

VISUAL WRITING:

A critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels,
from a Visual Communication Design perspective



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Certificate of Authorship/Originality



I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

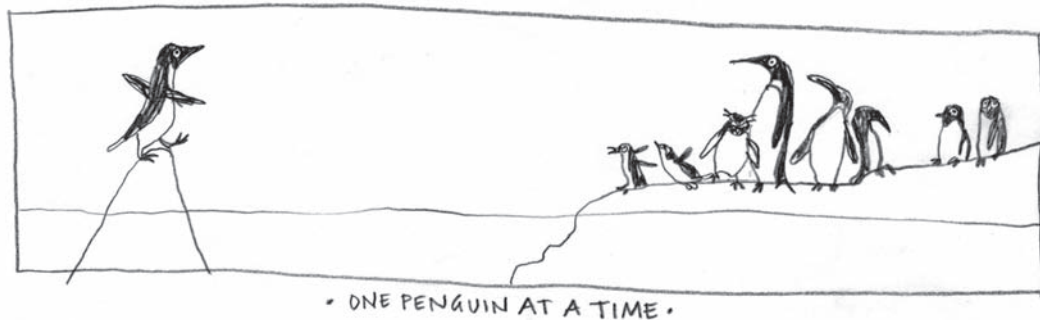
I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Zoë Sadokierski

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Preface

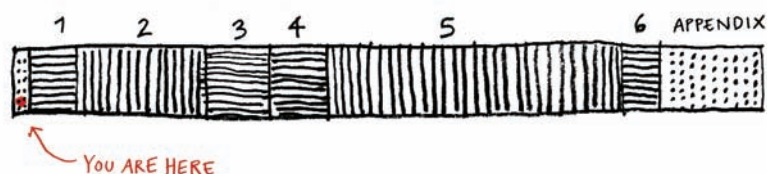


This document breaks two of the presentation guidelines for a doctoral thesis set by the Graduate School at the University of Technology, Sydney. Here, I justify why.

First, the presentation guidelines stipulate that examiners' copies must be printed single sided. This exegesis is designed as a double page document because at times it is important to compare images that appear on facing pages.

Second, producing a list of 'illustrations' is difficult – images within this thesis form a significant part of my argument. Often, images are integrated with written text, rather than separated as 'illustrations'. This will become clear as the argument is established.

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Abstract



This thesis examines *hybrid novels* – novels in which graphic devices like photographs, drawings and experimental typography are integrated into the written text. Within hybrid novels, word and image combine to create a text that is neither purely written, nor purely visual. Although not new, hybrid novels are increasingly appearing in commercial publishing, and increasingly recognised as an insufficiently explained phenomenon by both literary critics and academics.

Book reviews and essays show that readers and critics accustomed to conventional novels can find hybrid novels perplexing. They ask: What are these images? What are they doing in novels? How does one ‘read’ them? These questions point to the need for new approaches to the analysis and critique of hybrid texts, approaches that account for the interplay between words and images. This thesis proposes that Visual Communication Designers – those versed in both the verbal and the visual – offer useful analytical tools and critique for the study of hybrid texts. So the research asks: How could a designer’s particular knowledge of word-image interplay explain the function of graphic devices in hybrid novels?

A preliminary study of fifteen hybrid novels develops: criteria for identifying hybrid novels; a typology of graphic devices in hybrid novels – photographs, illustrative elements, unconventional typesetting, ephemera and diagrams; and a set of analytical tools to critique the effectiveness of the graphic devices in hybrid novels. Then, a primary study uses the analytical tools to critique the graphic devices in three exemplar hybrid novels: Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Steven Hall’s *The Raw Shark Texts* and Dave Egger’s *You Shall Know Our Velocity*.

This thesis is practice-led in that an issue identified through my design practice led to the research, and analytical and critical tools derived from practice are applied as research methods. The research also draws upon a theoretical framework from the emergent field of Visual Studies, where scholars call for the interdisciplinary study of hybrid texts in a critically acute and widely accessible way.

Finally, this thesis is itself a hybrid text; a combination of graphic devices and writing form parts of the argument.

1.

INTRODUCTION



When you live at the mouth of a river emptying into the sea, you never know if you are swimming in the river or an ocean. All you know is that the water is brackish.

— GEOFF HUTH, www.dbqp.blogspot.com —

IN THIS CHAPTER, I INTRODUCE MYSELF AS A VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGNER, investigating a phenomenon identified through my practice – novels with images printed onto their pages. I describe these novels as unconventional and insufficiently explained. I propose that Visual Communication Designers, with their distinct knowledge of word-image interplay, are well positioned to explain how the graphic images in these novels work.

The chapter explicitly describes the topic, aims and research questions for this thesis. In addition, I explain that the thesis is designed as a ‘hybrid text’.

Section One: Motivation

Identifying an insufficiently explained phenomenon, in practice

While working as an in-house book designer, a publisher approached me with a small pile of curious novels. On the pages of these books, alien images lurk within the written text: spindly line drawings, old magazine advertisements, blurry photographs, editing marks and strange typesetting. These images appear alien because conventionally, the novel is a purely written literary form.¹ Conventional novels look like this:



Some examples of the novels presented to me look like this:



1 For discussions on illustrations in early novels, see Chapter Two.

> Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, >> Daniel Mason, *The Piano Tuner*, >>> Arundathi Roy, *The God of Small Things*

> Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, >> Dave Eggers, *You Shall Know Our Velocity*, >>> Steven Hall, *The Raw Shark Texts*

For readers accustomed to word-only novels, happening upon unexpected images can be perplexing. What are these ‘things’? What are they doing in novels? How does one ‘read’ them? The puzzled publisher brought these unusual novels to me because within the publishing house, a designer – who works closely with images – seemed most capable of explaining the appearance of unexpected images on the pages of novels. As a designer, these books intrigued rather than perplexed me: by combining words and images to narrate their stories, it seemed to me that these writers are working in a *designerly* way.

I started collecting as many novels with images on the pages as I could find. My collection included well-known and up-and-coming authors alike. Examining examples discovered early in the research, I recognised these books are what Semioticians call ‘multi-modal’ texts: the text is composed by a verbal mode (words) and a visual mode (images).² However, I prefer the term ‘hybrid’ to ‘multi-modal’. ‘Multi-modal’ implies word and image coexist side by side, in their original modes. ‘Hybrid’, on the other hand, implies word and image breed to produce a new creature. This thesis argues that word and image can combine to form a kind of reading experience that is neither purely verbal, nor purely visual. So, I call these *hybrid* novels.³

It is worth noting that although, at a glance, hybrid novels look similar to more familiar hybrid types – such as picture books, graphic novels or artists’ books – they are clearly categorised as novels. These hybrid books are labelled as novels by the publisher and are shelved as novels in bookstores.⁴ This is important to emphasize because it reveals these books are not a new type of literature, or a new fictional sub-genre.⁵ Rather, they demonstrate a shift in the conventions of the novel – writers are composing their stories in both words and images. See Appendix B for an explanation of other, similar hybrid books that are not novels.

Conventions of the novel, expectations of the reader

A definitive definition of ‘the novel’ does not exist. A generalised definition describes the contemporary novel as: an extended (*in contrast to a short story, generally forty-thousand words*

2 For discussions about the term multi-modal, see: Kress 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen 1996; Machin 2007.

3 Within literary studies, ‘hybrid novel’ is sometimes used to describe a work that crosses genres, for instance blending detective fiction and fantasy. It also occasionally appears in relation to artists’ books and comic books: see www.hybridbook.org. I use it very specifically here to describe novels with graphic devices integrated into the primary text.

4 Publishers categorise books according to popular genres, such as ‘novel’, ‘travel’, ‘biography’ or ‘history’. This label appears on the imprint page and often on the back cover. Booksellers categorise books by shelving them in these same popular genres, although books that slip between genres can often end up on ‘gift tables’ or special sections in a bookstore. Over the course of the research, I constantly observed where these novels were shelved in bookstores. Unless they were on a ‘best-seller’ or promotional stand, they were always shelved with fiction, as novels.

5 Novels are, collectively, a literary genre. This genre is divided into sub-genres, such as historical fiction, crime fiction, magical-realism, chick-lit. Not only were these novels located in the general fiction section, they were found through almost all sub-genre sections, where bookstores sub-divided their fiction.

or more) fictional (*in contrast to nonfiction*) work written in prose (*in contrast to verse*), usually in the form of a story (*there are characters and events*).

The novel is a literary *genre*. Due to the slipperiness of the term, I am cautious of defining genre,⁶ but this definition raises several points worth discussing:

A genre is conceived as a set of constitutive conventions and codes, altering from age to age, but shared by a kind of implicit contract between writer and reader ... In the reader, these conventions generate a set of expectations, which may be controverted rather than satisfied, but enable the reader to make the work intelligible. (Abrams 1985: 109-10)

The ideas of *conventions* and *expectations* are paramount here; literary conventions result in certain expectations from the reader. This is described as a *contract*, between author and reader. For instance, while biographies or memoirs are expected to be ‘true’ accounts of real lives, fiction is expected to describe imaginary people and events. If conventions are broken, readers can feel perplexed, or even angry. When bestselling memoirs like James Frey’s *A Million Little Pieces* and Norma Khouri’s *Forbidden Love* were exposed as more fabrication than autobiography, the authors and their publishers found themselves in the eye of an angry media storm. Readers felt betrayed because the contract they entered with the author was exposed as false.

Although less scandalous than ‘fictional-memoirs’, the addition of images on the pages of novels is unconventional, and presents a breach in the contract between author and reader.⁷ If we recognise that *novels* are conventionally a linguistic literary genre, it is easy to understand why *hybrid novels* can be perplexing to readers. Images on the pages of novels appear alien because they are an unfamiliar *type* of image to a literary reader.

The publisher is not alone in feeling perplexed by hybrid novels. Reviews and essays in newspapers, magazines and online sites demonstrate a growing curiosity around the phenomenon. Over the course of the research, the publication of hybrid novels has increased and so has interest from both popular media and scholars. However, these articles generally lack scholarly analysis, particularly from a design perspective. A handful of critical articles written about hybrid novels will be discussed where appropriate throughout the thesis. These

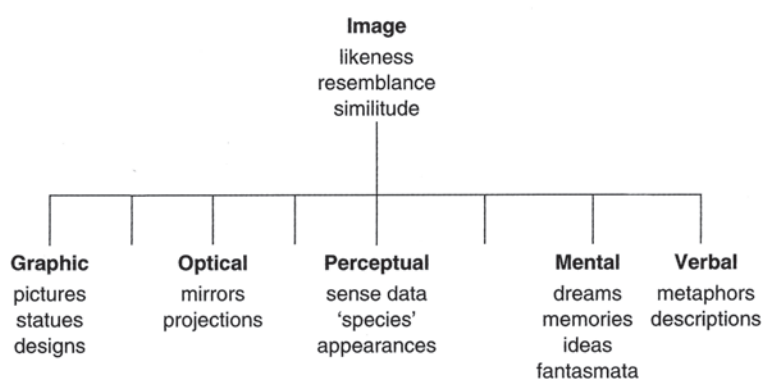
⁶ Literary and film theorist Robert Stam explains the issues around defining ‘genre’: “A number of perennial doubts plague genre theory. Are genres really ‘out there’ in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural?” (Stam 2000) See Sutherland (2006) for a well-written account of literary genres and sub-genres.

⁷ Images also frequently appear on the pages of the emerging genre ‘creative non-fiction’ – this thesis may be valuable to researchers who study the narrative techniques of creative non-fiction writers, as discussed in Chapter Six.

short articles and essays confirm hybrid novels are a relevant and timely object of study, but do not sufficiently explain how the graphic devices function as part of the text. I am aware of four postgraduate students from Australia, the UK and the USA currently researching around this area – two are from literary studies, one from library studies and one from communication studies. None attempt to critique graphic devices from a design perspective.⁸

The problem with 'images'

Up front, the term 'image' must be carefully defined. Theorist W.J.T. Mitchell's 'family of images' succinctly illustrates that there is no single, simple answer to the question 'what is an image?':



From: Mitchell, W.J.T. 1986,
Iconology: Image, Text and Ideology,
University of Chicago Press,
Chicago and London.

In Mitchell's diagram, graphic images reside at one end of the spectrum, and verbal images at the other. Within literary discourse an image is constructed verbally; descriptive language evokes mental images in the mind of the reader. Conventionally, images in novels are mental representations conjured while reading; images in novels are conventionally drawn in the mind of the reader, not on the page of the book. Reading prose, an image appears gradually like a chemically developed photograph, word upon word, sentence upon sentence, until the image forms clearly in the mind of the reader:

The slow ceiling fan sliced the thick, frightened air into an unending spiral that spun slowly to the floor like the peeled skin of an endless potato.

— Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things*

In contrast, within design discourse, an image is a graphic representation produced on a surface

⁸ These postgraduate researchers have contacted me through my research blog, active since August 15, 2006: <www.zoesadokierski.blogspot.com>. Two of these researchers – Clare Snowball, a PhD candidate at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Australia <www.alia.org.au/~csnow/research/index.html> and Greg Stevenson, who wrote his MA thesis at London College of Communication – were generous with their research; we exchanged many emails and posts on each other's blogs. Another researcher, Jane Sisley from Australian National University in Canberra sent me a copy of her honours thesis which quotes from my blog and article in *Heat* magazine. (Sadokierski 2007)

– a photograph, a drawing, a projection, a shape scratched in dirt. The immediacy of a graphic printed on the page enables readers “to quickly and intuitively spot relationships—between here and there, this and that, words and gestures, ideas and expressions.” (Stephens 1998:63)



Zoë Sadokierski, 2008

Verbal images and graphic images are deciphered using difference in perceptual modes – the human brain perceives language and images in different ways:

To perceive things such as trees and buildings through images delivered to the eye, the brain uses wholeness, simultaneity, and synthesis. To ferret out the meaning of alphabetic writing, the brain relies instead on sequence, analysis and abstraction.⁹ (Shlain 1998:4)

Therefore, when discussing how images work, it is essential to specify exactly what kind of image we mean. To clarify, this thesis focuses on *graphic* images. Specifically, the images printed on the pages of novels are referred to as *graphic devices* – the term *device* implies these images perform particular functions in the text. Chapter Two distinguishes between conventional and unconventional graphic elements in novels, and develops a typology of unconventional graphic devices.

So, the *phenomenon of study* is a shift in literary practice toward hybrid narratives –

9 Reading words requires the eye and the brain to move in a linear, sequential manner – letters form words, words form sentences, sentences form paragraphs, and so on. Shlain describes reading as a reductive ‘one-at-a-time’ process: “Comprehension depends on the sentence’s syntax, the particular horizontal sequence in which its grammatical elements appear. The use of analysis to break each sentence down into its component words, or each word down into its component letters, is a prime example of *reductionism*. This process occurs at a speed so rapid that it is below awareness. An alphabet by definition consists of fewer than thirty meaningless symbols that do not represent the images of anything in particular; a feature that makes them *abstract*. Although some groupings of words can be grasped in an *all-at-once manner*, in the main, the comprehension of written words emerges in a *one-at-a-time* fashion.” (Shlain: 4-5, his emphasis) Perceiving images, on the other hand, requires the eye and the brain to work in a holistic, synthesising, ‘all-at-once’ manner. “Images approximate reality: they are *concrete*. The brain simultaneously perceives all parts of the *whole* integrating the parts *synthetically* into a gestalt. The majority of images are perceived in an *all-at-once manner*.” (Shlain: 4)

writers composing novels using a combination of words and images. The *objects of study* are hybrid novels – in which words and images are grafted together to create the primary text.

The next section discusses how this investigation is framed as design research.

Section Two: Positioning the research

The potential for the ‘distinct knowledge’ of Visual Communication Design to explain graphic devices in hybrid novels

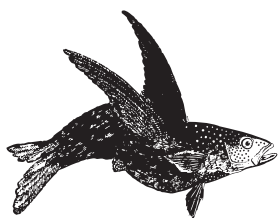
Although this research investigates a phenomenon occurring in literary practice, it is framed as design research. Early on, it became apparent that the overwhelming majority of these hybrid novels were not the result of collaborations between writers and designers. Instead of collaborating with designers, authors are writing in a designerly way – either as the image-maker or in the capacity of art director.¹⁰ Therefore, this phenomenon does not offer a new space for the design practitioner to enter.¹¹ It is a space in which authors borrow rhetorical techniques from designers, creating stories with both word and image. Yet because authors are working in a manner unfamiliar to literary studies, analysis of this phenomenon benefits from a design perspective; hybrid narratives are unconventional for literary studies, but not for design.

To support this claim, I point to appeals for analysis of hybrid narratives to be conducted by those literate in both words and images. Writer and academic David Sornig describes a student submitting a writing assignment accompanied by a series of photographs, despite Sornig discouraging the inclusion of images at draft stage. Although Sornig felt the piece was “somehow enhanced by the photos” he did not feel qualified to assess their inclusion: “nowhere could I find any sense that I had the scope or expertise to judge the quality of the images and their contribution to the meaning of the text.” (Sornig 2004) Margo Hammond, book editor of the *St Petersburg Times*,¹² identifies the issue of literary critics not knowing how to address images. She refers to hybrid books as unique literary forms, neither

10 Designers often produce their own images, but may also commission photographers, illustrators, calligraphers or other specialists to produce images. In these situations, the designer ‘art directs’ the commissioned image-maker, according to a brief. As discussed later, not all novelist are producing these graphic devices themselves, but where they are not, they are commissioning others according to a specific brief, like an art director.

11 This was a disappointing discovery for me – as a book designer, I had hoped this research would expose a space in practice where designers were rewarded with more creative license. Unless designers themselves become authors, it is unlikely an author is willing to share his or her creative process. See Rick Poynor’s article in *Eye* magazine for a discussion on this. (Poynor 2003a)

12 *The St Petersburg Times* of Florida, USA.



‘fish nor fowl’, which proves problematic for critics with a primarily linguistic background:

[I]t is the text that is usually examined most closely, with commentary on the artwork brought in as an afterthought. What should be considered, it seems to me, is the interplay between the two art forms, which lies at the heart of why these works differ from any other. (Hammond & Heltzel 2004)

The way to question hybrid literature, then, is around the *interplay* between word and image. It is not a matter of asking ‘what do these images mean?’ but ‘how do these images function as part of the text?’ Hammond suggests those versed in both verbal and visual communication should come forward: “As our society gets more and more visually sophisticated, we need to seek out those who can understand, analyze, and translate for us that interplay.” (ibid)

Understanding and analysing the interplay between word and image is fundamental to Visual Communication Design. Translating that understanding is more problematic. This thesis analyses an insufficiently explained literary phenomenon from a design perspective, and translates it to a broad audience.



Design is a relatively young practice, and younger still as a field of scholarly enquiry. As such, debates about what design research is, or could be, dominate much design scholarship. Helen Box provides a thorough summary of various arguments in the ‘design research debate’ in her PhD thesis, stating the central issue about scholarly design research is: “should design adopt research practices from other more established disciplines (and if so which ones, and to what extent), or assert its own distinctive research.” (2007:9)

Theorists have been plotting a field of design scholarship that claims design is a unique way of knowing and making since the last decades of the twentieth-century. The boundaries of this field are still sketchy, but increasingly, it is recognised as sovereign territory. In his book *Designerly Ways of Knowing* (2006), Nigel Cross argues for recognition of Design as a distinct and important discipline. Cross borrows Bruce Archer’s description of ‘design with a capital D’ to distinguish the Design discipline from design practice or artefacts.¹³ Cross proposes that, in addition to sciences and humanities, design is a third way of knowing the

¹³ Archer’s 1979 report for the London Royal College of Art states that as a discipline, Design intends to articulate: “the collected experience of the material culture, and the collected body of experience, skill and understanding embodied in the arts of planning, inventing, making and doing”. (Archer in Cross 2006:1)

world, a ‘third culture’. Again, borrowing from Archer’s report, Cross quotes: “There are things to know, ways of knowing them, and ways of finding out about them that are specific to the design area.”(2006: 5) Cross concedes that even a ‘three culture’ view of human knowledge is limiting – it could be argued that there are many other ways of knowing – but suggests that contrasting design with the more established disciplines of the sciences and humanities is a useful way to start articulating what is unique about Design. What is it that Design knows or does that is different from other ways of knowing?

Recent discussions consider how design *practice* could inform and expand this territory: it is recognised that practitioners might add a perspective to design research that includes the process of creation – *how* things mean, or affect interpretation. By conducting scholarly research, practitioners could expand the design discourse by offering insights into designerly ways of researching. Alongside borrowing methods and language from other disciplines, design could adapt methods and language from its own practice: how could tacit knowledge and methods (strategies to reveal insights) from design practice inform scholarly design research? Practitioner-research does not challenge the importance of conventional scholarly research, but aims to extend it. As an emergent field of scholarship, design research methods are also emergent – practice-led approaches to discourse are timely.

Designerly ways of knowing, or, the ‘peculiar value’ of Visual Communication design

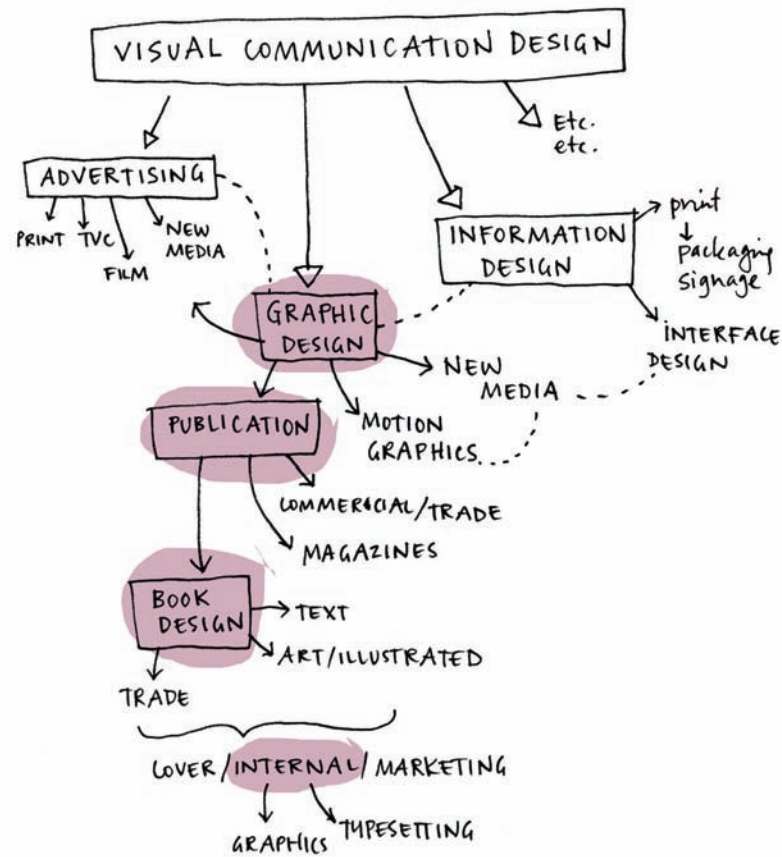
Within this thesis, the terms ‘design’ and ‘designer’ specifically refer to Visual Communication Design.¹⁴ Design theorist Jorge Frascara makes a strong argument for the use of ‘visual communication design’ as a label for this discipline:

The three words put together, ‘visual communication design,’ overflow the sum of their individual meanings to become the name of a profession ... visual communication design, seen as an activity, is the action of conceiving, programming, projecting and realizing visual communications that are usually produced through industrial means and are aimed at broadcasting specific messages to specific sectors of the public. This is done with a view toward having an impact on the public’s knowledge, attitudes, or behavior in an intended direction. (Frascara 2004: 2)

The rough diagram below shows Visual Communications Design as I see it – a vast network of design practices. Highlighted is the area this thesis focuses on, print design, and most

¹⁴ Despite occasionally being used interchangeably, the terms ‘visual communications design’ and ‘graphic design’ are not the same. Graphic design, like advertising, is one potential strand of Visual Communication Design – see the diagram following.

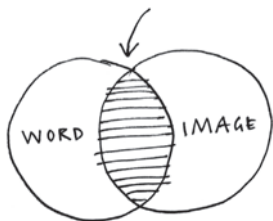
specifically, book design:



Design historians Paul Jobling and David Crowley state: “[Visual Communication Design] is not just a question of presenting pictures in isolation but more a means of conveying ideas through the juxtaposition or integration of word and image into a holistic entity.” (1996: 3) Visual Communication Design practice grafts word and image into hybrid texts. Wendie Wulff claims this bilingual knowledge of both word and image puts designers in a unique position to analyse and explain hybrid texts:

It is possible that ... designers have an advantage in these situations. Everybody learns to communicate with words, both orally and in writing, while most people—unless they study design or art—are not able to communicate effectively with visual representations.

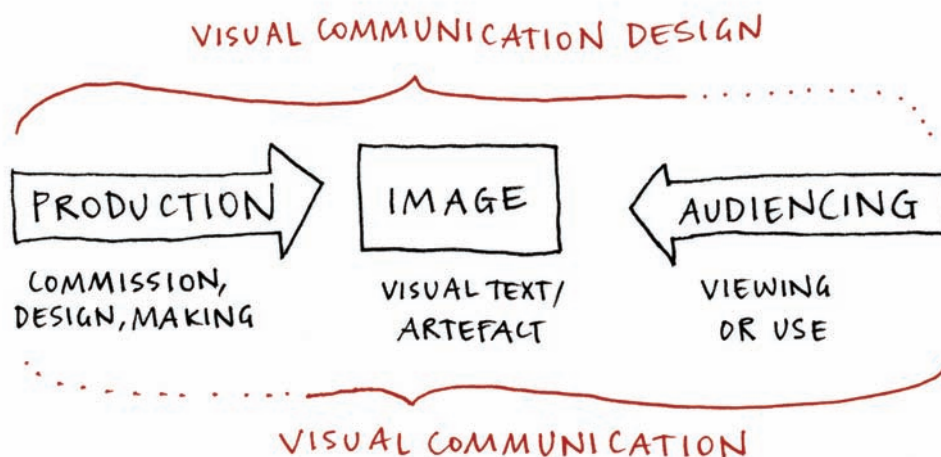
(Wulff 1990 :9)



Box states the ‘peculiar value’ of Visual Communication is that it can communicate something that could not otherwise be communicated. This thesis focuses on the aspect of Visual Communication Design that offers a unique perspective on word-image interplay.

Questions design can answer

A distinction must be drawn between Visual Communication and Visual Communication *Design*. Chapter Three discusses growing interest in studying visual communication in the humanities/social sciences, but it is important to stress that this is a different activity than studying visual communications in design. The fundamental difference is the perspective of the inquiry:



Visual scholar Gillian Rose identifies three sites where the ‘meanings’ of an image (or set of images) are formed: in its production, the image itself, and its audiencing.¹⁵ (2007: 26)

Social science and cultural theory primarily analyse images according to their ‘audiencing’, developing theories about how we read, and what images mean in particular contexts. However, this thesis approaches images from a different angle – with a unique understanding of image production, from the perspective of the *designer*. Chapter Four explores the value of this practitioner perspective in greater detail. For now, it is sufficient to establish that design process is generally ‘invisible’ to non-designers – although design artefacts/outcomes are highly visible, the process of creation is, to most people, a mystery. Design is a process that starts in the mind of the designer, on the pages of the sketchbook, in the privacy of the studio. This thesis aims to expose the kind of thinking – the distinct knowledge – of a designer, first to illuminate understanding of hybrid novels, and second to show the value of designerly thinking in scholarly research.

This thesis asks questions about visual communication that a designer can answer: where a humanities/social science inquiry might ask what graphic devices *mean*, a designer asks how graphic devices *work*.

¹⁵ The term ‘audiencing’ sounds awkward to me, but it encompasses the activities of ‘reading’, ‘viewing’ and ‘interpreting’, and is therefore appropriate to the thesis.

Section Three: Aims, research questions and overview

To reiterate, this thesis examines *a shift in literary practice* – writers narrating with both words and graphic devices, to produce *hybrid novels*. These hybrid novels can be perplexing to readers accustomed to the conventions of word-only novels, but not to design. The thesis has three primary aims:

First, to investigate the phenomenon of hybrid novels from a design perspective:

How would design describe the graphic devices in hybrid novels, or, *what are these things?*

How could design explain their function within the text, or, *what are they doing in novels?*

Second, to offer strategies for critiquing graphic devices in hybrid novels:

What strategies, or analytical tools, from design practice could be used to critique the graphic devices in hybrid novels?

In an article titled ‘Down with Innovation’ in *I.D. Magazine*, design writer Rick Poynor discusses the rise of ‘design thinkers and innovation experts’ who promote design as a business tool by asserting the old adage that ‘good design is good business’. Poynor is interested in moving past this limited view of design, and asks: “what else might good design be?” (Poynor 2008) In this thesis, I ask: what else might design research be? By demonstrating how design can offer critical analysis of a literary phenomenon – through research methods and findings – this thesis shows the potential for practice-led strategies to inform scholarly research.

Third, responding to the demand for visual scholarship that is ‘critically acute and widely accessible’ this thesis aims to present an argument *about* visual communication design, *through* visual communication design. Central to this thesis is the notion that graphic devices communicate; graphic images and typography can supplement verbal arguments, but they can also be powerful persuasive and argumentative tools in themselves. Here, the presentation of the thesis is part of the argument: “visual form is a form of knowledge. It is a means of encapsulating ideas and, indeed, some ideas are expressed more powerfully through the visual medium than via any other form of communication.” (Swann 2002)

I do not claim this is an original approach. Many fine examples of visual writing exist, but much writing on design and visual culture remains hauntingly devoid of visual argu-

ments.¹⁶ It would be counter intuitive for a thesis about breaking conventions to present a conventional academic thesis. So, this thesis address the question of what else design research might be from a different angle:

How could a *design* thesis be most effectively presented?

Chapter overview

Chapter Two: *Preliminary Study*

Section One uses Gerard Genette's paratextual theory to explain that graphic devices are conventionally part of the supplementary 'frame' of a novel. Although useful, paratextual theory is limited in its account of 'nonverbal' devices, so I expand it from a design perspective. Understanding the conventions of graphic devices in novels allows me to claim that the graphic devices in hybrid novels are unconventional, and therefore worthy of scholarly analysis. *Section Two* develops criteria for identifying exemplar hybrid novels, then analyses fifteen exemplars, describing how the graphic devices are integral, rather than supplementary, to the primary text. *Section Three* examines the claim by some critics that graphic devices in hybrid novels are 'gimmickry', and argues this reaction stems largely from a lack of understanding about how graphic devices work.

Chapter Three: *Contextual Review – conversations about the bigger picture*

Drawing from the interdisciplinary field of Visual Studies, a theoretical framework for the thesis is established using three key ideas from authoritative visual scholar W.J.T. Mitchell: that images have unique ways of communicating that are not reducible to words; that all texts are hybrid texts; and that visual scholarship should be presented in a manner that is open and conversational, to be accessible to the range of disciplines that deal with hybrid texts.

Chapter Four: *Developing analytical tools to critique graphic devices in hybrid novels*

This chapter reports on the practice-led approach used to develop a set of analytical tools,

¹⁶ Three examples of academic publications that integrate graphic devices in innovative ways are: James Elkins' *Visual Studies: A skeptical introduction* (Routledge 2003); William Garrett-Petts and Donald Lawrence's *PhotoGraphic Encounters: The edges and edginess of reading prose pictures and visual fictions* (The University of Alberta Press 2000); and Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's *The Medium is the Massage* (Penguin 1967). Design publications are often hybrid texts, though occasionally the visual devices can overwhelm or distract from the written argument. In this thesis, I use graphic devices as part of the argument, but am conscious of not producing a hyperactive surface that distracts the reader from the argument.

and presents these tools. This chapter presents my approach to practice-led research, as used in this thesis.

Chapter Five: *Primary Study of three exemplary hybrid novels*

Using the analytical tools developed in Chapter Four, I critique the graphic devices in three exemplary hybrid novels: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* and Dave Eggers' *You Shall Know Our Velocity*. The critique illuminates ways in which graphic devices 'work' – how they function as part of the primary text.

Chapter Six: *Conclusion*

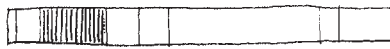
This chapter summarises the research aims, analytical methods and findings of the thesis, and points to further implications of the research – for Visual Studies and Design research, for literary and design practice.



Finally, unless attributed otherwise, all graphic devices that appear on the pages of this thesis were produced for this thesis. My notes and diagrams appear handwritten, **LIKE THIS.**

2.

PRELIMINARY STUDY



Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, ‘and what is the use of a book,’ thought Alice ‘without pictures...?’

— LEWIS CARROLL, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* —

Design is where literature manifests physical form.

— KENNETH FITZGERALD, 2005 —

SECTION ONE INTRODUCES LITERARY SCHOLAR GÉRARD GENETTE’S THEORY OF paratext to discuss the conventions of word-image interplay in novels. Paratextual theory explains that graphic devices in novels are conventionally supplementary – they are ‘thresholds to interpretation’ that support, but are not part of, the primary written text. However, as a literary specialist, Genette admits his account of graphic devices is limited. Therefore I expand paratextual theory from a design perspective, introducing the term ‘articulate package’. Understanding that graphic devices are conventionally supplementary is important. This thesis argues hybrid novels are unconventional because the graphic devices are integral to the primary text.

Section Two develops criteria for identifying exemplar hybrid novels, and describes the process of collecting a set of hybrid novels to form the base of the research. An analysis of fifteen hybrid novels in which graphic devices are *integral*, rather than supplementary, to the primary text leads to a typology of graphic devices.

Section Three discusses the dismissal of graphic devices by some literary critics as unnecessary *gimmicks*, and establishes the need for tools to critically analyse graphic devices to disprove these claims.

Section One:

Conventions of word-image interplay in novels – graphic devices as supplementary additions

Despite being an authoritative figure in his native France, literary theorist Gérard Genette is less well known in the Anglophone world than his contemporaries such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida or Jacques Lacan. Where his translated work is known, it has been influential.¹ Genette’s writing has not previously been applied to design research,² but his theory of

1 Genette works across the fields of structuralism, rhetoric, semiotics, postmodern poetics, mimology, transtextuality and narratology. The *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory* calls him “the most important French literary theorist after Roland Barthes.” A section from his multi-volume major work *Figures I-III*, translated in 1979 as *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, significantly influenced contemporary narrative theory. However, the scholarly volumes that followed remained untranslated until recently, first appearing in the late 1990s, and then often only as sections in anthologies and readers. In his introduction to *Paratexts*, Richard Macksey attributes this relative neglect to a combination of the “vagaries of publishing activity” and Genette’s “stubborn refusal to be categorised.” (xii–xiii)

2 The single reference to paratext in design discourse I located was in Sean Hall’s *This Means This, That Mean That* (2007: 112) which defines paratext but does not elaborate or expand Genette’s limited description of graphic elements. Since the translation of *Paratexts* into English, neighbouring scholarly fields have taken Genette writing as the starting point for new research: in textual and literary studies (Herman 1998; Sherman 2007; Steinlight 2006; Vanderborg 2001); in media and film studies (Gray 2004); in Biblical studies (Phillips 2006) and computer science/archiving (Dalgaard 2001).

paratext provides a useful way to explain conventional word-image interplay in novels: graphic elements are supplementary to the primary written text, but act as thresholds to interpretation. Understanding the conventions of word-image interplay in novels allows for discussion of the unconventional interplay that makes hybrid novels unique, and worthy of study.

Primary text versus paratext

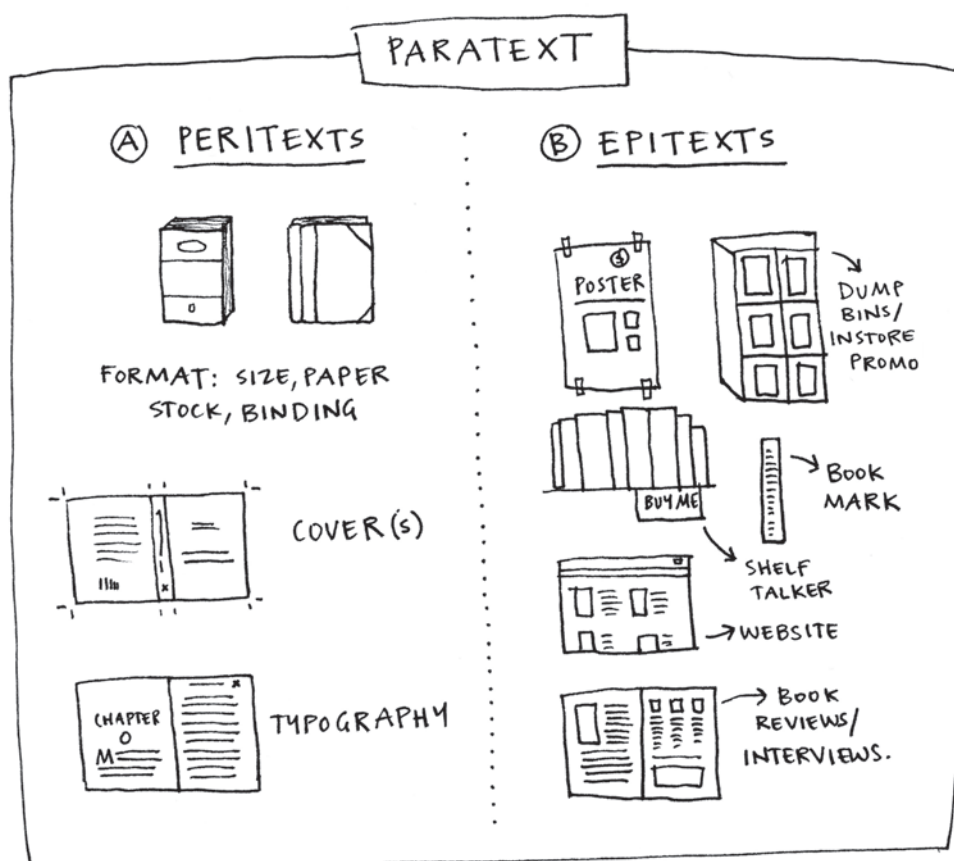
To understand paratext, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by *primary text*.

The *primary text* is the content originated in the mind of an author – the work of literature in unmediated form. In order to pass from the mind of the author to the hands of the reader, a literary work must be materialised – given physical form (for novelists, as a book). The primary text must be printed on the page, the pages bound as a book and the book placed within the reach of individual readers. The relationship between author and reader is always mediated. Genette names the collection devices that mediate this transition the *paratext*. So, paratext is the collection of supplementary elements that frame and present a *primary text* as an object that can be held and read – everything from the paper stock to the title of the book.

Genette divides paratext into two categories: devices contained within the book object (*peritext*) and devices that exist outside the book object (*epitext*). Some examples of *peritext* are the book cover, the title page, typesetting and indices. *Epitext* includes elements that make up the public and private history of the book – marginalia, interviews, marketing catalogues or author diaries.

The following diagram (next page) shows the graphic devices that belong to the paratext of a novel:

Primary – meaning foremost, the part or aspect that is most important. *Para* – meaning beside, auxiliary, assistant to.



*Paratext: threshold to interpretation*³

Genette argues that paratext is an important and often neglected aspect of textual production and reception; although supplementary, Genette does not consider paratext superfluous. Paratext is more than a physical vessel for a primary text – it is a ‘threshold to interpretation’. Genette states:

[Paratexts] surround and extend [the text] precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form ... of a book ... the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers.” (1)

So, paratext performs two functions: a material function (presenting the primary text as a tangible book package) and a rhetorical/communicative function (acting as a threshold for the interpretation of the primary text). In Genette’s words, the paratext is:

[A] zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence

³ The original French title *Seuils* – translated as *paratext* – means threshold. The subtitle to the English translation of *Paratexts* is: ‘thresholds of interpretation’. *Paratexts* is part of Genette’s larger theory of textual transcendence, a theory of connectedness, relating a primary text to all the other texts that surround it. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* is the third publication in Genette’s ‘transtextual trilogy’.

that – whether well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it. (2)

Paratext is the threshold where the reader first encounters a text – it presents the first impression of the text and establishes expectations for how to interpret the content. Paratext is “a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text.” (Philippe Lejeune quoted in Genette 1997: 2) Paratext is, therefore, a useful way of talking about the ways in which supplementary design elements – like typography, book covers, illustrations and diagrams – affect the interpretation of a text.

However, due to his background as a linguist, Genette’s paratextual theory focuses heavily on explaining verbal devices – those devices expressed in words, such as the title of a novel, the publisher’s blurb or introductions, dedications, inscriptions and epigraphs. Genette identifies some graphic devices – such as format, book cover, typesetting and illustrations – but recognises his description of these elements is “by no means exhaustive.” He attributes this to two factors, stating:

To examine this subject in its full scope, one would need not only the historical information I don’t have but also a technical and iconological skill ... I will never have. Clearly, that study exceeds the means of a plain literary person. (406)

Here, Genette recognises that explaining the function *visual* paratext requires particular knowledge of word-image interplay. As explained in the introduction, word-image interplay is the particular knowledge of Visual Communication Design. Below, Genette’s paratextual theory is expanded beyond the means of a ‘plain literary person’ – from a Visual Communication Design perspective.

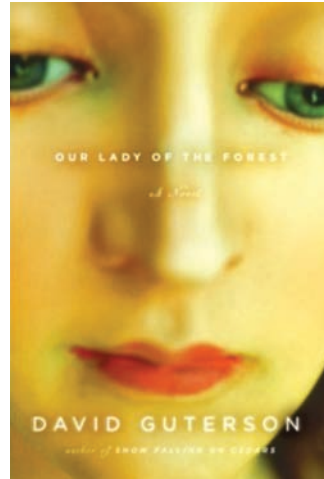
The articulate package: material, typographic and graphic devices

Design understands paratext as ‘the book *package*’.⁴ The word *package* describes the material function of paratext, but not the rhetorical function. Therefore, effective paratext can be called *articulate packaging*. An articulate package physically presents the primary text to the reader, and also offers visual ‘signposts’ that assist interpretation of that text.

To clarify, I offer an example. A book cover performs two functions. First, it binds and

⁴ Broadly, packaging a book is the responsibility of the publisher. Specifically, the material package (format, paper stock, etc), as well as the typographic and graphic elements of the book package, is the responsibility of the book designer.

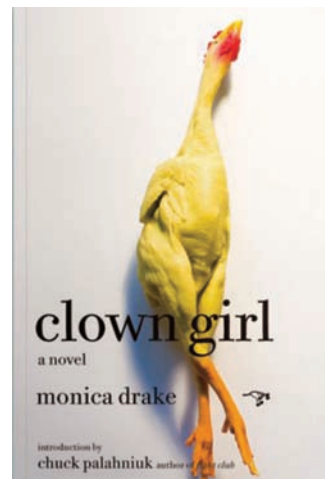
protects the pages of a book, transforming the primary text into a tangible object. Second, an effective cover communicates a range of messages to the reader, affecting his or her interpretation of the text. Compare the covers below. If I enjoyed this book:



< Vintage, 2004
 Designer: Gabriele Wilson
www.bookcoverarchive.com

Which of these books am I more likely to enjoy:

Houghton Mifflin, 2007>
 Designer: Martha Kennedy
www.bookcoverarchive.com

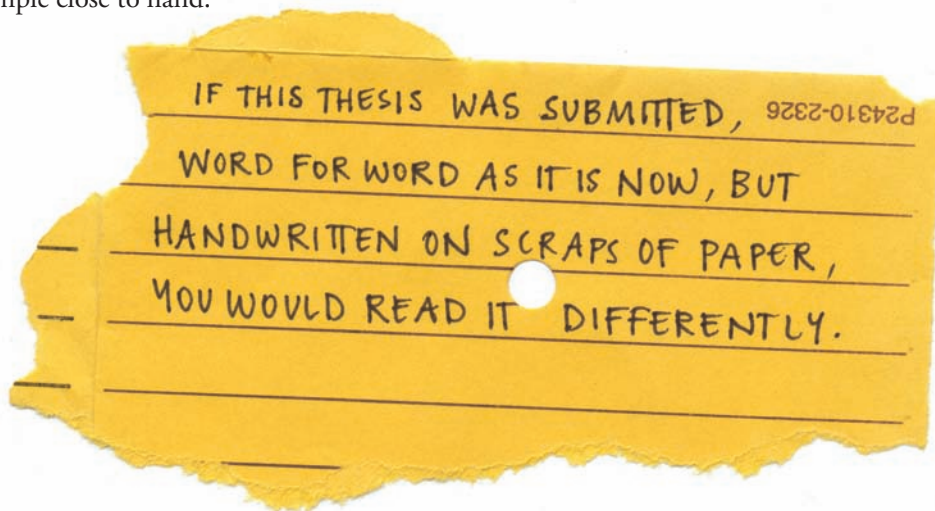


< Hawthorne Books, 2007
 Designer: Pinch
www.bookcoverarchive.com

Likewise, the marketing department at Bloomsbury were aware some readers were embarrassed to be seen reading 'children's books', so released the popular *Harry Potter* series in an 'adult' package:



This visual rhetoric is familiar territory for visual communication designers. Design and marketing understand that the ‘look of a book’ – what is articulated by the package – can affect reception and interpretation. What is less understood is that the material and typographic elements may also affect interpretation. To dramatise this point, allow me to offer an example close to hand.



Likewise, if I typeset the text in Comic Sans - an unpleasant but readable typeface - it would affect your reception of the text.

Aside from being cumbersome to handle and unsightly, these design elements would communicate a lack of credibility and signpost ignorance of academic conventions, which is, indirectly, an insult to you and your time.

In order to more clearly establish conventions of word-image interplay in novels, the articulate package is broken into three components: materiality, typography and supplementary graphics. These components form an articulate package, which helps mediate the reception and interpretation of a primary text.

(Typography + graphic elements) + materiality = book design.

Materiality (tangible form)

The most immediate component of the book package is its material presentation.⁵ Aside

⁵ An interesting note on the form of the book comes from literary critic John Sutherland, who explains that despite unimaginable technological advancements in other media, the codex book has not significantly altered its physical form since the 13th Century. Sutherland speculates if William Caxton, founder of the British book trade, were transported from 1480 to the present day, the codex book would be one of the few truly familiar objects in the world. (Sutherland 2006)

from tangibly mediating the primary text from the mind of the author to the hands of the reader, material elements – the format, paper stock and cover embellishments (foil, embossing, varnishes, etc.) – comment on the *content* (what the book is about) and *context* (where the book sits in the literary landscape). The object itself is articulate. Whether a book is hardcover or paperback articulates how the publisher values the book – a hardcover is produced to last, to be shelved for future readings, whereas paperbacks are produced to be ‘disposable’. For editions produced to last, more expensive archival paper is chosen over cheaper paper that yellows quickly and tears easily. As discussed above, the cover will give both an indication of the content of a book, but also where that book belongs (in the hands of an adult or a child, as the Harry Potter example illustrates). A book cover should effectively engage the reader’s attention and incite desire to purchase the book, and also effectively communicate the mood, tone or themes of the book.

