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“Chased from the Mainstream”*Tito Perdue and Far-Right Fiction Read via Bourdieu’s Field Theory*

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Abstract: *This article examines the transformation of the position of far-right fiction writer Tito Perdue in the transnational and US-based book business from the 1990s to the early 2020s using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the literary field. It considers the author’s career as a case study to examine how the transnational far right set up its own publishing infrastructure in the late 2000s following its exclusion from the mainstream literary world and turn toward metapolitics. Enabled by new possibilities brought about by the digital revolution, these actors gained visibility, while increasingly embracing their outsider position by capitalizing on what Bourdieu describes as the anti-commercial principles of the field. Faced with the problem of insufficient consecration by the literary establishment from which they have been ostracized, people like Greg Johnson of the multimedia project Counter-Currents have created an elaborate network of far-right cultural counter-institutions to obscure their actual lack of symbolic capital. While these events have launched Perdue from a struggling writer to one of the most widely published literary authors of the contemporary anglophone far right, the article concludes that the avant-garde performance of these metapolitical actors remains, obscuring their dominated position within the field.*

Keywords: Tito Perdue, Greg Johnson, far-right fiction, Pierre Bourdieu, literary field, metapolitics

This article examines the transformation of the position of white supremacist and neo-Confederate fiction writer Tito Perdue in the transnational and US-based book business using Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the *literary field*. It analyzes Perdue’s rise from struggling to publish to becoming one of the most widely published authors on the US literary far right.¹ This change reflects the wider far right’s metapolitical

1 The “far right” is understood here as defined by Cas Mudde (2022, 103), incorporating both the extreme right (i.e., antiliberal and antidemocratic) and radical right (i.e., antiliberal but still democratic).

shift to establishing its own counter-institutions in order to avoid exclusion from the mainstream mechanisms of literary production and dissemination.

The twenty-first-century rise of a transnationally connected far right has been analyzed by researchers from a variety of disciplines (e.g., Mudde 2019; Sedgwick 2019; McAdams and Castrillon 2022; Hermansson et al. 2020; Maly 2024). However, an area that has received only sparing attention is far-right fiction, despite its role in mythmaking and its affective potential. Pioneer of literary anthropology Wolfgang Iser notes that the dichotomy of fact and fiction is unhelpful, as fiction must be understood as “a means of overstepping the given, which is bound to cause a transformation of what is” (1989, 268). Far-right fiction, Christoffer Kølvrå and Bernhard Forchtner write, is thus not only a way of “imagining alternative worlds” but always contains an element of “seepage—from a space of play/fiction to one of life/reality—of desires and fantasies, anxieties and hopes, identification and enmities, now no longer merely imaginary, but imagined as real” (2025, 6). An example of this porous boundary in far-right fiction is the antisemitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which was received as true by some readers even after proof emerged that it was largely plagiarized from earlier works of fiction, and which still inspires the far right today (Segel and Levy 1996; Jacobs and Weitzman 2003). While generally considered relatively harmless when compared to, say, political manifestos, far-right fiction has the potential to move readers, radicalize them, and, in rare cases like William Luther Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries* (1978), inspire individuals and groups to commit acts of violence.

This article focuses less on the contents of this fiction than on the changing conditions enabling its production and dissemination. Considering his publishing history as a case study of the new opportunities available to far-right articulations of culture, I trace Perdue’s career back to the early 1990s, showing how the “metapolitical turn” of the far right (Ravndal 2023, 2121) influenced his rise. Perdue has moved from being barely able to publish his numerous manuscripts in the 1990s and 2000s to becoming one of the contemporary anglophone far-right literary authors with the highest visibility.

In this article, I want to make four points concerning Perdue’s career as a far-right writer and the evolution of the metapolitical far right’s relationship to the transnational US literary field: (1) Perdue was only able to attain his current level of visibility within the US far right because of transnational metapolitical publishing projects such as *Arktos* and *Counter-Currents*; (2) using what Bourdieu characterizes as the inverse logic of the literary field and its emphasis on anti-economic principles, Perdue and others are able to capitalize on their marginal position within the field; (3) in the early 2010s these far-right cultural institutions set up their own infrastructure that imitates the mechanisms necessary for what Bourdieu (2009, 167) terms “consecration,” that is, the granting and transferal of literary legitimacy and

symbolic capital; and (4), they have created a microcosm within the literary field consisting of publishers, literary journals, and literary prizes, which have the function of “*anti-institutional institutions*,” meaning that they define themselves in opposition to the dominant institutions of the literary field (258, original italics). Hence, this article does not give a systematic overview of far-right publishing nor an empirical field analysis but interprets one author’s changing position in the literary field as a paradigmatic example of the broader metapolitical development of the transnationally connected US far right.

The article is divided into four parts. After briefly elaborating on the far right’s metapolitical development, the first section introduces Perdue and his work, and outlines his publishing history. The second part theorizes the globalized US literary field in relation to Bourdieu’s field framework and considers how the digital revolution created new opportunities for the dissemination of far-right literature. Then, the article considers the way Perdue and other far-right cultural actors like US-based publisher Greg Johnson emulate the strategies of the mainstream literary field. Finally, it considers how Perdue’s career as a writer of far-right fiction illuminates the larger literary far right’s development from exclusion to capitalizing on their counterposition.

Background: Metapolitics

The globally linked far right has increasingly adopted a metapolitical approach as one of its main strategies (Ravndal 2023; Maly 2024; Bures 2023; Hermansson et al. 2020; Teitelbaum 2019). The concept of “metapolitics” was first articulated in the 1960s by French New Right thinker Alain de Benoist and his think tank GRECE (Groupement de Recherche et d’Études pour la Civilisation Européenne / Research and Study Group for European Civilization) (Camus 2019, 74), appropriating Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as articulated in the *Prison Notebooks*. This “right-wing Gramscism” (Van Kranenburg 1999, 14), based on the idea that cultural and ideological hegemony and the creation of consent by the bourgeoisie precede and underlie political dominance, is just one of the many “appropriations of leftist language and postures” that accompanied the repackaging of the post-World War II far right (Bures 2020, 36). It proved to be a fruitful approach. Faced with the difficulty of normalizing far-right politics after the world had witnessed the horrors of the Shoah (Mudde 2019, 10–11), these movements were in a defensive position and forced to play a long game by focusing on ideas, culture, and institutions rather than street actions and parliamentary politics. Roger Griffin argues that the novelty and efficiency of the French New Right’s approach lay in the “regular appearance in quality newspapers and academic press of its disquisitions on a vast range of issues . . . based on an ‘anti-egalitarian,’ ‘anti-materialist,’ ‘anti-universalist,’ ‘anti-

individualistic worldview” (2000, 45). Ico Maly claims that the French New Right’s metapolitics is more indebted to Richard Wagner’s cultural nationalism and Armin Mohler’s idea of the interwar Conservative Revolution than to Gramsci, and that metapolitics was originally conceived as an intellectual movement for an elite and not a general strategy. Thus, they focus solely on ideas at the expense of the underlying materialist and class analysis of Gramsci’s theorization (Maly 2024, 67).

Jacob Ravndal has quantitatively and qualitatively demonstrated that metapolitics has become the prevalent strategy of the twenty-first-century revolutionary right. He explains its adoption of this strategy as being facilitated by “(1) limited opportunities for armed resistance; (2) a subcultural style shift from violent skinheadism to bookish Identitarianism; and (3) new opportunities for promoting alternative worldviews online” (2023, 2121). As will become clear, the accessibility of digital technology played a key factor in the transformation of the US far right in the literary field. Ravndal (2023, 2130) describes this strategic development as the “metapolitical turn” of the 2000s and 2010s, which has widely influenced the appearance and rhetoric of a transnationally connected far right. This is visible in the emergence of groups such as the Europe-based Generation Identity movement and the alt-right in the US, which have received a lot of media attention for their purportedly more palatable aesthetics and rhetoric, generally replacing neo-Nazi symbolism with appealing graphics and memes (Hermansson et al. 2020, 15). This change in style rather than content was embodied by Richard Spencer, whose preppiness was a constant point of debate in much media coverage of the movement in the mid-2010s. Twenty-first-century far-right activists and thinkers such as Identitarian Martin Sellner, author of *Regime Change from the Right* (2023), and publisher Daniel Friberg, author of *The Real Right Returns* (2015), have articulated their own updated versions of de Benoist’s theory, with metapolitics becoming the “common ground” for a plethora of different far-right groups, political parties, and activist individuals (Maly 2024, 81). Examples of applied metapolitics are the founding of digital media enterprises, the organization of cultural events, and, relevant for this article, the creation of publishing houses.

