
Pejorative Language Use in the Satirical Journal “Die Fackel” as documented in the “Dictionary of Insults and Invectives”

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Abstract

Satirical literary texts have certain properties that are highly interesting for the study of pejorative language use. The language of the satirical journal “Die Fackel” published and almost entirely written by Karl Kraus is the text basis for a text-lexicographic exploration into the field of pejorative language and its specific lexicographic units. The „Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift „Die Fackel“. Alphabetisches, Chronologisches, Explikatives” was published in 2008. The three volumes document the usage of invectives in the journal, in alphabetical and in chronological order, and in explicative form explained through the example of the last article of the journal. The alphabetical part consists of 2,775 examples of pejorative phrases and related indices. The chronological part presents 555 of these pejorative phrases arranged in chronological order providing expanded contexts. The third volume contains explicatory texts as well as “Wichtiges von Wichten”, the final article of “Die Fackel”, where pejorative phrases were marked up and accompanied by commentaries. This source is representing a literary genre that offers a variety of different forms of pejorative language to be studied from various perspectives. The lexicographic insights offered by the text dictionary into the use of peoration by Karl Kraus will be presented in this paper.

Keywords: text lexicography; literary studies; pejorative language

1 Text Dictionary of “Die Fackel”

“Die Fackel” (“The Torch”) is the name of the satirical magazine of 22.586 pages which was published by Karl Kraus in 922 issues in Vienna from 1 April 1899 until February 1936. The work of the satirist, language critic and social critic Karl Kraus, who was born in Bohemia in 1874 and died in Vienna in 1936, is an abundant and highly interesting source not only for the history of his time, but for the language spoken and written at the time and above all for the moral transgressions which the satirist observed by interpreting the words and phrases of his time and which he pointed out in his satirical and polemical texts. His very influential literary journal comprises a great variety of articles, essays, glosses, notes, commentaries, aphorisms, poems, songs, advertisements, and many other literary forms. The main method of his satire is the method of quotation, whereby Karl Kraus wittingly com-

ments upon the quotations he finds in the newspapers, journals and magazines as well as in the literature and in the political speeches of his time. He criticises in numerous satirical and polemical articles of his magazine the acts and the words of his contemporaries who were active in various intellectual fields, not only in the media, but also in the theatre, the university, the church, in politics, the economy, the military, and so on. Karl Kraus covers in his typical style in thousands of texts the themes of journalism and war, of politics and corruption, of literature and lying. The language of the satirical journal “Die Fackel” - for several decades since its start in 1899 almost entirely written by Karl Kraus, and from 1911 on without external contributions, - is the text basis for a unique text lexicographic exploration which has been carried out at the Austrian Academy of Sciences for several years. Nowhere else in German literature, to mention but one aspect, is there such an extensive documentation of the socio-political idiom of the time as there is in “Die Fackel” by Karl Kraus. The idea of compiling a text-dictionary of the “Fackel” derives from our interest in language and how it is used in “Die Fackel”. The Fackel-Dictionary is a selective text dictionary research project initiated by Werner Welzig. The original plan was to develop three different types of dictionary. First, a “Dictionary of Idioms”, the *Wörterbuch der Redensarten zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift ‘Die Fackel’* (Welzig 1999), published on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of “Die Fackel” in 1999, a monumental scholarly publication that has won several international and national prizes, among them the Prix Logos by the French association of linguists and the Golden Letter at the Leipzig book fair as the most beautiful book of the year 2000 for its design worked out by the designer Anne Burdick in cooperation with the Fackellex working group (Hanno Biber, Evelyn Breiteneder, Susanne Buchner, Heinrich Kabas, Karlheinz Mörth, Christiane Pabst, Franco Schedl, Adriana Vignazia, Werner Welzig). In order to thoroughly analyse and interpret the more than 9000 idiomatic units of the text dictionary, of which 144 idioms are described in great detail in individual entries, which are longer than common dictionary entries are, it has proved reasonable to search large volumes of texts for comparison, a procedure that has also been made use of for the dictionary that followed. It is a lexicographic necessity to have large text corpora available, in particular when searching for lexical units, for example for idioms or for pejorative phrases, so that these text dictionary projects can be regarded as examples and applications of corpus based textual studies. The second example within this context of text lexicography is the “Dictionary of Insults and Invectives”, *Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift ‘Die Fackel’* (Welzig 2008), which was also worked out by the Fackellex working group (Hanno Biber, Evelyn Breiteneder, Gerald Krieghofer, Karlheinz Mörth) and will be introduced in this short presentation. Third, an “Ideological Dictionary” had been originally planned, which later in the course of the development of the program plans has been decided to be transformed into a special edition of the posthumously published text “Third Walpurgis Night” (*Dritte Walpurgisnacht*) by Karl Kraus, written in May 1933, constituting a manifestation the most important contemporary text of German literature dealing with the early time of National Sozialism and the issue how the intellectuals reacted when this most violent regime came to power.

