

Multimodality, Cognitive Poetics, and Genre: Reading Grady Hendrix's novel *Horrorstör*

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Multimodality, Cognitive Poetics, and Genre: Reading Grady Hendrix's novel *Horrorstör*

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Abstract: Quirk Books, the publisher of Grady Hendrix's (2014, *Horrorstör*. Philadelphia: Quirk Books) *Horrorstör*, portray the novel on their website as "a traditional haunted house story" but also mention that it "comes conveniently packaged in the form of a retail catalog". Such description points to two generic foundations: the horror novel, which is manifested primarily through the novel's literary themes and linguistic style, and the retail catalogue, signalled chiefly through the novel's multimodal design features. In this paper I argue that in order to account for *Horrorstör* both as literary experience and as "sly social commentary" (as Quirk books claim), consideration and analysis of genre is vital. The paper subsequently offers a cognitive stylistic approach to multimodal literary genre analysis. In doing so, it presents a reading of the novel as a literary artefact: as fiction and as commodity.

Keywords: genre, multimodal fiction, cognitive poetics, contemporary literature, stylistics

Introduction

Cultural anxiety over the materiality of human selves and the objecthood of artefacts intensified as the twenty-first century approached, with contemporary culture seeming increasingly digitalized and increasingly monetized. Such apprehension dominated debates, perhaps most obviously, in literary culture, with tensions mounting over the supposed "death" of the printed book and the subsequent economic impact for the publishing industry. Many creative writers, however, have responded to these popular fears by adopting literary strategies that reaffirm the novel as a book itself. Pressman calls this the "aesthetics of bookishness" and argues that such novels "exploit the power of the printed page in ways that draw attention to the book as a multimedia format, one informed by and connected to digital technologies" (2009: 465). Hayles (2002, 2008, 2012) and Gibbons (2010, 2012a, 2012b) make similar claims.

Simultaneously, the concept of genre is "enjoying renewed currency in literary discourse" (Duff 2000: 2). According to Duff, in the twenty-first century, genre "shows signs of becoming a general cultural buzzword" (2000: 2). Moreover, genre is also a vital consideration beyond literary studies. Bateman affirms, "Both within and across disciplines we find an increasing reliance and even presupposition that the notion of genre offers a useful way of delimiting areas of concern" (2014: 238). Of these disciplines, linguistics and multimodality studies have been at the forefront, developing rigorous, systematic models for genre analysis. Such models have frequently been employed to excavate non-fictional text types, such as traditional and electronic newspapers (Bateman et al. 2007), textbooks and web pages (Baldry and Thibault 2006; Bateman 2008) and tourist texts (Francesconi 2014; Hiippala 2015), amongst others. Given the historical predominance of the concept of genre in literary studies and the enhanced literary aesthetics of bookishness in contemporaneity, analytical models of genre must be augmented to account for the textual strategies and properties of contemporary novels as multimodal artefacts.

This article advances multimodal and linguistic genre analysis through an exploration of a contemporary work of multimodal fiction, namely *Horrorstör* by Grady Hendrix (2014). The novel's publisher, Quirk Books, portrays the novel on their website as "a traditional haunted house story" but also mention that it "comes conveniently packaged in the form of a retail catalog". Such description points to two generic

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foundations: the horror novel and the retail catalogue. Moreover, the reference to packaging suggests not only bookishness, that is “a serious reflection on the book – and the literary book in particular – through experimentation with the media-specific properties of print” (Pressman 2009: 466). More importantly, it also suggests that the novel’s genre orientations are realised through multimodal means. This article has two important, related outcomes. Firstly, after reviewing models of genre analysis, the article presents an augmented approach. Evidence of the use value of this new enhanced model – a multimodal cognitive poetic account of genre – is demonstrated through its application. Secondly, the analysis works not only as a test bed for the model as methodological approach, it further reveals that a multimodal cognitive poetic account of literary genre elucidates an interpretation of the novel and its related reading experience. Consequently, the article offers a dual-direction enrichment, illuminating literary work through genre analysis and offering insight into how we read genres through literary-linguistic enquiry.

Approaching genre

Genre is, according to Allori, Bateman, and Bhatia, “a key concept” (2014: 1). Hyon (1996) influentially identified three distinct approaches to the study of genre within linguistics. The New Rhetoric School (NRS), focussing primarily on the social purpose of genres and the rhetorical relations employed to achieve that purpose (e. g. Miller 1984, 1994); the ESP school (English for Special Purposes), most interested in genre as texts that can be defined by formal properties and unified by communicative purpose (see Bhatia 1993, 2004; Swales 1990); and the Sydney School, taking a systemic functional linguistic (SFL) approach to connect linguistic structures with social semiotic context (Halliday 1978; Halliday and Hasan 1976, 1989 [1985]). Whilst each approach is interested in the social component of genre, NRS has privileged social activity over linguistic analysis. “Detailed linguistic description of the kind pursued for grammar and semantics”, as Bateman (2008: 188) acknowledges, “was not a central part of this work.” In developing an approach to genre suitable for the analysis of multimodal literature, NRS is consequently less useful since linguistic texture is a vital component of a text type – the novel – that has traditionally signalled its genre predominantly through written language. With recent linguistic studies of genre seeking to include multimodal texts, Hyon’s tripartite division has been eroded somewhat, though it is still possible to observe NRS, ESP, and SFL sympathies. This section of the article reviews three central models of genre and multimodality.

