

Typography as Context

The Graphic Constitution of Genres and Social Territories

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Genre concept

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"[G]enres can be defined as the historically specific conventions and ideals according to which authors compose discourse and audiences receive it. In this view, genres consist of orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations that are not part of discourse structure, but of the ways actors relate to and use language [...]."

Hanks, William F. (1987). Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice. In: *American Ethnologist* 14/4, pp. 668–692, quot.: p. 670.

Genre concept

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"We conceive of genre as one order of speech style, a constellation of systematically related, co-occurrent features and structures that contrasts with other such constellations [...] and provides a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse [...]. More specifically, a genre is a speech style oriented to the production and reception of particular kinds of text."

Bauman, Richard (2005). The ethnography of genre in a Mexican market: form, function, variation. In: Penelope Eckert/John R. Rickford (eds.): *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 57–77, quot.: p. 58.

Genres and ideology

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"Genres also bear social, ideological, and political-economic connections; genres may thus be associated with distinct groups as defined by gender, age, social class, occupation, and the like. Invoking a genre thus creates indexical connections that extend far beyond the present setting of production or reception, thereby linking a particular act to other times, places and persons."

Briggs, Charles L./Bauman, Richard (1992). Genre, Intertextuality, and Social Power. In: *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2/2, pp. 131–172, quot.: pp. 147–148.

Enregisterment of genres

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"registers [are] culture-internal models of personhood linked to speech forms."

Agha, Asif (2007). *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language 24), p. 135.

"*Enregisterment*: processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population."

Agha, Asif (2007). *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language 24), p. 81.

Genres as interpretive phenomena

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"genres [are] typical forms of text which link kinds of producer, consumer, topic, medium, manner and occasion [...]. These control the behaviour of producers of such texts, and the expectations of potential consumers. [...] Like the category of text, **genres are socially ascribed classifications of semiotic form. Genres only exist in so far as a social group declares and enforces the rules that constitute them.**"

Hodge, Robert/Kress, Gunther (1988). *Social semiotics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, p. 7.

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- Genres are the result of *recurrent* communicative [and metacommunicative] practice
 - ➡ Communicative practice and “intertextual gaps” are part of generic change

Cf. [Günthner, Susanne/Knoblauch, Hubert \(1995\). Culturally Patterned Speaking Practices. The Analysis of Communicative Genres.](#) In: *Pragmatics* 5/1, pp. 1–32.

Typography as genre cue

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Hypothesis

Typographic forms and constellations serve as **contextualization** or **genre cues**, since they are indexically linked with (ascribed to) specific genres. Hence, typographic form frames the interpretation of text, evokes interpretive expectations and triggers communicative knowledge.

Typographic dispositives

“[Ich] verstehe [...] unter typographischen Dispositiven makrotypographische Kompositionsschemata, die als syntagmatisch gestalthafte ‘Superzeichen’ jeweils Textsorten konnotieren. Typographische Dispositive stellen eine hochgeneralisierte Form der konnotativen Semantisierung typographischer Syntax dar. Der Existenz von typographischen Dispositiven ist es zu verdanken, daß man auf den ersten Blick in der Lage ist, eine Seite aus einer Tageszeitung von einem Dramentext oder einem Lexikoneintrag zu unterscheiden. [...] Die Vorstellungen über Textklassen und ihre charakteristischen Eigenschaften umfassen immer auch Merkmale ihrer äußereren (typographischen) Form; sie gehören zum Alltagswissen unserer Lesekultur.”

Wehde, Susanne (2000). *Typographische Kultur. Eine zeichentheoretische und kulturgeschichtliche Studie zur Typographie und ihrer Entwicklung*. Tübingen: Niemeyer (Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 69), p. 119.

Typographic genre constitution

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Typographic means/constellations might indicate perceived

- **text function**
- **historicity**
- **actors** (social personae)
- **social relations** and **power**
- **ideologies**

In *emplaced communication*, these allocations are
bi-directionally linked with the location and with the social
ascriptions the location is subject to

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A dense semiotic arena

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As ideological as it gets

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(‘Death to the BVB [i. e., Borussia Dortmund]’)

Non-prototypical, but generic 'texts'

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Intergeneric references and functional indexes

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Genre parodies as genre

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Genre parodies as genre

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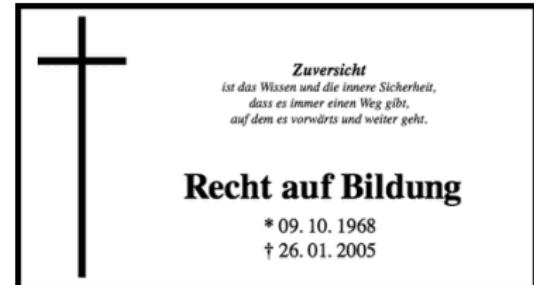
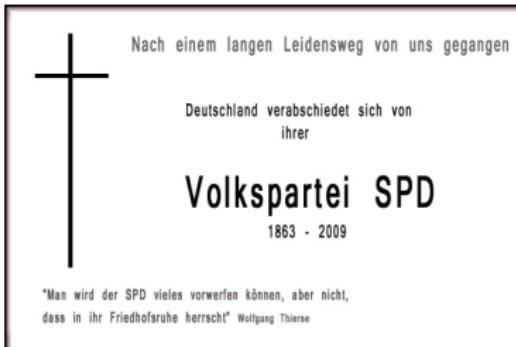
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Zuversicht
ist das Wissen und die innere Sicherheit,
dass es immer einen Weg gibt,
auf dem es vorwärts und weiter geht.