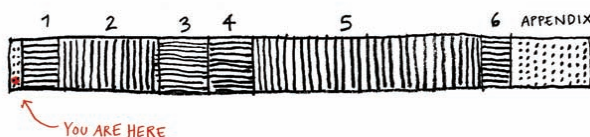
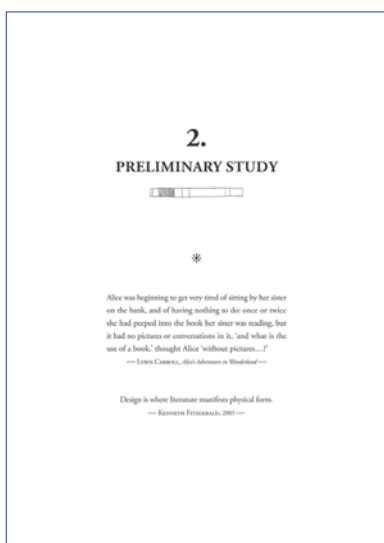
Typographic (how the words appear on the page)

Typography is the arrangement of text (printed characters) on the page. Typographic conventions in the context of book design are strict – readability is paramount. For example, the gutter (inside margin) should be wide enough that words do not fall into it when the book is opened, and the outer border should comfortably welcome the reader’s thumbs with enough space that the text is not obscured.

The fiction writer usually strives to create verisimilitude – a believable world for readers to enter. No character, event or literary device should distract readers from their state of immersion. Likewise, the book designer strives for a kind of visual-verisimilitude – well-executed typography allows readers to slip into the world of the book, unimpeded by the activity of reading. In a speech to the British Typographers Guild in 1932, Beatrice Warde built a self-proclaimed “long-winded and fragrant” metaphor comparing ideal typography to a crystal goblet. She argues that a connoisseur of wine would choose to drink from a simple crystal goblet over an exquisitely wrought gold goblet because “everything about it is calculated to reveal rather than to hide the beautiful thing which it was meant to contain.” (in Brown 2007) So conventions dictate that the typesetting of a book should be a transparent vessel, its purpose to convey content to the reader in a simple, elegant way. This is not to claim that text does not exist as an ‘image’ on the page – rather that we know we are not meant to see it. In literary fiction, effective typography recedes – the grey rectangle of justified type is so familiar it is essentially invisible, or clear as an elegant crystal goblet.

Subtle exceptions to typographic ‘invisibility’ are necessary to notify readers of a

change in scene or pace. Chapter headings and text breaks act as reader ‘signposts’, drawing attention to breaks in the flow of the narrative. A new chapter or text break is announced by breaking the typographic grid and sometimes the addition of printer’s ornaments or illustrations. Chapters usually start on a new page, with a title and/or number to help the reader navigate the book. A chapter head may also include a small dinkus, illustration or vignette, generally representing a theme or motif from the story, or repeating a graphic element from the cover design:



On the Contents page, the bar chart above is introduced to show the size the chapters, in relation to each other. On every chapter page, this device is repeated, reminding readers where they have been, where they are going, and the size of the chapter they are about to read.

In addition, a small dinkus * ‘breaks’ the space before the quotations, which are relevant to the content of the chapter.

A text break can be made simply by inserting an extra line space, or a dinkus – such as a line of asterisk or a small graphic:



Graphic elements

Aside from ornamental elements like the dinkus in the text break above, graphic elements in books are conventionally illustrations of the primary text. In nonfiction books, those illustrations may be reproductions of photographs, diagrams, drawings, paintings or other graphic types. As established earlier, contemporary novels do not usually contain illustrations. However, some illustrated novels do exist – early fiction and special editions. These two categories of hybrid novel are worth briefly discussing to eliminate them from the scope of the research.

Unlike most contemporary novels, early novels often included illustrations and graphic additions scattered amongst the pages. When novels first emerged they were serialised – bundles of chapters were published gradually, printed in magazines. Accompanying illustrations displayed in shop windows advertised the arrival of new sections. These supplementary

illustrations were often retained when novels became book-length volumes, reproduced as vignettes and decorative pages within the book.⁶ Over time, illustrations and graphic additions fell from the pages of novels, with a preference toward ‘uninterrupted’ verbal narratives. By the 1930s, convention dictated that a novel is a verbal narrative form. (Elliott 2003: 47) Some novels – like many of Dickens’ early works – are still published with these vignettes accompanying the written text, but editions without the vignettes also exist. The vignettes are, therefore, not integral to the text. Critics of vignettes in early novels complained that they were distracting, achieving the opposite to visual-verisimilitude: “vignettes in a book interrupt both the visual unity of the page and the actual reading of the text.” (Harthan 1981: 180)

However, illustrated novels still exist. Niche publishing houses – such as Scribner, Moby or Hidden Staircase – specialise in the production of illustrated collectors’ editions of the classics. These are existing novels to which illustrations have been added, transforming the original work into a hybrid creature. Regular publishing houses also occasionally release illustrated editions of bestselling novels, inviting an artist or illustrator to interpret a well-known work, often around an anniversary of the author’s life or the original publication of the work.



Ralph Steadman’s illustrated edition of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, Harcourt, 1995

In 2007, Canongate Books released an illustrated version of Yann Martel’s 2002 Man Booker Prize winning novel, *The Life of Pi*. Managing Director Jamie Byng explains his decision to do so was inspired by the ‘painterly qualities’ of the text, which evoked the classic editions of

⁶ The illustrators of these vignettes were popular social satirists who contributed to newspaper and magazines of the time, and were often as well known as the authors themselves. The vignettes for Dickens’ *Pickwick Papers* by an illustrator known as ‘Phiz’ are credited with significantly boosting the popularity of the novel (in serial form), after the untimely death of an earlier, less successful illustrator. (Cohen 1980: 4) For detailed accounts of early illustrated literature see: Behrendt 1997; Bettley 2001; Bland 1969; Harthan 1981.

Robert Louis Stevenson's novels *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* he had pored over as a child: "These paintings impressed themselves on my mind in such a strong way and always seemed to be an integral part of the novel. They expanded my sense of the book, fed my imagination rather than closed it down." (Byng 2007) Byng claims the illustrations enhanced his experience of reading and fed his imagination, rather than distracting him, as is one common criticism of illustrations in adult fiction.

Diana Klemin, long-time Art Director at Doubleday's New York office, describes the function of book illustration as both decorative and explanatory:

[The illustration] originates with the written word of the author [the illustrator creates] a supportive or supplementary embellishment, a decoration or explanation that makes the text memorable and explicit. (1970:17)

Although these early novels with illustrated vignettes and illustrated editions of the classics contain graphic devices, they differ from the novels at the centre of this study because ornate title pages or illustrated vignettes can be added or removed in different editions without significantly affecting comprehension of the story. The illustrations are *supplementary* additions to the primary text. Within the novels at the heart of this research, graphic devices are *integrated* into the fabric of the narrative. Again, the difference between multi-modal and hybrid is drawn: any novel containing graphic devices is multi-modal, but here, only novels where those devices are integral to the story are defined as hybrid novels. Therefore, graphic devices in hybrid novels are unconventional because they cannot be removed without significantly altering the primary text. The distinction between *integral* and *supplementary* graphic devices is crucial to this thesis. It is not a value judgement, championing integral elements over supplementary elements, but distinguishes between something known (illustration) and something less known (integral graphic devices). Written and graphic elements are grafted together into a cohesive primary text – a *hybrid* text.

Section Two:

Preliminary survey and analysis of fifteen hybrid novels

To examine the phenomenon of hybrid novels, a collection of exemplars was required to form the base of the study. However, locating these books proved difficult for several reasons.

First, generally nothing on the cover announces that graphic devices lurk within – from the outside these books look like conventional novels.⁷ Thumbing through books in search of disturbances in the grey rectangles of justified type is obviously a limited research method, but uncovered a small cluster of hybrid novels. Using these hybrid novels as examples, an email sent to a diverse list of writers, publishers, booksellers, critics and readers yielded seventy-six different suggestions.⁸ Online searches on Web 2.0 sites like Amazon.com with ‘if you like this, you may like this’ suggestions further fleshed out the list of examples. This list was also posted to a public research blog, inviting further suggestions.⁹



Analysing the list of suggestions revealed a second problem in identifying exemplar hybrid novels. It became apparent that some recommendations were not relevant to the study because they were not novels, but other types of literature, such as graphic novels, picture books, artists' books and illustrated nonfiction. These other types of literature are all hybrid texts because the primary text is a hybrid of word and image, however, they are not novels. These other hybrid books are no relevant to the study because images are expected to appear in these literary types. Hybrid novels are interesting because the graphic devices are uncon-

⁷ Some rare exceptions, such as Umberto Eco's *Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, subtitled 'An illustrated novel', are still difficult to locate as the subtitle is often not shown on the spine of the book or prominent in reviews or blurbs.

⁸ The email was sent to two hundred and forty-five people. Many were contacts from the publishing industry, supplemented by book reviewers and academics whose email addresses I located online. The email is shown in Appendix A.

⁹ www.zoesadokierski.blogspot.com

ventional. Appendix B describes different literary types that resemble hybrid novels, but fall outside the scope of this research.



That the hybrid novels in question can be mistaken – at first glance – for either conventional novels or other types of hybrid literature is a significant obstacle in locating exemplars, and ensuring the validity of the study. Therefore, clear criteria are required to identify exemplars, and to eliminate other types of hybrid literature from the scope of the research.

The next section presents a criteria for identifying exemplar hybrid novels, and then presents analysis of fifteen hybrid novels. These fifteen novels are categorised into a typology according to the type of graphic devices they contain, and supplemented by examples of hybrid novels that expose limitations in the criteria and typology.

Criteria for identifying hybrid novels

The criteria established to identify hybrid novels is as follows:

- The books must be novels, as opposed to other types of literature such as biography, graphic novels, or nonfiction;¹⁰

¹⁰ Anthologies of short stories are excluded to maintain a manageable scope for the research. It is not uncommon to find images on the pages of literary anthologies – *Granta*, *The Paris Review* and *Heat*, for example, all regularly feature photo-essays and occasionally other graphic additions. *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* takes the literary anthology into a whole new visual realm, as discussed in Chapter Five. This presents a rich topic for future research.

- The graphic elements must be ‘written’ as part of the original manuscript, not added in a subsequent edition;
- The graphic elements must be *integral* – there should be no evidence of these devices appearing or disappearing; they are intrinsic to the primary text.

The extensive list of books – identified by the initial survey of readers and writers – was distilled through this criteria into a long list of hybrid novels, shown in Appendix A. Examining this long list, the graphic devices are categorised into five types: typography, photographs, illustrative elements, ephemera and diagrams. These types, familiar to Visual Communication Design, warrant brief definition, and are best explained through examples. Here, I use fifteen exemplary and two ‘borderline’ hybrid novels to explain the typology of graphic devices.

Typology of graphic devices in hybrid novels

Examining a collection of hybrid novels, the graphic devices can easily be categorised according to five graphic types – typography, photographs, illustrative elements, ephemera and diagrams. This typology demystifies what is meant by ‘graphic device’ – by naming and categorising the images in hybrid novels, they seem less alien. Below, each of the five graphic types is explained, supported by three examples. Where possible, my critique of these devices is supplemented by critique from book reviews and essays.

I have chosen to reproduce double page spreads at a smaller size than the original novel, because in this preliminary survey, it is less relevant to understand the novels well than to have an idea of what they look like. Reading the pages from fifteen different novels would distract from the argument here.

Type One: Typography

A typographic device is any piece of typesetting that deviates from the conventions of book design, as described previously in this chapter. Unconventional typography interrupts the reading experience by breaking the ‘crystal goblet’. The rectangular grid composed by justified lines of text is such a familiar convention that it is essentially invisible, enabling readers to lose themselves entirely in a fictional world. If an author consciously disturbs this convention, readers must consider why they have been drawn back to the printed page, back to the material reality of the book.

Visual poets, and the literary critics and scholars who analyse their work, consider how we read the word on the page – how we engage with the material form of language. John Hall, a visual poet, explains:

Handwritten and printed poetry draws patterns on pages which a reader encounters before any sounding – actual or imagined – of words begin. Experienced poetry readers take in at a glance a number of spatial features that will translate later into temporal ones: on any occasion of reading off the page the first reading is, in other words, a visual one of a different order from the systematic decoding of the visual signs of alphabetic script. (Hall 2003)

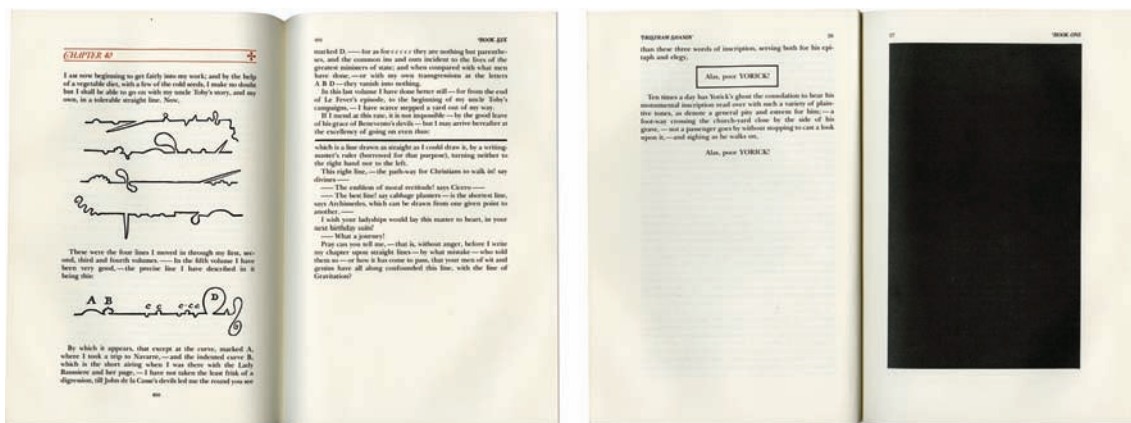
The first reading of text on a page, then, is a visual one. A critical reader approaches the ‘pre-reading’ of a poem by looking for visual signposts or prompts. Hall explains that readers:

pick out the visual patterning of punctuation marks: will *see* something about syntax, especially perhaps sentence length and clausality complexity, and will anticipate how this plays off against line and stanza breaks. Any such anticipation sets the conditions for reading. (ibid)

In hybrid novels, a typographic device is first noticed as an interruption of the ‘grey-rectangle’ of type on the page, setting the conditions for reading.

Typography, example one:

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767, in nine volumes, Ann Ward/Dodsley/Becket & Dehondt)



The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman is one of the earliest books to be considered a novel. Sterne’s classic social satire employs an array of typographic and graphic elements to interrupt the written narrative. Included are visual metaphors – a black page visualises the death of a character and a marbled page represents the contribution Shandy’s father made to

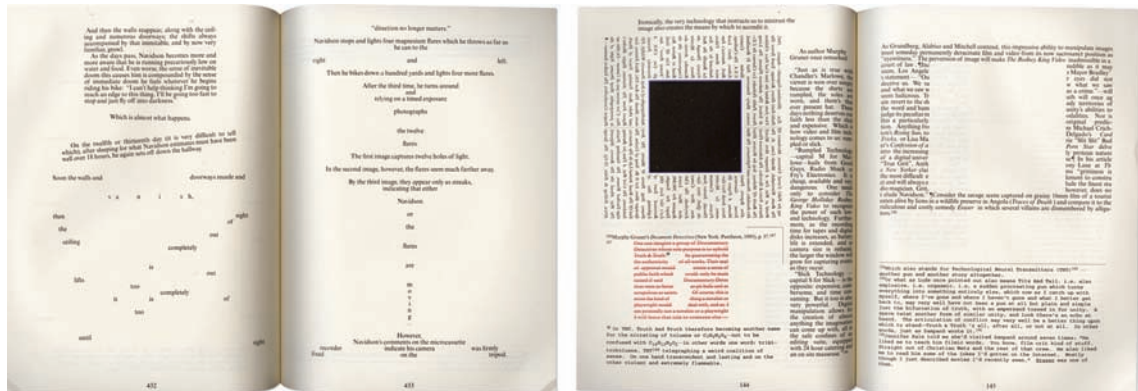
his conception – as well as a blank page for the reader to draw his or her own likeness of a character, passages of elongated em-dashes — — — and asterisk *** to denote pauses or omissions in dialogue, and diagrams of how the story line has meandered across the different books.¹¹ Sterne's graphic and typographic playfulness interrupt the flow and pace of the novel in an attempt to manipulate the reading experience – this book consciously explores the relationship between author and reader. The graphic interruptions are comparable to narrative asides, distracting the reader and forcing consideration of the “experience of interacting with the book as a consciously constructed object.” (Schiff 1998)

Peter de Voogd, editor of *The Shandean*,¹² succinctly describes how the graphic devices are integral to the fabric of the narrative: “The text’s verbal and visual elements are so intimately interwoven that they form an aesthetic whole. Text and picture cannot be divorced from one another without serious loss: the picture is the text, the text the picture.” (quoted in Schiff, 1998) Sterne’s use of graphic devices shows us that this phenomenon cannot be called ‘new’.

This example also reveals a problem with the typology of devices as a way to categorise hybrid novels – I classify it here as an example of typographic devices, but the black and blank pages could be described as ‘illustrative elements’ – they are more graphic than typographic.

Typography, example two:

Mark Z. Danielewski, *House of Leaves* (2000, Pantheon Books)



An ambitiously experimental novel, Danielewski's *House of Leaves* distinguishes between four parallel narratives with four different fonts, a practical (though not original) typographic device, assisting the reader's navigation through this maze of a book. Complicated page layouts reflect the narrated action: as characters advance through the claustrophobic laby-

11 Sterne's novel was originally published in nine volumes; serial publication was conventional at the time.

12 Launched in 1986 and releasing its 19th volume in 2008, this international journal dedicated to the study of Sterne's life and work, is testament to the high regard in which Sterne's work is still held.

rinth of a **house** that defies real-world logic (the **house** is bigger inside than outside), the text is set in tight boxes and columns bending in different angles around the page, so the reader must physically turn the book to follow the narrative. In another section, as characters are pursued by an unseen enemy, few words or phrases appear on each page urging the reader to flip quickly, propelling the pace of the narrative. This typographic framework adds to mood and setting, but also affects narrative pace by manipulating the act of page turning. The experience of the reader mimics the experience of the characters.

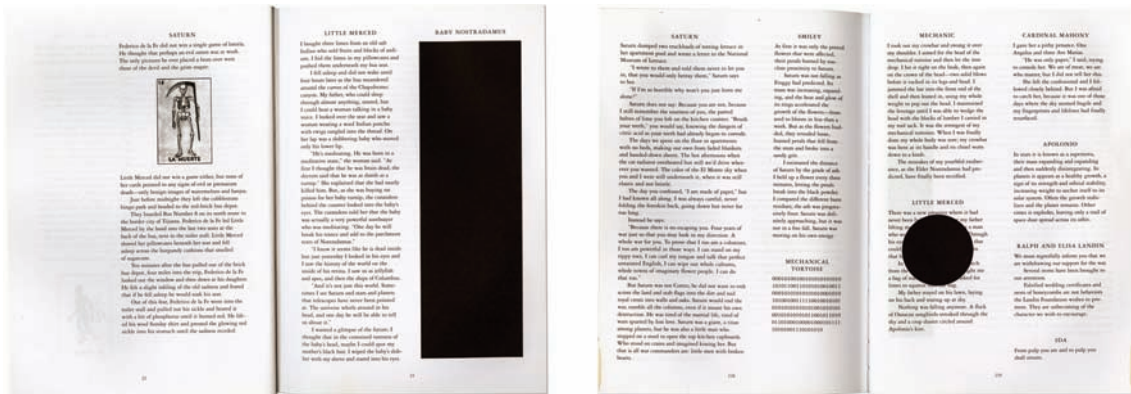
For some, the constant physical disruption of the text would be too much to endure. Reviewer Emily Barton asks: “the question for each reader is if the payoff makes the effort of slogging through its endless posturing worthwhile.” (Barton 2006) For others, it is an exciting interactive reading experience, familiar to readers of new media texts. Design writer Rick Poyner declared: “The positive reaction to *House of Leaves* suggests the degree to which readers’ tastes have already been transformed by exposure to devices, texture and rhetoric of contemporary graphic culture.” (Poyner 2003b)

Throughout the novel, the word **house** always appears in blue – a consciously ambiguous device, left for the reader to interpret. Reviews and posts on the book’s website have suggested this likens the **house** to online hyperlinks, or to the blue-screen technique in film-making. In a one-colour edition, the word **house** appears in greyscale rather than blue, which raises a production consideration. Printing books in colour is an expensive enterprise – could these devices be restrained by budget, or conversely, encouraged by increasingly less expensive printing technologies? This note on the imprint page of the full colour edition explains the different editions:

A Note On This Edition			
Full Color	2-Color	Black & White	Incomplete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The word house in blue; minotaur and all struck passages in red. •The only struck line in Chapter XXI appears in purple. •XXXXXXX and color plates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Either house appears in blue or struck passages and the word minotaur appear in red. •No Braille. •Color or black & white plates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Color is not used for the word house, minotaur, or struck passages. •No Braille. •Black & white plates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No color. •No Braille. •Elements in the exhibits, appendices and index may be missing.

Typography, example three:

The People of Paper, Salvador Plascencia (2005 McSweeney's)



A deeply odd work of magical realism, Salvador Plascencia's debut novel follows a dozen heartbroken protagonists as they rebel against the planet Saturn, anthropomorphised as the equally heartbroken author. The novel includes several typographic devices that steer the reader through constantly changing narrative voice and visualise the interventions of the author. Passages obscured by black blocks of ink – reminiscent of Sterne's black page – link Baby Nostradamus (a soothsayer who sees only blackness) to Saturn. Die-cuts literally remove the name of Plascencia's ex-lover, and sections of text with strike-through marks combine with a constantly shifting typographic grid and scattered ephemera – tarot cards, diagrams and graphic elements on the chapter headings. These devices draw the reader's attention to the physicality of the book object. The visual devices are constant reminders of the struggle between author and his characters for control of the narrative.

All three novels use typographic devices, but *Tristram Shandy* and *People of Paper* also include other graphic devices – such as black pages, die-cuts and ephemera. Again, this preliminary study revealed that many hybrid novels contain more than one kind of graphic device. In particular, typographic devices were often combined with other graphic devices.

Type Two: Illustrative Elements

It must be reiterated that illustrations of the primary text – such as the previously described vignettes in Victorian novels – are supplementary, not integral devices. A distinction must be made between an *illustration* and what I call an *illustrative element*. Having examined a range of hybrid novels, I suggest the illustrative element is integral if the narrator or other characters in the book are aware it exists – their awareness shows the element is embedded in the fabric of their world. These illustrative elements are used as literary devices, rather than illustrations of the text.

*Illustrative elements, example one:*Susannah Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (2004, Bloomsbury)

Illustrated by Portia Rosenberg.



Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell is an 800-page novel set in a fantastical version of 19th Century England, where magic is a respected academic pursuit but a dying practice – Norrell and Strange are the only remaining practical magicians in England. The novel plays between the genres of fantasy and historical fiction, employing several literary techniques to convince us of the ‘truth’ of the narrative: actual figures from the era – including King George III, publisher John Murray and poet Lord Byron – socialise with fictional characters; extensive faux-academic footnotes reference a huge number of magical books, historical documents and fables (mostly products of Clarke’s imagination); and the writing style is a pastiche of 19th century novelists such as Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, using Old English spellings like ‘shew’ for ‘show’. In addition to these linguistic devices, charcoal vignettes are scattered throughout, making reference to the illustrated vignettes of Victorian novels, particularly those found in the work of Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray.

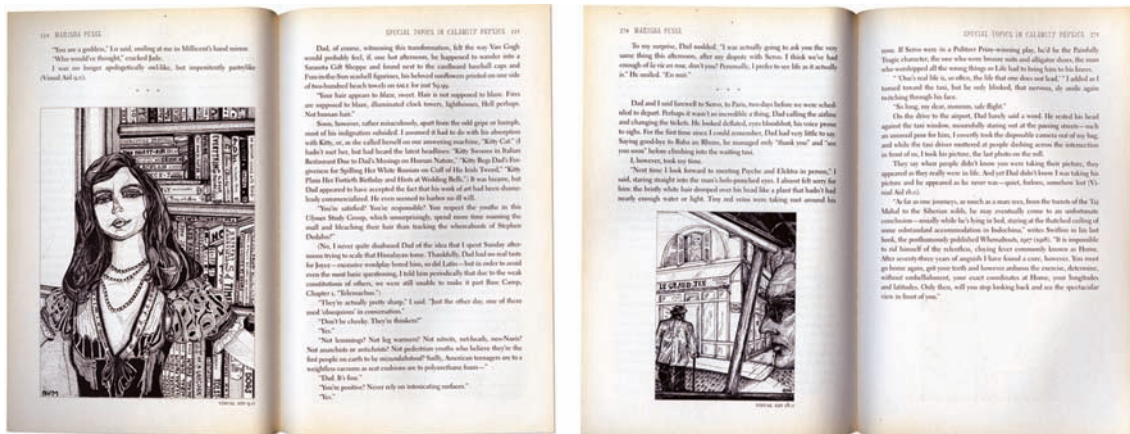
These vignettes differ from the supplementary additions in early novels for two reasons. First, they appear at a time when vignettes are unconventional in novels. In the same way linguistic devices like footnotes and Old English vocabulary are a pastiche of an earlier era, so are the vignettes. Second, the characters are aware the vignettes exist – in the story, Strange commissions a pair of engravers to produce them as illustrations to his memoir. So although these illustrative elements depict characters and scenes from the novel, they reinforce the artifice that the book in our hands is actually Strange’s memoir, not Clarke’s novel.

In a parallel between fiction and actual worlds, the author commissioned rather than produced these illustrations. On one hand, it could be argued Clarke has not integrated these vignettes into the narrative herself. On the other hand, if Clarke has conceived then commis-

sioned these vignettes, she acts as art director, and is still working in a designerly way. Designers often out source to image-makers for specific tasks. For the graphic devices to be credited to the author, he or she must have conceived of them as part of the original manuscript.¹³

Illustrative elements, example two:

Marisha Pessl, *Special Topics in Calamity Physics* (2007, Viking Press)



Blue Van Meer, the narrator and protagonist in Marisha Pessl's debut murder-mystery is an obnoxiously well-read but socially awkward teen, constantly moving cities in the wake of her much-loved father's career. The novel finds Blue starting her senior year at an exclusive school, where her father expects her to secure entry to an Ivy League college. She falls in with a clique of privileged students and their favourite teacher, who is eventually murdered. Early in the book, Blue reveals that her father once told her: "Always have everything you say exquisitely annotated, and, where possible, provide staggering Visual Aids..." So, included are 'visual aids', penned by Blue, depicting selected characters and scenes. These drawings lend an academic quality to the book – almost an anthropological approach to showing the foreign 'specimens' Blue encounters in a new tribe she never really belongs to.

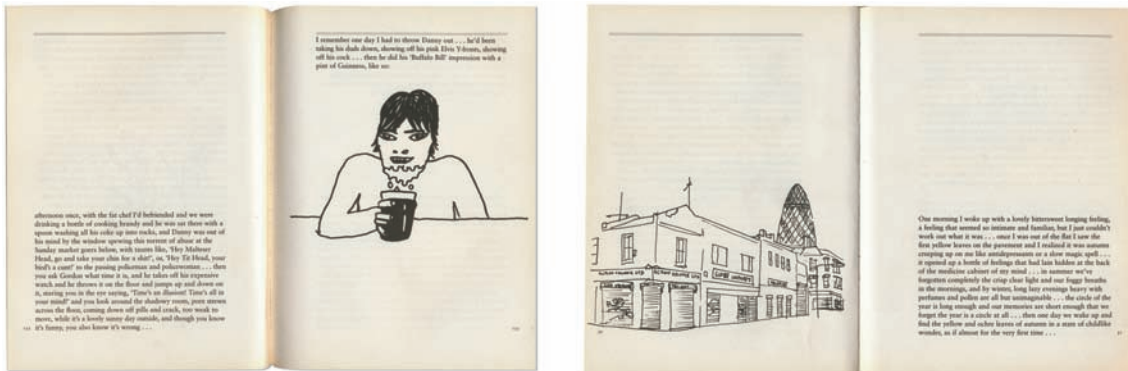
That these visual aids are significant. Rather than photographs, which imply a truthfulness of representation, they are Blue's interpretation, often from her memory, of people and places. This visual technique mirrors the written recollections of events; the reader is consciously reading Blue's interpretation of events, and must consider not only why she writes about a character in a certain way, but also why she draws them as she does. The visual aids remind us, with their school-girl quality and clumsy placement in the text, that

¹³ It could then be argued Dickens' illustrations are integral, as he briefed his illustrators while penning his novels, however, none of his characters are aware the illustrations exist – Dickens had a hand in directing his illustrators, but understood these vignettes to be supplementary and not an essential part of the narrative. For compelling discussions on Dickens' relationship with his illustrators, see Cohen 1980; Behrendt 1997.

Blue is a somewhat naïve narrator; she may not be able to read the characters around her quite as well as she reads literature. These visual aids do more than illustrate textual descriptions – they expand on the text, albeit in a subtle way. Pessl’s use of drawings is closer to the method of a social scientist than a novelist, which is appropriate to the content of this novel.

Illustrative elements, example three:

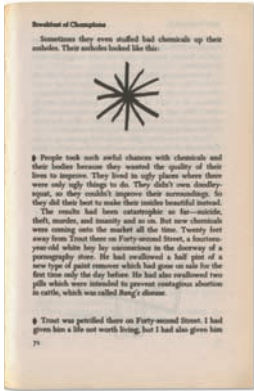
Michael Smith, *The Giro Playboy* (2006, Faber and Faber)



The Giro Playboy reads like an autobiography, but is classified as fiction. Sketchy drawings, credited to the author/narrator, are embedded amongst the stream of consciousness prose that starts and stops like a drunken conversation. Despite the diary style, the prose is seductive and the line drawings appear deliberately naïve; several sketches betray Smith’s ability to render more accurately than his other drawings would have us believe, suggesting the graphic style is intended to show the distinct hand of the character rather than the author.

The jacket boasts a quote describing this novel as “a twenty-first century beat classic in the making.” Perhaps these doodles are another manifestation of the ‘first thought is the best thought’ dictum promoted by the likes of Jack Kerouac and other beat writers.

The drawings are sometimes included to elaborate or contextualise a yarn – following the passage “and then, strangest of all, at the bottom of every long road, the towering corporate megaliths of the financial district, a colossus that was muscling in on my neighbourhood like an incongruous and unsettling mirage from a sci-fi future...” a full page drawing of a terraced street appears, with what is recognisably the ‘gherkin’ (Swiss Re Tower) building in London, protruding in the background. The drawing grounds, or ‘fixes’ the ambiguous description with something familiar and real, a visual caption to an ambiguous written description. In another instance, the passage “then he did his Buffalo Bill impersonation with a pint of Guinness, like so:” is followed by a drawing of a man holding a pint with foam on his chin.



Kurt Vonnegut championed this ‘visual description’ approach most notably in his 1973 novel *Breakfast of Champions*, which included ‘felt tip calligraphs’.¹⁴ An essay by Peter Reed says of the drawings (my emphasis):

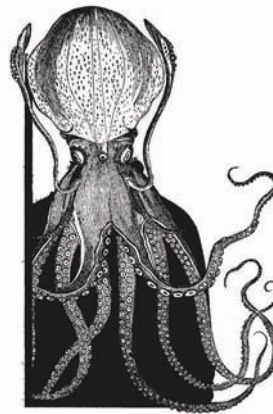
[T]he drawings earn their place in the novel, and must be seen as *integral* to it. Some make graphic the ludicrous disparities that often exist between words as signifiers and what it is they signify. Others simply function as embellishments or even punch lines of jokes. In their almost child-like simplicity of line they have a certain ironic propriety in a novel where the central event is an arts fair. (Reed 1999)

The word *integral* is important, distinguishing that these drawings serve a function within the text that transcends reflecting/reinterpreting the writing. Reed claims the drawings carry ‘ironic’ tone, voiced by their graphic quality. This idea of graphic ‘tone’ can be transferred to Smith’s slightly grubby line drawings. Like Blue van Meer’s naive visual aids, Smith’s doodles reveal as much of the hand that pens them as a turn of phrase or dialect does.

Sol Worth claims that *a picture can’t say ‘ain’t’* but visual style is loaded with ‘dialect’. As much as writing a character’s voice in a particular tone or dialect is revealing, so is ‘showing’ their hand.



[< David Shrigley]



[Zoë Sadokierski >]

Both drawings above depict squidmen, but they ‘say’ very different things. In drawings, what is left out is often as revealing as what is included:

Illustration returns us to the presence of a person, a distinctive and idiosyncratic point of view ... illustration is a form of meticulous and painstaking editing. Each tiny part of a drawing has been consciously produced. (Newark 2002)

¹⁴ Vonnegut notoriously signs autographs with the ‘sphincter’ drawing from his novel *Breakfast of Champions*.

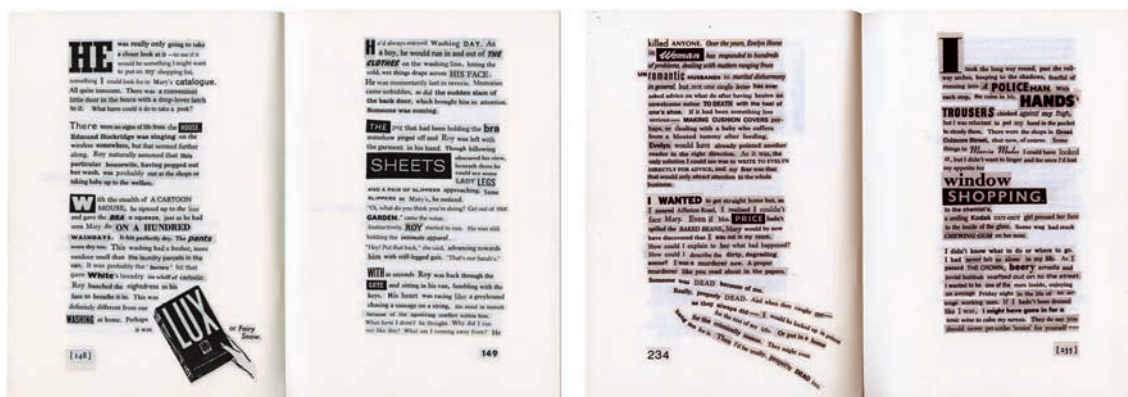
Type Three: Ephemera

The Centre for Ephemera Studies based at Reading University defines ephemera as: ‘the minor transient documents of everyday life.’¹⁵ Ephemera is produced for brief use, and then discarded – theatre programs, travel tickets, menus, labels, invitations and calendars are a few examples. When kept beyond their intended use, pieces of ephemera take on a second life, valued for nostalgic or novelty reasons. Scholars and librarians appreciate the historical value of ephemera; these raw artefacts document points in time. Marcus McCorison, director of the American Antiquarian Society, describes ephemera as “a window into the center of a culture.” (Jumonville 1990)

For example, a used ticket stub bears the finger prints of the ticket holder and ticket-tearer, brought ‘home’ in a pocket or a handbag, then stored with an eccentric collection of other sentimental leaves, until represented on the page of a novel. This journey is present on the page. The ticket stub carries its history with it.

Ephemera, example one:

Graham Rawle, *Woman's World* (2005, Atlantic Books)



Women's World is reminiscent of the typographic collage experiments popular in 20th Century avant-garde movements such as Dada and Futurism. Rawle's 437-page novel is literally collaged from over 40,000 text fragments cut from women's magazines dating from 1960s.¹⁶ This experimental work drifts somewhere between an artist's book and a novel, though the plot is certainly engaging enough to sustain reading as a novel. Rawle's comic-thriller-novance reveals the psychological struggle between Roy Little and his housebound 'sister'

15 Attributed to Maurice Rickards. See also Lewis 1962; Rickards et al. 2000; Sloboda 1997; Stone 2005 for further discussion and examples of ephemera.

16 Rawle's site <<http://www.grahamrawle.com/womansworld>> provides an absorbing porthole into his process, showing early compositional experiments, how he catalogued and stored the text fragments and his dangerously flammable workspace.

(transvestite alter-ego) Norma Fontaine, with a cast of fascinating characters and compelling series of plot twists. *Woman's World* is widely praised as an astounding and ingenious success, most notably because the materiality of the novel so effectively complements the content. The found text fragments lend a narrative eccentricity that perfectly complements both the era and the subject matter. It is an exceptional work because it so cleverly fuses materiality of the ephemera with the creative concept. Says one reviewer:

[J]ust imagine something so smoothly written and containing so many delightful turns of phrase that if you simply heard it being read aloud, you'd never guess that each part of the sentence had been sewn together like a Frankenstein monster. (Matwychuk 2008)

It is difficult to imagine this technique being repeated effectively. Aside from the fact that it takes an artist of considerable skill to pull this off, the ephemera (old magazines) drives the narrative voice. Could some devices be so content specific they are untransferable? Perhaps another entirely original novel of this scope is inconceivable, but the montage technique could be used as a device in a more limited way, to achieve a particular effect.

Ephemera, example two:

Umberto Eco, *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2004/2005 English translation by Geoffrey Brock)



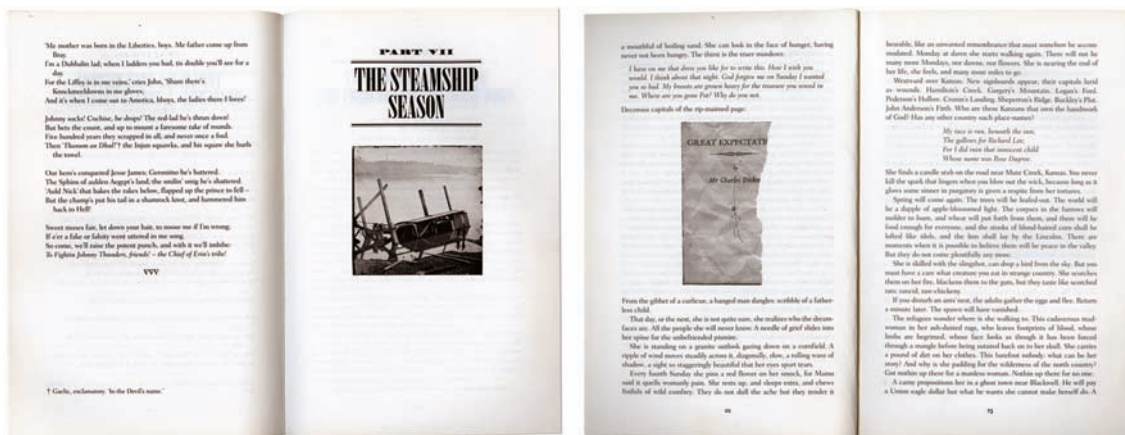
In renowned writer and philosopher Eco's beautifully produced fifth novel, protagonist Giambattista 'Yambo' Bodoni (yes, a reference to the typographer) loses his 'episodic' memory after a stroke. He can recall extensive quotes from the many books he has read and other public information, but has no memory of his family or own life. Yambo returns to his family home to jog his memory and discovers an archive of ephemera in the attic from his childhood during Mussolini's Fascist Italy: old comics and newspapers, record covers, photo

albums and diaries. The novel is peppered with full-colour reproductions of the ephemera. The subtitle declares it ‘an illustrated novel’, immediately announcing the addition of the colour images – unsurprising considering the cost of printing a book of this quality.

Although it is possible to verbally describe the ephemera, the reproductions are ‘visual aids’ in the sense an art or design book would contain reproductions of discussed work. When discussing an image, it is more valuable to see accurately than to imagine approximately. These illustrations have such particular and peculiar visual styles that the verbal description would less effectively show the ephemera. Moreover, the reader’s delight in discovering these beautiful things, reproduced on the page, emulates Yambo’s experience as he discovers them in the attic. The printed reproductions accurately and efficiently represents the ephemera, and packs an aesthetic punch that verbal description alone could not. For a reader who grew up with these popular culture artefacts, as Eco did, another level of meaning may be evoked – the reader’s subjective nostalgia.

Ephemera, example three:

Joseph O’Connor, *Redemption Falls* (2007, Harvill Secker).



Joseph O’Connor’s epic historical novel, set in the devastation of the American Civil War, is more a collection of stories than a cohesive narrative. Multiple accounts of the same events are voiced by different characters and a scattered archive of ephemera: bill posters, letters, press reports, photographs, maps and period vignette-illustrations.

At the end, it is revealed that the collection of ephemera is woven together by a single narrator. A wealthy man who has collected ephemera and information on the two central characters for years. It is his collection, ordered by his hand, that we read.

Throughout the novel, archival photographs are framed with the black-edge common to large format prints taken with old cameras. As such, these reproductions present both the content

of the photograph and the photographic object. Lucia, the protagonist's unhappy wife, takes these photographs as a way of coming to terms with the strange frontier wilderness and its inhabitants. By framing them, these devices contain the content and the object, plus the trace of the photographer. The fact that they are presented as photographic ephemera is as important as the content of the photographs. This raises an issue that will be dealt with in more detail shortly – some images seem to fall between categories presented in the typology of devices.

Type Four: Photographs

Photographic devices are reproductions of photographs, either original (produced specifically for the novel) or sourced (existing photographs that are reused in the novel).

A photograph is considered a mnemonic medium, automatically associated with the real world. Modernist designer Josef Müller-Brockman ambitiously claims that photography “provides an objective picture of reality and thus conveys an impression of authenticity.” (in Newark: 90) Quentin Newark challenges the veracity of this claim. He acknowledges that “photography is still burdened, or blessed, with the myth of objectivity, and, by extension, universality,” but states that as the photographic medium matures it is “growing increasingly supple, and as capable of the expression and subtle gradation of emotion as other forms of image making.” (Newark 90-92) Contemporary viewers know photographs can easily be manipulated, but have expectations of when this is acceptable. For example, it is expected that the photographic cover of a men's magazine is retouched, but a photograph in a newspaper is not. Despite the way a photograph ‘edits’ content, and can be manipulated, there is a prevailing sense that photographs represent reality in a more ‘authentic’ way than illustrations.

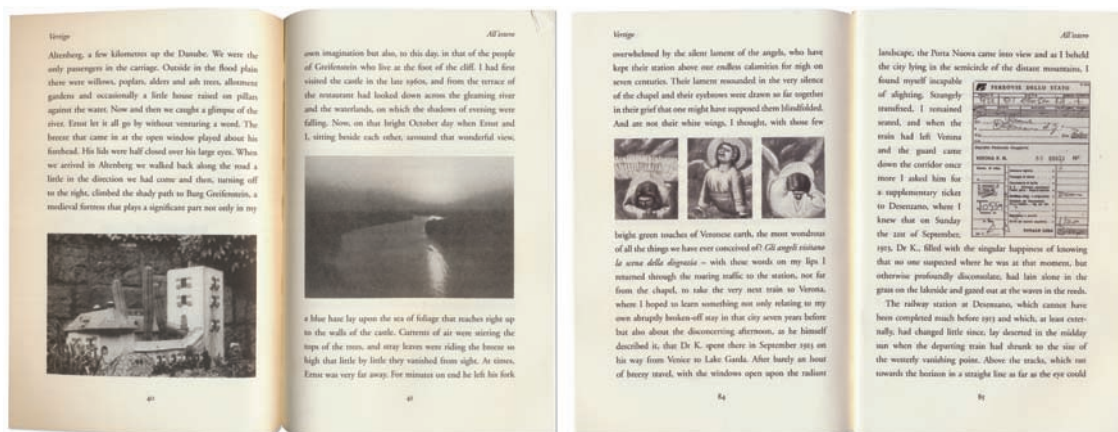
When a photograph accompanies a body of text (most commonly in nonfiction, for example in newspapers or magazines, social science writing or textbooks) it is usually as evidence – supplementary visual support to a written argument. In this context, a photograph is generally assumed to provide a reproduction of something true: a window into the real world. So what is the role of photography in fiction? Timothy Dow Adams contributed an essay to a special issue of *Poetics Today*¹⁷ dedicated to photography, titled ‘Photographs on the Walls of the House of Fiction’ (Dow Adams 2008) which considers the history of photography in fiction. He wonders, “[w]hat does it mean to call a photograph fictional?” and

17 Silke Horstkotte and Nancy Pedri's introduction to this issue ‘Introduction: photographic interventions’ is also an illuminating discussion of ways in which photographs are being used in hybrid texts. Rosalind Krauss's article ‘When words fail’ (1982) discusses the enthusiasm for photographs as a mode of communication for the future, by avant-garde artists in the 1920s and 30s which influenced writers at the time, and since.

quotes Suzanne Seed, who observed that “[p]hotographs are an extension not just of our sight, but of our thought. Like human thought itself, they use displacement, metaphor, and analogy; they step back to give us perspective and orientation. They allow us to evolve.” (176)

Photographs, example one:

W.G. Sebald’s four novels (English translation editions) – *The Emigrants* (1996, New Directions/Harvill Press), *Rings of Saturn* (1999, New Directions), *Vertigo* (1999, New Directions/Harvill Press) and *Austerlitz* (2001, Random House)



German writer and academic W.G. Sebald is arguably the most well known hybrid novelist; numerous conferences, forums, books and articles scrutinise the integration of photographs and ephemera in his four novels. Opening a copy of *The Rings of Saturn*, I was unexpectedly disappointed. Thumbing through *Vertigo* and *Austerlitz*, the disappointment lingered. I anticipated these books would be *beautiful*, and aesthetically, they are not. My designer’s eye finds many of the photographs in Sebald’s books perplexing because they are poorly rendered, with amateurish compositions, muddy tonality and occasionally, their graininess hinders my ability to decipher the subject. A series of possibilities may explain this graphic poverty: to avoid distracting the reader – if a photograph is compositionally beautiful we may gaze at its aesthetic quality rather than reading its content; the character who has ‘taken’ the photographs is not a professional photographer; these are authentic documents which predate the text, not images composed for the text. Perhaps all these premises are correct.

Sebald claims photographs are a tool for writing, included for himself as much as the reader, and are deliberately of ‘leadern’ quality:

I write up to these pictures and I write out of them also, so they are really part of the text and not illustrations and hence, if they were produced in a much better form, which would be technically very easy to do nowadays, then they would ruin the text. They must

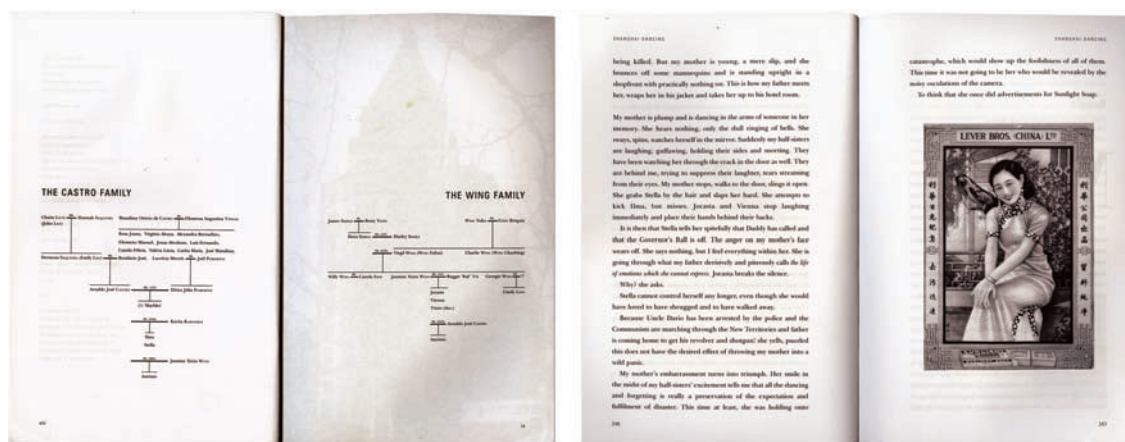
not stand out; they must be of the same leaden grain as the rest. (Biggsby 2001:155)

Sebald's justification is apt. The mundane, vernacular aesthetic of the photographs contributes to the melancholy hanging around Sebald's narratives. At times, their graphic poverty is comforting, even welcomed: in *The Rings of Saturn*, a blurred photograph disturbs the lines of text describing "Serbs, Jews and Bosnians, once rounded ...