In *Genre Relations*, Martin and Rose (2008) situate their approach within the SFL tradition, though their analyses are mostly concerned with the generic purposes of various forms of writing within school contexts. Guided by Halliday’s work (1989 [1985]), they rely upon a stratal model mapping the relationship between language and social context. The lowest stratum houses the “text in context” in which language is seen to realise certain metafunctions: the interpersonal, ideational, and textual. Next is the “context of situation” where Martin and Rose place the three variables of register: tenor, field, and mode which are seen to map neatly onto the metafunctions. At the highest stratum is “context of culture” where genre is situated. Thus, genre is viewed as a social semiotic realisation in culture and as “a pattern of field, tenor, and mode patterns” (Martin and Rose 2008: 16) at the level of context of situation that emerge from the text in context. There are two central drawbacks to Martin and Rose’s approach. Firstly, attributing linguistic features to metafunctions so definitely is too rigid a system, particularly if an analyst wishes to explore texts with creative compositions and/or atypical social purposes. Secondly, whilst Martin and Rose discuss multimodality (167–180), it is not a central concern and not explicitly accounted for in their stratal model. Their approach consequently runs the risk of homogenising the meaning-making resources of different semiotic modes.

Bhatia’s work on genre is a substantial contribution to the field from within ESP. *Analysing Genre: Language use in professional settings* (1993) has been highly influential, whilst *Worlds of Written Discourse* (2004) further develops Bhatia’s approach into a “multidimensional” and “multi-perspective” model.

The model comprises three spaces: textual, socio-cognitive, and social space. The textual space is concerned with the linguistic construction of a text with analysis focusing on phonology, lexico-grammar, semantics, cohesive features, information structure, and intertextuality. The analysis is extended into socio-cognitive space which features tactical space where genre is located. At this tactical level of discourse as genre, interpretation is considered in relation to socio-cultural context or more specifically, given the ESP foundation, “its institutional or more narrowly professional contexts” (2004: 20). Also housed in socio-cognitive space is professional space which “extends the notion of genre use to relate it to professional practice” (2004: 20), encapsulating professional knowledge. Finally, the third dimension is social space which accounts for context, including discourse participants and social structures that underwrite genres. Bhatia's model, like Martin and Rose's, does not include multimodality. Moreover, its ESP alignment towards professional text types – academic, professional, fundraising – reduces its suitability for analysing contemporary multimodal fiction. There are, however, aspects of Bhatia's model that will prove useful; chiefly, his attention to generic integrity and relatedly intertextuality and interdiscursivity which “refers to more innovative attempts to create various forms of hybrid and relatively novel constructs by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres and practices” (2010: 35). Bhatia (1997, 2004, 2010, 2015) has theorised interdiscursivity to include three processes: embedding, where a genre is “used as a template to give expression to another conventionally distinct form” (1997: 191); bending, in which one genre is adapted into a new genre which serves a different communicative purpose; and mixing, whereby genres are mixed together to form an indistinguishable hybrid. Given that *Horrorstör* is part horror novel, part retail catalogue, interdiscursivity is thus likely to provide useful orientation. Furthermore, Francesconi's (2014) study of multimodal tourist texts demonstrates that the concept of interdiscursivity is useful beyond ESP contexts.

In *Multimodality and Genre*, Bateman (2008) advocates a highly systematic and detailed approach that explicitly considers multimodality.¹ For comparison, Bateman's model is shown diagrammatically alongside Martin and Rose's and Bhatia's models in Figure 1.² Bateman's model divides multimodal texts and analytical process into five levels. This is important, since in Bateman's words, “there are many simultaneously varying dimensions to be considered” (2008: 228) in multimodal documents. In the first step, the analyst must identify the base units that create the GeM (Genre and Multimodality) base. These are the smallest semiotic units found in the text and thus include items such as sentences, icons, headings, and so on. There may also be embedded units present within the base units like, for instance, an emphasised text portion. Once the units in the base layer have been distinguished, the analyst can then attend to the layout where base units are assembled into clusters based on their visual organisation. The rhetorical base seeks to identify the rhetorical relations between content and communicative purpose of each cluster using Rhetorical Structure Theory (from NRS). This layer is the least useful for this article since it neglects linguistic structure as Bateman acknowledges: “we do not describe any detailed *linguistic* analyses” (2008: 110–1; original emphasis). In the navigational base, forms of what Paraboni and van Deemter (2002) call “document deixis” are considered, that is “expressions that explicitly express and support navigation and access operations within a document” (Bateman 2008: 114). Finally, the highest analytical level is the genre base. This is the least developed but seeks to account for the way genre constraints are utilised by producers and interpreted by readers.

As the most rigorous, replicable approach, Bateman's GeM model will be used as the foundation for multimodal genre analysis of *Horrorstör*. Two indispensable enhancements will be added as well as one further revision pertaining to the way genre is understood as a category in itself. These augmentations are outlined in the next section.

¹ His model is also adopted by Hiippala (2016).

² These are my diagrammatic realisations, designed with comparison in mind. Thus, my diagram is influenced by the visual representation of the models in their original expositions, but is not visually self-identical.

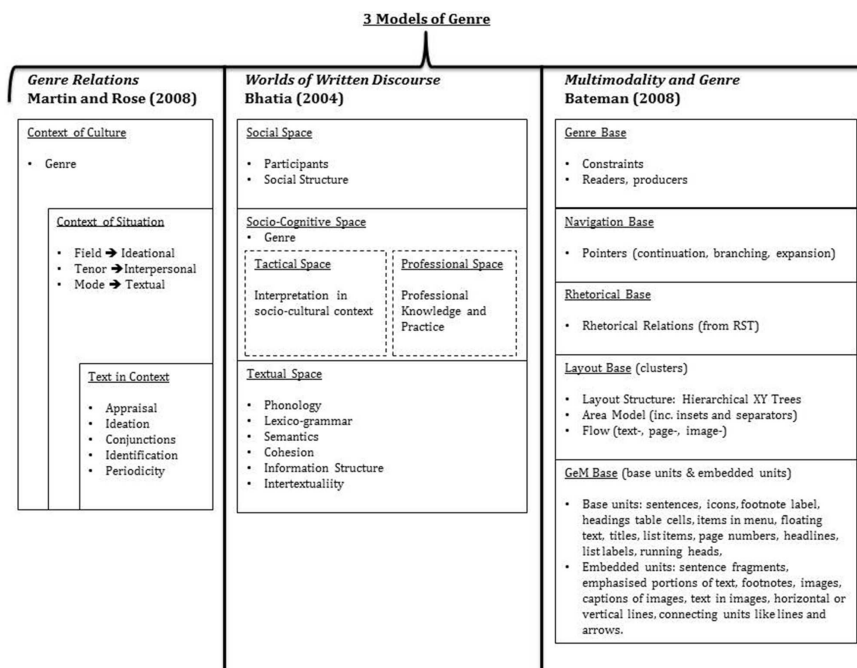


Figure 1: Models of genre for comparison.