Importantly, despite the approach’s focus on culture and nonmilitant activism, metapolitics bears a “dormant violent potential” as it is a “pre-revolutionary” strategy that has historically been accompanied by violent and terrorist actions (Ravndal 2023, 2139). Further, while future research will determine the influence metapolitics has had on what Cas Mudde (2022, 104) calls the “mainstreaming and normalization” of far-right politics in the twenty-first century, it is undeniable that contemporary far-right parties and politicians incorporate, consciously or not, some metapolitical elements in their emphasis on shifting the boundaries of the acceptable. Relatedly, metapolitical groups have actively supported far-right parliamentary struggles, visible, for instance, in the symbiotic relationship between Sellner and the far-right party Alternative for Germany (Hahne 2024).

The notion of metapolitics has influenced the sale and distribution of far-right literature in the US and elsewhere, as has recently been shown by Anna Karakatsouli (2025) in relation to Greece. Figures such as Spencer at the now defunct far-right think tank National Policy Institute, writer Tomislav Sunić, Daniel Friberg at his publishing house Arktos, and Greg Johnson of the publishing and media project Counter-Currents are among those who can be credited with popularizing metapolitics in the US (Hermansson et al. 2020, 15–16). Arktos and Counter-Currents will be briefly introduced below. As mentioned, the North American metapolitical movement greatly overlaps with the alt-right. However, these US activists have not succeeded in devising a truly American version of metapolitics, instead mostly cherry-picking elements from the European New Right while ignoring disagreements, such as the latter’s anti-Americanism and frequently deliberate de-emphasis on race (18). Furthermore, in relation to their intellectual forefathers, the alt-right variant of metapolitics is “sorely lacking in originality, depth, and sometimes even understanding of the ideas they co-opt” (19).

Metapolitics has become the key principle of internationally connected anglophone far-right book production and distribution. However, while it provided the ideological foundation, it was only with the advent of new self-publishing technology in the late 2000s that literary production on a larger scale took off. The almost simultaneous founding of the far right’s two major metapolitically motivated publishing and media companies—Arktos and Counter-Currents—which coincided with the launch of Amazon’s self-publishing services, testifies to that. Perdue’s career took a new turn with the emergence of these publishing houses, which launched him from a struggling writer to one of the most widely published literary authors of the contemporary anglophone far right.

Tito Perdue: The Career of a Far-Right Writer over Three Decades (1991–2021)

Tito Perdue (born 1938), a self-proclaimed “problematic author” and member of the white supremacist, neo-Confederate, and pro-secessionist League of the South, has written over twenty novels to date.² Most of them feature Lee Pefley, the author’s alter ego, a misanthrope depicted at various stages of his life but always trying to resist what the books describe as post-1950s degeneracy. In their monograph on far-right fiction, Kølvrå and Forchtner characterize Perdue’s novels as pervaded by a sense of nostalgia expressed in mourning for lost rural Southern spaces and “bourgeois patriarchy” (2025, 28, 123). Descriptions of small towns are connected to

2 For Perdue’s self-description, see “Welcome,” Tito Perdue (personal site), accessed February 18, 2025, <https://titoperdue.com/>. See also “League of the South,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, accessed November 18, 2025, <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/extremist-files/league-south/>.

the palingenetic yearning for a golden age (29), and are contrasted by the perceived decadence of the “postmodern,” which includes queerness, Black people in formerly segregated spaces, women who do not meet the protagonists’ tradwife standards, and rock music (Perdue 2014b).

Contrary to the often straightforward and artistically unremarkable writing that characterizes a lot of contemporary anglophone far-right fiction, Perdue writes in a peculiar style that renders his texts easily recognizable: In his sentences, the subject and main verb are often doubled (“He daren’t, dare not Reuben, to possess himself . . .”) (Perdue 2014b, 203). Also, the subject is frequently omitted (“Wanted a delimited country . . .”), which results in a supposedly sophisticated and somewhat archaic prose style (207). Further, the same idiosyncratic expressions are repeated throughout the novels, for instance that since the 1950s women have decided to “be like men” (208). The books are written in an ironic and “humorous’ tone” (Kølvraa and Forchtner 2025, 94). Humor and irony, which became key ingredients of far-right discourse with the advent of the alt-right, preemptively defend against charges of racism and other forms of discrimination. Kølvraa and Forchtner note that another characteristic of Perdue’s writing is episodes where the protagonist—almost exclusively a man—looks at people around him in disgust, followed by racist, misogynist, and generally dehumanizing “disdainful observation[s]” of their misconduct (94–95). The following, from Perdue’s 2014 novel, *Reuben*, is a good example: “He saw a woman who, very obviously, had been implanted with one of the new vibrators. Saw people who looked like baboons. Saw a child slurping on the snot that rilled her upper lip” (Perdue 2014b, 208). The reader, adopting the protagonist’s focalization, (involuntarily) becomes complicit in sharing this sentiment.

The novels are interspersed with occasional acts of violence, with *Reuben* probably the most explicit example. *Reuben* tells the story of Lee’s protégé, Reuben, orchestrating a violent racial and sexual cleansing of the US, and the installment of what is essentially a white ethnostate in the “Northern Hemisphere,” which is something Perdue has advocated on his blog (Perdue 2012). While most of Perdue’s novels do not relate the genocidal fantasies that can be found in the books of some of his peers (e.g., the Northwest series by neo-Nazi Harold Covington), his texts are permeated by explicit racism, heterosexism, antisemitism, and a South-specific traditionalism. This clear political alignment is reflected in Perdue’s publishing opportunities.

While Perdue’s career as a published author spans over three decades, with the first novel, *Lee*, published in 1991 and the most recent in 2021, the majority of his novels were published in the 2010s. Figure 1 gives an overview of the publication timeline of Perdue’s novels. Several works have been reprinted by different publishers. If a book has undergone several print runs or different editions within the same publishing company, only the date of the first is listed.

TITLE	YEAR	PUBLISHER	LATER EDITIONS
<i>LEE</i>	1991	FOUR WALLS EIGHT WINDOWS	OVERLOOK PRESS, 2007 ARKTOS, 2019
<i>OPPORTUNITIES IN ALABAMA AGRICULTURE</i>	1994	BASKERVILLE PUB.	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2023
<i>THE NEW AUSTERITIES</i>	1994	PEACHTREE PUB.	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2023
<i>THE SWEET-SCENTED MANUSCRIPT</i>	2004	BASKERVILLE PUB.	ARKTOS, 2019
<i>FIELDS OF ASPHODEL</i>	2007	OVERLOOK PRESS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2023
<i>THE NODE</i>	2011	NINE-BANDED BOOKS	
<i>MORNING CRAFTS</i>	2012	ARKTOS	
<i>REUBEN</i>	2014	RADIX/WASHINGTON SUMMIT PUB.	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2022
<i>THE BUILDER (WILLIAM'S HOUSE I)</i>	2015	ARKTOS	
<i>THE CHURL (WILLIAM'S HOUSE II)</i>	2015	ARKTOS	
<i>THE ENGINEER (WILLIAM'S HOUSE III)</i>	2016	ARKTOS	
<i>THE BACHELOR (WILLIAM'S HOUSE IV)</i>	2016	ARKTOS	
<i>CYNOSURA</i>	2016	COUNTER-CURRENTS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2020
<i>PHILIPP</i>	2017	ARKTOS	
<i>THE PHILATELIST</i>	2017	COUNTER-CURRENTS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2020
<i>THOUGH WE BE DEAD, YET OUR TIME SHALL COME</i>	2017	COUNTER-CURRENTS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2020
<i>THE BENT PYRAMID</i>	2018	ARKTOS	
<i>THE SMUT BOOK</i>	2019	COUNTER-CURRENTS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2020
<i>THE GIZMO</i>	2019	COUNTER-CURRENTS	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB., 2020
<i>LOVE SONG OF THE AUSTRALOPITHS</i>	2020	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB.	
<i>MATERIALS FOR ALL FUTURE HISTORIANS</i>	2020	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB.	
<i>JOURNEY TO A LOCATION</i>	2021	ARKTOS	
<i>VADE MECUM</i>	2021	STANDARD AMERICAN PUB.	

Figure 1. List of all published books by Tito Perdue (1991–2021).