... up, were hanged in rows like crows or magpies." Out of context, I doubt I would be able to identify this as a portrait. In context, I do not want the image to be any more distinct.

A prominent characteristic of Sebald's work is that it resists conforming to traditional genres. His books are often categorised as 'fiction/travel/history', with a narrator 'who both is and is not Sebald'. The numerous uncaptioned and unattributed photographs embedded in his books add to the uncertainty of where to shelve his work. If Sebald's *Austerlitz* is a fictional narrative, why is the story of his passport being revoked and reissued on a certain date seemingly authenticated with a reproduction of his passport issued on that same date? On the other hand, J.J. Long quotes an interview with Sebald in which he admits to collecting 'stray photographs' because 'there's a lot of memory in them'. Long asks, "do the images in Sebald's text really represent what the text tells us they represent, or are they merely 'stray photographs' around which a story has been woven?" (Long 2003) How can this be a work of nonfiction if the photographs are not authentic? The photographs seem to evidence the truth of the narrative, but their questionable authenticity counters this proof. The slippage between fiction and nonfiction in the text is not bridged by the photographs, but further confused.

*Photographs, example two:*Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing* (2004, Giramondo Press)

Castro employs photographs, ephemera and genre-bending in the tradition of Sebald, whom he has written about. (Castro 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2007) Meandering between continents, cities and generations, *Shanghai Dancing's* fractured narrative traces the history of Castro's family in what he describes as a 'fictional auto/biography'. Although this may appear to be a contradiction in terms, Castro maintains that his work is more interested in narrative and memory than fact or fiction: "I wonder whether any irritable reaching after fact and fiction is way off the point," because writing essentially portrays "a way of seeing things; a perspective; to tell a story where truth and meaning come into existence not in real life, but in the writing itself." He seems to suggest that the act of constructing an autobiography is the act of fictionalising one's own life – the process of writing is as much a process of discovery and invention as a process of re-telling what is known to the writer. Through his use of scattered photographs and diagrams, Castro includes the reader in his process of discovery-invention.

The preliminary pages of *Shanghai Dancing* map two family trees, both ending at protagonist Antonio Castro, who is confusingly referred to as both 'he' and 'I' throughout the book. Here, we see what Castro means by a 'fictional auto/biography' – the protagonist shares the writer's last but not first name, and the lack of unified subject throughout the narrative causes the reader to question who is speaking; Castro the writer or Castro the character? Who is the 'I'? The family trees (described by Castro the writer as a 'furfphy' – an Australianism meaning a fabrication or made up story) visually assist the reader to navigate the complicated web of relatives. However, a question mark next to the name of a half-brother includes the reader in the discovery/invention of a sub-plot that is a recurring mystery to both Castro (writer/character) and the reader.

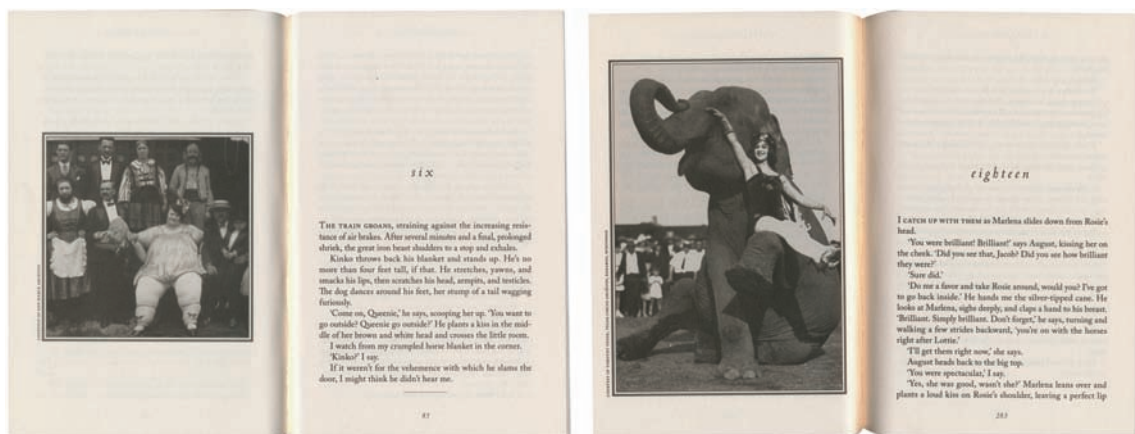
Scattered throughout *Shanghai Dancing* is an archive of photographs Castro inherits

after the death of his father. The photographs are employed as a tool for Castro the writer (but also Castro the character) to piece together his family history. Are these actually photos of Brian Castro's family? Aside from asking who the 'I' in the narrative belongs to, we must consider who owns the 'eye' behind the camera, as we must question whether Sebald's images are authentic or 'strays'. A reproduction of a Sunlight Soap advertisement appears to depict Castro's mother, based on its proximity to the text: "To think she once did advertisements for Sunlight Soap." Is this his mother, or even an authentic advertisement? If this is fiction, the authenticity of the photograph should not matter. However, if it is a book that parades as autobiography, it does. Conventions of the genre demand 'truth'.

The questionable authenticity of these images contradicts the notion that a photograph is evidence of something true – an idea discussed further in Chapter Five. For Sebald and Castro, the ambiguity between the voice of the author and the voice of the narrator is amplified by their employment of uncaptioned and unattributed photographs and ephemera, confusing the distinction between fabrication and truth, fiction and nonfiction.

Photographs, example three:

Sara Gruen, *Water for Elephants* (2006, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill)



Jacob Jankowski, a man in his 90s, recounts his time in a second-rate travelling circus, struggling to make ends meet during the Great Depression. A half-trained veterinarian, Joseph is charged with the care of the menagerie of circus animals, and falls for Marlena, the animal trainer's wife. Punctuating chapter headings are an array of fabulous old circus photographs, found by the author in an archive from the era. In an interview, Gruen claims to have stumbled across an article on a Depression-era circus photographer in the *Chicago Tribune*.¹⁸ Inspired by the accompanying photo, she bought a collection of books on circus photography

18 www.popculturemadness.com/Entertainment/Books/Water-for-elephants.html

and began the research that lead to *Water for Elephants*. Like Sebald and O’Conner, Gruen wrote ‘out of and up to’ an archive of existing photographs. The photographs ground the novel in the era, and tell complex, intriguing narratives in themselves. Gruen has included discrete captions, attributing the photographs to the archives/copyright holders. These captions are unobtrusive, and resemble newspaper captions, appropriate to the images.

Two hybrid novels discussed closely in Chapter Five contain photographs produced specifically for the novel, but in other hybrid novels, original photographs were less common that ‘found’ or ‘reused’ images.

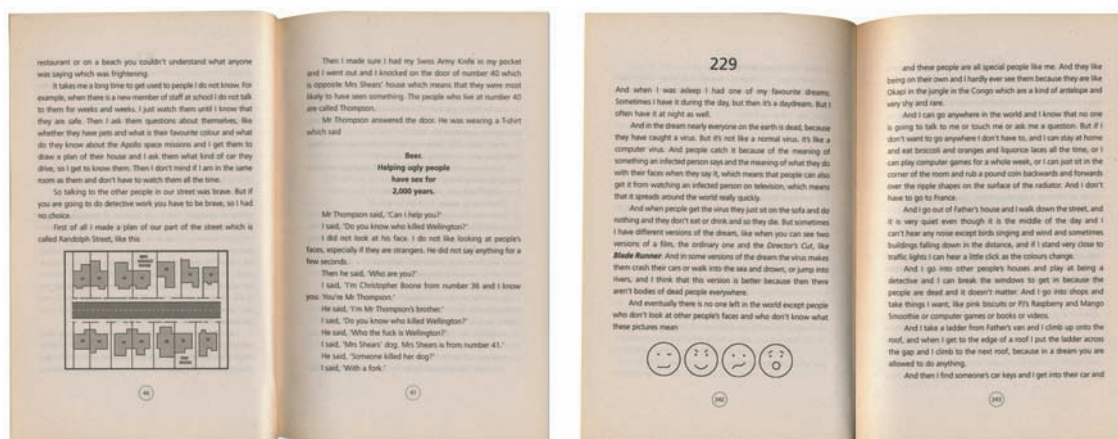
Type Five: Diagrams

Diagrams, such as charts, maps, instructional drawings and visual codes, simplify complex data sets by visualising information.

Diagrams are generally reductive – complex data is visually organised to present the information as concisely as possible. Diagrams are conventionally used in nonfiction books, where sets of facts are visualised, and used as evidence, or to instruct the reader.

Diagrams, example one:

Mark Haddon, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (2003, Jonathan Cape)



When autistic 15-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone decides to investigate the murder of his neighbour’s poodle – which he discovers at seven minutes past midnight, speared with a garden fork – he accidentally uncovers a series of secrets about his parents that turn his world upside down. Christopher’s first person narrative includes diagrams and mathematical equations he has drawn, or has found. These diagrams are included to illuminate the world

as Christopher sees it – sometimes as a series of facts, and sometimes as an incomprehensible overload of information; when Christopher runs away to London, he is overwhelmed by the amount of signage in the airport, an idea clearly visualised across two pages with a clutter of typefaces. Christopher is incapable of explaining parts of his world linguistically, but he can ‘show’ them. For example, when he is unable to explain his emotions, he points to the relevant face on a diagram drawn for him by his teacher.

In addition, as a mathematical savant with some very particular aversions he only uses prime numbers for chapters (he likes them more than cardinal numbers), the book is unconventionally typeset in a sans serif font and an appendix is included with the A-level maths questions he aced towards the end of the story. As literary devices, the integration of diagrams and unconventional typesetting choices contribute to Christopher’s slightly jarring but ultimately believable narrative voice. One review links Haddon to Sterne:

Some of the devices Haddon uses are straight out of the Laurence Sterne handbook on how to keep readers happily bamboozled. The pictures, the equations, the digressions, the inclusion of letters, the candid asides, the typography – everything keeps the reader busy. (Greenwell 2004)

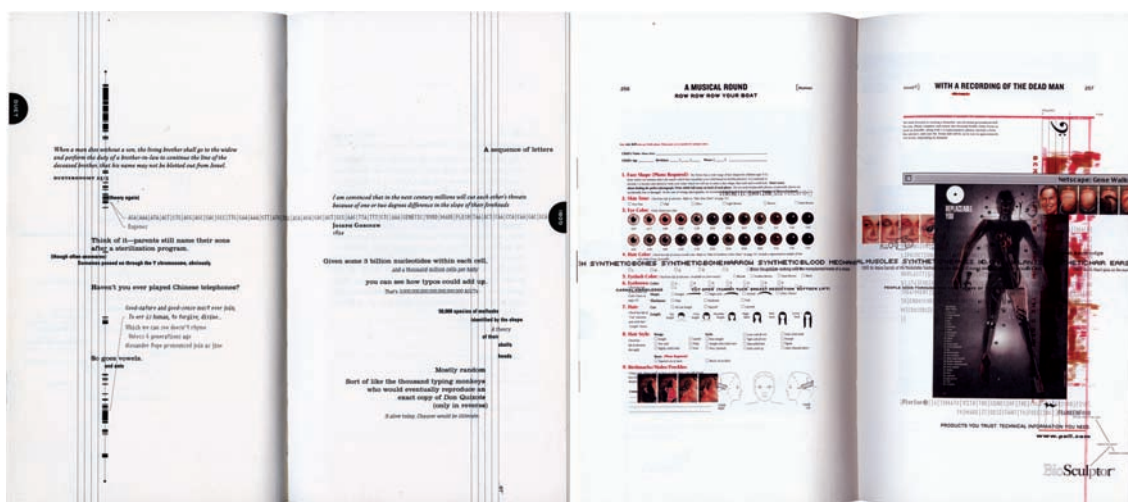
Diagrams, example two:

Will Self, *The Book of Dave* (2006, Viking Press)



London cabbie Dave Rudman is a cantankerous, self-medicating misogynist. Indignant that he is denied visitation rights to his son, by ex-wife Michelle and her team of lawyers, he writes *The Book of Dave* – his venomous thoughts on custody rights for fathers and ‘The Knowledge’ (an in-depth knowledge of London’s streets and sights known to taxi-drivers). He buries the book in Michelle’s backyard. Five hundred years after Dave’s death, it has been

Both author and designer are given equal credit on the front cover of *VAS*. Recognising both writer and designer on the cover implies the visual and written narratives are equally important. This thesis uncovered few writer-designer collaborations, aside from Tomasula and Farrell. This does not rule out the possibility of collaborations producing hybrid novels, but it seems rare for writers to renounce autonomy and extend the role of the designer, as argued by Rick Poynor in a review of the novel. (Poynor 2003a) In addition, *VAS* is worth mentioning because, as corroborated with several other readers, the visual ‘narrative’ is infinitely more engaging than the writing.



I bought this book as soon as I laid eyes on it, but have yet to finish reading it. In questioning how graphic devices enhance a novel, the potential for them to ‘mask’ poor writing must be considered. Are these devices, then, ineffective because they promise something that is not delivered? The question of *effectiveness* is explored more thoroughly in Chapter Five.



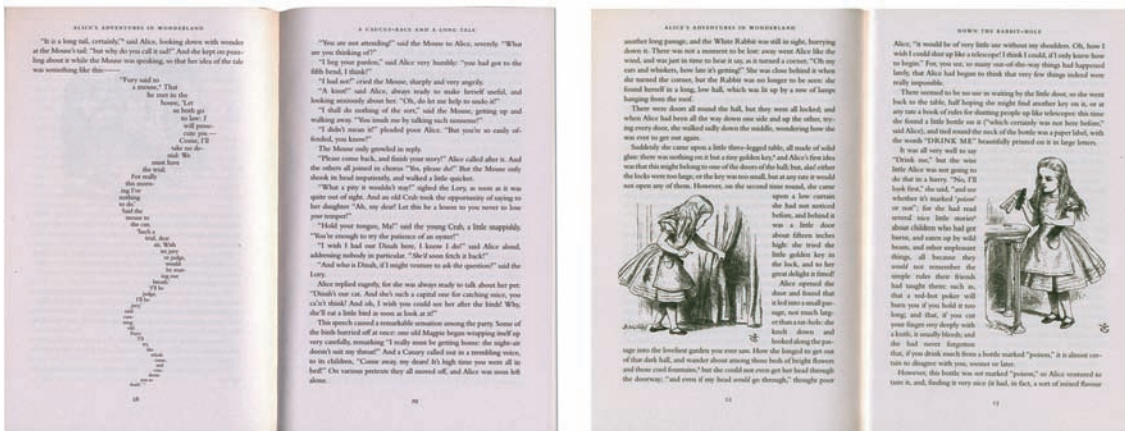
To summarise, this preliminary study demonstrates the variety of graphic devices found on the pages of hybrid novels. I have categorised these devices into five graphic types – typography, illustrative elements, photographs, ephemera and diagrams. However, choosing fifteen exemplars from my ‘long list’ of hybrid novels exposed limitations in both the *criteria* for identifying hybrid novels and the *typology* of graphic devices proposed at the beginning of this chapter. Below, two novels are described as belonging to the borderlands between conventional and hybrid novels; and two further examples demonstrate how some graphic devices ‘slip’ between categories in the typology.

Fringe Dwellers

One of the most frequently suggested ‘hybrid novels’ in my survey of readers and writers was Lewis Carroll’s classic *Alice in Wonderland*. However, it is debatable whether this book fulfils the criteria for a hybrid novel.

As the criteria specify, the length of *Alice* constitutes a novel. However, the criteria do not specify whether the novel should be intended for adult or child readers. Children’s novels (or ‘young adult fiction’) are a transitional genre of literature, between picture books and ‘adult’ novels. As such, experimental design and illustration are not as unconventional in these novels, as in novels for adult readers. For this reason, I exclude young adult and children’s novels from the study of ‘exemplars’.¹⁹ Whether the reader regards this novel as adult or young adult fiction will determine its eligibility to be included in the study.

In addition, this book may fall outside the scope of the research depending on how integral the reader considers the illustrative elements. Within his manuscript, Carroll specified typographic emphasis such as boldness, underlining, and shaped text boxes, as well as including thirty-seven original line drawings. The typographic idiosyncrasies were published as requested – the most well known being the layout for ‘The Mouse’s Tail’ (below left):

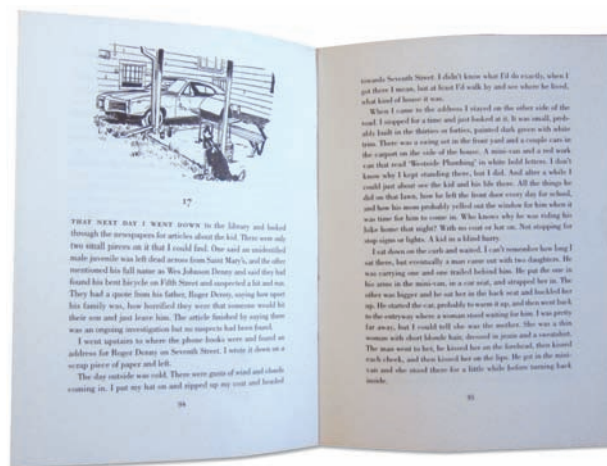


These typographic devices are integral – they cannot be removed without significantly altering the comprehension of the text. However, illustrator John Tenniel was commissioned to produce a set of forty-four drawings to replace Carroll’s original submissions (shown above). Regardless of whether he rendered them himself, Carroll intended the illustrations to be integral components of the text. Yet David Carrier, scholar of hybrid texts states: “Tenniel’s images, well suited to the story, are not an essential element of it.” (Carrier 2001) This claim

¹⁹ Other examples of excellent ‘cross over’ novels – between young adult and adult fiction – abound, such as Margo Lanagan’s *The Red Shoe* and Mark Zusak’s *The Book Thief*. I looked at many of these in the initial survey of hybrid novels, but decided to exclude them because it muddies the argument about expectations of the conventions of the genre. The expectations of young adult novels differ, which is an interesting tangent to explore at a later stage.

is seemingly supported by the variation of illustrations in different editions. *Alice* is one of the most frequently illustrated – and collected – books in the English language. The Lewis Carroll Society website offers links to 110 published editions with illustrations replacing Tenniel's, from a range of illustrators. So, according to the criteria, the typographic devices are integral, but the illustrations are supplementary. It is worth acknowledging the possibility that different devices within a hybrid novel could be alternately integral or supplementary.

The Motel Life, Willy Vlautin (2007)



The book jacket to Willy Vlautin's debut novel declares: "Interspersed with drawings that form an integral part of the narrative, *The Motel Life* is a moving and naïve debut, that should come to be seen as a classic of downbeat American prose." The claim that the drawings are integral suggests that this is a hybrid novel. However, my reading contradicts the claim on the jacket.

After Jerry Lee accidentally runs over a child, he and his brother Frank skip town. Raised in an underprivileged and dysfunctional environment, neither copes well with reality; Frank writes and Jerry Lee draws to exorcise the trauma following the accident. The book is framed as the result of these artistic purges. Intricate drawings appear at the beginning of each chapter, depicting a scene or object from the written narrative.

I am not convinced that these drawings contribute something different enough from the written text to be considered integral. As illustrations, these are intricate and beautiful, but they could be removed without significantly affecting the story. To reiterate a distinction drawn in the introduction: *The Motel Life* is a multi-modal text – it contains both writing and drawings – but it is not a hybrid text, because the writing and drawings can be separated without significantly changing the primary text.

These two novels – *Alice* and *The Motel Life* – do not nullify the criteria, but demon-

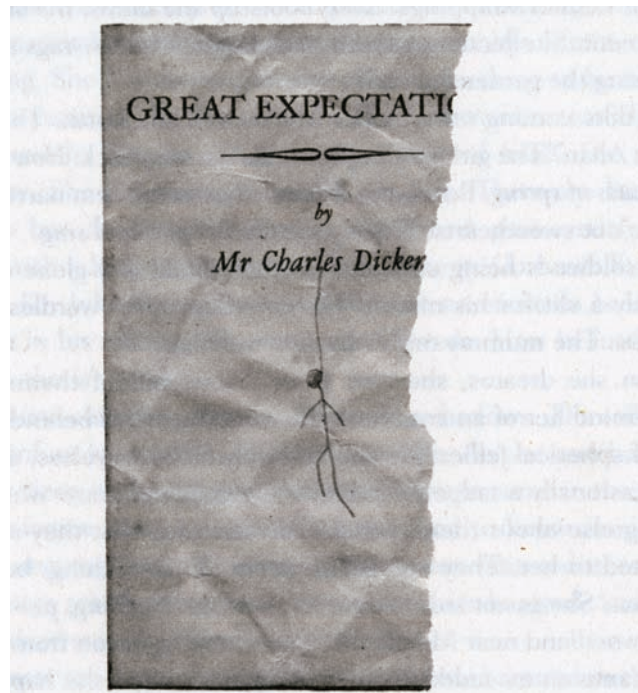
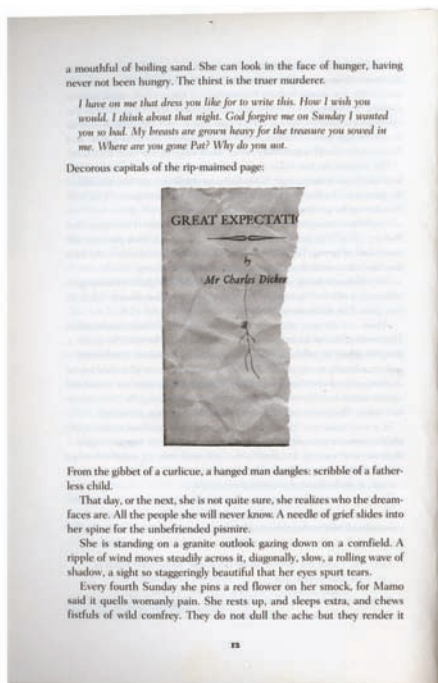
strate that some books dwell in the borderlands between hybrid and conventional novels. Categorising them as hybrid novels relies on the judgement of the reader. These examples acknowledge a grey area in defining hybrid novels, and reiterate that identifying *exemplary* hybrid novels is crucial for further analysis.

Slippages in the typology

In this preliminary survey, I attempt to categorise hybrid novels according to the type of graphic devices they contain. This exposes two problems. First, many hybrid novels contain more than one type of graphic device – Lawrence Sterne, for instance, uses both typographic devices such as *** and illustrative elements such as the marbled and black pages, and Sebald and Castro both use a combination of photographs and ephemera. Therefore, although the typology is a useful way to identify individual graphic devices, it is not a useful way to categorise hybrid novels more generally. Having said this, some graphic devices cannot be identified strictly according to the typology. A second issue raised in the preliminary study is that some devices seem to slip between the five graphic categories, as explained through three examples below.

Two graphic types in one device

On this page from O’Conner’s *Redemption Falls* a piece of ephemera is reproduced:



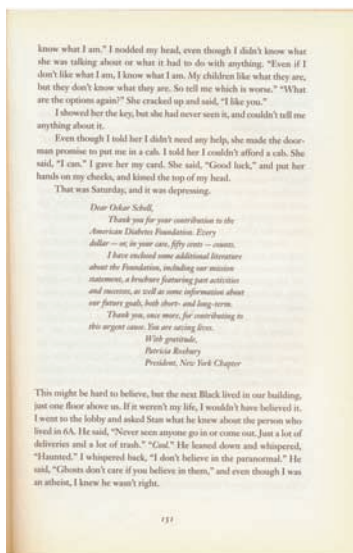
< actual size in novel

Although torn, it is identifiable as the title page Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*. In addition, a hand-drawn hanging man swings from the author’s name. Is this device a piece of ephemera,

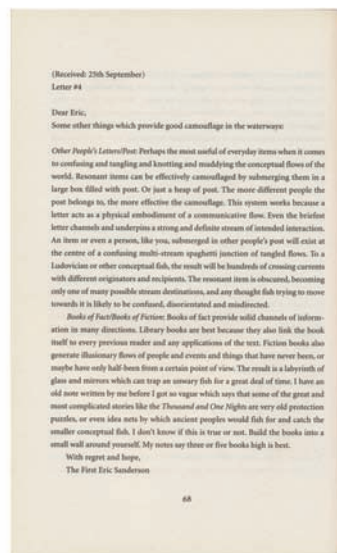
or an illustrative element? The piece of ephemera alludes to Dickens' well-known work, and the drawing makes a comment on that allusion. This is a complex image. Is the hanging man a reference to Dickens himself, the description of the gallows in *Great Expectations*, to the man hanged at the beginning of *Redemption Falls*, or perhaps all three? Intertwining different types of image complicates interpretation, multiplying the polysemy of the image – this complexity charges the power of the image, but also illuminates the difficulty of critiquing it.

Implied ephemera

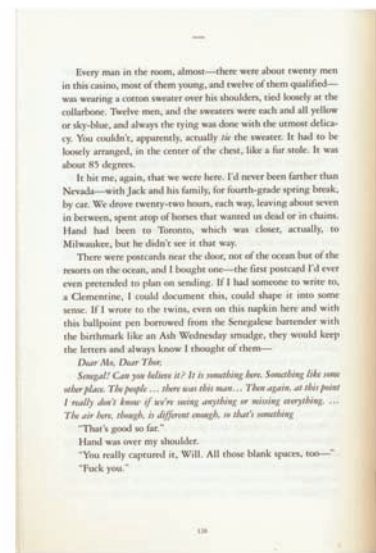
A whole sub-category of graphic devices that slip between typography and ephemera can be called *implied ephemera*. When text is typeset so it resembles an ephemeral item – a letter, a poster, a computer screen – the typesetting *implies* a familiar form. Even a very simple shift in typesetting can imply ephemera. Here are three letters, presented on the pages of three novels:



[*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Jonathan Safran Foer]



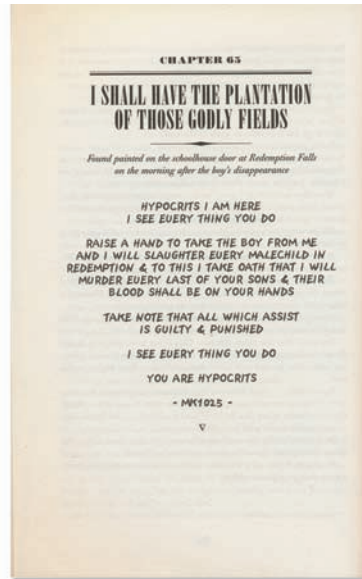
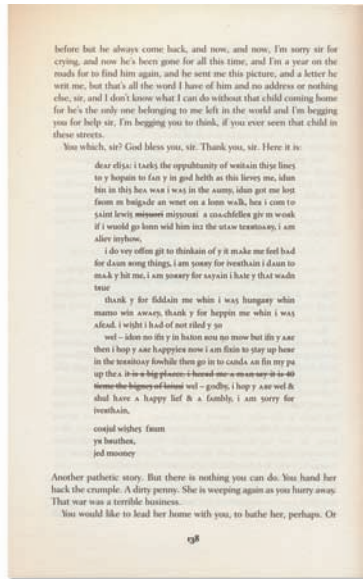
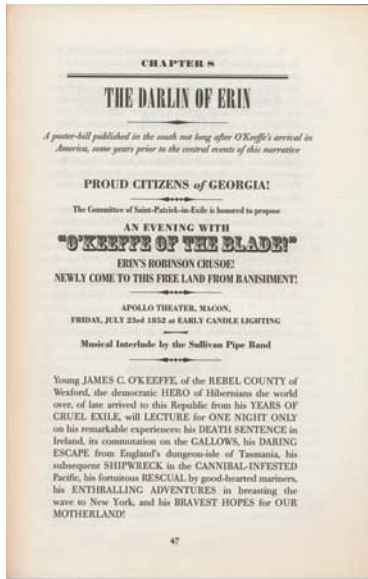
[*The Raw Shark Texts*, Steven Hall]



[*You Shall Know Our Velocity*, Dave Eggers]

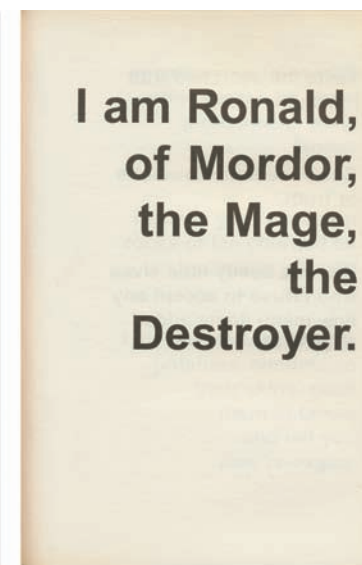
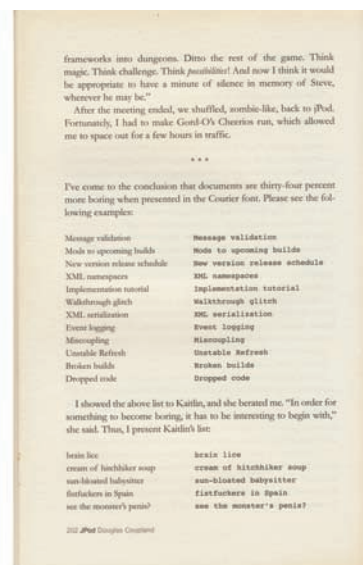
These three novels, discussed in Chapter Five, 'show' letters in three different ways. We know they are letters because they are addressed to a person – "Dear" – but the typesetting provides an additional visual clue.

More intricate examples of implied ephemera come from *Redemption Falls*: the first page (below) presents a text block in a way that implies a bill poster; the second is a letter, written by a barely literate character, so characters are backwards or written incorrectly, implying not only that it is a letter, but how the hand writing of the character would look; the third implies a piece of text scrawled on the wall of a building.



In contrast to the page from *Great Expectations* shown previously, in the examples above, reproducing the actual ephemera – an original-looking bill poster, a badly scrawled letter or a photograph of the building with this text written on its wall – is not required for most readers to recognise the texts that are implied. This novel is set in the ‘Old West’, which provides a context to aid our understanding of these pages. By implying a specific material or media, we read the materiality even though it is absent.

J-Pod, a 2006 novel by cult-author Douglas Coupland, follows a group of cynical 20-something computer-game developers who speak in contemporary movie quotes and advertising slogans.



Constantly changing typefaces, text fragments reminiscent of SMS and computer scripting, and pages of seemingly nonsensical numbers or symbols generate a kind of graphic white

noise to accompany the story. *J-Pod* is set in a culture defined by this white noise. Coupland shows us that in the contemporary environment, language and dialogue look different; that some language has a particular, familiar visual form that instructs us how to interpret it.

Although ephemera is usually paper based, these digital texts present another kind of ephemeral document, particular to the characters' world. As with O'Conner's bill poster, Coupland need not show the computer or mobile telephone screen here; the typesetting implies the material associations of this digital ephemera.

I include these examples that slip between the five graphic types to acknowledge the limitations of the typology of devices. Implied ephemera and found photographs are two sub-types of graphic device, but the potential for new crossbreeds is limitless.



To recap, this section develops criteria for identifying hybrid novels, and distinguishes them as different from other types of hybrid literature. Then, a collection of hybrid novels identified using the criteria is analysed. Through this preliminary study, I develop a typology of graphic devices that appear in hybrid novels. Limitations to both the criteria and typology of devices are discussed. So with criteria to identify hybrid novels, and a typology to more specifically describe the graphic devices within them, the next task is to critique how graphic devices *function* within the text.

As a starting point to explore ways to critique the function of graphic devices in hybrid novels, the last section in this chapter looks at how hybrid novels have been received in book reviews.

Section Three: Critical reception of hybrid novels

With little scholarly analysis to refer to, I turned instead to book reviews to source existing critiques of graphic devices in hybrid novels. Reviews of hybrid novels were collected from a range of different media – literary supplements, newspapers and magazines, online book reviews and blogs, publishing industry publications, and, where possible, design magazines. See Appendix F for a list of publications.

Seeing the graphic devices in a ‘thumb through’, the reviewer assumed they were gimmicks, but changed his mind after ‘reading’ them in the context of the novel. Likewise, a review of Graham Rawle’s cut-up masterpiece *Woman’s World* states:

The idea that Graham Rawle’s dazzling new novel might end up stacked among the novelty books at Urban Outfitters (*Boring Postcards; The Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook*) is upsetting. The concept for the book sounds, if ambitious, a bit gimmicky: an entire novel constructed from words cut out of women’s magazines from the early 1960s. But *Woman’s World* is no gimmick. (Doig 2008)

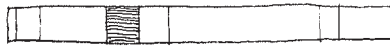
The concern is these books may be mistaken for a *mere* gift books rather than *worthy* literary works. The negativity associated with the term ‘gimmick’ in a literary context stems from a value judgment – where literature is highbrow (worthy), marketing/advertising is lowbrow (cheap, tacky). Underlying this is that books with images in are considered inferior literature. Another reviewer states: “Isn’t the term ‘gimmicky’ kind of dismissive? These novels are more than just gimmicks; they are experiments, explorations, novels where the author is pushing the limits of what a novel can do.” (W 2006)

In seeking out existing critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels, I was surprised by the frequent use of descriptors such as ‘gimmicks’ and ‘tricks’. These frequent criticisms directly contradict my analysis of the novels discussed in this chapter, and my argument that graphic devices are integral to the primary text in hybrid novels. On closer inspection, these terms appear in reviews not only as a criticism, but also in commentary that congratulates them for what they are *not*. As an appreciator of graphic devices, the dismissal of these devices as ‘gimmicks’ by some reviewers was as perplexing to me as their appearance on the page of novels was to these reviewers. The next chapter explores why graphic devices are dismissed as ‘gimmicks’, by positioning the phenomenon of hybrid novels in a broader cultural context.

3.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Visual Studies – an introduction to the
bigger (hybrid) picture



The illiterate of the future will be the person ignorant
of the use of the camera as well as of the pen.

— LASZLO MOHOLY-NAGY, 1936 —

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS SHOW THAT HYBRID NOVELS ARE AN INSUFFICIENTLY explained phenomenon, which suggests there are many angles from which to examine these texts. The primary aim of this research is to examine how *design* explains the function of graphic devices in hybrid novels. Yet before following this specific line of inquiry, it is necessary to frame the research more broadly. This chapter addresses satellite questions, raised by the preliminary study: why are graphic devices appearing in some novels *now*; and why do some critics dismiss these devices as *gimmickry*? These questions are intertwined, and are best explored through a broader discussion about images and contemporary visual culture. To this end, the emergent field of Visual Studies is introduced, through the writing of one of its major authorities – W.J.T. Mitchell.

At a time when culture is increasingly dominated by visual texts, *Visual Studies* emerges as a field of inquiry interested in images, and their production and circulation.¹ The study of images is, of course, not new, but Visual Studies proposes a pioneering field, where different perspectives and approaches from established disciplines – such as semiotics, aesthetics and art history – can be compared and combined, cultivating new ways to analyse and critique images. A founding figure in this emerging area,² Mitchell describes Visual Studies as an *interdiscipline* – it exists above and across all disciplines that study visual images. As such, this emerging field is a forum where scholars are opening new spaces for the study of images, and offers fertile territory for Visual Communication Design to both harvest and sow ideas about word-image interplay.

Mitchell's writing is of particular value to this thesis, and Visual Communication Design more generally, because it challenges the intellectual privileging of the written word over images. Two key ideas from Mitchell's writing that challenge this hegemony are: that images have unique ways of communicating that are not reducible to words; and

1 This field of study is also occasionally called Visual Culture – particularly by cultural theorists such as Margarita Dikovitskaya, whose book *Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn* is widely cited as an influential text. Nicholas Mirzoeff (2002) edited *The Visual Culture Reader*, a collection of essays from key figures in the interdisciplinary field, including W.J.T. Mitchell and Irit Rogoff, whose work I will discuss in Chapter Four. Mitchell draws a clear distinction between these two labels: "I think it's useful at the outset to distinguish between visual studies and visual culture as, respectively, the field of study and the object or target of that study. Visual studies is the study of visual culture." (2005:337). Johanna Drucker (2003) also offers a thoughtful contribution supporting the idea that Visual Studies is a unique approach to knowledge, not just the study of visual artefacts. She outlines the sketchy borders of this field – how it affects both practice and critical discourse, and where it should reside in the academy, particularly in relation to more established disciplines such as Art Theory and Aesthetics. James Elkins book *Visual Studies: A sceptical introduction* is a provocation for the future of the field – Elkins argues that in barely a decade, Visual Studies has produced a number of excellent texts but that scholars need to 'raise the ante' for the field to realise its potential: "It has to become more ambitious about its purview, more demanding in its analyses, and above all more difficult." (Elkins 2003) Elkins states that his wish is: "to see the field become so difficult that it can do justice to the immeasurable importance of visibility, which is still slighted throughout the university." (65)

2 I was first introduced to Mitchell's work at a literary conference, 'The Language of Images', held at Central Connecticut State University, March 29–30 2007, where Mitchell's writing was frequently referenced: <<http://www.english.ccsu.edu/petit/>>

that all media is mixed media, or, to use the terminology established in the thesis – all texts are hybrid texts. A third key idea from Mitchell’s writing is that visual scholarship should be presented in a manner that is widely accessible, to appeal to the range of disciplines that deal with visual texts. Mitchell calls for open and conversational approaches to the critique of images, and the hybrid texts they are part of. Mitchell’s theoretical framework is useful because he promotes an approach to critiquing the visual that allows multiple interpretations to coexist.

This chapter sets up a theoretical framework through which to view this thesis. It begins by reviewing the intellectual supremacy of word over image, and a contemporary shift in that hegemony. Then, it introduces three key ideas from Mitchell’s writing about hybrid texts that are pertinent to this thesis. Where relevant, writing from other significant visual scholars is used to support or extend these key ideas. The chapter concludes by reiterating the call for those with expertise in word-image interplay to step forward, and foster new approaches to analysing and critiquing hybrid texts.

The duel between word and image

... [L]ike Plato’s original four-legged two-headed humans in the Symposium, words and images seem to have fallen foul of the gods and been rent asunder forever, flung into a mad dance, whose irregular beat searches in vain to restore their long-lost unity ... What remains between the image and the text is the old yearning for unity. — David Sornig (2004)

A historical supremacy of words over images: valuing monosemy over polysemy

Visual Studies emerged as a distinct scholarly field in reaction to the well-established intellectual hegemony that values the verbal (*words*) over the visual (*images*) as the primary mode for analysing and articulating human knowledge. This intellectual hegemony is rooted in the different kinds of *meaning* the verbal and visual have the capacity to communicate: words are elevated for their capacity to form structured, unambiguous arguments and analysis. From an early age, reading and writing are promoted as educational necessities for intellectual development, whereas image making and interpretation are considered optional electives.³

³ Visual scholar Paul Martin Lester points out that when “words became more important than pictures to convey complex thought ... Reading and writing became curriculum requirements, but visual literacy wasn’t considered a necessary component of an individual’s education.” (Lester 2003)

Linguistic expression can make *propositions* – statements that affirm or deny something, and can be proven true or false. Therefore, language can aspire to *monosemy* – the articulation of specific, unambiguous meanings. Visual expression, conversely, cannot make propositions, or explicitly express abstract ideas, such as possibility, conditionality, counterfactuality or causality. Images are always *polysemic* – ambiguous and open to multiple possible meanings. Recognising that of course not all language achieves, or aspires to achieve, monosemy, the key distinction here is that language has the *capacity* to be explicit.

Narrative theorist Marie Laure Ryan states: “Whereas language can easily zero in on objects and properties, pictures can only frame a general area that contains many shapes and features.” (Ryan 2004)⁴ Ryan explains: “only language can make it explicit that the queen died of grief over the death of the king or that the fox stole the cheese from the crow by fooling him to believe it was something that was not the case.” (11) An image, or a series of images, could illustrate these events, but not in a specific, unambiguous way. For example, Ryan suggests it is impossible to explicitly convey that ‘Napoleon was short’ visually: “a picture would have to represent the height of the emperor together with many of his other visual properties, and there would be a significant risk that the spectator would be more impressed by one of the other features than by the height itself.” (10)

This lack of specificity is often considered a limitation to images. Mitchell Stephens⁵ says: “most still pictures must strain to say something as simple as ‘no’ or to ask ‘why?’ or to wonder what might be. They state much more effectively than they negate or interrogate or speculate. ... These are significant handicaps.” (1998: 66)

Stephens offers another example of the ambiguity of images: Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel fresco of God giving life to man through the touch of the finger could also be read as a father-son or a lover-beloved relationship – a show of caring, joy or effort, amongst other things. Stephens states: “This richness of meaning is testament to the artists’ genius. But if we did not receive some verbal explanation, how could we be expected to ‘read’ this scene as we might a piece of writing.” (1998: 66)

To ‘fix’ their floating ambiguity, words are almost always attached to images, pinning

4 Ryan’s introduction to *Narrative Across Media* (2004) discusses the different expressive capabilities of words and images, and how material, medium and mode affect communication. Sol Worth’s article ‘Pictures Can’t Say “Ain’t”’ (1975) is frequently cited in discussion on the limitation of images. See also Pink (2006) and Chaplain (2006).

5 Professor of Journalism and Mass Media at New York University, Stephens book *The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word* discusses the shift toward a culture dominated by visual symbols and texts (discussed later in this chapter, through Mitchell’s proposition of a ‘pictorial turn’). Published in 1998, Stephens book predicted that film and video would find new spaces on the Internet – seven years before YouTube and other video sharing sites arrived.

an intended *reading* to the work.⁶ It is rare for images to appear unaccompanied by any text at all – even abstract paintings are captioned to gallery walls. Therefore, almost all images we encounter are, in fact, *hybrid texts*, pinned like butterflies within a linguistic frame. The notion that most images are hybrid texts is an important idea, explored in more detail shortly.

Sociologist Elizabeth Chaplin⁷ claims the convention of pinning linguistic captions to images is a result of nineteenth-century sociology, “borne of increased literacy, more sophisticated technology, and indeed the scientific revolution.”⁸ (Chaplin 2006) In an era in which ‘truth’ and validity were paramount, the kinds of analytical thinking and unambiguous propositions achievable through language were prized. Linguistic analysis and articulation became the dominant mode of expression, and a superior ‘way of knowing’. Academics and literati espoused language as the foundation of knowledge, and promoted the densely printed page as a symbol of the ‘purity’ of the written word:⁹

A scholarly writer should be able to present an argument or scientific principle through the logic of language. A learned reader should have the analytic skills and imagination to comprehend a scientific text or enjoy a novel without being distracted by pictures. Where illustrations are essential, as in a geometry textbook, they should be sparse and used only as sources to be discussed in the text. (Sharples: 130)

The perceived need to caption images – to manage their ‘fatal polysemy’ – rendered them subservient to words. However, it is widely believed that the supremacy of word over image is shifting, as a result of contemporary communication and information technologies that

6 Roland Barthes proposes that captions anchor an image within a written text. Barthes states that captions are “intended to fix the floating signifiers in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs.” (Barthes 1977: 39) John Berger and Jean Mohr describe the interplay between written captions and photographs: “In the relation between a photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it.” (Berger & Mohr 1982) Stuart Hall expands on Barthes’ theories of textual anchorage, arguing that a caption pinpoints one of a range of possible meanings and amplifies it for the reader. Therefore, captioning is reductive – it reduces the range of possible interpretations. Elizabeth Chaplin suggests that readers are so familiar with captions that they barely register them as verbal instructions, instead perceiving “an image whose meaning is clear (whose meaning is ‘given’).” (2006:45)

7 Chaplin is writes about word-image relationships and the use of images, particularly photographs, in sociology research. Her article quoted from above, ‘The Conventions of Captioning’, influenced my thinking about captions and broadens the potential audience for this research – beyond novelists and designers, Chaplin advocates uncaptioned images as effective devices for scholarly researchers and writers.

8 Elsewhere key factors contributing to the supremacy of the word over image in Western thinking are commonly cited as: the development of an alphabet; mechanisation of printing technology, and; the philosophical ‘linguistic turn’ that claims our understanding of reality is conditioned by language. The influence of the alphabet and later mechanisation of printing technologies on human thought are discussed across literature from fields as broad as cognitive science to design. Conversations directly pertinent to this research can be found in Lester 2003; Scott 2003; Sharples 1999; Shlain 1998; and Walston 2006. Richard M Rorty popularised the phrase ‘Linguistic Turn’ 1967 – the introduction to the 2nd edition of his anthology by the same name (1992) offers a full description of the linguistic turn. Ludwig Wittgenstein is also an influential figure in this discourse, as well as Fredric Jameson, who proposed a Cultural Turn, particularly in the Humanities, with emphasis on meaning and culture.

9 A parallel sentiment, familiar to design historians, is the modernist idea that decoration is something frivolous, or untrustworthy. Deyan Sudijic claims Modernist designers believed “decoration was reprehensible because it hid the undadored truth they professed to to in modern materials.” (in Lash 1990)

are highly visual. Visual Studies recognises, and investigates this shift.

The pictorial turn – the supremacy of word over image shifts

Development of visual technologies – such as photography, film and television, and new image-rich media – affects a ‘society of spectacle, surveillance and simulacra’ and with it, a shift from a primarily linguistic culture toward a more visual, ‘ocularcentric’, culture.¹⁰ Mitchell coined the phrase ‘pictorial turn’ in his influential work *Picture Theory* (1994) to denote “the widely shared notion that visual images have replaced words as the dominant mode of expression in our time.” (2005: 5) Other significant discussions about the shift from a verbal to visually dominant culture are found in: Kress 1998; Shlain 1998; and Seward 1997. This is not to claim that visual images have not played a role in shaping times past, but it is difficult to deny that ours is now an era dominated by visual images.

Drawing from current research in cognitive science, a cluster of scholars claim the ‘pictorial turn’ is fundamentally altering the human brain.¹¹ A shift from a dominance of verbal to a dominance of visual expression in mass media has caused a seismic shift in Western thinking, identified as a shift from left to right brain cognition. The ‘left brain’ is described as sequential, logical, analytical – specialising in text, analysing detail. The ‘right brain’ is nonlinear, intuitive and holistic – specialising in context, synthesising the big picture. To hack a distinction, the left brain is linguistic (words) and the right brain is visual (images). David Crow¹² suggests the camera and then the television “shifted mass communication from the left to the right side of our brain, favouring a more holistic way of reading and understanding the world: a way of reading more suited to reading images.” (18) Therefore, survival in a visually dominant culture demands *visual literacy* – the ability to critically engage with images.

Yet scepticism surrounds what ‘right brain thinking’ or ‘visual literacy’ actually means in academia, particularly by those committed to the intellectual privileging of writing over visual texts. In some camps, the pictorial turn has engendered suspicion toward images, and the outright dismissal that nonverbal literacies are a possibility. Daniel Pink describes a view that begrudgingly recognises the value of right brain thinking, but still places it below left-brain reasoning, claiming it is dismissed as “a side dish to the main course of true intelligence. What distinguishes us from other animals is our ability to reason analytically ... anything else

¹⁰ Gillian Rose summarises arguments that both modernity and post-modernity are ‘ocularcentric’. (2007: 3-5)

¹¹ Publications that discuss how a shift from left to right brain thinking affects our interpretation of texts are emerging from social science and design writers. In particular, see: Leonard Shlain (1998); Daniel Pink (2006); David Crow (2006).