Multimodal cognitive poetic account of genre

Two substantial elements are missing from Bateman's model: typographic and linguistic style. Bateman does include typography in the layout base (2008: 117–8). However, his transcription considers type-size and type-face as descriptive features yet does not explicate them in terms of the semiotic meanings they communicate. In terms of linguistic style, as mentioned, Bateman's NRS approach neglects to consider how linguistic structures contribute to stylistic texture and meaning-making. Both typographic and stylistic meaning are crucial to this article's analysis of *Horrorstör*.³ Bateman's GeM model will therefore be augmented by supplementing the rhetorical base with a stylistic base.

Multimodality studies recognises typography as a semiotic resource (van Leeuwen 2005, 2006; Nørgaard 2009; Stöckl 2005, 2009, 2014). Nørgaard suggests three categories of typographic meaning-making: iconic, where the typeface visually resembles its meaning; indexical, where the typeface visually resembles its mode of production; and discursive import, where a typeface associated with one particular media context is imported into a different context. Stöckl (2005) also suggests three strategies: the symbolic, indexical, and iconic. The latter two map neatly onto Nørgaard's identically named categories whilst the symbolic represents type's orthographic purpose to communicate as written language. Crucially, Stöckl also considers how typographic style relates to genre by drawing on Wehde's (2000) conception of "typographische Dispositive". Stöckl (2005: 80–84) argues that typography works on four levels from the micro- level of type-face and -size through a meso- level concerned with clusters and a macro-level which takes in the full textual layout up to para- features relating to material and production. Certain combinations of typographical features across the varying levels may create or conform to

³ The presence of stylistics as a crucial aspect of genre analysis is in keeping with the formative development of genre theory in which Russian formalism is a central root, signalling a "breakthrough" in genre analysis (Duff 2000: 6).

“conventional configurations or patterns of graphic design which mark texts out as belonging to a certain genre” (2014: 290–2). Micro-, meso-, and macrotypographic features will be incorporated into the layout base (consistent with Bateman’s conception), whilst paratypography and triggered iconic, indexical, discursive, or dispositive meanings will be discussed as part of the stylistic base.

Stylistic models of genre are sparse. Recent cognitive poetic accounts have therefore trail-blazed a stylistic approach to literary genre. Steen (2011) sets out, and Gavins (2013) applies, a three plane model for genre analysis attending to context, text, and textual code (language and other modes of communication). These three levels cannot be categorically mapped on to layers in any of the models previously discussed. I therefore suggest distributing Bateman’s less-developed genre base into a genre base and a context base and incorporating aspects of code analysis (modality, language, and register) into the stylistic base. Crucially, stylistic analysis will be text-driven thus the text in question will determine which linguistic features are salient. The new genre base will incorporate aspects of the text relating to genre as organising construct, such as content/themes, generic type (e. g. narration, argumentation), formal structure including generic constraints, and structural cohesion. In comparison, the context base accounts for discourse participants such as producers and readers, function of discourse, spatio-temporal setting, socio-cultural domain, and medium specificity. These two bases consequently account for both genre structures and social context, speaking to the higher levels of analysis in the three models discussed earlier.

Lastly, the preceding review of analytical models raises the issue of how to understand genre itself: Martin and Rose related it to culture; Bhatia placed it in socio-cognitive space; Bateman deployed it as a base for considering constraints and participant knowledge. This article follows Steen (2011) and Gavins (2013) in regarding genre as cognitive construct. This is not entirely radical: Bateman claims that genre allocation is important since on this basis “the user/reader brings appropriate interpretive schemes to bear” (2008: 177) whilst Bhatia’s socio-cognitive angle accounts for “not only the way text is constructed, but also for the way it is interpreted, used, and exploited” (2004: 20). Positioning genre as cognitive construct is in keeping with the development of genre theory in which genre is increasingly understood as neither stable nor static. Indeed, arguing for a sociocognitive perspective, Berkenkotter and Huckin’s definition has become highly influential: “genres are inherently dynamic rhetorical structures that can be manipulated according to the conditions of use [...] genre knowledge is therefore best conceptualized as a form of situated cognition” (1993: 477).

There are two related cognitive conceptions of genre: genre as prototype and genre as schema. Prototypes are conceptual categories (Rosch 1975, 1977, 1978; Rosch and Mervis 1975) that take a radial structure. The mind classifies instances of a category according to whether it is a good central example of that category or whether it is less good and thus peripheral. In this view, novels would sit as stronger or weaker examples of a genre in terms of prototypicality. Thus, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is a central example of horror fiction whilst *Horrorstör*, with its hybrid generic sources, is likely to be situated somewhere on the periphery. It is this approach that Gavins (2013) takes in her study since she is interested in the shared attributes of absurdist literature and how readers classify particular texts in relation to the absurd as prototype category.⁴

Steen (2003, 2011) takes a schema approach in his analysis of love stories.⁵ Schemas are cognitive structures that represent and contain expectations and knowledge of the world. Schemas are dynamic, built up through accrued social knowledge and managed through five processes, summarised by Stockwell (2002: 79–80) as follows:

- knowledge restructuring – the creation of new schemas based on old templates.
- schema preservation – where incoming facts fit existing schematic knowledge and have been encountered previously.
- schema reinforcement – where new facts are new but strengthen and confirm schematic knowledge.