The frequency of publishing, the dates of publication, and the profiles of the publishing houses shine a light on the effect of the far right's metapoliticization on the opportunities for ideologically aligned writers. The lengthy list of twenty-three books arguably creates an impression of legitimacy: For someone to publish so many books in the US they must be an accomplished writer, regardless of the nature of the publishing

houses or the books' literary quality. The first step in creating respectability is founding publishing houses that produce an illusion of social acceptability and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, 17).

What is notable is the increasing frequency of publications: In the 1990s, three novels were published, and just two in the 2000s, all of them by small independent houses with ideologically inconspicuous profiles. Judging by descriptions of these early novels, their publication was possible because the texts did not yet carry the explicit far-right content that would come to define the later novels. Perdue also does not seem to have been publicly associated with any far-right groups at that point. In the 2010s, things changed, with eighteen books published between 2011 and 2021. At first glance, this seems to be the effect of an immense artistic productivity. It was made possible, however, because many of the books were written beforehand (Johnson 2017). Perdue has been committed to novel writing full time since the early 1980s.³ What changed, then, was the willingness of others to publish his work.

Perdue and the Publishers

The first indication of the turning point is the publication of *The Node* in 2011 by Nine-Banded Books. This small imprint describes its books as “exist[ing] at the murky borderlands, at the prickly edge of acceptable discourse where no dogma is safe” (“About Nine-Banded Books,” n.d.).⁴ In practice this means books ranging from studies about the historical Jesus to open Holocaust-denial literature. Its founder, Chip Smith, was interviewed by Greg Johnson from Counter-Currents, which the latter explained by saying that he wanted to acquaint himself and his audience “with a colleague in Alt-Right publishing” (Johnson 2013b). Smith mentioned that it was Perdue who contacted him and asked whether Nine-Banded Books wanted to publish his novel. After Smith indicated that Perdue’s reputation might suffer from being associated with the press, Perdue reportedly replied that “he had already written himself into a corner and to hell with the big houses anyway” (quoted in Johnson 2013b). This quote illustrates the counter-institutional self-presentation of much of the twenty-first-century literary far right.

After 2011, the books were issued by publishers with explicit far-right and metapolitical profiles: Arktos, Counter-Currents, Washington Summit Publishers, and Standard American Publishing Company (SAPC), the latter of which reprinted

3 “About Tito,” Tito Perdue (personal website), accessed February 18, 2025, <https://titoperdue.com/tito.php>.

4 “About Nine-Banded Books,” Nine-Banded Books, accessed May 6, 2024, <https://www.nineband-edbooks.com/about-nine-banded-books/>.

several of Perdue's works in the early 2020s. The increase in publication is connected to structural changes in the far-right book business, specifically to the forming of the biggest and most important anglophone and transnational far-right publishing houses and multimedia projects, Arktos and Counter-Currents. While this article does not provide a full or empirical field analysis, these publishers are briefly introduced here, as especially Counter-Currents' and SAPC's involvement in Perdue's career illuminates the mechanisms of the metapolitical far right.

Washington Summit Publishers, now disbanded, was a "white nationalist publisher specializing in eugenics, anthropology, and human biodiversity," led by alt-right figurehead Richard Spencer (May and Feldman 2018, 29). It was founded in 2005 as part of what was to become the leading alt-right hub, the National Policy Institute, and both ventures were heavily funded by white supremacist millionaire William Regnery II ("The New Racialists" 2006).

Arktos, founded in 2009 by Swedish former neo-Nazi Daniel Friberg, is widely credited with being the largest contemporary distributor of far-right literature and has been fundamental to the metapoliticization of the movement (Valencia-García 2020; Teitelbaum 2019; Hermansson et al. 2020; Burley 2020; Schaeffer 2018). Friberg, who had a metapolitical approach to far-right politics before he ever encountered the term, is a key figure in the gradual intellectualization and turn toward Identitarianism that the transnational far right underwent in the early 2010s (Teitelbaum 2019, 260). The physical relocation of the publishing house with its "aggressive metapolitics" (Bures 2020, 49) reflects this role: Founded in Denmark, Arktos moved its base to India, then Budapest, and is now led from Sweden, the UK, and Washington, DC, with its editors and contributors working from across the globe (Valencia-García 2020, 305). The initial books published reflected who would become the favorite thinkers of the twenty-first-century metapolitical far right—works by Julius Evola, Guillaume Faye, and de Benoist are presented in aesthetically appealing copies and English translations.

Counter-Currents is an explicitly metapolitical multimedia project that was cofounded in 2010 by Greg Johnson and Michael Polignano, but it is really the former's personal project (Macklin 2019, 204). Johnson, who has become one of the most important US-based metapolitical actors, formed Counter-Currents with the idea of introducing European New Right thought to the US, and he planned on the publishing house's first books being English translations of French New Right theorists (Macklin 2019, 206; Hermansson et al. 2020, 15). When Arktos was quicker to do that, Johnson had to conceive a new profile for his publishing house and hoped to find a way of working with Arktos (Macklin 2019, 206), which became impossible due to numerous feuds between the two heads (Lawrence 2019).⁵ Counter-Currents'

5 On recent feuding within Arktos, which may presage a new split in far-right publishing, see Piero Gayozzo, "A Threatening Rupture in Postfascism? Arktos Media vs. Constantin von Hoffmeister," *On the*

slogan became “Books Against Time,” which refers to the characterization of Hitler as a “man against time” by the esoteric fascist Savitri Devi, whose revival in US far-right circles is attributed to Johnson (Hermansson et al. 2020, 243). Devi’s books, alongside many others by various authors, prominent among them Perdue, can be bought from the website’s shop. Many of Counter-Currents’ books are authored and/or edited by Johnson himself, sometimes under his pen name, Trevor Lynch, most notably *The White Nationalist Manifesto*, which has been translated into several European languages.

Today, Counter-Currents hosts several forms of media—not only countless articles with daily updates, but also a podcast. Counter-Currents is different from other metapolitical and New Right projects in that Johnson does not shy away from openly engaging with National Socialism (see the introduction to Sedgwick 2019, xxi–ii). It presents itself as in touch with both high and pop culture (Macklin 2019, 216). In a sense, Counter-Currents mirrors elements of online alt-right pop culture and fuses this with academic pretense. Counter-Currents has been hit by a series of deplatformings from several payment services over the years, the worst coming from PayPal after the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville (Maly 2024, 267), which left protester Heather Heyer dead and several others injured. It is difficult to estimate how widely read Counter-Currents actually is. In its (apparently most recent) publicly available newsletter from August 2021, Johnson states that, between January and August of that year, the website had between 246,560 and 453,940 unique visitors each month (Johnson 2021).

In contrast, there exists very limited public information about Standard American Publishing Company, though it can be seen that it is located in Brent, Alabama, where Perdue presumably lives today on his family’s property (“Opportunities,” n.d.; Noble 2008). Also, it has only ever published his books. This makes it seem like SAPC is a self-publishing imprint formed to disseminate Perdue’s work. Perdue’s involvement in the ownership is supported by the fact that all SAPC reprints of former Counter-Currents publications look the same as their originals, except for the name of the publisher on the cover. Only an agreement between Johnson and Perdue could explain the use of the same design and format for the later editions, which is made plausible by their mutual support (“Novel Takes,” n.d.; Johnson 2024). The appearance of SAPC also coincides with Counter-Currents’ announcement that it will be retiring from book publishing in 2020 (“It’s Okay,” n.d.). While this has since turned out to be untrue, it would explain the founding of SAPC as ensuring the availability of Perdue’s work.