2 Pejorative Language Use

In this paper a short presentation of the main aspects of the second text dictionary, the “Dictionary of Insults and Invectives”, *Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift ‘Die Fackel’* (Welzig 2008) will be given, offering an exploration into the field of pejorative language use and its specific lexicographic units as selected for this dictionary. “Die Fackel” can be regarded as an ideal text basis for such a dictionary in that it has no equal in the German literature of the twentieth century either in terms of form and content or in the use of language. The *Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift ‘Die Fackel’* (Welzig 2008) published in 2008 consists of three parts: „Alphabetisches“, „Chronologisches“, „Explikatives“. The three volumes document the usage of the invectives and pejorative phrases in the journal, in alphabetical order (ALPHA), in chronological order (CHRONO), and explained through the example of the last article of the journal in a volume (EXPLICA), that shows by thoroughly analysing one short, but semantically very dense text, the full potential of a text lexicographic documentation of its pejorative forms.

Adjektivschmuser		ALPHA 1
A		
die Aasgeier des Interessanten	📄	437_090
die Ab- und Zufaller meiner Region	📄	890_248
Abhub des bürgerlichen Geisteslebens	📄	820_050
der übelste Abhub der Wiener Geistigkeit	📄	351_054
schwacher Abklatsch von Lustspielfiguren	📄	336_021
Abkömmlinge der Bürgerwelt	📄	890_297
Abkömmlinge meines Lebenskreises	📄	445_142
diese Abkürzer der Sprache und des Lebens	📄	501_026
diese Abkürzung eines Rezensenten	📄	457_024
Abonnenten der ‚Neuen Freien Presse‘	📄	071_001
Abonnenten der großen Tagespresse	📄	118_002
Abschaum von einer Creme	📄	697_140
Abschaum der Wiener Advokatie	📄	170_009
Alterston des Abschiednehmers	📄	423_049
einer der beliebtesten Abschilderer von Verwundetenzügen	📄	531_184
Franz Blei, ein Abt der roten Garde	📄	568_035
Achilles des Wiener Feuilletons	📄	368_025
glaubt das Volk, ein Achtundvierziger sei die Rufnummer eines Fickers, und ein Unnummerierter ist doch mehr	📄	251_032
Adabei und Niedabei	📄	622_146
Adept der Neuen Freien Mythologie	📄	121_012
Adepten des Ritualmordglaubens	📄	059_001
Adepten seiner Schminke	📄	349_008
Adjektivkünstler	📄	387_002
Adjektivschmuser	📄	857_033

Fackel Schimpfwörterbuch

Figure 1: ALPHA.

The alphabetical volume of the text dictionary (ALPHA) consists of 2,775 examples of pejorative phrases and several related indices. In this alphabetical part the lemmatized entries of the pejorative forms are marked and each of the entries is given a short context. Only one reference is given with one entry and those entries which are represented in full detail of the page in the chronological volume of

the text dictionary are printed in red color. The indices at the end of the alphabetical part, referring to the pages and the lines indicated by the marginal letters, comprise a complete index of the documented word forms, second a selective index of inverted word forms and also a few indices of names (an index of personal names, placenames and other names).

The chronological volume (CHRONO) of the *Schimpfwörterbuch zu der von Karl Kraus 1899 bis 1936 herausgegebenen Zeitschrift 'Die Fackel'* (Welzig 2008) presents 555 selected examples of the overall 2,775 selected pejorative phrases arranged in chronological order as they appear in the magazine, thereby providing expanded contexts by printing the full page of the original journal in a graphically transformed facsimile where the quoted passage is highlighted. In all three volumes of the text dictionary the references to the digital edition of the journal, the AAC-Fackel - published within the framework of the corpus research enterprise "AAC - Austrian Academy Corpus" (AAC-FACKEL 2007) - are given by means of short URLs of the individual pages, so that the user of the text dictionary has always the full context available and can at the same time make use of the print representations of the highlighted pejorative expressions. The larger context given in the chronological volume of the text dictionary allows the reader to evaluate the textual dynamics and the effects how the pejorative expression is constituted, which in many cases is gradually intensified and accompanied by other related expressions in the context of the satirical or polemical text of "Die Fackel". In many cases the pejorative intensifications are made possible by word formation processes or syntactical effects, which is one of the reasons why the particular use of compounds is documented to a larger extent as well as certain significant pejorative collocations are taken into consideration for this text dictionary of insults and invectives. In many cases words that are not commonly used pejoratively are used in this way by the satirist, who is also reflecting upon this particular satirical procedure in his texts.

