 1850), p. 16, n. a.

²¹ Wace, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, II, 22-23; similarly Keiter, *op. cit.*, III, 357.

²² Diodorus, V, 32.

²³ G. Sergi, *Le prime e le piu antiche civiltà* (Turin, 1926), p. 250.

²⁴ G. Sergi, *Mediterranean Race*, p. 20; Coon, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

figures as support for his contention that the classical Greeks were predominantly blond,²⁵ he fails to mention that an equal number of such renderings were brunet²⁶ and, if anything, evidence for the fact that the classical Greeks were a heterogeneous amalgam of ethnic strains "with Mediterranean strains predominant."²⁷

Nor is the picture, painted by the alter-Guenther, in which the Greeks revealed themselves enamoured of "nordicity," in full accord with the facts. The Guenther of the *Northern World* nowhere mentions the *Physiognomonica* of the pseudo-Aristotle. The Nordacist is convinced that the Greeks of antiquity admired the morphological traits of the North European.²⁸ Now the *Physiognomonica* is a contemporary text, easily available, concerned with the Greek evaluation of the physical characteristics of mankind. One would imagine the Nordacists, were they interested in an objective evaluation of Hellenic sentiment, would seek out its testimony. They are no doubt aware of its existence. But we nowhere find reference to it.

The reason is not far to seek, for the pseudo-Aristotle finds little to admire in "Nordic traits." It is not the fine, silken locks of the North European which denote, to him, courage or virtue, but rather the coarser tresses of the Mediterranean.²⁹ Similarly, dark eyes are the sign of good moral character³⁰ — "grey or white³¹ eyes" connote cowardice.³² Dark hair ("not very black") is an indication of natural vitality.³³ Too fair a complexion is indicative, to the pseudo-Aristotle, of cowardice.³⁴ A thin, pointed nose, which Guenther finds characteristic of Nordics, indicates "irascibility, as in dogs. . ."³⁵

Aristotle, himself, did not find much to admire in the Northern peoples whom he found full of spirit but "wanting in intelligence and skill," having no political aptitude and incapable of ruling over others.³⁶

But little dismayed, Guenther continues to add "fact" to "fact." One such "fact" is Guenther's intuitive judgment that Greek statuary gives evidence of the prevalence of "pure Nordic features"³⁷ among the Greeks. Needless to say Guenther does not report Professor Sergi's equally authoritative judgment that Greek statuary does "not in the slightest degree recall the features of a northern race. . ."³⁸ Nor does he take seriously the considered judgment of Professor Schuchhardt

²⁵ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 29.

²⁶ Coon, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-46; Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

²⁷ Coon, *op. cit.*, p. 145; G. Botsford and C. Robinson, *Hellenic History* (New York, 1956), p. 45. By the time of Herodotus the Greeks clearly distinguished themselves from peoples of fair hair and complexion. Cf. Herodotus, IV, 108, 109.

²⁸ "Nordic Civilizations," pp. 28-29.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 806b 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 807b 36.

³¹ Hertz suggests this is "light blue." Cf. Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

³² Aristotle, *Physiognomonica*, 812b 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 807b 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 812a 13-15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 811a 31.

³⁶ Aristotle, *Politica*, 1327b 23-27.

³⁷ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 29.

³⁸ Sergi, *Mediterranean Race*, p. 20.

(whom he otherwise cites with alarming frequency). Schuchhardt reminded the Guenthers that "the indigenous population of the Mediterranean had, before the Indogermanic incursions, a cephalic structure similar to North Europeans, and one must not, therefore, as is often the case today, display the busts of antiquity and the heads of the most famous of the Greeks and declare them Nordic."³⁹