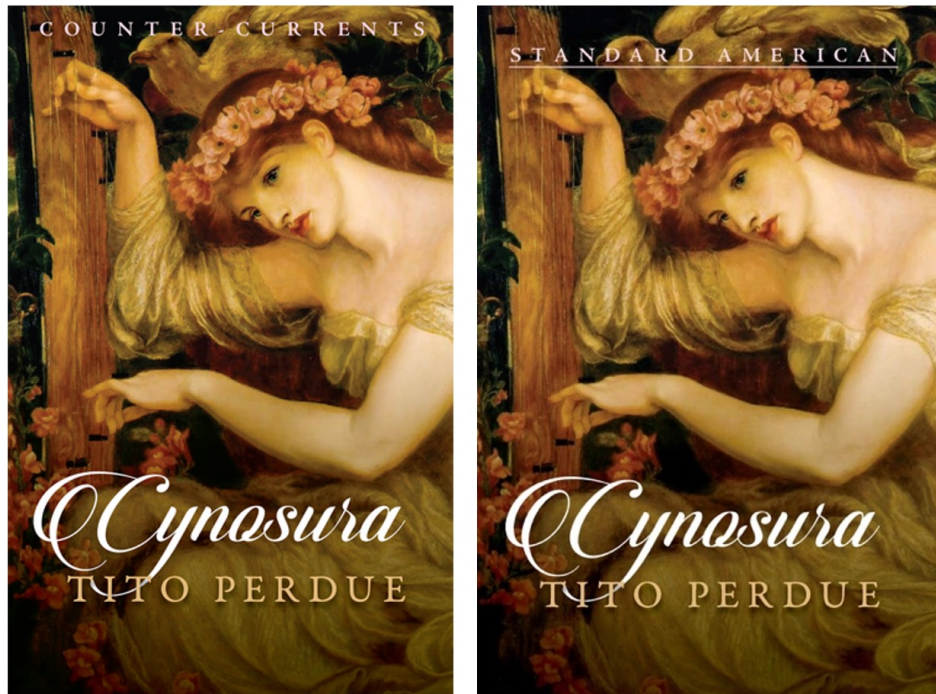


Figure 2. The two versions of Perdue's *Cynosura*, the first one published by Counter-Currents (2016), the second one by Standard American Publishing Company (2020).

The structural changes in far-right publishing, enabled by the digital revolution that accompanied the metapolitical turn, made it possible for the majority of Perdue's books to be published and disseminated much more widely in the 2010s, with several of them having second editions to date. During that time, he was discovered by metapolitical far-right actors, deemed useful, and given a platform. Perdue thus went from barely being published in the 1990s and 2000s to being fully embraced by the metapolitical publishers, which, in turn, allowed the writer to openly embrace far-right positions. The founding of these institutions had a profound impact on his place in the book business and changed the trajectory of his career. Indeed, the founding of Arktos and Counter-Currents coincided with the discovery of Perdue, and resulted in him being collectively stylized into a sort of cultural trailblazer for the far right. Johnson, in a review of Perdue's *Morning Crafts*, describes Perdue's value and the importance of the new publishing houses:

[British far-right cult figure] Jonathan Bowden once said that the overwhelming decadence of our culture does not mean that the creativity of our race has disappeared. It has simply been marginalized and disprivileged. Thus there must be great white novelists, painters, poets, composers, and other creators out there. We simply have to find them, publish them, and promote them. We have to create new

cultural spaces where the greatness of our people can flourish. Tito Perdue is proof of this. Chased from the mainstream, he continued to labor in solitude until the New Right finally caught up with him. He has now found a community of writers, publishers, and readers who love his work and wish to share it with the world. You, dear reader, need to join them. (Johnson 2013a)

Johnson emphasizes the urgency of creating “new cultural spaces” for far-right artists whose presence is not tolerated in the “mainstream.” He also stresses the importance of the far right having its own publishing houses: Once these artists have been spotted, they need to be published and promoted—which is what publishers do. These publishing houses made it possible for Perdue to find, in Bourdieu’s words, his “*natural place*” within the literary field, whose prior absence rendered him “more or less condemned to failure” (Bourdieu 2009, 165, original italics). Because the logic of the literary field predetermines a position for each cultural actor, the creation of what Johnson calls a “community of writers, publishers, and readers” where someone like Perdue is favorably received was a necessary component of the metapolitical far right’s strategy (165).

Perdue’s books were only made available to a larger audience once the far-right publishers Counter-Currents and Arktos were founded. What Johnson describes as “the New Right finally [catching] up” with Perdue would not have been possible without the founding of the two publishers. Nor would Perdue have found a “sympathetic public” (Bourdieu 2009, 165), whose consolidation throughout the 2010s enabled subsequent publication through an unknown (and probably self-publishing) imprint. Indeed, according to Bourdieu’s theory of the development of the literary field, a marginal position can be capitalized upon, as Johnson observes in judging positively Perdue’s exclusion from the “mainstream.”

A Bourdieuan Analysis of the Metapolitical Far Right in the Globalized US Literary Field

In Bourdieu’s field theory, consideration of literary productions should not be made in isolation but in reference to their position in the greater literary field and to the “social conditions underlying the production of the work and those determining its function” (Bourdieu 1993, 140). To contextualize Perdue’s career and the emergence of far-right literary institutions, I will here briefly outline the state of the globalized US book business and introduce Bourdieu’s field theory. While Bourdieu’s framework is informed by a qualitative and quantitative approach, this article’s focus is purely qualitative due to the inaccessibility of most data related to far-right publishing.

In his book *Big Fiction*, Dan Sinykin argues that the US publishing and book market as we know it today is the result of several decades of conglomeration. Over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, the focus at US publishing houses

shifted from what they understood as advancing culture to the “neoliberalization of publishing” (Sinykin 2023, 21). Big publishers started swallowing up smaller houses, all but eliminating independent publishers and merging into the “Big Five” of Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Simon & Schuster, and Hachette Book Group. With the last big merger in 2013, when the German mega-conglomerate Bertelsmann acquired Penguin and Random House, Bertelsmann now holds almost 40 percent of the Big Five’s revenue (2). These developments show that literary fields are not mainly structured by national processes anymore as in Bourdieu’s theory but are increasingly shaped by globalization, which recently has caused literary sociologist Gisèle Sapiro to speak of a “*transnational literary field*” (2020, 487, original italics).

In general, actors in this globalized US literary field, and especially publishers, have shied away from more explicit and violent forms of far-right literature.⁶ While this might have various causes—lack of quality, fear of repercussions, or not wanting to give a platform to far-right content—it leaves the literary and metapolitical far-right and its writers in a tight spot, as the dissemination of their texts has long been made difficult. Carol Mason documents the existence of a US tradition of institutionalized and influential right-wing literature since the 1960s, which includes Barry Goldwater’s *Conscience of a Conservative* (1960) and Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged* (1957)—a tradition that continues today (2018, 1–22). The more extreme far-right producers of literature, however, have historically had no other choice but to self-publish their books (Kaplan 2018, 504). Until recently this was connected to the high cost of printing infrastructure, and dissemination remained limited. Pierce’s aforementioned *The Turner Diaries* was first serialized in *Attack!*, a journal produced by his National Alliance party, and then self-published in book form (510) and sold through what Pierce himself called the “underground market”—via his own National Vanguard Books, at gun shows, and through ads in magazines (quoted in Griffin 2001, 141). Until the 2000s, far-right fiction was either not published at all or self-published and passed from “hand to hand through the magic of mail order and the availability of a mimeograph or Xerox copier,” often with a very limited reach (Kaplan 2018, 504).

The advent of the internet and the concomitant accessibility of commercial self-publishing solved many of these problems for the metapolitical far right. After publishing conglomeration stabilized in the 1990s, the next big change was the 2008 financial crisis and the almost simultaneous launching of Amazon Kindle, which was accompanied by the rise of the e-book and Amazon’s affiliate program. Once the book world understood how to adapt to that change, e-books and Amazon simply became

6 It must be noted, though, that several of the Big Five have “conservative” imprints. Simon & Schuster’s Threshold has published books by right-wing figures such as Rush Limbaugh, Ben Shapiro, and Donald Trump; and Penguin Random House’s Sentinel bears titles by Abigail Shrier, Nikki Haley, and Marco Rubio. Many of these publishers focus exclusively on nonfiction texts and seem to shy away from including writers openly associated with fascism and neo-Nazism, such as Evola, Friberg, or Johnson.

part of how the conglomerates operated. One change that Amazon brought about, however, is the popularity of self-publishing: In the US, the number of self-published books grew from ten thousand in 2000 to over a hundred thousand in 2020 (Sinykin 2023, 212, 217).

Geoff Boucher and Helen Young note the importance of these new digital possibilities for the production and dissemination of far-right literature (2023, 141). In particular, print-on-demand services made it significantly easier for far-right writers to publish their texts in book form (143). Though he had uploaded a couple of his novels to the internet in 1999, the aforementioned Covington (2005, 175), a dinosaur of US neo-Nazi activism and a literary trailblazer, claimed that it was only in 2000–2001 and through a print-on-demand company that he “had the incredible experience of publishing a lifetime of literary work in a period of about eighteen months.” He concluded that likeminded writers will no longer need huge amounts of money for printing, storing, and reprinting, noting that these companies seem to not care about the contents as long as they get their money (176).

