

Books as Weapons?
Identifying Strategies of the New Right's Literature Policy

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the literature policy of the German New Right with a particular focus on its literary strategies of canonization, appropriation and instrumentalization. Building on theoretical discussions of cultural hegemony and intellectualization, it analyzes how new right publishers and networks, especially *Antaios* and *Jungeuropa*, mobilize literature as a medium of ideological dissemination and cultural positioning. Through paratexts, publisher programs, podcasts and reviews, the thesis explores how the New Right constructs narratives of belonging, frames the state as an adversary, and cultivates a discourse of resistance. Exemplifying case studies highlight the dual role of explicitly new right texts and works originally published outside new right contexts, which are discursively reinterpreted and integrated into a new right literary canon. Special attention is given to *Antaios*' canonization project "Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane", which exemplifies the New Right's efforts to establish cultural authority by appropriating both 'high' and popular literature. The thesis demonstrates how the New Right uses and frames literature (and language) to negotiate cultural authority as well as advance its political goals and it considers potential counter-strategies.

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1. Introduction

“A book is a loaded gun in the house next door... Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?” (Bradbury 77). This quote from the dystopia *Fahrenheit 451* stresses the power of literature as both a challenging tool and a basis for ideological struggle within a society. The New Right (Neue Rechte) in Germany acknowledges this potential aiming to form, stabilize and normalize new right discourse (Meurer 195) for shaping public literary discourse in order to ultimately, reach its ideological and political goals (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 624). In that it distinguishes itself from the political sphere (Jessen et al. 201) and right-wing political parties such as the ‘Alternative für Deutschland’ (AfD). The increasing influence of the AfD in the political landscape of Germany along with the “Rechtsstreit um die Einstufung der AfD als rechtsextremistisch” (“Verfassungsschutz”, *Tagesschau*) serve as a stark reminder that the lessons of history do not automatically translate into societal development. Contrary to hopes and beliefs that past experiences would prevent a resurgence of far-right ideologies, the AfD’s active participation in discussions on “Remigration” (“Vertreibungsplan”, *Tagesschau*) uncovers the radical potential rooted within the party and broader right-wing institutions. A book with the same name being published by the new right publisher *Antaios* and the existence of new right publishers in general proves this rightward shift not only to be a political phenomenon but also a cultural, academic and literary one, including the discipline of German Studies. The debate surrounding the influence of the New Right on literature and linguistic policies is particularly significant, as literature plays a crucial role in shaping cultural discourse, public perception and identity (Altun).

In recent years, research on the New Right has intensified (Busch, Busch et al., Hoffmann, Jessen et al., Kempke, Ruhe, Schilk, Thomalla, von Moltke and Komfort-Hein, Wortmann), reflecting the growing weight of the topic and the academic community’s concern. This thesis contributes to this discourse by examining the publishing activities of *Antaios*, a key institution in the New Right’s literary network (Stahl 16; Wortmann 85). As such, the publishing house assumes a hegemonial exemplary position within the New Right; theory and principle wise (Meurer 195). Beyond *Antaios*’ function as a publisher of new right literature, it is also a central hub that distributes books from other new right publishers as well as non-new right publishing houses. Through an analysis of the *Antaios* website as basis, this thesis presents a cross-section of the kinds of fictional books offered, focusing on how they are presented and framed on the publisher’s website and through paratexts (Genette) beyond. By examining book descriptions and their interpretative frameworks, it will be explored how the New Right strategically positions its (discussions of) literature. In doing so the New Right intends to

normalize and legitimize its own participation in public discourse to achieve its broader goals of intellectualization and cultural hegemony (Woods 95).

A transverse analysis requires a foundational understanding of the New Right as a movement: its ideological roots and the overarching goal(s) uniting its various factions despite internal differences. For the sake of conciseness, this thesis will not engage in a detailed differentiation of individual new right organizations but will instead highlight their shared objectives and collaborative strategies (see chapter 2). The theoretical framework will further include an overview of the New Right's literature policy, positioning *Antaios* as a central player within it (see chapter 2.3). Subsequently, it will be analyzed how "the paratext [as] itself a text" (Genette 265) (book descriptions, book reviews and other elements) frames individual fictional works. This allows an apprehension of how meaning is ascribed to literature within the New Right's ideological context and which works are preferred to do so. It will be demonstrated that the New Right does not merely produce its own texts but also strategically reinterprets non-new right literature to fit its worldview. This is particularly evident in its response to established literary canons, such as its alternative reading list "Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane", which serves as a countermodel to established literary recommendations through canons (see chapter 3.3). To provide a comprehensive overview and illuminate the ambivalent nature of the New Right's literature policy, this thesis presents a range of case studies within a broader analytical framework. These can be categorized under three main aspects: literature by new right publishers (e.g. *Heerlager der Heiligen*, *Systemfehler*), by non-new right publishers (e.g. *Fahrenheit 451*) and by a mixture of both within the canonization project (e.g. *Der Prozess*, *Faserland*, *EuropaPowerbrutal*, *Schizoid Man*). These selected case studies will provide deeper insights into the interpretative and framing strategies employed by new right actors. Given the sheer volume of literary production within this sphere, this thesis can only focus on a limited number of examples. However, these examples are carefully chosen to illustrate fundamental mechanisms at play in the New Right's literary strategy.

The discussion based on these findings will display how the New Right assesses and uses literature and which (ambivalent) criteria influence these judgments. It will also review strategies of language policy applied within the new right literature discourse. This facilitates exploring how their ideological influence affects the public perception of language, literature and their cultural significance. It will be shown how the New Right constructs a nested network, both nationally and internationally, strengthening its institutions and increasing its reach. Apart from solidifying connections between new right actors, this network strategically extends its influence beyond explicitly new right circles. Through recommendations, intertextual

references, curated book descriptions and analyses, the New Right pursues to integrate its literature within public discourse. This tactic serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it instrumentalizes non-new right texts by ascribing ideological meanings that may not inherently exist and on the other hand, it legitimizes its own literary production, increasing its credibility and broadening its audience. In a last step, this thesis intends to identify potential countermeasures and to discuss new right literature policy in broader contexts: the examination of public discourse and conflicts in relation to the New Right raises the question of how such discourses might promote or challenge their ideologies. The relationship between author intent and text reception is fundamental in these discussions.

This thesis will shed light on how the new right movement employs its literature policy as a tool for cultural influence. If we understand the mechanisms and far-reaching implications of its literary strategies, we will be able to disguise its potentially dangerous impact on contemporary political and cultural discourse.

2. The New Right

Prior to the analysis, it is essential to define what is meant by the ‘New Right’ as the term is applied differently depending on the contexts (Salzborn 75) and as it refers to a heterogeneous and dynamic movement (Jessen et al. 199). Unlike ‘traditional’ political movements, the New Right cannot be clearly identified through party affiliations or unified agendas. Instead, it covers a broad spectrum of actors, associations and institutions, “revolving around right-wing, anti-liberal and anti-pluralist sentiments” (Jessen et al. 199), but these often pursue slightly differing goals, values and strategies. In some cases, these groups even make active efforts to distinguish or distance themselves from one another (see chapter 3). This distancing may serve strategic purposes such as appealing to specific target audiences or avoiding certain ideological stigmas. At the same time, it reflects the internal tensions and competing tendencies within the movement. Despite these divergences, they all operate under the shared label of the umbrella term ‘New Right’ (Schilk, “Metapolitics” 339), indicating the existence of certain unifying elements. These commonalities enable the diverse actors to collaborate and to form extensive networks. One of the most important new right theorists, Benedikt Kaiser, (Thomalla 648) conceptually brings this together under the term ‘Mosaikrechte’, a mosaic of different, yet ideologically related components: he asserts that the “Mosaik-Struktur als Teilchen Struktur vor allem anderen ein Netzwerk der effektiven, solidarischen Arbeitsteilung darstellen muß [sic!] – und weniger eine einheitliche inhaltliche Stoßrichtung verkörpert” (“Mosaik-Rechte” 35). The presence of this shared identity alongside their frequent cooperation implies that the New Right can be meaningfully treated as a cohesive movement, united by “some recurrent patterns of thought” (Woods 95) and overarching objectives. This thesis will therefore focus on the commonalities among the various new right groupings and, despite their internal differences, will analyze them as a collective actor with similar strategic ambitions. The diversity within the movement, which will be pointedly accentuated within some case studies, is not treated as a sign of disintegration but as a strategic diversification that strengthens its overall reach and flexibility.

2.1 Goals

The New Right differentiates itself from earlier far-right movements by emphasizing cultural and intellectual influence over direct political mobilization. Rather than aspiring immediate political power, it pursues a metapolitical strategy to achieve long-term ideological transformation (Buch et al. 474), which involves shaping public discourse, intellectual debates and cultural narratives. This metapolitical approach is rooted in two interrelated goals: the intellectualization of right-wing thought, equipping it with a scholarly and respectable facade and the establishment of cultural hegemony by gradually displacing liberal-democratic norms with its own ideological frameworks (Salzborn 76; Speit 61). By doing so, the New Right seeks to present itself as a legitimate ideological power within academic and cultural institutions, ultimately working to subtly reshape prevailing norms and values (Salzborn 76). It is this strategic focus and the interconnectedness of its actors that justify analyzing the New Right as a coherent, though complex, political and cultural project.

2.1.1 Intellectualization

The aspiration for intellectualization of the New Right constitutes a central strategic orientation targeted at establishing new right discourse for a more educated and culturally adjusted audience. The most important intellectual new right publication site (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger“ 221), magazine *Sezession*, for example, “arbeitet nicht in die Breite, sondern in die Spitze” (“Konzept”). By own admission, the New Right does not target as many readers as possible, but the ‘correct’, intellectual reader, who is able to comprehend “die Komplexität der Welt” (“Konzept”). This intellectualization process involves more than superficial rebranding; it is supposed to insert nationalist and new right positions within discursive frameworks that appear rational, historically informed and theoretically coherent. Not necessarily the values or the program are what distinguishes the New Right from the ‘Old Right’, but the strategy and its appearance (Hornuff 9). Within “the project of intellectualising the movement” (Woods 95), it cultivates a scholarly image, positioning itself as a movement capable of serious intellectual engagement and cultural reflection.

At the core of this strategy is the reframing of nationalist and conservative ideology through the strategic appropriation of philosophical, historical and cultural references (Salzborn 76). Scholars from the Western intellectual tradition are often selectively interpreted or abstracted from their original contexts. Their names and legacies are summoned to indicate that the New Right’s views are legitimate and part of a longstanding tradition, deeply rooted in European thought (Speltz 110). Such references serve to reinforce the image of the movement

as part of a longstanding and respected tradition of cultural critique, thereby countering accusations of extremism or irrationality (Busch et al. 471). The intellectual posture is communicated through a variety of means: contributions to scholarly journals, the production of theoretical essays, the hosting of literary conversations, the creation of publishing houses and think tanks to provide ideological coherence and intellectual depth to the broader movement (Busch et al. 467).

By embedding exclusionary and anti-liberal ideas within complex, often abstract, theoretical frameworks, the New Right is able to obscure the underlying political intentions behind a veil of academic legitimacy and to distance itself from National Socialism (Jorek 80). Furthermore, this intellectualization ties to more traditional conservative milieus, fostering what Busch et al. call a “Scharnierfunktion zwischen Konservatismus und Rechtsextremismus” (473), a hinge function that establishes the collaboration and ideological overlap between conservatism and far-right ideology. Through this discursive bridging, the New Right is able to draw support and recognition from individuals and institutions that may not fully identify with the New Right but nonetheless share skepticism toward liberal democracy, multiculturalism, or globalization (Schilk, “Heroismus” 451–452). This strategy also reflects an intra-movement ambition: the effort to offer a seemingly intellectual alternative (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 709) of far-right extremism aids to claim leadership within the broader right-wing spectrum, particularly in relation to more populist, political actors like the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). This allows the movement to assert a kind of theory-driven authority and to enhance its role as an elite forerunner of the cultural and ideological New Right (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 709).

Apart from serving as a rhetorical device, ultimately, the intellectualization of the New Right is a foundational element of its other main goal: it functions as a mode of internal legitimization and an external strategy of infiltration into ‘mainstream’ debates, interplaying with the objective of cultural hegemony.

2.1.2 Cultural Hegemony

Closely linked to the process of intellectualization is the New Right’s broader ambition to achieve cultural hegemony. The movement draws from Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony¹ which emphasizes that political dominance is not sustained through state power alone but is rooted in the control of cultural norms and values (Femia 24): by shaping

¹ This in itself is a tactic of intellectualization and appropriation; in this case paradoxically of left-wing concepts.

the underlying discursive conditions that determine what is perceived as acceptable or true (Femia 24), the New Right seeks to transform society. This strategy pursues long-term ideological change by influencing cultural production, public discourse and institutional frameworks (Salzborn 76). An occupation of the pre- or metapolitical field is supposed to secure enduring success in the political field (Meiering 5).

One of the central mechanisms in this cultural project is the strategic manipulation of discourse. The New Right intends to destabilize dominant liberal paradigms not necessarily through direct confrontation, but via tactics of fragmentation that introduce alternative narratives and generate discursive uncertainty (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 708). Creating disruption opens spaces in which new right perspectives can gain traction. By intellectualization, embedding their positions within culturally resonant and theoretically grounded narratives, new right actors work to normalize their worldview across media, academia and cultural institutions (Hornuff 14). A prominent narrative within this strategy is cultural pessimism (‘Kulturpessimismus’). The New Right frames modern society as being in a state of moral and cultural decline (Jessen et al. 210), attributing this perceived decay to processes such as secularization, individualism, globalization and liberal cultural policies (Schilk, “Heroismus” 461). It positions itself as the “guardian of traditional values, aesthetics and ways of life” (Jessen et al. 202) and uses this narrative to critique contemporary art, literature and media as corrupted by progressive ideologies. This context portrays culture as being censored or devalued by leftist elites, constructing a victim narrative that both legitimizes the movement’s cultural engagement and mobilizes supporters (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 222).

The framing extends to a rejection of multiculturalism, which is portrayed as a threat to national identity (Bruns 306). One of the New Right’s most influential narratives, the so-called ‘große Austausch’ (grand replacement), a term coined by French novelist Renaud Camus² (Schilk, “Heroismus” 461), claims that the ‘substitution’ of the European population by immigrants will lead to the dissolution of cultural and ethnic identity (“Großer Austausch”, *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*). For its metapolitical purposes, the New Right adopts the term, adding an image of an enemy (Schilk, “Heroismus” 461). Ultimately, the ‘grand replacement’ would then produce a rootless mass of individuals, allegedly designed to serve the global profit and capital interests of vaguely defined elites (“Großer Austausch”, *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*).

² His book *Revolte Gegen den großen Austausch* was published by *Antaios* in the meanwhile 4th edition and with an afterword by Martin Sellner (*Antaios*), proving the relevance of Camus for the German New Right.

While immigrants are cast as an external threat, the narrative also suggests a more insidious danger from within: state institutions are covertly complicit, advancing these developments under hidden agendas (Schellh oh et al. 16–17). Culture is defined in terms of fixed elements such as language, tradition and geographic or even biological lineage (Bruns 306) and the New Right constructs a vision of cultural purity that excludes hybrid or pluralist identities. This essentialist conception of culture is central to the ethnopluralist framework that underlies much of the New Right's discourse (Pfeiffer 35). According to this perspective, different ethnic or cultural groups are seen as inherently incompatible and must therefore remain separate to preserve their 'authentic' identities (Priester 540). A revealing example of how the New Right redefines existing terms and appropriates historical thinkers into its intellectual project is its instrumentalization of German philosopher and theorist Johann Gottfried Herder, as Andrea Speltz illustrates: the New Right "views Herder as the founder of ethnopluralism ... because he was the first to define nation in cultural and linguistic terms" (112). The New Right highlights Herder's "commitment to feeling and to the uniqueness of national cultures" (Speltz 113) while opposing this romantic notion to the "contemporary liberalism and globalization as the heirs of the Enlightenment" (Speltz 113). Within this selective interpretation, Herder's idea of culture is instrumentalized to argue against globalization and cultural hybridity and to "justify a politics of exclusion" (Speltz 120). This reinterpretation allows to distance the concept of ethnopluralism and – in a broader spectrum the New Right – from racism (Amlinger, "Rechts dekonstruieren" 319), while maintaining this discourse of exclusion under the mask of cultural protectionism. That Alain de Benoist, the 'founder' of the French New Right ('Nouvelle Droite') (Bruns 305), is a significant advocator of ethnopluralism demonstrates a paradoxical dynamic: "the nationalism of the far right is, ironically, transnational" (Speit 112). The trans-European spread of the new right ideology, visible in the exchange of ideas between the French New Right and the German New Right, exposes a broad and interconnected network. Concepts developed in one national context, such as ethnopluralism, are adapted and rearticulated in another which turns the ideological movement inherently transnational despite its nationalist rhetoric.

This exchange underlines the approach of a 'Kulturrevolution von rechts', a new right cultural revolution directed at achieving discourse hegemony in the metapolitical sphere (Bruns 305). Appropriating Gramsci's concept, De Benoist's ideas lay the ideological groundwork for the German New Right's agenda (Hoffmann, "Haltungsfigur" 707). The notion of 'Kulturrevolution' implicitly draws on Mao Zedong's concept of cultural revolution: the belief that a new societal order can only be established by displacing the intellectual, political and

cultural elites of the old regime (Jorek 80). De Benoist calls for a 'reconquest' of cultural spaces and a reassertion of traditional values in the realms of art, academia and public discourse (Hoffmann, "Haltungsfigur" 707). This ambition entails directly entering ideological competition with the left, engaging in a 'Kulturkampf' (Bruns 305), a battle over cultural and intellectual dominance. The broader stakes of this 'Kulturkampf' lie in challenging what is perceived as leftist cultural hegemony, encompassing institutions such as universities, the education system and progressive discourses associated with 'wokeness', 'cancel culture' and related concepts (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 637).

These strategies, as seen in the reinterpretation of historical concepts and in the critique of contemporary culture, are operational across a variety of cultural forms, including fiction which will be further explored in the subsequent chapter. In sum, the New Right's pursuit of cultural hegemony is a multilayered endeavor. It aims to replace liberal cultural norms with a nationalist and exclusionary worldview; doing so through reshaping the symbolic terrain on which cultural and political meaning is negotiated.

2.2 Strategic Narratives

The reshaping of cultural discourse and the pursuit of ideological influence by the New Right are promoted by specific narratives and strategic approaches disseminated across their various platforms. These narratives are not fixed or uniform, but fluid, overlapping and often modified for different audiences and contexts. On the one hand, they contribute to consolidate and expand the New Right's cultural and ideological reach. On the other hand, they should undermine trust in state institutions, liberal democracy and established societal norms. This dynamic interplay between consolidation and destabilization is vital for the New Right's broader metapolitical project. The following section introduces four key narrative patterns that structure new right discourse: the state as enemy, cultural and political belonging, constructing opposition and framing resistance. These will then serve as the basis for a deeper analysis of how such narratives are embedded in and advanced through their literature policy.

2.2.1 The State as Enemy

As previously indicated, a central strategy within the New Right's effort to establish cultural hegemony lies in undermining the legitimacy of the existing cultural order, including its leading institutions and, ultimately, the state itself. This is achieved through the construction of alternative narratives that portray the current societal, political and cultural landscape in a deeply negative light.

First, the state is accused of failing in its fundamental duties: protecting its citizens, maintaining order and securing national interests. This criticism is used to delegitimize the state by suggesting that it no longer serves the people under its governance. Apart from the political sphere, this applies to educational institutions, too: in line with intellectualization there is a general dissatisfaction with and criticism of for example German studies (Wortmann 82). Not only fail (educational) institutions to do their job, but the narrative extends to one of manipulation: "Dass das bundesrepublikanische ‚System‘ die Bürger indoktriniere (und daran auch Institutionen wie die Schule, die Universität sowie die Medien Anteil haben) ist ein Topos neurechter Gesellschafts- und Politikanalyse" (Wortmann 91). Germanist and new right figure Günther Scholdt accuses universities of a left indoctrination (*Musterung* 9), which is why the New Right's metapolitics takes place there (Buch et al. 474) (*Aktion 451*, see chapter 3.2). The political system is equally described "as mostly corrupted and controlled by leftist politics" (Jessen et al. 202). This narrative is supposed to create a "general disillusionment with and despair over mainstream liberal politics and political and economic elites" (Bangstad et al. 101). The term 'mainstream' indicates a lack of diversity and individuality and that there is only one

possible opinion one can overtake, which “homogenises society in a totalitarian way” (Jessen et al. 204). Beyond this, the system is depicted as manipulative, exploitative and repressive, curtailing freedoms and even endangering the very population it is meant to protect, ultimately leading to hostility (Thomalla 648). As threat and danger from the inside it complements the dangers from outside the country such as the ‘Flüchtlingskrise’ in order to create “diffuse Bedrohungsszenarien” (Palberg 73), dangers for current and future society in need to be managed. At the same time, these scenarios are allegedly generated by the incapability of the political system, which is the culprit of every problem of current society. In line with the two camps of the ‘Kulturkampf’, this includes the political left as well. New right figures illustrate the narrative of the left turning from former rebels to an oppressive force (Scholdt, *Musterung* 10), either working together with the state or manipulating it.

Second, the New Right frames the present as in a time of crisis. Such crisis rhetoric evokes social decay, cultural decline and moral disorientation (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 630), painting a picture of a society in chaos. Palberg determines crisis to be never neutral, contingent and open-ended (72). Constituting a “Situation der Kontingenz und der radikalen Offenheit” (72), crisis creates a moment in which the status quo is suspended and the future becomes undecided. Crisis then demands action, whether through radical change or the restoration of a lost order (Palberg 72). For the New Right, invoking crisis serves several functions: at the outset, it situates their movement within a broader conservative tradition. Schilk points out that the narrative of crisis, particularly cultural and moral crisis, has long been a characteristic of conservative thought (“Heroismus” 449). By inscribing itself into this lineage, the New Right legitimizes its ideological positioning. In addition, crisis narratives have affective power. They are emotionally mobilizing because they speak directly to experiences of insecurity, alienation and disorientation: Schilk underscores that such narratives address perceived or real losses of cultural coherence, social stability, or normative certainties and reframe them as political objections (“Heroismus” 451, 464). This allows the New Right to produce and utilize diffuse anxieties and convert them into political capital (Schilk, “Heroismus” 451). The emotion most closely associated with this rhetorical strategy is fear; of change, of dissolution, of invasion, of loss (Palberg 72). Fear, in this context, becomes a structuring emotion that facilitates political alignment. Apart from the mere depiction of crisis, the New Right actively attempts to produce or intensify it. They aim to provoke a pre-civil war atmosphere in which the collapse of the current system becomes thinkable and desirable (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 223). The movement cultivates moments of rupture to open discursive and political spaces for its own agenda, but it does not stop at invoking crisis. It often

radicalizes this narrative into one of catastrophe. As Palberg argues, crisis still implies the possibility of restoration within the current system, whereas catastrophe calls for the complete replacement of that system, meaning an overturning of the existing order in favor of a ‘natural’ or ‘true’ order that aligns with new right ideology (72). This reframing denotes catastrophe to be necessary because it justifies revolutionary change and legitimizes the installation of a new sociopolitical hierarchy (Palberg 72).