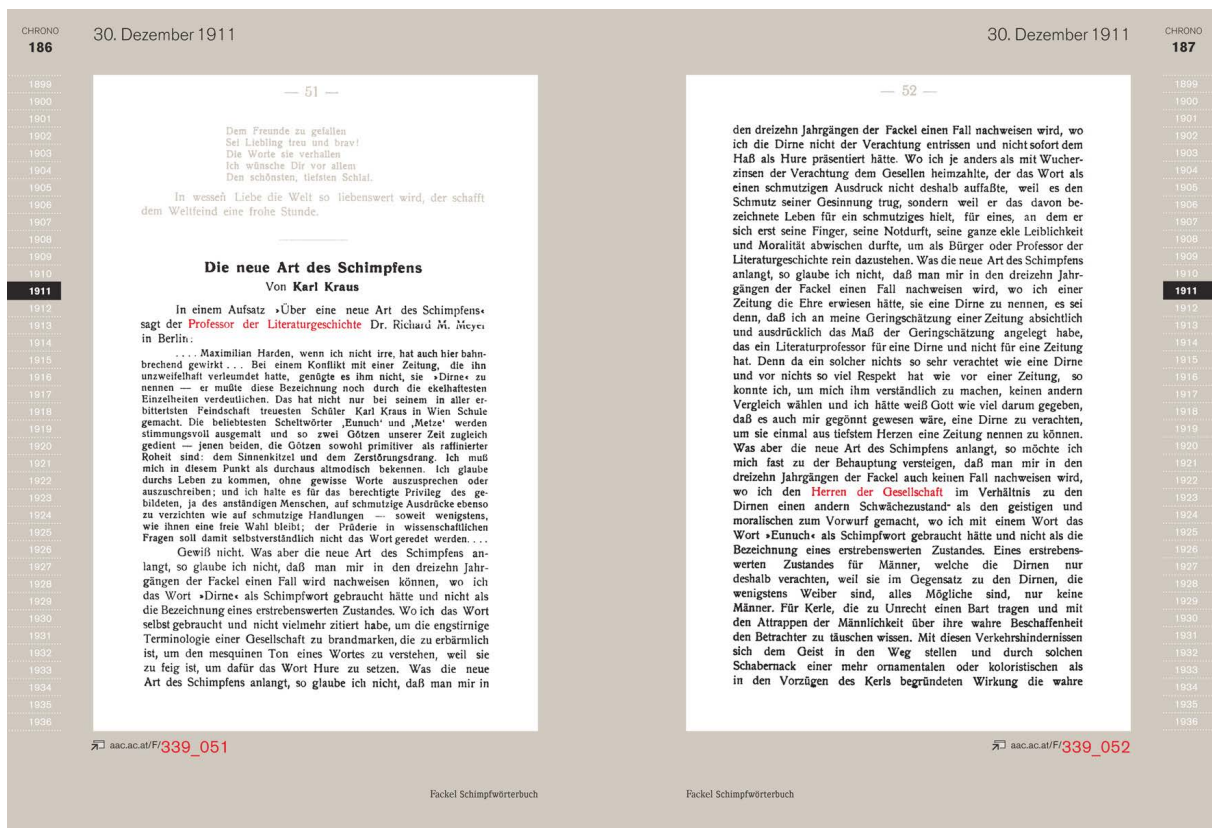


Figure 2: CHRONO.

The third volume (EXPLICICA) contains explicatory texts as well as “Wichtiges von Wichten”, the final article of “Die Fackel”, where pejorative phrases were marked up in this specific text and have been accompanied by detailed commentaries. This last text published in “Die Fackel” in February 1936 is treated as a source text for the analysis of pejorative terms in order to exemplify the difficult and ambitious task of getting to terms with the high level of pejoration in the satirical and polemical texts written by Karl Kraus. The politically interesting polemical note “Wichtiges von Wichten” from 1936, referring to the political situation at the time and how to react to it by means of writing, is reproduced in the explicatory volume of the dictionary in a plain form first, giving the readers an uninterrupted chance to read a large piece of textual evidence first and then it is given in a form in which, according to the text lexicographers’ interpretations, pejoratively used expressions are highlighted in the text and provided with their alphabetical list. In a third part of this volume the same text is reproduced again, this time dashed out with only those expressions left visible which are commented upon by the editors and compilers of the text dictionary, documenting the intensive need and necessity for detailed commentary in order to understand and fully assess the pejorative qualities of the expressions selected.