Given the profit-driven nature of the contemporary literary field, the results of globalization, neoliberalization, and digitization on literary production have significantly transformed the transnational far-right book business. Most of Counter-Currents’ and Arktos’s books and countless others with far-right contents are available not only on Amazon but via mainstream booksellers like Barnes & Noble—indicative not necessarily of these businesses’ far-right views but of the neoliberal logic of a globalized US literary field, where even fantasies of racial genocide can be made into a commodity as long as they create profit. Amazon in particular has received repeated criticism from activist groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Hope Not Hate, and from journalists, for its reluctance to remove books containing far-right ideology, which it only does after substantial pressure from the public (Diamond 2022; Dewey 2015; Hayden and Gais 2022; “Turning the Page” 2018). Despite its content policy banning different forms of intolerance, Amazon was providing a stable platform and source of income to publishers like Counter-Currents through its affiliate links program. It only stopped following an article by the *Washington Post* in 2015 (Dewey 2015), even though the SPLC had been alerting Amazon about the connection for years (Partnership for Working Families and ACRE 2018, 5). To this day, Amazon continues to sell most books by Counter-Currents, Arktos, Washington Summit Publishers, and other explicitly far-right publishers and authors.

The results of globalization on the availability of far-right literature have been recognized by the producers themselves: Arktos’s new website bears the slogan “Making Anti-Globalism Global Since 2009,” which, while perhaps inflating its reach and importance, is not a bad summary of its efforts. Ironically, reaching an international community was only possible, as Louie Dean Valencia-García writes, by “heavily rel[ying] upon technology and globalism to both communicate amongst each other and to connect to potential customers” (2020, 311). Through these developments,

far-right actors have formed what Valencia-García, drawing on Benedict Anderson, calls “digital imagined communities” (309). However, this kind of literature and the structures enabling it occupy a marginal position in the literary world: books by Arktos and Counter-Currents remain niche, and non-far-right actors, not to mention the Big Five, rarely interact with them.

In the world of literature, though, this relative exclusion is not necessarily a bad thing. Bourdieu, in *The Field of Cultural Production* and *The Rules of Art*, puts forward a theory of the fields of cultural production as structured by an “inverse economy” based on the rules of “symbolic goods” (Bourdieu 2009, 141). Tracing how the French literary field gained its relative autonomy from political and economic pressure in the late nineteenth century, Bourdieu argues that the literary field is part of the greater “field of power” and the social space (161). In this greater power structure, the literary field is in a dominated position (215). Today it is structured by two opposing poles, or “modes of production and circulation obeying inverse logics” (142). One is an “economic’ logic” that treats literature like any other good in the market and is interested in generating as much profit in as short a time as possible, while the other pole relies on an “anti-‘economic’ economy of pure art” (142). This, in a way, is reflected in Sinykin’s characterization of the US book market as “split in two, into popularity and prestige” since the 1980s (Sinykin 2023, 43).

I argue that it is this second principle of “pure’ art” that the cultural far right is able to (ab)use to gain legitimacy within the world of literature (Bourdieu 2009, 148). The “autonomous” pole, which producers of far-right culture are closer to, is based on an “inversion of the fundamental principles of the field of power and of the economic field” and is characterized by a “disinterestedness” in economic capital, like in the “game of loser takes all” (216–17). It favors smaller structures of literary production and “tends to pit success and intrinsic artistic value against each other” (146). Literature close to this pole is considered rich in symbolic capital, which, in the long run, can be transformed into economic capital (Bourdieu 1993, 75) and is especially prestigious in a literary field characterized by a high level of commercialization. The metapolitical far right’s exclusion from the mainstream book business, structured by neoliberalization and profit-driven conglomeration, can be worn as a badge of honor. However, even the most “revolutionary” and “pure’ art” has to “secure for itself the ‘economic’ means to realize an ambition irreducible to the ‘economy’” (Bourdieu 2009, 148–49). In the case of far-right literature, this in part means securing the financial means from acceptable right-wing businesses.

The field’s inversed logic allows dominated producers “to make of temporal failure a sign of election and success a sign of compromise” (Bourdieu 2009, 217), while drawing on the tradition of the “cursed artist” who has been misjudged by the institutions and field actors of their time (219). This history of the field lets “writers without publications or even without a public play on the ambiguity of the criteria of success which allows them to confuse the elected and provisional failure of the ‘cursed artist’ with the naked

failure of the simply unsuccessful” (219). Thus, Perdue and other metapolitical actors are able to capitalize on their marginal position within the literary field. In the above quote by Chip Smith, the Nine-Banded Books editor, Perdue’s defiant stance recalls the posture of this cursed artist, where failure to secure a contract with “big houses” (quoted in Johnson 2013b) is entangled with notions of “pure production,” or uncompromised art mostly produced for other producers (Bourdieu 1993, 121). Importantly, this is often but a performance. Perdue specifically seems to hold a grudge against the publishing world that rejected him repeatedly: In a 2013 speech for the H. L. Mencken Club, Perdue complained that publishers have “become parts of conglomerates and are interested solely in being able to report good profits to their ownerships[, which deem it] more profitable to publish mid-brow pulp aimed at well-dressed semi-educated feminist career women domiciled in the big coastal cities” (Perdue 2014a). In the novel *Reuben*, several episodes describe the protagonist disgusted or in tears of laughter after reading passages from contemporary fiction, while one passage describes Reuben violently punishing “the country’s most egregious publishers, editors, and mainstream readers” for their incompetence (2014b, 257). The performance of economic disinterestedness is often combined with an instrumentalization of the alleged political repression these writers are under, even though their books are widely available from mainstream booksellers. They can present themselves as part of a misunderstood avant-garde, regardless of the actual quality of their products. Some of these writers and publishers are thus able to posture as the vanguard of a right-wing cultural revolution and of literature in general.

Claiming avant-garde status, however, is not sufficient for the creation of authority, which the metapolitical far right needs if it wants to be successful in its endeavor. If these producers want their literature to be read widely, they also need to gain the larger field’s approval to heighten their visibility, gain symbolic capital and literary authority, and demonstrate that their works of literature are, in fact, literature.

The Far-Right Consecration Loop

“I’m an old-fashioned person, I like books, and I think there’s something added, value added, when you bring out an actual physical book. . . . All these things have been published on the internet before . . . for free, but I think putting them between covers gives them a sense of legitimacy and it gives them a new life.”

—Greg Johnson (2025)

Because of their position of relative exclusion, proving their value is not easy for far-right producers of culture. Bourdieu posits that in any field of artistic production the *illusio*, the “collective adhesion to the game that is both cause and effect of the existence of the game,” is enabled by the “charismatic” belief in the creator, the “apparent producer” of a work of art (2009, 167). In his anti-charismatic theory, it is not the writer, however, who creates that value “but the field of production as a universe of belief” (229). A work

of literature does not exist as such “unless it is known and recognized” by other actors endowed with the necessary symbolic capital (229). Bourdieu writes that

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the fundamental stake in literary struggles is the monopoly of literary legitimacy, i.e., *inter alia*, the monopoly of the power to say with authority who are authorized to call themselves writers; or, to put it another way, it is the monopoly of the power to consecrate producers or products (we are dealing with a world of belief and the consecrated writer is the one who has the power to consecrate and to win assent when he or she consecrates an author or a work—with a preface, a favourable review, a prize, etc.). (Bourdieu 1993, 42, original italics)

The founding myth of the author as sole creator of a literary text hides the fact that behind the writer, there stands a whole network of other agents who consecrate them. This is echoed in Sinykin’s description of contemporary US literature: “Conglomerate ownership, conglomerate authorship” (2023, 21). Value is given to a book through the “collaboration” of various actors of the field, who in turn are consecrated by the same network (Bourdieu 2009, 169). Consecration thus emerges in “relationships” of these various participants of the literary field, and it is cyclical (168). Hence, an assessment of the network that surrounds actors in the field is the next step in trying to understand the mechanisms of legitimization in the globalized far-right book business.

Far-right writers like Perdue have for a long time been excluded from most forms of consecration. His consecration as an author, at least in far-right circles, relied on the founding of Arktos and Counter-Currents, what Bourdieu would call the “creator[s] of the creator” (2009, 168). The mere publication of his books, however, is not sufficient to consecrate Perdue: Firstly, more actors than the editors or publishers are needed to grant legitimacy; and secondly, the publishing houses and their editors’ symbolic capital also stems, in turn, from consecration. In order to understand how authority is created on the metapolitical far right, the different agents of the US literary field and their relationships must be analyzed. By considering Perdue, one can argue that far-right producers are aware of their relative “displacedness” (165), and that as a response they imitate the discourse and strategies of consecration of the US mainstream literary field that mostly excludes them.