Third, these narratives of crisis and catastrophe often culminate in the presentation of the current situation in (pre-)apocalyptic terms (Schilk, “Heroismus” 456). In a dystopian manner (Bangstad et al. 110), the New Right constructs a vision of societal collapse that demands urgent and radical intervention. Schilk ascribes the narrative of apocalypse originating from tropes of religion (“Heroismus” 465), which reflects once again the New Right’s tactic of appropriating and transforming existing (and established) discourses. The apocalyptic narrative converges effectively with political storytelling (Schilk, “Heroismus” 447), offering multiple subnarratives that reinforce its central assertion: the world is in decline and must be remade. On the one hand, the apocalyptic frame builds on the “kulturkritische Figur der Entzweigung bzw. Entfremdung” (Schilk, “Heroismus” 454), emphasizing a fundamental alienation from the contemporary world. On the other hand, it demands transition: from old to new, from corruption to purity, from degeneration to regeneration (Schilk, “Heroismus” 453). In this sense, the apocalyptic narrative bears a revolutionary character cloaked in traditionalist aesthetics. It envisions a reform but even a radical overhaul, which might be one of the reasons such narratives are easier adaptable in times of transformation (Schilk, “Heroismus” 455). Schilk ascribes them a paradoxical fusion of traditionalism and revolution, of anti-modernism and modernity (“Heroismus” 453), which is a defining feature of new right discourse, too. They accommodate an agenda that thrives on contradictions, overlaps and tensions (see also chapter 2.2.3). This oppositional notion, in turn, is applicable to the dual differentiation of apocalypse, including oppositions such as “Unreinheit – Reinheit, Gut – Böse oder Wahrheit – Lüge” (Schilk, “Heroismus” 453). As will be shown in chapter 2.2.3, such oppositional camps create the effect of only one possible alternative available. These narratives are inherently hegemonic, because instead of coexisting with other perspectives, apocalyptic discourse seeks to dominate (Schilk, “Heroismus” 453). Apocalyptic narratives are supposed to delegitimize competing narratives and establish themselves as discursive regimes, claiming exclusive authority over truth and meaning (Schilk, “Heroismus” 453). In this way, they function as method for the New Right’s aspiration to cultural hegemony (see chapter 2.1.1): they pursue interpretive sovereignty

while invalidating the legitimacy of pluralist, democratic debate (a notion they ambivalently criticize in the current state).

Finally, these narratives serve a dual function: they support the New Right to position itself as misunderstood, neglected and oppressed victim of the existing order (Speit 59). An unequal treatment of new right and left activists (Bruns 307), for example, implies a curtailment of freedom of speech and opinion. Such an engagement in self-victimization reveals fascist tendencies (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 16). In a reversal of victimhood, they enqueue themselves in the tradition of (paradoxically) left rebellion against past dictatorships:

In einer strategischen Allianz mit wissenschaftsfeindlichen Klimawandel- und Corona-Leugnern zielt die Metapolitik der Neuen Rechten darauf ab, dem für Jahrzehnte mit der Kritischen Theorie assoziierten (und für genuin ‚links‘ gehaltenen) Dispositiv der ‚Kritik‘ eine neue, eine neurechte Heimat zu geben (Hoffmann, „Ästhetischer Dünger“ 222).

Moreover, it enables the New Right's staging as a viable alternative, as "utopischen Ort innerhalb einer zunehmend fragmentierten und polarisierten Gesellschaft" (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 630). By doing so, the movement pursues moral and political legitimacy while paving the way for its own vision (Schilk, "Heroismus" 455). This narrative strategy is supplemented with the ones discussed in the following subchapter, particularly in relation to strategies of opposition and the construction of cultural belonging.

2.2.2 Establishing Cultural and Political Belonging

Beyond offering itself as a mere alternative to the status quo, the New Right actively constructs a narrative of belonging designed to unify its diverse supporters and foster a shared ideological identity. This narrative strengthens internal cohesion within the heterogeneous 'Mosaikrechte' and presents the movement as a coherent political-cultural front against a common adversary.

One strategy in generating belonging is through contrast. Belonging is not created in a vacuum but emerges relationally through the construction of an outside, of the 'other' against which identity is formed (see next subchapter). The delegitimization of the liberal democratic order and its institutions is therefore a rejection but also a productive act: it creates the emotional and ideological preconditions for alignment with an alternative. Emotions evoked by the narrative of decline, corruption and alienation, such as despair, fear and rage are discursively converted into hope and longing for a new order (Bangstad et al. 101). According to Jessen et al., the New Right engages in a "specific framing of a mainstream society that includes a dilapidated cultural landscape and a corrupt and alienating political sphere in order to

simultaneously mobilize disappointment in one set of institutions and belonging to another” (212).

Central to this dynamic is emotion, the affective dimension of belonging. Bangstad et al. argue that the ‘politics of affect’ has long served to gather and mobilize ‘ordinary people’ around shared goals and emotions (99). While the intellectualization of the New Right might suggest a distancing from populist rhetoric, in practice, affective strategies serve to bridge that gap and allow the movement to appeal across a broad spectrum. This again ambivalently characterizes new right strategy in combining elitist metapolitics with popular emotional appeal. Jessen et al. elaborate on how institutions themselves evoke a wide range of affects oscillating from stability and identity to dependence or resentment (200). The New Right exploits this emotional ambivalence: by presenting liberal institutions as betraying their supposed stabilizing roles, the movement cultivates distrust and alienation, while simultaneously offering its own structures and communities as emotionally confirming and identity-granting alternatives. What makes this strategy particularly effective is that affect and emotion often produce stronger attachments than reason or fact. Bangstad et al. affirm that it is precisely through emotion that political affiliations become resilient, even when inconsistencies, internal contradictions, or ideological ambivalences are present (100). This helps explain the paradoxical stability of the New Right’s coalition despite its ideological heterogeneity.

Moreover, the movement associates itself and embeds its arguments within other contexts, such as religion (Schilk, “Heroismus” 448) or culture. Cultural belonging is then a fascist narrative which in line with, for example, ethnopluralism excludes certain groups of people (Bangstad et al. 109). It supports implanting values, in this case, the rejection of multiculturalism and globalism within new right narratives (of belonging). Such a notion of nationality draws a “Grenze der Zugehörigkeit” (Palberg 68), a boundary of who belongs and who does not. Instead of being inclusive, belonging is selective: it strengthens identity through exclusion. In this model, national or cultural identity is defined positively (through tradition, language, religion) and also negatively through opposition to, for example, ‘the foreign’. Cultural affiliation stabilizes individual identity and becomes a vehicle for collective political mobilization (Bruns 306).

Finally, narratives themselves play a crucial role in constructing belonging. Beyond isolated rhetorical strategies, the New Right fosters narrative communities with shared interpretive frameworks that bind individuals together across space and difference. Just as certain terms function as linguistic dog whistles (Busch et al. 476), entire storylines, for

example conversations about literature, serve as ideological bonds. Felix Schilk illustrates the importance of common and collective narratives for bonding and community building (344–345). He states that the metapolitics can be viewed as a programmatic storytelling aiming to “transform cursory discourse coalitions into mentally shaped narrative communities that extend the groupuscules of the” (345) New Right. In line with the literature policy as main strategy such narratives often revolve around literature: as the New Right understands politics as being shaped by cultural preconditions, it becomes both a tool and a site of community formation. Beyond instrumentalizing literature for ideological purposes (as will be discussed in chapter 3), the shared reflection on and discussion of texts itself becomes a form of political belonging (Kempke 686). It is through this practice that a sense of intellectual and emotional community is cultivated. The creation of affection and belonging is not only directed toward reinforcing internal loyalty but also toward drawing in (unpolitical) outsiders: “Ideologische Indoktrination erscheint so als Effekt einer bestimmten affektiven Strategie, die die vorhandenen, erst einmal unpolitischen Gefühle intensiviert, sie politisch wendet und sie zudem um das Gefühl der Gruppenzugehörigkeit erweitert” (Kempke 697). Belonging is an active and strategic process central to the New Right’s broader goal of cultural and political hegemony.

2.2.3 Constructing Opposition

The narratives outlined above are consistently built, strengthened and reiterated through the strategic invocation of opposition or polarity. This rhetorical strategy generates a sense of clarity and coherence by simplifying the complexity of sociopolitical realities into seemingly self-evident dichotomies. Through these binaries, the world is rendered legible as and reduced to a struggle between two clearly allocated sides, leaving little room for nuance. Within the new right narrative, this dichotomous logic constructs binary oppositions that make it appear not only easy, but necessary, to choose a side, implying that only one side is legitimate. Their reductive clarity offers a form of emotional orientation in a perceived world of chaos, crisis and transformation. The spectrum of oppositions mobilized in new right discourse is broad, ideologically loaded and includes for example ‘own vs. other’, ‘us vs. them’, ‘the people vs. the state’, ‘minority vs. majority’, ‘outsiders vs. insiders’, ‘oppressed vs. suppressor’, ‘individuality vs. mainstream’, ‘tradition vs. modernity’, ‘right vs. wrong’, or even ‘good vs. evil’. This thesis will focus on a selection of these oppositions that prove particularly relevant to the new right cultural and literature policy and will play a central role in the subsequent analysis.

At the core of these oppositional structures lies the binary of 'own vs. other'. This foundational opposition serves as the basis for the construction of identity within the New Right's discourse. Drawing on Said's theory of Orientalism, the 'other' is framed as distinctly separate and incompatible with the self (Said 1784). This alterity aids to stabilize the identity of the self by contrast (Said 1784): one's own cultural, political and moral essence is defined through negation. The 'other' can become a threat to physical security and to the imagined coherence of cultural identity. Culture, as a key component of this identity, is similarly construed as static and bound. In this regard, the oppositional narrative promotes ethnopluralist ideology, as it insists on the separation and preservation of cultural entities. This, in turn, promotes a sense of homogenous unity within the 'own' pole of the binary (Hornuff 18). The oppositional framing sets the stage for the new right positioning against the political system as well as threatening other cultures (Schilk, "Heroismus" 461) and promotes affiliation with their movement. The polarizing structure helps establish a sense of belonging while delegitimizing existing political institutions. Jessen et al. determine it to be through "a polarising rhetoric of 'us vs. them' that New Right institutions emerge and become meaningful and important to people" (200). The implied logic of this narrative functions as persuasive tool: if one is dissatisfied with the state, one must naturally be aligned with what the New Right has to offer. The cohesion of the 'Mosaikrechte' is strengthened, uniting diverse ideological positions against a common enemy (Thomalla 649). The flexibility of this openness allows the New Right to appeal to different groups within the far right but also to individuals beyond its spectrum alike.

Closely tied to this dichotomy is the opposition of 'insiders vs. outsiders'. While a matter of perspective – who counts as insider or outsider depends on one's positionality – the New Right plays both roles. On the one hand, it self-identifies as an outsider: a minority deliberately situated outside of the hegemonic political system (Wortmann 93), striving for an alternative society. The outsider status is characterized by a cultivated political, intellectual and aesthetic non-conformity (Hoffmann, "Haltungsfigur" 724), by a deliberate deviation from established societal values. This renders it favorable to be an insider within the New Right. This means being part of those who have 'awakened', who 'know better' than the masses blindly following 'mainstream' ideologies. Through this double positioning inside the binary the New Right is able to maintain the moral authority of an outsider while offering the social affiliation and epistemic superiority of an insider identity.

Another prominent opposition is 'tradition (or the past) vs. modernity'. The New Right valorizes the former while casting the latter as a corrupting force (Amlinger, "Rechts dekonstruieren" 321). It embraces and promotes traditional societal norms and values extending

from a hierarchical societal order to traditional imagery of family and gender (Bruns 305; Salzborn 82). Traditionality comprises “Western and/or Christian values, Germanness, ... the nation, intellectualism, freedom, a better past” (Jessen et al. 200). This affinity for the past (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 226) and tradition is closely linked to their rejection of progressive values and the modern world, including phenomena such as globalization, digital culture and multiculturalism. Despite this critique, however, the New Right embraces the very tools of modernity, such as social media, digital platforms and global networks to disseminate its ideology and organize its movements (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 620). These contradictions expose a strategic ambiguity. While the New Right publicly laments modernity and its consequences, it navigates its structures when doing so serves its own interests. The ambiguity is essential: the New Right moves fluidly between extremes, appropriating whichever position is most advantageous in a given context. While it asserts operating on an intellectual, complex level, its oppositional rhetoric often results in precisely the opposite, in oversimplification, producing generalizations and reductive categories. Yet, this very simplification makes new right narratives so effective. Offering stark moral oppositions and emotionally resonant binaries facilitate to address a wide and heterogeneous audience.

The construction of oppositional narratives serves a dual purpose: it fosters a sense of belonging within the New Right while simultaneously discrediting the legitimacy of the current system. This enhances a division of society and emphasizes the populist character (Amlinger, “Gegenlektüren” 75–77) of the New Right. Jessen et al. state that in the “fundamental struggle between stability and flexibility, tradition and progress, consistency and diversity, culture and politics, New Right institutions foster and amplify existing hostilities towards a pluralist society” (211). Through these polarities, the New Right forges identity, cultivates community and positions itself as the only viable alternative in a crisis.

2.2.4 Framing Resistance

At the intersection of the previously discussed narratives of delegitimizing the state while creating belonging through opposition lies a central discursive strategy of the New Right: the framing of resistance. This narrative legitimizes and even encourages action against the perceived enemy. The New Right presents resistance not as radicalism but as a necessity in the face of state oppression and societal decay. Those who conform are portrayed as complicit actors who willingly subject themselves to the will of ‘the enemy’ (Amlinger 326). Integration and assimilation into the current political and cultural system are thus framed negatively, while deviation and nonconformity become signs of authenticity and courage (Palberg 76). The ‘ideal

new right subject' is one who resists manipulation, sees through the 'lies' of the system and reclaims the ability to think independently (Jessen et al. 2006). This narrative serves as a call for ideological differentiation but also as a mode of radicalization: turning away from the state becomes a virtue and confrontation becomes a badge of political honor. Günther Scholdt extends this narrative to every situation no matter from which 'direction', emphasizing the importance of resistance as act for the New Right:

Gegen Despotien einer jeden Epoche zu streiten, bleibt ehrenvoll, unabhängig davon, ob man die sonstigen politischen Ansichten teilt. Sich gegen schreiende ökonomische Zerklüftungen einer Gesellschaft, gegen rechtliche Chancenlosigkeit, Korruption, Gewalt und Ähnliches aufzulehnen, ist immer verdienstvoll (*Musterung* 10).

As a consequence, new followers are drawn in, existing supporters become further radicalized and the antagonistic division between 'us vs. them' is deepened. The appeal to resist rarely stands alone. It gains strength from being embedded in the broader narrative structure of the New Right, particularly in conjunction with crisis and catastrophe.

The call to action is rooted in apocalyptic and conservative motifs (Schilk, "Heroismus" 453, 465): if the current moment is framed as an existential threat to the nation, the culture, or one's identity, then (violent) resistance appears to be legitimate and necessary. Palberg explains this logic as a shift from crisis to catastrophe: only when the situation is imagined as catastrophic does the use of force become thinkable as self-defense (78). The framing of resistance does not remain on the symbolic level. Hornuff illustrates how the New Right cultivates an "ästhetisierte Gewaltphantasie" (92), which serves as intellectual preparation for political aggression: "Im notorischen Beschwören eines ästhetischen Aktivismus sollen Gewaltneigungen imaginativ entfesselt ... werden" (Hornuff 93). While this violence is not always explicitly endorsed, there is an ambivalence: the New Right often claims not to desire violence, while simultaneously insisting on the right and necessity of defense (Hornuff 92).

This ambivalence is amplified by the use of war metaphors and "aggressiv militante[r]... Rhetorik" (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 622), especially in the context of literature and cultural production. Books become vehicles of ideological warfare, their content and paratexts charged with militant imagery that links cultural politics to a broader strategic agenda (Wortmann 91). Such violent imagery underlines the presentation of the current situation as war-like, the capability of the New Right to enter this 'war' victorious and overall carries forcefulness. On a formal level, the usage of violent metaphors in their literature policy reveals the connection between literature and linguistic strategies of the movement.

The narrative of resistance only unfolds its full potential when connected with the other core narratives of the New Right. The mobilization of a collective enemy image and the

emotional binding of followers through belonging converge to create a discursive environment in which resistance is imperative. The effectiveness of this narrative depends on its relational embedding: resistance becomes the logical endpoint of a story in which the state has betrayed its people, truth is suppressed and cultural decline threatens collective identity. In this way, resistance functions as a nodal point within the new right discursive network. It is the enactment of their ideological contentions, the emotional valve of their affective strategies and the culmination of their cultural and political narratives. As the following chapter will demonstrate, these narratives are (aesthetically) shaped and further reproduced through the New Right's literature policy, which plays a crucial role in preparing, circulating and legitimizing the call for resistance within the broader strategy of intellectualization and the pursuit of cultural hegemony.

2.3 The Literature Policy of the New Right

Within the political project of the New Right, literature holds a central role as a strategic and symbolic instrument through which cultural and ideological goals are pursued. Hoffmann observes no other political movement to instrumentalize literature and the discourse surrounding it as the New Right does (“Ästhetischer Dünger” 226). Instrumentalizing literature is not merely one among many means of communication, but the very core of their metapolitical strategy: “literature moves to the centre of ‘metapolitical’ endeavours” (Ruhe 478). Through their manifold activities in the literary field the movement advances its political vision and constructs a counter-hegemonic cultural identity. This importance of literature reflects a deliberate aesthetic and strategic orientation toward the past: the act of reading which is perceived to be no longer central in contemporary media culture constitutes a symbol of intellectual nostalgic tradition and current decline. Wortmann determines a dual purpose in the fortification of reading: the New Right exploits this affinity for the past, positioning itself as a cultural elite lamenting the erosion of reading culture while appealing to intellectuals who share this view (88). Thus, literature can signify cultural decay and accentuates intellectual and moral superiority. It is, then, instrumental for the movement’s self-intellectualization and for establishing cultural hegemony. By declaring continuity with recognized literary and publishing traditions, the New Right intends to legitimize its ideological position. This cultural work enables the movement to distance itself from the contemporary ‘mainstream’ while asserting its own cultural authority: the focus on literature allows to “garner cultural significance through re-enactments of cultural tropes, which suggest belonging to a long tradition of publishing and reading cultures, but also through a shared contempt for a surrounding culture depicted as hollow at best, corrosive at worst” (Jessen et al. 201).

As demonstrated by this thesis in the following analytical chapters, the New Right’s reading and appropriation of literature function as a microcosm of these broader discursive and cultural strategies (Thomalla 659). The movement’s literature policy is part of a long-term strategy (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 226). Over time, the production and dissemination of literary works have become increasingly institutionalized and linked (Thomalla 641, 649), culminating in a structured scheme of cultural intervention. Moreover, these literary strategies surpass a German context. Similar literary-political approaches can be identified transatlantically with shared formats, intertextual references and the circulation of texts through translation. They connect new right ideas across national boundaries (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 620). This international dimension fortifies the strategic role literature plays within

broader new right networks. Understanding the relevance the movement attributes to literature thus sheds light on how and why it has such a strong focus on its literature policy.

While some groupings within the New Right attempt to distance themselves from *Antaios*, they nonetheless share a common emphasis on the importance of reading and attribute to literature overlapping functions, as will be further illustrated. One such function is the extraction of present-day meaning from past literary works. In the preface to *Literarische Musterung*³, where he offers reinterpretations of canonical literature, Günther Scholdt insinuates and challenges a notion that only contemporary themes can speak to the present. As he puts it:

Auch kursiert das Vorurteil, nur heutige Handlungen, Konflikte oder Personen betreffen erkennbar die Gegenwart, während die für Klassiker beanspruchte Allgemeingültigkeit eher unverbindlich-antiquarische Zeitflucht begünstigt. Die folgenden Deutungen widerlegen diese simple Einschätzung (*Musterung* 7).

Scholdt's approach exemplifies the reduction of literary texts to didactic purpose, instruments for drawing direct lessons for the present. Such pedagogical reading practice is framed as a form of intellectual complexity. It contrasts with 'simplistic' readings, which do not draw ideological meaning and learnings for the present from literature. Ambivalently, Wortmann notes this instrumentalization of literature for new right instructions often results in an oversimplified interpretation (93). Engaging in literature is thus a way to obscure blunt statements about ideology or politics and to render them acceptable (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 631) and is essential for the New Right to gain and convey political and ideological ground: "Keine politische Identität ohne kontinuierliche Lektüre", analyzes Jonas Meurer, stressing the constitutive role of reading in the development of a new right worldview and identity (211). Here, literature is not merely about education but about cultivating a political self and locating oneself within a shared ideological terrain (Hoffmann, "Haltungsfigur" 722), so consequently, about individual identity formation. At the same time, it must take place within a group of people with shared objectives and ideas, within a collective (Meurer 204). From a new right perspective, reading enforces identity both on an individual level but through collective reading practices and shared interpretive communities (Thomalla 652). Collectivity supports the narrative of political and cultural belonging.

All these functions of literature culminate in books as a mode of cultural revitalization; a kind of second birth (Kositza and Kubitschek 8). This conception is explicitly articulated in the anthology *Das Buch im Haus nebenan*, edited by Götz Kubitschek and Ellen Kositza. In the

³ The title already carries metaphorical imageries of military. Personifying books with soldiers underlines their power and violence. It reproduces the books as weapons for the new right 'Kulturkampf'.

preface, the editors characterize literature as equipping readers with “Gefühlen, Erinnerungen, Meinungen, Argumenten, Erregungszuständen, Widerstandskräften, Fragen, Rückzugsräumen, Verweigerungshaltungen, Ideen und Phantasien” (7). Reading is illuminated as a generative act, producing both affect and ideas, which operate as crucial resources for resistance and critique of the present. In a life changing (Meurer 198) and cathartic (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 622) matter new right reading means “Welterschließung, Daseinsaufschlüsselung” (Kositza and Kubitschek 8). Literature is positioned as revelatory and almost spiritual in its effects (Kempke 692). This pathos is reflected in the metaphors used by Kositza and Kubitschek to describe books: as warm blanket, sudarium, uppercut, bomb, pill, cure or poison (8). These are images drawn from all spheres of life, including violence and war, that underline the association of literature with struggle and transformation. Yet, Meurer points out that, sociologically, entry into the new right milieu does not typically occur through the reception of a single text, but rather through prolonged exposure and steady involvement (200). This observation contrasts the ‘reading as second birth’ narrative, where ‘rebirth’ is attributed to one specific text (Kositza and Kubitschek). This paradoxicality might be a reason for *Antaios* offering a broad range of literature and continuously advocating for reading as a long-term practice.