This source text in particular as well as the whole journal in general is representing a literary genre that offers a variety of different forms of pejorative language to be studied from various perspectives. The various use of the pejorative expressions not only in the last text, but above all in all texts chosen

are, as has been observed, dominated to a large extent by the creative transformations and configurations performed by the writer. These creative adaptations and modifications are not only important for the documentation and the analysis of the idiomatic expressions as represented in the text lexicographic project of the “Dictionary of Idioms”, but also to a large extent these creative adaptations are most relevant for the way, in which pejorative expressions are formed, which can be studied in great detail in the “Dictionary of Insults and Invectives”. In the case of the idioms, a more or less normal form is creatively transformed into other forms, which cannot easily be detected by standard automated corpus query systems, only systematic annotation and possible semi-automatic methods could provide the scholar with reasonable results to be gained from larger corpora. In the case of the “Dictionary of Insults and Invectives” the corpus of the whole text has been made use of for purposes of systematization. This extensive literary text is full of a great variety of satirical forms in the context of pejorative expressions. For this reason it can be used as a research object following a certain combined interest in the study of pejorative language and in phenomena related to the more methodological questions of satirical and polemical language as a research topic for text lexicography as well as for corpus research.

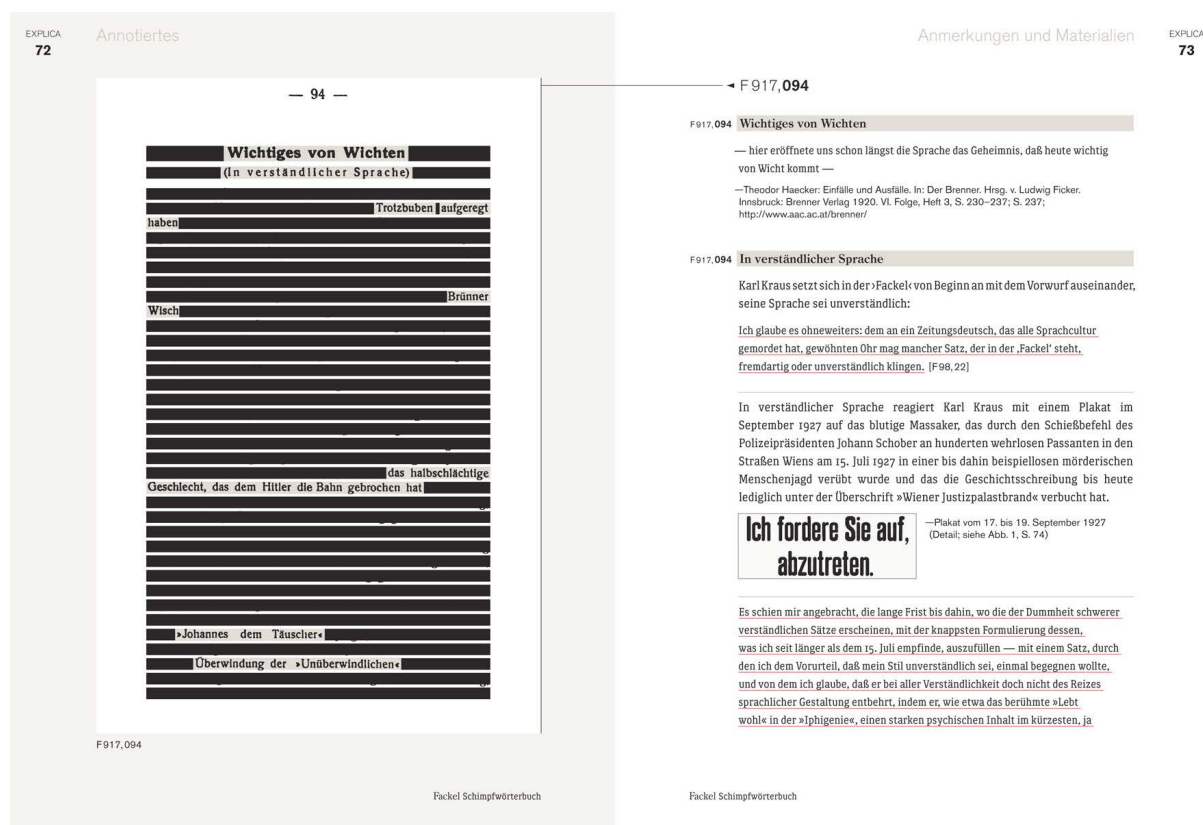


Figure 3: EXPLICA.

The research initiatives concerning the magazine published by Karl Kraus from April 1899 until February 1936 has offered the lexicographers at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna a unique opportunity to study and to document the language of this important writer in great detail. No author of the 19th and 20th centuries has thought or written about the language of his contemporaries in Vienna, Berlin, or Prague as precisely, as continuously and as passionately as Karl Kraus. No other author is showing such a productive and such an effective use of pejorative expressions as Karl Kraus in his satirical and polemical texts in “Die Fackel”.

3 References

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