This short biographical note on Perdue by Greg Johnson, which accompanied a review of the 2023 reissue of Perdue’s novel *Opportunities in Alabama Agriculture*, illustrates this imitation:

[Tito Perdue’s] first novel, 1991’s *Lee*, received favorable reviews in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Reader*, and *The New England Review of Books*. In addition to the present volume, his novels include *The New Austerities* (1994), *The Sweet-Scented Manuscript* (2004),

Fields of Asphodel (2007), *The Node* (2011), *Morning Crafts* (2013), *Reuben* (2014), the *William's House* quartet (2016), *Cynosura* (2017), *Philip* (2017), *Though We Be Dead, Yet Our Day Will Come* (2018), *The Bent Pyramid* (2018), *The Philatelist* (2018), *The Smut Book* (2018), *The Gizmo* (2019), *Love Song of the Australopiths* (2020), *Materials for All Future Historians* (2020), *Journey to a Location* (2021), and *Vade Mecum* (2021)—which have been praised in *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, *The Quarterly Review*, *The Occidental Observer*, and at *Counter-Currents*. In 2015, he received the H. P. Lovecraft Prize for Literature. (“Opportunities,” n.d.)⁷

At first glance, the text follows the norms of authorial biographical notes. The first sentence mentions that Perdue’s first novel, *Lee*, was positively reviewed by three mainstream periodicals, which was possible because, in the words of neo-Confederate editor Thomas Fleming, these reviewers “seemed to miss . . . the obvious fact that Lee was the most reactionary fictional hero since Ignatius in John Kennedy Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces*” (Fleming 1996). And while these reviews were indeed positive, what is not mentioned is the fact that, in similar journals, *Lee* was also negatively discussed. A *Publishers Weekly* review describes the novel as “sink[ing] under the weight of its own pretensions” (“Lee” 1991). The selective naming of these periodicals gives Perdue an aura of legitimacy, and the authority and cultural capital associated with traditional media is invoked and transferred to the writer via the reviews.

The long list of books creates the impression of high literary productivity, which supports the hunch that the first step toward legitimacy and consecration by the far right is founding its own publishing houses, which feign social acceptability and generally “function as a label of quality” (Sapiro 2003, 454). After this list, four journals and media projects are mentioned that favorably reviewed Perdue’s novels: *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, *The Quarterly Review*, *The Occidental Observer*, and *Counter-Currents*. In contrast to the ones named at the beginning of the paragraph, these are neither well known nor renowned because they are explicitly far-right publications. Their structural entanglements with each other give insights into the consecration mechanism of the far right, which is why, with the exception of *Counter-Currents*, they will be introduced briefly here.

The Quarterly Review was a far-right magazine headed in the late 2000s and early 2010s by literary author Derek Turner, an Irish neo-Nazi with close ties to the US (Collins 2022). Turner reviewed one of Perdue’s novels, while Turner’s own novel—including a preface by Perdue—had been published by Washington Summit Publishers (Turner 2008). *Chronicles* is a paleoconservative periodical published by

7 The publication dates given here at times differ from the ones I found to be correct (see figure 1).

the Charlemagne Institute (“Charlemagne Institute” 2023), which merged with its original publisher, Rockford Institute, in 2018 (Foley 2019). Its editor in chief is Paul Gottfried (“Editorial Team” 2022), former mentor of Richard Spencer. Until 2015, Thomas Fleming headed the magazine for thirty years (Beirich and Potok 2004). Fleming is also the founder of League of the South, where Perdue is a member (“Obiter Dictum” 2015). The mention of *Chronicles* invokes far-right cultural capital accumulated over generations. There also exist ties to more traditional publishing: Henry Regnery, the founder of the ultraconservative Regnery Publishing empire, previously sat on the boards of directors of *Chronicles* and the Rockford Institute in the 1980s and 1990s (Carlson 1996).

The Occidental Observer is a web journal championing pseudoscientific racism headed by the academic antisemite Kevin MacDonald. The online publication comes out of the Charles Martel Society, which was founded and funded by Henry Regnery’s nephew, the late white nationalist and multimillionaire William Regnery II. This “heir to the Regnery publishing fortune” (“Occidental Observer” 2012) in the late 1990s “set up and fund[ed] a network of racist and antisemitic groups, websites, publishers and conferences” (“William H. Regnery II,” n.d.). He also openly embraced the idea of a white ethnostate and founded the aforementioned National Policy Institute.

What is striking here is the legacy of right-wing publishing that backs several of these publications from the 2000s and 2010s. Not only can knowledge and already established connections be used, but generations of old money back Perdue’s consecration. The SPLC describes Regnery as a “right-wing publishing dynasty that continues to wield tremendous influence among both mainstream conservatives and far-right extremists” (“William H. Regnery II,” n.d.). The founder Henry’s father, William H. Regnery, cofounded the isolationist and partially pro-fascist America First Committee (Beirich and Potok 2004). His grandson, the aforementioned William Regnery II, is credited with having funded much of US white supremacist activism in the twenty-first century until his death in 2021. William II’s cousin Alfred, heir to the publishing house, distanced himself from the more extreme William on the grounds that the latter is “obviously racist” (Roston and Anderson 2017). But the Regnery family and the influence of their business demonstrate a closeness between conservatism and the far right in the US that reflects what Mudde identifies as the increasingly “[p]orous boundaries” between the two (2022, 104).

While the interpersonal entanglements are numerous, a lot of the effort behind Perdue’s consecration comes from the same few people. This results in what I term a *consecration loop*, which creates the illusion of an endorsement by more actors than are actually involved. Various figures give him their approval, while they in turn are consecrated by the same few actors, who are granted legitimacy by the former, and so on. An attempt at visualizing some of these connections and the consecration loop can be found in figure 3.