The movement only values reading insofar as it is correct reading (Kempke 690). This correctness is marked by selective, flexible and often contradictory notions. The following aspects of what and how literature should be chosen and read shall exemplify this flexibility and provide an idea of how the literature policy operates before illustrating that within some case studies. The New Right seemingly rejects ‘mainstream’ literary culture, which is often accused of lacking ideological depth or counter-position. Scholdt, for instance, criticizes post-war literature in Germany for its thematic narrowness and inability to articulate complex social realities beyond a limited individualistic framework (“Nachkriegsliteratur” 60). Another common preference is literature that offers dystopian or apocalyptic visions. These texts can be read as mirrors of the contemporary world (Thomalla 656), providing a stage on which to depict the state as the enemy and to reproduce the dichotomy of ‘us vs. them’. Literature depicting individuals oppressed by collective power, institutions or society resonates strongly with the New Right’s narrated self-image as a marginalized intellectual opposition (Bruns 308). Due to dystopias relying on the “Isolation bestimmter Beobachtungen, die als entwicklungs- und zukunftsbestimmend charakterisiert werden” (Bermbach 334), they offer a ground for political instrumentalization while festering anxieties and vague fears. As established earlier in the discussion on apocalyptic narratives (see section 2.2.1), such texts align neatly with the movement’s ideological orientation. While intellectualization is a main goal, it is not the only

approach. Bruns identifies the strategic potential of popular literature and mass-cultural texts, noting their accessibility, emotional appeal and modern presentation (308, 311). The new right publishing house *Jungeuropa*, as Kempke observes, particularly utilizes such forms of literature (688, 693). But *Antaios*, too, has begun to explore their effectiveness, recognizing the need to reach broader audiences. The idea that literature should neither be purely aesthetic nor overtly political is central here (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 724): artistic autonomy of literature is used in order to be effectively politicized (Kempke 699). The aesthetic thus legitimizes the political messaging and the link establishes literature to function as both cultural capital and ideological weapon (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 230). This strategic openness leads to a wide and diverse literary canon within the New Right.

However, for the movement, this literary diversity necessitates guidance. Readers must be instructed on how to understand the texts (Wortmann 86). The interpretive practices employed often reveal striking inconsistencies. For example, while Scholdt laments the failure of post-war literature in Germany to separate the author from the text (“Nachkriegsliteratur” 56), new right interpretations frequently conflate fictional monologue with authorial intention when it suits their purpose (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 711). This selective approach allows new right actors to shift between emphasizing or ignoring paratextual authorial positions, depending on which reading better matches their ideological goals. Ambivalence in interpretation is deliberately cultivated to reach as many readers as possible (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 244). It is accompanied by flexible self-positioning (Jessen et al. 211) and a high tolerance, even encouragement, of contradictions at every level (Buch et al. 468; Thomalla 642).

Cherry-picking, selective emphasis and one-sided interpretation are core techniques in new right reception (Meurer 202). It leads to interpretative distortion and paves the way for ideologically aligned readings of otherwise ambiguous texts. As already mentioned, Speltz illustrates this regarding the New Right’s appropriation of Herder, showing how selective quotes and reinterpretations obscure the historical and philosophical complexity of the original work (111, 114, 120). The preference for ambivalent or controversial texts (Thomalla 17) also reflects this tendency of selectivity and oversimplification. The resulting debates enable to indirectly criticize the political left and its perceived restrictions (Thomalla 657). The New Right’s flexible interpretive strategy is thus defined less by fidelity to literary or philosophical traditions than by their usability. Literature becomes a malleable resource as it can be cast into a preconfigured narrative structure of decline, opposition and resistance. Interpretations are adapted depending on the ideological need while sometimes stressing authorial intent, at other

times dismissing it, demonstrating a broader argumentative tactic of ambiguity and avoidance. This vagueness is compounded by an absence of precise definitions, which contributes to openness in interpretation and which impedes critique (Bruns 305). The argumentation often lacks coherence (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 715) but this is masked by a gesture of self-critical, reflective intellectualism, which leaves a more lasting impression than inconsistency in the content (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 716). In many cases, the argument relies on partial truths which is a rhetorical form particularly common in times of crisis (Schilk, “Metapolitics” 344). Paradoxically, the New Right criticizes the manipulation of meaning, semantic framing, as seen in publications on left language regimes, where the perceived control over terminology shapes perception and discourse.⁴

The New Right, simultaneously, places emphasis on the personal and affective dimension of literature (Jessen et al. 208), favoring emotional over political coherence (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 244). This emotional resonance invites “empathische Rezeption” (Thomalla 655) and identification (Thomalla 657), often echoed by popular or nostalgic figures (Bruns 308). The reading experience is centered less on political argument than on cultivating a sense of atmosphere and cultural mood (Thomalla 655, 659). This emotional affiliation can translate into solidarity with new right literary production, which in turn encourages readers to purchase books from new right publishers (Thomalla 641). Apart from offering books, these publishers provide interpretive scaffolding that guide the reader’s ideological orientation while maintaining plausible deniability through ambiguity and aestheticization. Prior to illustrating that by concrete examples, the strategies and function of the literature policy need to be captured.

The ambivalence and range of the New Right’s literary practices can be understood more clearly when placed in the context of their overarching strategic goals. One of the main means of new right literature policy is the integration of different actors and target groups within the ‘Mosaikrechte’ (Meurer 210). Literature plays a unifying role by connecting seemingly disparate values, voices and styles within a coherent, if flexible, ideological framework (Thomalla 659). The breadth of literary offerings is designed to appeal across spheres, from the intellectual to the populist, from high culture to ‘accessible’ literature, providing readers with various interests with points of identification (Thomalla 641; Bruns 308). This strategy underpins the project of establishing an alternative public sphere, the “Etablierung und

⁴ See titles such as *Sprachregime* (by Michael Esders) from the publisher *Manuscriptum*, also offered by *Antaios*. The description accuses the political left to hold the “mächtigste Sprachregime der Gegenwart” (*Antaios*) and ascribes the book deliver the means to break that ‘power’ (*Antaios*).

Expansion einer alternativen Öffentlichkeit” (Meurer 210). Literature imparts cultural and ideological counter-positioning, delivering critique but also substitution. An entire counter-cultural canon is created, designed to challenge the dominance of ‘mainstream’ media and cultural institutions. This ambition is part of a “struggle for discursive sovereignty” (Schilk, “Metapolitics” 340), in which cultural artefacts are repurposed to reframe the political conversation. The objective of this effort is the attempt to occupy the literary field itself. Von Moltke and Komfort-Hein describe this as “umfassende Kolonisierung des literarischen Feldes zur Verschiebung des kulturellen Diskurses” (624), illustrating the New Right’s desire not only to participate in cultural discourse but to structurally and symbolically reshape it. Contemporary literature, often associated with liberal values, is systematically portrayed as symptomatic of cultural decay, media manipulation, or moral relativism (Thomalla 656). Günther Scholdt for example goes so far as to compare the postwar literary landscape to a form of censorship and thereby links the perceived dominance of left-liberal values to a new kind of ideological dictatorship (“Nachkriegsliteratur” 56).

With this reframing, the New Right seeks to enter and influence current discourse by projecting integrity (Meurer 211), authenticity (von Moltke and Komfort-Hein 629), normalcy (Busch et al. 469; Kempke 700) and legitimacy (Meurer 204). Such rhetorical and aesthetic strategies should create an appearance of intellectual seriousness and cultural legitimacy. These enable disguising new right ideological content under respectable literary engagement. Ultimately, the literature policy of the New Right is about dissemination and discursive redefinition alike. It is about laying claim to cultural authority through the means of literature, shaping taste, controlling frames of interpretation and establishing literary-political continuity across a spectrum of new right identity formation.

The goals of cultural hegemony and discursive redefinition outlined above are not achieved in isolation, but they rely on an expansive set of strategies, actors and institutional infrastructures. Thorsten Hoffmann identifies several of these strategies including the transformation of the canon, aesthetic education and to create attention through actions (Hoffmann, “Ästhetischer Dünger” 230). The New Right pursues these strategies both by producing its own literature and by appropriating, reinterpreting and canonizing existing works. Few other political movements have been as prolific and well-organized in their literary operations as the New Right. As Busch et al. outline, this productivity manifests in a variety of interlocking platforms:

Neurechte Verlage (wie Antaios oder Jungeuropa), Zeitschriften (u. a. Sezession, TUMULT oder Compact), Blogs (z.B. Die Aster), Videoformate (z.B. Aufgeblättert. Zugeschlagen. Mit Rechten lesen) und Podcasts (wie Von rechts gelesen) stellen

einzelne Gedichte, Romane und Gesamtwerke vor, geben Lektüretipps und betreiben Literaturkritik. In Monographien und Artikeln mit literaturwissenschaftlichem Anspruch finden sich rechte Relektüren kanonischer Texte sowie eine ‘alternative‘ Literaturgeschichtsschreibung. Für die Erstveröffentlichung literarischer Texte wurden Buchreihen (z.B. EXIL des BuchHauses Loschwitz), Zeitschriften-Rubriken (z.B. die für zeitgenössische Lyrik reservierten ‘Landschaften‘ in TUMULT) und Literaturbeilagen (z.B. Phonophor in der Sezession) etabliert, für die auch renommierte Autorinnen und Autoren wie Monika Maron und Uwe Tellkamp Beiträge zur Verfügung stellten (467).

This networked productivity allows for a consistent presence across various cultural fields including academic criticism, poetic production or media formats like podcasts or YouTube reviews. Such density enables the New Right to act synergistically: publications, discussions and reviews mirror one another and generate a sense of omnipresence and discursive authority, essential for the goal of cultural hegemony. The proliferation of formats contributes to the emergence of an alternative public sphere, where new right positions can circulate and can be affirmed. Jessen et al. emphasize that “cultural practices associated with literature, namely, reading and canon-building, become particularly integral in the process of institutionalisation within the New Right” (201). One of the most effective instruments in this institutional project is the publishing industry which facilitates to embed new right positions within the formal and aesthetic language of literature and scholarship. By cloaking ideological positions in the form of legitimate cultural production, these publishers facilitate the normalization of new right thought. As *Antaios* occupies a central position as “[z]entrales Publikationsorgan für die kulturalistische Rechte” (Wortmann 85), the publisher is a crucial entry point for any in-depth analysis of new right literature policy.

3. Case Study: *Antaios*' (and Other New Right Publishers') Offer

Before turning to the specific literary offerings of *Antaios*, it is fruitful to consider the infrastructural and symbolic design of its digital presence. The publishing house, founded by Götz Kubitschek in 2000, positions itself as a distributor of books and as a nodal point in the new right cultural field. Its self-description, encapsulated in the motto “Wir liefern jedes Buch” (*Antaios*), implies openness and range. This slogan is an attempt to cater to the heterogeneous ‘Mosaikrechte’ (Meurer 210) and to reach as many readers as possible. A closer look at the structuring logic of the website uncovers an algorithmic and curatorial mechanism supporting ideological cohesion and guiding reader attention. Search functions, for example, are biased and only books relevant or resonant with new right interests appear via autocomplete (such as these discussed in this thesis). Some titles, although available, require precise entry and prior knowledge.⁵ Others are not available at all: Hubert Fichte’s *Die Palette*, for example, is not offered.⁶ This selective accessibility reflects the larger principle of ideological suggestion and curation: the website does not just sell books, but it proposes how to read and what to value.

The site’s structure is segmented into categories that subtly communicate value hierarchies and ideological frames: ‘Neuerscheinungen’, ‘Gesamtverzeichnis Antaios’, ‘Bücher anderer Verlage’, ‘Zeitschrift Sezession’ and ‘Autoren’. ‘Gesamtverzeichnis Antaios’ delivers an overview of the publisher’s own production, subdivided into 6 categories. ‘Reihe Kaplaken’ evokes maritime navigation and signals intellectual direction. The series, self-described as „geistige Zulage für Selbstdenker” (*Anatios*), includes non-fictional books that lay the conceptual foundation of new right thought. Titles such as *Antisemitismus. Frage und Versuch*, *Der faschistische Stil*, *Geschlecht und Politik*, *Linke Räume. Bau und Politik* or *Der Rechtsstaat nach seinem Ende* point to an ideological mapping of state, identity and opposition. The category ‘Einzeltitel’ gives the impression of exclusivity, as not all 150 *Antaios* titles are readily available; many are printed on demand. This reinforces the image of an elite canon. A notable attempt to preserve and reintegrate the last year dissolved ‘Institut für Staatspolitik’ (possibly to pre-empt a ban) (“Auflösung”, *Spiegel*) via publishing infrastructure is the category ‘Staatspolitisches Handbuch’. Each volume is framed as a conservative guidebook: “Jeder Band ist ein Wegweiser durch die Vielfalt des konservativen Geländes – sorgsam erarbeitet und neben den Text-Artikeln bestückt mit Zitaten, bibliographischen Hinweisen und Registern” (*Antaios*). The publisher merges literature with political education and uses strategies of

⁵ To name a few authors that were tried: Caroline Wahl, Ödön von Horváth, Angela Merkel, Karen Duve, Sibylle Berg, Durs Grünbein.

⁶ Whether that coincides with their open dislike of queerness is debatable.

intellectualization by verifying this with quotes or bibliographic notes. The series ‘Edition Nordost’ includes fiction by new right authors like Joachim Fernau, Domenico de Tullio and Jean Raspail. The inclusion of fiction here is essential: it bridges aesthetic affect and ideological messaging. The categories ‘Antaios Krimi’ and ‘Restposten’, lastly, symbolize productivity and long-term intellectual value. The latter is described as follows:

Unser Verlag hält nicht viel davon, Bücher gleich zu verramschen, wenn sie nach einem Jahr noch nicht verkauft sind. Sie finden bei uns Titel, die zehn Jahre alt sind und unseren Verlag erst zu einem echten Verlag machen – zu einem geistigen Kosmos. Und dennoch gibt es Restposten, unbeschädigte, neuwertige Bücher – wir haben da einfach zu viel gedruckt (*Antaios*).

Books are presented as treasure while implying that other publishers (outside the new right sphere?) value them less. There is an emphasis on the high productivity of the publisher in literary business. Portraying oneself as a spiritual, mental cosmos illustrates the self-understanding of *Antaios* as more than a publishing house, but a complete ideological world.

The next tab, ‘Bücher anderer Verlage’, demonstrates how *Antaios* curates and sells works by other publishing houses, who to different degrees spread new right ideas, like *Jungeuropa*, *Ares*, *Manuscriptum*, *Renovamen* and *Karolinger*. This section demonstrates inter-publisher networking and discloses the variety of the new right field, spanning Christianity, conservatism, nationalism and ecological thought across national contexts. The tab ‘Zeitschrift Sezession’ links fiction to journalism and theoretical writing. Building the bridge to this magazine demonstrates the intended meta-reading of politically contextualized and ideologically anchored literature. The tab ‘Autoren’ provides a list of authors reflecting a transnational and trans-sectoral strategy. It includes names from various fields (e.g. Brittany Sellner, Jack Donovan, Alexander Gauland) and countries (USA, France, Germany), again catering to the ‘Mosaikrechte’ and signaling the networked reach of *Antaios*.

What appears at first as a wide-ranging literary marketplace is in fact a highly curated ideological infrastructure. By framing literature through suggestive presentation, associative grouping and selective visibility, *Antaios* encourages a mode of reading aligned with its metapolitical objectives. It becomes clear that this structure is not simply about book sales, but about the discursive arrangement of meaning, identity and belonging. This systemic presentation forms the basis for the case studies to follow, where the concrete mechanisms of selection, interpretation and appropriation will be analyzed through individual texts and the contexts in which they are displayed.

3.1. Literature from New Right Publishers

3.1.1 *Heerlager der Heiligen*

Jean Raspail's *Heerlager der Heiligen* (1973), originally published in France, occupies a central place in the literary offerings of new right publishers such as *Antaios*. This edition published by *Antaios* was translated and edited by new right activist Martin Lichtmesz (Semlitsch). The novel, which depicts a dystopian scenario of Europe being overrun by Indian refugees, has been widely interpreted by the New Right including Lichtmesz as a prophetic warning of the "Zerstörung des Abendlandes" ("Vorwort" 7). Given its themes of demographic collapse and civilizational decline, it is unsurprising that the New Right reads the text as both a parable and a vision of the future (Meurer 201).

The description of the novel is saturated with hyperbolic language, painting the refugees as an overwhelming threat: terms such as "Flotte", "eine Million" and "unzählige Massen" (*Antaios*) evoke images of invasion and uncontrollable crisis. Such exaggeration is key to the novel's rhetorical strategy and aligns closely with new right discourse which often frames migration as existential danger. The description also criticizes the perceived naivety or incompetence of Western societies in facing such challenges. The use of quotation marks around terms that describe the present state such as "Willkommenskultur" (*Antaios*) ridicules and delegitimizes 'mainstream', left-wing perspectives. Phrases like "realitätsblind", "nicht in der Lage..." and "institutionell-opportun" (*Antaios*) underline institutional weakness and incompetence. The promotional framing of the novel accentuates its polarizing qualities. The description as "viel diskutiert" (*Antaios*) advocates controversy and therefore relevance. Moreover, its status is elevated through terms such as "legendär", "Kultroman" and "starke Präsenz" (*Antaios*) which seeks to legitimize and celebrate its supposed prophetic qualities alike. The book is thus positioned as a text that voices an uncomfortable truth which caters to the narrative of literature as 'Erweckungserlebnis'. Descriptors such as "enthüllende", "prophetisch" and "dystopisch vorweggenommen" (*Antaios*) indicate that the reader is entertained, enlightened and awakened to political realities allegedly hidden or denied by current discourse. A notable rhetorical move is the quote of Lorenz Jäger from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), that serves to legitimize the novel via endorsement from an established intellectual outlet. Jäger was or has been known "als Rechtsaußen der Feuilleton-Redaktion" ("Tonlage", FAZ) and his own affiliations with *Karolinger Verlag* (published e.g. his book *Unterschied, Widerspruch. Krieg*), a publisher promoted on the *Antaios* website, indicate a degree of ideological overlap. This nuance, however, remains opaque to casual readers. Without investigating Jäger's background, one might easily assume that the

endorsement reflects the general stance of the *FAZ*, thereby blurring the boundaries between discourses. The thematic focus on “eigene” (*Antaios*), on distinct national or cultural identities, shows the novel’s alignment with new right priorities such as ethnopluralism and the narrative of the ‘grand replacement’. This is mirrored by the recommended books-section on the *Antaios* website consisting of Renaud Camus’ *Revolte Gegen den großen Austausch*, Sellner’s *Regime Change von rechts* and another book by Raspail, *Die blaue Insel*. Blending fictional and non-fictional texts together establishes an ideological link between both forms and highlights the didactic character of *Heerlager der Heiligen*: the book is supposed to be read as warning, a negative narrative of the ‘großer Austausch’.

Before examining the content of *Heerlager der Heiligen*, it is useful to briefly contextualize its author, Jean Raspail. Udo Bernbach determines the ideological stances expressed in the novel to be closely aligned with Raspail’s own views, rather than being fictional projections or narrative provocations (325). Raspail presents himself as a self-declared opponent of leftist and ‘mainstream’ cultural discourses and Bernbach characterizes him as a conservative, catholic and non-left intellectual (325), whose open disdain for prevailing cultural and political paradigms adds to his controversial status. Despite the overt ideological positioning in his work, Raspail has received literary recognition and won several prestigious prizes (Bernbach 326). It is through this dual positioning of being part of the established cultural system while articulating dissent from within that renders him particularly attractive to the New Right. He becomes a useful figure for their reading: integrated into established literary discourse but carrying alternative, new right narratives.

Adding to the paratextual frames, the novel’s title itself already encodes thematic and symbolic meaning. It invokes religious and nationalistic imagery, combining Christian references with conservative ideals and national identity (Bernbach 326). The book’s interpretation or intention is peritextually guided (Genette 268–269) by a preface from Martin Lichtmesz. Using the words “verblüffender, hellsichtiger und erschreckender” (Lichtmesz, “Vorwort” 5) he conveys a unique and intellectual insight. In seemingly random name-dropping of Strauß⁷, Camus, canonical dystopian authors (Bradbury and Orwell) and Nietzsche (“Vorwort” 6, 8), Lichtmesz underscores the book’s value as well as evocates and connects it to other discourses. These embed the book in philosophical, literary and political contexts and legitimize its statements before even reading it. The preface further invokes the book’s plot by criticizing Europe having lost “seinen Selbsterhaltungswillen, seine Selbstachtung und vor

⁷ His essay “Anschwellender Bocksgesang” is instrumentalized by the New Right as constituent document (Hoffmann, “Haltungsfigur” 724).

allem seinen Glauben" (Lichtmesz, "Vorwort" 6) and by homogenizing non-Europeans in a racist manner (Lichtmesz, "Vorwort" 6). Lichtmesz recognizes this "Vereinfachung" ("Vorwort" 7) in most of the book's other characters, too. It contradicts the New Right's claim for intellectual complexity in narratives but is ambivalently relativized by Lichtmesz due to the book's haunting, memorable scenes ("Vorwort" 7).

In terms of content, Udo Bernbach determines *Heerlager der Heiligen* to repeatedly rely on motifs that resonate with new right discourse, one of which is the narrative of decline (327). As a central trope of dystopian literature, such narratives of crisis and apocalypse are essential in new right cultural discourse. The depiction of refugees correlates a dehumanizing portrayal: instead of presenting them as individuals, they are described as an anonymous, threatening mass. To refer to them as an "amorphe Masse" (Stahl, "Rechte Belletristik" 39) reflects the "menschenverachtende[n] Charakter des Erzählens" (Stahl, "Rechte Belletristik" 44). Raspail uses phrases such as "wimmelten die unwirklichen Invasoren" (10), "Ameisen in Marschbewegung" (11), "unermeßliche [sic!] und elende Menge" (15), "hundert Köpfe des Tieres" (70), "Fleischwogen" (71) or "formlose Masse" (365) to impart this impression. The text contrasts the 'intruders' to the perceived civilized West and addresses lingering anxiety and fear in the depiction of loss, decay and collapse:

Sie [the refugees] werden auf Ihre Terrasse kacken und sich mit den Büchern Ihrer Bibliothek die Hände abwischen. Ihren Wein werden Sie ausspucken. Mit den Fingern werden Sie aus Ihren hübschen Zinntellern essen, die dort an der Wand hängen. Sie werden auf den Fersen hocken und zusehen, wie Ihre Sessel brennen. ... Jeder Gegenstand wird den Sinn verlieren, den er für Sie hat. ... Nichts wird mehr einen echten Wert haben (Raspail 22).