⁴ Fishelov (1993) and Mancing (2000) also discuss genre as prototype.

⁵ Steen uses the term “scenario”. This term is often used interchangeably with “schema”, along with terms such as “frame” or “script” (see Cook 1994: 20).

- schema accretion – where new facts are added to existing schema, enlarging its scope and explanatory range.
- schema disruption – where conceptual deviance offers a potential challenge.
- schema refreshment – where a schema is revised and its membership elements and relations are recast (tuning, defamiliarisation in literature).

We have various forms of schemata, such as self schema, person schema, role schema (e.g. age, sex), and event schema⁶ (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 117–20). An example of the latter is the restaurant schema, which holds information such as our expectations of how restaurants look as well as how to act in them (e.g. ordering food and wine).⁷ Because schemas relate to countless types of experience, literary applications of schema theory are varied.⁸ Nevertheless, Stockwell states: “Literary genres, fictional episodes, imagined characters in narrated situations can all be understood as part of schematised knowledge negotiation” (2002: 78–9). In his study of literariness and deviation, Cook (1994: 15, 181) focuses on three schema categories: world (knowledge of the world), text (knowledge about text-types) and language (knowledge about how language works). Genre schemas are a type of text schema.

Fiske and Taylor concede that, although not self-identical, for “most purposes of social cognition, however, the overlap between schemas and prototypes is most important” (1991: 117). They also highlight the different uses of schema and prototype theory: “categorization research is more concerned with the classification of instances, whilst schema research is more concerned with the application of organized generic prior knowledge to the understanding of new information” (Fiske and Taylor 1991: 116–117). Thus, rather than being competing terms, prototypes and schemas are different yet complementary cognitive constructs. As such, the components of schemata can exhibit prototype effects. Genres therefore are prototypes in the sense that they are cognitive categories of which there are central and peripheral examples. Nevertheless, we can also say that genre schemas exist in which certain attributes such as textual features and narrative structures are expected. The properties of such genre schemas can also be reconsidered in light of new evidence and experience.

These augmentations result in the multimodal cognitive poetic model of genre (shown in Figure 2). The model is hierarchical in that base units form clusters that comprise the layout, layout clusters are the foundation of the text's style, the text's style is navigated by pointers. Taken together, these bases comprise a genre that is, in turn, produced and interpreted in a wider (interpersonal, spatio-temporal, socio-cultural) context. The succeeding analysis applies the model, and demonstrates that recognising genre in cognitive terms enables a better understanding of reading multimodal fiction.

The herein proposed multimodal cognitive poetic model of genre advances on existing paradigms in four central ways. First, the new model enhances layout analysis by including micro-, meso-, and macro-typographic design features. Second, in the place of Bateman's rhetorical base, the multimodal cognitive poetic model features a stylistic base, which attends to linguistic composition and typographic meaning-making, including paratypography. Third, genre is understood as a cognitive construct, and fourth, the new model also considers forms of interdiscursivity as they arise during the course of text-driven analysis.

Analysing multimodal fiction: *Horrorstör*

The most obvious starting point in analysing *Horrorstör* as multimodal genre fiction is to consider the book's peritext (Genette 1997 [1987]): that is, its outer elements. The peritext forms a reader's first encounter

⁶ Event schemas are also referred to as scripts because of the way in which they capture the sequential information of an event. Fiske and Taylor also mention two further categories: Content-free schemas and Comment schemas.

⁷ Stockwell (2003: 255) in fact cites the restaurant event schema as a “classic example”.

⁸ Schema theory has been used in literary analysis to account for how readers create imagined text worlds (Semino 1995), understand Science Fiction (Stockwell 2003), conceptualise and read hypertext fictions (Bell 2014), as well as the way different reading audiences respond to crossover fiction (Walsh 2007).

Multimodal Cognitive Poetic Genre Model
<p><u>Context Base</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants (e.g. producers, readers) • Goals and functions of discourse • Spatio-temporal setting • Socio-cultural domain • Medium and its associated role
<p><u>Genre Base</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content (theme, topic) • Type (narrative, argument, instruction) • Form and Constraint (genre-specific forms and structures) • Structure and Cohesion
<p><u>Navigation Base</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pointers (continuation, branching, expansion)
<p><u>Stylistic Base</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typographic: indexical, iconic, discursive including paratypography, dispositive • Linguistic: Text-driven (e.g. inc. modality, focalisation, language, register)
<p><u>Layout Base (clusters)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layout Structure: Hierarchical XY Trees • Area Model (inc. insets and separators) • Flow (text-, page-, image-) • Microtypography (type face, size, colour) • Mesotypography (alignment, spacing) • Macrotypography (indents, emphasis, image combinations)
<p><u>GeM Base (base units & embedded units)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base units: sentences, icons, footnote label, headings table cells, items in menu, floating text, titles, list items, page numbers, headlines, list labels, running heads, • Embedded units: sentence fragments, emphasised portions of text, footnotes, images, captions of images, text in images, horizontal or vertical lines, connecting units like lines and arrows.

Figure 2: Multimodal cognitive poetic model of genre.

with the book as physical, material object. *Horrorstör* is an unusual size for a novel, measuring 7½ins (19 cm) across and 8¾ins (22.2 cm) in height. This makes the book wider than most novels. Friedlander (2010), for instance, suggests that trade paperbacks are typically sized at 5½ × 8½ins. The book's format, therefore, does not conform to expected proportions of published fiction. Multimodal novels, though, often come in less typical sizes and formats and since *Horrorstör* does have a codex form, its dimensions can be accreted into an existing schema about novels and books.