Not content with this cavalier treatment of anthropology, philology and archaeology, this revived Guenther proceeds to make light of historical evidence. In the 1927 English edition of the *Rassenkunde Europas*, of which the article we are now considering is an all but perfect reflection, Guenther was conscientious enough to put "Eyes: Dark (?)" beneath the likeness of Julius Caesar⁴⁰ — but by the time he permitted his latest contribution to science to be published he had convinced himself that Caesar had "light eyes."⁴¹ This is a fact most singular in itself, since he cites no new evidence — but it is a fact made still more worthy of note when we read in Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* that Caesar had eyes "black and piercing."⁴²

Having thus accounted for almost all the sociobiological sciences, the author of our essay proceeds to dismember historical ethnology and cultural anthropology. We are told that "there is nothing unclean about life itself in any Nordic religion. . . . There is to be no shrinking from life, merely good clean living . . . lewdness and perversions are sinful. Here is industry, simplicity, love of truth and valor and righteousness which is behind all Nordic beliefs. . . ."⁴³

What we are to make of statements such as these remains obscure. We are not told if the Nordic worship of the horse's phallos, the sex orgies in which the Nordics disported themselves, their homosexual practices (for which we have more than ample historical and archaeological evidence⁴⁴) are to be considered expressions of "good clean living" or momentary departures into "lewdness and perversions." We could only begin to evaluate Guenther's statements after we have his definition of what constitutes "unclean," "lewd," and "perverse."

(An earlier contributor to our Nordacist journal had contended that the Nordics had "brought a new *humanizing* influence to bear on the fossilized cultures of the Mediterranean peoples."⁴⁵ The peoples of the Mediterranean, it seems, entertained human sacrifices. The Nordics, it is contended, did not.

Now unless one refuses to classify non-Nordics as human it is difficult to see how one could absolve the "Nordic peoples" of addiction to this inhuman practice when we know that the Cimbri, in 105 B. C., con-

³⁹ C. Schuchhardt, *Alteuropa* (Berlin, 1941), p. 343.

⁴⁰ Guenther, *Racial Elements*, p. 180, Figs. 224a, 224b.

⁴¹ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 38.

⁴² Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, XLV.

⁴³ "Nordic Civilizations," p. 25.

⁴⁴ Cf. H. Shetelig and H. Falk, *Scandinavian Archaeology* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 411, 413, 415, 420.

⁴⁵ R. Kuttner, "The North European in Homeric Greece," *Northern World*, III, 14.

ducted a sacrificial slaughter of thousands of captured Romans.⁴⁶ The Germans entertained themselves with human sacrifices in 12 B. C. and in 9 A. D. after the battle of Teutoburg.⁴⁷ Before the engagement with Drusus the Germans burned twenty centurions alive as a preliminary sacrifice.⁴⁸

As a matter of fact the custom of human sacrifice was prevalent among the Danes and seems to have accompanied the cult of Thor and Odin.⁴⁹ Nor were the sacrificial victims aliens — there was a wholesale immolation of royal personages to Wotan.⁵⁰)

As to the further evidence of the "good clean living" of these early Nordics we find that Tacitus tells us that the Germanic children were raised "naked and filthy,"⁵¹ in homes around which filth abounded,⁵² while Ibn Fadhlán (whose account of the Vikings is the earliest contemporary text describing their life) describes the Nordics⁵³ as "the dirtiest creatures of God. They have no shame in voiding their bowels and bladder nor do they wash themselves when polluted by emission of semen nor do they wash their hands after eating. They are, then, like asses who have gone astray. . . . They may have intercourse with their maiden while their comrades look on. At times a crowd of them come together and do such things. . . . As a matter of duty they wash daily their faces and heads in a manner so dirty and so unclean as could possibly be imagined."⁵⁴

We have, then, some slight indication of the accuracy of Nordicist accounts. If these most curious cerebations are, as Guenther suggests, to afford us a "key to history,"⁵⁵ it will be a key with which we can expect to open but precious few locks.