¹² Crow, a graphic designer and academic, has written a series of textbooks for students of communication media and graphic design, published in AVA Academia’s Context series. His book *Left to Right / The cultural shift from words to pictures* provides a broad but basic overview of the shift from left to right, verbal to visual, as it relates to designers and audiences alike.

isn't simply different; it's less." (Pink 2006: 16-17) Despite pervasive claims of a turn toward the visual, a lingering dismissal of images as an inferior way of knowing hangs about.

The dismissal of images as inferior to writing is a complex issue. Visual scholars William Garrett-Petts and Donald Lawrence¹³ provide a widely referenced overview of the resistance to images in light of an increasingly visually mediated world, as do readers and anthologies of essays, such as *Images: A reader* (Manghani, Piper & Simons 2006)¹⁴ and *Eloquent Images* (Hocks & Kendrick 2003). Naysayers warn a world dominated by visual images will result in a 'dumbed-down' civilization and even dismiss visual literacy as an oxymoron. Garrett-Petts and Lawrence summarise this perspective:

Visual images are said to offer only a superficial snapshot of reality – sight without insight ... distrust of the visual becomes still more acute when the image moves from metaphor to metonymic element: when actual photographs or drawings are combined with the verbal narrative. ... Any integration of visual and verbal literacies... presents a potentially disruptive challenge to the hegemony of word over image – and openly suspicious (even hostile) characterizations of the visual should be seen, at least in part, as an anxious reaction to that challenge. (Garrett-Petts & Lawrence 2000)

At its most hysterical, the resistance to images manifests itself as a hostile elitism, vilifying the image as a pied piper luring us toward universal idiocy: images and image media – think television, video games, comic books – are blamed for laziness, hedonism and moral decay. (Mitchell 2005:77) In more subtle manifestations, the resistance to images is apparent in the dismissive association of picture books and comics with children or the illiterate, or in assuming a graphic element in a novel is a supplementary 'gimmick' rather than a narrative device.¹⁵

Returning to the focus of this thesis, in the context of a 'pictorial turn', in which visual images are colonising all forms of media, the appearance of graphic devices in novels is unsurprising. Hybrid novels are products of an increasingly visual culture. Further, considering the intellectual resistance to images in the wake of this 'pictorial turn', the rejection of these graphic devices is also unsurprising. As Garrett-Petts and Lawrence state above, the metonymic

13 Their book *PhotoGraphic Narratives* warrants mentioning as a useful text for scholars interested in word-image relationships in fictional and non-fictional texts alike. It developed from an interdisciplinary course they taught in Canada, and provides a broad overview of the existing literature written about hybrid texts.

14 A review I wrote of this reader appears in the Sage *Visual Communication* journal. (Sadokierski 2008)

15 Appendix B discusses parallels between the struggle for comics/graphic novels to be recognised as 'legitimate' literature and the current critical reaction to hybrid novels. See also Hillis Miller (1994: 61-75) for a lively discussion of how different novelists perceive the inclusion of graphic images in fiction, from Mark Twain and Stéphanne Mallarmé's strong anti-graphics stance, to Henry James's inconsistent attitude and writer-artists Edward Gorey, William Blake and D.G. Rossetti, who produce work in which "picture and word have relatively equal force." (74)

presence of graphic devices on the pages of novels is particularly troubling to those anxious about a visual ‘dumbing down’ of culture – graphic devices are infiltrating a ‘high culture’ narrative form, where the written word has traditionally reigned supreme. The appearance of images on the pages of novels is viewed, by some, as a degradation of a ‘high art’ form. The dismissal of graphic devices as gimmicks by some reviewers is symptomatic of a broader resistance to images – bound by a fear that visual images threaten the supremacy of the written word, and will permanently alter the analytical reasoning so valued by nineteenth-century thinkers. However, this limiting ‘anxious reaction’ is caused by the tendency to pit word against image as binary opposites. Visual Studies emerges, then, as a field interested in word and image as complementary, not binary, opposites, and is thus an appropriate field in which to contextualise this research.

Visual Studies – calls for exploratory and discursive critique of hybrid texts

I think visual artists, connoisseurs, and most art historians know intuitively that an image cannot finally be ‘cashed in’ for words—that’s what the saying ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ really means.

—W.J.T. Mitchell (quoted in McNamara 1996)

Visual Studies encourages scholars and educators from different disciplines to come together, sharing their expertise and collaborating to form a kind of ‘border pedagogy’ for images.¹⁶ As a result, courses in ‘visual communication’ and ‘visual studies’ are sprouting in diverse university faculties and tertiary curricula, and academic journals like *Visual Studies* and *Visual Communication* demonstrate a desire for better understandings of the visual.¹⁷ In addition, numerous books about the ‘rise of the image’ and new approaches to studying images are appearing. A small selection of these titles include: Mitchell’s *What Do Pictures Want?* (2005); Mitchell Stephen’s *The Rise of the Image the Fall of the Word* (1998); and Ron Burnett’s *How*

16 In particular, Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux’s research into new educational approaches between literature and its “sister disciplines” – visual arts, photography, film –is cited in much of the literature about new literacies, and Garrette-Petts and Lawrence give an over view of other scholars working in this area..

17 Taylor & Francis’s *Visual Studies*, published on behalf of the Visual Sociology Association, cites its aim as publishing ‘visually-oriented articles’ across a range of areas to provide a key resource for all disciplines that engage with images, society and culture. Sage Publication’s *Visual Communication* is also positioned as an interdisciplinary forum, interested in articles on ‘the crucial visual dimension of language and communication’, defining the visual broadly as: still and moving images; graphic design and typography; visual phenomena such as fashion, professional vision, posture and interaction; the built and landscaped environment; and the role of the visual in relation to language, music, sound and action.

Images Think (2004). These titles do little to ease apprehension about a visual ‘invasion’ – images indeed sound like an aggressive alien force.

However, in rectifying misinterpretations of the Pictorial Turn a decade after coining the phrase, Mitchell clarifies that his intention is to acknowledge a ‘turn to the visual’, not to claim that visual images will dominate or replace language entirely:

The mistake is to construct a grand binary model of history centred on just one of these turning points, and to declare a single ‘great divide’ between the ‘age of literacy’ (for instance) and the ‘age of visibility’. These kinds of narratives are beguiling, handy for the purposes of presentist polemics, and useless for the purposes of genuine historical criticism. (2005: 348-9)

Rather than pitting word against image in a battle for supremacy, Mitchell aims to disrupt habitual ways of thinking about word-image relationships, to address images in new ways. Mitchell recognises “deep and fundamental differences between the verbal and visual” but also “inescapable zones of transaction between them.”¹⁸ (2005:55) Word and image are complementary modes, not binary opposites. The first key idea from Mitchell’s writing I adopt here is that word and image are different communicative and perceptual modes. Accepting that images are less specific than words does not mean that images cannot communicate in a unique way. Images carry *unique kinds of meanings*, with the potential to communicate something that is *not reducible to words*.

Unique kinds of meaning

Gillian Rose asserts that visual images always carry a certain amount of original information; they carry “their own peculiar kinds of visual resistance, recalcitrance, argument, particularity, strangeness or pleasure.” (Rose 2007: 12) Inherent in images is *something* that resists linguistic translation. Articulating that *something* is a challenging task for visual scholars.

Returning to the idea that most images are, in fact, hybrid texts because they “make sense in relation to other things, including written texts and very often other images”, Rose stresses that images cannot be explained purely in language. She continues: “[images] are not reducible to the meanings carried by those other things.” (11) Yet, in most disciplines, *ekphrastic* descriptions of images and image studies are the norm – images are analysed and

18 Mitchell suggests a set of terms to express and distinguish between these ‘inescapable zones of transaction’. “Imagetext” describes hybrid works that integrate image and text. “Image/text” designates the problematic ‘gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation’. “Image-text” to designate relations of the verbal and visual. Although interesting for their thoughtful use of punctuation, I found these terms confusing in my writing and abandoned them.

described through language, turning a ‘blind eye’ to the fact that although similar, language and image are not the same. When describing images in language, something is always lost in translation.¹⁹ Prominent semiotician Gunther Kress asserts that questioning the visual in linguistic terms is crippling to a broader understanding of human cognition and experience:

At the moment our theories of meaning (hence our dominant theories of cognition) are entirely shaped by and derived from theories founded on the assumption of the dominance of language. Meaning is, in fact, identified with ‘meaning in language.’ This constitutes a major impediment to an understanding of the semiotic potentials of, amongst other modes, the visual and its role in cognition, representation and communication. (Kress 2000)

Meaning is a question designed to ask of language. If word and image are different cognitive modes of communication, to ask what an image *means* is the wrong question. Mitchell says:

The question of meaning has been thoroughly explored—one might say exhaustively—by hermeneutics and semiotics, with the result that every image theorist seems to find some residue or ‘surplus value’ that goes beyond communication, signification and persuasion... We need to reckon with not just the meaning of images, but their silence, their reticence, their wildness and nonsensical obduracy. (2005:9-10)

Rather than asking what images mean, Mitchell asks what they *want*, and his brief answer is: images want equality. Mitchell considers spectatorship – “the look, the gaze, the glance, observation, visual pleasure” – as *equal to* reading, but *not reducible to* a ‘form’ of reading. Mitchell continues:

Vision is as important as language in mediating social relations, and it is not reducible to language, to the ‘sign’, or to discourse. Pictures want equal rights with language, not to be turned into language. They want neither to be levelled into a ‘history of image’ nor elevated into a ‘history of art’, but to be seen as complex individuals occupying multiple subject positions and identities. (2005:47)

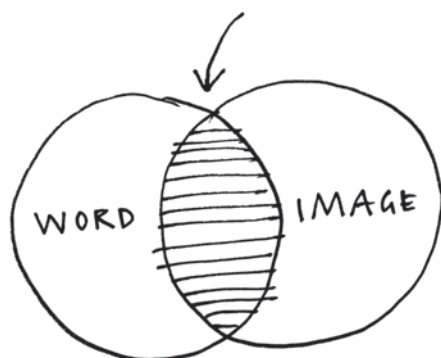
The field of Visual Studies needs new questions to ask of images – questions that recognise the unique ways in which the visual communicates. Following the understanding of word and image as distinct but equally compelling modes of communication, we come to the second key idea from Mitchell’s writing that is useful to this thesis – that all media is mixed

¹⁹ Liv Hausken (Ryan 2004) describes this as ‘medium blindness’ – interpretation that does not account for the significance of the nature of the medium (the mode of expression).

media, or, that all texts are hybrid texts. The *interplay* between word and image creates a complex ‘third space’ that demands *hybrid literacy*.

All media is mixed media, all texts are hybrid texts

Examining the interplay between word and image is central to developing new ways of understanding how images work. Mitchell states: “The space between words and images is a kind of void into which (and from which) ideas, passions, narratives, representations emerge. It is the ‘third space’, the in-between where contingency rules.”²⁰ (McNamara 1996)



The *interplay* between word and image in hybrid texts creates a ‘third space’ that is neither purely verbal, nor purely visual.

Rose states that almost all images are actually hybrids, because they are pinned to verbal, aural and other texts. Mitchell extends this notion, arguing that all media is actually mixed media, or, that there is no such thing as an unmixed medium:

[Word and image] are woven in a kind of braided chiasmus in the very process of perception. This means that, of course, we will ‘read’ the visual, treat the image as a text. We have never had any choice but to do this in some way or other. But we also have no choice but to ‘see’ the verbal, to treat the text as an image. Whenever we deal with representations, media, art forms, or percepts we are dealing with ‘mixed media’. (in McNamara 1996)

If all media is hybrid (mixed media), then it follows that all reading involves some degree of ‘hybrid literacy’. A more complex kind of ‘seeing’ develops from interacting with hybrid media. Using the example of film, Mitchell Stephens states:

Moving images can cut in, cut away, dance around, superimpose, switch tone or otherwise

²⁰ Other scholars support exploring ‘space’ produced by hybrid texts, and the cross-disciplinary exploration this requires. Daniel Radcliffe states: “rather than disputing priority, wouldn’t it be more valuable to inquire into the various ways in which linguistic and non-linguistic modes combine, intersect, and resist one another?” (quoted in Garrett-Petts & Lawrence: 3)

change perspective, without losing their audience's attention; they can encompass computerized graphics, even words. Seeing, consequently, can become a more complex activity; we might see from more perspectives.²¹ (Stephens, xi)

Bringing the focus back to print media, understanding 'new' (digital) media, reveals new ways of thinking about old (print) media. The effect of the pictorial turn has been to reassess all word-image relationships – to 'rethink textuality' – opening new ways to study not only images, but all texts.²²

In an article about the contemporary influx of hybrid novels, design writers Anna Gerber and Teal Triggs wonder whether we end up *looking at* rather than *reading* these books, asking: "Do such antics—cut-up newspapers, blank pages, photographic dreams—mean we end up looking at the book instead of reading it? And is there an implicit hierarchy between the two? Is reading more important than looking?" (Gerber & Triggs 2006) Traditionally verbal reading has been more important than looking, but now, expectations of what it means to 'read' are shifting toward a more hybrid experience, where the distinction between reading and looking are increasingly blurred. Noticing this shift, literary critic Jonathan Franzen suggests: "For every reader who dies today, a viewer is born."²³ (Franzen 2004) What emerges, then, are new readers for new writers, and new writers for new readers.

New Writers for New Readers, New Readers for New Writers

Considering the photographic and typographic experimentation in the early 20th Century book culture in avant-garde art movements, such as Dadaism, Futurism and Constructivism, artist and educator El Lissitzky predicted the birth of a new kind of writer. In a 1923 manifesto, Lissitzky stated: "The book finds its way into the reader's brain through the eye, not

21 Cultural theorists refer to the 'MTV effect' – juxtaposing images, words and sounds, bumping them against each other and weaving them together. The effect on magazines of the time like *Raygun*, *Wired* and *Émigré* – to name a few – is apparent.

22 Johanna Drucker and Jerome McGann write individually and in collaboration on 'rethinking textuality' – the way new media leads to a re-examination of 'old' print media. McGann (1993, 2004) proposes what designers have known for some time – that design elements like text layout, font, and other typographic devices are 'bibliographic codes' that should be considered along with linguistic codes. Drucker writes prolifically and accessibly about typography and the materiality of texts. Their central argument is that translating a print document into an electronic document necessarily involves an act of interpretation: "The advent of electronic textuality presents us with an unparalleled opportunity to re-formulate fundamental ideas about texts and, in the process, to see print as well as electronic texts with fresh eyes." (quoted in Hayles 2003) N. Katherine Hayles (2007) directly relates the notion of new, computational technologies and the rise of hybrid novels, and speculates how literature will be structurally affected by the computer. J. Hillis Miller (1992: 61) also discusses a 'revision' of the function of illustrations in Victorian novels in light of new media studies: "A new branch of the interpretation of fiction has recently been opened up by the recovery, for example of the graphic tradition to which Dickens's illustrators belonged and by the study of Dickens's novels as multi-media collaborative productions. This attention to illustrations in novels has no doubt in part been stimulated by discussion of the relations of picture and word in film studies." Robinson (1995: 30-37, 46-51) and Crow (2006: 30-37) both provide succinct arguments for how new media influence the old, in particular, how television influenced magazine and book cover design, affecting a shift toward more image-based content.

23 This quote references Roland Barthes influential essay 'The Death of the Author' (Barthes 1977), shifting the obituary from that of the author to the reader.

through the ear ... The new book requires a new writer.”²⁴ These new writers have taken some decades to surface from the experimental avant-garde to the mainstream, but the hybrid novels discussed in this thesis suggest these new writers are now here. Technology and culture have progressed enough for Lissitzky’s prediction to be realised. Mike Sharples states:

[T]he time is ripe for a re-integration of illustration and text design with writing, not just as an aspect of ‘visual literacy’ but as an essential part of the process of writing as design ... By becoming more aware of the code [the combination of language, visual appearance and physical form of a text] and how it will be received by readers in different cultures and contexts, a writer can deliberately manipulate all its aspects – not just the language – to achieve effects on the reader.²⁵ (1999:131)

The hybrid novel is not new – as evidenced by Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* and Abbott’s *Flatland* – however, contemporary digital technology hands the writer more opportunities for graphic innovation. William Faulkner requested different colour inks to differentiate separate characters in *The Sound and the Fury*; this was not an option in 1929, so italics were used instead. (FitzGerald 2005) Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* show this is now an option – and writers know it. Danielewski says:

Older generations—despite the fact that they’re multi-processing their morning breakfast, a train wreck in India and thoughts of an ailing friend—will find *House of Leaves* difficult because they’re prejudiced. They’ve been taught what a book should look like and how it should be read. Ruler-wielding didacts have instilled in them the notion that a book must start here, move along like this, and finish over there.

But books don’t have to be so limited. They can intensify informational content and experience. Multiple stories can lie side by side on the page. Search engines—in the case of *House of Leaves* a word index—will allow for easy cross-referencing. Passages may be found, studied, revisited, or even skimmed. And that’s just the beginning. Words can also be colored and those colors can have meaning. How quickly pages are turned or not turned can be addressed.

Hell pages can be tilted, turned upside down, even read backwards... Books are remarkable

24 Originally published in Kurt Schwitters’ magazine *Merz*, in 1923.

25 Social semiotician Theo van Leeuwen identifies a ‘new writing’ developed through the ‘visual grammar’ of digital media [his emphasis], stating this new writing “integrates writing and image in new ways and increasingly blurs the distinction between the two, a distinction which only yesterday still seemed so clear-cut and obvious.” (van Leeuwen 2008) Semiotics is increasingly shifting toward the study of ‘multimodal’ texts – which is simply another way of describing ‘hybrid texts’. In a 2008 article in the journal *Visual Studies*, van Leeuwen states that a crucial issue in the ‘social semiotics of visual contemporary visual communication’ is a need to move away from examining specific semiotic modes – ‘monomodality’ – toward an ‘integrated multimodal approach’. According to this approach, analysing images as independent and self-contained ‘modes’ is less useful than breaking images into ‘visual resources’ – such as colour, movement, composition. See also Machin 2007; Martinec & Salway 2005.

come new writers, producing still more hybrid texts. A chicken-and-egg cycle of new reading breeding new writing, and vice versa, is gaining momentum. Yet criticism that graphic devices in hybrid novels are ‘gimmicky’ exposes a gap in hybrid literacy. I argue in many cases, these critics are fundamentally mistaken in their analysis of graphic devices. As new contracts of expectation develop between writers and readers, scholars and educators recognise a need to guide readers toward strategies for reading hybrid texts. In Chapters Four and Five, this thesis intends to do just that – guide readers toward strategies for critiquing hybrid novels. This leads to the third idea from Mitchell’s writing on Visual Studies that frames this thesis: that critique of images and hybrid texts should be widely accessible, to appeal to a range of disciplines that deal with visual texts. The final part of this chapter expands on the necessity, and current insufficiency, of accessible language and more ‘conversational’ approaches to discussing images and hybrid texts.

The pedagogy of hybrid literacies: open and discursive approaches to the study of hybrid texts

In response to a proliferation of hybrid texts, a project of redefining ‘literacy’ is developing.²⁷ This is not to suggest that ‘old’ practices of reading and writing are to be replaced by ‘new’ approaches to literacy. Rather, that a new space needs to be opened in scholarship and education to account for the different ways we interact with hybrid texts. Diana George, an academic who teaches written composition, recognises a gap between how students develop visual literacy skills through their social environments and the way scholarship engages with the visual: “our students have a much richer imagination for what we might accomplish with the visual than our journals have yet to address.” (2002:12) This does not necessarily mean students are more sophisticated readers than their teachers, but in George’s words, that to “move beyond a basic and somewhat vague call for attention to ‘visual literacy’ in the writing class, it is crucial to understand how very complicated and sophisticated is visual communication to students who have grown up in what is by all accounts an aggressively visual culture.” (15)

The New London Group is a collective of researchers and educators interested in expanding the definition of literacy, aiming to “ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community and economic life.” Their manifesto states:

27 Authoritative design writer Ellen Lupton (2004) explores three definitions of literacy, citing a range of influential proponents of each concept: first, a “pure, alphabetic concept of literacy” advocated by Walter Ong (1982) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1959); second, an impure “expansive, all inclusive view” which embraces “any mode of communication that can be preserved and recalled outside the human body” as proposed by Nancy Kaplan; and between them, an intermediate view – “a middle ground that is something more interesting than a compromise” supported by post-structuralists Jacques Derrida (1976) and Friedrich Kittler.

[L]iterary pedagogy must now account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies. This includes understanding and competent control of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word – for instance, visual design in desktop publishing or the interface of visual and linguistic meaning in multimedia. (New London Group 1996)

In light of the above, hybrid literacy is increasingly relevant. Educators are responsible for empowering students with necessary tools to navigate and communicate in such an environment.²⁸ Educators recognise that projects in which students collaborate to create ‘real world constructions’ – like web pages, interactive movies or layouts (design projects) – are invaluable, because students assume the role of the producer, rather than consumer, of information: “Through classroom construction of a multimedia project, an in-depth understanding of visual communication, or visual literacy, is learned along the way.” (Riesland 2005) Results of these projects show high motivation as students enjoy participating in the creative process, as well as high learning retention – through participation, students engage with learning objectives more deeply. (Chandler-Olcott & Mahar 2003; Considine, Horton & Moorman 2009; Garthwait 2001) This is old news to visual communication designers and educators, but interestingly, much of this pedagogy is being developed and taught by non-designers. It is taught from a perspective focused on *audienicing*, with limited knowledge of *production*. Mitchell states: “this might be a moment when those who pay a lot of attention to visual images might be in a position to say something worth listening to, and that it wouldn’t be just the ‘news’ that textual procedures can get meaning out of images.” (in McNamara 1996) Likewise, the editors of *Images: A Reader* state: “Even today those best suited to understand images in the broader sense have been those trained in practical criticism – the study of art, for example, sitting somewhere between theory and practice.” (Manghani, Piper & Simons 2006) Barbara Maria Stafford calls for: “scholars, creators and teachers of visual communication to bring a distinctive, irreducible and highly visible experience” to create a counterpoint to an “aggressively linguistic” view of cognition. (1996:10)

Again the question raised in the introduction resurfaces: *what else could good design be?*

28 Other scholars suggesting holistic approaches to the study of hybrid texts include Nicole Amare and Alan Manning (2007) advocate teaching “a unified system of visual rhetoric that encompasses both text and graphics within a common visual-language system.” They build a semiotic model based on the work of C.S. Pierce, organised around three primary communication goals: to decorate, to indicate, and to inform. This approach echoes the three taxonomies of word-image relationships discussed in Appendix C.

In relation to the interdisciplinary field of Visual Studies, this question becomes – *what could design add to the understanding and teaching of hybrid literacies?* So, we arrive, full circle, at the demand for ways to critique word-image interplay; it is again apparent that distinct knowledge of word-image interplay makes Visual Communication Designers particularly suited to critiquing images, and the hybrid texts they belong to.

Mitchell calls for critique of hybrid texts that opens dialogue, issuing an “invitation to a conversational opening in which the outcome is somewhat indeterminate, rather than an ordered series of steps. The aim is to undermine the ready-made template for interpretive mastery . . . by halting us at a prior moment.” (2005:48-49) He promotes analysis that reveals insights about images, rather than prescribing meanings to them, and critique that is exploratory and discursive. In addition, Mitchell expresses his hope that the field of Visual Studies: “might find a way to write about the images and words that comprise our culture in ways that are critically acute and widely accessible.” (in McNamara 1996) For Visual Studies to be valuable across a range of disciplines, accessible language is essential. For these reasons, Mitchell’s take on the emerging interdisciplinary field of Visual Studies is appealing to Visual Communication Design.

However, although Mitchell establishes criteria for critiquing hybrid texts, he does not offer *methods* for analysis to inform such criticism. The next chapter develops a set of tools for analysing graphic devices in hybrid novels, considering Mitchell’s criteria for conversational, accessible and critically acute analysis.

4.

ANALYTICAL APPROACH:

Developing analytical tools to critique
graphic devices in hybrid novels



Critical reading is a specialised practice. Literary critic John Sutherland states that “reading novels is not a spectator sport but a participatory activity ... it is almost as difficult to read a novel well as to write one well.” (2006:12) Handbooks, guides and textbooks designed to foster good reading practices appear in educational curriculum, and are widely available on reference shelves in bookstores and libraries.¹ In order to encourage critical reading skills, these guides expose the reader to the ‘art of fiction’ – they analyse exemplary novels, critiquing the techniques and devices that writers use to create verisimilitude (the artifice of a fictional world). Critical reading is a specialised practice, taught through literary criticism. However, this kind of criticism is less available to inform the ‘reading’ of graphic devices.² Therefore, this chapter and the next form a kind of reading guide for hybrid novels. First, this chapter reports on the set of analytical tools that I developed to inform my critique. Then, in Chapter Five, I critique the graphic devices in three exemplary hybrid novels using these tools. My critique is an example of how hybrid novels could be better explained.

Two literary reading guides that achieve a balance between critical acuteness and accessible language are James Wood’s *How Fiction Works* (2008) and David Lodge’s *The Art of Fiction* (1992). Wood and Lodge write in language that is appealing to ‘common’ and scholarly readers alike. Lodge states in his introduction:

Although the book is intended for the “general reader” I have deliberately used, with explanations, a number of technical terms which may be unfamiliar to such a reader, because you cannot analyse a literary text without an appropriate descriptive vocabulary, any more than you can strip down an engine without an appropriate set of tools. (x)

1 An Amazon search for ‘reading guide and literature’ reveals almost seven thousand books, ranging from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster and *A Beginner’s Guide to Critical Reading: An Anthology of literary texts* by Richard Jacobs, to *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Critical Reading* by Amy Wall and Regina Wall. Increasingly, online ‘reading guides’ for particular books are appearing on the website of many publishers, and also sites set up as resources for students and reading groups. See, for example: www.readinggroupguides.com; www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/; www.randomhouse.com/rvgg; www.harpercollins.com/readers/index.aspx.

2 Narratology, a branch of literary studies, draws from art theory to discuss ‘intermedial’ or ‘transmedial’ narratives, and examines the narrativity of graphic images. Key figures in this field are: Wendy Steiner, editor of a double issue of *Poetics Today* on ‘Art and Literature’ in 1989; Kibedi Varga who outlines different approaches to study of word-image relations from different fields in the Humanities, identifying two major issues with these studies – finding appropriate methodology for conducting cross disciplinary research and the tremendous variety of word-image phenomena make taxonomies and generalisations difficult; G.E. Lessing coined the phrase ‘pregnant moment’ to describe the narrative potential of a single, still image – previous and following moments are alive in the image; and Werner Wolf, who describes pictures as sites of narrative having “a number of crucial gaps of meaning ... a single picture can in fact never actually represent a narrative but at best metonymically point to a story by selecting one of its characteristic phases, so that one may qualify this type and degree of narrativity not as genuinely narrative but only as indexically so.” (Wolf 2004) These theorists all support the same ideas Mitchell raises through the field of visual studies, and although these literary critics discuss images, they lack the particular expertise of word-image interplay that is inherent to Visual Communication Designers.

These two guides are models for the guide developed by this thesis, because Wood and Lodge are articulate practitioners who write in a critically acute, but accessible way. Both are novelists as well as literary critics – their guides are illuminated with rich examples from classic and contemporary texts, and complemented by insights from practice. In sharing their knowledge of the creative process, Wood and Lodge contribute a unique kind of criticism. Wood states his aim is to present literary theory in a way that is accessible to a broad audience, by asking a critic’s questions and offering a writer’s answers.³ In a similar vein, to explore how graphic devices function within hybrid novels, I ask a critic’s questions and offer a designer’s answers. To teach critical reading, the process of writing is exposed to the reader; to teach critical reading of graphic devices, the process of designing needs to be exposed to the reader. Here, my knowledge of design practice – specifically, the process of creating graphic devices – contributes to a unique kind of criticism.⁴



Of the chapters in this thesis, this is the most practice-led; it presents one approach to scholarly, practice-led research.⁵ I claim this research is practice-led because it emerged from an issue identified in practice; through my practice as a book designer, I recognised the value of a design perspective on the insufficiently explained phenomenon of hybrid novels. In addition, this chapter shows how analytical and critical approaches from design practice can inform scholarly research; it presents practice-led methods. Within the conclusion (Chapter 6), I discuss the implications of ‘practice-led methods’ for design practitioners, researchers and critics.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section frames my approach to

3 Wood models his guide on John Ruskin’s *The Elements of Drawing* (1857), a guide for the appreciation of drawing and painting. Ruskin leads his readers through the process of artistic creation, using examples of his own drawings as well as drawings from great artists. In doing so, Ruskin’s authority is attributed to both his own skill as an artist, and his experience as a viewer and critic: “from what his eye has seen, and how well, and his ability to transmit that vision into prose.” (Wood: 1) Wood limits himself to novels on his bookshelf, limiting his examples to books he knows well.

4 I do not presume expertise equal to that of Wood or Lodge – I plainly recognise my critical expertise is nascent, but critique of an emerging phenomenon must start somewhere.

5 The introduction of practice-led research to the academy is currently topical in design scholarship. Again, Helen Box’s doctoral thesis offers an overview of the possibility that research could be practice-based, and criticisms of practice-based research (Box 2007), as does Richard Buchanan’s paper, published in *Design Issues* (2001). Many design journals and conferences are forums for discussing ‘best practice’ frameworks for design research, demanding more explicit research methods that are appropriate for the unique kind of ‘knowing’ in design. The Design Research Society – an international, multi-disciplinary society of design researchers founded in 1966 – has established a program of Special Interest Groups to advance international discourse around various aspects of design research. One of these focuses on Experiential Knowledge (EKSIG), and is primarily concerned with clarifying how design practice might be integrated as, or within, design research: <www.experientialknowledge.org> In addition, see: (AHRC 2006; Candlin 2000; Centre for Research into Practice 2004; Dilnot 1998; Doloughan 2002; Friedman 2006a, 2006b; Haslem 2006; Lunenfeld 2003; Marshall & Newton 2000; Newbury 2002; Norman, Heath & Pedgley n.d.; Poldma 2006)

developing analytical tools. The second section presents the set of tools, developed through the preliminary study and supplemented by my distinct knowledge of word-image interplay as a design practitioner. These tools are intended to reveal insights, without prescribing specific meanings or readings to the graphic devices in hybrid novels, allowing for open, conversational critique.

Section One:

Developing analytical tools – the ‘good eye’ of the practitioner, the ‘curious eye’ of the practitioner-researcher

James Wood suggests that critical reading requires an ‘ear’ for language:

We have to read musically, testing the precision and rhythm of a sentence, listening for the almost inaudible rustle of historical association clinging to the hems of modern words, attending to patterns, repetitions, echoes, deciding why a metaphor is successful and another is not, judging how the perfect placement of the right verb or adjective seals a sentence with mathematical finality. (138)

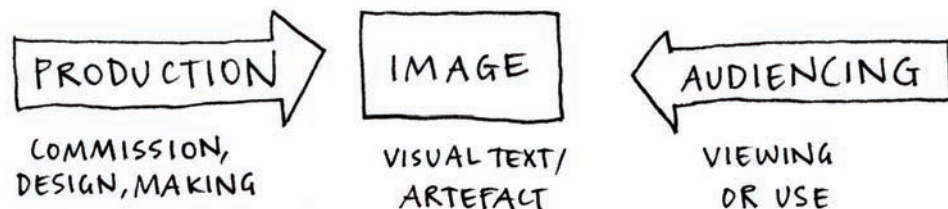
I propose that in addition to a good ear, critical reading of hybrid novels also requires an ‘eye’ for graphic devices – an eye that sees associations, and attends to patterns, repetitions and echoes, to inform critique of the success of graphic devices. The notion of a ‘good eye’ is familiar to art historians and critics. Where in literary studies, a good ‘ear’ is developed through thoughtful reading, in art history, a ‘good eye’ is developed through looking at and reflecting on artwork. This thesis guides readers toward developing their own ‘good eye’ for graphic devices.

Reading guides, such as the ones written by Wood and Lodge, help readers develop a critical ‘ear’ and provide language to talk about how fiction works. The writers of these guides must have a critical ‘ear’ themselves, but also, they must have something more – they must have a curiosity about how the critical ‘ear’ works, in order to help others develop one. Therefore, developing a guide to reading hybrid novels requires a ‘good eye’ and a curiosity about the way that ‘good eye’ works. Below, I expand the difference between a ‘good eye’ and a ‘curious eye’ as critical tools.

‘The good eye’: Critical expertise of the visual connoisseur

Gillian Rose was quoted in the previous chapter, in support of Mitchell’s call for new critical approaches to visual studies. Her handbook *Visual Methodologies* presents a collection of research methods for critiquing visual texts.⁶ One chapter is dedicated to ‘the good eye’ – an analytical approach adapted from art history. Rose explains that this approach relies on developing ‘visual connoisseurship’; critical expertise – or, *a good eye* – is developed through repeatedly looking at visual texts (usually paintings) and reflecting on contextual information around these texts (such as knowledge about particular artists – the kind of works they produce, the work that inspires them). Where an untrained eye might comment ‘my five year old could have done that’, a good eye sees from an informed perspective. A good eye is an analytical tool that belongs to the visual critic, developed through experience of examining visual artefacts.

Rose names the method of critiquing with a good eye *compositional interpretation* – the researcher uses their critical expertise to closely examine the way a visual text is composed. A ‘good eye’ is useful as a way to scrutinize the *content* and *form* of visual texts.⁷ Returning to the three sites where the ‘meanings’ of an image (or set of images) occur, the good eye focuses on the *site of the image*, paying most attention to the composition – what can literally be seen.⁸



Rose advocates using ‘the good eye’ as a starting point for visual critique, however, she is clear about the limitations of this as a research method. Due to its focus on the *site* of the image,

6 By visual texts, I mean any kind of visual image, on any surface – from a photographic reproduction on the page of a book to a projection on the side of a building.

7 Rose states that this type of ‘visual scrutiny’ is often neglected, particularly in social science scholarship, and therefore “the power of the image is subordinated to the theoretical debates in which its interpretation is embedded.”(39)

8 Rose identifies a schema of components examined by the good eye: content; colour; spatial organization; light; and expressive content. By examining each of these components, a deeper understanding of the whole composition is revealed. However, Rose stresses that few of these components are distinct from each other – by definition, composition refers to the combination of these elements. (40) The compositional components must be considered as parts that compose a whole. This aligns with the Gestalt theories of perception that provide a foundation for much design analysis – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Compositional interpretation also pays (limited) attention to the production of images: socially – “who commissioned it, why, who painted it, and what then happened to it before it ended up in its current location,” and also technologically – “qualities of both certain media – drawing, painting, graphic arts, sculpture, and architecture – and the different ways in which these can be deployed.” (40) These aspects of social and technical production are primarily considered to help describe particular characteristics of a work – for instance, to discuss whether a painting is fresco, water-colour, oil, collage, etc.

‘the good eye’ does not encourage insightful discussion of production, or how a visual text may be used, understood, or interpreted by viewers. Based on subjective expertise, ‘the good eye’ is interested in what images *are*, rather than what they *do* or how they were/are *used*. Rose therefore suggests that ‘the good eye’ needs to be combined with other research methods.

Rose credits the term ‘good eye’ to cultural theorist Irit Rogoff. Through an aside in an article about the field of visual culture Rogoff describes being instructed to stare at pictures while training as an art historian:

The assumption was that the harder we looked, the more would be revealed to us; that a rigorous, precise and historically informed looking would reveal a wealth of hidden meanings. This belief produced a new anatomical formation called ‘the good eye’. (Rogoff 1998: 17)

However, Rogoff is somewhat dismissive of the term. She takes issue with ‘the good eye’ when it is used as an irrefutable justification, explaining:

Later, in teaching in art history departments, whenever I would complain about some student’s lack of intellectual curiosity, about their overly literal perception of the field of study or of their narrow understanding of culture as a series of radiant objects, someone else in the faculty would always respond by saying ‘Oh, but they have a good eye.’ (ibid)

Like Rose, Rogoff’s issue is that relying on the good eye as a single method of enquiry is insufficiently rigorous, focused as it is at the site of the image, by the single ‘expert’. Rogoff calls for a more critical approach to visual studies than the expertise of ‘connoisseurs’.

Although Rogoff aligns herself with Visual Culture, rather than Visual Studies, her writing echoes the three key ideas from Mitchell that frame this research: that images have their own unique kinds of meanings – “in today’s world, meanings circulate visually, in addition to orally and textually. Images convey information, afford pleasure and displeasure, influence style, determine consumption and mediate power relations” (15); that all texts are hybrids – “in the arena of visual culture the scrap of an image connects with a sequence of a film and with the corner of a billboard or the window display of a shop we have passed, to produce a new narrative formed out of both our experienced journey and our unconscious”⁹

9 In this thesis I define texts as hybrid when they are composed by more than one ‘mode’, for instance writing and graphics. Here Rogoff is describing all texts as hybrids, but also all texts as being ‘intertextual’ – she explains this more clearly earlier in the paper quoted from above: “[V]isual culture opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another, lending ever-accurring layers of meanings and of subjective responses to each encounter we might have with film, TV, advertising, art works, buildings or urban environments.” (14) This notion of intertextuality is an extension of the idea that all texts are hybrids, and will be discussed, using concrete examples, in the following chapter.

(16); and that new, conversational approaches to the study of images are necessary – “[m]uch of the practice of intellectual work within the framework of cultural problematics has to do with being able to ask new and alternative questions, rather than reproducing old knowledge by asking the old questions.” (15) Rogoff proposes that asking new and alternative questions of visual artefacts will affect a shift “from the old logical-positivist world of cognition to a more contemporary arena of representation and of situated knowledge.” (16-17) So, she wonders how to find a new perspective to look from – to form a “counter position to that old art historical chestnut ‘*the good eye*’.” Following Laura Mulvey’s work within feminist film theory, Rogoff proposes ‘the curious eye’:

I have settled on the notion of ‘the curious eye’ to counter the ‘good eye’ of connoisseurship. Curiosity implies a certain unsettling; a notion of things outside the realm of the known, of things not yet quite understood or articulated; the pleasures of the forbidden or the hidden or the unthought; the optimism of finding out something one had not known or been able to conceive of before. It is in the spirit of such a ‘curious eye’ that I want to open up some dimension of this field of activity. (18)

The curious eye, then, questions what the good eye knows. The good eye belongs to the informed viewer, it makes value judgments based on the experience of the beholder. The curious eye belongs to the researcher – it questions and interrogates, seeking to find out how and why images work. The good eye and the curious eye are both critical, but to different ends.

In this thesis, the preliminary study (Chapter Two) analysed a collection of hybrid novels systematically, but intuitively. Through this study, I developed a ‘good eye’ for critiquing hybrid novels, based on my experience as a reader with an understanding of book design. The study led to criteria for identifying exemplar hybrid novels, and a typology of graphic devices. However, I recognised that my ‘good eye’ allowed me to critique these novels, but did not explain how I arrived at that critique. I described *what* I know, but not *how* I know it. To share how I arrived at my critique, a more rigorously defined analytical approach is necessary. Scholarly research involves the articulation of the research *process* as well as the research findings – the research approach must be explicit and methodical. Influenced by Rose’s ‘good eye’ and Rogoff’s ‘curious eye’, I now develop a distinction between the expertise of the practitioner, and the expertise of the practitioner-researcher, to clarify my research methods.

The good eye of the design practitioner

The *good eye* is a useful way to describe the expertise of the design practitioner – what we

would call disciplinary or tacit knowledge. Designers are innate visual critics. Critical reflection is an essential part of the creative process. An experienced designer can literally align elements ‘by eye’ and consciously look at things from different angles or perspectives: ‘this shape looks wrong’; ‘that text would work better smaller’; ‘although this is an engaging image, it will not work as a book cover’. The designer’s good eye informs decisions in practice.

I propose that the designer’s good eye is developed across three domains: critical observation of other design (through pedagogical training and ongoing education via industry magazines, books, conferences); reflection on the designer’s own process and outcomes (internal reflections, journal writing, conversations with colleagues and clients); and professional experience (interactions with clients, user testing, feedback/reception of work). This expertise is constantly developing; the good eye is more sharply focused with experience.

However, the design practitioner is often inarticulate about what their good eye knows. Critical reflection is an internal process, for a tangle of reasons. Tacit knowledge is difficult to communicate because it is intuitive. No matter how much preliminary planning occurs, things will change during the design process; many decisions happen ‘in action’, and retrospectively describing these decisions is difficult. This leads to frustratingly unhelpful explanations such as: ‘I designed it like that because it worked best.’ Outside educational institutions, designers are rarely taught or encouraged to articulate their reflections, so it may be some designers do not articulate well because they do not know how. Further, for most designers there is little time or financial incentive to articulate critical reflections on their process/practice. The insights gained from one experience are stored internally for the next time a similar situation arises, rather than documented in a sharable way. This is not to say designers do not reflect – of course they do, this is part of creative and professional development – but time for these reflections is not allocated ‘in the budget’. Designers may also be hesitant to reveal their creative process because creativity is currency in a competitive industry; revealing one’s process exposes it to be copied or reproduced. Commercially, there is ‘nothing in it’ for the designer to reveal their process, in the same way magicians are hesitant to reveal their tricks. For these reasons, the design process is often mistakenly regarded as a kind of creative alchemy. An important task of the practitioner-researcher is to find ways to articulate the tacit knowledge of the practitioner, to share what the ‘good eye’ knows.

As a design practitioner, my good eye knew that the graphic devices in hybrid novels were doing *something* other than illustrating the written text. My curiosity to explain what that *something* was led this research. When the good eye – the tacit eye of the practitioner – becomes curious, the practitioner is led to research. My critique of hybrid novels in the

preliminary study demonstrates that graphic devices are integral to the primary text, but does not share the analytical approach that informed that critique. For this thesis to offer more than a designer's reading of hybrid novels, I must share my analytical approach in a way that can inform critique by others.

I reiterate that the good eye of the practitioner and the curious eye of the practitioner-researcher are both critical, but their purpose is different. A good eye is internalized – expertise is a tool for decision-making in practice. A curious eye is externalized – expertise is a tool for theorizing. To explicitly distinguish between the good and the curious eye as I am using them here:

The good eye is the eye of the practitioner. 'Align those two elements.' 'Make the heading larger than the author's name.' The good eye is *tacit*: implicitly informed by training and experience. Research here is *for* design – to inform the task at hand and the individual's practice. Specifically focused on knowing how, the good eye makes statements and decisions.

The good eye of the designer, plus a curiosity about why, becomes a curious eye.

The curious eye is the eye of the practitioner-researcher. 'Why does that look better here? And not there or there?' 'Why did this work this way, and not other ways?' The curious eye is *explicit*: informed by training and experience, but also research and scholarship. Broadly focused on knowing about, the curious eye asks questions and theorizes.

In discussions about what constitutes the difference between design practice and design research, a key factor is articulation of *methods* and *findings* in a sharable way. The curious eye of the practitioner-researcher wants to find things out in order to extend knowledge in a field. To this end, the next section in this chapter proposes a sharable set of analytical tools for critiquing the graphic devices in hybrid novels.

Section Two: Analytical tools for critiquing graphic devices in hybrid novels

Design as research uses its own media to perform the investigations ... a flexible and ever expanding methodology of design as research is necessary to deal with a moment defined by pluralism and enlivened by serendipity. Design as research is a rational practice, but it is one in which emotion is allowed its own power and intelligence. (Lunenfeld 2003: 12)

The tools presented below were developed by reflecting on my process and findings from the preliminary study of hybrid novels (Chapter Two).¹⁰ This section is both a report on my research, and a model for other researchers and critics. Three tools are presented: sketching a thumbnail schema; a questionnaire; and a review of epitexts.

Tool One: Thumbnail schema

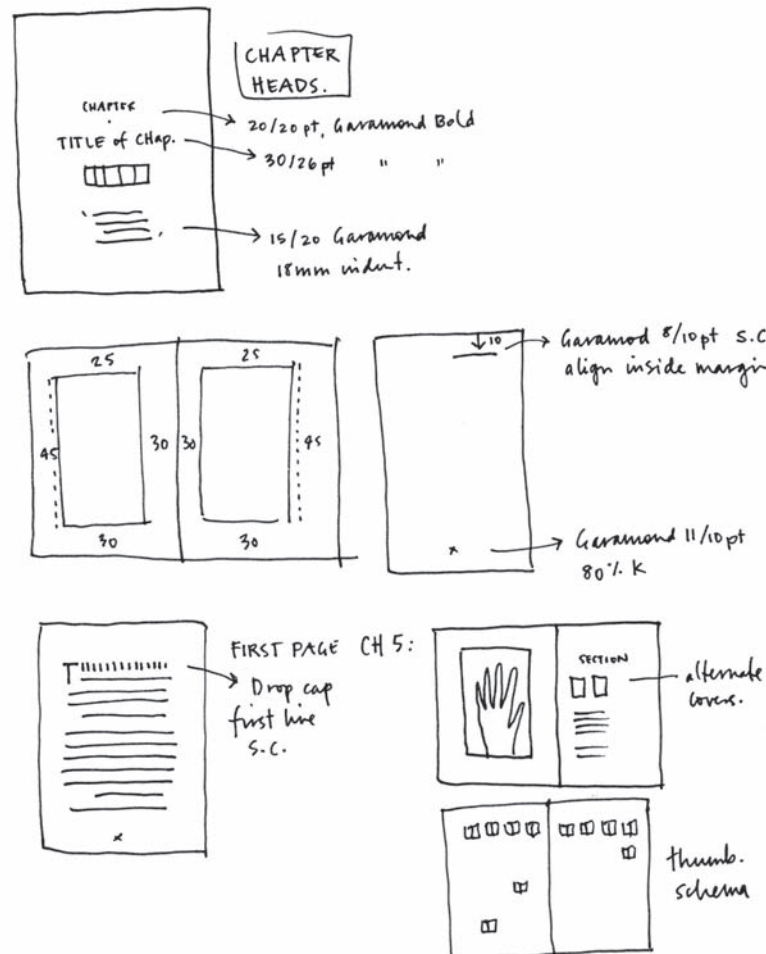
Richard Sennett discusses the 'link between the head and hand', in his book *The Craftsman*. (2008) For craftspeople – including writers and designers – planning and drafting are vital stages in the creative process. In 'thinking' through the hand, ideas are fleshed out in action, through the process of making, and reflecting on making. Le Corbusier, a staunch advocate of sketching, wrote: "Once the impression has been recorded by the pencil, it stays for good, entered, registered, inscribed. ... To draw oneself, to trace the lines, handle the volumes, organize the surface ... all this means first to look, and then to observe and finally perhaps to discover ... and it is then that inspiration may come." (in Anthony 1966)

Sketching is fundamental to my design practice, and, as an educator, I teach design students to use sketching as the foundation for idea generation and visual processing, and as a visualisation tool to communication with clients and other designers.¹¹ Gabriela Goldschmidt states sketches are not only an aid to thinking, but that "their making is thinking itself." (Goldschmidt 2003)

10 Reflection is an important part of my practice, and central to design education. Some key writing on reflective practice are: Bamberger & Schön 1991; Bolton 2001; Doloughan 2002.

