Dubrovnik 2016
Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies
Cities at Risk – From Humiliation to Dignity
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Dubrovnik 2016

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From Past to Present: How writing and writing systems impact Dignity in Human Interaction
Toward a dignity approach to writing

A shift of focus from the functional relationship between speech and writing (phonemics and graphemics) to the ethics and dignity of writing
Linguists overestimate the functional aspects of writing

Important issues:

- writing is visual art
- emotional issues
- esthetics
- ideology
- politics
- power
Some few crucial scenarios:

- Afghanistan: Western alphabets or Persian script
- Minorities such as Tartars in Russia
- Former Tibet and China
- Tyrkia: Introduction of the Latin alphabet by Ataturk after World War I
- American linguistic efforts: Introduction of alphabetic writing systems with the Indians
«Writing is not language, and language is not writing.»

Famous dialogue between two linguists:

«When Boswell objected to describing the Chinese as «barbarians», Johnson’s reply was: «Sir, they have not an alphabet!»» (Harris 1989: 100)
The widely held view ...

Samuel Jonae Columbus (born April 24, 1642 in Husby in Dalarna) a Swedish linguist and hymnwriter in the 1600s

«Bokstäfr äre teckn, som mäd mångeledes hijt och dijt dragne streck, prickar ok linier liksam afcopiera tanckan ok dess tolk, språket.»

From En svensk ordeskötsel angående bokstäfver, ord och ordesätt, 1678
Writing is always a kind of picture 🎨

◊ pReC!oUs L!L D!aMoNd ◊ (Coetzee 2012)
A child (6 years) exploiting the visual space ...
... a stress on creative writing

I Pike the Flawase
From my godin i bone around
and Stop to see the
Yellow rose I go to Pike wine
a thone gest Stik in my figir

(following Kress 2000: 190)
The esthetics and beauty of the text ...

**Flowers**

I pick the flowers from my garden I turn around and stop to see the yellow rose I go to pick one a thorn gets stuck in my finger.
Iconic writing of young children:

\[ S = \text{SNAKE or SLANGE} \]
Falls wir uns nicht vorher nochmal 📝, oder 👡 oder 🎀, wünsche ich dir einen guten 👩 ins Jahr 2015
- aber Trink nicht zu viel 🥂 oder 🍺 oder aber 🍷, sonst hast du am nächsten Tag einen fürchterlichen 🐶!

❗ Sollte das der Fall sein nimm lieber ganz schnell eine 🕵️♂️ 😅!! Also lass es 💥, 🙈 rein und mach einen drauf 🎆... ✨❤️分钟左右! Guten Rutsch ins Jahr 2015
Who wrote?
School people and red people
Skriving og klassetilhørighet

Breckenridge sier om skriving i colonial-Afrika:
«[T]here are very good grounds for seeing writing as a definite marker of class ... Yet the evidence that unschooled migrants wrote is overwhelming ... Xhosa workers were the first to make use of letter-writing as a tool for managing the exigencies of migracy.»

English summary

Writing is an immense creative source that involves much more than linguistic and orthographic factors ... Sapir and Bloomfield have to be modified: Writing is not secondary to speech or a reflection of speech, but a social and cultural practice in its own right (a term in new literacy studies is linguistic landscaping).