The threat portrayed in the novel does not only emanate from the outside. Raspail also constructs an inner erosion: the failure of institutions, the media and leftist intellectuals are identified as equally or more culpable (Bernbach 330). The novel conveys a profound cultural pessimism, predicting the collapse of Western civilization (Bernbach 327, 329, 333). Left-wing ideologies are portrayed as naive and even dangerous. The text ridicules what it casts as the exaggerated optimism and forced solidarity of liberal politics by depicting its followers similar to the refugees as animals: "Die Euter dieser Milchkühe des zeitgeistigen Denkens füllten sich auch dieses Mal täglich von neuem. Sie wedelten fröhlich mit dem Schweif" (Raspail 75), "Pawlow'sche Hunde" (Raspail 76). Solidarity with refugees is presented as socially coerced, lest one be denounced as racist (Bernbach 328–332). Stahl identifies a tone of sarcastic criticism in this portrayal ("Rechte Belletristik" 41), extending to mocking humanism (45). Humanism, empathy for the refugees and guilt is scorned with phrases such as "Orgie der Zerknirschung" (Raspail 91) and metaphorized through sickness (91). Marking refugees and

the political left similarly homogenizes both groups and invokes oppositional tendencies. The critique of media, the “große Hure der Massenmedien” (Raspail 76), forms a central part of this narrative. The text criticizes a media-created illusory world (Raspail 75), in which “die harten Fakten verdrängt werden zugunsten einer vordergründigen Unterhaltung und Oberflächlichkeit – eine Flucht vor der Wirklichkeit in Illusionen, in der sich alle gut aufgehoben finden können” (Bermbach 331). The people believing this and allowing the manipulation instead of resisting it are equally bashed: “Das Publikum hatte es sich längst gemütlich gemacht wie ein Kackhaufen auf dem Boden einer Kloschüssel” (Raspail 101). It resonates with Götz Kubitschek’s reading of *Fahrenheit 451* (see chapter 3.2), which similarly centers on media manipulation. This is paired with a critique of modernity in Raspail’s work (326) alongside globalization. In this regard, *Heerlager der Heiligen* conveys ethnopluralist sentiments, namely, the lament over the erosion of national identities and the perceived homogenization of cultures (Bermbach 332). The text calls for the preservation of distinct cultural and ethnic identities and implicitly endorses their hierarchical ordering (Bermbach 334).

In summary, *Heerlager der Heiligen* positions itself as a “Zeitdiagnose” (Bermbach 335), claiming relevance as a diagnostic tool for the present, which is precisely the kind of function the New Right attributes to literature. Bermbach denotes dystopias to be particularly well suited for such undertakings (334), as they offer a speculative framework for critiquing societal developments and imagining alternative political futures. Bermbach points out a crucial limitation of Raspail’s novel: it does not genuinely engage with the complexities or nuances of a possible future crisis (335). Instead, it relies on narration as a form of unmediated criticism, offering little space for negotiation or ambiguity (Bermbach 335). This mode of storytelling is mirrored in broader new right discourse. Under the pretense of intellectual inquiry, the New Right often makes sweeping declarations without substantiating them through argumentation or discussion. Bermbach also notes the text’s implication of universal validity: the novel presents itself as a work to be read and accepted as authentic across all of Europe (336), implicitly framing its narrative as a shared European truth. In this framework, the state is portrayed as having failed its responsibilities and even actively deceiving and oppressing its citizens. The convergence of these discursive elements, the call for authenticity and the indication of a lying state creates ground for radicalization (Bermbach 336). The literary dystopia becomes a political text whose structure and rhetoric align closely with the ideological objectives of the New Right.

3.1.2 *Systemfehler – Das Chaos*

In 2017, *Antaios* released *Systemfehler – Das Chaos* by pseudonym author Rob Salzig. The novel is part of a two-part series under the ‘newly’ created “Antaios Krimi” label, which has so far only produced these two works. The book’s inclusion in this publishing program reflects the New Right’s broader strategy of using and creating fiction as a vehicle for their political narratives. The description of *Systemfehler – Das Chaos* on the *Antaios* website transmits the novel’s central message of “an Recht und Ordnung festzuhalten – doch dann bricht in Deutschland das Chaos aus”. The preservation of right and order is presented as the foundation of stability. The disruption of this order is attributed primarily to immigration and, more significantly, to the state’s failure to control it. The portrayal expresses a profound skepticism toward the political system, blaming institutional failures rather than individual actions for societal collapse. *Antaios* emphasizes that the novel merges “aktuelle politische und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse zu einer spannenden Krimihandlung”, highlighting a conscious blending of fact and fiction. The blurring of boundaries between reality and imagination creates the impression that the depicted events could easily occur in real life. The author’s intention is specified: “er möchte seine Leser anregen, das Vorgebliche zu durchschauen und das Rechtmäßige einzufordern” (*Antaios*). This phrasing calls for resistance by encouraging readers to see beyond surface realities and to demand what is portrayed as legitimate order. It is an invitation to politicize the private sphere by drawing direct parallels between fictional events and one’s personal experience of social reality.

The title and cover reinforce the novel’s message. The term ‘Systemfehler’ shifts the blame for the societal breakdown onto the political system itself. This framing continues throughout the narrative, presenting the collapse of order as the inevitable consequence of a fundamentally flawed state. The visual design of the cover is similarly symbolic: it is rendered entirely in black and grey tones, evoking a threatening atmosphere. A figure holding a sniper rifle is prominently displayed and evokes a setting of war-like conditions. In combination with the title, the imagery conveys a grim prognosis: when the state fails, chaos and violence ensue. The recommended reading section following *Systemfehler – Das Chaos* reveals *Antaios*’ transnational networking efforts within the new right literary field. Laurent Obertone’s novel *Guerilla* is promoted alongside Salzig’s work. As a French author, Obertone represents an internationalization of crisis narratives across national borders. *Guerilla* similarly focuses on themes of instability, societal collapse and a political system on the edge of disintegration. Like *Systemfehler*, Obertone’s novel blurs the line between fact and fiction, using references to “heute”, “Charaktere unserer Zeit” and “fundierte Gesellschaftskritik” (*Antaios*) to anchor the

apocalyptic storyline in contemporary societal realities. The association of both *Systemfehler – Das Chaos* and *Guerilla* exemplifies how the New Right seeks to instrumentalize the genres of crime and dystopia to construct emotionally charged crisis narratives. These novels are designed not merely for entertainment but as strategic interventions into cultural and political discourse. They should cultivate a particular worldview among readers that perceives the established political order as irreparably broken and ready for fundamental resistance.

A closer examination of the novel's content shows even more clearly how *Systemfehler* narrates political messaging. The story starts with the rape and murder of a German woman by immigrants and is told from multiple perspectives including those of said violent immigrants, left-wing protesters, detectives and terrorists from both the right and the left sphere. By depicting Germany from various angles and showing holistic failure, the novel constructs a vision of total societal collapse. Central to this narrative portrayal, mirroring the paratextual framing, is the motif of the failing state: the German government is depicted as passive, negligent and ultimately complicit in the suffering of its citizens. This is underscored by the repeated assertion that the state fails to act against criminal immigrants (Salzig 5, 6, 36, 201), thereby sharing responsibility for their crimes. The media is depicted as biased and controlled by leftist politics and the state with terms like "Mainstreammedien" (Salzig 35), "Lügenpresse" (Salzig 74) and "staatsnahen Medien" (Salzig 127) underlining this narrative. Throughout the novel, Germany is described as falling apart by words and phrases such as "Staat derzeit rasend auseinanderfiel" (Salzig 70), "schreiendes Unrecht" (Salzig 70) and "Chaos" (Salzig 146, 212). The justice system is disapprovingly referred to as "Kuscheljustiz" (Salzig 201), expressing that criminals are treated too leniently. The notion of normality is presented nostalgically as something favourable, but lost ("Das Unvorhersehbare, Instabile war inzwischen die neue Normalität" (Salzig 130)). Whether the country will ever return to its 'normal' state is doubted: "Ob dieses Land jemals wieder in seinen Normalzustand zurückkehren würde?" (Salzig 170).

In addition, the political left is consistently portrayed in a negative light, often from the perspective of the two police officers Schmied and Bäcker (Salzig 133, 173), who might be considered as main characters and are likely to attract the reader's sympathy. Leftist characters are portrayed as naïve and partially guilty, especially for their initial support of immigration (Salzig 20, 46). Terms like "Ökospinner" (Salzig 12, 150) and the negative portrayal of "political correctness" (Salzig 12–13) fortify this bias. The political right, by contrast, is often depicted as a victim (Salzig 122, 151, 191). In one scene, a stark opposition is drawn by one of the police officers, Lars Schmied: "Vor der deutschen Grenze stehen 1000 junge Männer und wollen rein, hinter der Grenze stehen 1000 deutsche Demonstranten und wollen das verhindern.

Dazwischen stehen die Kollegen [von der Polizei] mit den Wasserwerfern. Auf wen schießen sie?“ (Salzig 74). Here, the police are caught between protecting the state and protecting the people, implying a betrayal of German citizens in favor of immigrants. Similarly, the phrase “Alle Kräfte gegen Rechts. Das Schiff hatte Schlagseite, definitiv” (Salzig 87) enunciates that state forces are unjustly arrayed against the political right.

In light of these escalating conditions, Germany is presented as being in a civil war. Threatening references such as to (world) war (Salzig 126), “anhaltende Dauerkrise” (Salzig 190), “Grauen und Entsetzen” (Salzig 133) shape an apocalyptic and dystopian atmosphere of the novel. Scenes of burning cars, street battles with fatalities and civil unrest (Salzig 135, 164–165) create an overwhelming sense of chaos. The novel suggests that Germany is descending into a despotism or even tyranny (Salzig 184). Immigration is framed as an existential and due to its sheer numbers overwhelming threat: metaphors such as “Millionenheer aus Flüchtlingen” (Salzig 126) associate it with war imagery, while the term “Flüchtlingstsunami” (130) depicts immigration as a natural disaster. Violent actions by immigrants are highlighted and ridiculed, often linked to religious motivations (Salzig 56, 116, 193), reproducing xenophobic stereotypes. Despite being a work of fiction, the novel employs strategies of authenticity, referencing real places, events and people. Authenticity fosters the illusion that the depicted scenarios could imminently become reality. Blending of fiction with recognizable socio-political elements allows the novel to function as a political ‘warning’ under the guise of entertainment. The attempt to distribute blame across political camps, portraying both left- and right-wing extremists as culpable, does not genuinely create a balanced picture. Rather, it serves to reinforce a broader populist narrative: the true adversary is the political system itself which is a corrupt system that has abandoned the people. Through the opposition ‘us vs. the state’, hatred toward the state becomes the unifying principle, transcending traditional ideological boundaries.

The potential extremity of the novel’s message is also reflected in its restricted availability: borrowing the book from the university library required special authorization, demonstrating how institutions may intervene when literature is deemed ideologically dangerous. Unlike, for example, *Das Heerlager der Heiligen* (which – as already demonstrated – has a critical message towards the state and immigration, too), *Systemfehler – Das Chaos* is seen as so politically explicit that it is difficult to interpret in any way other than as new right propaganda. Even critics from within the New Right acknowledge the novel’s unconcealed messaging (Kempke 699; Thomalla 658). In the podcast *Von rechts gelesen* from *Jungeuropa*, Philip Stein (host and publisher) describes *Systemfehler’s* message as terrible, blunt, like being

hit with a sledgehammer (“Türsteher” 1:52:--). That this is the reason they devalue it, creates the impression of different reading practices within new right groupings. This assessment ties into broader discussions of literary value: *Antaios* frames the book as “Urlaubs-, S-Bahn- und Feierabendlektüre, etwas Triviales also, aber derlei hat seine Daseinsberechtigung”. Paradoxically, its very simplicity and lack of narrative complexity build an effective channel for transmitting a clear, emotionally charged political message without inviting deeper reflection or critical distance. At the same time, the downplaying of the ideological message by framing the narrative quality as ‘trivial’, even though its effect might not be, is, in itself, a manipulative strategy.

3.1.3 *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann*

Among the books offered by *Antaios*, *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann*⁸, written by Rudolf Preyer and published in 2021 by *Antaios* (Edition Nordost), stands out for its blend of genre and ideological positioning as “Szene-Prosa” (Kubitschek, “Szene-Prosa”). The novel centers on the circumstances preceding and following a Viennese family’s shooting of three burglars who attempt to steal from them. According to the publisher’s description, the novel recounts “die kurzweilige Geschichte eines sehr bewegten Jahres im Leben der Familie Gottmann (Vater, Mutter, Sohn, Tochter), die leider ein wenig ramponiert ist, sich aber trotzdem wehrt (also: so richtig wehrt)” (*Antaios*). This short description already conveys key elements that point to the framing and ideological function of the book within the *Antaios* catalogue. The phrase ‘despite being battered’ implies that it is both legitimate, commendable and possible to defend oneself even when weakened. This is mirrored by the phrase “müssen plötzlich schießen”: They are forced to shoot and to defend themselves with violence, insinuating that there is simply no other way to treat intruders. It is debatable whether this implication extends to an advocated reaction to immigrants ‘intruding’ Germany. This rhetoric aligns with a broader discursive pattern observed in the literature offered by the New Right. One example is the publishing house *Ares*, also promoted by *Antaios*, whose name appropriates the god of war in Greek mythology. It publishes titles such as *Einbruchschutz*, *Selbstverteidigung*, *Home Defense* or *Wir Weicheier. Warum wir uns nicht mehr wehren können und was dagegen zu tun ist*, in which self-defense is framed not only as necessary but as morally justified. Similarly, it is indicated that the Gottmanns are practically forced to resort to violence, as no other form of reaction seems available or reasonable. This implicit legitimization of

⁸ In the following abbreviated with *Gottmann*.

violence in the face of societal or political adversity mirrors the broader victim-perpetrator reversal. It is characteristic of the New Right's narratives that new right actors are portrayed as unjustly attacked by a hostile political and media environment.

From a literary-critical perspective, the novel is notable for its divergence from the intellectual ambitions that parts of the New Right otherwise pursue in their culture and literature policy. The description applies terms such as "fetziger Roman", "absurd", "rasant", "voller Klischees" and "mal nichts Schweres" (*Antaios*) placing the book more in the realm of pop literature or 'Kitsch', which supposedly lacks high cultural prestige and addresses the non-intellectual mass (Dörner and Vogt 235). Kubitschek recounts their decision to include the book as follows:

Schabernack steckt darin, szenische Komik, die Figuren sind nicht eindimensional, sondern modern gebrochen in aller Sorglosigkeit einer institutionellen Zugehörigkeit, die es so wohl nur noch in Wien gibt, allenfalls in Ansätzen in München oder Hamburg – ganz sicher aber nicht in Berlin ("Szene-Prosa").

The offer of this type of literature (especially because the multidimensionality of the characters is debatable) seems at odds with the intellectual self-image cultivated by many new right figures who advocate for the creation of a new right cultural elite. Yet, *Antaios*' inclusion of such titles reveals a broader publishing strategy: the diversification of their catalogue in order to appeal to various segments of the 'Mosaikrechte'. By including literature that is entertaining, accessible, yet political (as seen in Kubitschek's classifications of 'resistant' cities) – possibly geared toward a younger or more pop-culturally oriented audience (Kempke 698) – *Antaios* expands its reach while still embedding ideological narratives.

Furthermore, (the reception of) *Gottmann* is contextually embedded via the reference of similar books. The paratextual recommendations promote *An vorderster Front* alongside *Gottmann*, an autobiographical account by Brittany Sellner (*Antaios*). The description of Sellner's book reads:

Als Verlag verstehen wir Brittanys autobiographisches Buch als Lehrstück und als Protokoll: Was Sellner und sie angestoßen und durchgehalten haben, was England (Haft!), Österreich (Kriminalisierung!) und andere EU-Staaten mit ihnen und anderen Aktivisten angestellt hat, um den Aufwuchs einer authentischen, gewaltfreien und sehr erfolgreichen Bewegung von rechts zu verhindern, ist kaum zu glauben (*Antaios*).

This narrative sets the stage for *Gottmann* by implying that the political system reacts in an exaggerated and unjust manner to new right activism. While Sellner's activism is explicitly framed as non-violent, the title of her book and the associated novel *Gottmann* introduce a contrasting, yet complementary, form of self-defense, involving the use of force. This ambivalence between non-violent resistance and justified violence reflects the discursive

flexibility of the New Right, which simultaneously claims victimhood and asserts the necessity of forceful reaction. The thematic network constructed around *Gottmann* includes further titles such as *Systemfehler* by Rob Salzig which similarly portrays the current socio-political situation from a new right perspective. Additionally, *The Great Gatsby*⁹ is named as a reference point on the *Antaios* website¹⁰, which might seem random. The use of a canonical international ‘classic’ novel, however, could elevate *Gottmann* from a niche ideological novel to a universal tragedy about modern civilization. This shift indicates the approach of constructing a new right literary canon that is at once selective, productive and ideologically coherent, while also expansive in terms of genre and target audience.

The paratextual elements of *Gottmann* – already the title and cover – further guide and frame the reader’s interpretation. The cover features the skull of a stag mounted on a richly patterned, red wallpaper. This imagery evokes a traditional aesthetic reminiscent of aristocratic hunting culture and bourgeois interior design, situating the Gottmann family within a setting that aligns with the image of the Viennese bourgeoisie. At the same time, the presence of a skull in combination with the intense red background subtly introduces associations of violence and death, creating a visual ambivalence that mirrors the narrative content. The title itself, *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann*, also carries significant intertextual weight. Its inversion of the more familiar phrase ‘rise and fall’ evokes Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, thereby aligning the book, at least rhetorically, with international canonical literature. This allusion implies a degree of literary value and genre awareness. Furthermore, the reference to Poe places the narrative within the genre of horror or gothic fiction, innerring that the story of the Gottmann family might similarly contain elements of decay, catastrophe, or psychological distress, albeit distorted. That the rise follows the fall in the title introduces a layer of irony and narrative complexity that aligns with the reinterpretation of the ‘bürgerlicher Roman’ (bourgeois novel). Beate Boßmann, writing on the new right platform *Tumult*, picks up on this connection and describes Preyer’s novel in relation to the genre that has played a central role in German literary history. While Boßmann acknowledges this tradition, she also notes the title’s subversion of the genre’s conventional trajectory: “In bürgerlichen Romanen kommt der Fall einer Familie gewöhnlich nach ihrem Aufstieg” (Boßmann). This underscores the book’s ironic

⁹ *The Great Gatsby* is part of the international list of world literature (“Weltliteratur”) and therefore, seems to have canonical qualities for the New Right.

¹⁰ Originally, instead of *Great Gatsby*, the section recommended Jack Donovan’s *Nur Barbaren können sich verteidigen*. The thematic connection to *Gottmann* seems obvious as the description evokes the active decision of becoming outsiders, for a “Lossagung von Kompromiß- [sic!] und Reformhoffnungen, für ein Leben als Wolf inmitten der zivilisierten Schafsherde” (*Antaios*) as well as new right narratives such as ‘mainstream’ opinion, vague threats and the hostile state. Such continuous curatorial efforts highlight the ongoing recalibration and fluency of the publisher’s strategy.

and potentially satirical treatment of its subject matter and the assumption that the New Right will eventually prevail with their ideology, despite seemingly being oppressed by the oppositional left.

The publication of Boßmann's critique of *Gottmann* in *Tumult* adds another dimension to the book's reception and framing. Founded in 1979, the magazine emphasizes its longevity and resilience, having 'endured eight different publishers' ("Über") to signal its tradition. The magazine's association with thinkers like Michel Foucault ("Über") is in line with the New Right's intellectualization, including a strategic appropriation of left intellectual traditions in the service of new right cultural critique. The journal's title itself infers a spontaneous, unintentional turmoil ("Über"), framing all published texts within a narrative of crisis, rebellion and cultural upheaval, either describing this situation of current society or even catering to it. This extends to their broader editorial vision, described as "Abkehr vom Machbarkeitswahn" ("Über"), meaning the hybris that one can 'invent' the world and 'construct' one's own identity at will ("Über"), which ties in directly with ethnopluralist arguments against cultural and individual constructivism.

The alleged legitimacy of the literary critique offered by Boßmann is underlined by her academic and political background. As a philosophy graduate and former member of the political group 'Demokratischer Aufbruch' – of which Angela Merkel was also once a part ("Kick-Start") – Boßmann is presented as intellectually and democratically credible.¹¹ Her critical engagement with literature is thus positioned as serious and grounded, not easily dismissible as merely ideologically supporting. This enhances the authority of her interpretation, particularly when she links literature such as Preyer's novel with broader socio-political developments and anxieties, which she does in the following. Boßmann's article uses the reception of *Gottmann* as a medium for broader societal critique. Her discussion oscillates between summarizing the novel's plot and deriving from it a real-world narrative, particularly one that legitimizes self-defense in the face of perceived threats. Although she does not explicitly state who must be defended against, the repeated emphasis on the foreign origin of the intruders in the novel, combined with the portrayal of a failing or hostile state, establishes a dichotomy of external and internal danger. This vague but suggestive construction allows the text to induce a latent threat both from outside and within society, thus laying the groundwork

¹¹ 'Demokratischer Aufbruch' was a main oppositional party to the GDR ("Kick-Start"). The inclusion of such seemingly unnecessary info places Boßmann not only as democratically credible, but also in resistance to a political system. It is a favoured new right narrative to compare the dictatorship of the GDR to the current state e.g. mirrored by Kubitschek (see chapter 3.3.2) or Tellkamp (see chapter 3.3.4).

for justifying defensive action. This framing culminates in a commentary that moves seamlessly from the narrative to political commentary:

Seitdem [2015] muß [sic!] jeder Deutsche für sich entscheiden, wie er im Falle eines Angriffs auf ihn oder andere Menschen in seiner Nähe reagieren soll. Noch ist die Mehrheit (insonderheit der Westdeutschen) nicht in der Lage und willens, diese Entscheidungssituationen als solche anzuerkennen. Noch läßt [sic!] sie sich von der Rubrizierung als ‚Einzelfälle‘ narkotisieren oder arbeitet, aus dem Gefühl der Ohnmacht heraus, mit Verdrängung. Ihren Glauben an den Rechtsstaat und die tatsächliche Wahrnehmung der Pflichten, die sich aus dem staatlichen Gewaltmonopol ergeben, sind sie nicht bereit aufzugeben. Die Gottmanns waren da schon weiter (Boßmann).

Boßmann implies that the current political system is untenable and that passive reliance on state institutions is no longer feasible. The Gottmanns are portrayed as ahead of their time, already acting where others remain in denial. In this way, the narrative criticizes those who have not yet ‘woken up’ to the supposed reality of social and political decay, framing them as unwilling to acknowledge the truth or too indoctrinated to act. This criticism is extended to the political left and the state itself, both of which are accused of manipulating information, suppressing dissent and upholding illusions of security and justice (Boßmann). By invoking familiar oppositional binaries such as ‘minority vs. majority’, ‘individual vs. mainstream’, ‘people vs. state’ and ‘oppressed vs. oppressor’, the passage and the article in general construct a simplified moral framework in which there is only one acceptable choice: resistance. Ultimately, this logic renders violence permissible and necessary.