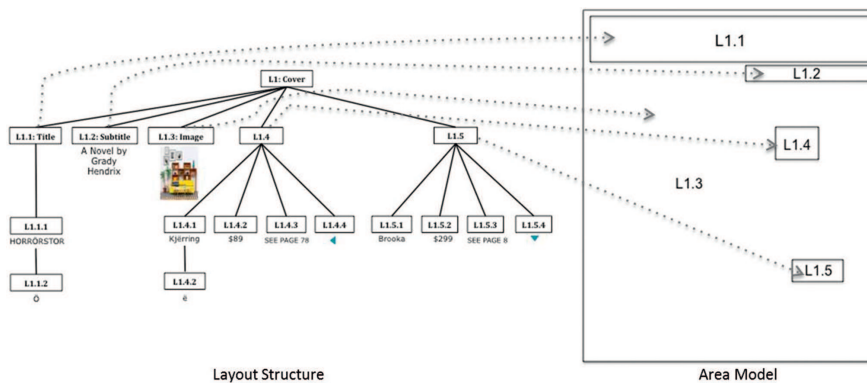
Base and layout analysis

The first task in multimodal cognitive poetic analysis is to identify the base and embedded units. Base analysis of the front cover of *Horrorstör* is shown in Table 1, with embedded units indented.

In a second step (Figure 3), an XY diagram of the layout structure is created, followed by an area model of the document. The front cover of *Horrorstör* is relatively straightforward, though it should be

Table 1: Base and embedded units of *Horrorstör*.

Base and embedded units		
1. HORRORSTÖR	5. Kjerring	9. ◀
2. Ö	6. ë	10. Brooka
3. A Novel by Grady Hendrix	7. \$89	11. \$299
4. Cover Image	8. SEE PAGE 78	12. SEE PAGE 8
		13. ▽

**Figure 3:** XY layout structure and area model for *Horrorstör*.

noted that the cover image (L1.3) occupies the full page with remaining clusters appearing as insets positioned in front. The combination of text and image means that the organising logic of the *Horrorstör* cover is ‘page-flow – a semiotic mode that builds on distinct contributions’ (Bateman 2008: 157) and deserves recognition when dealing with multimodal documents since it enables analysis of the function of and spatial relationships between clusters and modes. All text on the *Horrorstör* cover is realised using the Futura type-face.

A cursory comparison of cover layouts is useful at this point. As can be seen in Figure 4, two small data sets, consisting of four covers each, were used. The first data set comprised four covers from horror novels published in 2014 (the same year as *Horrorstör*) whilst the second featured covers from four furniture catalogues (also 2014).⁹

Looking at the four horror novel covers, it is clear that certain elements are essential: image, title and author. Other elements such as quoted endorsements, descriptors (e. g. “a novella”), and publisher are optional. Whilst the book covers exhibit different area layouts, they all feature an image that occupies the expanse of the cover with textual clusters as insets, matching *Horrorstör*. Turning to the furniture catalogues, the brand name appears to be the only constant element. Moreover, they do not all feature images: *John Lewis Home* uses only text whilst on the *Habitat* cover, text is arranged iconically in the shape of a house. The images in the *Heal’s* and *IKEA* covers are expansive, again with textual elements as insets. Looking at the area models, it is apparent that *Horrorstör* contains the essential elements of the horror fiction covers, but most closely resembles the *IKEA* area model. This is by no means accidental. Thus, the somewhat unusual proportions of the *Horrorstör* cover are more likely informed by its connection with the *IKEA* catalogue, which measures 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins (20.9 cm) across and 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins (22.2 cm) in height (the latter being identical to *Horrorstör*).

⁹ These were selected more-or-less at random. The four novels were chosen alongside *Horrorstör* as the best horror novels of 2014 on a horror fiction fan blog (<http://gingernutsofhorror.com/4/post/2014/12/best-horror-of-2014.html>).

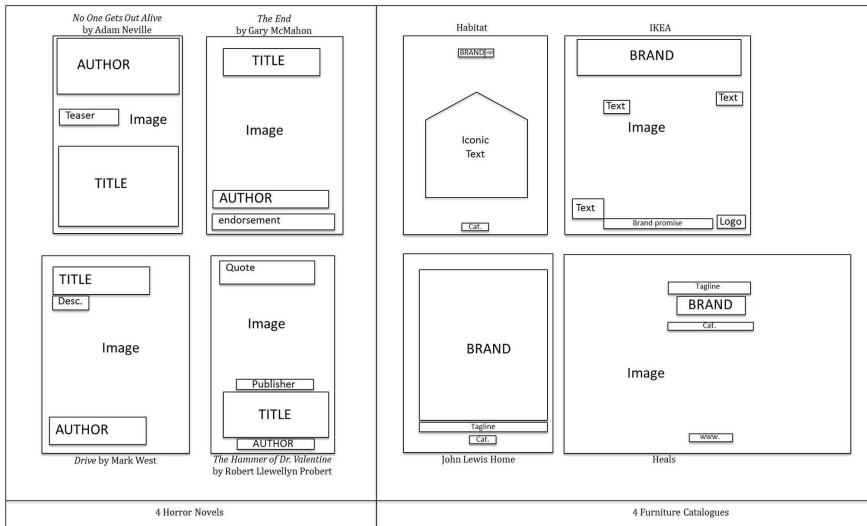


Figure 4: Area model comparisons.

Intertexts

IKEA (including its catalogue) is an important intertext to *Horrorstör*, both in terms of the novel's narrative as well as the design of its front cover. The central location of the novel is Orsk, a knock-off IKEA furniture superstore in Cleveland, Ohio. The store is suffering from strange acts of vandalism – defecated sofas, ripped mattresses, broken mirrors – found when the store opens each morning. A select group of employees stay overnight to investigate, but discover a horrific paranormal force perpetrating the crimes. Hence, the design of *Horrorstör*'s cover is deliberately modelled on IKEA catalogues.