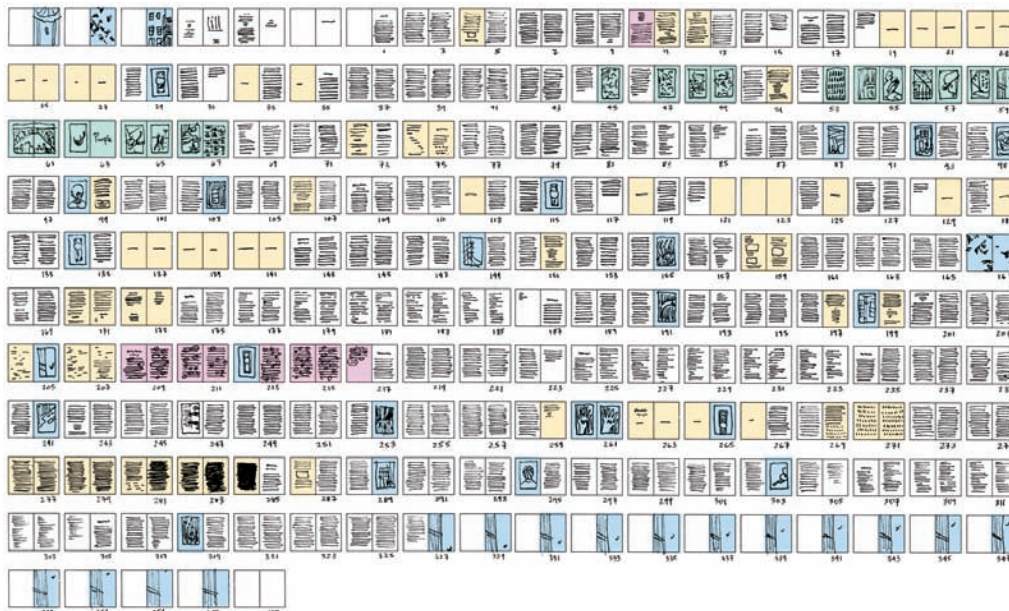
11 Sketching is used as a 'generative' tool to quickly get ideas onto paper, then to develop those idea – thinking through content and composition in a rough and malleable way before actually executing them through the computer or other rendering tools. It is also used as a 'presentation' tool, to show others a visual approximation of a design, through rough drafts or by presenting other work of a similar visual style or form. In communicating abstract ideas, it is important to visualise to minimise misunderstanding. In addition to Goldschmidt's article on self-generated sketches, referenced above, Pam Schnek's essay on the role of drawing in graphic design after the computer is fodder for thought on this topic. (Schenk 2005) Also, with thanks to Kate Sweetapple, who shared research and ideas about sketching, and constantly conceives new ways to encourage our students to commit pen to paper.

A type of sketching specific to print design is thumbnailing. A book designer sketches a schema of ‘thumbnails’ to map out a book. This schema allows the designer to plan where graphics fall – if they are required to appear on particular pages for print reasons – and to establish rhythm within the layout – considering how graphic devices affect the pace of reading and comprehension of the text. A thumbnail schema helps the designer envision the book as a whole – to make decisions about individual devices, in the context of the novel. Here is part of the thumbnail schema for this thesis:



Not every page is thumbnailled. I sketched different ‘types’ of pages to think through the different graphic elements that required designing. For example, the chapter openers (the first page of a chapter) have extra white space, as a visual pause that asks the reader to prepare for a new set of ideas. Each time I typeset a new chapter opener, I refer to this thumbnail as a style guide. So the thumbnails are useful both in planning the layout, and during the design process to maintain consistency. In a more heavily illustrated or visual text, I would plan the layout of the whole novel by thumbnailing every double page spread, creating a schema similar to the floor plan of a building, or a tailor’s pattern.

After an initial reading (to have an understanding of the content), sketching the double-page spreads in each novel creates a schema of the whole novel:



This is obviously an exercise in deconstruction, attempting to understand how the book is designed by thinking like a designer: could the placement of graphic devices be determined by printing specifications?¹² Is there visual rhythm in the placement of graphic devices?

In addition, this exercise forced me to engage with the graphic devices with my hand as well as my eye. It is a meditative exercise that encourages me to ‘converse’¹³ with the graphic devices, revealing new insights about these devices. Committing pen to paper – sketching the graphics – requires breaking down the composition of the page in order to sketch it. The slowness of the process encourages reflection, and shifts my engagement from that of a ‘common’ reader to a ‘critical reader’. I created a colour code to mark the different graphic types, as defined by the typology of graphic devices.

The slowness of this exercise is important. In hybrid novels, there are generally far more spreads without graphic devices than those with them. Therefore, setting up a step-and-repeat action to reproduce the spreads without graphic devices (using computer programs such as Photoshop or InDesign – a quick way to repeat an element) would be a more time-efficient

12 Sections of specialty paper may be ‘tipped in’ to the book so graphics are printed at higher quality (think of picture sections in biographies), or colour graphics may be printed only on certain pages – printing sections in colour rather than the whole book significantly reduces production costs. To plan this, the designer and printer must communicate in the early design stages, using a thumbnail schema.

13 Donald Schön discusses the notion of a conversation between designer and their sketch (Schön 1983). Goldschmidt (above) calls this ‘backtalk’.

way to produce these thumbnail schemas. At one stage, I attempted to do this. However, the computer is a tool for multitasking. While executing this schema, I checked my email and did a couple of other small tasks. I was easily distracted. In short, it was not meditative. Reflecting on this, I realised part of the value of thumbnailing the novel by hand was that for between an hour and an hour and a half – the time it took to sketch the schema for an entire novel – I was completely focused on the ‘bigger picture’. Because I was looking at the double page spreads as graphic compositions rather than reading the text, I considered how the graphic devices inhabit the page, how they relate to each other spatially within the novel. I looked for repetitions and patterns in the types of graphic devices, and noticed variations in size and reproduction that may have been missed by looking at the book as a ‘codex’ – page by page, rather than as a schema. The thumbnailing exercise encourages looking with a ‘curious eye’ – actively seeking what is not yet known.

One general insight revealed through this process was that although I previously envisioned pages without graphic devices as being ‘grey rectangles of justified type’, dialogue often interrupts the graphic shape of the text on the page. Dialogue is visually distinct from prose, which affects our reading experience. This shift in typesetting is a graphic device, but it is so familiar (or conventional) that we barely register it while reading. A less frequent, but still common deviation from straight prose is the way letters (written correspondence) are often presented in novels – often set in italics and indented, to visually distinguish them as texts within a text. The form of the letter is implied. From this reflection, I began thinking about implied ephemera, which became a subcategory in my typology of graphic devices.

The process of sketching thumbnails reveals insights about how the graphic devices function within the novel as a whole. In addition, the thumbnail sketches form a schema that can be used as a reference while further critiquing hybrid novels, as I discuss in the next chapter. However, although meaningful to me, the loose, reductive nature of the sketches is not detailed enough to share with others, or to re-examine the devices later in great detail. For this reason, the graphic devices were also catalogued in their original size, by scanning the pages.

Scanned thumbnails – making an archive/catalogue for presentation

I scanned every double page spread that contained graphic devices. The scans isolate devices for closer scrutiny, but also allow them to be considered in the context of the surrounding text. They show compositional elements such as size, colour, texture and graphic presentation on the page, as the reader of the novel would experience them.

It seemed important to have reproductions of the novels at exact size, to be able to

make ‘visual quotations’. Including correctly scaled scans in written critique allows readers to experience the devices in as close an approximation to the actual novel as possible; the reader is better equipped to assess my critique if they can accurately see what is being discussed. The scans can also be reproduced at a smaller scale to show readers what is being discussed without the distraction of a readable page of text. You have already experienced this, in the preliminary study presented in Chapter Two.

To a book designer, creating this archive of graphic devices for presentation – ‘framed’ by double page spreads, as they appear in the text – is an obvious exercise. However, I have been perplexed at numerous conference presentations and reading publications where hybrid texts are discussed without either showing the text, or reproducing it in an inauthentic way.¹⁴ Effective critique of hybrid texts must find innovative ways of presenting analysis.

Tool Two: Questionnaire for graphic devices

The first analytical tool, the thumbnail schema, provides a visual overview of the graphic devices in a novel. This second tool examines the graphic devices in closer detail, as individual images and in terms of their function within the novel. It is a questionnaire, designed to reveal insights about graphic devices, and inform critique of hybrid novels. Below, I describe the process of developing the questions, and then present the ‘questionnaire’ as an analytical tool.

Developing the questions

Chapter Two employed literary scholar Gérard Genette’s *paratextual theory* to explain that graphic elements are conventionally supplementary in novels – they are thresholds to interpretation, but not part of the primary text. Genette analyses each paratextual device by its position in the landscape of the textual whole, before describing its particular literary function:

Defining a paratextual element consists of determining its location (the question *where?*); the date of its appearance and, if need be, its disappearance (*when?*); its mode of existence, verbal or other (*how?*); the characteristics of its situation of communication – its sender and addressee (*from whom? to whom?*); and the functions that its message aims to fulfil (*to do what?*). (1997: 4)

¹⁴ At one conference, I sat through three papers which discussed photographs printed on the pages of novels, without showing these photographs. One presenter simply described the photograph at the centre of her paper as “a picture of a woman.” A book review I wrote of *Images: A Reader* also discusses this problem in published criticism. (Sadokierski 2008)

The first four questions – *where, how, when, from whom/to whom* – locate and describe the paratextual device. The fifth question – *to do what* – considers the function of the device. Genette does not ask ‘what does this thing mean’, but what *is* this thing, and what *function* does it perform in *the context of the novel*.

Although I argue the graphic devices in hybrid novels are integral, not paratextual, the *approach* Genette uses to analyse paratext is a useful model to start analysing graphic devices, because it leads to the kind of questions that reveal, rather than prescribe, insight. This approach considers how graphic devices work as part of the novel, in the same way literary devices are best understood in the context of the whole novel. I offer an example, analysing a written metaphor:

A cold moth with unusually dense dorsal tufts landed lightly on Rahel’s heart. Where its icy legs touched her, she got goosebumps. Six goosebumps on her careless heart.

—Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things* (55)

The question *what does this metaphor mean* can be addressed without having read Roy’s novel; it is a powerful metaphor for some kind of heartache. This device stands alone as a piece of writing. In context, the passage describes the child Rahel’s devastation when she makes a hurtful comment to her mother, who responds: “When you hurt people, they begin to love you less. That’s what careless words do. They make people love you a little less.” Knowing the reason that the cold moth settles on Rahel’s heart provides richer understanding of this particular ache – Rahel’s is a prickly, shame-filled devastation. The coldness of the moth is apt. In addition, the reader of the novel knows moths are associated with Rahel’s temperamental and violent Grandfather – an entomologist. This association casts a darker shadow across the metaphor. Further in the novel, similar descriptive language conjures the moth, and with it, Rahel’s ache: “Later became a menacing, goose-bumpy word. Lay. Ter. Like a deep-sounding bell in a mossy well. Shivery, and furred. Like a moth’s feet.” (139)

A contextualised reading ripens the metaphor, opening up its affective potential. So, a more revealing question is: *how does this metaphor affect the novel/reader?*

Similarly, isolating graphic devices to closely ‘read’ them is a useful starting point, but the devices must be considered in the context of the novel as a whole. Framed by an understanding of the ‘contextual whole’ from reading the novel and sketching the thumbnail schema, we can now analyse individual devices.

Inspired by Genette’s analytical questions for paratext, and Wood’s idea of asking a critic’s ques-

tions and offering a practitioner's answers, I developed the following questionnaire. The questions are informed by insights revealed by the research process, as described so far in the thesis. To recap, this research process has been: developing 'a good eye' through the preliminary study (Chapter Two), which led to a criteria for identifying hybrid novels, and a typology of graphic devices; the theoretical framework (Chapter Three), which establishes a need for analysing hybrid texts in critically acute, but conversational and accessible ways; and viewing these novels with the 'curious eye' of a practitioner-researcher, to reveal insights from a unique perspective.

QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR GRAPHIC DEVICES IN HYBRID NOVELS

Graphic 'type': What is it? The typology developed in Chapter Two offers five main types: photographs, illustrative elements, ephemera, diagrams or typographic devices. However, a device might be a combination of these types, such as implied ephemera (typesetting that implies the form of a piece of ephemera, such as a letter or business card), or a photograph presented as an ephemeral object (a Polaroid, or a postcard), or a typographic illustration (a piece of typesetting that forms a recognisable shape).

Reproduction: How is it reproduced on the page? Is it embedded in the written text, separated with a frame or border, presented on a new page? Does it sit within the text boundaries (typographic grid) or fall outside the grid? Is it full bleed? Is it produced in colour, or greyscale? Was it originally full colour, greyscale, single colour? Is it the actual size, or scaled up/down? Is it cropped? The reproduction could offers clues about graphic type, for example it could show the difference between a photograph and a piece of ephemera.

Author/viewer (fictional): Who is supposed to have created the device in the world of the novel – the narrator or a character? Who is supposed to 'see' the device – the reader or a character?

Author/viewer (actual): Who is credited with creating the device – the author, a typesetter, a designer? Where is the device credited – cover, imprint page, acknowledgements, outside the book (website, interview)?

I had not seen a cloud map when I came up with the initial review-mapping exercise (above right). Word-mapping was a technique learnt whilst teaching an information design class. It is now a common tool on the Internet, where free software automatically generates a cloud-map in a matter of seconds, such as www.wordle.net, used to generate the ‘gimmick’ maps (above left). The prevalence of cloud-maps online demonstrates recognition that visualising information is increasingly valued in new media technologies. Analysing reviews and other epitextual documents through mapping exercises could reveal further insights about graphic devices, overlooked by the individual researcher.

These maps are a kind of content analysis, mining epitexts for repetition of phrases, allusions or analogies. See Rose (2007: 59-74) for description of content analysis as a research method. In addition to the computer generated cloud maps, a simple highlighter was useful for identifying patterns. As I will discuss in the next chapter, reading book reviews of *The Raw Shark Texts*, I noticed an unusual number of references to films, novels and other texts. Using a basic colour coding system – yellow for films, pink for novels, blue for ‘other’ (video games, music) – I traced these references through twenty-five book reviews. This insight informed my understanding of the novel, and shed light on the function of some of the graphic devices.

References	References	References	References	References	References
Gibson's <i>Neuromancer</i> ; Stephenson's <i>Snow Crash</i> ; >Nicole Kidman		Paul Auster's <i>City of Glass</i> ; Haruki Murakami; <i>The Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Casablanca</i> ; > Nicole Kidman (x4)	"plugged into a ... network of associations"	<i>Memento</i> ; Jonathan Lethem; Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> ; Peter Abraham's <i>Oblivion</i> ; W.G. Sebald; <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> ; <i>The Hunting of the Shark</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>The Matrix</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	pastiche of films <i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; <i>Aliy McBeal</i> ; <i>Gilmore Girls</i> ; <i>Sex and the City</i> ; <i>Tank Girl</i> ; <i>Doctor Who</i> ; William Gibson; <i>Neuromancer</i> ; <i>Pattern Recognition</i> ;
<i>Moby Dick</i> ; Jorge Luis Borges by way of <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> ; Mark Haddon; <i>Bach</i> ; >Nicole Kidman (unnamed)	<i>Jaws</i> meets <i>The Matrix</i> ; Ring; <i>A Nightmare on Elm Street</i> ; Alien; Haruki Murakami; Jorge Luis Borges; Neal Stephenson; Mark Z Danielewski's <i>House of Leaves</i> ; David Mitchell; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>3D Monster Maze</i> (game); Alex Garland's <i>The Beach</i>	<i>Jaws</i> ; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Christopher Nolan (<i>Memento</i>); Michel Gondry (<i>Eternal Sunshine</i>); Calvino; <i>The Happy Mondays</i> ; Alfred Hitchcock; William Gibson; <i>Lara Croft</i> ; >Nicole Kidman	Alan Moore/Dave Gibbons' <i>The Watchmen</i> ; The <i>Picture of Dorian Gray</i> ; Frankenstein; David Lynch; <i>Matrix</i> ; Marc Augé; Corby Wyn Evans (conceptual artist); William Burroughs; Cronenberg; Keanu Reeves/Arné; <i>Frankenstein</i> ; Benchley's shark; Melville's whale; <i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i> ; <i>Solaris</i> ; John Frankenheimer's <i>Seconds</i> ;	<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; <i>Suture</i> ; <i>Trauma</i> ; Stay; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; <i>Lost Highway</i> ; <i>Hidden</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; Calvino; Haruki Murakami; <i>Scarlet</i> ; Thomas' <i>The End of Mr Y</i>	David Mitchell; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>3D Monster Maze</i> (game); Alex Garland's <i>The Beach</i>	<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> ; anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Hitchhiker's <i>Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i>	Burroughs; Cronenberg; Keanu Reeves/Arné; <i>Frankenstein</i> ; Benchley's shark; Melville's whale; <i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i> ; <i>Solaris</i> ; John Frankenheimer's <i>Seconds</i> ;	<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
Danielewski; Borges; Calvino; Grant Morrison's <i>The Invisibles</i> ; Garth Ennis' <i>Preacher</i> ; <i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Super Mario Bros</i>	David Mitchell; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>3D Monster Maze</i> (game); Alex Garland's <i>The Beach</i>	<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> ; anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Hitchhiker's <i>Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i>	Problem: "Where Burroughs leads us into uncharted territory, here we are being led straight to the multiplex. All ambiguity and indeterminacy get jettisoned en route"	<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
<i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Paul Auster; Mark Z Danielewski's <i>House of Leaves</i> ; Chuck Palahniuk; Haruki Murakami's <i>Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; John Haskelly <i>American Purgatorio</i> ; Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> ; Sam Taylor's <i>The Amnesiac</i>	<i>Memento</i> ; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>The Machinist</i> ; <i>Vanilla Sky</i> ; Charlie Kaufman (complete works); Auster; Amis; Danielewski; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>Casablanca</i> ; Paul Auster; <i>Matrix</i> ; Hitchcock's <i>Vertigo</i> ; <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> ; >Nicole Kidman	<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> ; anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Hitchhiker's <i>Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i>	notes that all coverage of RST "note Hall's nod to popular culture"	<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
Herman Melville meets Michael Crichton; Thomas Pynchon meets Douglas Adams	<i>Memento</i> ; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>The Machinist</i> ; <i>Vanilla Sky</i> ; Charlie Kaufman (complete works); Auster; Amis; Danielewski; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>Casablanca</i> ; Paul Auster; <i>Matrix</i> ; Hitchcock's <i>Vertigo</i> ; <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> ; >Nicole Kidman	<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> ; anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Hitchhiker's <i>Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i>		<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
	<i>Gone with the Wind</i> meets <i>Clockwork Orange</i> ; >Nicole Kidman	<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> ; anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Hitchhiker's <i>Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i>		<i>Memento</i> ; Harry Potter; Haruki Murakami; Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	

Clearly, this exact iteration of the exercise would not be relevant for all novels – some novels make no references to other texts. As a research tool, it must be adapted to suit the specific text being analysed. So, the researcher begins reading the collection of epitexts (such as book

reviews), and observes patterns of adjectives (such as gimmick, or tricks) or textual references (to films, novels or other texts). If a pattern emerges, the researcher then ‘codes’ and ‘counts’ this data. The coding in the example above was into the categories of ‘films’, ‘novels’ and ‘other’. The counting was not relevant in terms of actual numbers or percentages, except that it shows many reference are made, and that most reviews reference more than one type.

This analytical exercise is simultaneously a tool to reveal insights by examining the content of other criticism, and a tool to visualise the findings. It could be applied to other kinds of texts.



Adhering to Mitchell’s criteria for an accessible, critically acute and conversational approach, these three analytical tools – the thumbnail schema, the questionnaire and the epitextual analysis – are devised to reveal insights about graphic devices and inform critique of hybrid novels. These tools are not presented as a definitive set. As the ‘canon’ of hybrid novels develops, more innovative and noteworthy examples will inform our understanding of the ways graphic devices could function in a novel. As other critics discuss these novels, it is my hope that new perspectives will complement and challenge these analytical tools. It is my intent that other critics could add to it, and to the critique of hybrid novels more generally. Design educator Neal Haslem states:

The strength of practice-led-research is in the way it allows the practitioner to use his or her most fluent language (the language of design: be it visual, system or artefact) as the key research tool. The artefacts produced through that practice embody and further the research concerns in, I would argue, a poetic way.” (Haslem 2006)

It is my hope that more practitioner-researchers will contribute more ‘poetic’ approaches to researching hybrid texts.

5.

PRIMARY STUDY:

A critique of the graphic devices in
three exemplary hybrid novels



During the last weeks of craziness and timelessness I've had these moments of 'knowing' one after the other, yet there is no way of putting this sort of knowledge into words. ... Words. Words. I play with words, hoping that some combination, even a chance combination, will say what I want. ... The fact is, the real experience can't be described. I think, bitterly, that a row of asterisks, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. Or a symbol of some kind, a circle, perhaps, or a square. Anything at all, but not words.

— DORIS LESSING, *The Golden Notebook* —

THIS CHAPTER DEMONSTRATES HOW THE ANALYTICAL TOOLS DEVELOPED IN the previous chapter can reveal insights about graphic devices, and prompt critique of hybrid novels. The analytical tools are used here to critique three novels: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* and Dave Eggers' *You Shall Know Our Velocity*.

From the long list of hybrid novels collated during the research, these three novels were selected for close analysis for several reasons. First, according to my 'good eye' these novelists use graphic devices in innovative ways. Second, each novel includes more than one type of graphic device, for different literary purposes – each author understands the potential for graphic devices to produce diverse literary affects. Third, all three novels were the subject of extensive and varied critical discussion, providing rich contextual material for analysis. Finally, all three authors are adamant that the graphic devices are *integral* to their novels.

Within this chapter, each novel is assigned a separate section, and each section is broken into four parts:

- i) *Contextual Information*: establishing the writer's reputation and previous experimentation with word-image interplay;
- ii) *Plot Synopsis*: a brief summary of the novel, providing enough information for the reader to understand my analysis of the graphic devices used;
- iii) *Analysis of graphic devices*: I categorise the devices by graphic type (based on the typology developed in Chapter Two), then explain their function within the novel and critique their effectiveness;
- iv) *Critical reception*: I analyse published 'epitexts' (book reviews, author interviews and publisher's press releases) to corroborate or challenge my analysis.

My argument that the devices are integral to the text, and that critics who dismiss these devices as 'gimmicks' are fundamentally mistaken, runs throughout the critiques.

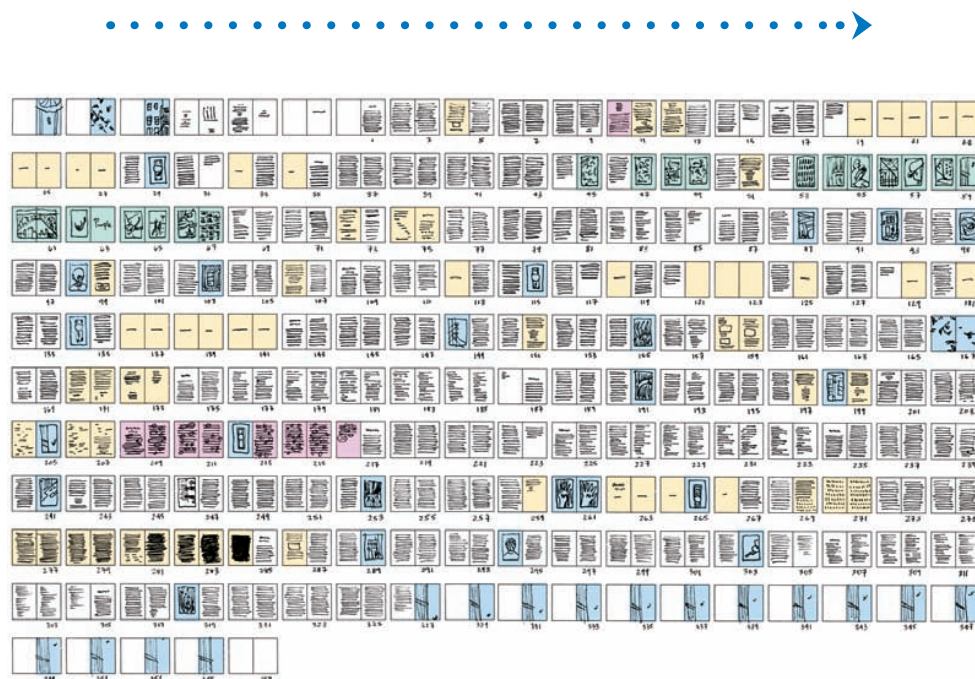
Design notes

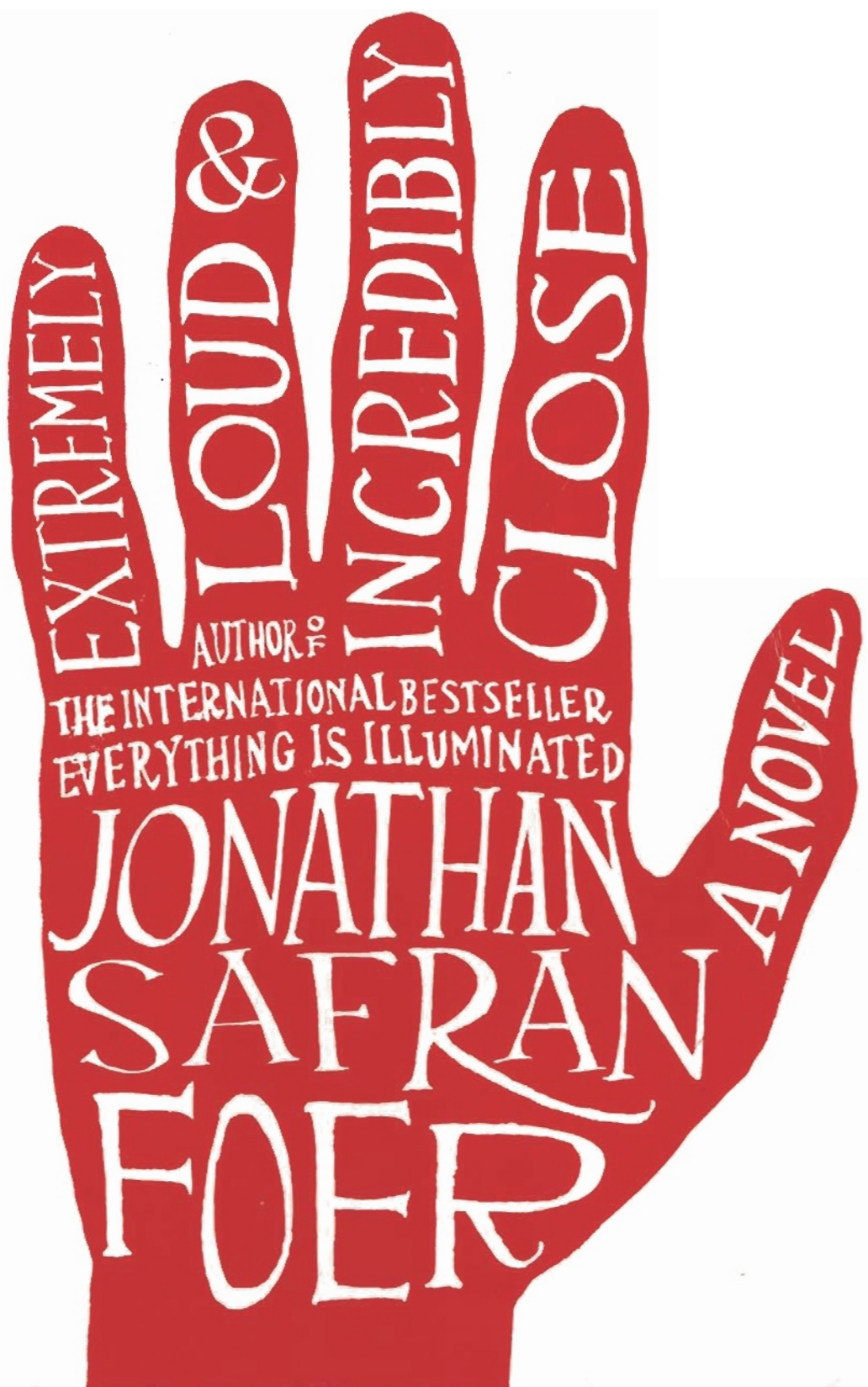
In Chapter Four, I propose that hybrid texts demand hybrid critique – at the very least, the reader should be shown the text/object being analysed. For this reason, where appropriate I have 'quoted' from the novels by reproducing pages, at actual size. In other words,

if you can read the text, you are supposed to. This is an unconventional but effective way to ‘quote’ from a text, because it presents a close approximation to experiencing the device within the novel. In particular, several characters in Jonathan Safran Foer’s novel have a visually distinct typographic style. When ‘quoting’ from these characters, it seemed most effective to simply reproduce the pages from the book, rather than attempting to replicate the typographic idiosyncrasies myself.

If it is not relevant to read the surrounding text, a device will be presented alone on the page, ‘cropped out’ of the novel, to avoid distracting the reader from the critique. When it is more relevant to see how the graphic device is presented than to read the surrounding text, double page spreads are shown on a smaller scale. The way images are presented within this critique is thoughtfully designed – the examples I use become graphic devices, which form part of my argument.

Each section also begins with a thumbnail schema of the novel, which provides a visual synopsis to show readers the quantity and type of graphic devices used. A key explains the colours used to highlight different types of devices that appear in the novel. The thumbnails are read across the double page spread, to best present sequencing of the pages:





EXTREMELY

LOUD &

INCREDIBLY

CLOSE

AUTHOR OF

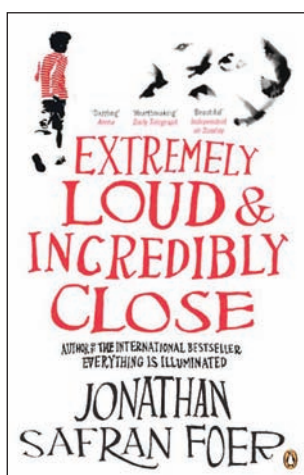
THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

JONATHAN
SAFRAN
FOER

A NOVEL

Section One:

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close Jonathan Safran Foer

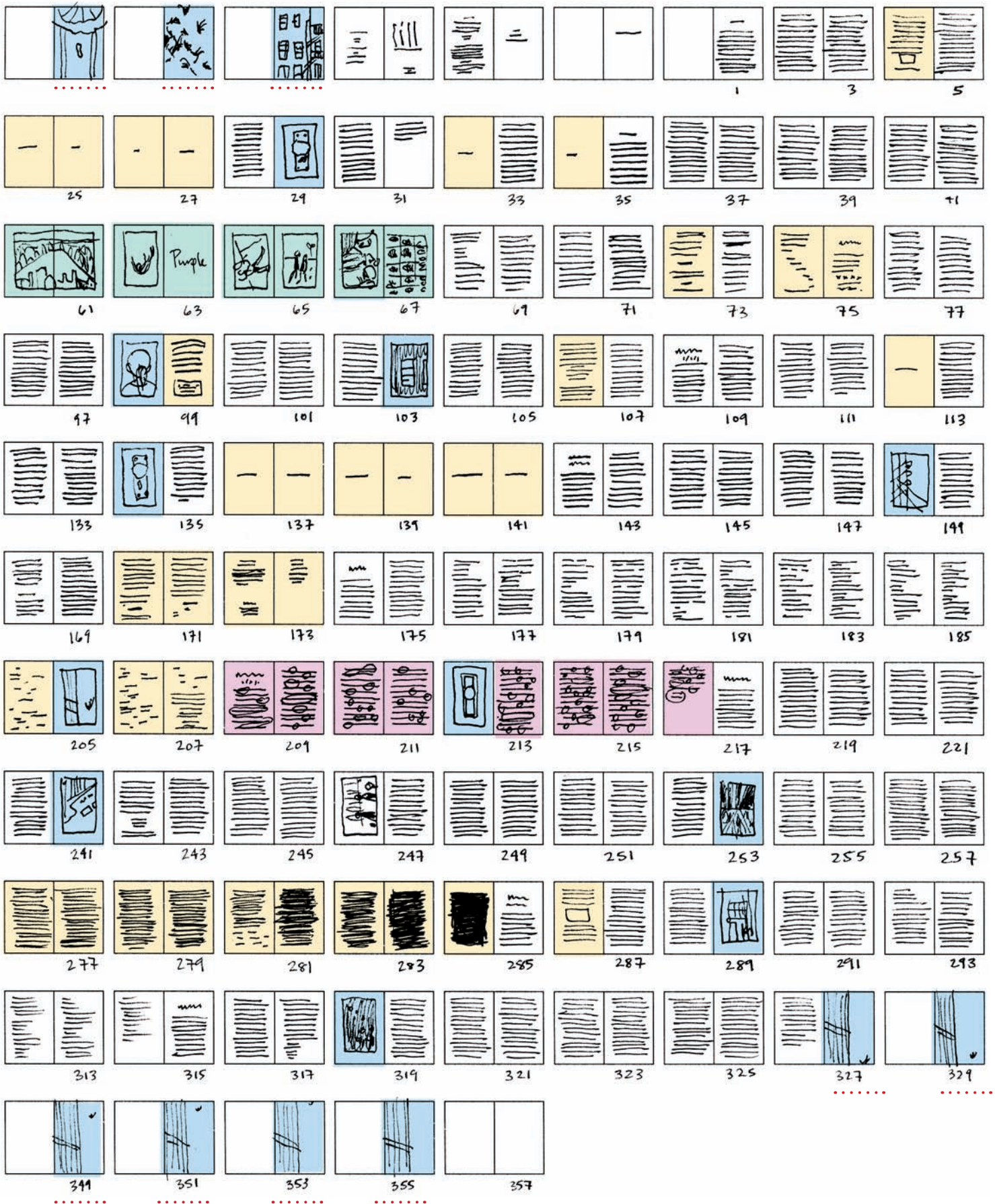


< alternate cover

Published editions: 2005, Houghton Mifflin, New York
2005, Hamish Hamilton (the Penguin Group), London

Edition analysed: 2005, Hamish Hamilton
C Format (152x228mm)

Thumbnail Schema: *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*



PHOTOGRAPHS (FULL BLEED)

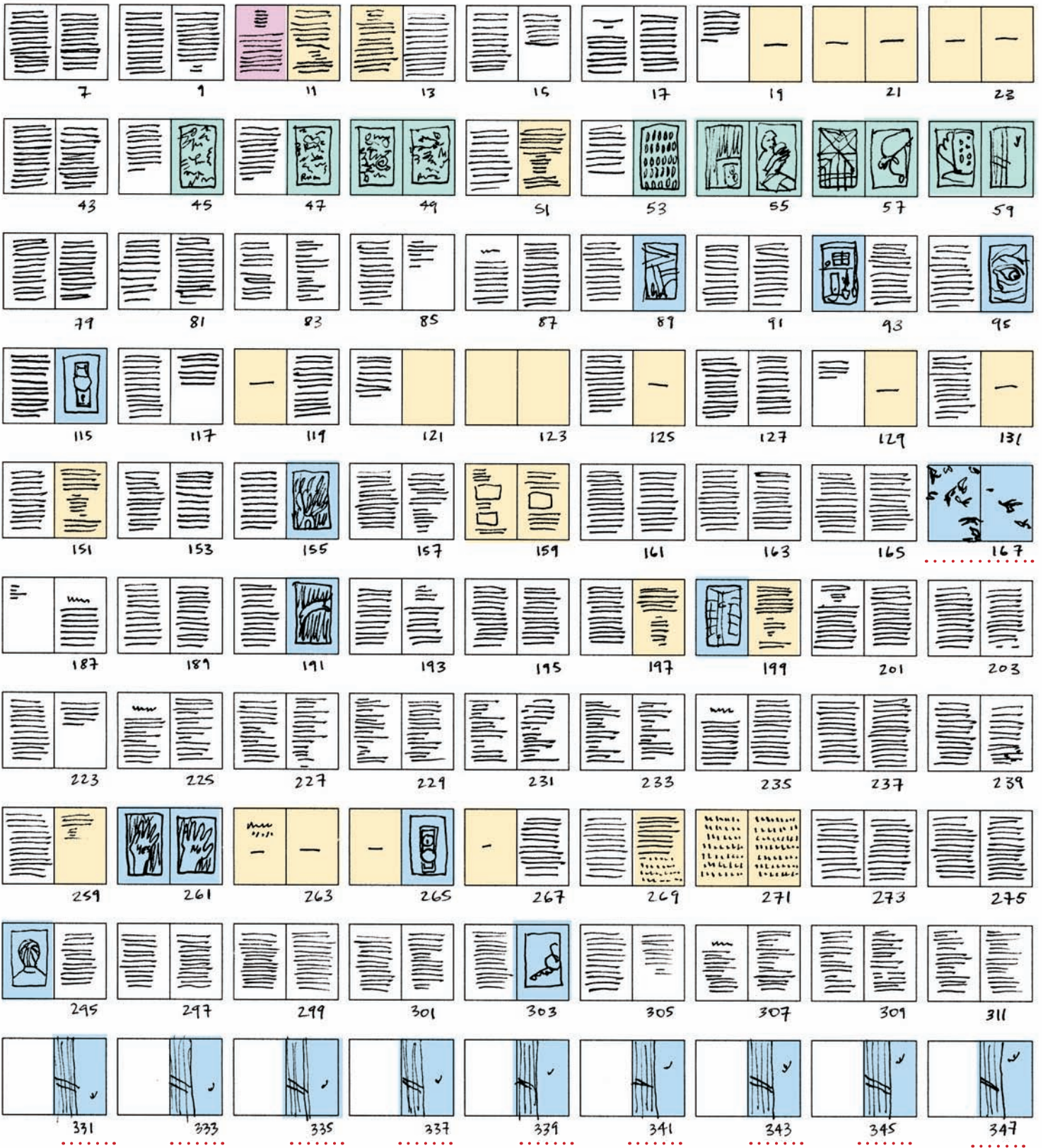
■ TYPOGRAPHY

■ PHOTOGRAPHS

■ EPHEMERA

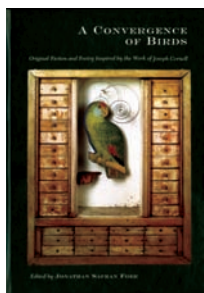
■ DIAGRAMS

■ ILLUSTRATIVE ELEMENTS



i) Contextual information

Word-image interplay features throughout Safran Foer's published work. Four previously published hybrid texts are described below.



A Convergence of Birds: Original Fiction and Poetry Inspired by the Work of Joseph Cornell (2001) is an anthology Safran Foer edited while still a writing student at Princeton. He posted letters to authors he admired, asking them to write a story or poem inspired by one of Cornell's 'bird box' assemblages, specifying that the writing "need not make any specific reference to either Cornell or the art itself." (xiii)¹ Each piece begins with a colour reproduction of the relevant assemblage, and is printed on creamy stock, in a hardback edition. Here, Safran Foer uses images in the tradition of Sebald, asking contributors to write 'up to and out of' these images.



Two short magazine essays – 'A Primer for the Punctuation of Heart Disease' (2002a) and 'About the typefaces not used in this edition' (2002b) – are structured around clever typographic devices, demonstrating Safran Foer's familiarity with the expressive potential of unconventional typesetting.

This typographic playfulness is also evident in Safran Foer's first, critically acclaimed novel *Everything is Illuminated*. (2002c) Safran Foer manipulates the typesetting grid and alternates typefaces to distinguish between parallel narratives.²

In 2003, artist Hiroshi Sugimoto was invited to photograph the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts building in St Louis. Instead, he focused on Richard Serra's sculpture *Joe*, which is installed within the building.³ Safran Foer was commissioned to write 'non-descriptive' text to accompany Sugimoto's moody photographs, and designer Takaaki Matsumoto grafted them into a hybrid book. The preface states: "Safran Foer's deep interest in the juxtaposition of the visual arts and poetic language predestined him to be part of the project. He composed a text in relation to the sculpture and the photographs without describing or defining them." (Safran Foer, Sugimoto & Matsumoto 2006) Safran Foer is recognised as an innovative writer with a sophisticated understanding of word-image interplay.

1 Cornell was an eccentric and reclusive New York based artist, most well known for his boxed assemblage artworks, which feature in *A Convergence of Birds*. Examples of his work are available online: <http://www.artnet.com/awc/joseph-cornell.html>

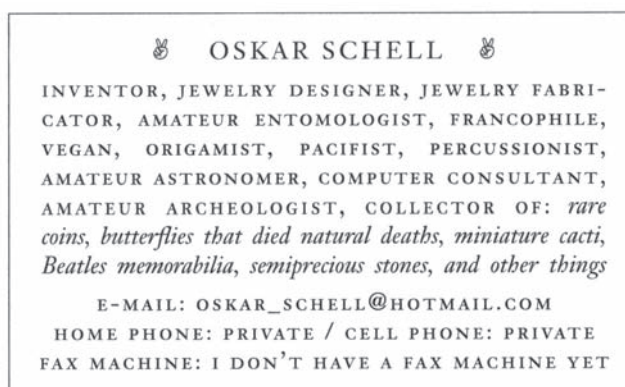
2 In an interview, Safran Foer states that this novel was inspired by a photograph of a woman said to have saved his Ukrainian grandfather from the Nazis during the Second World War. (Mackenzie 2005) The photograph is not reproduced in the novel, but this is another example of a novelist writing 'up to and out of' an image.

3 The sculpture is an homage to Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. View the photographs and book online: www.sugimoto.pulitzerarts.org/book

ii) Synopsis

Safran Foer's second novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* observes three generations of the Schell family, traumatised by the loss of a loved-one. Oskar Schell is a precocious but fragile 9-year-old, devastated when his beloved father Thomas dies in the September 11, 2001 World Trade Centre attack in New York City. Trapped in the second burning tower, Thomas leaves five messages on the family answering machine that Oskar returns home to hear. The last message is left moments before the tower falls, while Oskar is home but too frightened to pick up the phone. Guilty and in shock, Oskar replaces the answering machine, hiding the messages from his mother: "That secret was a hole in the middle of me that every happy thing fell into." (71)

A narrator in the vein of Huckleberry Finn and Holden Caulfield, Oskar's idiosyncratic vernacular is characterised by hyperbole and oddly poignant phrases. He describes his grief as 'wearing heavy boots', answers 'I'm okay' when his name is called, dresses exclusively in white, claims to competently play 'Flight of the Bumblebee' on the tambourine and imagines inventions like ambulances that assure passers-by a loved-one is not aboard. Homemade business cards declare him:

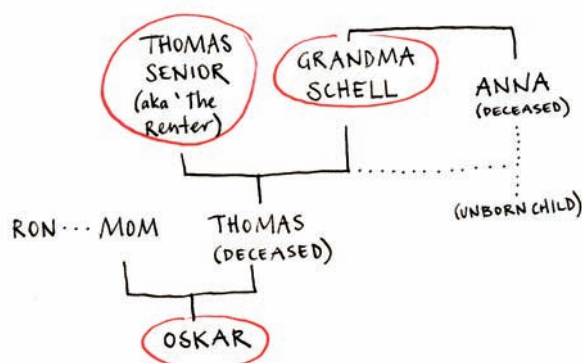


One reviewer describes him as: "the kind of child that adults adore and kids love to pick on." (Jain 2005)

Oskar's unnamed mother lingers just off-stage, present in times of deep distress but often strangely absent from Oskar's day-to-day life. Glimpses of her grief are shown through Oskar's naive eyes. For example a few months after Thomas' death they drive to a storage unit to clear out his things. Oskar says: "it took us more than two hours to get there, even though it wasn't far away, because Mom kept stopping to go to the bathroom and wash her face." (102) To Oskar's despair, a year after the tragedy she slowly develops a friend-

ship with Ron, a man from her trauma-support group. Sulking in his father's closet while his mother and Ron play Scrabble, Oskar accidentally breaks an unfamiliar blue vase. Inside is a small envelop with the word 'Black' written in red pen, in Thomas' handwriting. Inside the envelope is a key. Oskar imagines this key is a mystery he must solve – he speculates 'Black' is a name belonging to someone who knew his father: "I decided I would meet every person in New York with the last name Black. Even if it was relatively insignificant, it was something, and I needed to do something, like sharks, who die if they don't swim, which I know about." (87)

For most of the novel, Oskar tramps across the five boroughs of New York, door-knocking an eccentric collection of people with the surname Black, hoping to find the lock to match this mysterious key, but mostly trying to keep his father present in his daily life.



Oskar's grandparents narrate two letters, which run parallel to Oskar's narrative. They met in war-torn Germany, but not as lovers. An adolescent Grandma used to spy on Thomas Senior kissing her older sister, Anna. Anna dies, pregnant with his child, in the firebombing of Dresden. Thomas Senior falls permanently mute from grief. Years later, he randomly meets Grandma in a New York City bakery, and they marry out of mutual bereavement for Anna. They create a stifling silent life together, literally dividing their apartment into zones of Something and Nothing. When Grandma falls pregnant, Thomas Senior feels she has betrayed the 'rules' of their union and deserts her, fleeing back to Dresden, and so is known as neither father to Thomas, nor grandfather to Oskar.⁴ Grandma raises Thomas alone and shares a special bond with Oskar. Thomas Senior returns to NYC after forty years – too late to meet his son. Grandma allows him to move

⁴ In the novel, both Oskar's father and grandfather are simply called Thomas – I refer to the grandfather as Thomas Senior here to avoid confusion.

into the spare room in their apartment, but refuses to let him meet Oskar. Slowly, he does befriend his grandson, but is known to Oskar only as Grandma's 'renter'.

Both grandparents narrate through letters, which are presented between Oskar's chapters. Chapters titled 'Why I'm not where you are' are pieces of Thomas Senior's letters, written to Thomas – the son he never meets. Chapters titled 'My feelings' are sections of a letter Grandma writes to Oskar – when Thomas Senior tries to leave her for a second time, she follows him to the airport, where they set up a strange life in the departure lounge. She did not tell her sister that she loved her the night before Anna died, and this letter attempts to ensure that Oskar knows she loves him now, even though she has left him. These letters allow Safran Foer to present two adult perspectives of grief alongside Oskar's.⁵

iii) Analysis of Graphic devices

The graphic devices in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* are most easily analysed by categorising them into three graphic types: typography; photographs and ephemera; and 'pen' marks. Each category is discussed below.

Graphic Type One: typography

Safran Foer manipulates typesetting in two ways: first, to distinguish between the three different narrative voices, and second, to disrupt pace and the rhythm of reading.

Narrative Voice

The three first-person narrators composing *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* – Oskar, Grandma and Thomas Senior – are visually recognisable by different typesetting styles. The novel begins with Oskar's narrative, and his chapters form the majority of the novel. Although occasionally interrupted by photographs and ephemera, discussed in part B of this section, Oskar's narrative is typeset conventionally for a novel; Oskar's chapters establish the typesetting convention – in contrast, the other two chapters are both seen as unconventional.

Grandma's 'My feelings' chapters feature uncommonly large spaces after full stops (75):

⁵ Novels written through letters, known as epistolary novels, were popular in the eighteenth century. Lodge discusses the advantages of the form – letters chronicle an ongoing process and allow narration in the present tense, and more than one correspondent can show the same event from different points of view. (23)

MY FEELINGS

12 September 2003

Dear Oskar,

I am writing this to you from the airport.

I have so much to say to you. I want to begin at the beginning, because that is what you deserve. I want to tell you everything, without leaving out a single detail. But where is the beginning? And what is everything?