Nordicism has woven itself, inextricably, into the fabric of our times. Many of the excesses of National Socialism can be traced to its influence. It would be difficult to assign a specific place in the complex of ideas that constituted Nazi racial theories to the notions of Hans F. K. Guenther. What can be said without too much equivocation is that Guenther was long favored by the Party⁵⁶ and his conjectures were uncritically incorporated into the early "theoretical catechisms" of the movement.⁵⁷

His ideas, however, had but little influence in the legislative enactments of National Socialist Germany because of their fundamentally

⁴⁶ Strabo VII, p. 293, as cited G. Schuette, *Our Forefathers: The Gothonic Nations* (Cambridge, 1929), I, 227.

⁴⁷ Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 59-61.

⁴⁸ W. Babington, *The Fallacies of Race Theories* (London, 1895), p. 175.

⁴⁹ Schuette, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵¹ Tacitus, *Germania*, 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵³ "They are tall as date palms, blond and ruddy. . ." Fadhlán, "The Vikings Abroad and at Home," *A Reader in General Anthropology* (ed. C. Coon; New York, 1940), p. 411.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 411-12.

⁵⁵ Guenther, *Ritter, Tod und Teufel*, p. 145.

⁵⁶ Cf. A. Rosenberg, *Kampf um die Macht* (Munich, 1939), p. 349.

⁵⁷ Cf. C. Rosten, *Das ABC des Nationalsozialismus* (1933), Chap. XVI.

impractical nature.⁵⁸ In fact, by 1939, Guenther's highly imaginative speculations were explicitly rejected by the Head of the Rassenpolitischen Amtes of the NSDAP.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, school instruction continued to be largely based on Guenther's racial mythology⁶⁰ although significant departures were notable in their number and their tactical and theoretical importance.⁶¹

In 1935 Guenther received the first National Socialist Gold Medal for his "achievements" in science. But by 1943 Guenther apparently had cast off his more immediate Nazi connections and since the termination of the Second World War he has been loud in his denunciation of National Socialism.

It is thus difficult to assess Guenther's real influence in the development of Nazi theory and practice and for our purposes here it is not important to do so. Our concerns here are with his speculations in themselves.

Since the end of the war Guenther has quietly occupied himself with an elaboration of his original thesis, formulated as early as 1920. Forty years have brought no significant changes in his conjectures. In 1956 and 1957 he brought forth two successive books, *Lebensgeschichte des Hellenischen Volkes*⁶² and *Lebensgeschichte des Roemischen Volkes*,⁶³ which, although they hedge the unequivocal statements of the earlier works with qualification, do not substantially alter the tenor, nature of the evidence and the conclusions of his work. He pursues his "intuitive"⁶⁴ methods with a vengeance born of the academic scorn and neglect to which he has been subjected. He continues to find "Nordic features" everywhere, in statues and graphic representations, in every instance of physical attractiveness; he continues to find "Nordic spiritual traits" in the chastity of women, in the pugnacity of men, in the philosophic bent of mind, in inventiveness.

Although he finds, for example (in this book), Caesar to have been cursed with pigmented hair and eyes,⁶⁵ he discovers "Nordic spiritual characteristics" in his steadfastness in battle, in his "Roman deportment," in his tactical sense and his iron determination.

The complete absence of any empirical evidence that these traits are exclusively associated with "Nordic man" does not hinder him in the slightest in the development of his fancies. These are traits which he "intuits" belong to the "Nordic man."

Thus "almost without exception the great philosophers of the West

⁵⁸ Cf. G. Jacoby, *Racial State* (New York, 1944), pp. 78-79; cf. *Reichsgesetzblatt*, I, 815.

⁵⁹ W. Gross, *Der deutsche Rassengedanke und die Welt* (Berlin, 1939).

⁶⁰ Cf. particularly, J. von Leers, *Rassische Geschichtsbetrachtung: Was muss der Lehrer davon wissen?* (Berlin, 1941).

⁶¹ Cf. C. Konrad, *Der Rassengedanke in der Schule: Grundlagen, Stoffe und Wege fuer die Praxis* (Erfurt, 1936), pp. 48-49.

⁶² Paehl, 1956.

⁶³ Paehl, 1957.