The IKEA catalogue is produced by IKEA Communications AB (ICOM), with approximately nearly 400 million people reading the catalogue each year: “IKEA prints 200 million copies in more than 25 languages and distributes them free in 35 countries” (Bengtsson 2010: 356). Moreover, the catalogue has strong cultural capital: Lewis emphatically asserts that it “is read more widely than the Bible” (2005: 133) and Bengtsson claims it “has a devoted fan base. People jump on the new issue each year with the same excitement as children on Christmas morning” (2010: 357). This matters since it means readers of *Horrorstör* will possess schematic knowledge about the IKEA catalogue.

Horrorstör's cover was designed by Andie Reid and the image, under her direction, was created by Christine Ferrara using “miniature modern” furniture. Ferrara details, on her blog *Call of the Small*, that she was instructed that “the front cover should be a closeup of a showroom-type interior, be well-lit and modern, and employ a blue and yellow accents” (Ferrara 2014). Shown in Figure 5, the correspondences between the IKEA catalogue and *Horrorstör* cover are striking. In both, the title (be it brand or novel) is positioned top-centre. Although the area model comparisons of the four furniture catalogues showed variation, Held found the top-centre title placement typical of magazine covers: “The fundamental ingredient is the typographically constant logo of the magazine which – according to our western reading habits – appears in the upper corner” (2005: 178). The covers both show a room interior and use bold accent colours. Moreover, Ferrara's guiding instructions of “blue and yellow accents” was most likely intended as visual intertext to the colours in the IKEA logo. The base unit clusters on the *Horrorstör* cover also take their cue from the IKEA catalogue. L1.4 and L1.5 are composed of an emboldened title, a price, and two pointers. Moreover, the visual pointers in both texts are coloured to match the accents of the respective cover image.

Horrorstör is not the first copy-cat IKEA design. Kristoffersson highlights the legal case IKEA brought against American company STØR Furnishings International Inc. in 1987 who “basically copied their concept straight off. The stores and catalogs had been plagiarized down to the smallest details” (2014: 24).

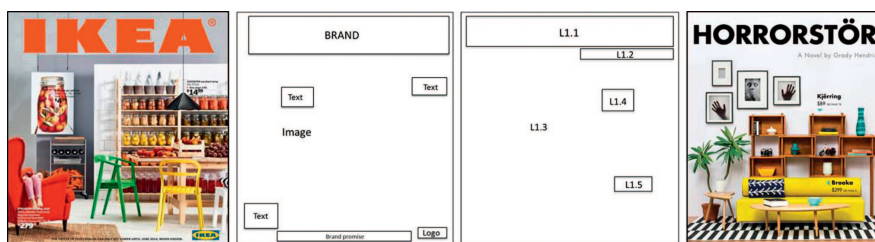


Figure 5: IKEA and *Horrorstör*.

Furthermore, the significance of IKEA's graphic design in branding is evident from the 2009 typography controversy that came to be known online as “verdanagate” (Simon 2010: 82). That is, the company changed its typeface from Futura to Verdana, resulting in public uproar including an online petition that amassed over 5,000 signatures (Rothstein 2009: 7). Tellingly, *Horrorstör* uses Futura. Discussing this decision, designer Andie Reid admitted, “I was very conscious of the existing Ikea style guide and wanted the reader to instantly recognize the reference without reproducing the Ikea brand exactly in order to keep the book within the realm of parody” (personal correspondence, November 10, 2015).

Considering intertextuality, Bhatia states that indicators of intertexts “are powerful instruments for discourse and genre analysts to account for the way in which texts and genres are constructed and interpreted” (2004: 127). The IKEA catalogue provides vital intertext for *Horrorstör*, chiefly signalled through typographic and design features. The IKEA catalogue therefore functions as schematic design template into which the marketing content of *Horrorstör* as literary novel and horror fiction is “embedded” (Bhatia 1997). The combination of type-face, cover elements, colour choice, and layout work to activate readers' schematic knowledge of IKEA catalogues. This is therefore an important text schema available as readers interpret *Horrorstör*.

Stylistic analysis

The preceding discussion has touched upon aspects of the stylistic base, since the type-face (part of microtypography, identified in layout analysis) has a significant role in creating dispositive genre and intertextual connections. The stylistic analysis proper will start with the novel's title, given its prominent position in the upper centre and as the largest piece of text on the cover.

As identified in the base analysis, “HORRORSTÖR” as title features an embedded unit: the special character ö (umlaut). Found in Swedish, here it has an indexical function: to index “Swedishness”. It thus serves as a further trigger of intertextuality, again pointing to the Swedish company and global brand IKEA. Additionally, “HORRORSTÖR” is, of course, a play on words. It is arguably a compound (where two or more words are combined into one). The title is composed of “HORROR” and “STÖR”. The former, “HORROR”, works as a genre descriptor: *Horrorstör* is a horror fiction. The latter, “STÖR”, is not a recognised English word. However, readers can still draw on language schemata in order to interpret “STÖR”. There are two key interpretive frames: phonology and orthography (spelling). “STÖR” is obviously a homophone of “store”. Phonological similarity along with a potential linguistic clipping of the word point to another referent: the word “story”. Thus, the novel's central plot – a tale of horror taking place in a superstore – is captured by the title's linguistic composition. An additional, but perhaps more obscure, linguistic meaning stems from the fact that in Swedish “STÖR” means “interferes” and indeed in the novel, horror is interfering with the store by night.