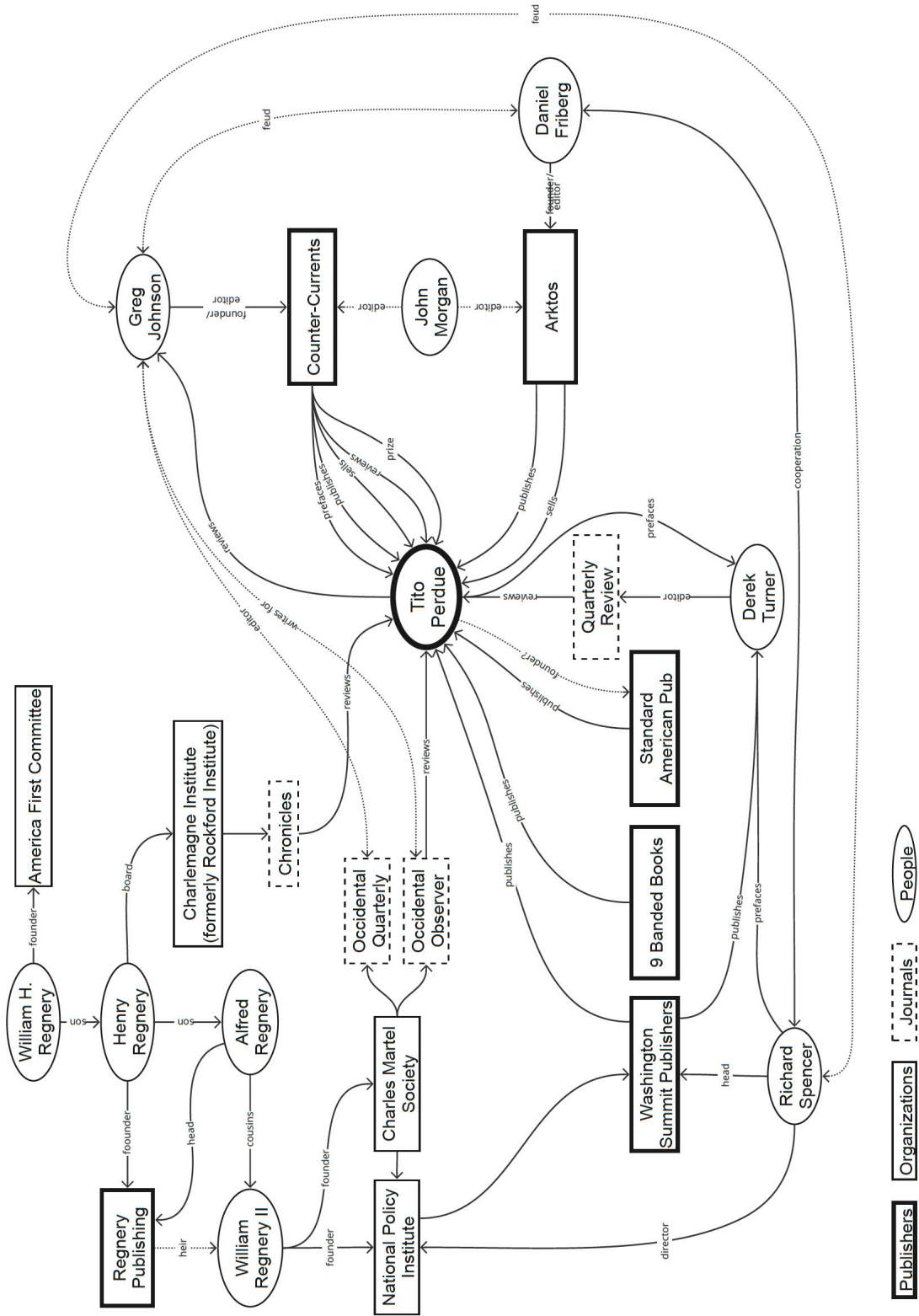


Figure 3. Some of the interpersonal entanglements in the far-right publishing world and the consecration loop around Perdue.

By including reviews of Perdue's books, these journals and media projects participate in the consecration of the author. Some of the reviews were even written by other far-right literary authors like Tomislav Sunić or Johnson, which increases the symbolic capital transferred. It is through them that the "artist who makes the work is himself made" (Bourdieu 2009, 167), and the work of art is "made not twice, but hundreds of times, thousands of times, by all those who have an interest in it, who find a material or symbolic profit in reading it, classifying it, decoding it, commenting on it, reproducing it, criticizing it, combating it, knowing it, possessing it" (171). The entanglements make visible what happens all over the globalized far-right book business: A far-right author, in this case Perdue, is published, disseminated, and reviewed by the same people, creating a self-reinforcing structure that uses the mechanisms of the literary field to consciously create literary legitimacy and authority.

Because of the cultural far right's relative exclusion, what Bourdieu describes as consecration's cyclical nature is not only emulated but almost parodied, visible in the relationship between Perdue and Johnson (Bourdieu 2009, 168). Johnson has published, edited, reviewed (under his own name and a pseudonym), and prefaced several of Perdue's books. Perdue, in turn, has penned several blurbs for Johnson's nonfiction books (Johnson 2024; "Novel Takes," n.d.). The far-right network of consecration around Perdue also shows that he is seen as a great asset to the white nationalist cause, with several high-profile cultural figures betting on and investing in him. Indeed, Perdue is the fiction author with the most books published by both *Arktos* and *Counter-Currents*.

This is not to say that people like the Regnerys, Spencer, Johnson, Friberg, and many others actively work together—some of them do, some of them do not—but that they see similar efforts as useful and necessary. Still, even someone as prominent as Perdue is largely unknown outside of this sphere, which speaks to the nicheness of far-right literature. The consecration loop can be understood as a strategy to obscure the lack of field-specific capital, rather than as an adherence to the rules described by Bourdieu. The loop's creation reflects the recent history of the far right in the literary field, which went from being mostly excluded from both dominant and dominated literary institutions in the 1990s to, as will be addressed in the next section, founding its own counter-institutions in the mid-2000s, and consolidating them in the 2010s.

From Exclusion to Anti-Institutional Institutions

As if we weren't already in the most serious civilizational crisis in the whole history of The West, consider how much more serious would be our plight in the absence of *Counter-Currents* and the sort of unafraid people like Greg Johnson. Fast forward a couple of generations and your grandchildren's textbooks (assuming our

demographic actually survives), will cite this publisher as one of those who were willing to stand against the diseases of our dwindling age.

—Tito Perdue (Johnson 2024)

The need for metapolitical far-right institutions to symbolically turn their cultural producers into artists and writers despite the defensive position they still occupy has led these houses and journals to present themselves in opposition to the structures that will not let them participate. I call these far-right institutions, following Bourdieu, “*anti-institutional institutions*” (Bourdieu 2009, 258, original italics). He uses the term to explain how producers at the dominated pole often build their own institutions in opposition to the ones structuring the dominant part of the field. Here, “freedom from institutions is found inscribed *in* those institutions” (258, original italics). And because of specific field movements, these new anti-institutional institutions might eventually become the next dominant institutions. Although Bourdieu only mentions this in passing, it is helpful when trying to conceptualize what the literary far right is doing, considering that the metapolitical goal of people like Johnson or Friberg diverges from their posture of cultural rarity and opposition. The tension between trying to gain cultural hegemony, their de facto marginal position within the literary field, and the field’s tradition of favoring anticommercial positions encouraged their building of counter-institutions.

The literary far right’s building of anti-institutional institutions is illustrated by the last sentence of Perdue’s biographical note. It mentions that he was awarded the H. P. Lovecraft Prize for Literature in 2015. Prize-giving is an important part of legitimization in literature (Bourdieu 1993, 101). Drawing on Bourdieu, James English argues that prizes are “a claim to authority” that create symbolic worth (English 2008, 51). Being awarded a prize named after another canonized author such as Lovecraft is a sign of distinction—until one takes a closer look, for the prize was bestowed by Counter-Currents. English writes that prize-giving is a way for institutions to control the field and determine what is considered good art, and that this necessarily provokes the forming of “hostile counter-groups” that create their own prizes (51–52). The Lovecraft is such a counter-prize. Its creation coincides with a similar far-right reaction to the mainstream US literary scene, the so-called Sad and Rabid Puppies campaign, which was an attack on the prestigious speculative fiction prize, the Hugo Award. Anna Oleszczuk describes in detail how, between 2012 and 2016, the award procedures were attacked for their supposed leftist bias. A campaign to get right-wing (e.g., Larry Correia) to far-right (e.g., Vox Day) writers awarded the prize was started through the involvement of alt-right figureheads like Milo Yiannopoulos (Oleszczuk 2017). Gregory Goalwin argues that “Puppygate” can be seen as an attempt at what Bourdieu describes as a “symbolic revolution” (Goalwin 2023, 3; Bourdieu 2009, 132). Symbolic revolutions emerge when the social field changes and actors within a specific field, endowed with the necessary forms of capital, use this moment to transform their

field (Goalwin 2023, 3). The campaign, fueled by the rightward shift in the lead-up to Trump's 2016 election, challenged the field's orthodoxy by openly gaming the award's procedures. Out of that cultural momentum, the Dragon Awards were founded as an alternative to the Hugos. One of the first Dragons was awarded to Nick Cole, who had just lost his contract with HarperCollins, allegedly over an anti-abortion scene in his tech dystopia novel *CTRL-ALT REVOLT!* (Cole 2019).

The Lovecraft Prize emerged out of a similar reaction. The World Fantasy Award, a prestigious award for fantasy literature since 1975, used to have a Lovecraft bust as the award trophy. This was contested in the early 2010s, when people began criticizing using the image of a writer known for his racist views and endorsement of fascism. When it was announced in 2015 that a new trophy would be used, this proved to be perfect feeding ground for the cultural branch of the far right. Johnson wrote in a blog post that Counter-Currents "saw this coming," and that Lovecraft's demotion prompted him to create the H. P. Lovecraft Prize for Literature "to be awarded to literary artists of the highest caliber who transgress the boundaries of political correctness" (Johnson 2015). The first award had been given to Perdue earlier in 2015. The award trophy, which is also a Lovecraft bust, was created by ceramicist Charles Krafft, a famous artist who was excluded from the mainstream art scene after being exposed as a white supremacist and Holocaust denier. Johnson wrote several articles about how Krafft had fallen prey to what he calls political correctness, conducted interviews with him, and later edited a posthumously published essay collection about Krafft titled *An Artist of the Right* (Krafft 2022).