The Gottmann’s ‘rise’ instead of conviction for killing three intruders in the end of the novel reflects this. In certain scenes their actions are described as “heldenhaft” (Preyer 61), “beschützend” (Preyer 67) and “tapfer“ (96), for example: “Sohn, der den Einbrecher mit seinen bloßen Händen zur Hölle geschickt hatte“ (Preyer 96). This legitimization adds to the general presentation of especially the father, who seemingly represents a steadfast, authentic character, “kein Opfer” (Preyer 18) with new right values or according to Kubitschek’s description: “politisch, weil Boomer, also aneckend” (“Szene-Prosa”). Tradition, too, plays a central role, as seen by the continuous description of the individual family members’ roles (husband, head of the family, wife, mother, daughter, sister, brother) (Preyer 61, 67, 70, 79, 94), the emphasis on their duties (Preyer 61, 67) and a criticism of today’s modernity and technology as threat (Preyer 47). This portrayal mirrors new right narrative contentwise by presenting traditional family structures, gender roles, xenophobia, ridiculous left-wing reactions, (fascist) heroism, violence-legitimizing masculinity as morally superior alternatives to modern liberal values and above all, resistance. The role (or discussion of) literature in this context becomes clear: it is a discursive tool through which new right narratives are recounted, legitimized and disseminated.

Even without a detailed discussion of the actual plot of *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann*, it is evident how new right literature is paratextually framed and contextualized. Through cover design, title, intertextual references and especially the reception in ideological media such as *Tumult*, works are embedded within a strategic narrative that promote the political goals of the New Right. Literature becomes a medium of ideological storytelling, repurposed to foster identification, stir resentment and ultimately render new right worldviews culturally realizably.

3.2 Literature from Non-New Right Publishers: *Aktion 451*

This chapter investigates in which ways *Antaios* frames and presents literature from non-new right publishers in its catalogue exemplified by Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. While some descriptions are written or edited by *Antaios*, others are directly taken from the original publishers. In the latter case, interpretative caution is necessary. However, the mere inclusion of a book without additional commentary can still reveal why it might align with the interests of the New Right; whether due to thematic relevance, ideological proximity, or strategic positioning within their literary landscape. It is important to acknowledge that not all books featured by *Antaios* are chosen purely for their political significance; some may hold aesthetic or cultural value beyond ideological worth. Nevertheless, the framing of *Fahrenheit 451* efforts to extract political and cultural meaning from certain works. Some books might be featured especially for the perceived lessons they offer to the New Right. The comparison of book descriptions and discussions within new right circles highlights a noticeable preference for literature that engages with themes of state criticism, societal decay and resistance. These books are not merely presented as cultural artifacts but are actively framed to express their contemporary relevance and utility. Using *Fahrenheit 451* as an example will illustrate how *Antaios* appropriates classic literature for its broader ideological and strategic goals.

A search for *Fahrenheit 451* on the *Antaios* website presents its offer of nine different editions, sourced from six distinct publishers. This stands in contrast to many other books on the site, which are typically available in only one edition and indicates the exceptional importance of this book within the *Antaios* catalogue. Additionally, an examination of the available version shows that the description has been at least partially modified or supplemented by *Antaios*, rather than simply reproducing the publisher's original text (see e.g. Diogenes Verlag – *Fahrenheit 451*). *Fahrenheit 451*, therefore, appears to be a foundational text for the New Right's literature policy. Its significance within this context denotes that it may be a determining and guiding force in shaping discussions and analyses of how the New Right frames and interprets literature.

The line from the description “Verbrannt wird, was nachdenklich, traurig, sentimental, wütend stimmen könnte” (*Antaios*) establishes a connection between books and emotions. Reading is inherently linked to emotional engagement. Another passage, “was also neben der Norm liegen und Freisein bedeuten würde” (*Antaios*), extends this connection to the themes of freedom and rebellion. It implies that, in the present political climate, true freedom and emotional depth are being suppressed. The description summarizes: “Montag ignoriert sie, Montag ist wie – wir!“ (*Antaios*). The protagonist of *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag, is directly

identified with the New Right, positioning him as both a figure of resistance and a source of identification. This framing functions to create and maintain a sense of identity, affiliation and belonging within the new right movement. The final section of the description explicitly claims:

Ein Zitat aus Ray Bradburys Dystopie *Fahrenheit 451* hat einem Antaios-Buch den Titel gegeben. In voller Länge lautet es: ‘Das Buch im Haus nebenan ist wie ein scharfgeladenes Gewehr. Man vernichte es. Man entlade die Waffe.’ Und auch der Name des Verlags an sich ist von *Fahrenheit 451* inspiriert: Ein alter Büchersammler verweist auf den Riesen Antaios und seine Standfestigkeit (*Antaios*).

This passage underscores two critical aspects of *Antaios* and the New Right’s literary strategy: first, the instrumentalization of *Fahrenheit 451* as a foundational text for both the publisher and the broader movement and second, the powerful metaphorical role that books play within their ideological framework. The integration of *Fahrenheit 451* into new right discourse is further supported through book recommendations associated with the description. *Das Buch im Haus nebenan*, which is directly referenced in the description and Jean Raspail’s *Heerlager der Heiligen*, which was previously discussed in this thesis, are prominently referred to. This curation of literature demonstrates how a book that has never traditionally been interpreted through a new right lens is now being actively recontextualized within a new right ideological framework. This shift insinuates that the New Right is no longer operating covertly or indirectly; rather, it is openly acknowledging and asserting its agenda of literary appropriation.

This and the instrumentalization of Ray Bradbury’s novel as basis book of *Antaios* are mirrored in the New Right’s *Aktion 451* and a speech by Götz Kubitschek introducing this ‘campaign’ in November 2023 at the University of Vienna. Kempke characterizes the speech as a combination of all essential aspects of the new right literature policy (697), rendering it a useful starting point for analysis. Due to a prohibition by the administration to hold the speech within the university’s rooms, Kubitschek held it in front of the university’s entrance under the banner “Geben Sie Gedankenfreiheit”, gathering supporters and protesters alike. Busch et al. note this “Akt der doppelten Umwidmung“ (476) to be a common new right strategy: “Neben eine entstellende Begriffsokkupation, mit der im Sinne des Dogwhistling rechte Akteure adressiert werden, tritt eine vereindeutigende Lesart, mit deren Hilfe der bildungsbürgerliche Kanon zum Instrument politischer Tat-Konzepte umfunktioniert werden soll” (476). Despite Kubitschek’s repeated assurances that this was not planned, the setup of the speech tells a different story – or at least hints at a certain adaptability and flexibility to use ‘spontaneous’ events for own purposes. Such purposes are first and foremost to criticize the protesters and the university while staging oneself as the victim of the former. He openly admits doing so: “und im selben Moment behauptet die linke Seite, dass man sich als Opfer inszeniert und dass man

daraus Kapital schlagen wird für den politischen Kampf. Naja, Kinder, so ist es halt” (“Wien”, 0:04:40-0:04:54). Instead of the “Sache” (Kubitschek, “Wien” 0:01:05), *Fahrenheit 451*, he would be forced to only address the “Umstände” (“Wien” 0:03:14). According to Kubitschek, these would consist of a homogenous mass (complying with the principle of opposition, there seem to be only two poles): “das ist ne relativ bequem gewordene, sehr staatsnahe, sehr zivilgesellschaftsnahe, ziemlich verfettete Jugend, die alle irgendwie ins Nichts studiert. Das ist akademisches Proletariat” (“Wien” 0:03:23-0:03:37). Being against the New Right would then automatically mean to favor the state, reproducing the anti-state attitude of the New Right. At the same time, the demonstrators are depicted as non-intellectuals, who do not read (Kubitschek, “Wien” 0:06:--) as opposed to intellectual new right members. The supposed catastrophic conditions of the state and the society are thereby allegedly reproduced instead of advancing it by questioning it. Kubitschek only shortly deviates from his description of the protesters, ranging between insult and criticism, when he talks about ‘die Sache’ *Fahrenheit 451*. He presents the novel as neither left, nor right, nor a book for the mid (Kubitschek, “Wien” 0:02:--), insinuating the unpolitical character of literature. But he also clearly states the New Right’s intention and the core of their literature politics: “Wir müssen lesen. Und wir müssen ein Roman nach dem anderen und ein zentrales Werk nach dem anderen für uns vereinnahmen, aus rechter Sicht lesen und daraus das machen, was man eine Rückeroberung oder Reconquista an der Universität nennen sollte” (Kubitschek, “Wien” 0:06:17-0:06:36). Reading is essential but not enough. What was a few years ago seemingly still an unobtrusive strategy is now explicitly called for: the appropriation of as unpolitical perceived literature for the political and cultural purposes of the New Right.

Later the same day Kubitschek explains in more detail how this is implemented in practice (“Fahrenheit”). He repeats that there is not only one interpretation of the novel, expressing its complexity and layeredness. At the same time, his whole talk consists of an instruction of how to interpret *Fahrenheit 451* from a new right perspective and calls for a new right “Vereinnahmung” (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:03:51) of the book despite the presumption. This reveals the ambivalence of how the new right literature policy operates, which is constantly reproduced in this speech. Prior to explaining the plot of the book, Kubitschek starts with some general remarks on the meaning of the novel. It would be “radikale Kulturkritik” (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:04:40) but he also notes that cultural criticism in general is useless, because it cannot prevent anything (“Fahrenheit” 0:05:--). Here, he reproduces another ambivalence, as in discussing this book he must assume there to be a certain power of change in literature. It would further be a book of “Selbstermächtigung” (Kubitschek,

“Fahrenheit” 0:07:49) (empowerment) and of “Erwachen” (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:09:20) which suits the reading-as-waking-up narrative. He links that to the current societal situation, such as the forced vaccination or the “Migrationswelle” (“Fahrenheit” 0:05:--), setting the mood for the analysis of the plot.

In this habit of evaluating the plot with the main goal of transferring it to the present, Kubitschek continues. Notable is a notion of oversimplifying aspects and of shifting sympathy in order to easily integrate them within the new right narrative: Clarys, the girl who is the first one sowing doubt within Montag, is associated with the political green and alternative while Beatty is presented as pioneer-like, in the position to see through societal structures (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:15:--). The destructiveness of technology is further essential to Kubitschek’s interpretation, although he efforts to stage it as a physical and psychological weapon of the system. The technological dog who relentlessly and brutally hunts readers is equaled with projects to persecute intruders in the USA or belligerent drones in Russian war (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:17:--). The state’s manipulation is executed through the big screens Montag’s wife sticks to, which would correspond to stop individual reflection in today’s society (Kubitschek, “Fahrenheit” 0:23:--). With such references Kubitschek excoriates technological progress as effect of modernity, sews distrust in current political systems, poses countries outside of Germany as threat and by that creates and increases anxiety and fear phantasies.

Even though Kubitschek notes the multifacetedness of literature, he paradoxically caters to a one-sided interpretation of it. A book published 70 years ago in another country right after the Second World War might not be easily applicable to current societies. By ignoring the context, he cherry-picks statements fitting for his cause while neglecting the layerdness of literature and the variety of established interpretations of the novel. Even the author himself contextualizes the ideas within his work, which lay in the past: book burnings under dictatorship of Hitler or Stalin (Bradbury, “Afterword” 221) as well as his “romantic background in Roman, Greek and Egyptian mythology” (221) or the “triple burnings of the Alexandrian library” (221). Bradbury’s motivation was not primarily that of warning, but his love for books (“Afterword”). His main concern is the decline of reading and the rise of media, which delivers a suiting starting point for Kubitschek’s appropriation:

Because you don’t have to burn books, do you, if the world starts to fill up with non-readers, non-learners, non-knowers? If the world widescreen basketballs and footballs itself to drown in MTV, no Beattys are needed to ignite the kerosene or hunt the reader (Bradbury 225–226).

Knowing that most authors can or do not share their works' intentions, appropriating literature with only one kind of reading can be very dangerous. Sticking to this idea, Kubitschek's end remarks are dedicated to the power and function of books as "Welterschließung" ("Fahrenheit" 0:32:08). He links this once more to current society, where technology and media prevent people from reading, which equals thinking on their own ("Fahrenheit" 0:32:--). Reading is by that positioned at one side of the pole alongside individualism and tradition and opposed to the state, to modernity and to the 'mainstream'. Kubitschek associates this with his publishing house by summarizing it under the name 'Antaios': the myth is about a giant who withers because he lost contact to the mother soil due to technology ("Fahrenheit" 0:33:--). All the books offered by *Antaios* then are placed in the context of reconnecting people to this 'mother soil', to detach them from (technological) manipulation and to awaken them. This didactic element of literature which is constitutive for how Kubitschek and co. are reading books is meaningful and beneficial for the whole New Right to develop the right attitude for resistance.

The speech illustrates why and how specifically a novel like *Fahrenheit 451* is instrumentalized by the New Right and why a student campaign appropriated the title for their goals (*Aktion 451*). A browse through their website provides further insights into how the new right literature policy (in connection to *Fahrenheit 451*) operates. Their explanation of the chipper includes the following:

Die Fantasie von Fahrenheit 451 ist nun an der Universität Wirklichkeit geworden. Kritische Bücher und Gedanken sind verboten. Einheitsdenken verseucht die Hörsäle. Wir dagegen lesen ohne Scheuklappen. Und wir handeln. Denn den Pionieren des 'gefährlichen Denkens' gehört die Zukunft! (*Aktion 451*).

First, it indicates the didactic character of books and that books are applicable and should be actively applied to society. That the New Right – as they do in the case of every appropriated literature – only cherry-picks parts of the (interpretation of) text and ignores the rest is typical: that the state does not forbid any books unless they are against the constitution is of secondary matter. Critical books and thoughts are equated with new right literature. Neglecting these would mean uniform thinking and – just as Kubitschek insinuated in his speech – being part of a generalized homogenous mass. To normalize and exaggerate this line of thinking metaphors are applied associating current universities with poison ("verseucht") and their students with animals ("Scheuklappen") (*Aktion 451*). Readers are requested to resist these conditions, to act and by that, to restart as pioneers (*Aktion 451*). Resistance is legitimized by practices of intellectualization: the sticker section features quotes from known persons such as Nietzsche ("Ihr sollt Dichter eures Lebens sein"), Tolkien ("Das Alte, was stark ist, verwelkt nicht"; "Mut findet man an den außergewöhnlichsten Orten"), Schopenhauer ("Das Schicksal mischt die

Karten, und wir spielen”), Hölderlin (“Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch”) or Schiller (“Geben Sie Gedankenfreiheit”) (*Aktion 451*). A concrete explanation or a complex reflection of these quotes does not happen, as is often the case (Bruns 305, 307): namedropping without going into detail. In this context the quotes all refer and cater to various notions of the New Right’s narratives such as taking action, resistance, individuality, aesthetic education, tradition or the crisis narrative. The quotes gain their popularity from different spheres which shall validate and reinforce the movement(‘s narration) on multiple fields, levels and in all intellectual areas. They are paired with several citations by Jean Raspail (*Aktion 451*), who delivers, as was already established, basic ideas for the new right movement. His inclusion frames the unobjectionable statements of the others while normalizing his and lays open once again the interconnectedness of the New Right.

The ‘about us’ section of the website further constructs a persuasive self-image by framing the act of reading as an act of resistance (*Aktion 451*). This metaphorical elevation of reading to a subversive activity and as dangerous (Busch et al. 474) places the movement in opposition to perceived ‘mainstream’ cultural and political norms. The group draws a sharp line between itself and current institutional structures and particularly targets the university system as a site of ideological conformity and suppression (Busch et al. 475). This antagonism extends to a broader critique of leftist movements, which are portrayed as dominant and as collaborators with the state in maintaining an intellectual status quo: “Wir sind die, vor denen eure linken Professoren Angst haben” (*Aktion 451*). The use of metaphorical language such as “Fluchthelfer aus dem geistigen Gefängnis” (*Aktion 451*) exemplifies the movement’s strategy to dramatize its role: members are imagined as liberators from a mental prison. This buttresses the binary between enlightened dissidents and an intellectually oppressive society. Books themselves are metaphorically weaponized with references to *Fahrenheit 451*, positioning literature as a tool of liberation in times of war as is typical for the New Right (Busch et al. 474). This metaphor aligns with the movement’s broader rhetoric, which includes the repeated use of trigger words like “dissident” (*Aktion 451*) to evoke resistance while simultaneously appropriating the language of political activism. The conjuration of the oppositions ‘us vs. the state’, ‘individuality vs. mainstream’ or ‘outsider vs. insider’ taps into the romanticized notion of the rebel. Statements such as “Wir wollen anecken” (*Aktion 451*) embellish this outsider identity and the desire to provoke societal sensibilities. Exaggeration such as the allegation that knowledge and certain opinions are prohibited (*Aktion 451*) are supposed to sensationalize the perceived threat of censorship and intensify the sense of urgency and victimhood. The complementing ironic use of quotation marks around terms like “Revolte”, “Che Guevara”,

“Antifa” and “linker Gesellschaftskritik” (*Aktion 451*) aims to ridicule these symbols of leftist resistance and strip them of their legitimacy. Collective identity is also cultivated through the consistent use of first-person plural pronouns (*Aktion 451*), fostering a sense of belonging, strength and internal cohesion among supporters. The inclusive language used invites readers to see themselves as part of a community united against cultural and ideological homogenization. The intellectual framing of the movement is reinforced through the appropriation of academic concepts, such as the re-enchantment of the world (“Wiederverzauberung der Welt”) in contrast to Max Weber’s notion of disenchantment (“Entzauberung der Welt”) (*Aktion 451*). This not only creates the impression of theoretical sophistication but also recontextualizes established thought to serve the movement’s ideological goals. The persuasive rhetoric of inclusivity and intellectual diversity is undermined by an inherent ambivalence. Their advocacy of a “vielfältigen Debattenraum” (*Aktion 451*) collides with their rejection of anti-new right voices and the notion of ethnopluralism. This tension illustrates the selective openness of their ideological framework and points to a deeper contradiction in their self-presentation.

What was exemplary examined with the framing and appropriation of *Fahrenheit 451* is a strategic new right pattern. Two brief additional examples illustrate the same approach: in his anthology, *Literarische Musterung*, Günther Scholdt frames the dystopia *1984* by George Orwell similarly. The respective article consistently attempts to project the dystopian narrative onto contemporary society in casting the state, the media and external figures such as refugees as threats (Scholdt, *Musterung* 82, 85, 86). New right tropes such as “Gesinnungslenkung” (83) are thereby reproduced. Scholdt mocks humanist ideals and portrays the New Right as victims of leftist agendas (85, 87). This interpretive strategy hinges on identifying supposed points of resonance between the plot and present-day conditions, regardless of the actual context, so long as these allow for ideological appropriation. Similar interpretive readings extend to numerous works of popular classic literature, including *The Lord of the Rings*. A striking example is *Antaios’* offer the anthology *Aurë entuluva! – Tolkien zum 50. Todestag*, published by *Renovamen*, which features contributions from authors who claim, for instance, that “Tolkien war ihr wichtigster Führer auf dem Weg zu Gott, zum Abendland und zur Familie” (*Antaios*). Despite the genre’s apparent distance from political discourse, the volume seeks to imbue Tolkien’s work with new right values such as Christianity, nationalism and the traditional family. The fantasy world is reinterpreted as an allegorical model for the present-day ‘fight against the dark’ (*Antaios*), framed as a metaphor for contemporary societal conditions. It is therefore unsurprising that the author attracts significant attention within the broader New Right

milieu (Thomalla 655; Kempke 693): the *Jungeuropa* podcast repeatedly advocates for Tolkien's inclusion in a new right literary canon (Stein and Zierke, "rechte Literaturkanon") and *Der Hobbit* is part of the *Antaios*' international one ("Weltliteratur").

Typical strategic framings further explored in the next chapter emerge: first the (renown or popular) book is integrated within new right contexts and discourses by lending the name to new right publishers, groupings or texts and by connecting it to new right thinking and ideologies. By that, at the same time, new right discourses are established in public discourses, legitimizing and normalizing them. Secondly, by using and framing novels this way, ideologic and narrative strategies are pursued: the current state and its institutions are criticized by associating it with the world and the narrative of the book, oppositions are created in the 'us against the world' narrative, where it is easy to feel a sense of belonging, which ultimately, paves the way to take action and resist.

3.3 Canon Formation: “Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane”

This chapter examines how the New Right engages with and reinterprets non-new right German language literature while intertwining it with literature from new right publishers through its reaction to *Der Spiegel's* 2024 book list, “Die 100 besten deutschsprachigen Romane der letzten 100 Jahre”. The list of one hundred German-language prose texts from 1924 to 2024 was created for the ‘Frankfurter Buchmesse’ by four experts from the literary business (“Literaturkanon”). Despite the list’s disclaimer of not being complete nor objective and rather focusing on the individual taste of the jury, the magazine frames it as delivering the best works of fiction from the past century (“Literaturkanon”) and calls it “SPIEGEL-Literaturkanon”. The wording implies general validity and authority coming from one of the defining magazines of Germany. The fact that canonization always insinuates literary policy factors (“Literaturkanon”) and as such depends on societal, political and literary (“Wertung”) power constellations (Rippl and Winko 1–2) might be the reason why this list was met with a direct response from the New Right, publishing its own alternative selection of 100 books in a list called “Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane”. Even before analyzing the specific books included, the very act of creating this counter-list is revealing.

First, it underscores their systematic observation of cultural and literary developments. Their ability to react quickly and comprehensively to the *Spiegel* list illustrates how deeply embedded literature is in their broader ideological project. They actively intervene in its reception and interpretation, using book selections as a tool for cultural critique and influence. This vigilance once again highlights the importance of literary discourse within their political strategy.¹² Second, the publication of a counter-canon signals a fundamental dissatisfaction with the literary works promoted in widely read and long-established media outlets. The rejection of the *Spiegel's* selection reflects a broader opposition to the cultural and intellectual currents that such lists are seen to represent. Accordingly, when first talking about this list in their YouTube channel *Kanal Schnellroda* (with Götz Kubitschek, Ellen Kositzka, Erik Lehnert and Christoph Bernd), *Spiegel* is metaphorized as “Sturmgeschütz des Linksliberalismus” (“Am Rande” 1:09:32) and equaled with the current democratic political system (“Am Rande” 1:09:--). The *Spiegel's* list therefore seemingly promotes current democracy in a distinct left image of gender and history.

¹² The ongoing and vast productivity and the relevance of new right canonization are further evidenced by the appearance of yet another counter-list of international ‘world literature’ published during the writing of this thesis (“Weltliteratur”).