⁶⁴ Cf. E. v. Eickstedt, *Grundlagen der Rassenpsychologie* (Stuttgart, 1936), p. 109.

⁶⁵ *Lebensgeschichte des Roemischen Volkes*, p. 204.

have been predominantly Nordic,"⁶⁶ we are informed, irrespective of the fact that the most Nordic of European lands, Norway and Sweden, have not succeeded in producing a single philosopher of distinction.⁶⁷

In fact, what is true for philosophy is true for all achievements — the principal cultures have never, to this day, had their center of gravity in Scandinavia, the most "Nordic" of areas.⁶⁸

If we are to generalize at all, the most productive peoples in history have been those in which a variety of ethnic strains have intermingled.⁶⁹ Similarly, individuals who have distinguished themselves in the cultural history of the West have been singularly of mixed race.⁷⁰

This is not to say that any conclusions concerning race-mixture can be drawn from these considerations. There may be no biological implications that can be legitimately drawn from these facts. The rapid development of a culture in these areas may be the result of a confluence of cultural currents upon which ethnic intermixture is simply a contingent and unimportant occurrence.

What these facts do suggest is that the notion that the "Nordic Race," *per se*, is the sole possessor of culture-creating capacities is more than suspect. The notion lacks the theoretical fruitfulness and the empiric verification an hypothesis must possess if it is to pass muster as a legitimate conjecture in theory building. The gratuitous introduction of vague causes of error, speculative and subjective judgments, a reliance upon incomplete data, summary neglect of disconfirming evidence and alternate explanations, methodological poverty and an inordinate disposition to simplification, earmark the "Nordic Hypothesis" as a religious commitment rather than a sound theoretical premise.

Finally, Nordicism is essentially a philosophy of despair. The very basis upon which the "system" rests precludes the possibility of serious social or political action. When Guenther informs his followers that in a "Nordic nation" such as Germany but 6 to 8 percent of the population display the morphological traits of the "pure Nordic,"⁷¹ he condemns the "movement" to the fate of an exclusive sect outside of which remain over 90 percent of the population. Even in Sweden the "pure Nordics" constitute, according to various estimates, but 12 to 18 percent of the population. Try as they might, the Nordacists have never been able to

⁶⁶ Guenther, *Rasse und Stil*, p. 45.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46, n. 2.

⁶⁸ Cf. Guenther, *Racial Elements*, pp. 122 ff. "Die Hochkulturen haben ihren geistigen Schwerpunkt bis heute nie in Skandinavien." E. Kretschmer, *Geniale Menschen* (Berlin, 1931), p. 90. "Keine der grossen Kulturbewegungen, die in geschichtlicher Zeit den Erdteil durchzittert haben, hat in Skandinavien oder Island ihren Ursprung gehabt." Keiter, *op. cit.*, p. 371. Cf. W. Ripley, *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study* (London, 1899), p. 507.

⁶⁹ Cf. C. Gini, *Nascita, evoluzione e morte delle nazioni* (Rome, 1930), pp. 73-74; J. Radzinski, "The American Melting Pot: Its Meaning to Us," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CXI, No. 10, 873-88.

⁷⁰ "Many of the men who are universally regarded as the greatest in history (for instance, Socrates, Michelangelo, Luther, Goethe, and Beethoven) were obviously of mixed race. Speaking generally, it is exceptional to find that distinguished men exhibit a pure racial type." E. Baur, E. Fischer, F. Lenz, *Human Heredity* (London, 1931), p. 692.

⁷¹ Guenther, *Kleine Rassenkunde*, p. 92.

convince the remaining majority of "bastards"⁷² that they should devote themselves, with any kind of diligence, to the interests of the Nordic Supermen.