This episode shows how the culturally interested far right founded institutions (prizes, publishing houses, journals, reviews, etc.) in opposition to the dominant ones from the late 2000s to the mid-2010s. Johnson specifically seems to possess a good instinct for exploiting cultural-political momentum and appropriating certain discourses for his own cause. Counter-Currents presents itself as a last refuge for artists shunned by the culture business because of their far-right views, capitalizing on the notion of censorship. Thus, in a description of the new award given to Perdue, Johnson writes:

As the Left continues to hollow out and destroy institutions, corrupt minds and culture, and denigrate white greatness in art, science, statecraft, and the culture at large, Counter-Currents and other New Right organizations will construct new institutions and honors to carry forward the greatness of European man. For us to carry on, however, we depend on the donations of readers like you. (Johnson 2015)

Declaring Counter-Currents one of the last bastions of "white greatness," Johnson presents the culture and literature business as ruled by leftist bias, which excludes great artworks; and he presents Counter-Currents as a white supremacist counter-institution. Indeed, this sentiment is inscribed in the very name of the project. This differs from Bourdieu's description of the avant-garde's anti-institutional institutions, as the far

right tries to free itself from the dominant institutions to be able to produce politicized forms of literature, not autonomous or “pure’ art” (Bourdieu 2009, 148). Freedom, here, means the freedom to spread white supremacist content, not, as in Bourdieu’s theory, freedom from bourgeois norms.

Conclusion

The transnational metapolitical turn of the 2000s and 2010s has deeply impacted the standing of US far-right producers of culture like Tito Perdue. Thanks to the founding of far-right counter-institutions with a global reach, above all Counter-Currents and Arktos, Perdue has become something of a literary celebrity within ideologically aligned circles, with many important North American and European metapolitical figures having interacted with his work. The establishment of these cultural institutions has changed the trajectory of his career, and Perdue, after almost two decades of struggling to get his politically less explicit works published with small houses, finally found a Bordieuan “*natural place*” in the literary field (Bourdieu 2009, 165, original italics). The founding of counter-structures was necessary for the metapolitical far right and was the first step in creating respectability. Over the past fifteen years, they have been able to appropriate and (ab)use what Bourdieu describes as the specific mechanisms of the literary field. They rely on the anticommercial stance of the avant-garde and other producers close to the dominated pole of the field, capitalizing on this tradition to justify their literature in a field characterized by conglomeration and neoliberalism. Because of their exclusion from most literary institutions and thus mechanisms of consecration, they have set up their own structures to create authority and legitimacy,⁸ which, on closer inspection, are enacted by only a handful of people, creating a far-right consecration loop that reproduces itself repeatedly. Several of the counter-institutions described here, which are defined in opposition to mainstream institutions, are dependent on old right-wing or far-right publishing money associated with the Regnery family. These institutions perform the role of refuges for far-right authors shunned and supposedly censored by society and most of the literary field. Despite culturally remaining in a dominated position, the metapolitical far right has established its own microcosm within the literary field. This reflects Eliah Bures’s observation that one of the European New Right’s “dual countercultural styles” is the taking of a “refugium” position (as opposed to a more militant “beachhead” stance),

8 Anecdotal evidence from teaching a seminar about US far-right fiction suggests that this artificial consecration and institutionalization can have the desired effect on people unfamiliar with these structures and names. Thus, several students took this inflated performance at face value and commented on how, for instance, the H. P. Lovecraft Prize must be a sign that Perdue is considered a good writer by parts of the literary establishment. The creation of this infrastructure has also led to a steadily increasing scholarly engagement with this kind of literature, which also creates more visibility and, arguably, is in itself a form of consecration.

which, as a far-right post–World War II strategy, harks back to Evola and Armin Mohler, two New Right favorites (Bures 2020, 54).

However, using Bourdieu’s theory also has important limitations when it comes to these highly political actors. The forming of counter-institutions and claiming of an avant-garde tradition fundamentally contradict the metapolitical mission, which aims to conquer the cultural mainstream. These positionings are thus an instrumentalization of what actors like Johnson, consciously or not, recognized as the mechanisms of the literary field, while their actual goal is more in accord with the logic of the neoliberal market, or with what Sapiro describes as the “competition between publishers for the largest public that conditions the supply” (2003, 460). These metapolitical actors have understood how to play on the connection between belated success and failure, and to present political transgression as literary novelty. Their politics propel their activities, visible in the often bad literary and editorial quality of the books in question. This is not to say that far-right artists in general are incapable of producing artistically interesting works; one only has to consider Ezra Pound or Yukio Mishima. While Bourdieu’s extremely anti-charismatic theory—and, relatedly, his critique of taste (see Bourdieu 2002)—mostly disregards questions of artistic quality, it is undeniable that the current generation of writers published by these metapolitical houses is mostly lacking in artistic skill. They do not have what Sabine Cofalla describes as the “necessary stakes for the literary field” (2005, 359, translation mine). In these aspects, they diverge from Bourdieu’s theory as their avant-garde stance does not aim to introduce novelty to the field—many of their texts, and all of Perdue’s writing, adhere to realist standards—but rather relies on tried-and-tested artistic forms in their quest for hegemony. Setting up this literary structure is antithetical to the principles of pure art and is better understood as a far-right strategy that appropriates what it deems useful. The looming presence of explicitly political figures like Fleming, Turner, Spencer, and William Regnery II in Perdue’s consecration weakens the claim to symbolic capital in a field that values autonomy from politics and economics.

Thus, since the 2010s, actors like Perdue and institutions like Counter-Currents have not actually been perceived as avant-garde by anyone but themselves. Their self-presentation artificially inflates their actual significance within the literary field, reflecting Cofalla’s insight that when trying to understand internal “power struggles,” one should not take “group-specific games of deception” at face value (2005, 365, translation mine). Despite their improved situation since the late 2000s, US far-right literature, exemplified here by Perdue’s fiction, remains in a very dominated position in the literary field. As long as consecration remains within a far-right microcosm that is low in symbolic capital, this literature is not recognized as such by relevant actors. It is impossible to know how widely Perdue is actually read because of a lack of transparency regarding print and sales numbers, and also because of the easy and free downloadability of these texts from the Internet. However, the overwhelming lack of

engagement by field actors and the reading public suggests that Perdue's audience is relatively small.⁹ In the US and elsewhere, other forms of media like television and social media are much more relevant in disseminating far-right thought, and the broader role of the internet in radicalizing people has been noted widely (Maly 2024; Ravndal 2023; Hermansson et al. 2020; Strick 2021; Leidig 2023; Blazakis 2022). These developments suggest that the idea of political struggles for dominance within the literary field is increasingly anachronistic. They also, to some degree, challenge Bourdieu's thesis that changes in the political field are reflected in the literary field, for Trump's election and the United States' subsequent shift toward the far right did little to improve these metapolitical actors' position, nor did it help far-right literature gain traction. In contrast, the effects of transnationalization and digitalization on the field cannot be denied, as in Arktos's mission to translate far-right thinkers into English, the language of globalization. The tension between the globalized nature of the far-right publishing business and the nostalgic imagery of a clearly localized Southern rurality that pervades all of Perdue's novels promises to be an interesting avenue for future research on the topic.

Finally, while a writer like Perdue and his arguably outdated style might never be consecrated by anyone outside of his own circles, and while Johnson and Counter-Currents remain too stigmatized for the larger field to engage with them, they can be considered trailblazers that paved the way for a newer generation of metapolitical-literary activists. In the 2020s, more companies with slick aesthetics and updated versions of far-right ideology are appearing. Newer publishing houses like US-based Antelope Hill and Passage Publishing are able to build on earlier achievements and avant-garde discourse. Thus, Passage Publishing, founded in 2022, publishes far-right icons like neoreactionaries Curtis Yarvin and Nick Land, and describes itself on its website as "an alternative to the increasingly closed-minded worldview of modern mainstream publishing." Indebted to decades of metapolitical struggle within the literary field is Passage's further declaration that "[e]nough on this topic has already been written. We take it as self-evident."¹⁰ A 2023 article published by established leftist publisher Verso describes Passage and Yarvin as part of a "Right-Wing Avant-Garde" (Boyle 2023), indicating a new respectability that was not reached by Perdue and Johnson, or Arktos and Counter-Currents. This suggests that these actors' efforts, even if they did not come to fruition, provided a model for future generations.

9 Judging from the low number of Amazon reviews, Perdue's books are not widely read. As of November 20, 2025, his most-reviewed novels are *Morning Crafts* and *Philip*, with thirteen and fourteen reviews respectively. The others have fewer than ten reviews, or none at all.

10 "About," Passage Publishing, accessed November 19, 2025, <https://passage.press/pages/about>.

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