The New Right does not passively criticize the choices made by literary institutions and media. Rather, it produces a “Gegenliste” (Kubitschek et al. 1:33:19) offering a competing new right vision of literary history and aesthetics that aligns with its ideological framework and attends to their idea of literary quality. That not every book is replaced suggests (despite the framing of the *Spiegel* as nonsense (Kubitschek et al. 1:04:--)) that there seems to be an agreement on which basis literature succeeds in uniting even the most contrastive political poles. If applied, however, the act of replacement rather than mere critique is significant, as it moves beyond commentary and towards an attempt at cultural restructuring. Third and most importantly, by curating its own list of recommended books, the New Right positions itself as a cultural authority. It is not simply an act of rejection but an assertion of influence over public discourse. The creation of a literary canon is a powerful political tool: it defines what is worth reading, what is worth remembering and ultimately, what kinds of narratives and worldviews should shape collective consciousness (Rippl and Winko). By establishing its own version of literary history, the New Right seeks to guide reading practices in a direction that serves its ideological goals. The following analysis will investigate texts from the New Right’s alternative list to uncover the strategies employed in this act of literary canon formation. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all 100 selections, a focused analysis of key entries will reveal patterns in the New Right’s approach. The goal of this analysis is the identification of types of literature that the New Right finds valuable, the ways in which they frame their selections and what these choices communicate about their broader ideological and cultural strategies.

As with any canon, it is first crucial to establish the criteria by which a distinctive new right canon can be identified. The description of the list merely states to offer a better alternative to the *Spiegel* list (*Antaios*), staging Kositzka, Lehnert and Kubitschek as more competent readers and literary curators. Kubitschek’s more explicit explanation “Weil wir uns zu jedem Thema ... des subkutanen antideutschen Geist in die Welt setzt ... mit einem deutschen Standpunkt entgegen müssen“ (1:04:22-1:04:33) highlights the reactionary, responding character of their canon on the one hand. On the other hand, it defines the *Spiegel* as anti-German which automatically would mean their canon to be the same. What exactly is meant with a canon to be anti-German remains open, but it implies a political agenda overshadowing aesthetic qualities of the new right canon. Another important criterion apart from a political goal seems to be the importance of mirroring German literary history: repeatedly, Kubitschek, Kositzka and Lehnert complain, that they – as Germanists and hence, self-claimed literature experts themselves – would not know certain authors and have never read certain works, rendering these unsuitable for a German canon. The *Jungeuropa* podcast discusses this

question, too. Even though they explicitly differentiate their answer from *Antaios* (“rechte Literaturkanon” 0:34:--) it mirrors the core of literature as ‘Erweckungserlebnis’ and the political agenda *Antaios* equally preaches: the new right canon should turn over current world views and should deliver new insights within, but also beyond new right contexts and German history (Stein and Zierke, “rechte Literaturkanon” 0:44:--). Ultimately, it shall lead to new insights and perspectives on current Germany (Stein and Zierke, “rechte Literaturkanon” 0:44:-). They accuse and criticize *Spiegel*’s list to be deconstructing and questioning (the myth) Germany, which mirrors the perceived importance of the New Right to picture German literary history as it was (in their point of view). The list’s perceived incompleteness (already starting with the limitation of time to one century and thereby neglecting ‘classic’ authors like Goethe) seemingly allegedly “das Gegenddeutschland ... das geheime Deutschland linksliberaler Kulturelite” (Stein and Zierke, “rechte Literaturkanon” 0:31:46-0:31:53). The similarity of the comments of *Jungeuropa* and *Antaios* once again demonstrates that the new right movement, despite some self-acclaimed intrinsic differences and an always existing subjectiveness in literature (quality), shares similar goals and has similar perceptions on literature.

To be recognized as ‘Gegenliste’, the *Antaios* list requires to have apparent similarities to the *Spiegel*’s list. *Antaios*, too, selected one hundred fictional German language books from 1924 to 2024. Many books are also provided with a short description (by Lehnert, Kositza or Kubitschek). Moreover, the article refers to available titles to buy from the publisher, even if Kubitschek and co. complained about affiliate links in the *Spiegel* article. Several differences emerge in a general comparison to the *Spiegel*’s lists. First, as announced and criticized in both conversations (*Jungeuropa* and *Antaios*) about a new right alterative canon, the *Antaios* list selected one book per year in contrary to the *Spiegel*’s decadic division. In some cases, however, there are several recommendations for the same year (1936-1939). Deviations like this disclose inconsistencies in new right statements and discourse as well as a higher valuation of authors associated with ‘innere Emigration’ (see chapter 3.3.2), who, from their perspective, are underrepresented in the *Spiegel* list. Second, there is a noticeable underrepresentation of female authors. Third, there is a preference for authors or literature that has historically sparked controversy or ideological debate (e.g. Maron, Klonovsky, Strauß). Lastly, there is a significant inclusion of books from new right publishers. The analysis of how they construct this counter-canon delivers deeper insights into the mechanisms through which the New Right seeks to reshape cultural and political narratives.

3.3.1 *Der Prozess* (1925)

For the year 1925, both the *Spiegel* and the *Antaios* list recommend a work by Franz Kafka. However, the New Right opts for *Der Prozess*, while *Spiegel* selects *Das Schloss*. The description of *Der Prozess* on the *Antaios* website is noteworthy, especially since it is authored by Götz Kubitschek himself: his initials are appended to the same passage in the corresponding article from the “Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane” list. This is rare within the publisher where descriptions are usually anonymous or copied from publishers’ blurbs. The decision to write an original commentary indicates that *Der Prozess* holds, if framed accordingly, strategic value within new right discourses. The increased interest unifies the whole movement as seen by the presence of several recent articles on Kafka in new right magazines such as *Junge Freiheit*, including “Kafka oder: Wenn das Unerklärliche hingenommen wird” (2024), “Kafka und der Sozialismus” (2023) and others. These pieces communicate a broader cultural interest in Kafka and an attempt to integrate him into their ideological framework. It is also notable that while the edition used is from a non-new right publisher, *Antaios* consistently writes the title using “ß” instead of “ss”, communicating a symbolic, perhaps nostalgic or identitarian gesture toward an older, supposedly ‘authentic’ form of written German. The part in the *Antaios* description imparting interpretive capacities is as follows:

Bedenken Sie bitte, wie jemand Kafkas Roman noch einmal neu und anders lesen muß [sic!], nachdem er in die Mühlen der Justiz geriet und im anonymen Verwaltungsstaat von Tür zu Tür irrt, ohne jemals jemanden anzutreffen, der nicht nur ein Rädchen ist, sondern umfänglich Bescheid weiß. ‘Mauer aus Kautschuk’ hat Armin Mohler das genannt: keinen Hebelpunkt finden können (*Antaios*).

This appeal invites a specific re-reading of Kafka’s novel as a prophetic critique of modern bureaucratic totalitarianism. According to the description, Kafka must be read newly and differently than the established and canonical interpretation of education institutions. Readers who engage in similar interpretive practices as guiding institutions are criticized, because they follow the rules and thereby reproduce the system. A different reading, as advocated by the New Right, would interfere with this and break ‘the wall out of rubber’. The reference to the ‘Mauer aus Kautschuk’, a metaphor coined by Armin Mohler, an influential new right thinker (Leggewie), further anchors this interpretation. Erik Lehnert explains the term to denote “eine Grenze, gegen die man anlaufen könne, ohne daß [sic!] sie nachgebe, aber auch ohne daß [sic!] dem dagegen Anrennenden der Aufprall besonders weh täte” (“Mauer”). The image conveys a system designed to absorb and neutralize resistance, seemingly flexible yet, ultimately impenetrable, while at the same time invoking being caught in a padding cell like a lunatic. By associating Kafka with this image and Mohler, *Antaios* first reinvokes the metaphor of reading

as waking up, being able to see through the manipulation of the hostile system. Second, there is a deliberate mixing of discourses: on the one hand, invoking a canonical figure of modernist literature; on the other, embedding him within the intellectual tradition of the New Right. It contributes to a reappropriation of Kafka not as a detached modernist, but as an author whose work – properly understood – aligns with the New Right’s critique of state power, administrative overreach and ideological conformity. Interestingly, the recommended reading in conjunction with *Der Prozess* includes canonical works such as *Traumnovelle* and *Der Zauberberg*. It is unusual for *Antaios* not to pair a new right novel here, but the invocation of Armin Mohler already integrates new right thought into the interpretive frame. It establishes a continuity between canonical literature and new right critique.

Tumult published an article from Günther Scholdt which exemplifies the broader strategy of literary appropriation and ideological framing of Kafka and *der Prozess* in particular (“Kafka und wir”). Scholdt’s piece initially adopts the tone of a neutral, scholarly contribution. By refraining from overtly subjective writing at the beginning, he positions himself within a supposedly objective, intellectual discourse. Kafka’s cultural prominence is acknowledged upfront and once again, the distinction between Kafka as a person and his works is deliberately collapsed. To legitimize his reading, Scholdt declares that his interpretation aligns with that of a Czech Kafka specialist; notably, this scholar remains unnamed (“Kafka” 96). Such strategy of intellectualization attempts to lend authority to his own reading without engaging in thorough substantiation. Further, he uses inclusive language such as “wir Interpreten” (“Kafka” 96) situating himself within a community of respected scholars and Germanists. By that, an aura of intellectual credibility and a sense of interpretive consensus is evoked. The final paragraphs of the article expose another intention: a call to politicize the novel for a new right re-reading of Kafka. Scholdt writes: “Seine stärksten Texte enthalten Parabeln, auch wenn sie auf paradoxe, nie zweifelsfreie Lehren hinauslaufen” (“Kafka” 94). The phrasing emphasizes the parabolic and therefore didactic potential of Kafka’s literature, despite its ambiguity. It supports a particular kind of new right reading strategy that draws meaning not from fixed interpretations but from emotional atmospheres and ideological affinities. There is a focus on the “Gesamtschau” and on the “stimmungsmäßigen Grundtenor” (Scholdt, “Kafka” 96) of the text. The stress on mood and tone over discursive clarity enables the New Right to appropriate Kafka’s ambiguous texts as politically charged: “In jedem unfreien System birgt Kafka-Lektüre deshalb literarischen Sprengstoff, was in Diktaturen Abwertungen und Verbote nach sich zog. Unser Kulturestablishment mindert die Provokation, indem sie ihn schlicht vereinnahmt” (Scholdt, “Kafka” 96). The passage employs a weapon metaphor for reading and constructs the

contemporary liberal-democratic state as a covert dictatorship that neutralizes literature through cultural appropriation.

Ironically, Scholdt critiques exactly what he proceeds to do himself: he re-politicizes Kafka and channels him into a new right framework, particularly evident in the next section titled “Der politische Kafka”. Scholdt concludes his article by summarizing K.’s biggest mistake: “Für K. (wie für uns) besteht somit der psychologische Fehler darin, sich überhaupt auf die Anklage eines solchen Gerichts eingelassen und mit der Schuldfrage beschäftigt zu haben, wodurch man bis zu einem gewissen Grad dessen absurde Kriterien übernimmt” (“Kafka” 97). Scholdt taps in an interpretation by Felix Menzel published in his anthology *Literarische Musterung*: it draws a direct line between the text and the new right reader. He transforms Kafka’s protagonist into a model of misguided conformity while portraying the New Right as those who have ‘woken up.’ The “us” in this sentence stages a communal identity between the author, Kafka and the reader oppositional aligned against a bureaucratic, deceptive and totalitarian system. The implication is that anyone who accepts state structures or the cultural ‘mainstream’ is complicit and intellectually blind. Ambivalent or even contradictory texts are recoded as politically didactic, emotional resonance is elevated over textual fidelity (when it suits) and ideological readings are legitimized through the invocation of canonical figures. Scholdt’s article thus functions not as literary criticism in the traditional sense (despite its paratextual presentation), but as a carefully coded intervention into the cultural field.

Felix Menzel’s contribution on Franz Kafka’s *Der Prozess* in *Literarische Musterung* completes the example of how the New Right appropriates canonical literature. Menzel’s reading centers on the direct relevance of Kafka’s novel for contemporary society, particularly with regard to public opinion and the perceived erosion of free speech. Menzel explicitly frames the novel as a reflection of today’s sociopolitical climate, arguing that individuals are increasingly subjected to subtle forms of control and surveillance through public discourse. According to Menzel, there is no freedom of opinion in the current system, which is a recurring motif within New Right rhetoric that positions current culture as hegemonic and repressive. A strategy of legitimization employed by Menzel is the invocation of canonical figures such as Bernhard Schlink, thereby installing a symbolic proximity between his reading and established intellectual discourse (Menzel 255). His own ideological framework is legitimized by embedding it within a widely accepted cultural and literary tradition. Menzel further praises the position of the outsider echoing a classic new right populist trope that equates marginality with authenticity and moral superiority. The protagonist’s isolated status is highlighted as exemplary (Menzel 255, 257), while the anonymous collective is devalued as conformist and lacking

individuality (Menzel 258). The dichotomy reinforces the central new right narrative of the heroic individual versus the manipulated or docile mass. Menzel does not name a specific antagonist. Instead, he exploits the novel's inherent ambiguity to make his critique resonate broadly and indirectly. The Kafkaesque atmosphere of *Der Prozess* characterized by indeterminate threat and vague persecution is politically useful in this context. Menzel refers vaguely to the "Mächtigen" (256) and describes the enemies as "unsichtbar" (257), using the text's elusiveness to his advantage. The absence of a concrete enemy allows for ideological flexibility, enabling the reader to project their own fears onto unnamed forces such as the media, the state, or cultural elites. The rhetorical ambiguity of identifying structural oppression without naming specific oppressors mirrors Scholdt's strategy.

Instead of offering detailed analysis or explicit critique, the focus is placed on emotional resonance and atmospheric suggestion. The result is a text that cultivates suspicion and disillusionment without requiring substantiation. Together, these interpretations and the paratextual frame demonstrate how the New Right selectively appropriates *Der Prozess* to legitimize its own worldview. The novel's ambiguity, status in the literary canon and themes of authority and alienation align with new right reinterpretation as a prophetic diagnosis of modern liberal democracies.

3.3.2 *Wolf unter Wölfen* (1937)

In the 1937 segment of the "Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane" list *Antaios* deviates from the *Spiegel* literature canon. While *Spiegel* recommends Ödön von Horváth's *Jugend ohne Gott*, considerable as part of an established canon, the New Right's selection excludes this work. This omission seems not only to be motivated subjectively. In the YouTube video about a new right canon ("Am Rande" 1:18:42), Kubitschek and Kositzka dismiss *Jugend ohne Gott* as "eins der furchtbarsten Bücher", "ekelhaft" and "ganz schlimmes Buch" (1:18:54). Instead, their list expresses a preference for Hans Fallada, specifically his 1937 novel *Wolf unter Wölfen*. This preference contrasts with *Spiegel*'s more tepid appraisal of Fallada, which refers to his work as "technisch ... oft Durchschnittsware" ("Literaturkanon"). While *Spiegel* includes only Fallada's late novel *Jeder stirbt für sich allein* (1947), *Antaios* selected two works from earlier in Fallada's career. The double representation of the author articulates a pronounced interest in Fallada that arguably transcends mere aesthetic appreciation. A search for Fallada's name on the *Antaios* website displays no fewer than nine different titles available. Considering the New Right's curatorial effort within *Antaios* to prioritize especially valuable works implies that Fallada is not cherished solely for individual works but rather for his entire literary legacy. The

broader fascination with the author is substantiated by a two-hour YouTube video discussion between Götz Kubitschek and Erik Lehnert dedicated to Fallada. One statement summarizes this stance particularly well:

und wenn jetzt von einigen Seiten im Vorfeld geäußert wurde, ja der Mann ist doch gar kein nationaler Autor, kein Rechter, ja, stimmt, aber auch der nationale Gedanke, der deutsche Gedanke, der lebt eben nicht nur von irgendwelchem ideologischen Überbau, sondern auch der hat seinen Alltag. Und diesen Alltag, den stellt Fallada dar und völlig unverfälscht (Kubitschek and Lehnert 0:04:37-0:04:59).

This reflects the general intent of the New Right to read literature politically. According to Kubitschek and Lehnert, Fallada is not and cannot be appropriated as a new right author per se. Rather, what renders him valuable is his ability to authentically depict a specific German national consciousness embedded in the everyday. As previously discussed, identity formation particularly tied to nationality is central to new right discourse. In Fallada's novels, they perceive a truthful portrayal of German life and culture that appears ideologically unfiltered (0:04:--).

This approach indicates a flexible positioning: not every canonical work must convey an explicit ideological message. However, the New Right still engages in interpretive practices that seek to attach such works to the present. One crucial aspect of Fallada's appeal is his classification as a writer of 'innere Emigration' (Kubitschek and Lehnert 0:08:--) which is a category the New Right believes to be neglected within 'mainstream' German literary historiography and the *Spiegel* list. Kubitschek and Lehnert denote this not to be literature of overt resistance, but to oscillate between assimilation and desire for autonomy (1:17:--). This ambivalence resonates with the New Right's own narrative of ideological marginalization in the contemporary political climate. The question arises whether this inclusion aims to construct a more complete image of German literary identity or whether Fallada is being positioned as a model for contemporary cultural resistance. The following statement from the video accentuates this: "wie schreibt man in sonem System, wie schreibt man in der DDR, manchmal denken wir auch schon wie schreibt man heute und wie schrieb man damals" (Kubitschek and Lehnert 1:16:52-1:17:03). Here, Kubitschek draws a provocative parallel between writing under National Socialism, in the GDR and in today's political system implying a continuity of systemic restriction. *Wolf unter Wölfen* is described as "Ausweichsliteratur" (Kubitschek and Lehnert 1:16:46) and "welterschließender Roman" (Kubitschek and Lehnert 1:07:02), reflecting the pedagogical and moral function attributed to literature by the New Right. Lehnert's commentary in *Das Buch im Haus nebenan* mirrors this function of literature. He

depicts Germany in 1923 as marked by catastrophe, madness and in a state of dissolution (22–23), concluding:

Wenn die Wolfszeit anbricht, kann sich niemand vertreten lassen, sondern muß [sic!] sich selbst verhalten. ... Es stellt sich die Frage, wie man in einer in Auflösung befindlichen Welt sein Innerstes, den menschlichen Kern bewahren kann. Um das zu demonstrieren, muß [sic!] man nicht in absurde Konstellationen ausweichen, sondern kann es so schildern, wie Fallada es tat (Lehnert 23).

The passage is less a historical analysis than an implicit appeal to individual agency in times of societal crisis. That Lehnert praises Fallada's narrative ambiguity so that his texts resist explicit classification as resistance literature (22) may also correspond to the New Right's own strategic self-presentation.

Ultimately, Kubitschek and Lehnert aspire to 'collect' ("einkassieren" 0:03:51) Fallada and *Wolf unter Wölfen* not only for the authentic depiction of a pivotal period in German history but also for the allegorical potential. The novel's portrayal of societal collapse is presented as transhistorically relevant. Such framing is underscored by its inclusion in the 'recommended reading' section alongside *Das Buch im Haus nebenan* and *Hauptmann Pax* by Joachim Fernau, an author exclusively published by *Antaios*. The publisher links works from non-new right publishers to its own ideological discourse, subtly integrating them into a new right cultural narrative.

3.3.3 *Faserland* (1995)

Christian Kracht's debut novel *Faserland*, published in 1995, centers around a nameless narrator who embarks on a journey through Germany. The cynical text offers a bleak portrayal of contemporary society through the eyes of its disenchanting protagonist. What renders *Faserland* particularly noteworthy in the context of this thesis is its inclusion on both the *Spiegel* list and the list curated by *Antaios*. While overlap between these lists is relatively rare, their shared interest in *Faserland* suggests a broader aesthetic or cultural appeal that transcends political boundaries. The inclusion of Kracht's work on the *Antaios* list does not necessarily imply that the New Right interprets the author as an overtly political figure. It appears that both *Spiegel* and *Antaios* appreciate the novel for its stylistic and aesthetic qualities. However, this overlap becomes significant considering the New Right's long-standing aspiration for a new right canonization of Kracht (Busch 122). Examining the inclusion of *Faserland* thus offers insights into the kinds of authors and narratives favored by the New Right and, crucially, how literature is interpreted, instrumentalized and politicized.

Christian Kracht and his work are of interest to the New Right for two main reasons. First, his narratives – *Faserland* included, though more explicitly in his later novels – articulate a form of societal critique that resonates with contemporary cultural and political disillusionment. Second, Kracht has become a focal point of public debate within German feuilletons, where his texts are interpreted through a political lens including one that aligns him, however controversially, with new right thought. The ongoing discourse inadvertently contributes to the normalization and legitimization of new right positions in the broader cultural and literary public sphere. A peak point in this process, as Busch outlines, was triggered by a 2012 article in *Der Spiegel* by Georg Diez. He labeled Kracht a “Türsteher der rechten Gedanken” and accused him of a racist worldview (“Methode”), referring to his then-latest novel *Imperium* (Busch 122). Although the comment did not concern *Faserland* directly, it exemplifies how such media interferences shape public discourse and influence the reception of an author and their entire work. It can extend retrospective paratextual to the author’s name and to political connotations to earlier, seemingly apolitical works.

Indeed, *Faserland* was initially received as an apolitical novel (Busch 138, 142). The narrator’s detachment from and devaluation of political engagement, alongside his ambivalent stance on ideological issues, contributed to this perception (Busch 141). However, scattered throughout the novel are provocative and politically charged remarks such as “SPD-Nazi” or “SPD-Schwein” (Kracht 53) and disparaging comments like “Varna war so billig, so vorhersehbar, so liberal-dämlich, daß es einfach nicht möglich war, sich ihre blöden Ideen anzuhören, ohne auszurasen und sie zu treten oder ihr zumindest aufs Maul hauen zu wollen” (Kracht 73), “ultra-dämlichen Devise Think globally, act locally” (Kracht 73) or “Die [Berliner Autonome] sind eben etwas verdreht im Kopf” (Kracht 120) which appear to devalue leftist politics and resonate with an anti-political-correctness discourse (Busch 139): even though the narrator exhibits contempt for a wide range of political positions, an isolated interpretation of such utterances might resonate with a new right reading style. The narrator of *Faserland* also articulates a broader cultural and political pessimism. His reflections often express disillusionment with Germany and its political structures, such as when he remarks: “als ob das gar nicht mehr Deutschland wäre” (Kracht 17–18), or “daß [sic!] ich auch gern auf Demonstrationen gehe, nicht, weil ich glaube, damit würde man auch nur einen Furz erreichen, sondern weil ich die Atmosphäre liebe” (Kracht 30). He declares the world fundamentally corrupt: “diese Welt, wie unfäßbar [sic!] verkommen alles ist” (Kracht 30). Interwoven with this dystopian outlook is a nostalgic undertone, a yearning for a better past (Kracht 85, 89, 106).