Furthermore, the methodological principles to which the Nordacists have committed themselves assure a regularly diminishing return for their efforts. The greater exactitude with which they define their "pure" Nordic condemns them to a correspondingly meager reward for their trouble. As long as their "Nordics" were required to display only blond hair, blue eyes and long crania, they could find a respectable number of representatives in Europe and America. But with increased specificity the number of acceptable specimens diminished. When nasal index, facial index, the form and shape of the mouth and lips, the prominence of the superorbital bosses, the texture and color of the hair and skin, body form and carriage as well as a host of further specifications were added, the instances of pure nordicity decreased with alarming rapidity. The "race" was, in effect, qualified out of existence.⁷³

The pure race-bastardization thesis is a pre-Darwinian notion found in the work of Gobineau.⁷⁴ He conceived mankind to have been polygenetic in origin, God having created three distinct varieties of men: the white, the yellow and the black. History is the record of their bastardization. In this inevitable bastardization Gobineau saw inevitable decline.

Guenther, and his Nordacists, remain transfixed, as it were, by this pre-Darwinian tale of creation and fall. The Nordic race, once "pure," in quite the literal sense, underwent a gradual biological adulteration (*Entnordung*).⁷⁵ The consequence is a bastard population possessed of a dual psychic heritage forever at fisticuffs with itself.⁷⁶ No longer the cool, self-possessed culture creators of the "pure" past, the remnants of the Nordic race (and they are lamentably few)⁷⁷ are lost in a sea of physically and psychically hybrid peoples.⁷⁸ Nor, according to this doctrine, is it genetically possible to restore this lost virtue.

In a nation, a region, a continent, that has undergone protracted intermixture, it is impossible to reconstitute lost racial purity. For even if the "neo-aristocracy" practices systematic homogamy (blond, blue-eyed, tall dolichocephals marrying none but blond, blue-eyed, tall dolichocephals⁷⁹), the peoples of Europe and America are so genetically bastardized, Guenther tells us, that even these "natural aristo-

⁷² "Die Rassenkunde ist in der misslichen Lage, den uberaus groessten Teil der Europaeischen Menschen fuer Mischlinge, fuer Bastarde, erklaren zu muessen." Guenther, *Rassenkunde*, p. 15.

⁷³ Cf. C. Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man* (New York, 1957), p. 95.

⁷⁴ Cf. A. Gobineau, *Versuch ueber die Ungleichheit der Menschenracen* (trans. Schemann; Stuttgart, 1898), I, Chap. XVI.

⁷⁵ Cf. Guenther, *Racial Elements*, Chap. I.

⁷⁶ Guenther, *Rassenkunde*, p. 243.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239-40.

⁷⁸ Guenther, *Racial Elements*, p. 266.

⁷⁹ Guenther, *Nordische Gedanke*, pp. 103-9.

crats" could not predict, with any assurance, the physical appearance of their offspring,⁸⁰ much less their psychic traits.

Nordicist literature is, thus, heavy with a stark and oppressive pessimism. As such it accords well with the spirit of our time. It offers a certain succor to the dispossessed, the defeated, the casteless and disorganized quasi-intellectual class which mass education is manufacturing.

But its peculiar characteristics charm only a limited faction — dissidents who oppose any established opinion — creatures anti-social, who wish to see the world composed of enemies⁸¹ — those too weak to accept the responsibility of their own failure.

One thing has become quite clear — Nordicism has ceased to have any influence in "serious" circles. If it could at one time number among its adherents and fellow travellers men of such stature as Vacher de Lapouge, Gustav Le Bon, Henry Fairfield Osborn and Professor Ridgeway, the scientific pretensions of the cult have been so thoroughly undermined that not a single reputable authority will take up cudgels, today, in its behalf. This is most assuredly evidenced by the low quality of the material that has, of late, collected around it.

In this rather pitiable state Nordicism will linger on until its few adherents find a sheltered niche in Theosophy, food-faddism, Christian Science or Psychoanalysis.

⁸⁰ Guenther, *Rassenkunde*, p. 240; *Nordische Gedanke*, p. 110.

⁸¹ Nordicists have systematically opposed themselves to Jews, Christians, South Europeans,

