FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERACY: AFFECT, AESTHETICS, & ETHICS

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(see also Altherr-Flores, 2016)
LIVED LITERACY: CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 2
Immigrants need a visa, a residency permit and a work permit to be allowed to live and work in Germany.

In Germany there work more than a million foreigners.

Immigrants bring the cultures and traditions of their home countries with them.

The Germans eat Turkish doner and Greek gyros almost as much as pizza, spaghetti and hamburgers.

The integration of foreigners must already begin in childhood.

Xenophobia is a problem – not only in Germany.
GUIDING QUESTIONS

• In what ways are learners’ affective experiences of literacy practices in excess of the pedagogical and analytical models within which we conceptualize them?

• What alternative paradigms for L2 learning emerge, if we shift our attention to affective dimensions?
FL LITERACY: A VERY BRIEF HISTORY, PART I

- **reading for meaning** (Bernhardt, 1991; Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991)

- **multiple literacies / design** (New London Group, 1996; Kern, 2000; Byrnes & Sprang, 2004; Maxim, 2008; Paesani, et al, 2016)
LITERACY AS MEANING DESIGN

Designs

Redesigning ←→ Designing
GENRES AS DESIGNED MEANINGS

In functional linguistics terms [...] “genres are defined as a recurrent configuration of meanings and that these recurrent configurations of meaning enact the social practices of a given culture.” (Martin & Rose 2009: 5)

“The choices available within a genre are limited by the conventions that have become valorized for that specific communicative situation.” (Maxim, 2008: 175)
FL LITERACY: A VERY BRIEF HISTORY, PART II

• not just words, but worlds (Kern, 2000)
• situating literacy in…”historically formed, and dynamically changing, social, symbolic and material ecologies” (Thorne, 2012)
• relational pedagogies (Kern, 2015)
• oppositional practice (Kramsch & Nolden, 1994); symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2011)
“Languagers”, for us, are those people, we may even term them ‘agents’ or ‘language activists’, who engage actively with the world, and for whom language learning is a way of embarking on the risky business of stepping out of one’s habitual ways of speaking and acting in order to engage with others whose modes of speech and action are other. ‘Languagers’ are prepared to develop new dispositions for action in another language in a way that will transform their current behaviour in a permanent way.” (Phipps & Gonzalez, 2009: 295)

How “can the teacher make space for fluidity and indeterminacy as the nature of things? Can he or she recognize difference, surprise, and unfolding that follow along paths that are not rational or linear or obviously critical or political?” (Leander and Boldt, 2012: 22 & 44)
## THE COURSE: CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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<th>SPECIAL TOPICS</th>
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<td>Stories from German History (Geschichten aus der deutschen Geschichte)</td>
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<td>Digitale Gemeinschaften (Digital Communities)</td>
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DIGITAL COMMUNITIES UNIT

• ethnography of digital communities
• genre and discourse analysis of key texts and interactions
• group presentation on the digital communities
• individual article for a magazine targeting German learners – should German language learners engage with social media communities?
JADEN

• Started German in high school, but placed into beginning German at university
• Completed second-year in intensive study abroad course
• Wanted to someday work in a lab in Germany
• Stated course goal: to read books (mentions specially books set in WWII and East Germany)
Jayden, Wikispaces, October 14
Yeah, sometimes I forget that I am in the internet and I ask myself “Is every German person completely crazy…?” And then I breath deep and remind myself, that the internet is to blame. The internet is a not a good representation of people (Volksvertreter).

Jayden, Reflection, November 12
Yes I like German and yes I like digital communities but if I were interested in world politics then I would go to international newspapers. I feared this course, when we were doing the digital communities.

The eleventh of September – a day, which no one who experienced, could ever forget. For many Americans this is a day, on which the power of their homeland and their people was put into question. Many people from many countries expressed feelings of solidarity with the USA. Now - 14 years later – this day is not forgotten. This topic is so contentious in the USA that it is difficult to discuss – sometimes the whole discussion fails because of strong emotions and perspectives.
Genres are not just forms. **Genres are forms of life, ways of being.** They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. **They are locations within which meaning is constructed.** Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact. Genres are the familiar places we go to to create intelligible communicative action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the unfamiliar. 

[...] **Other people have other places** they have constructed and where they regularly go to interact. When we travel to new communicative domains, we construct our perception of them beginning with the forms we know. Even our motives and desire to participate in what the new landscape appears to offer start from motives and desires framed in earlier landscapes.

*(Bazerman, 1997: 19)*
“Affect is a process of existential appropriation through the continual creation of heterogeneous durations of being and, given this, we would certainly be better advised to [...] deliberately turn ourselves toward ethical and aesthetic paradigms.” (Guattari, 1996: 159).

“When we navigate our way through the world, there are different pulls, constraints and freedoms that move us forward and propel us into life.” (Zournazi, 2002: 210)
This thing we call “critical thinking” or “analysis” has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques—it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one’s country. (Fox, 1994: 125)

symbolic competence "to shape the multilingual game in which one invests...and to reframe human thought and action." (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008: 662)
CREATING SPACE FOR CRITICAL FEELING

• expanding through the literary
• expanding through movement
• expanding through gifting
IN LAK’ECH

Tú eres mi otro yo / You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti / If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mí mismo / I do harm to myself; Si te amo y respeto /
If I love and respect you, Me amo y respeto yo / I love and respect myself

[See Snell, 2016, p. 87]
Beschreiben Sie das Bild. Formen Sie 5 positive Sätze über die Mauer. Schreiben Sie in Wir-Form (Plural “we”)

WALLS
The epiphanic realization I had owing to this lesson study was that I have been underestimating my students a lot... We were planning on creating an urge for the East Germans to want to go to the West, but now that I think about it, and after I saw it in class, the task gave it a too materialistic touch and thereby created the falseful picture that it was not desirable to live in the East and that the West was the paradise everyone strived for. However, the task absolutely neglected the personal experiences, the emotions of the separated families, and the positive aspects about life on either side in general. What the dynamics of the presentation task provoked, was a too one sided movement from the East to the West and thereby fed too much into the global stereotype of Eastern Germany. (Martin, reflection)
GIFTING: IRC INTERNSHIPS
STEPPING OUT...

• new affect worlds – expanding L2 activities beyond typical communicative domains

• new paradigms – aesthetics and ethics as central to FL education
THANK YOU!

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE LITERARY IN THE EVERYDAY

fllite.org
THE LITERARY IN THE EVERYDAY

Situation 1: Hast du einen Schlafsack?

MODELLE: MJ: Hast du einen Schlafsack?

SZ: Ja, ich habe einen Schlafsack.

Nein, ich habe keinen Schlafsack.

ein Motorrad

eine Sonnenbrille

einen DVD-Spieler

einen Pflad

einen Pferd

[See also fllite.org; Timlin, forthcoming]
Dies ist meine Mütze,
dies ist mein Mantel,
hier mein Rasierzeug
im Beutel aus Leinen.

Konservenbüchse:
Mein Teller, mein Becher,
ich hab in das Weißblech
den Namen geritzt.

Geritzt hier mit diesem
kostbaren Nagel,
den vor begehrlchen
Augen ich berge.

Die Bleistiftmine
lieb ich am meisten:
Tags schreibt sie mir Verse,
die nachts ich erdacht.