In line with this broader discursive context, the podcast *Von rechts gelesen* by Volker Zierke and Philip Stein offers insights of how *Faserland* is read and interpreted within new right circles. Their episode on Christian Kracht, which directly references and responds to the *Spiegel* article by Georg Diez in its title, highlights how central such public controversies have become for the reception and positioning of literature within the New Right. The very existence of this episode demonstrates the relevance of public discourse for shaping their literature policy. In their discussion, Zierke and Stein stress the interpretative power of reading literature through the lens of modernity critique. According to them, a novel becomes political through the way it is interpreted, especially when it expresses or is read as expressing a critique of modernism (“Türsteher” 0:46:--). They explicitly categorize such critique as an “Element des rechten Denkens” (“Türsteher” 1:12:26), catering to new right ideological motifs. This redefinition does not center on the author’s intent but rather on the potential to read texts in ways that resonate with conservative or reactionary sentiments. They assert, for example, that a recurrent motif across Kracht’s body of work is the critique of prevailing ideologies (Stein and Zierke, “Türsteher” 0:29:--). Kracht, they argue, utilizes historical events and systems not merely as narrative settings, but as vehicles for deeper cultural and political statements about the present (“Türsteher” 0:30:--). From this perspective, literature is viewed as a form of knowledge production with contemporary relevance.

In another episode of their podcast, which focuses on a new right canon, Stein and Zierke express appreciation for Kracht as an author, but they explicitly exclude *Faserland* from new right canonization. They perceive the novel as deconstructive of German identity, a trait they associate with ‘mainstream’ literary tastes and therefore not useful in a pedagogical or ideological sense for the present (“rechte Literaturkanon” 1:01:--). In contrast to other works by Kracht, *Faserland*, in their view, does not offer instructive value for current readers in terms of political or cultural orientation. Instead, they argue that *Faserland* is valuable primarily for what it tells about the past of German identity (“rechte Literaturkanon” 1:10:--). This characterizes the novel as a kind of cultural artifact rather than a politically productive or instructive narrative. Such a stance reveals the novel’s intrinsic ambiguity and the elasticity with which the New Right engages with literature. Their interpretive strategies are highly flexible, allowing them to claim, repurpose, or reject literary works depending on shifting ideological needs. The fact that *Antaios* nonetheless includes *Faserland* in its list of recommended works further illustrates the internal diversity and fragmentation of the ‘Mosaikrechte’. While Zierke and Stein may hesitate to canonize the novel, its inclusion by *Antaios* reflects a broader tendency within the New Right to exploit cultural products that bear

potential for ideological instrumentalization, even if these products are not uniformly recognized across all factions. Despite such internal divergences, certain criteria appear to consistently guide the New Right's literary preferences. Books are considered valuable if they aid readers in 'learning' something whether about contemporary society, German history, or national identity. Historical consciousness, critique of modernity and a capacity to polarize or challenge mainstream discourse emerge as core features of texts deemed worthy of attention. In this sense, *Faserland*'s place within the New Right literary field exemplifies both the strategic nature of new right cultural politics and the contested terrain of literary interpretation.

A closer examination of the paratextual framing of *Faserland* on the *Antaios* website endorses the aforementioned observations. Even though the novel is not published by a new right publisher and thus, the description was not authored by explicitly right-aligned actors, the way it is presented on the site matches the interpretive patterns outlined above. The description accentuates the novel's timeless appeal, stating that it continues to fascinate "immer wieder neue Generationen von Lesern" (*Antaios*). This statement grants the text a kind of cultural durability and signifies its continued relevance across changing sociopolitical landscapes. The novel is positioned as current, supporting a reinterpretation of established works through a contemporary new right lens. The description denotes the novel's critical engagement with society, resonating with the New Right's broader framework of cultural critique: "Christian Kracht legt in seinem Debütroman *Faserland* das hedonistische Zeitalter der Bundesrepublik, legt seine eigene Generation unters Mikroskop" (*Antaios*). Here, the emphasis on societal analysis and generational dissection marks the novel as a diagnostic tool of civilizational decline. The critical tone is intensified by the characterization of the protagonist: "Betrunken ist er häufig, angewidert eigentlich ständig. Von den Menschen, dem Land, der Zeit" (*Antaios*). This existential and cultural dissatisfaction mirrors the affective register often found in new right narratives such as feelings of alienation, decay and loss. Through this emotionalized reading, *Faserland* becomes a narrative of disillusionment that can be appropriated as a form of cultural diagnosis. The depiction of the protagonist as a lost individual, someone searching for meaning, belonging or purpose, creates a narrative open for identification. For readers sympathetic to the New Right, an existential emptiness converts to a void to be filled and the New Right positions itself as offering what is lacking in the modern world: a sense of rootedness, identity and alternative belonging beyond the perceived moral and cultural relativism of liberal societies. *Faserland*'s ambivalence and melancholy might not be read as literary aesthetic but as symptoms of a larger crisis to which the New Right insists to offer answers. The inclusion of quotes by Frank Schirrmacher (*FAZ*) and Elmar Krekeler (*Welt*)

increases the literary value of the novel, integrates established magazines within new right contexts and promotes legitimization and normalization of *Faserland* in a new right framework.

This strategy of appropriation is underlined by the section ‘Ähnliche Artikel’. *Faserland* is combined with titles of new right publishers, creating an associative proximity that functions both to normalize new right literature and to politicize the literary discourse by implication. Two of these books, *Schizoid Man* by Sebastian Schwaerzel and *EuropaPowerbrutal* by John Hoewer, are also featured within the *Antaios* canon. Both will be analyzed in detail in later sections of this thesis. The connection also drawn and hence, multiplied via articles in *Sezession* (Kositza, “Sezession 121”) of these newer, explicitly right-aligned works with *Faserland* underpins the notion of the novel’s contemporary relevance. Despite being written in the 1990s, it is framed as ideologically and culturally adjacent to current new right publications. The impression that *Faserland* can be read like these newer books and that it belongs to the same interpretive universe is intensified. It provides credibility to newer new right literature and subtly pulls Kracht’s novel further into the ideological sphere of the New Right.

3.3.4 *Der Turm* (2008)

For the year 2008, *Der Turm* by Uwe Tellkamp has been listed in *Antaios*’ reading list. *Der Spiegel* opts for a book by Karen Duve. Tellkamp, who won the German book prize in 2008, and his work exemplify how the New Right creates, fuels and exploits literary controversies for its own purposes. It is not so much the content of *Der Turm* that is politically significant for new right discourse, but rather the context surrounding it: the author, the reception and the subsequent debates. Ten years after *Der Turm*’s publication, Tellkamp made the following statement at a 2018 citizen dialogue event titled “Streitbar! Wie frei sind wir mit unseren Meinungen?”: “Die meisten [Migrierenden] fliehen nicht vor Krieg und Verfolgung, sondern kommen her, um in die Sozialsysteme einzuwandern. Über 95 Prozent” (1:05:44-1:05:51). The response from his publisher *Suhrkamp* came the following day: a public distancing from this evidently false allegation (Busch 391) despite the publisher’s general policy of letting the work speak for itself (“Fall”). This moment marked what Busch refers to as “für den Zeitraum der 2010er Jahre als wohl einflussreichste, durch einen Autor ausgelöste Kontroverse zum ‘politisch Rechten’” (391). Tellkamp’s statements and affiliations sparked ongoing debates about how to handle his literary works retrospectively, particularly with respect to the question of whether it is possible or desirable to separate an author from their texts. That the literary criticism indeed extends the “Verschwörungs-Topos auf das Gesamtwerk und den Autor” (Busch 403), accuses Tellkamps texts to have an “intentionale, beeinflussende Wirkung auf die

politische Wirklichkeit” (Busch 303). As has frequently been noted, such interpretations align closely with the New Right’s preferred modes of reading.

Tellkamp has answered this treatment of his text with an East German habitus of being misunderstood, an outsider cast away and as a victim (Busch 443, 444, 655). He uses the public critique of his person to accuse the state of stripping away his freedom of opinion just as was done in the GDR (“Fall”). Such narrative posture mirrors rhetorical tropes the new right idea of being silenced, marginalized and unfairly treated. It is perhaps no coincidence that Tellkamp describes his successor text *Schlaf in den Uhren* to feature a protagonist who is misjudged by society, undergoes a revelatory experience and ultimately withdraws into exile (“Fall” 1:26:00-1:27:46). This character development itself functions as a form of social critique. The publication of *Schlaf in den Uhren* illustrates the annulment of separation between author and his texts and how productive that might be for the New Right. Carolin Amlinger describes how the struggle over the interpretation of this novel, a “Deutungskampf” between the feuilleton and so-called amateur readers is transformed into a populist cultural divide. Aesthetic judgments become politicized: populist discourses present themselves as popular culture, while popular culture is reimagined as the voice of a suppressed majority (Amlinger, “Gegenlektüren” 79). Thus, reading Tellkamp becomes a political act, a form of cultural resistance against dominant political and cultural norms (Amlinger, “Gegenlektüren” 95). The discourse surrounding Tellkamp and his works reproduces the central narratives of the New Right: depicting the state as the enemy, engaging in oppositional thinking and adopting a narrative of resistance. Notably, this occurs even without direct intervention from new right actors. They still do as seen in the several articles on the treatment of Tellkamp by Kubitschek, who himself overtakes a role in the debate within the Frankfurt and Leipzig book fair.

Kubitschek actively participates in the politicization of Tellkamp. He repeatedly praises Tellkamp’s resilience along with the truth and clarity of his statements (Kubitschek, “Anarchie”) and despite the demonstrable falsehoods of the claims in question. In doing so, Kubitschek mirrors Tellkamp’s own rhetorical strategies: emotionalization, framing and strategic self-victimization. Kubitschek further elevates Tellkamp’s status by classifying his work as high literature and emphasizing the extensive debate it has generated in leading magazines (Kubitschek, “Gerede”). He ultimately characterizes literary criticism itself as a form of state manipulation, collapsing the distinction between the literary ‘establishment’ and political power (Kubitschek, “Gerede”). The homogenization works in both directions: it is not only the New Right that aligns itself with authors like Tellkamp, but also certain actors within the literary field who, through similarly controversial statements and affiliations, become

entwined in new right networks. Susanne Dagen, owner of the publishing house *BuchHaus Loschwitz* co-authored the Charta 2017 (a document positioned against leftist protests at the Frankfurt Book Fair) (Busch 398) and hosted reading groups with Ellen Kositzka and Martin Sellner. Monika Maron was dropped by her publishing house *Fischer*, because she published with Dagen's house (and because of other new right affiliations).¹³ Maron strongly identifies with those who, like herself, feel unjustly excluded from public discourse (Busch 406). These examples reveal how narrative strategies in literary discourse contribute to the formation of identity and, above all, to the cultivation of a sense of belonging. Regardless of potential differences in opinion or actual political positioning – Dagen, Maron and Tellkamp all reject the 'new right' label ("Fall") – the shared narrative of a state-imposed restriction on freedom of expression unites them in a discursively coherent group. This illustrates how the New Right's strategies are effectively realized in practice.

Finally, Kubitschek's short commentary on *Der Turm* ("Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane") exemplifies this broader dynamic. Within a few lines, he activates several new right rhetorical strategies, demonstrating how even a seemingly innocuous book recommendation can carry ideological weight. The novel's prestige is described as great, award-winning, adapted into film and widely recognized ("Hundert"). It is characterized as holding an uncontested position in the literary field as a cultural monument ("Hundert"). The description subtly reframes the novel ideologically: it is said to be "eingefärbt" ("Hundert") not because of its content, but because of the author's later statements. This metaphor of ideological contamination implies censorship and exclusion, drawing on the New Right's familiar narrative of marginalization. The perceived disconnect between artistic achievement and political acceptability is used to critique the cultural 'mainstream'. The problem, according to Kubitschek, is not Tellkamp himself, but the literary business' inability to distinguish aesthetic value from political ideology. The final sentence, "Er überragt, und man kommt an ihm nicht vorbei" ("Hundert"), repeats the novel's canonical status while framing it as a text that transcends political debate. New right actors are enabled to claim cultural authority while simultaneously undermining established norms. The underlying strategy is the appropriation of a work widely celebrated for its literary quality and the strategic reframing of that work as a symbol of resistance against a politically conformist cultural elite. The paratext functions on two levels: it affirms the cultural value of *Der Turm* and simultaneously uses that affirmation

¹³ Her novel *Stille Zeile Sechs* is part of *Antaios* reading list. Tellkamp, too, published with the "Reihe Exil" of *BuchHausLoschwitz*. The term 'Exil' is an obvious response to their perceived societal exclusion ("Fall") and places them in opposition to the cultural and literary business associated with the vilified state. In such ways, literature explicitly serves political purpose.

to attack the legitimacy of the literary public sphere. The author's later political stance is converted from a liability to evidence of the system's intolerance. The novel and its author become emblems of both artistic and ideological resistance.

3.3.5 *EuropaPowerbrutal* (2021)

“Wer bitte hätte gedacht, daß [sic!] ein rechter Szene-Roman nach 1945 je zu einem Verkaufsschlager werden würde?” (“Hundert”). This is Kubitschek's comment on *Antaios'* recommendation for 2021, highlighting its explicit new right ideological messaging and connecting that to supposed popularity. *Antaios* replaced the *Spiegel's* selection of two female authors, Helga Schubert and Antje Rávik Strubel, by a work published with *Jungeuropa* titled *EuropaPowerbrutal*. The novel written by John Hoewer follows a nameless narrator traveling through Europe to explore various milieus of the New Right. Already in its basic narrative premise, as seen in the description, the novel clearly mirrors the structure of *Faserland*, establishing a formal and thematic intertextuality that is explicitly acknowledged in the book's paratext (Stein and Zierke, “Europa”; Kositzka, “Schizoid”). Kubitschek for example characterizes Hoewer's book as “Christian Kracht von rechts” (“Szene-Prosa”). Accordingly, Kubitschek describes the protagonist as looking for the spirit of a different Europe (“Hundert”), a Europe, “das nur dem offen steht, der bereit ist, mit den Leuten um die Häuser zu ziehen, vor denen die ‘Tagesschau‘ immer gewarnt hat” (“Hundert”). He reproduces the oppositional narrative of new right ideology as alternative and in separation to the current system and media but based on a similar (and repeatedly insinuated as such) narrative structure to an established literary work as *Faserland* is. The intertextual link underscores the blending of discourses from both sides: associating *Faserland* with new right literature (as was shown in its' subchapter), but also positioning new right literature, such as *EuropaPowerbrutal*, in tradition of popular, established texts, such as *Faserland*. Everything that is valid and true for *Faserland* should thereby be transmitted to *EuropaPowerbrutal*: its popularity, its canonization, its timelessness, its polarity and its style. The description is written in a deliberately stylized and colloquial tone (similarly to *Gottmann*) deviating from serious or didactic new right publications. On the one hand, this approach reflects the New Right's capacity to produce culturally engaging or entertaining content that appeals beyond its core ideological base. On the other hand, the stylistic shift helps disguise or soften the political messaging embedded in the narrative, contributing to a more subtle form of ideological dissemination. The description mirrors this tension by stating that “Europa Power Brutal ist ein Roman, wie ihn die politische Rechte in Deutschland noch nicht gesehen hat” (*Antaios*). The text's function is politicized by declaring

its perceived innovation for the new right cultural project. However, the description leaves vague what precisely renders the novel politically or aesthetically innovative. Rather than clarifying its message, the framing signals ideological allegiance and targeting a specific readership within the new right scene without necessarily spelling out its program.

What the book's description merely suggests is echoed and expanded upon in its reception. Given that *EuropaPowerbrutal* was published by *Jungeuropa*, it is unsurprising that the podcast *Von rechts gelesen* dedicated an entire episode to the book, featuring a conversation with the author himself. Stein and Zierke open the episode with an introduction of the author, noting that he works for the AfD ("Europa" 0:16:--). The statement can be treated as a symbolic fusion of political and metapolitical right-wing spheres and underscores another ambivalence of the new right strategy: the lack of tension or contradiction between party politics and cultural production. Far from having to choose between these spheres, individuals like Hoewer move seamlessly between them, legitimizing the political project through cultural means. In their discussion of the book, Stein and Zierke identify its dual function: it is both aesthetic and didactic. On the one hand, the novel offers a kind of literary travelogue into the lifestyle of the political right, showcasing the other side of the medal of individual new right cultural and political activity, what Hoewer calls the "Feierabend" of a right-wing politician (Stein and Zierke, "Europa" 0:28:--). The motif of a "rechtes Dolce Vita" (Stein and Zierke, "Europa" 0:26:45) reveals how lifestyle becomes politicized. Readers are invited not through overt propaganda, but to inhabit this world imaginatively, rendering the novel politically potent not by message, but by mood. In this way, the book becomes politically inspirational and provides an entry point into a new right worldview (Stein and Zierke, "Europa" 0:39:--) while maintaining the guise of cultural entertainment. On the other hand, the podcast insists on the book's non-propagandistic nature, describing it as the "Gegenteil eines Propagandaromans" (Stein and Zierke, "Europa" 0:48:25 – 0:48:28). The defensive framing demonstrates how the New Right attempts to reposition its cultural output: not as dogma, but as lifestyle; not as ideology, but as aesthetic narrative. By insisting to offer no direct political message, the novel is portrayed as authentic and thereby more powerful in its ability to attract and affect readers. The effectiveness of this strategy lies in its ambiguity: it opens a cultural space in which political engagement is less about explicit instruction and more about identification and affective alignment.

A further intensification of this strategy, blending aesthetic accessibility with political intent, can be observed in the reception of *EuropaPowerbrutal* in the new right magazine *Aktivposten*. The review praises the novel's combination of entertainment value and ideological

relevance and goes so far as to define this very mixture as a core element of political and cultural resistance (“Rezension: EuropaPowerbrutal”). As the reviewer puts it:

Mit dem Reisemotiv und der Hervorhebung der jeweiligen aktivistischen Lebensart trifft der Autor ein wichtiges Element der Kultur des politischen Widerstandes. Denn zur Weltanschauung gehören nicht nur „ernste“ Themen wie Aktivismus, Sport und die Arbeit in Parteien oder anderen Organisationen, sondern auch gemeinsame Feiern, Reisen oder Aktivitäten nur zum Spaß. Erst dadurch wird eine oppositionelle Gegenkultur lebendig und zieht Menschen nicht nur über ihre Inhalte an, sondern auch gefühlsmäßig (“Rezension: EuropaPowerbrutal”).

Such articulation stresses the importance of affective structures in the formation of oppositional identity. The cultural project of the New Right is not solely about the transmission of content or ideology, but also about emotional engagement and lifestyle aesthetics. In this reading, the lightness and apparent lack of ideological pressure in *EuropaPowerbrutal* constitutes a central mechanism of new right subject formation. The novel’s atmosphere of relaxed opposition, shared experience and affective community becomes its message. In doing so, the review contrasts this mode of engagement to what it describes as the rigidity and joylessness of the political ‘mainstream’, specifically the left (“Rezension: EuropaPowerbrutal”). The left is accused of lacking the capacity for optimism and leisure while increasing the affective appeal of the new right counterculture (“Rezension: EuropaPowerbrutal”). The review in *Aktivposten* thus re-narrates the novel as a pattern for cultural resistance by framing its affective elements as politically productive in themselves.

Drawing on notions of literary critical valuation, this playful, colloquial and atmospherically rich style facilitates the novel’s accessibility even beyond new right readerships (“Rezension: EuropaPowerbrutal”). It does not correspond to an advertised ‘Hochliteratur’. Kevin Kempke denotes this to represent a significant shift in the publishing strategy of *Jungeuropa*. In contrast to *Antaios*, which continues to focus on intellectualized and ideologically explicit literature, *Jungeuropa* offers books that rely less on complex argumentation and more on mood, lifestyle and implicit political positioning (Kempke 14). The focus is no longer a distinguished intellectual elite but a broader, potentially more affectively driven audience. That being said, the distinction between *Antaios* and *Jungeuropa* should not be overstated. While their respective emphases may differ, both publishers share and support one another’s offerings, often integrating each other’s publications into their respective catalogues. *Antaios’* promotion and inclusion in the literary canon of *EuropaPowerbrutal*; establishes it in its wider discursive and commercial system. In his article on “Szene-Prosa” Kubitschek expresses his dislike for ideological explicit texts and emphasizes their

classification as uncomplex, simple literature. Paradoxically, Kubitschek notes that there is scenic explicit new right literature of high value:

Wenn es zu leicht fällt, einen Roman oder eine Erzählung als ‚rechts‘ zu bestimmen, ist das fast ausnahmslos kein gutes Zeichen. Fast ausnahmslos bedeutet aber: Es gibt Ausnahmen, es gibt qualitativ empfehlenswerte Romane von rechts, die für eine Vereinnahmung geschrieben wurden und ihre Leser in diesem Lager finden. Solche Romane haben thematische Eindeutigkeit, Szeneanspielungen, Weltanschauungsaura zu bieten (“Szene-Prosa”).

Perceived preferences or distinctions within the ‘Mosaikrechte’, such as those between intellectual versus subcultural approaches, do not impede the overall strategy. Instead, the various tendencies complement one another, working toward the common goal of normalizing and disseminating new right ideology.

This becomes evident when examining the ‘recommended books’ section accompanying *EuropaPowerbrutal*. Among the recommended titles is *Enklave* by Volker Zierke, which is repeatedly advertised in episodes of the podcast and consequently promoted by *Antaios* as well. Such cross-platform promotion once again underscores the omnipresence and multilayeredness of the New Right’s networking activities. Also included is *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann*, contributing to a literary field shaped by new right discursive frames and new right readings that are lighter in tone. What stands out most in this section is the inclusion of *Zwischen Globalismus und Demokratie* by the sociologist Wolfgang Streeck, published by the established publishing house *Suhrkamp*. The juxtaposition of placing explicitly new right literature alongside titles from recognized, non-new right publishers exemplifies a tactic of normalization: aligning new right literature within a broader public and literary discourse and thus blurring ideological boundaries. Equally noteworthy is the mixture of fiction and nonfiction. The presence of Streeck’s book alongside the novels highlights how fiction, too, can be constructed as educational and politically meaningful, even if this is not explicitly the case in the primary discussion of the novel by Zierke and Stein. Streeck’s criticism of globalization resonates with new right concerns, particularly regarding national sovereignty and the perceived erosion of democratic structures. The title alone echoes a central opposition in new right thinking, where globalization is constructed as inherently antithetical to genuine democratic governance. That this is the only title by Streeck offered in the *Antaios* catalogue indicates a selective recontextualization to fit new right interpretive frameworks. In the description, *Zwischen Globalismus und Demokratie* is recommended by Benedikt Kaiser, tying such literature within new right theoretical hubs such as *Sezession*. The book is rooted within the ideological framework of the New Right despite its formal detachment from new right publishing. Paratextual framing once again becomes a tool of politicization, allowing *Antaios*

to maintain an ambivalent and flexible position of neither openly dogmatic nor entirely detached from political messaging.

The deliberate overlap of fiction and nonfiction, new right and non-right literature, aesthetic pleasure and ideological instruction as seen in this case through the framing of *EuropaPowerbrutal*, lies at the heart of the New Right's cultural strategy. It is through such structures that literature might become metapolitically effective; not solely through content, but through curated connections, suggestive proximity and affective engagement.