Recht auf Bildung

* 09. 10. 1968
† 26. 01. 2005



Es war ein langer, harter Kampf

Wir trauern um

Die letzte Hoffnung
auf anspruchvolles Radio in Sachsen

* 15. Juni 1992
† 03. Dezember 2010

In stiller Trauer:

Musikwirtschaft Sachsen
Viele Dresden
Die Oberlausitz, geb Budissin
mit Bautzen und Bischofswerda
Karl Marx-Stadt mit Familie
Teile von und zu Leipzig
Robert Schumann Stadt Zwickau
Zittau und Görlitz, geb. Yzcorelik
Die Jugend!

Die Beisetzung findet unter Ausschluss der
Öffentlichkeit statt.

Intergeneric references and functional indexes

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('FELIX: Not liked by us anymore')

Emulated (iconic) historicity

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Factual (indexical) historicity

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'Factual' or 'emulated'?

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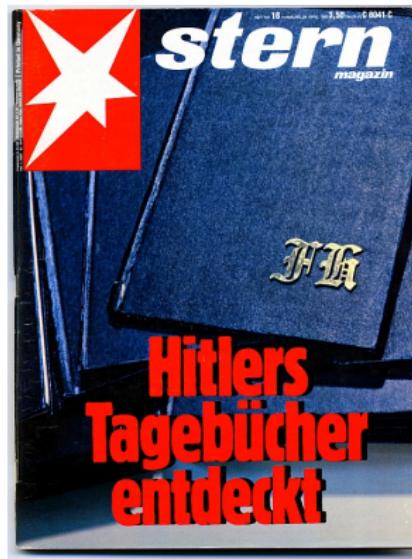
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'Factual' or 'emulated'?

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Historicity as identity

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(Ceterum ceno: '... furthermore, we consider that the sponsor must be elided from the club logo')

'Real' fans?

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Legitimate practices

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“But that's the old tiresome Ultra/normalofan discussion. As long as our organized fans [the Ultras] continue to protest against everybody and everything and **refuse to hold up their scarfs even when 'You'll never walk alone' is being played**, which destroys the overall picture, we can only dream of a perfect stadium atmosphere.”

<http://www.bvb-forum.de/index.php?id=173591>

<30. 12. 2011>; my transl.

Legitimate practices

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“Was ist aus den guten alten, von Frau / Mutti / Omi zusammen genähten, und selbst mit viel Liebe bemalten Zaunfahnen geworden? Klar, durch Digitaldruck & co Sind mittlerweile teilweise sogar Fotos auf Zaunfahnen darstellbar, aber dies ist meiner Meinung nach keine Entwicklung, die man mitmachen sollte. Mit einer Zaunfahne muss sich ein Fanclub identifizieren. Und das ist bei einer selbst gemalten Zaunfahne doch viel eher der Fall als an einer, beim Onlinehändler XY, bestellten. Natürlich sieht eine selbst gemachte Fahne wahrscheinlich optisch nicht so perfekt aus, wie eine bestellte, doch DAS macht die alten ‘Lappen’ doch gerade so liebenswert! Außerdem könnt ihr euch sicher sein: In einigen Jahren blickt ihr mit Sicherheit stolz auf eure selbst gemalte Zaunfahne und erinnert euch an die geilen (und mit Sicherheit auch beschissen) Tage die ihr und eure Zaunfahne mitgemacht

Legitimate practices (cont.)

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habt. Auch wenn sie vielleicht nicht die schönste ist – Es ist EURE Zaunfahne! Deswegen, der Appell, hier im BPZ [= 'Beipackzettel', Name of the Fanzine; J. S.]: Nehmt euch die Zeit, malt eure Zaunfahne selbst – Es lohnt sich auf jeden Fall und für den Block ist es eine Bereicherung!"

Ultras Krefeld (2011): *Beipackzettel. Infoflyer für die Fanszene Uerdingen.* 11. Anwendung: KFC Uerdingen vs. Sportfreunde Siegen (28. Okt.). URL: <http://ultras-krefeld.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/BPZoktober11web.pdf> <01.03.2012>, S. 3.

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('FELIX: Not liked by us anymore')

Occupying place

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(‘Money can achieve much, but not everything –
we are the club!’)

Occupying place

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Graphic ideologies

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Conclusions

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- Genres as **orienting frameworks** make texts – and the places to which these texts are embedded – **socially interpretable** and **structure the social world**
- This is achieved by means of the **connection** of the discussed categories, *function, historicity, actors, social relations, power* and *ideology*, with genres
- All these aspects are part of **genre knowledge**
- The **context of interpretation**, when we read texts that are allocated to a specific genre, is derived from inferences we draw due to communicative cues, amongst others, **typographic cues**
- **Typographic constellations** are thus **contexts that stabilize communication** and invite us to read a text (or place) in a specific way

Conclusions (cont.)

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- **Typographic landscapes** are **social territories**, to which claims (of property, legitimacy, authority, orthopraxy etc.) are made by means of generic, enregistered typographic forms
- The claims, however, are themselves often **confronted with counter-claims**, and the indexical meaning of the forms is by no means stable, but itself **subject to discursive negotiation**

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