The generic hybridity encapsulated in the novel's title – that of horror fiction and IKEA store catalogue – is also signaled in the iconography of the text. The black-and-white artwork shown on the walls in the cover image starkly contrast with the bright hues of the yellow settee, and blue cup and vase. There are four hanging picture frames: one empty, two depicting hands pressed against glass and one

featuring a close up face. This headshot – with neck strained in anguish, eyes empty of pupil or iris and with skin seemingly having grown around the place of a mouth – fits neatly with horror film schemas: this person is undead, possessed, or tormented. Moreover, the placement of the pictures on the wall – with the face central and hands either side coupled with the illusion of depth in the pictures of hands pressed against glass – suggests the person is trapped inside or on the other side of the frame.

Lastly in this layer of analysis, it is worth discussing the linguistic text in clusters L1.4 and L1.5. Both contain four base units, with a further embedded unit in L1.4. This is another special character “ë” and thus serves the same function discussed earlier for “ö”. Heading both clusters is an emboldened word (both neologisms), “Kjerring” and “Brooka”, which the accompanying price tags (in dollars) suggest are product names. Actually, whilst IKEA furniture names may sound obscure to English speakers, there is in fact a system (Henley 2008): Swedish place names are given to upholstered furniture, coffee tables, bookshelves, etc.; Norwegian place names for beds, wardrobes and hall furniture; bookcases are named as occupations; and so on. Whilst “Kjerring” and “Brooka” follow no such logic, world schema of IKEA business practices make these easy enough for readers to interpret.

Stylistic analysis demonstrates that the semiotic resources of image, type, and text on the front cover of *Horrorstör* continue the work of the base and layout in signalling the IKEA catalogue as intertext. Moreover, analysis at this level further shows the novel's hybrid genre foundations are signalled multimodally.

Navigating beyond the cover

At the level of navigation, there are two significant features on the front cover of *Horrorstör*. Firstly, the blue arrows offer visual orientation to readers matching the text in clusters L1.4 and L1.5 to the depicted furniture. Both clusters also contain a base unit with imperative construction: “SEE PAGE ...”. These are expansion pointers (Bateman 2008: 271) directing readers to further information at another point in the text. If readers choose to follow these pointers inside the novel, they arrive at pages 8 and 78 respectively, which each feature a drawn image of the furniture item in question along with a short description and some product information. Brooka, on page 8, for instance, is described thusly (Hendrix 2014: 8):

A sofa that's everything you ever dreamed a sofa could be. With memory-form cushions and a high back that delivers you support your neck deserves, **BROOKA** is the relaxing beginning to the end of your day.

AVAILABLE IN FOREST GREEN, AUBERGINE, CARDINAL, AND NIGHT

W 87¾ X D 32¼ × H 34¼

ITEM NUMBER 5124696669

From the perspective of register, there are linguistic features that fit with text schemas of consumer discourse: the presence of second-person address and boulomaic modality (signalled by the lexical verbs “dreamed” and “deserves” and modal auxiliary “could”) encourage wish projection as well as grammatical constructions and typographic emphasis that foreground the product in subject position (most obviously “BROOKA” but also “A sofa” in the opening fragment which is a noun phrase). Such product information is present at the start of every chapter. Furthermore, the piece of furniture in question is then referenced in the narrative of the chapter. These inclusions thus fulfil a priming function. As readers progress through the novel, they learn the strategy and thus expect to encounter the item in the ensuing story.

It is unlikely that readers will follow the cover's expansion pointers in this way since Western reading habits are built on a more linear reading strategy. Instead, readers will begin at the beginning, with the first sentence: “It was dawn, and the zombies were stumbling through the parking lot, streaming toward the massive beige box at the far end” (2014: 9). Linguistically, register features preserve the horror fiction schema that various elements of the cover have activated: the “dawn” setting, noun “zombie” and verb “stumbling” neatly fit a horror fiction semantic field. However, the novel continues (2014: 9):

Later they'd be resurrected by megadoses of Starbucks, but for now they were the barely living dead. Their causes of death differed: hangovers, nightmares, strung out from epic online gaming sessions, circadian rhythms broken by late-night TV, children who couldn't stop crying, neighbors partying till 4 a.m., broken hearts, unpaid bills, roads not taken, sick dogs, deployed daughters, ailing parents, midnight ice cream binges.

Initially, the verb “resurrected” suggests that the horror fiction schema is relevant and to be preserved, though the ensuing noun phrase “megadoses of Starbucks” elicits a repair. That is, readers must revise their previous judgement and instead understand “zombies” as well as the subsequent “barely living dead” metaphorically. Additionally, colloquial phrasing such as “megadoses”, the reference to coffee giant Starbucks, and the list of contemporary cultural “causes” emits a more consumerist register. The opening to *Horrorstör*, then, mixes registers in order to activate a genre schema – horror fiction – in order to then disrupt it, forcing readers to tune the schema to take in this new relation with consumerism.

The plot of *Horrorstör*, in fact, follows a prototypical horror structure – what Carroll (1990: 99–108) calls the “Complex Discovery Plot”. It starts with an onset in which readers find out about the effects of a monster (in *Horrorstör*, the mysterious store vandalism), followed by a discovery (Orsk employees encounter the monsters during a night shift); the horror is then confirmed before a final confrontation that (hopefully) defeats the monster. However, the intermittent product placement at the start of each chapter continuously disrupts the schematic logic of the horror fiction. Moreover, the novel's epilogue considers not only the emotional aftereffects for the surviving characters but their compensation settlement with and from Orsk legal. While the front cover involved genre embedding via reference to the IKEA catalogue as intertext, the style and plot of the narrative take interdiscursivity further through genre mixing (Bhatia 1997). Reading *Horrorstör* then, from the front to the back cover, involves schema refreshment. Readers must interpret the novel as a horror fiction, but one for which IKEA is a vital intertext and in which contemporary consumerist cultural discourse has impinged.