3.3.6 *Schizoid Man* (2024)

The selected book for the year 2024 is *Schizoid Man* by Sebastian Schwaerzel. The novel centers on a male protagonist who engages in bodybuilding, exhibits a pronounced sense of superficiality (along his surrounding) and displays extreme tendencies toward self-mutilation and suicide. While the *Spiegel* list for that year features Clemens Meyer's *Die Projektoren*, *Schizoid Man* is published by *Castrum*. The Viennese publishing house *Castrum* describes its own mission as offering "jedem Gedanken in der Tradition klassischer, deutscher Literatur und Philosophie ein Veröffentlichungsorgan" ("Verlag"). Upon closer examination, *Schizoid Man* does not appear to be either classical or traditionalist in a literary sense. Nevertheless, through its reception by new right-affiliated organs, one can discern the ways in which the book might resonate with traditionalist or new right ideological narratives.

An example of this is a review by Ellen Kositzka published in *Sezession*. She characterizes the book using terms such as "tristen Gegenwartsbeschreibung", "authentisch", "puren Nihilismus", "Welt- und Lebensekel" and "Desillusion pur, Katharsis" (Kositzka, "Schizoid"). Considering the theoretical groundwork established earlier in this thesis, these descriptions align with new right discursive strategies: the portrayal of an authentic and disillusioned depiction of contemporary Germany enables a didactic reading that frames the present as in a condition to be criticized and ultimately rejected. Nihilism, as articulated here, can be interpreted as a vehicle for social critique and specifically one that converges with anti-liberal, anti-political correctness rhetoric. Kositzka compares *Schizoid Man* to *Faserland*, *EuropaPowerbrutal* and *American Psycho* ("Schizoid") which is echoed across other new right reviews of the novel. A dual function resides in this rhetorical strategy, observed repeatedly in the "Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane" list: it links works from potentially new right publishers to canonized literature, while simultaneously reframing commercially successful and critically established works as compatible with new right ideological frameworks.

Schizoid Man has also attracted attention from *Jungeuropa*. A full podcast episode of *Von rechts gelesen* is dedicated to the book, followed by an interview between Zierke and the author Sebastian Schwaerzel. In the podcast, the hosts first engage in a discussion about the nature of the book (“Schizoid Man” 0:07:--). They question whether it should be read as a generation novel, an authentic depiction of the current youth, or rather as a timeless, nihilistic portrayal of individuals searching for meaning. Although Zierke and Stein state on two occasions that *Schizoid Man* is not a new right novel, they simultaneously emphasize that the themes it addresses are characteristic of new right discourse (“Schizoid Man”). The episode is saturated with the discussion of the book’s statements rejecting political correctness, often articulated in provocative and polemic language. The hosts themselves reproduce these narratives in employing terms such as “Transvestitenmonster” (“Schizoid Man” 0:15:56) and “Gutmenschenarschlöcher” (“Schizoid Man” 0:34:16) to describe the characters. Identity crisis and a crisis of sense, two connectable notions for the New Right, are communicated especially by the protagonist. He is marked by complete indifference and the nihilistic depiction of his environment echoes the discourse of cultural pessimism. These resonances are perhaps why the New Right draws comparisons of Schwaerzel’s narrative tone to authors like Christian Kracht or Bret Easton Ellis. Quotations such as “Der Instagram Feed hat uns allen beigebracht, wie wir einander behandeln sollen” (Schwaerzel 10) or “Es gibt eine bittere Gleichgültigkeit in uns, die mir mehr Angst macht, als selbst mein ekelhaftes Verlangen” (122) illustrate this bleak emotional atmosphere. Many passages throughout the novel are steeped in irony, sarcasm and cynical repetition, accentuating both the protagonist’s superficiality and his existential disorientation (Schwaerzel 72, 77, 107, 155, 157). For example: “Der Islam, der Nationalsozialismus und die Sekte von irgendeinem Guru aus Amerika. Die Weltreligionen des 21. Jahrhunderts” (86). Stein and Zierke interpret the novel’s lack of clear message or ideological directive as a strength, highlighting instead the atmosphere and emotional tenor it conveys. Regardless of how the book is ultimately classified, both readings, the generation novel and the timeless, nihilistic character study, support a reception that aligns with new right narratives, which may explain the strong interest from these circles. The hosts also briefly touch upon the publisher, *Castrum*, noting that they are not particularly familiar with it. They still recognize it as an alternative to ‘mainstream’ publishers such as Klett-Cotta, mirroring once again structures of the ‘Mosaikrechte’ (“Schizoid Man” 0:48:--).

Furthermore, they speculate on the author’s intentions and blur the line between the literary narrator and Schwaerzel. This may be one reason why Zierke conducted a separate

interview with Schwaerzel, in which the nihilistic tone is maintained (“Manifest”). In the interview, Schwaerzel states:

Wenn man so will, ist der Erzähler Partisane eines Krieges, der so radikal personalisiert ist, dass er noch nicht mal Raum für ein schlüssiges Ziel oder Feindbild hat. Letzten Endes ist mein Schizoid Man ein Terrorist, das jedoch in seiner ureigensten Form, da ihm jede Ideologie oder Zielsetzung fehlt (“Manifest”).

This assertion reflects a form of radical subjectivism and identity loss that can be interpreted as compatible with new right sensibilities, particularly when considering their emphasis on cultural crisis and the loss of clear friend-enemy distinctions. The cultural pessimism continues in other statements by Schwaerzel, such as:

Würde ich ein Zoomer-Manifest schreiben wollen, müsste mein Protagonist wohl gleichzeitig kodeinabhängig, abstinenter salafistischer Konvertit, nicht-binär, Anarcho-Kapitalist, pornographiesüchtig, vegan, karnivor und Soundcloud-Rapper sein. Ich kann nur hoffen, irgendwann wirklich geisteskrank genug zu sein, um so ein Manifest zu schreiben (“Manifest”).

Even if Schwaerzel himself rejects any associations with the New Right (“Manifest”), statements such as these along his willingness to engage with new right institutions, whether through publication or interviews, suggest otherwise. The tension between authorial denial and institutional affiliation raises important questions about the discursive overlap and strategic ambiguity that characterize contemporary new right literature policy.

Finally, it is worth examining how *Schizoid Man* is presented on the *Antaios* website. The book description opens with a quote from Yukio Mishima¹⁴, immediately establishing an intertextual connection that invokes aestheticized masculinity and cultural pessimism (Hubernagel) within a new right context. Moreover, similar titles listed alongside the book, comprising of *EuropaPowerbrutal*, a book by Jack Donovan and Rolf Schilling’s¹⁵ *Blüher im Herbst* (published with *Castrum*), further embed it in new right (poetic, fictional and non-fictional) discourse. Jack Donovan’s *Der Weg der Männer*, for example, is framed as a counterpoint to contemporary gender discourse. The description states: “Es geht also – gegen jeden Gender-Trend und gegen jede Verweichlichung des Mannes – um eine Reconquista maskuliner Ideale und um eine Re-Polarisierung der Geschlechter” (*Antaios*). The explicit call for a return to traditional gender roles and hierarchical structures aligns directly with the themes discussed in the *Jungeuropa* podcast episode; particularly the search for meaning and orientation among young men. While such a reading is not the explicit focus of *Schizoid Man*,

¹⁴ Japanese author instrumentalized in new right discourse due to his “rechtsnationale Gesellschaftskritik” (Hubernagel).

¹⁵ In an article by *Tumult*, Rolf Schilling is described as an author of ‘innere Emigration’ (Wolff). That Schilling is willing to associate himself with new right magazines such as *Tumult* (Wolff) and publishers like *Castrum* proves a new right interest in the author and at least suggests the author’s proximity to their ideologies.

it is implied through the associative logic of the site's recommendations. The relation to *EuropaPowerbrutal* may rest on shared formal characteristics: both texts aim less at narrative coherence and more at the production of a specific atmosphere. In *Von rechts gelesen*, it is noted that *EuropaPowerbrutal* represents the antithesis of *Schizoid Man* in being a book that actively seeks meaning, whereas *Schizoid Man* resigns itself to the absence of it (Stein and Zierke, "Europa" 0:59:--). The fact that these works are presented side by side, by podcast hosts and by *Antaios*, exhibits a discursive pattern shared across New Right institutions: aesthetic and ideological contradictions are not seen as problems, but as part of a broader cultural strategy. The inclusion of *Schizoid Man* in *Antaios*' canonical 'Gegenliste' and its promotion alongside ideologically charged and 'classical' literature further supports this observation. Lichtmesz notes the design of this strategy to reach a wider intellectual and cultural audience: "Büchermenschen, obskure Romanautoren, Foucault-Anhänger und Spenglerianer, Literaten und Cineasten" ("Mit schwarzen Fingernägeln"). By framing the book in a context that evokes cultural critique, identity crisis and aesthetic nihilism, the New Right can appeal to a readership beyond the explicitly ideological. It could concern younger audiences, who may be drawn in by the book's numerous pop-cultural references, such as those to Kanye West.

4. Summary

The preceding case studies intended to provide an overview of the New Right's activities in the field of literature policy. Although each case could have been explored in greater depth, the objective was to shed light on the multifaceted and ambivalent strategies employed by the New Right. This ambivalence is, in fact, the central finding and justifies the broad scope of the case studies presented: in every aspect of their literature policy, the New Right displays a strategic openness. Rather than adhering to a single dominant strategy, the movement positions itself with flexibility in order to reach as broad an audience as possible. Such openness unifies various factions of the 'Mosaikrechte', gathering them under the shared project of resistance. The analysis revealed recurring structural and rhetorical patterns of framing across all cases, regardless of the specific publisher or literary focus. What emerges is a network of different publishing houses, each addressing distinct topics, yet functioning together like a cogwheel. The New Right produces an all-encompassing structure in which every level, discourse, narrative, goal and theory is interconnected. This structural cohesion is visible in their curation of fiction: texts from new right publishers are presented alongside those from non-new right sources and compiled into canonical lists. The mosaic-like structure externally associated with the New Right is mirrored. It creates a platform that provides multiple forms of identification and strives to appeal to a diverse range of individuals.

This inclusive method is for example reflected in their approach to literary evaluation. On the one hand, the New Right stages itself as intellectually sophisticated as seen in their self-description on *Sezession*. With the repeated emphasis of a necessary complexity in literature and the seeming dismissal of overt messaging, the movement draws distinctions between 'Kitsch' and 'high' literature similar to the public (Dörner and Vogt 239). On the other hand, they promote more accessible, lighter and entertaining texts such as *Fall und Aufstieg der Familie Gottmann* or *EuropaPowerbrutal* or texts with explicit messaging such as *Systemfehler* or *Heerlager der Heiligen*. These work as a form of escapist fiction that appeals to and comforts readers by providing emotional satisfaction (Dörner and Vogt 241–242) and belonging. The two-fold approach between stylistic and thematic poles demonstrates a new right effort to increase reach in readerships including those seeking entertainment and those drawn to (ideological) depth (Dörner and Vogt 242).

By engaging in debates over literary value and canonization, the New Right inserts itself within broader cultural discourses which potentially work identity-forming (Dörner and Vogt 246). They strategically associate themselves with intellectual tradition in order to gain cultural legitimacy. Their participation in 'mainstream' literary valuation discourses lends them

authority and allows to present themselves as ‘normal’ intellectuals, which can defuse criticism and blur the lines between ‘mainstream’ and new right rhetoric. This process appropriates classical cultural references and established authors such as Bradbury, Fallada or Kafka for normalization. The paratextual reference of the similar title-section on the *Antaios* list and the creation of reading lists such as “Hundert Jahre, hundert Romane” exemplifies this method: canonical literature is used to both anchor traditionalist values and advance resistance to perceived state manipulation. Such paradoxical and often contradictory stance facilitates participation in public discourse despite the extreme nature of new right ideological foundations. Intertwining disparate new right narratives creates a framework in which individuals can recognize themselves as part of a collective, fostering group identity and internal coherence. Narratives such as that of resistance might appear random but are strategically used across literary discussions. This dog whistle communication (Busch et al. 476) maintains recognizability while avoiding overt radicalism.

The New Right seemingly reads broadly, but certain topics in classical literature especially capture their interest. Literature is used to reproduce new right affective functioning narratives, which sow distrust and degrade the system while oppositionally staging the New Right as platform for belonging. Depicting the state as an internal threat is prioritized over depicting external threats such as the refugees. Therefore, works are favored that express anxiety and dissatisfaction with systems, such as in Kafka’s *Der Prozess* as well as texts that reflect a sense of disorientation and the search for identity, such as *Faserland*. The latter proved to be especially favorable for approbation, as it repeatedly serves as comparison within new right circles for two newer new right publications (*EuropaPowerbrutal*, *Schizoid Man*). One reason might be that *Der Spiegel* (according to the new right definition as politically left aligned) similarly ascribes aesthetic value to *Faserland* (as seen in their canonical list). An interest in popular, renowned or polarizing works is revealed because they facilitate entrance into public discourse as was shown with Uwe Tellkamp and his works. Transferring literature to present German society regardless of their origin (*Fahrenheit 451*, *1984*, *Lord of the Rings*) and their historical distance (*Der Prozess*) exposes selective new right interpretational practices and paradoxes considering the ideological focus on nationality. The latter is reflected in an affinity for authors such as Fallada: the relevance of ‘authentic’ depictions of German history and culture displays how nationality, identity and belonging are elevated to ideological and cultural principles. The New Right’s self-proclaimed literary interest is aesthetic, but even more so it is ideological. Literature is seen not only as art but as a medium for political learning. This potential is actively constructed through strategic framing. Even literature from new right

publishers rarely stands alone and is instead accompanied by interpretation, discussion and ideological contextualization through for example book reviews, literary suggestions (of supposed similar fictional and non-fictional texts) and conversations in videos or podcasts. More important than the content is the context.

While not the focus of this thesis, numerous instances were observed in which linguistic strategies further contribute to this effort. Similarly to texts, books and literary and cultural theories, the New Right coins terms which function as umbrella terms for whole discourses (Schilk, “Heroismus” 461). New Right imagery is metaphorically connected to popular imageries to normalize the drastic meaning (Palberg 67–68). Metaphors of war, weaponry and references to violence (specifically in connections to books and reading) underline the overall narrative of resistance. Archaic spellings – in all new right non-fictional and fictional texts, ‘ß’ instead of ‘ss’, is used – reinforce the traditionalist notion. Terms and phrases are often put in quotation marks to ridicule or diminish their meaning. As part of a language policy, such linguistic strategies are employed to foster a sense of belonging and recognition within new right circles while using language to reproduce ideological narratives. Ideological thought patterns such as holistic notions of opposition are strengthened through rhetorics. Political discourse is reflected in literary and linguistic practices and even actively constructed through them. The question of whether these strategies are ultimately successful is debatable. However, the New Right has gained visibility and traction in public discourse. The growing popularity and presence are the subject of the following chapter which examines their broader impact on cultural and political debates.

4.1 The Need for Critical Reception

The analysis of the New Right's literary strategies inevitably raises the question of how to engage with such findings. This is a concern shared by many scholars who study the New Right. A persistent dilemma lies in whether discussing and analyzing new right literary productions and activities might unintentionally legitimize them by granting attention and increasing visibility. The tension between critique and potential amplification accentuates both the sophistication and the partial success of the New Right's ambivalent and highly adaptable positioning. Scholars such as Hornuff (12, 14) and von Moltke and Komfort-Hein (624) argue that ignoring these developments is not a viable strategy. On the contrary, they call for conscious engagement and critical reflection, cautioning that inattention may inadvertently normalize such discourses by allowing them to spread unchallenged. Meiering asserts that only a clarification of implicit radical content might ban its "Infektionsgefahr" (5): similar to the necessity of understanding an etymology, new right coining and ideological implications of words such as "Gesinnungskorridor" or "Remigration" to defuse and boycott it, it is necessary to recognize new right (literary) narratives to prevent them from spreading. Thomas Wortmann equally emphasizes the importance of analyzing new right paratextual framings and interpretive strategies in academic contexts:

Erstens zeigt sich ... ex negativo die Bedeutung der Grundlagen der literaturwissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit Texten (etwa im Hinblick auf den Status des historischen Kontextes, auf die Bedeutung von Rezeptionsgeschichte, auf die Notwendigkeit, Argumente am Text zu belegen), zweitens lässt sich über Rahmenbedingungen und Rhetorik der Literaturvermittlung (etwa zum Schlagwort der ‚Aktualisierung‘) diskutieren, drittens biete[n] sich Scholdts Text [and other new right productions] selbst als Analysegegenstand an, um die Argumentationsstrukturen der Neuen Rechten in den Blick zu nehmen (97).

Although awareness of the New Right's activities appears to be growing within German literary studies, such recognition is still largely absent in other spheres. Conversations about this thesis with individuals outside the field showed that many were not even familiar with the term 'New Right' let alone their cultural strategies. Yet it is precisely the lack of awareness that leaves society vulnerable to ideological manipulation through literature, language and culture. Meurer concludes: "Außenstehende müssen selbst mitunter viel und genau in neurechten Publikationen lesen, um die Fassade kultivierten Räsonnements als Fassade entlarven zu können, hinter der sich de facto rechtsextreme Ideen und Ideale verbergen" (212). This thesis contributes to precisely this process by offering a more accessible and concise entry point into that hidden layer of new right discourse. It ensures that others do not need to expose themselves to such literature in depth to understand its implications.

Only once this foundation is built can meaningful action begin. Hornuff, for instance, argues that it is crucial to understand the functional mechanisms of modern societies better than the New Right does (20), which is an insight that demands an interdisciplinary approach. Supporting cross-field alliances and networks could prove useful in illuminating political and cultural manipulation from various perspectives. Bangstad et al. similarly highlight the importance of examining the origins and conditions that gave rise to the New Right's increasing influence, particularly in the affective sphere of cultural politics (108). Taking affects seriously as a site of political mobilization also means overcoming the fear that writing about the New Right might itself amplify their reach: scholars should not shy away from such work (Ruhe 478), even though the New Right comments on the perceived positive effect for an academic discussion of their movement (Kempke 686). Therefore, Kempke stresses the importance of not reproducing affective modes of communication but rather describing and analyzing them with critical distance (700).

This leads to broader questions regarding the role of literature in public discourse and the treatment of new right authors and agents within the cultural field. In the context of scandal research in literary studies, the issue of authorship versus the autonomy of the work is frequently debated (Friedrich). Scandals or public conflicts are used and exploited by the New Right to gain attention and to frame themselves as victims of censorship. For example, in the case of Monika Maron (Hoffmann, "Ästhetischer Dünger" 223), terms like 'Zensur', having the power to influence literary scandals (Friedrich 18), are repurposed as rhetorical weapons, even though their use is often detached from actual legal or institutional constraints. The New Right positions itself as the defender of artistic freedom and uses this claim to challenge what it perceives as moralistic restrictions imposed by its opponents. It thereby attempts to inscribe itself in and to shift the discourse about literature itself, not just through literature. This strategy exposes the tensions between the ideals of autonomous art and the responsibilities of ethics and morals. At the heart of this dynamic lies a series of unresolved questions: Can an author's personal views be separated from their work? Can a literary text be consumed ethically even when the author holds problematic views? At what point do such views become too difficult to ignore and who decides this? Is it the responsibility of publishers, the public, state institutions, universities or booksellers (such as Amazon, which has delisted certain titles)? When do the contents of a work or its paratexts become unacceptable, where is the line?

This thesis does not presume to provide definitive answers to these questions. However, it argues that acknowledging and critically discussing these interconnections, particularly in an interdisciplinary framework, is a necessary step toward developing such answers. Creating

spaces or platforms for informed public discussion helps not only to raise awareness but is the core of democratic progress. Different actors and fields could publicly expose hidden strategies and inconsistencies in new right discourses: the more people learn about and understand the ambivalent way the New Right positions itself, the more their affective cultural strategies would lose their power. Through informed engagement, society can begin to counteract the aesthetic and ideological strategies of the New Right and reclaim literary discourse as a space for true democratic discussion.

4.2 Conclusion

This thesis has explored how the New Right in Germany instrumentalizes literature as a medium for cultural and ideological influence. By examining the publishing activities and paratextual strategies of *Antaios* and its network, the thesis exhibits how literature is strategically reframed and mobilized to serve the New Right's broader goals of intellectualization and cultural hegemony. The analysis of book descriptions, reviews and canonizational efforts shows that literature is not merely a site of cultural production but also of political contestation. This is reached through a reproduction of common new right narratives. These are embedded and intertwined partly or wholly within their literature policy, such as 'the state as enemy', 'belonging', 'opposition' and 'resistance'. A central finding of this thesis is the deliberate ambivalence that characterizes the New Right's literature policy. The ambivalence enables a flexible positioning that appeals to both elite and popular readerships, to conservative traditionalists, to those pursuing radical opposition and potentially even to those who are merely dissatisfied with the political status quo. This allows integration within cultural institutions and discourses. It increases its legitimacy and reach without necessarily revealing its ideological aims. The mosaic-like structure of the New Right, both ideologically and institutionally, is reflected in its literary strategies. The interconnected publishing houses, the interplay of populist and intellectual appeals and the ambivalent stance towards literary value and canonization together form a dense network of cultural influence. Through curated paratexts, recontextualizations and dog-whistle rhetoric, the New Right creates affective and interpretative frameworks that invite identification and belonging while concealing more radical goals beneath a surface of cultural sophistication. This thesis also highlights the importance of academic engagement with these developments. While the risk of expanding new right discourse through scholarly analysis exists, ignoring it leaves problematic ideologies and manipulation unreflected. A nuanced, critically distant and interdisciplinary examination is necessary. In disclosing the New Right's strategies, literary studies can contribute to a broader democratic discourse that resists ideological manipulation and preserves literature as a space of pluralism, complexity and aesthetics. The cultural field is not immune to politicization; in fact, it can be one of its most contested settings. Recognizing the urgency of the questions raised here regarding canon formation, authorial intent, the ethics of reading and the role of institutions is the first step toward developing resilient and reflective responses.

Future research could explore one of the three categories introduced in his thesis, the production of new right literature, the framing of non-new right literature or the canonizational effort, in more detail. Regarding the latter, it may be particularly fruitful to analyze *Antaios'*

recently published (April 2025) list of world literature (“Weltliteratur”), especially to gain insights in the New Right’s international activities beyond the German-speaking world. Further studies could focus more on linguistic strategies within discourse analysis in new right circles and connect this to these findings. Projects with a more interdisciplinary focus should explore how democratic societies can safeguard language, literary and cultural discourse against appropriation while remaining open, critical and self-aware. Only through such engagement can literature fulfill its potential not as an instrument of ideological control, but as a catalyst for critical thought and dialogue on the one hand and as an aesthetic medium and means of entertainment on the other hand. The handling of right-wing extremist ideology that could threaten the constitution of the Federal Republic remains a balancing act. This is also demonstrated by the recent decision of the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig regarding the very recent (24 June 2025) lifting of the ban on the magazine *Compact* (“Compact-Verbot”, *Tagesschau*). It is always necessary to find a middle ground between constitutional protection and press freedom.

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