I am an old woman now, but once I was a girl. It's true. I was a girl like you are a boy. One of my chores was to bring in the mail. One day there was a note addressed to our house. There was no name on it. It was mine as much as anyone's, I thought. I opened it. Many words had been removed from the text by a censor.

The gaps affect our reading of these chapters. This typographic device references the 'tabs' on the typewriter Grandma uses to tap out her letter, but also injects pauses between sentences – a kind of visual reference to the breathy quality of a grandmother's speech.

Thomas Senior's 'Why I'm not where you are' letters are dated, ranging from before Thomas' birth (5/21/63) to after his death (9/11/03). In contrast to his wife's chapters, his are distinguished by long-winded sentences and a total lack of paragraphing (16):

WHY I'M NOT WHERE YOU ARE

5/21/63

To my unborn child: I haven't always been silent, I used to talk and talk and talk and talk, I couldn't keep my mouth shut, the silence overtook me like a cancer, it was one of my first meals in America, I tried to tell the waiter, "The way you just handed me that knife, that reminds me of—" but I couldn't finish the sentence, her name wouldn't come, I tried again, it wouldn't come, she was locked inside me, how strange, I thought, how frustrating, how pathetic, how sad, I took a pen from my pocket and wrote "Anna" on my napkin, it happened again two days later, and then again the following day, she was the only thing I wanted to talk about, it kept happening, when I didn't have a pen, I'd write "Anna" in the air—backward and right to left—so that the person I was speaking with could see, and when I was on the phone I'd dial the numbers—2, 6, 6, 2—so that the person could hear what I couldn't,

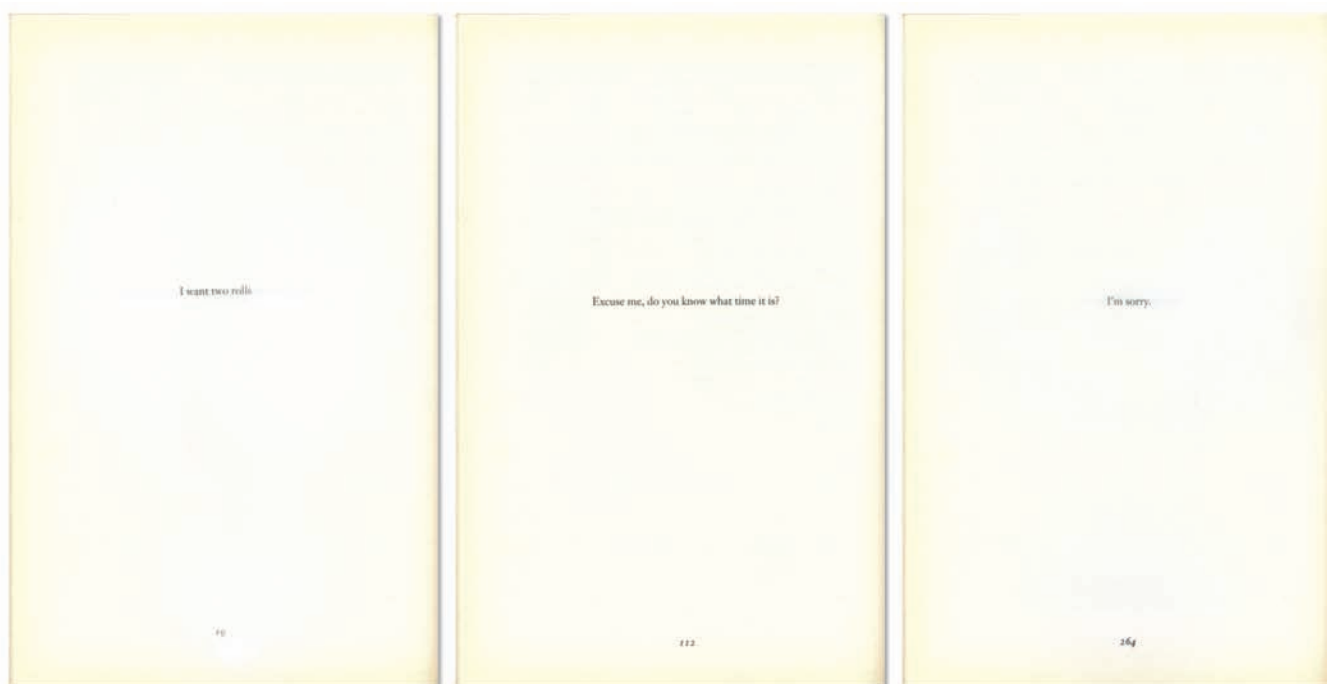
His letters are stream of consciousness passages – a man who does not speak, need not pause for breath. For the reader, these chapters carry a manic, fretful tone. The restless stream of Thomas Senior’s letters is only broken when he presents a page from one of his ‘daybooks’ – either a single line of text or a photograph of a doorknob, as discussed shortly.

These different typesetting styles help distinguish between the different narrative voices, which speak from different continents and eras concurrently. The visual presentation of the different narrators also affects the tone of their narratives, alluding to the idiosyncratic voice of each narrator.

Pace and rhythm

Unconventional typesetting is also employed to disrupt the pace and rhythm of reading. Safran Foer breaks the typesetting grid at several points, to achieve particular affects.

When Thomas Senior becomes mute, he tattoos the words ‘yes’ and ‘no’ on the palms of his hands. For other communication, he carries small ‘daybooks’ in which he writes, as briefly as possible, what he needs to say:



Presenting these snippets one line per page, as they would appear in his daybooks, interrupts the pace of reading. We experience what the baker, the stranger, or his wife experience – an isolated phrase floating with limited context. This device also echoes the profound loneliness of Thomas Senior’s world – the whiteness of the page surrounding the line of text

breaks his relentless, unpunctuated narrative, affecting a sense of isolation and silence.

A particularly powerful use of this device is when Thomas Senior describes deserting Grandma. She is ill with a cold, and he leaves her at their apartment, uncertain whether she understands he is deserting her. Six pages of single daybook entries follow – his part of the conversation:

- I want to buy a ticket to Dresden (136)
- What are you doing here? (137)
- You have to go home. You should be in bed. (138)
- Let me take you home. (139)
- You're being crazy. You're going to catch a cold. (140)
- You're going to catch a colder. (141)

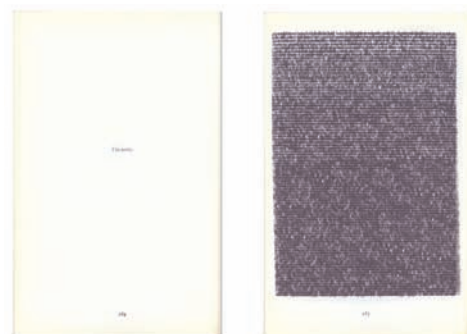
No further explanation of this scene follows. Grandma's unheard dialogue – floating between the pages that present these stark sentences – evokes the scene powerfully. Safran Foer has given us time – through the space on the page – to empathise with Grandma in this painful moment. The barren description speaks volumes in the white space.

When Thomas Senior returns to his family after forty years of self-imposed estrangement, he begins shadowing Oskar – desperate to be close to him but respectful of Grandma's rule that he cannot meet him. They first meet face to face when Oskar comes crying to Grandma's house, but she is not home. Thomas Senior tells us how he silently listens as Oskar pours his heart out, and plays him the final answering machine message from his father in the burning tower. After Oskar leaves Grandma returns home and they make love for 'the last time', then the next morning Oskar appears and confides that he wants to dig up his father's empty grave (Thomas' body was never recovered). As this narrative cascades out of Thomas Senior, the leading* becomes tighter and tighter until pages are black with overlapping lines of text:

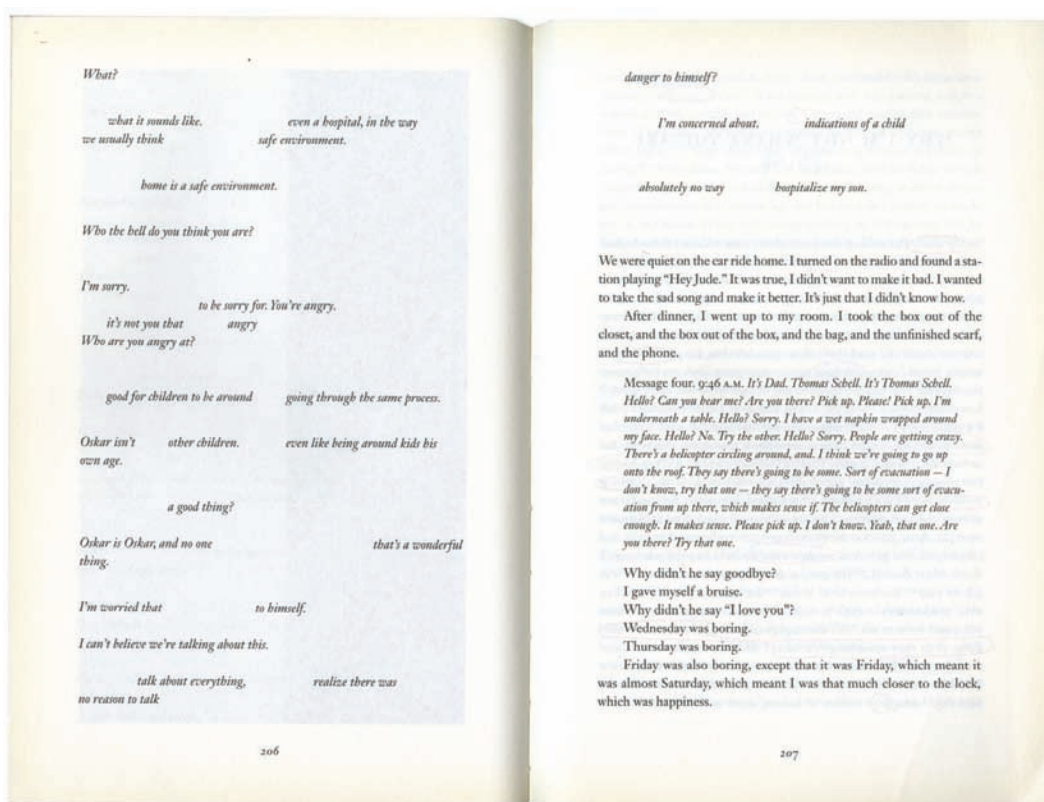
*Leading is the typographic term for the space between lines of text



The visual juxtaposition between this heavy ink and the whiteness of the single-line daybook entries visualise the complexity of his heartache. The unreadable mess of text represents the devastating experience of facing his family, and their collective heartache, after years in self-imposed isolation. Through this device, we share Thomas Senior's anxiety and claustrophobia as his world becomes overwhelmingly emotionally complex.

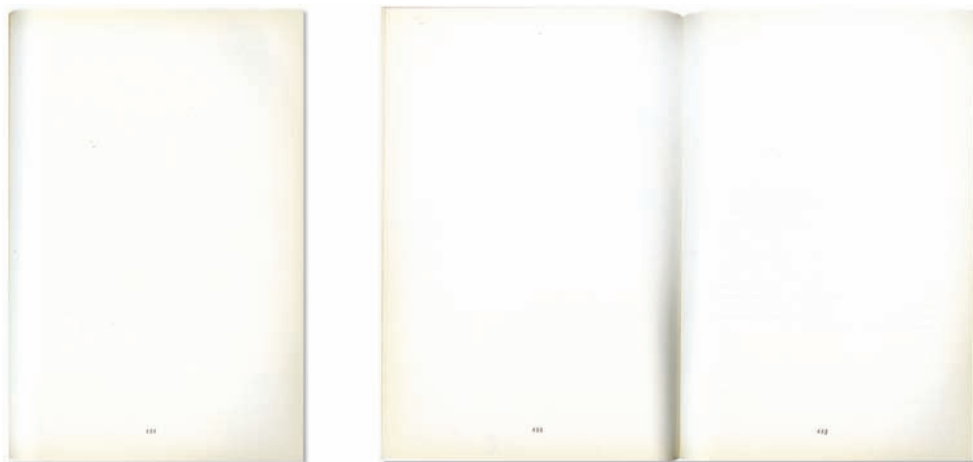


Another example of typography manipulating the pace and cohesion of reading occurs when Oskar eavesdrops on an angry conversation between his mother and his therapist, discussing whether Oskar is a danger to himself and needs to be hospitalised (he inflicts bruises on himself when frustrated or sad):



Yawning gaps in the text represent parts of the conversation Oskar misses through the closed door. The passage could be contained on one page instead of across three by representing these omissions with ellipsis. But an ellipsis is the same no matter how long the pause – the way our eyes move across this physical space between phrases muddles the conversation. We strain to guess what we have missed, just as Oskar does; we do not understand the whole conversation, but we know the gist of it is not good. For the reader, the typographic fragmentation simulates Oskar's experience, and amplifies his confusion and anxiety.

Similarly, when Thomas Senior encourages Grandma to write her life story – before he leaves her – she types a thousand pages. Thomas Senior picks them up:



Presented with the blank pages, we are as puzzled Thomas Senior: has she not typed anything? Then, we are told the typewriter ribbon is ink-less and her eyes are too ‘crummy’ to notice. Through this device, the pages of Grandma’s desolate biography are placed into our hands, for us to slowly realise the awful fact as Thomas Senior does.

By manipulating the typesetting, Safran Foer shifts the pace of the narrative – slowing it down with white space, and disrupting it with overlapping or omitted text – making us share the character’s experience, in ‘real time’.

Graphic Type Two: Photographs and ephemera

Photographs and ephemera are discussed together here, because they are used to achieve similar affects. Two types of photographs and ephemera appear in the novel – found images (sourced from the Internet and newspapers by Oskar) and ‘original’ photographs (taken by Oskar and Thomas Senior). Thomas Senior has a camera, which he uses to document his apartment for insurance purposes. He leaves it, and everything else, behind when he flees. Grandma gives the camera to Oskar, who uses it to document the people and events he encounters on his travels. Thomas Senior and Oskar both photograph banal, everyday things; the (same) camera is a screen between these characters and the worlds they are both estranged from. They keep the photographs they capture as a way to reflect upon their worlds.

*Photographic frontispiece**

Waiting in ambush between the cover and the preliminary pages, three full-page black and white photographs open *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

**A frontispiece is the heavily illustrated page(s) between the cover and the primary text. In Victorian novels, the frontispiece was often an ornate, calligraphic title page, but is rarely used in contemporary publishing.*



Occupying such prominent territory, we assume these images are important. Yet uncaptioned, and isolated from the primary text, they appear without apparent clues for interpretation. However, comparing the graphic presentation of these frontispiece photographs with the photographs that appear later in the novel reveals two clues for interpretation.

First, these three are full-bleed, where later photographs are positioned within the bounding margins of the text box. Second, the three frontispiece photographs are each coupled with a blank page, although later photographs are presented facing text or other photographs. On the thumbnail schema of the novel (see the opening page of this section), a red dotted line appears under full bleed photographs, showing that aside from the final sequence, discussed later, there are far more photographs set within the text grid, without blank facing pages, making this formatting the ‘convention.’⁶



When an author breaks the conventions they have established for their novel, we assume it is for a particular purpose. The way these frontispiece photographs are presented, in comparison to the other photographs in the novel, seems to me to suggest that the frontispiece images are not presented to us as photographic devices, placed within the text, but as pictorial ideas, flowing beyond the page. The frontispiece, then, can be read as a framing device that visually introduces important themes and symbols. Similar to some title sequences in film and television, they are evocative, rather than descriptive. The photographic frontispiece also introduces the possibility that more graphic devices follow, making later devices less unexpected – convention has already been broken, up front.

Next, each of these three frontispiece photographs is analysed as a ‘pictorial idea’ and linked to other photographic devices in the novel.

⁶ The two other deviations from this layout convention are discussed later in the chapter.

Frontispiece Device One: keyholes and doorknobs



Actual page size

The first frontispiece photograph is an extreme close up on the keyhole of a door. Are we peering through the hole or noticing the key is missing? Keyholes are associated with mystery – the unknown behind a locked door, and also voyeurism – the hidden observer, peeping into a private space. Literally, this image represents Oskar’s quest to find the lock that fits his mysterious key, and also the doorknobs that recur throughout Thomas Senior’s narrative. More broadly, the locked door is a metaphor for the characters’ inability to communicate, or let each other into, their grief.

In addition to this frontispiece image, five photographs of doorknobs appear within the novel, on pages 29, 115, 134, 212 and 265. These photographs only appear in Thomas Senior’s chapters. Grandma explains their presence in his daybooks. He took out the most expensive insurance policy possible when they moved in together; an insurance agent snapped a roll of film in the apartment so ‘if anything happened’ they could rebuild exactly as it was. After the agent left, Thomas Senior manically photographed the apartment again himself. Grandma explains:

He took pictures of everything. Of the undersides of the shelves in the closet. Of the backs of the mirrors. Even the broken things. The things you would not want to remember. He could have rebuilt the apartment by taping together the pictures. And the doorknobs. He took a picture of every doorknob in the apartment. Every one. As if the world and its future depended on each doorknob. As if we would be thinking about doorknobs should we ever actually need to use the pictures of them. I don’t know why that hurt me so much. I told him, They are not even nice doorknobs. He wrote, But they are our doorknobs. I was his too. He never took pictures of me, and we didn’t buy life insurance. He kept one set of the pictures in his dresser. He taped another set into his daybooks, so they’d always be with him, in case something happened at home.

This passage explains the presence of the photographs in Thomas Senior’s chapters – he rips pages from his daybooks to write letters, some of these pages contain doorknob photographs. Although this explains why Thomas Senior, the character, has included the photographs, it does not explain why Safran Foer, the author, has. To understand Safran Foer’s inclusion of the photographic devices, the photographs must be examined more closely.

On first reading, I assumed the same photograph was repeated several times in the

novel – an understandable oversight considering the number of pages dividing each appearance of the image. Yet through the process of sketching the thumbnail schema, I noticed these photographs are all slightly different. It is possible future readings may have revealed this insight, but the act of sketching the thumbnails forced me to look at the photographs with a more critical eye. Next, by cataloguing these devices – shown below – I analysed them more closely as individual photographs, in relationship to each other, and considered their placement in relation to the surrounding text. This catalogue prompted my interpretations of why Safran Foer includes this photographic device.



Page 29 – This door, with a glass knob, plain metal fixture and key turned at a 45 degree angle, appears in a letter dated 5/21/63. This letter is written from the airport when Thomas Senior discovers Grandma is pregnant and deserts her. It is presented in two parts within the novel. The first part of the letter describes how Thomas Senior gradually lost his ability to speak, and his chance meeting with Grandma at the bakery in NYC. In this brief meeting, Grandma unexpectedly writes ‘please marry me’ on the last page of his daybook; they flip the pages back and forward between pre-written phrases until he settles on ‘Help’. It is the beginning of their new life together.



Page 115 – In the second part of the letter dated 5/21/63, Thomas Senior reminisces about falling hopelessly in love with Grandma’s sister, Anna, in Dresden immediately before the war. It is the only period of true happiness his letters describe. Although it has a similar glass knob, this door is obviously different from the previous photograph – it has a keyhole and decorative edge on the metal plate.



Page 134 – Also in the second part of the 5/21/63 letter, this photograph appears as Thomas Senior tries to justify deserting his wife and son. He finishes this letter, to Thomas, with this image, and the text:

I’ll rip these pages from this book, take them to the mailbox before I get on the plane, address the envelope to ‘My Unborn Child,’ and I’ll never write another word again, I am gone, I am no longer here. With love, Your father.

But he does write again, and two more doorknob images follow.

Is it significant that in the first three photographs, the doorknobs embedded in text about Grandma have a key, and the doorknob near Anna has a keyhole? Is this second door with a key the same door, with key turned at a different angle, indicating a shift in ‘openness’ of the door? It is, of course, possible to force too much significance onto these visual ‘clues’. Perhaps they are all different simply for the sake of not repeating the same photograph, as these images are supposed to represent Thomas Senior’s obsessive documentation of all the doorknobs in his apartment. But these closely framed doorknobs ask us to scrutinise an overlooked domestic object – they beg for interpretation.

Page 212 – This door appears in the midst of a letter dated 4/12/78; Thomas would be fifteen years old. He writes from Dresden, finally trying to face the horrors that he experienced there during the Second World War. He recalls running through the streets, searching for the pregnant Anna in the aftermath of the bombing. All that is left of his home is the “patch of the façade that stubbornly held up the front door.” Grabbing the burning metal doorknob scorches the skin off his palms, he writes: “I saw the muscles of my palm, red and pulsing, why did I grab it with my other hand?” (211)



This cannot be a photograph of that doorknob, as it is not the door to the front of a house (there is no keyhole) and it is not burnt. The doorknobs are not literally related to the text that surrounds them, but linked in an abstract way. Seven pages narrate, in gruesome detail, what Thomas Senior saw while searching for Anna:

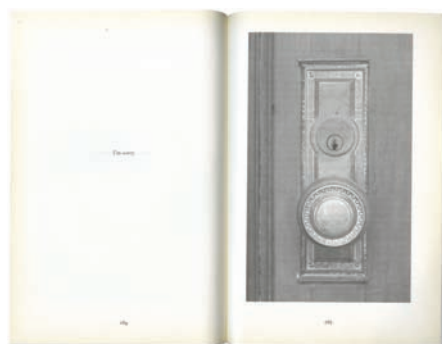
[L]egs and necks, I saw a woman whose blond hair and green dress were on fire, running with a silent baby in her arms, I saw humans melted into thick pools of liquid, three or four feet in places, I saw bodies crackling like embers, laughing, and the remains of masses of people who had tried to escape the firestorm by jumping head first into the lakes and ponds, the parts of their bodies that were submerged in the water were still intact... (211)

Through this passage, we understand how Thomas Senior is traumatized so deeply he loses both the power of speech and the capacity to love – how he becomes a closed door, without a key. This is the only door with no keyhole – as such, it can be read as a visual metaphor for Thomas Senior closing himself off to the world, in this traumatic moment.



Page 265 – The last doorknob photograph appears near the beginning of Thomas Senior’s final letter, dated 9/11/03, exactly two years after Thomas’ death. This letter ends when he becomes so overwhelmed by his own narrative that the leading becomes unreadable (left).

This final letter starts with three daybook pages:



I don’t speak, I’m sorry. (262)

My name is Thomas. (263)

I’m sorry. (264)

Then the metal knob above, with a keyhole, followed by:

I’m still sorry. (266)

Thomas Senior does not speak – he is a locked door – for which he is sorry. The door is noticeably different, again, because the keyhole is above the doorknob in this image, and it is a more ‘modern’ lock. Perhaps Grandma updated the doors in his absence?

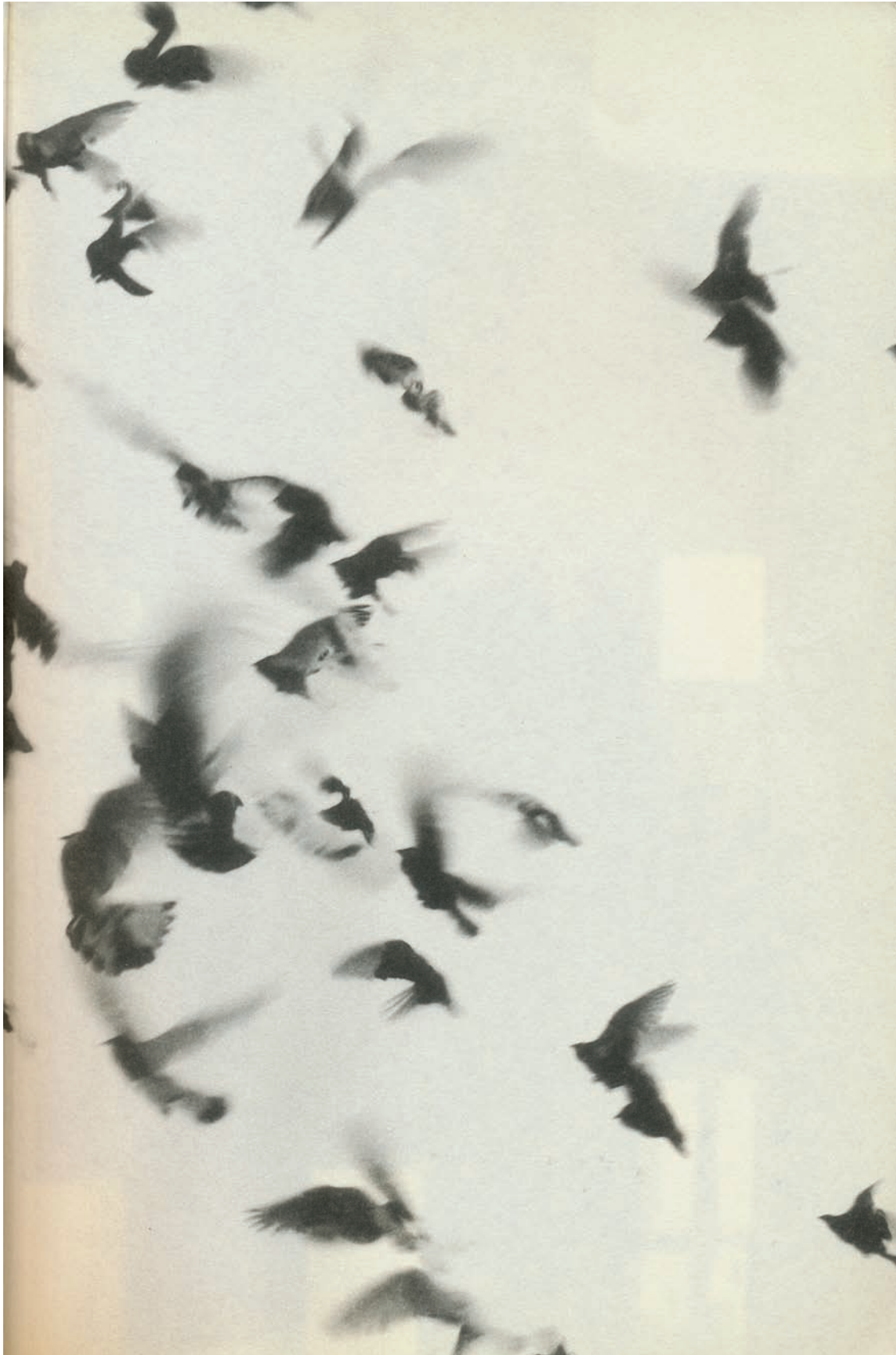
A simple reading of these different doorknob photographs is that Thomas Senior snapped them, in an obsessive moment, to document all the ‘things’ in his apartment. They are different, because the doorknobs in the apartment were all different. Yet Grandma describes him photographing everything in the apartment – “even the broken things” – and keeping copies of everything in his daybooks. The only photographs presented in his chapters are of the doorknobs; therefore, the doorknobs are significant. These photographs are compositionally similar – the doorknob and lock are a similar size and placement in all photographs. The differences are whether the doorknobs are metal or glass, and whether there have keyholes or no locking device. The three more ornamental, glass doorknobs appear near descriptions of the two women he loved, Anna and Grandma. The doors associated with Grandma both have keys, and the door associated with Anna has a keyhole. The metal doorknobs appear when Thomas Senior is talking about his own feelings: the first lockless-door when he recounts the horror of Dresden being bombed,

and the second door with the newest keyhole when he describes his slow friendship with Oskar. Perhaps the presence of the keyhole in the second image is an indication of hope?

If there was just one of these doorknob photographs, it could be argued that the photograph is not significant enough to be called integral to the novel – removing it would not alter the plot. However, a small but important distinction should be made between a narrative device, and a literary device. These photographs may not be narrative devices, in that they do not progress the narrative (storyline) directly, but they are literary devices, because they contribute an intangible, literary value to the novel. Again, I can relate the plot of a novel to you, but the art of the novel lies in its use of literary devices. The fact that there are multiple versions of these doorknob photographs means that they develop as a visual theme, linking to people and events and actions in the story. Other descriptions of keyhole and doorknobs crop up in the text. Aside from Oskar’s quest to find a lock for his mysterious key, Grandma describes Thomas Senior peeking through a keyhole. Although she allows Thomas Senior to stay in the spare bedroom when he returns to New York, she punishes him by refusing to introduce him to Oskar. Desperate, he suggests: “I’ll hide in the coat closet and look through the keyhole.” (276) His first view of Oskar is through that keyhole, and he later states, “I wanted to carry the closet door with me so I could always look at him through the keyhole.” (278)

Both verbal and photographic descriptions of doorknobs and keyholes appear in different contexts, and in different ways throughout the novel. These descriptions are neither immediately obvious nor perfectly clear upon reflection. The question ‘what does the door mean in the novel’ has no single answer, and nor does the question ‘what does the *photograph* of the door mean’. The doorknob/keyhole device is a recurring theme, both linguistic and graphic, that is allowed to float polysemically. Oskar literally has a key and is searching for a lock. Thomas Senior is metaphorically locked, and in search of a key to open himself up.

Frontispiece Device Two: birds in flight



Actual page size

We gather Oskar has snapped this second frontispiece photograph, because a cropped version appears within one of his chapters, blown-up into a double page spread. Early in his quest, Oskar befriends a reclusive, elderly Mr Black who lives upstairs in his building. This Mr Black accompanies Oskar on his trips across New York. Mr Black has not left his apartment for twenty-four years and turned his hearing aids off to save the batteries – for no apparent reason. Oskar convinces him to turn them back on:

Then, out of nowhere, a flock of birds flew by the window, extremely fast and incredibly close. Maybe twenty of them. Maybe more. But they also seemed like just one bird, because somehow they all knew...



exactly what to do. Mr Black grabbed his ears and made a bunch of weird sounds. He started crying – not out of happiness, I could tell, but not out of sadness, either. (168)

The double page spread bleeds off the page, as though the birds are too loud and fast to be contained within the grid. By breaking the convention for presenting photographs – which, as established earlier, is for photographs to fit within the text grid – this image has immediate visual impact. When we turn the page, the presentation is unexpected, and amplifies the moment for us, reflecting the experience of the characters.

Flight, in the human sense of fleeing from grief and responsibility, is a recurring theme in the novel. Through his quest for the lock, Oskar flees from the reality of his

father's death. Thomas Senior deserts his pregnant wife, fleeing the responsibility of fatherhood. At the end of the novel, Thomas Senior flees again, but this time, followed by Grandma. She intercepts him at the airport – the ultimate space that is neither Something or Nothing – and they settle there together. Grandma explains (312):

Things were happening around us, but nothing was happening between us.
 Above us, the screens said which flights were landing and which were taking off.
 Madrid departing.
 Rio arriving.
 Stockholm departing.
 Paris departing.
 Milan arriving.
 Everyone was coming or going.
 People around the world were moving from one place to another.
 No one was staying.
 I said, What if we stay?
 Stay?
 Here. What if we stay here at the airport?
 He wrote, Is that another joke?
 I shook my head no.
 How could we stay here?
 I told him, There are pay phones, so I could call Oskar and let him know I'm OK. And there are paper stores where you could buy day-books and pens. There are places to eat. And money machines. And bathrooms. Even televisions.
 Not coming or going.
 Not something or nothing.
 Not yes or no.

In a more literal sense, flight also recurs in Oskar's obsession with a photograph he finds on the Internet. This blurry photograph could almost be a blown up bird. But it is not. Oskar found the now well-known pictures of people jumping from the second tower on September 11 to avoid burning to death.⁷ He wonders whether this 'falling man' is his father. Throughout the novel, Oskar imagines many safety inventions, one

⁷ The imprint page of *Extremely Loud* credits this as: "photo illustration based on a photograph by Lyle Owerko." According to his website – www.owerko.com – Lyle Owerko shot six rolls of film of 'jumpers' who leapt from the top of the World Trade Centre. He published a book of these 'falling man' photographs called *And No Birds Sang*. Another falling man photograph, by Richard Drew, inspired Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* and journalist Tom Junod's article in *Esquire* magazine (2003). Videos are apparently available online, however I did not seek them out.



of which is a birdseed shirt: “there are so many times when you need to make a quick escape, but humans don’t have their own wings, nor not yet, anyway, so what about a birdseed shirt?” (2)

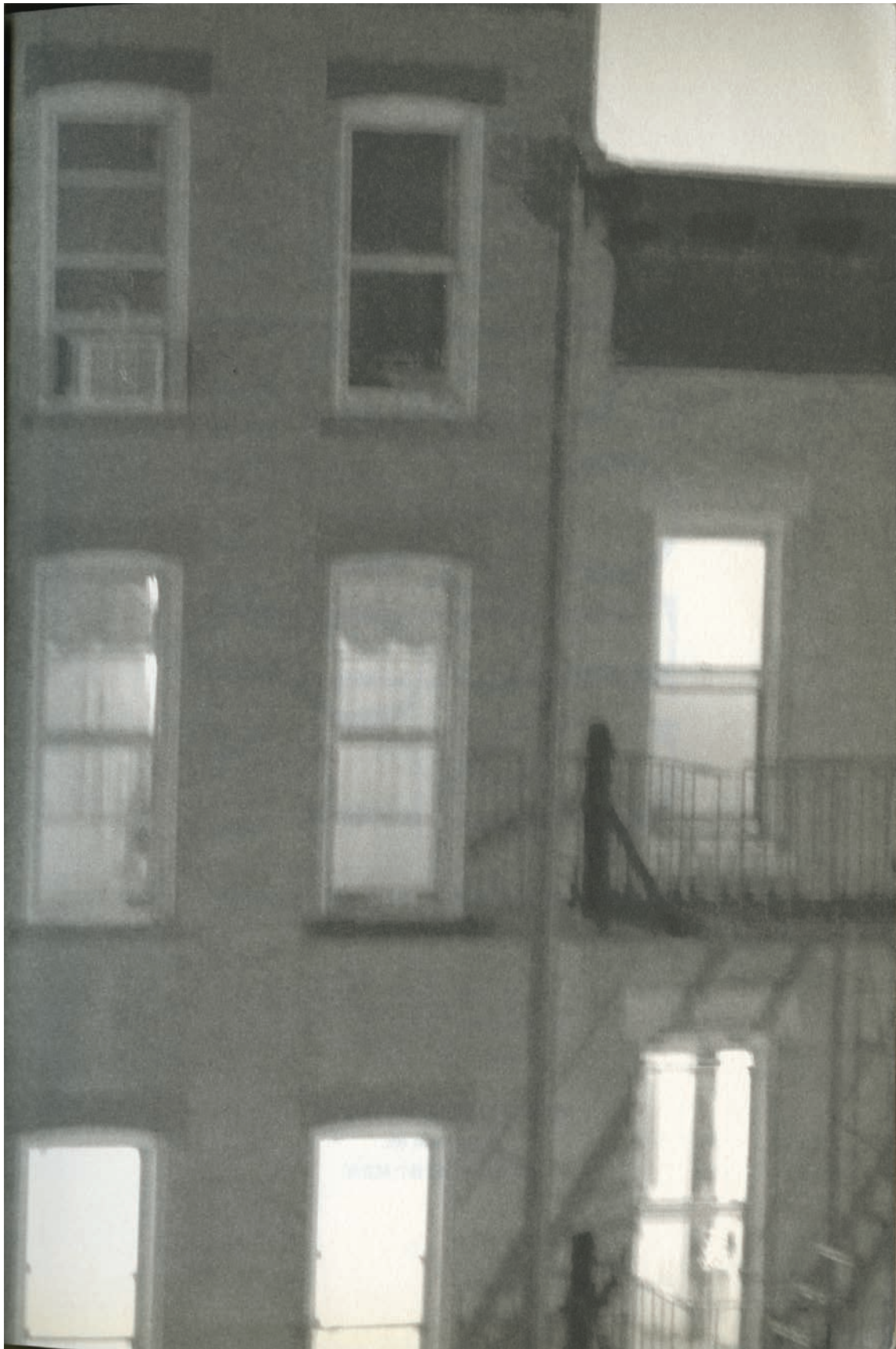
This birdseed shirt is referenced several other times – always in moments when Oskar is thinking about his father’s death. In one passage, when Grandma mentions the birdseed shirt as a joke, Oskar becomes upset – when she asks what’s wrong, he tells her he misses his father. (71) In another passage, Ruth Black, who guides tours around the Empire State Building, explains to Oskar that during the spring and autumn bird-migration, the lights on the building are turned off on foggy nights to prevent confused birds flying into the building. Oskar says to Ruth:

‘Ten thousand birds die every year from smashing into windows,’ because I’d accidentally found that fact when I was doing some research about the windows in the Twin Towers. ... ‘so I invented a device that would detect when a bird is incredibly close to a building, and that would trigger an extremely loud birdcall from another skyscraper, and they’d be drawn to that. They’d bounce from one to another.’ ... ‘But the birds would never leave Manhattan,’ Ruth said. ‘Which would be great,’ I told her, ‘because then your birdseed shirt would be reliable.’ (250)

The falling man image is discussed in more detail shortly, but here, a connection is clearly made between this falling body (possibly Thomas?) and the birds.

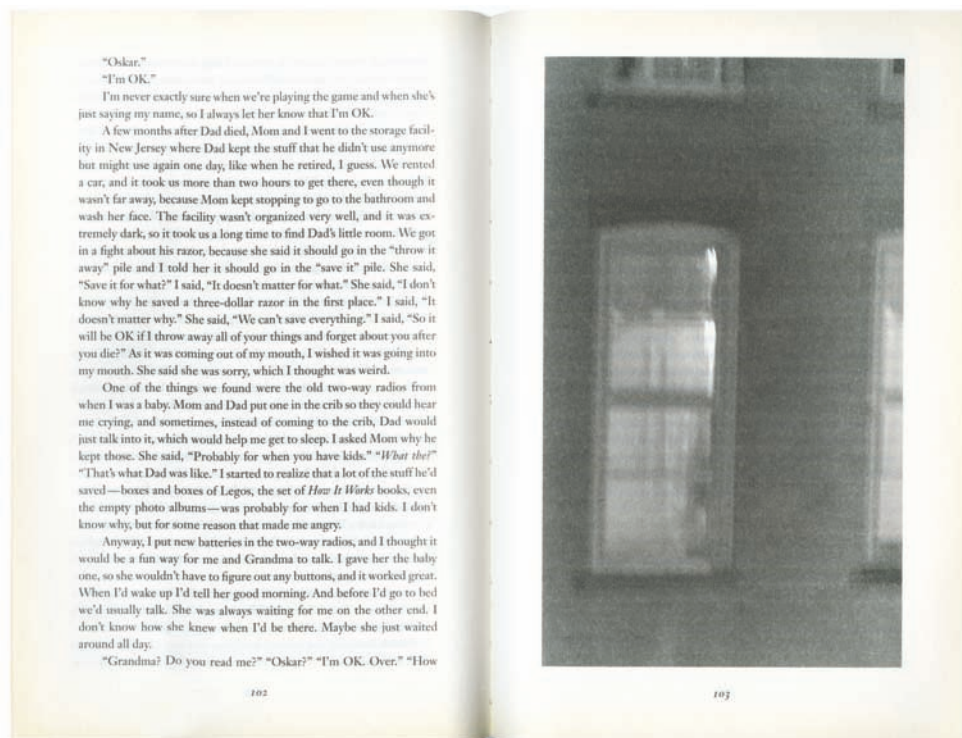
The phrases ‘extremely loud’ and ‘incredibly close’ appear throughout the novel, but in particular, in association with birds, and with this image of a falling man. There is no simple, direct reading of this phrase – it alludes to the catastrophic events on September 11, but also to the more personal catastrophes and illuminating moments in the lives of many characters who populate the novel. The photograph of birds in flight, like the doorknobs, can be read in multiple ways, and related to different aspects of the novel.

Frontispiece three: apartment building



Actual page size

This third frontispiece photograph is a blurry shot of an apartment – presumably taken by Oskar, from his apartment, which directly faces Grandma’s. The same photograph appears again when Oskar describes setting up two-way baby monitor radios between their facing apartments, so they can speak first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Within the chapter, this photograph is cropped in – an extreme close up of just one window. Isolated, this window begs for closer inspection:



Is the dark smudge on the right a person – Grandma? – peeking through the curtains at us? The photograph is poorly focused, and the reproduction blown-up blurry. It is heavy with a mundane kind of voyeurism, reflected in the narrative surrounding it:

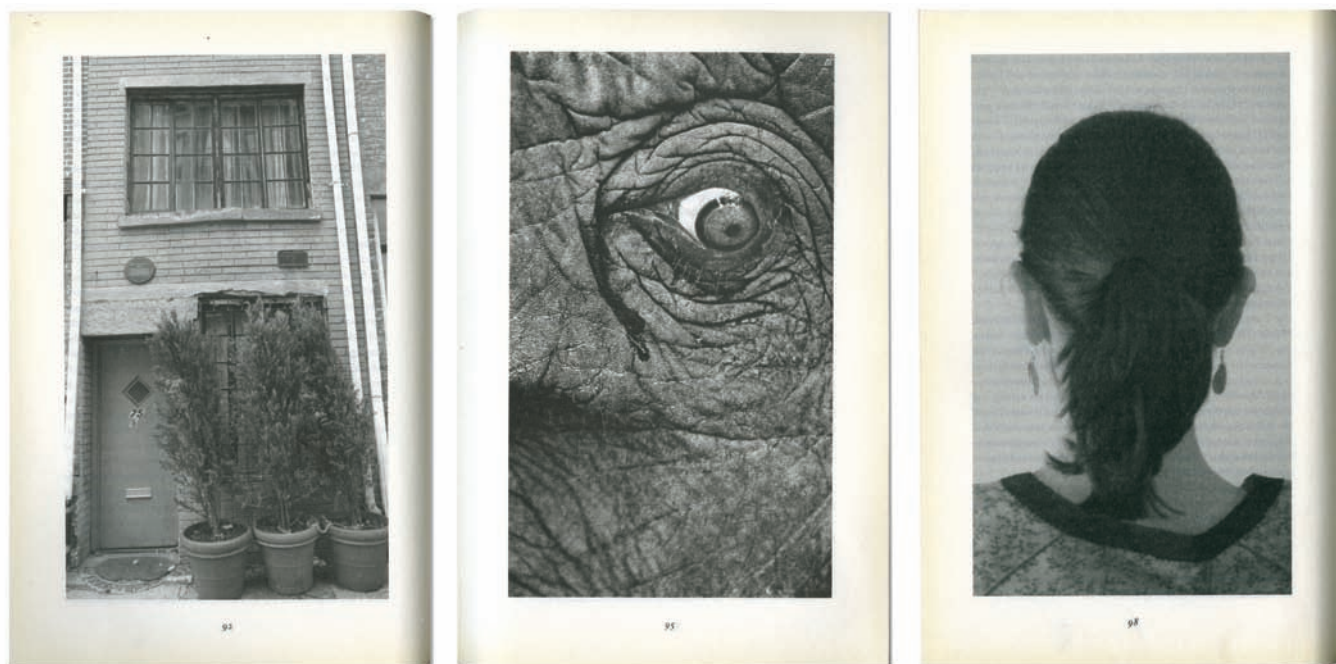
‘I asked how did you sleep. Over.’ ‘Fine,’ I’ll say, looking at her across the street, my chin in my palm, ‘no bad dreams. Over.’ ‘One hundred dollars. Over.’ We never have all that much to say to each other. (104)

Thomas Senior watches Oskar through a cupboard door, Grandma watches him through a window, but both are watching, incredibly close.

While visiting the various Blacks, Oscar documents his journey with his camera (formally Thomas Senior’s). Not every narrated encounter is accompanied by photographs – in

retelling some stories Oskar mentions taking photographs but doesn't include them. For example, none appear in the account of visiting a wealthy woman's uptown apartment where he inadvertently offends the African-American maid by being overly complimentary. Oskar seems to omit pictures of experiences that were very uncomfortable, perhaps too self-conscious to pull out his camera, or not wanting to remember them in detail.

The description of meeting Abby Black, the second name in the phone book, contains three photographs:



It is an awkward meeting. Oskar has obviously walked in on a domestic argument (obvious to us but not him, the scene is heavy with dramatic irony). While he speaks to Abby, her husband storms about in the background; Oskar describes him as a 'desperate person' in the other room. When Oskar informs Abby that humans are the only animals who cry, she replies that the elephant on her wall appears to be crying. Oskar photographs this photograph, to reflect on later. We are not told whether the image we see is a close up of Abby's picture, or a full reproduction. The image is strange and haunting, its eye rolling to the side as if in terror or pain. At one point in their meeting, Abby bursts into tears, and Oskar thinks: "*I'm the one who's supposed to be crying.*"(96) A moment later, he asks her: "Could we kiss for a little bit?" She politely refuses, explaining that she is forty-eight and married, and he is twelve – he lies about his age, wanting to seem old enough for her to love him. The elephant photograph adds to the strangeness and discomfort of the scene. In lieu of a kiss, Oskar asks to take Abby's photograph, but says:

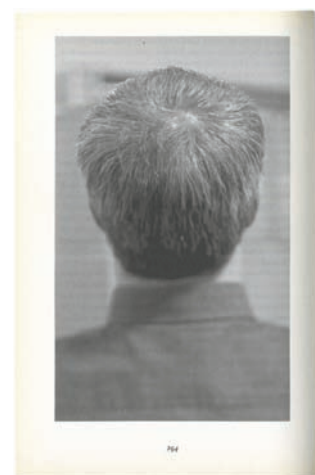
When I started focusing Grandpa's camera, she put her hand in front of her face for some reason. I didn't want to force her to explain herself, so I thought of a different picture I could take, which would be more truthful, anyway. (99)

The photograph of the back of a woman's head appears nearby. Why is this more truthful? Has he taken it without her permission? To allow her to hide her tears? Or to show that he doesn't really *see* her? Oskar's statement provides an in-text caption to the image – telling us he took a picture implies that this is the photograph he took, but this 'caption' does not pin a meaning to the image – if anything, it confuses us more.

Almost two hundred pages and a lot of door-knocking later, it turns out Abby's 'desperate' husband is the owner of the lock that fits Oskar's key. Immediately after Oskar leaves her house, Abby leaves him a phone message saying she was not completely honest and may be able to help him, but – for obvious reasons – Oskar is hesitant to listen to answering machine messages. He does not receive Abby's message for eight months, by which time he has visited an eclectic collection of Blacks in NYC. Hearing the message, he rushes straight over to Abby's house. The photograph of her house greets us again.

Abby explains her husband, William, may own the lock the fits his key. Oskar arrives at William's office to discover William has been searching for the key for two years. After selling his own deceased father's possessions, William discovered a letter informing him of a safety deposit box key, hidden in a blue vase. The blue vase Oskar's father bought, and Oskar accidentally broke. Oskar does not mention photographing William, the Black he has spent so long hunting, but includes this photograph >

The phrase 'we were incredibly close' is repeated several times in the passages describing Oskar's encounters with Abby and William Black, yet Oskar photographs the back of their heads. Are these 'more truthful' portraits because Oskar realises he will never be close to these sympathetic strangers? These are the only photographs of 'real people' (characters) that appear in the book. Here, we wonder if Safran Foer avoids depicting characters too figuratively to avoid dictating their appearance to us, or 'shock' us out of our suspended disbelief with a 'real' face. Or has Oskar chosen to depict them this way? Did Oskar photograph the back of William's head so it would match Abby's portrait? Did William find out Abby was photographed from the back and request a similar angle? In considering these scenarios, the reader spends more 'time' with the characters in these strange and uncomfortable meetings. In this sense, the photographs are meditative – I spent time reflecting on their making, on the characters involved in producing these images.