Conversely, just as consumerism violates the space of the horror fiction, horror corrodes the product placements in the novel. As the narrative progresses and the characters interact with the supernatural night terrors in the Orsk store, the products themselves become increasingly more sinister. The “Littabod” of Chapter 15 (2014: 196), for instance, is a torture device. Although it is available in “SNOW BIRCH, NIGHT BIRCH, AND GRAY OAK”, its description is less than pleasant: “Using the power of centrifugal force to cause blackouts and unconsciousness, **LITTABOD** is a ceaseless rotational machine that harnesses the primal forces of nature and turns them against your body. If you're lucky, you'll simply experience vomiting and permanent brain damage.” Again, second-person address is used along with product foregrounding – but there is also an intensity of lexis related to uncomfortable physiological effects (“blackouts”, “unconsciousness”, “vomiting”, “brain damage”). The final sentence is also composed as a conditional, thus creating narrative tension for readers as they read the chapter. Consequently, both horror and consumerist schemas are disrupted and both must be refreshed in light of its relation to the other.

Conclusion: Genre schemas and interdiscursivity

Multimodal cognitive poetic analysis of *Horrorstör* reveals two competing genre schemas at play: horror fiction and retail catalogue. These schemas are triggered through multimodal means: by graphic design, typography, and linguistic style, and through genre embedding in the front cover and mixing in the style of the narrative opening and the continued style and story of the novel generally. Speaking of her own adoption of a cognitive-poetic approach to genre in absurdist literature, Gavins claims: “What this model proposes is a cognitive, context-sensitive and stylistically driven approach to the examination of all genres of discourse; what it offers literary scholarship specifically is a principled means of comprehending the complex interrelationships between writers, readers, a text and its context” (2013: 15). This article builds upon this, applying a rigorous, incremental, multidimensional analytical model that accounts for the

complex interrelationships between semiotic modes as well as how meaning-making resources are distributed across those modes to signal genre attributes.

In this article, the multimodal cognitive poetic model of genre has been applied to a single case study: *Horrorstör*. Nevertheless, the framework can and should be applied in genre analysis to other multimodal fictions. For instance, Mark Z. Danielewski's (2000) *House of Leaves* is also often discussed as a horror fiction; thus it would be beneficial to apply the model in order to reveal the mechanisms by which it aligns itself to such generic foundations. Another fruitful case study would be Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff's (2015) young adult novel *Illuminae: The Illuminae Files_01* which uses multimodality in order to present its narrative as a series of online documents, including email and "Unipedia" (a fictional version of the Wikipedia page). Analysis of literary texts need not be restricted to multimodal printed fiction: born-digital fiction would be worth exploration as would so-called traditional print fictions with hybrid genre foundations, such as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009)¹⁰ by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith. In the case of the latter, the book's cover could be analysed (as with the *Horrorstör* analysis in this article) as well as the novel's register since the text is a mash-up of Austen's original words and Grahame-Smith's inserted zombie narrative. Furthermore, precisely because the multimodal cognitive poetic model of genre builds upon existing frameworks, it can be applied to non-literary texts in order to gain a cognitive understanding of how we interpret the genre of non-fictional text-types.

In *Horrorstör*, the two genre schemas, horror fiction and retail catalogue, are mixed to form an intertextual and interdiscursive product, which intertwines the horror fiction with the (IKEA) retail catalogue. In reading and interpreting *Horrorstör*, then, readers must refresh their schema for horror fiction in order to understand *Horrorstör* as a peripheral, hybrid, member of the horror fiction category. Mixing horror and retail genres, though, is not simply an aesthetic experiment or innovation: it is also, as Quirk books argue on their website, a "sly social commentary", and the recognisability of IKEA corporate branding make it an ideal target for such commentary. Indeed, Grady Hendrix is not alone in his allusions to IKEA: In literature, IKEA is pivotal to the plot of Romain Puerolas' (2014) *The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir who got Trapped in an Ikea Wardrobe* and occupies a central site of consumer commentary in Chuck Palahniuk's (1996) *Fight Club* in which "people used to sit in the bathroom with pornography, now they sit in the bathroom with their IKEA furniture catalogue" (1996: 43); in popular TV, *The Simpsons* features a furniture store called Shøp, indexing IKEA using the Scandinavian vowel; in video art, Guy Ben-Ner filmed his family drama *Stealing Beauty* (2007) in IKEA showrooms (unbeknown to the management); in sculpture Clay Ketter has built new unique items from "billy" bookcases; and in digital art, Koya Abe's project *Digital Art Chapter 3: Display* (1997–2015) is a series of images which mix historical European portrait painting with the consumer displays of IKEA showrooms. Used in these contexts, IKEA represents the pervasiveness of consumer culture.

Ultimately, *Horrorstör*'s genre-mixing results in what Stockwell (1999), in relation to conceptual metaphors, has called "interanimation". As a result of the mix, how readers understand horror fiction as well as how they understand consumer culture is changed: *Horrorstör* recasts consumerism as a horror and fiction as a commodity. Indeed, *Horrorstör* is itself a product designed to sell: The book has been licensed for translation in over a dozen languages, TV rights have been optioned by The Jackal Group, and, in the English language worldwide, has grossed over \$30,000 in sales in all formats.¹¹ Thus, it seems appropriate that the final page of *Horrorstör* is not narrative, but an advert for the ORSK website (2014: 248). It is troubling, though, that – true to the novel's genre-mixing – which genre schema readers should draw on, fiction or consumerism, is unclear: "We never stop. We never sleep. And now we're in your home." *Horrorstör* suggests that both horror and contemporary consumer culture are the stuff of nightmares.

¹⁰ Although *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is not a multimodal novel per se, it does feature 13 illustrations.

¹¹ Information provided by Quirk Books (personal correspondence with Senior Manager Katherine McGuire, January 19, 2016).

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