Oskar realises that although he must hand the key over, it has brought him no closer to his father. The last photograph in this section is the key he gives to William.

Another point of reflection for Oskar and Thomas Senior's photographs is the artistic quality of these images. As with Sebald's photographs – described as having 'deliberately leaden quality' so as not to stand out from the written text – these appear to be snapshots rather than professional or artistic photographs. The only photograph taken by Oskar that stands out as being more artistically composed – more sharply focused, with clearer tonality and more engaging cropping – is the elephant eye, which is supposed to be a photograph of a professional photograph. The rest are 'muddy' in tone (there are no sharp blacks or whites), often slightly out of focus or blurry, and straight 'snaps' of people or objects, rather than considered compositions. To read fiction, we must believe the voice belongs to the character, not the author. Likewise, we must believe the photographs are produced by Oskar and his Grandfather, and not by Safran Foer or a professional photographer.

These 'original' photographs also draw a parallel between Oskar and his grandfather. Despite having played so little part in each other's lives, Thomas Senior and Oskar share similar behaviour (and neurosis). They both obsessively imagine impossible inventions, and both archive their lives in books – Thomas Senior in his daybooks, Oskar in 'Stuff That Happened To Me.' Moreover, they use the same camera to do so.

The final graphic devices to discuss in this section are those Oskar pastes into his scrapbook – a miscellaneous collection of ephemera and photographs.

Stuff That Happened to Me

Oskar keeps a scrapbook called 'Stuff That Happened To Me.' Photographs and ephemera from this scrapbook are scattered through the novel. As well as the photographs Oskar takes of people and places he encounters, images he finds in newspapers and on the Internet are included: a paper aeroplane template, turtles copulating, the falling man.

One night, struggling to sleep, Oskar says:

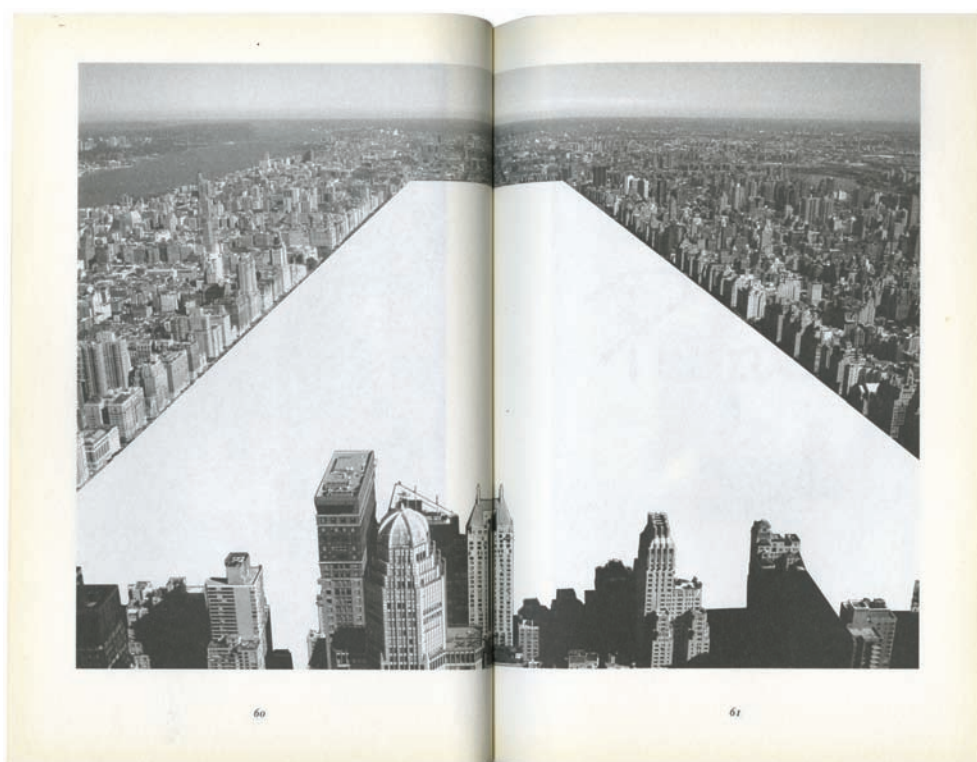
I couldn't stop thinking about the key, and how every 2.777 seconds another lock was born in New York. I pulled *Stuff That Happened to Me* from the space between the bed and the wall, and I flipped through it for a while, wishing that I would finally fall asleep. (52)

Fifteen pages of images follow, starting with a photograph of a wall of keys, presumably taken at the locksmiths he visits, followed by a random array of found images and ephemera.



Then: “After forever, I got out of bed and went to the closet where I kept the phone.” (68) We have flipped through the book with Oskar, pausing where we feel like it, noticing whatever takes our fancy, perhaps remembering links from the story that help explain the inclusion of these images. For example, Oskar writes fan mail to Steven Hawking asking to be his protégé, is cast as Yorrik in a school production of *Hamlet*, remembers a photograph of a tennis player from the newspaper he and his father read the night before Thomas died, was taken to be finger printed at the police station by his mother. Clumped together, without captions, this section allows the reader time to reflect. For example, I found the fourth image – the page of fingerprints – particularly haunting. Oskar describes the experience of visiting the police station as ‘great’ – in a way only a 9-year-old could – but these little, squashed fingerprints are recorded so Oskar’s body can be more easily identified in a repeat terrorist attack or other catastrophe. The idea of Oskar’s mother bundling him off to the police station to have this done is a poignant display of her anxiety and paranoia in the aftermath of the tragedy. Oskar may not understand the significance, but as a reader, I did. Likewise, the tennis player, splayed out in either victory or defeat, is included simply because Oskar and his father looked at it in the paper the night before what Oskar calls ‘the worst day’. The content of the image is less relevant than our understanding of its sentimental associations – Oskar kept this newspaper clipping because he shared it with his father. The ephemera is powerful not simply for the picture it depicts, but for the story behind its collection.

Another image from this sequence resonated with me:



This is the only image that crosses over a double-page spread in this section from Oskar's scrapbook. It has obviously been manipulated. We are not told Oskar cut Central Park out of this photograph, but knowing it is from his scrapbook, we make the conceptual leap. One reading relates to a game Oskar and Thomas played called 'Reconnaissance Expedition'. Thomas set Oskar puzzles to figure out – the game at the time of his death involved finding 'something', 'somewhere' in Central Park. Thomas handed him a map of the park, with no other clues. The cut out park could reference the space Oskar was to explore. Alternatively, it could allude to the fact that he will now never know the 'answer' to this game. But something else is at work here. Cutting is an act of violence. Removing a huge and iconic section of the city is symbolically parallel to the space left after the Towers fell – Ground Zero. This image does not provide any new information or alter my understanding of the plot, but it moved me profoundly. Would every reader pick this up? No. But *something* lingers, asking to be read, if the reader chooses to engage with it. My interpretation of this image considers how it relates to events in the story, but also to the way it was produced – the materiality of the image is also meaningful.

All of these photographs relate to anecdotes in the written text, but do not necessarily appear near that text. Rather than illustrating anecdotes, the uncaptioned photographs allow the reader to see through Oskar's eyes, providing a rich visual description of the world he exists in, and is a product of. Making the scrapbook and the quest to find the lock are activities through which Oskar tries to make sense of the world after a cata-

strophic public and personal loss he is unable to process.

In a review of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, James Bucky Carter (2007) describes a trend in young adult fiction where characters are “making use of their innate visual literacy skills” – skills learnt by “video game-playing, cell phone picture-taking, music video-watching people.” Although not a young adult novel, Oskar’s ‘innate visual literacy skills’ are apparent in his scrapbook. Similar to Christopher, the narrator of *Curious Incident*, Oskar includes these devices as both a coping mechanism (a way to understand his world) and a communication tool (it is logical to him to show, rather than describe, these images). The most effective way to evoke a bombardment of random images is to show them – sharing Oskar’s experience heightens our empathy with him. James Wood’s notion that the novelist’s ‘third language’ is the language of their world is again useful – the language of Oskar’s world is coloured by images from the Internet, newspapers, and other visual media. Safran Foer relates an anecdote about surfing the Internet while writing the novel:

I was browsing the Internet one night – allowing links to carry me farther and farther from the news sites I normally visit – and was shocked by the breadth and graphicness of the images I quite unintentionally came across. There’s something exhilarating about being so close to everything at once. It made me think about the visual environment in which [children] are now developing. (Houghton Mifflin Publishing 2005)

Oskar recognises some of the images he finds are violent and disturbing, but pastes them in the scrapbook anyway:

Ray Black was in prison, so we weren’t able to talk to him. I did some research on the Internet and found out that he was in prison because he murdered two kids after he raped them. There were also pictures of the dead kids, and even though I know it would only hurt me to look at them, I did. I printed them out and put them in *Stuff That Happened to Me*. (243)

Oskar calls his scrapbook ‘Stuff That Happened To Me’ even though many of these images are not things that ‘happened’ to him – by viewing these images, he feels they ‘happened’ to him. Indirectly, they have. The photographs of these children are not included on the pages of the novel. However, another disturbing image, as mentioned previously, is included several times – the falling man.

Oskar comes back to this image over and over, speculating on whether or not it is



his father. Reproductions of the photograph appear throughout the novel, haunting the reader as this vision haunts Oskar. In Grandma's final chapter, she describes a dream in which the events she witness during the bombing of Dresden begin to reverse:

[A]ll of the collapsed ceilings re-formed above us. The fire went back into the bomb, which rose up and into the bellies of planes whose propellers turned backward, like the second hands of the clocks across Dresden, only faster. (306)

After Grandma's dream, the novel closes with Oskar's final chapter. He takes out 'Stuff That Happened To Me' and tears out the grainy photographs of the falling man, and reverses the sequence:

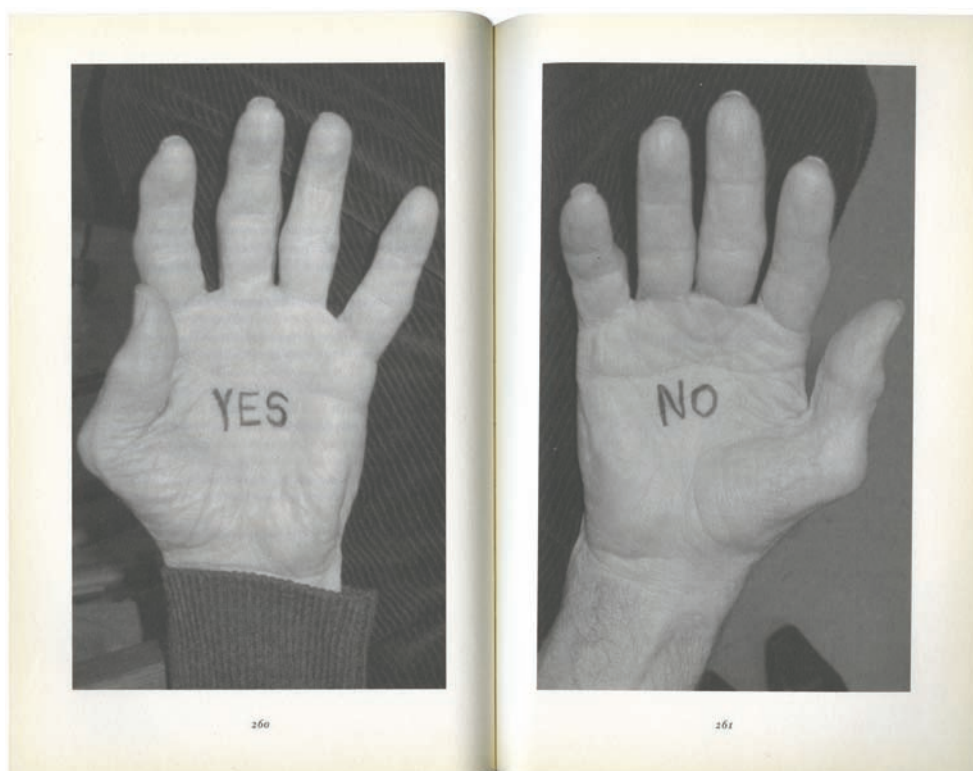
Finally, I found the pictures of the falling body. Was it Dad? Maybe. Whoever it was, it was somebody. I ripped the pages out of the book. I reversed the order, so that the last one was first, and the first was last. When I flipped through them, it looked like the man was floating up through the sky. (325)

The body floats back up into the building, reversing time and undoing the tragedy. The final fifteen spreads show this. As readers, we are forced to participate in this act, making the image come 'alive' in our hands. It is at once beautiful and terrifying, especially if the photographs are 'real' – we visually reverse a man's actual death.

Again, the issue of authenticity and photographs is raised. The series of photographs is obviously manipulated. Aside from the imprint page calling them 'photoillustrations', a body falling from a building would not free-fall frozen in exactly the same position, as it is in all these images. Does the fact these images are manipulated make them 'inauthentic' and less powerful, even though the original photograph is 'real'? The more I reflect on this, the more uncomfortable I become – in some ways, I feel ashamed to so rationally analyse this man's death-mask image. Yet, this is one aspiration of fiction – to inspire reflection on social etiquette, moral codes and human nature, through fictional scenarios. Therefore, this device affected me powerfully.

As they spend time together, Thomas Senior and Oskar develop their own special 'Reconnaissance Expedition' – to dig up Thomas' empty coffin. Thomas' father and his son are united at last. One sleepless night, Oskar has a thought unlike the usual inventions he imagines: "It was closer to me, and louder. I didn't know where it came from, or what it meant, or if I loved it or hated it. It opened up like a fist, or a flower.

What about digging up Dad's empty coffin?" (259) Immediately following this passage, these images of Thomas Senior's hands appear:



The placement of image is confusing. It hovers after Oskar's chapter, but just before Thomas Senior's chapter; I am uncertain who is supposed to have taken or included it. It is feasible that Oskar has taken the photograph of Thomas Senior's hands – who he thinks is 'the renter' at Grandma's apartment. But none of Oskar's other chapters ends with a photograph, and it seems unlikely that he would so cleverly place this image directly after the idea to dig up the coffin. The only photographs that appear anywhere else in Thomas Senior's chapters are of doorknobs, and always after the 'Why I'm Not Where You Are' title. It seems then, that neither Oskar nor Thomas Senior is responsible for these pages, which is inconsistent with the other photographic devices in the primary text. Nevertheless, the placement of this photograph in the text is effective. Floating between Oskar's idea of digging up the grave, and Thomas Senior's description of the event, we are invited to linger on the double page spread, uninterrupted by written text, as a kind of dramatic pause – will they dig up the grave, or not? It is sometimes necessary to 'break the rules' or conventions to achieve a specific literary affect. As with the full bleed double page spread of the birds in flight (when Mr Black turned on his hearing aids), this graphic device breaks conventions established for the appearance of photographic devices in the novel,

but does so to achieve a particular affect.

A different kind of inconsistency also affected my reading of this device. Although presented on the gnarled hands of an old man – presumably Thomas Senior – these words look drawn in pen, not tattooed.⁸ This may not register with, or trouble, some readers, but for me, the artifice of the fictional world was momentarily broken. Unlike the manipulated flipbook, I find the inauthentic look of this photograph frustrating: the image should either be reproduced to convincingly look like a tattoo, or not be included. A poorly written description would be reworked or edited out – this level of editing should apply to graphic devices.



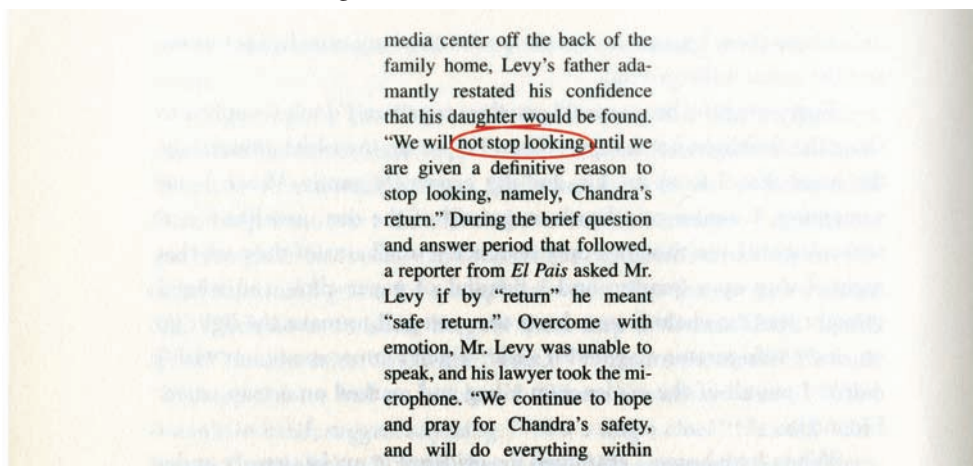
In the limo on the way to dig up his father's empty grave, accompanied by Thomas Senior, Oskar says: "I stood up with the top half of my body sticking out of the car. I took pictures of the stars with Grandpa's camera, and in my head I connected them to make words, whatever words I wanted." (317) When they arrive at the cemetery, it is almost 1am and pitch black. Thomas Senior and Oskar fumble along looking for the grave, pointing the beam of the flashlight at tombstones, illuminating one name at a time. After a list of these names, the page turns to an image of stars. Oskar says: "I kept thinking about how they were all the names of dead people, and how names are basically the only thing that dead people keep." (319) The image of stars reads as a visual metaphor for all those dead people, each name a spot of dying light in the night sky. One reviewer disparagingly refers to this page as a 'meditation aid', yet Safran Foer's book is a meditation on grief and loss. Within it, he presents us with photographs and ephemera to pause and reflect upon. For some readers, these may appear twee or gimmicky, but for many, myself included, these graphic devices evoke a vivid visual landscape in a novel centred around the World Trade Centre attack – a highly visual event.

Graphic Type Three: Pen marks

Early in the novel, Oskar admires his father's ability to locate mistakes in the *New York Times*, circling them in red pen. Oskar explains: "Sometimes they were grammar mistakes, sometimes they were mistakes with geography or facts, and sometimes the article just didn't

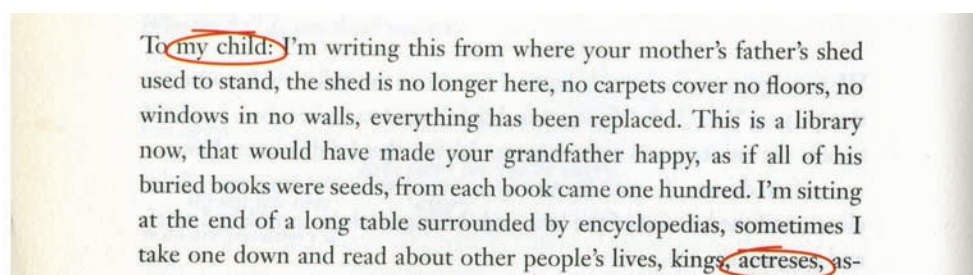
⁸ In an interview, Safran Foer describes taking this photograph: "I went to the Jewish Home on the Upper West Side and found an old man who was willing to model his hands for the book. He had bad tremors and couldn't keep his fingers open for much longer than it took to snap the photo. He had a great sense of humor. When we were done, I offered to help him wash off the 'YES' and 'NO' that I'd written, in marker, on his palms. He said he'd leave the writing on for a while." (Quoted in Hudson 2005)

tell the whole story. I loved having a dad who was smarter than the *New York Times*.” (12)
 The first we see of this device is when Thomas circled something that was not an error, as a ‘clue’ for Oskar in one of their games:



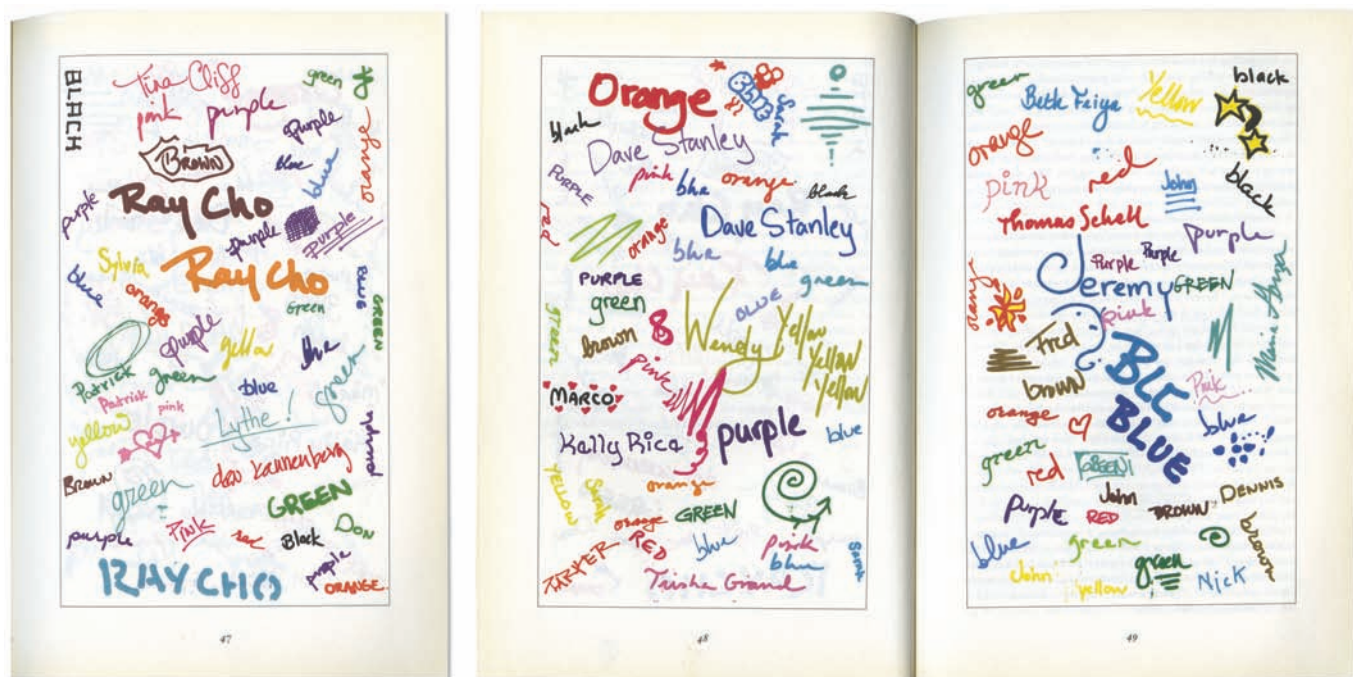
The ‘pen’ marks show Thomas’ hand, through Oskar’s eyes.

Later in the novel, we find out Thomas received just one letter his father wrote him, the only one Thomas Senior actually sent, in 1978. It is presented to us, corrected by the same red pen. That it is printed in red is relevant – a red pen is the pen of an editor. As Thomas is dead when the novel begins, these correction marks are the only time we ‘hear’ his voice directly. By introducing this device earlier in the novel, Safran Foer ‘taught’ us how to read it – we know this device highlights grammar and spelling mistakes, but also highlights mistakes in facts and identifying omissions or untruths. The first thing Thomas circled – or questioned – in the letter from his father is the phrase ‘my child’:



The red correction simply, but effectively, shows Thomas questioning his father’s right to refer to him as ‘my child’. There is a detachment in the way this is marked as wrong, without further comment. As this letter progresses into the nightmarish description of Thomas Senior’s desperate search for Anna, the red corrections become more disturbing. Not all the corrections are relevant; they seem to mark everything that is potentially wrong.

name, or the colour of the pen they are testing. A page from a blotting pad from the pen counter is presented as an example. Oskar is blown away – this is the lead he needs to begin his search for the lock – it is here he decides to seek out every person in New York City with the surname Black. Another three pages of blotting paper follow the first:



The careful reader is rewarded with a surprise – on the third page, the name ‘Thomas Schell’ appears. The less pensive reader is informed on the following page, when Oskar shoves it under the nose of the occupied clerk announcing: “That’s my dad!” As they piece together how long the blotting sheets have been there (not for a whole year) Oskar is perplexed – it must be, but cannot be, his father. The inclusion of these blotting pages is not essential to the plot, but the complexity of the dramatic irony – as readers, we understand it is Thomas Senior, who Oskar has yet to meet – contributes to the bittersweet relationship between the grandfather, father and son, all in some ways lost to each other. There is also a kind of visual rhythm to the idea that Thomas Senior and Thomas, who have never met, both choose to write in red pens – and that Oskar is following the handwritten clue “Black”, written in a red pen. Again, there is not single direct interpretation of the pen marks that appear on the pages of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, their inclusion allows us to trace the marks three generations of the Schell family leave for each other.

iv) Critical Reception

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close was awarded both the book illustration award and the overall prize at the 2005 V&A Illustration Awards.⁹ It was an unusual win, as the ‘illustrations’ are mostly found photographs and ephemera, and a designer typeset the book.¹⁰ V&A director Mark Jones calls the novel a “rare and impressive example of a text with fully integrated visual elements, in which you encounter things you don’t expect.” (Khan 2005) Safran Foer explains he took some photographs himself, sourced some from photo archives and web sites and one came from *The New York Times*. (Hudson 2005) In design terms, Safran Foer’s role was more Art Director than illustrator. Nevertheless, such distinguished recognition of ‘writer as illustrator’ supports the arrival of a new type of writer.¹¹

However, not all readers and critics greet these graphic devices enthusiastically. Disparagers have described the graphic devices in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* as ‘a tired bag of tricks’, ‘gimmickry’ and ‘publicity tricks.’ The frequent use of ‘gimmicks’ in other reviews is inarguably negative. One subtitle reads: ‘Gimmicks drown out power, poignancy.’ (Upchurch 2005) A review titled ‘A bag of tired tricks’ says:

What may hurt the book even with its intended audience are the various diversions that both writer and publisher seem to have thought would constitute a selling point ... After a while the gimmickry starts to remind one of a clown frantically yanking toys out of his sack: a fatal image. (Meyers 2005)

Another picks at just one device: “Oskar’s grandfather’s letters are the most gimmicky in the novel...He never really comes alive, and is perhaps the one major person in the book that is more a metaphor than a fleshed-out character.” (Greer 2005) But perhaps the most vicious attack comes from Robert J. Hughes:

The novel’s ramblings and gimmicks are meagre representations of catastrophe and often badly out of key. The end of the book features a stunt – a short flip-book of photographs with a body falling upward to a World Trade Centre tower, as if we could turn back the clock. We can’t, of course, but we already knew that. It is fairly offensive to see a novelist co-opt such an indelible image of desperation and death for such a trite purpose. Whimsy and terrorist tragedy do not add up, at least in Mr. Foer’s hands. (Hughes 2005)

⁹ The Victoria and Albert Museum in London has presented these annual awards as an exhibition since 1972, honouring excellence in book and magazine illustration.

¹⁰ The designer is not credited within the novel, but Anne Chambers is named as the designer in one essay that discusses the novel. (Gerber and Triggs 2006)

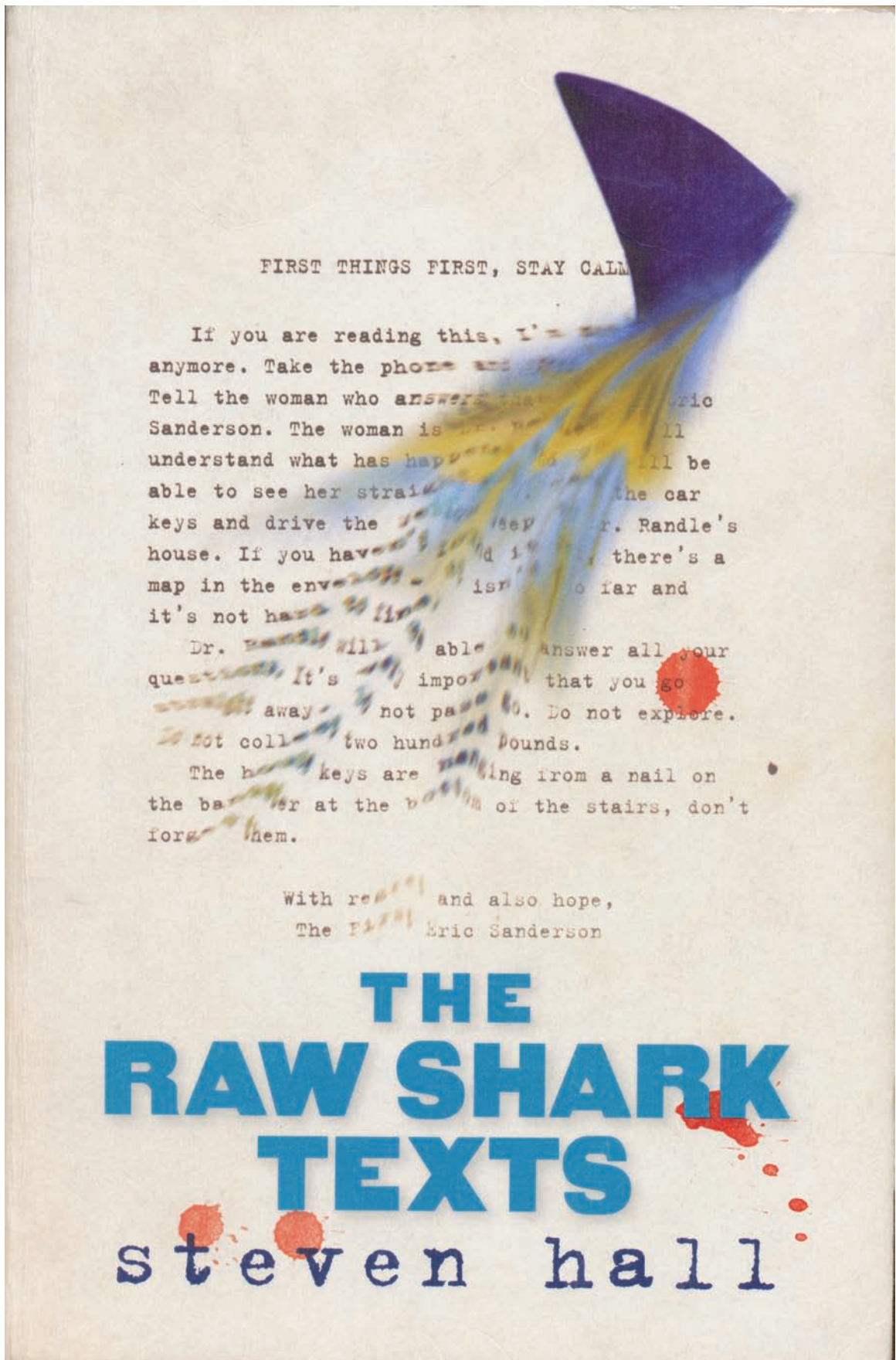
¹¹ Jim Davies’ article in *Design Week* discusses Safran Foer’s win, and compares it with graphic novelist Jimmy Corrigan and other writer-illustrators. (Davies 2006)

Retaliating against such criticism, Safran Foer states:

It's a shame that people consider the use of images in a novel to be experimental or brave. No one would say that the use of type in a painting is experimental or brave. Literature has been more protective of its borders than any other art form – too protective. Jay-Z samples from Annie – one of the least likely combinations imaginable – and it changes music. What if novelists were as willing to borrow? (Hudson 2005)

In another interview, Safran Foer defends his use of graphic devices, stating: “Most of what I do in my books I do exactly because I can't explain in any other way.” (Gerber & Triggs 2006) In designing his novel to communicate as effectively as possible, Safran Foer chooses what to verbalise and what to visualise – a process familiar to visual communication designers. In a novel that deals with the aftermath of a highly visual catastrophe, narrated by a protagonist born into a highly visual world, graphic devices communicate in ways that words alone could not.





FIRST THINGS FIRST, STAY CALM

If you are reading this, I'm sorry
anymore. Take the phone and
Tell the woman who answers the phone Eric
Sanderson. The woman is Mrs. Randle. I'll
understand what has happened. She will be
able to see her straight. She'll have the car
keys and drive the car to Mr. Randle's
house. If you haven't found it, there's a
map in the envelope. It's not far and
it's not hard to find.

Dr. Randle will be able to answer all your
questions. It's important that you go
away. Do not pass up. Do not explore.
Do not collect two hundred pounds.

The house keys are hanging from a nail on
the banister at the bottom of the stairs, don't
forget them.

With regards and also hope,
The First Eric Sanderson

THE RAW SHARK TEXTS

steven hall

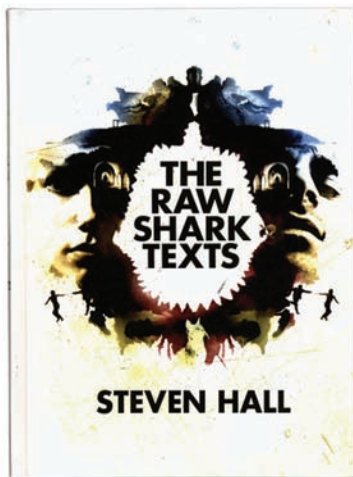
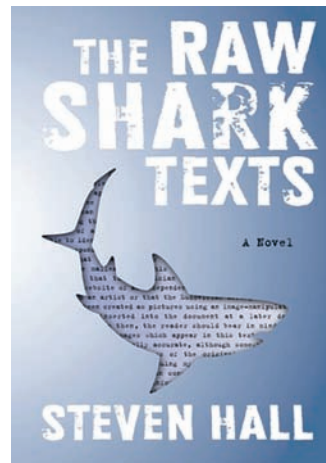
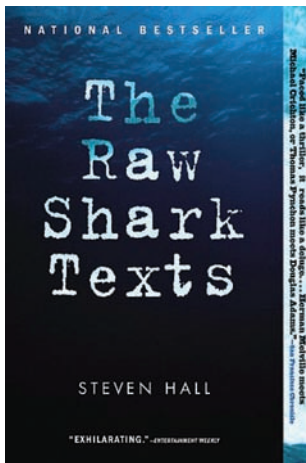
Section Two:

The Raw Shark Texts, Steven Hall

First published: 2007, Cannongate Books, London

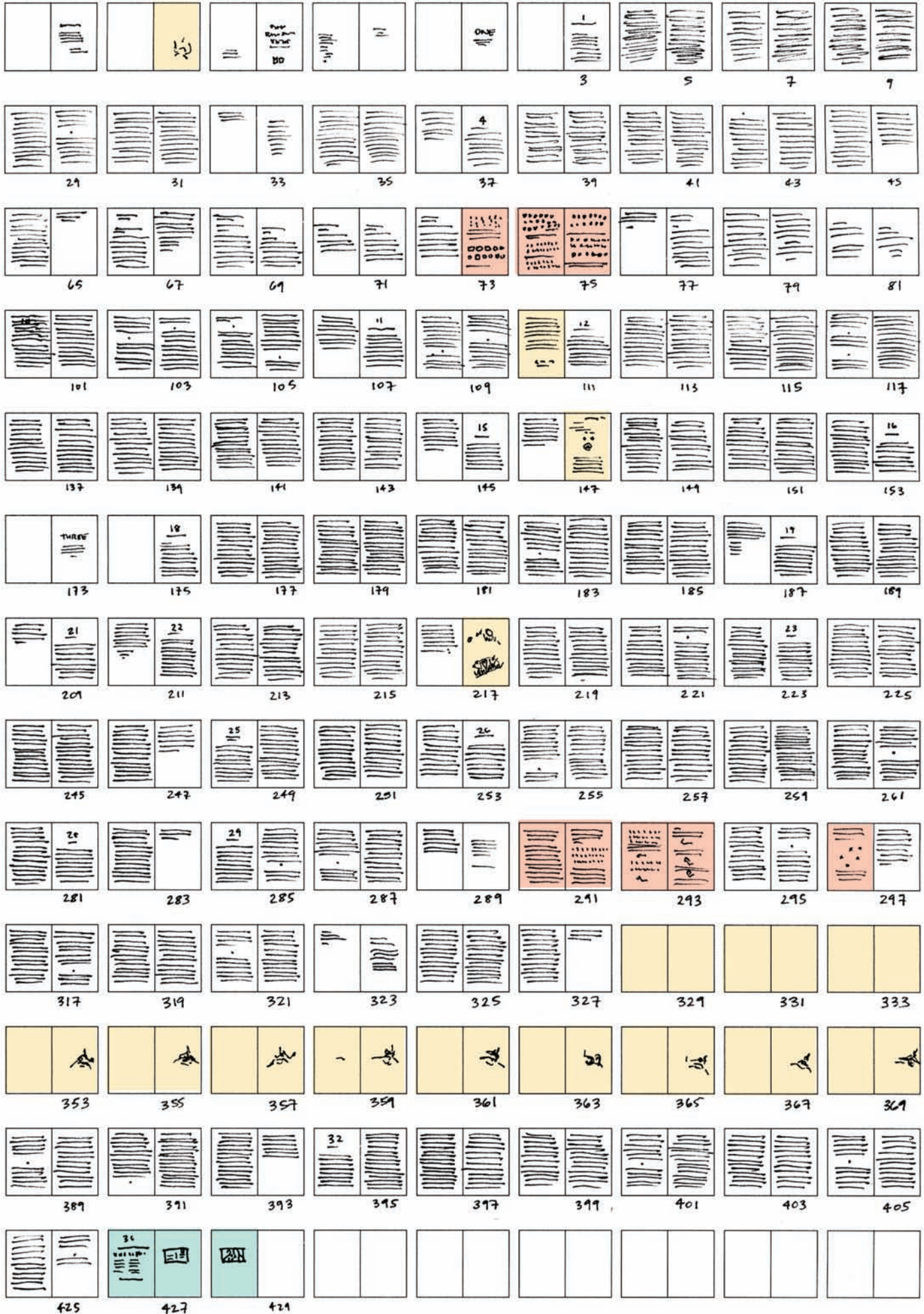
2007, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne

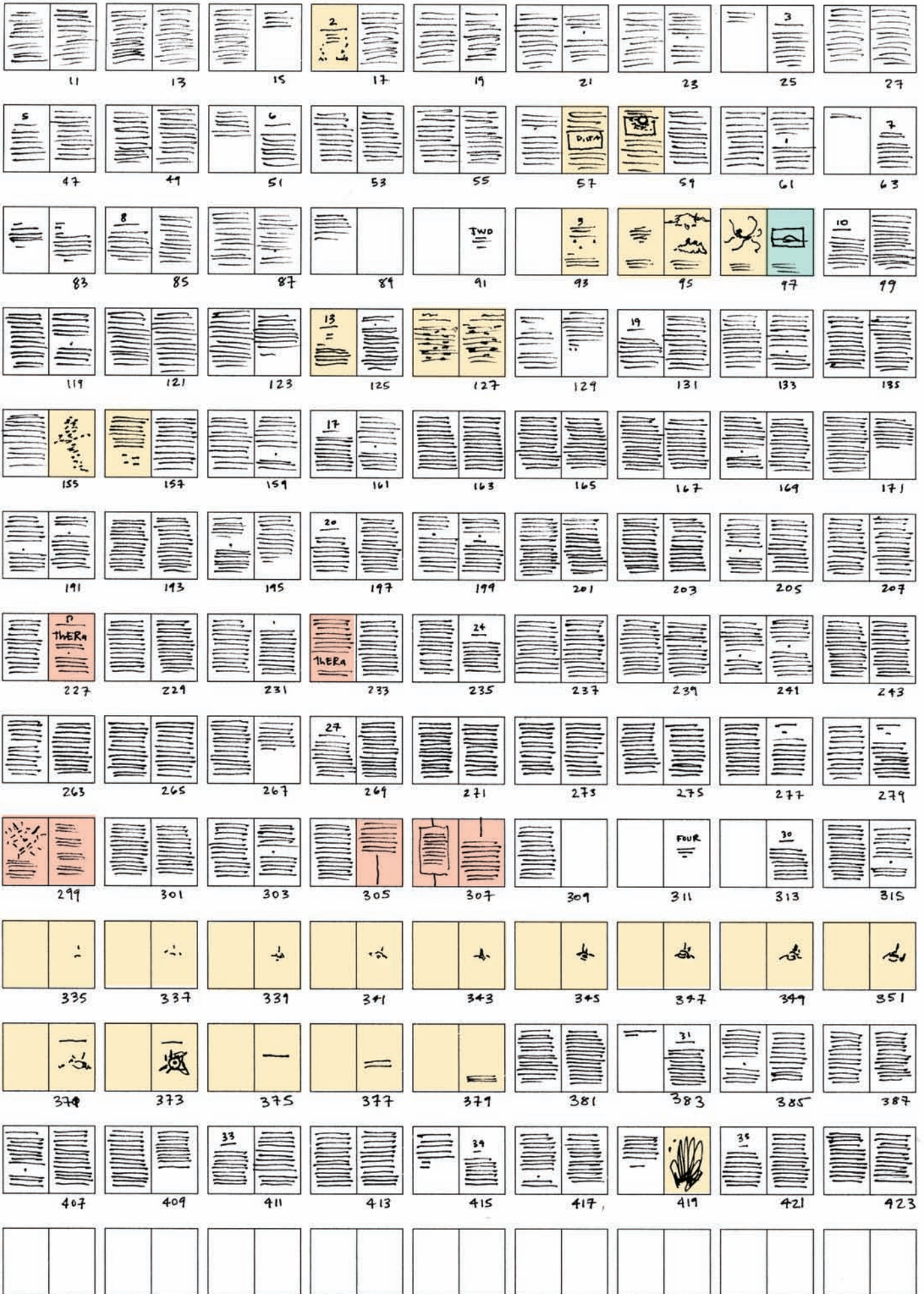
Edition analysed: 2007, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne



Montage of covers from: <www.media.photobucket.com/image/raw%20shark%20texts/despot66/rawsharkeditions1.jpg>

Thumbnail Schema: *The Raw Shark Texts*





i) Contextual Information

The Raw Shark Texts was the talk of the publishing world before Hall finished writing it.¹² The buzz around the book was not generated by Hall's reputation as a writer, or his profile as a public figure – the 31-year-old from Manchester previously had one short story published in a 2005 anthology. The hype emerged from a carefully orchestrated – and ongoing – marketing strategy. A MySpace page – www.myspace.com/stevenhallbooks – documents Hall's writing process, with access to deleted chapters and personal notes from the editor, publisher and agent. An interactive web site – www.rawsharkttexts.com – features inkblot tests and memory games, unpublished text supplements (which you need to find a password to access) and a multi-media game that sends you looking for clues around the Internet. The online discussion forum facilitated by Hall himself – www.rawsharkttexts.com/unspace – allows readers to discuss their interpretations of the novel. A wiki – www.annotatedrawshark.com – with description and analysis of characters, textual elements and inter-textual references is steadily growing. The trailer¹³ starring Tilda Swinton was submitted to book bloggers and sites like Google Video and YouTube. Hall also embarked on an ambitious meet-and-greet tour of international book fairs and bookseller conferences. This sounds more like the publicity campaign for a major motion picture than an unknown, previously unpublished novelist.

Hall is not the first writer to exploit multi-media marketing strategies. Mark Z. Danielewski developed a cult following by publishing sections of *House of Leaves* on the Internet as he wrote them. Blue Van Meer, heroine of Marisha Pessl's *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*, has her own MySpace page and interactive web site. Sites for bestselling authors – popular and literary alike, such as Dan Brown, Steven King, Kate Grenville and Peter Carey host dizzying volumes of information. In fact, it seems rare for an author not to have a web presence now. While angry debates about the extinction of book-review sections in newspapers rage, perhaps multi-media marketing offers an alternative for the industry. Yet it is difficult to imagine this sort of campaign working for all novels – it requires a reading audience who engage with what Hall calls 'beyond the cover' marketing elements, and who frequent social networking and online review sites. In other words, it requires a new kind of reader.

¹² An early version of this section was published in the *Visual Communciation* journal. (Sadokierski 2008b)

¹³ View the trailer: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=h73f3LWZALE> Harper Collins has been using Flash animated 'trailers' since February 2006 to promote books pre-publication. They are similar to, though often less technically sophisticated than, film trailers. Many other publishers have adopted the marketing strategy as a way to generate word-of-mouth publicity for the 'Internet' generation.

ii) Synopsis

We meet narrator Eric Sanderson as he wakes on the floor, retching for breath, with no memory of who or where he is. Cut to a psychiatrist's office, where Dr. Helen Randle – “a large clashing event of a woman” – explains to Eric that he suffers from a rare form of ‘dissociative amnesia’, caused by the accidental drowning of his girlfriend Clio, while the couple were happily holidaying in Greece three years earlier. We have just witnessed Eric’s eleventh relapse, each incident erasing more of his memory than the last. However, when Eric begins receiving letters from his ‘former self’, an alternate explanation is offered: before us is the second Eric Sanderson, inhabiting the body of the first Eric Sanderson, whose human memory and ‘intrinsic sense of self’ is being devoured by a Ludovician – a ‘conceptual shark’.

Hall’s surreal premise is as follows: all human minds are linked by vast streams of language and thought and, swimming through these streams, are conceptual thought-fish. The Ludovician is the most dangerous thought-fish, feeding on chunks of human personality and memory, or, in Eric’s case, repeatedly attacking until there is nothing left but the shell of a person. The story is a romance/adventure/horror/meta-text that follows Eric and a motley cast of accomplices/enemies (who belongs to which category is part of the intrigue) on a quest to escape the fate of the first Eric Sanderson. The reader is constantly uncertain whether Eric is suffering a mental breakdown, or has slipped into a parallel world.

The title offers a clue on how to approach this dense, experimental work. Say it out loud; it is a play on the Rorschach test, used by psychiatrists to examine psychological and emotional characteristics of a patient by analysing their interpretation of inkblots – apt for a thriller about an amnesic man that can be read in a variety of ways.

The first of ten inkblots that make up Rorschach's Test.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rorschach_inkblot_test

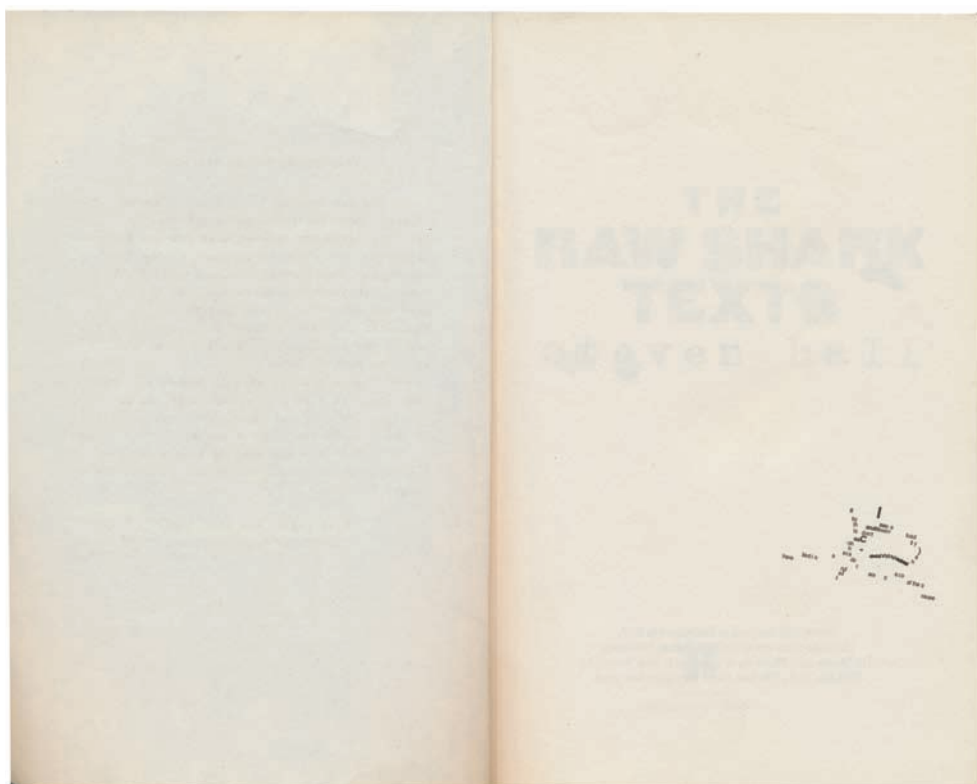


iii) Graphic devices

The graphic devices in *The Raw Shark Texts* can be categorised into three types: ‘typo-graphics’ – I will explain this new term shortly; diagrams; and ephemera. Each graphic type is discussed below.

Graphic Type One: typo-graphics

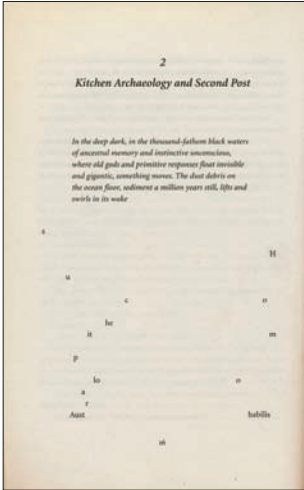
Hall introduces his typo-graphic devices gradually. The first appears – like Safran Foer’s photographic frontispiece – between the cover and title page:



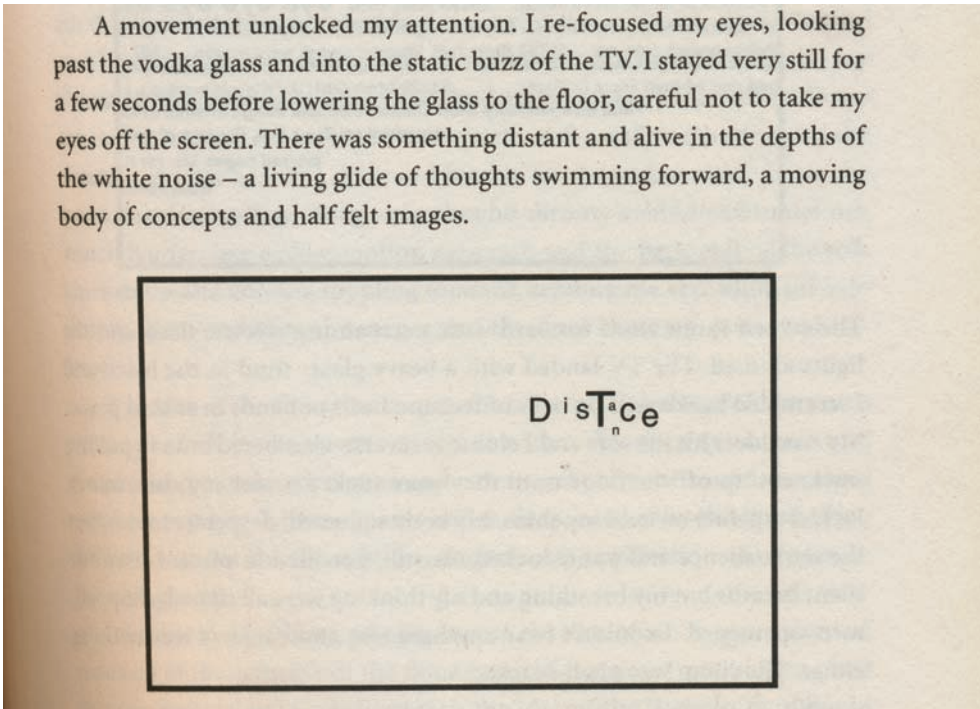
I refer to the graphic above as ‘typo-graphic’ because it slips between the categories of typography and illustrative element – it is typographic in the sense that the shape is formed by letters and punctuation marks, but also illustrative because it ‘reads’ as a picture of a shark, rather than a piece of writing. The little typo-graphic shark swimming here, out of context and without a caption, signposts that potentially, other graphic devices follow.

As readers, we learn about the existence and complexity of the conceptual world as Eric II does, piece by piece. Aside from this frontispiece shark, the first time we see ‘matter’ from the conceptual world is the ‘dust and debris’ floating on the page:

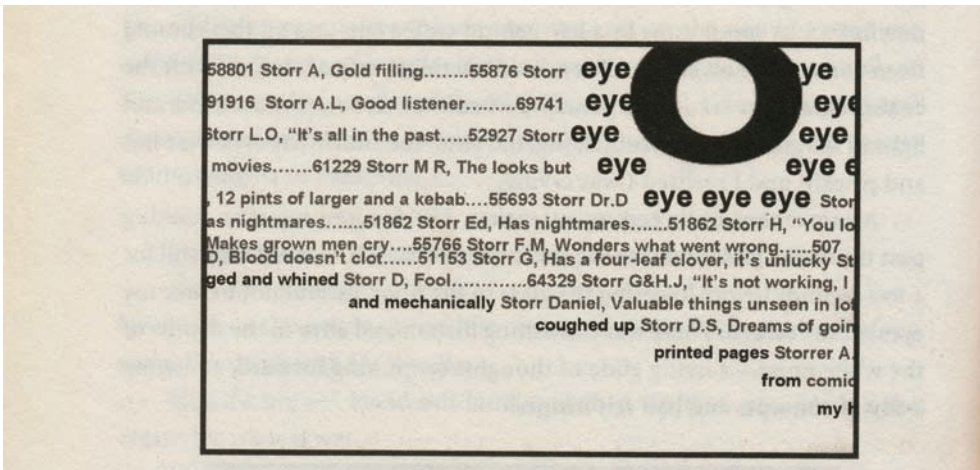
Scattered letters, seem to drift up from the bottom of the page, spelling the words 'Australopithecus' and 'Homo habilis' – two extinct species of early man. These fragments are particles of the conceptual other-world, composed of the thoughts and memories of all humankind. Hall starts his explanation of the conceptual world at the beginning of time, with simple matter from the origins of human existence.



The first encounter we witness between the Ludovician and Eric II occurs in his living room, when the creature emerges from the static in Eric's television:



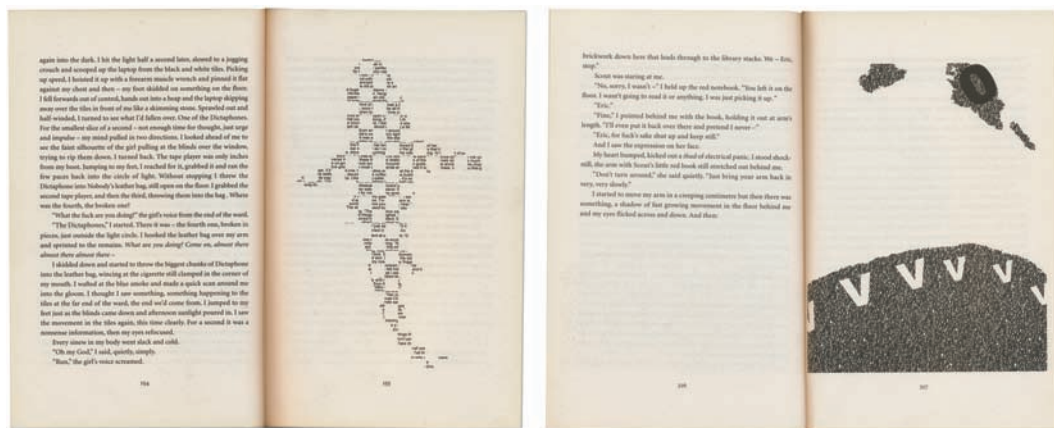
He crawls closer, and suddenly:



Hall represents the Ludovician crossing from the conceptual to the physical realm visually; the television is a thin black frame on the page, the shark illustrated as a collection of typographic marks. The cropping implies this monstrous creature is peering at us with one beady eye, its hulk looming somewhere beyond the screen. Our understanding of the frame as a television screen gives scale to the unfamiliar form – if this is the eye, the shark is enormous. As Eric II crouches before it, the Ludovician smashes through the screen in a ‘sea’ of memories, sensations, letters, words and images, in a scene reminiscent of *The Ring* (and countless other horror flicks).

Before this attack, Eric is aware of his own fragile mental health and is highly sceptical about the existence of a conceptual shark, but it bursts through as a real entity – for Eric the ‘conceptual fish’ becomes a physical predator and for the reader, the verbal description becomes visual. As the Ludovician crosses the channel from conceptual to physical, the description crosses from verbal to visual. Hall explains on his publisher’s web site: “Whenever the shark appears I wanted it to be in text because I like the idea that you part imagine it and part see it, so the shark kind of exists in between this visual and mental arena.” (Harper Collins 2007)

This typo-graphic device appears at three other points in the novel when the Ludovician manages to locate and attack Eric II. First (left) when it swims below a tiled floor, and second (right) when it attacks in a tunnel:



Still from *Jaws*: <www.answers.com/topic/jaws-large-image>

The second image bears clear resemblance to a famous still from the film *Jaws*. The most ambitious is the third visualisation, at the climax. An obvious homage to *Jaws*, the shark attacks flipbook-style as Eric II and companions are adrift on a conceptual-boat (of course). Seven blank pages establish anticipation, then slowly, in the distance, the shark emerges:

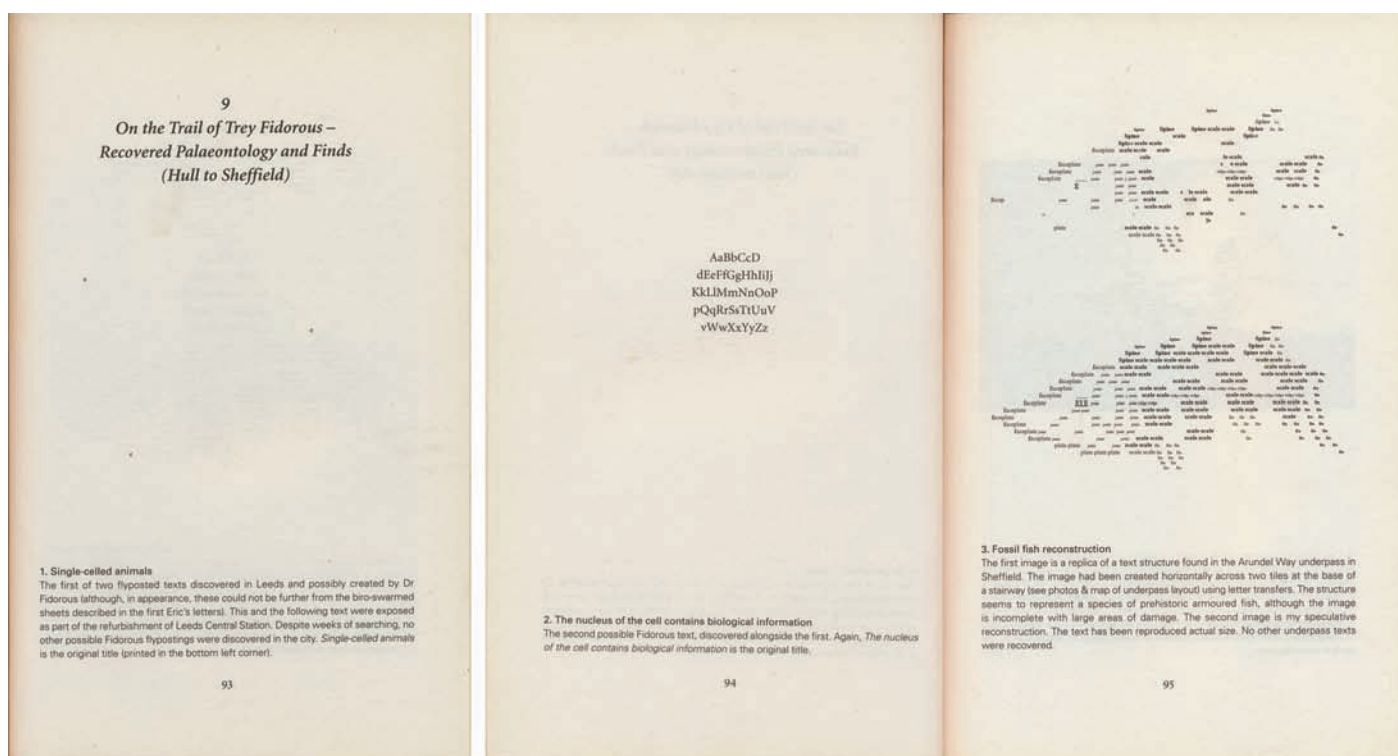


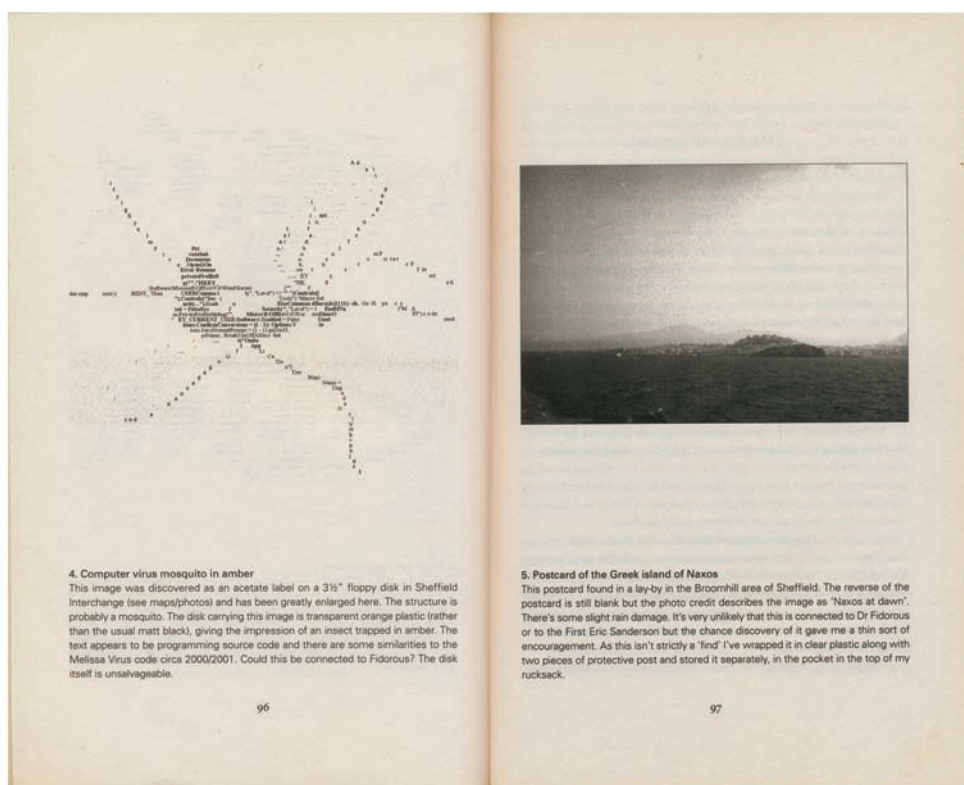
In flipping the pages, the shark comes ‘alive’ in our hands, as if emerging from the conceptual realm through the book we are holding. This device is obviously similar to the reversed falling man sequence at the end of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* – because it is a flipbook, but also because it forces us to participate in breaking the artifice of the novel.

One reviewer criticised the shark for being “actually sort of cute-looking.” (Ohlson 2007) The shark is not frightening or disturbing in the way that the falling man flipbook is, but I am not convinced this was Hall’s intention. The device visualises the shift between the conceptual and ‘real’ world in the novel. In addition, it makes a cinematic allusion, in a cinematic way.

Series of ‘scientific’ illustrations/ephemera

Eric II must reach scientist Dr Trey Fidorous, the only man who can help him kill the Ludovician, by following a trail of notes left in various public places: on fly-posters in train stations, stencilled on tiles in a stairway, stuck on a floppy-disc found in a bus station. Five reproductions of these pieces of ephemera are included sequentially, with captions written by Eric II:



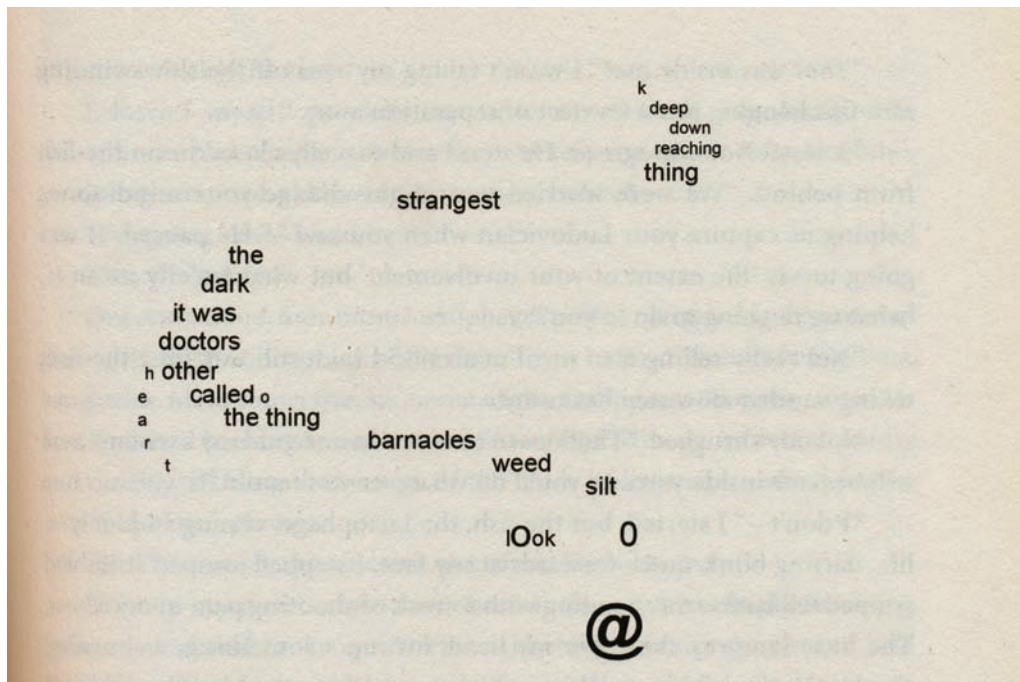


Eric II is piecing information together as he goes. He includes these pieces of found ephemera as evidence. He is as sceptical as we are about the conceptual world at this stage, so these documents are presented less as proof that the conceptual world exists, and more as proof that he actually is finding these clues – whatever they are. We understand what Eric II does, as he does.

The relationship between the written captions and images is important here. The ephemera is presented in a scientific way: centred on the page, with a 'factual' caption. The tone of the writing directs our interpretation of these pieces of ephemera as 'evidence', amplified by the sans serif typeface, bold numbers and label-headings. The tone and graphic presentation imply objectivity in the way Eric II presents these pieces of ephemera.

Except for the postcard – reproduced in greyscale with a caption explaining the back is blank except for the photo credit 'Naxos at dawn' – the other four pages show what I earlier named *implied ephemera*. Reproductions of the actual pieces of ephemera are not included, but approximated by Eric II. The captions below the images on these pages also refer to other ephemera that is not included in the novel. Presumably Eric lost this ephemera along the way, or perhaps these are documents Hall has made available in the 'conceptual world' outside the novel – on various blog and Internet sites related to the book. That these lost pieces of ephemera are mentioned but not shown is intriguing, and adds to the sense that the conceptual world is unpredictable.

Another species of conceptual fish appears later in the novel. Eric II is surreptitiously fed a Luxophage, a revolting tapeworm-like creature that he vomits onto the floor:

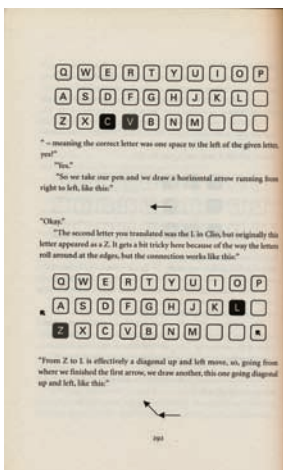


The bold @ makes a dark, sphincter-looking mouth – combined with the hollow 0 eyes and snaky form, this is a horrible thing to have been *inside* someone. By developing these ‘lesser’ species, Hall strengthens the verisimilitude of his conceptual realm, fleshing it out with a whole universe of creatures.

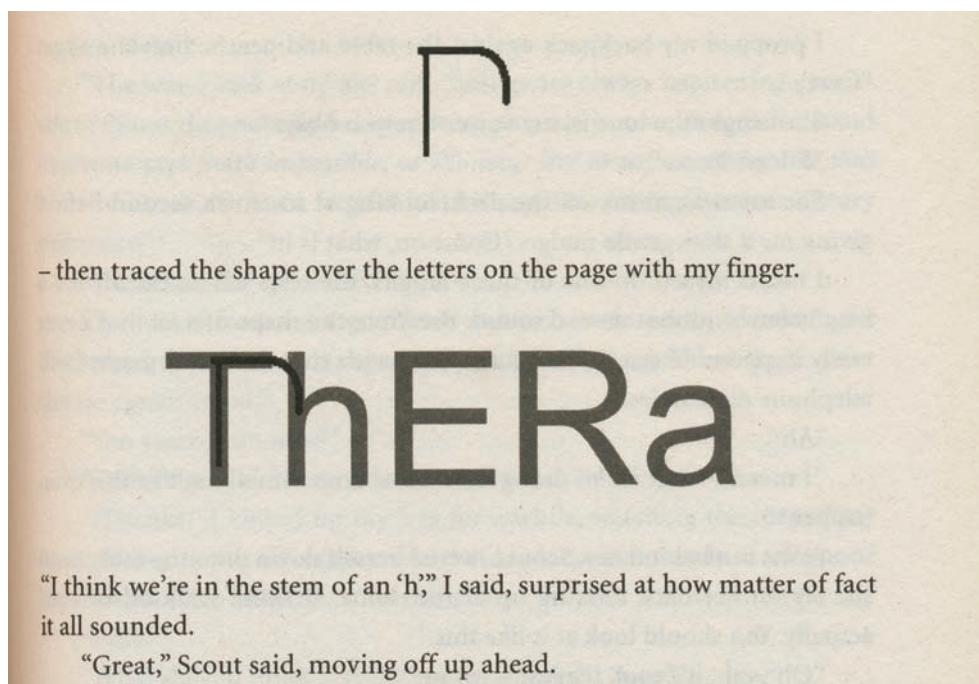
Graphic Type Two: Diagrams/charts

Anticipating that another attack will wipe out more of his memory, Eric I sends letters to his future self (Eric II). All the letters Eric sends are typeset in a way that implies their material form as letters – they are implied ephemera. These letters appear throughout the novel.

Some of these letters are sent in complex codes – the Ludovician preys on thoughts and memories, so Eric scrambles his letters to avoid attracting its attention. One strategy involves a kind of Morse code using a flashing light bulb, which translates into another code, deciphered using a typewriter keypad as a grid. The codes are explained with diagrams and charts, but the reader need not actually decipher text this way – *showing* this technique demonstrates both the cunning of the Ludovician predator and the dedication/obsession of Eric in defeating it, without confusing or boring us.

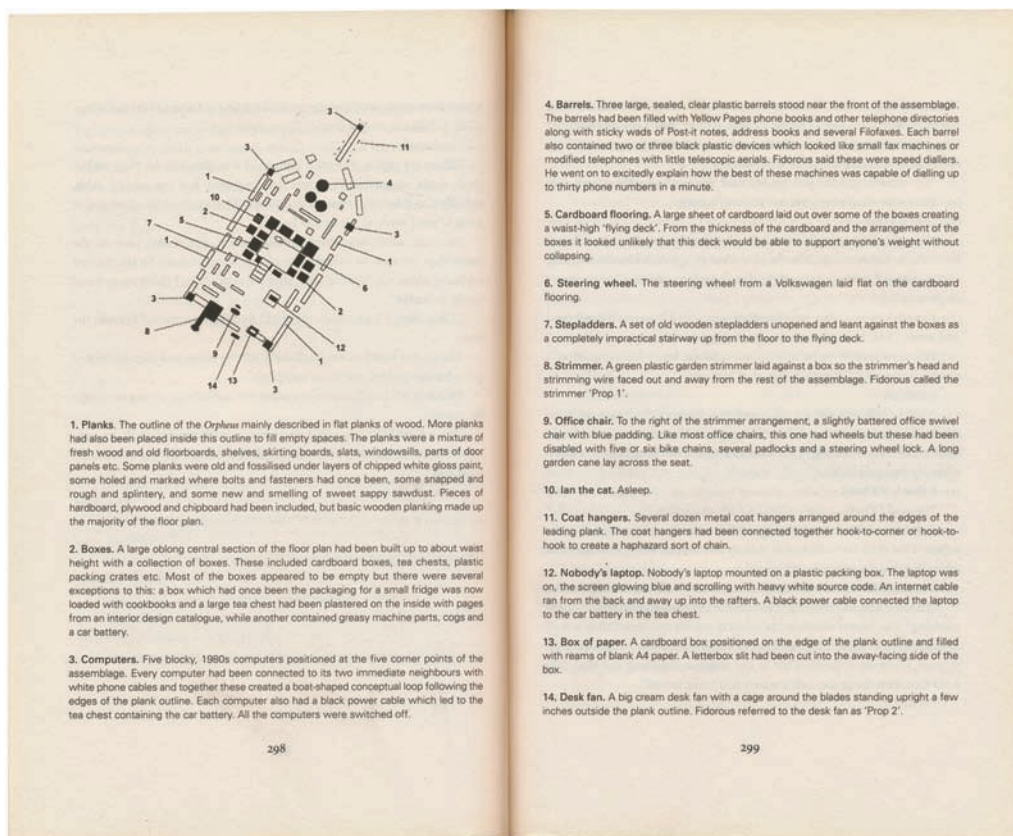


Eric II's search for Dr Fidorous finally leads to a bizarre maze constructed entirely by old books. A map used to navigate the maze is presented on the page:



The sans serif typeface, enlarged point size and grey scale colour break from the typesetting conventions in the rest of the novel, visually signposting that we should read this as a piece of implied ephemera: it is the map in Eric's hands. This visual evidence illustrates the scale of the maze – Eric's slow progress through the maze is traced with a wonky black line – and helps us understand where the characters are within this strange structure. When Eric states: “We made it to the bulb of the ‘R’. This turned out to be a room-sized chamber with a yellow domed roof made of what looked to be telephone directories,” (227) the map gives us a clearer idea of what this means.

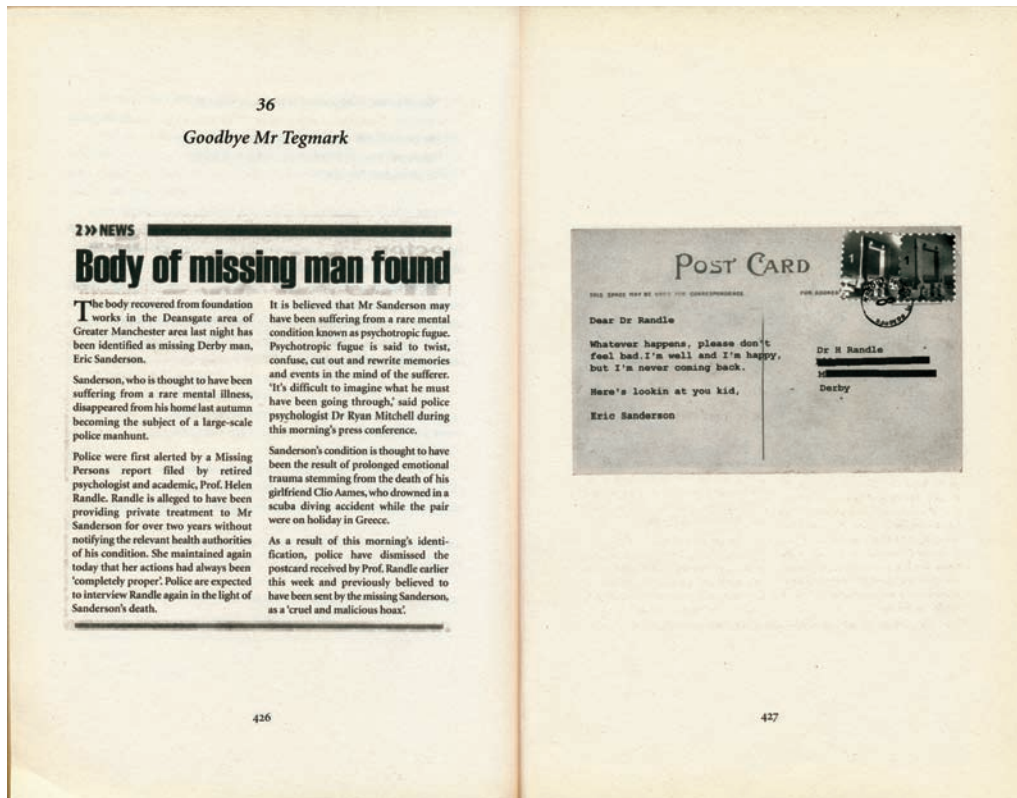
Similarly, when the characters construct a ‘conceptual’ boat to hunt the Ludovician, a technical diagram effectively describes the actual objects they use and how these things form a ‘boat’. Again, the captioning text is numbered and titled in bold, and set in a sans serif typeface:



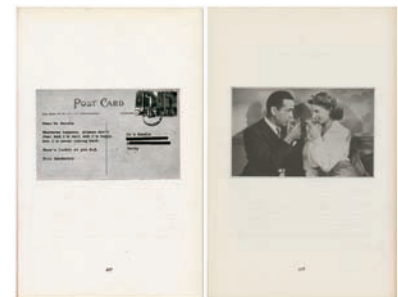
Only when these objects are in exact formation does the conceptual boat exist – by showing them to us in formation, we see how it exists. Also, for readers familiar with the first *Jaws* film, this 'shark hunting boat' is strikingly similar to the boat used to hunt and kills Jaws. This allusion would be difficult to explain verbally – the visual allusion is more subtle than a verbal reference.

Graphic Type Three: Ephemera

Similar to Sebald and Castro's use of ephemera (see the preliminary study of fifteen hybrid novels in Chapter Two), Hall includes ephemera as evidence, to question the 'reality' of the narrative. The enigma remains at the end of the novel – was Eric mentally unwell, or does the conceptual world exist? The novel concludes with two pieces of ephemera – a newspaper article and a postcard. The unsourced newspaper article reports the discovery of Eric Sanderson's dead body, and attributes his rare mental condition, as Dr Randle does, to trauma induced by Clio's drowning. The article claims police have dismissed the postcard received by Dr Randle as "a cruel and malicious hoax." (426) This is the first we hear of a postcard sent to Dr Randle.



On the facing page is the back of a postcard address to Randle, followed on the next page by this image:

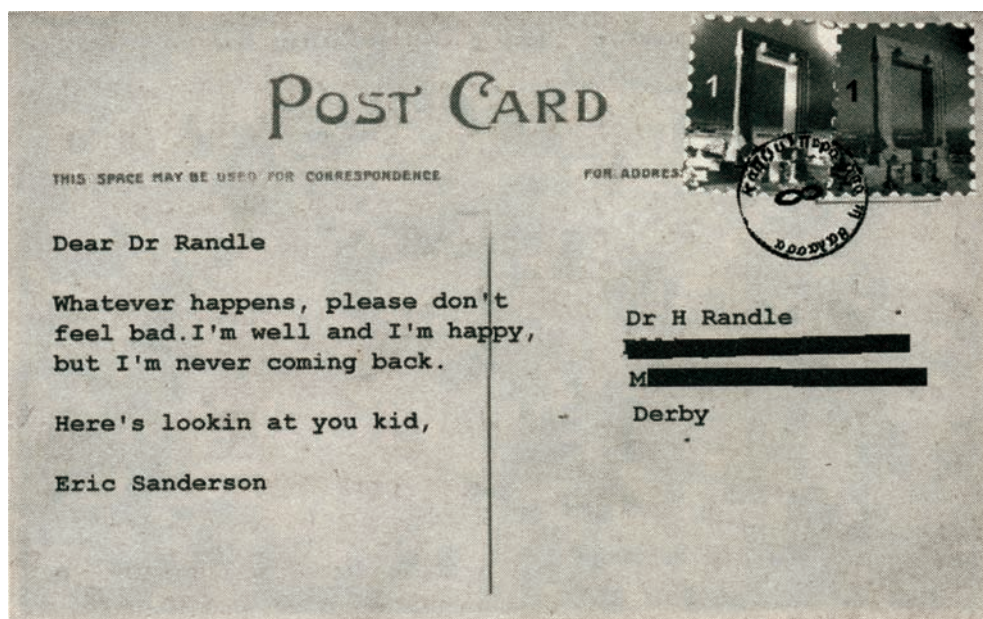


Exactly the same size, shape and placement as the postcard-back on the previous page, this still from *Casablanca* is read as the front of the postcard. The first time we witness Dr Randle counselling Eric II, she asks him to recite a line from *Casablanca*, which he does, but cannot then recall the last time he saw the film. Randle uses this to show Eric, and us, that he has

lost his personal memories. We infer Randle has asked Eric this question before, after a previous incident, with the same result. Therefore, the postcard may suggest Eric II survived the Ludovician's final attack, as he chooses this card in reference to their conversation – a personal memory he has retained, and referenced in both his choice of postcard and the line 'Here's lookin at you kid' typed on the back, which is also from the film.

Juxtaposed, the public newspaper article and the personal postcard further confuse us about Eric II's fate. Although the article claims the discovery of Eric's body proves the postcard is a fraud, who could have sent such an insightful message to Randle other than Eric himself?

The graphic details on the card point to its authenticity – it is stamped and post-marked, and someone has blacked out of the address to protect Dr Randle's privacy (Randall herself? The book publisher?). These visual details seem to validate the ephemera. But on closer inspection, where the date in the postmark should be there is instead a small infinity symbol, and the two stamps, stuck side by side are negatives of each other:



The visual clues seem to first validate one reading (that Eric was mentally ill and died at sea), then the other (that Eric crossed into the conceptual world and is still alive), yet the small details on the card confuse the clues again (are the infinity symbol and negative stamps the post marks of the 'other world'). By presenting these ambiguous, uncaptioned pieces of ephemera at the end of the novel, both readings are allowed to co-exist.

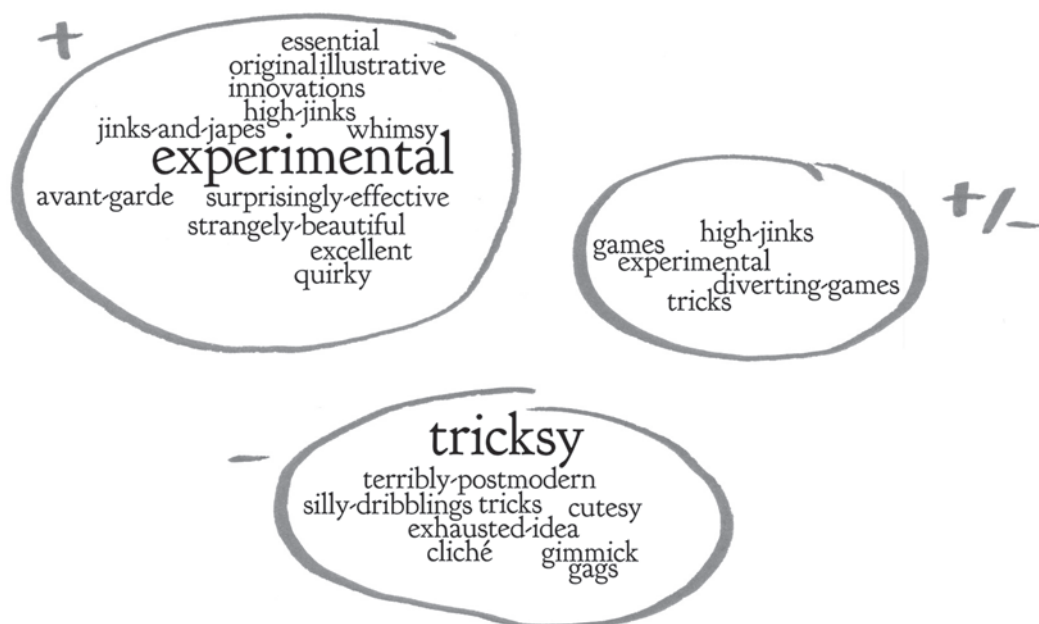
iii) Critical reception

Many reviewers enjoyed Hall's devices, calling them: "quirky elements [that] infuse the novel with a piquant avante-garde flavour" (Gioia 2007); "the 50-page flipbook of an approaching shark late in the novel is surprisingly effective and chilling in context" (Ness 2007); and "strangely beautiful" (McCarthy 2007). Equally, reviewers mention the devices – it seems difficult to not mention a typographic shark attack – but without offering any real critique of the effectiveness of the device or their reading experience. For example, one reviewer describes "the Ludovician swims through the pages, represented in collages of text" (Leith 2007).

Despite the wave of praise for this novel, Hall too has been criticised for resorting to visual gimmickry. Again, the first word cloud shows all the adjectives used to describe the graphic devices in this novel, from twenty-five reviews.



This cluster of clouds below separates the adjectives into complimentary, neutral and negative iterations:



The word ‘gimmick’ is less prevalent in these reviews than other hybrid novels, but ‘tricksy’ replaces it as a similar criticism.

Reviewer Steven Poole asks in the *New Statesman*: “If you invent a shark made out of words and then abandon the medium of words to represent it, what is the point?” (2007) Aside from the fact that the shark *is* made out of words – in fact, it is composed by fragments of Eric I’s memories, highly appropriate as it is only when Eric II reminisces that the Ludovician can locate him – Poole seems to miss the point that the shark only appears as typographic illustration when it breaks through the conceptual ‘stream’ and into the physical world. This device serves a particular conceptual function, and therefore is not merely a gimmick.

In addition, Poole offers a less generous critique of the *Casablanca* still, seemingly missing the connection within the narrative to the conversation with Dr Randle. He states: “The novel concludes not with words, but with an old movie still, exploiting borrowed emotion.” (2007) ‘Exploiting borrowed emotion’ is a curious phrase. Here, the reviewer suggests Hall is incapable of producing his own emotionally rich ending, and instead resorts to exploiting a moment from a classic film. What emotion is being ‘exploited’ here is not discussed by the reviewer, and is actually a complex question. The image depicts lovers Rick Blain (Humphrey Bogart) and Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) in Paris, moments before the Nazi invasion. To readers familiar with the film, this image is pregnant with nuanced subtext – Rick is jovial, planning their reunion in the near future, but Ilsa has just learnt her husband is alive and she must leave Rick to return to him. Is this still supposed to be exploiting the emotion of their impossible love? Or our emotion, knowing that it is their last moment as lovers? Or more generally, that *Casablanca* is known as a great love story, and by including this image, the exploitation is some kind of emotional osmosis? If Hall is borrowing emotion, it is as a kind of cultural mnemonic, at the service of enriching the complexity of the text – in the same way pastiche or an allusion to another text are employed. James Joyce was not accused of exploitation in naming his novel *Ulysses*.

Elsewhere it has been argued that this kind of ‘exploitation’ – call it pastiche, appropriation or homage – is routine practice in writing. Roland Barthes, for example, states in his essay ‘The Death of the Author’:

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. [...T]he writer can only imitate a gesture that

is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. (Barthes 1977)

In the context of a pictorial turn, it is not surprising that the ‘tissue of quotations’ woven into contemporary texts are also quotations of visual texts, such as the *Casablanca* still. Hall assumes his readers are literate in cinematic references, embroidering them throughout the novel, both verbally and visually. The original UK edition wears a Post-it note quote from Mark Haddon on the title page, describing the book as: “The bastard love-child of *The Matrix*, *Jaws* and *The Da Vinci Code*.” In addition, comparisons to authors like Haruki Murakami, Italo Calvino and Paul Auster (who are quoted on the three Part Title pages in the novel) and films such as *Memento* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* drift like phosphorescent particles through reviews of the novel. This is a highly intertextual novel.

References	References	References	References	References	References
Gibson's <i>Neuromancer</i> ; Stephenson's <i>Snow Crash</i> >Nicole Kidman		Paul Auster's <i>City of Glass</i> ; Haruki Murakami; <i>The Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Casablanca</i> ; > Nicole Kidman (x4)	"plugged into a ... network of associations"	<i>Memento</i> ; Jonathan Lethem; Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> ; Peter Abraham's <i>Oblivion</i> ; W.G. Sebald; Alice in Wonderland; <i>The Hunting of the Snark</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>The Matrix</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; <i>Harry Potter</i> ;	pastiche of films <i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Ally McBeal; <i>Gilmore Girls</i> ; <i>Sex and the City</i> ; <i>Tank Girl</i> ; <i>Doctor Who</i> ; William Gibson; <i>Neuromancer</i> ; <i>Pattern Recognition</i> ;
<i>Moby Dick</i> ; Jorge Luis Borges by way of <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> ...; Mark Haddon; Bach >Nicole Kidman	<i>Jaws</i> meets <i>The Matrix</i> ; Ring; <i>A Nightmare on Elm Street</i> ; Alien; Haruki Murakami; Jorge Luis Borges; Neal Stephenson; Mark Z. Danielewski's <i>House of Leaves</i> ; David Mitchell; <i>Moby-Dick</i> ; 3D <i>Monster Maze</i> (game); Alex Garland's <i>The Beach</i>	<i>Jaws</i> ; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; Christopher Nolan (<i>Memento</i>); Michel Gondry (<i>Eternal Sunshine</i>); Calvino; <i>The Happy Mondays</i> ; Alfred Hitchcock; William Gibson; <i>Lara Croft</i> >Nicole Kidman	Burroughs; Cronenberg; Keanu Reeves; Arnie; <i>Frankenstein</i> ; Benchley's shark; Melville's whale; <i>Orpheus and Eurydice</i> ; <i>Solaris</i> ; John Frankheimer's <i>Seconds</i> ;	Haruki Murakami, Paul Auster; Stephen King; <i>Carl Jung</i> ; Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ; Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> ; Benchley's <i>Jaws</i> ; James Joyce; Andrew Wyeth (painter)	
>Nicole Kidman (unnamed) Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> <i>Memento</i> ; <i>Suture</i> ; <i>Trauma</i> ; <i>Stay</i> Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; <i>Lost Highway</i> ; <i>Hidden</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> Calvino; Haruki Murakami; <i>Scarlett Thomas' The End of Mr Y</i>		<i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Moby Dick</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Bret Easton Ellis' <i>Lunar Park</i> , anything Charlie Kaufman; Paul Auster; Haruki Murakami; <i>Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> ; <i>Back to the Future</i> ; <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> ; Charlie Kaufmann; Christopher Nolan's <i>Memento</i> ; Paul Auster's detective fiction; <i>The Matrix</i> ; Danielewski's <i>House of Leaves</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> ; <i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Kafka</i> ; >Nicole Kidman	Problem: "Where Burroughs leads us into uncharted territory, here we are being led straight to the multiplex. All ambiguity and indeterminacy get jettisoned en route" >Nicole Kidman	"Hall pays homage to writers he admires" <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Memento</i> <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Memento</i>	
Danielewski; Borges; Calvino Grant Morrison's <i>The Invisibles</i> ; Garth Ennis' <i>Preacher</i> ; <i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> ; <i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Damen Hurst's fish.		notes that all coverage of RST "note Hall's nod to popular culture"	Nicole Kidman	
<i>Matrix</i> ; <i>Memento</i> ; Paul Auster Mark Z. Danielewski's <i>House of Leaves</i> ; Chuck Palahniuk Haruki Murakami's <i>Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World</i> ; <i>Jaws</i> John Haskell's <i>American Purgatorio</i> ; Tom McCarthy's <i>Remainder</i> ; Sam Taylor's <i>The Amnesiac</i>	<i>Memento</i> ; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>The Machinist</i> ; <i>Vanilla Sky</i> ; Charlie Kaufman (complete works); Auster; Amis; Danielewski; <i>Fight Club</i> ; <i>Casablanca</i> ; Paul Auster; <i>Matrix</i> ; Hitchcock's <i>Vertigo</i> ; <i>Eternal Sunshine</i> > Nicole Kidman			Nicole Kidman	
Herman Melville meets Michael Crichton; Thomas Pynchon meets Douglas Adams	<i>Gone with the Wind</i> meets <i>Clockwork Orange</i> >Nicole Kidman			<i>Jaws</i> ; Jorge Luis Borges; Richard Long;	

Compiled from twenty-five reviews of *The Raw Shark Texts*, where reviewers made comparisons to films are highlighted in yellow, to books or novelists in pink, and other references, such as music or computer games, in blue. Nicole Kidman appears so frequently because, according to a well-publicised anecdote, Kidman contacted Hall about changing Eric into a female so she could play the role.

The notion of exploiting, or borrowing, emotion also appears in reviews of other hybrid novels. One reviewer says of Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*: "By the time you get to the end, and flip backwards through the pictures of the falling figure to restore the victim to the top of the skyscraper, as Oskar wishes, you may feel a good deal of the emotion has been borrowed and not quite deserved." (Adams 2005)

Conversely, a review of Umberto Eco's *Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* states:

In the Eco-ian universe, books aren't merely stand-alone islands to be traversed in linear fashion; they are nodes in an exponentially expanding extranet. To read one book, you sometimes have to pass through several others, accumulating countless references and subtexts along the way. (Ng 2005)

Like Safran Foer, Hall addresses these criticisms as kind of snobbishness: "These storytelling techniques are still considered 'experimental' or even worse, 'gimmicky' in some book circles; whereas in art you can sit in a gallery with a dead lobster on your head for a week without fear of being accused of either." (Gallacher 2007)

Hall's flipbook device is not just a homage to cinematic drama, but an attempt to engage the reader in a more playful reading experience. Hall offers a succinct description of the difference between 'gimmicky' visual devices and those that are integrated into the text:

I'm a huge advocate of unusual typesetting, visual elements ... but these devices must always enhance the reading experience rather than obstruct it ... this new interactivity is less about the reader having to create a story and more about offering the reader opportunities to find more of the story for themselves ... It's not about creating so much as the offer of a more active form of engagement. (Gallacher 2007)

This more active form of engagement is a game played between author and reader. Hall's most playful device is the Ludovician: *ludo*, from the Latin *Ludus*, means game. Whether Hall's games are driven by marketing or literary interests is debatable, but Hall says: "It's never been about selling lots of books for me – it was always about finding new ways to tell a story and look at the how a story can exist and evolve in the world we live in today." (Baby Got Books 2001)

Hall's playfulness both within the text and in promoting the book is a fascinating case study for the commercial future of the novel, which leads into the third novelist discussed here – Dave Eggers.



EVERYTHING WITHIN TAKES PLACE AFTER JACK DIED AND BEFORE MY MOM AND I DROWNED IN A BURNING FERRY IN THE COOL TANNIN-TINTED GUAVIARE RIVER, IN EAST-CENTRAL COLOMBIA, WITH FORTY-TWO LOCALS WE HADN'T YET MET. IT WAS A CLEAR AND EYEBLUE DAY, THAT DAY, AS WAS THE FIRST DAY OF THIS STORY, A FEW YEARS AGO IN JANUARY, ON CHICAGO'S NORTH SIDE, IN THE OPULENT SHADOW OF WRIGLEY AND WITH THE WIND COMING LOW AND SEARCHING OFF THE JAGGED HALF-FROZEN LAKE. I WAS INSIDE, VERY WARM, WALKING FROM DOOR TO DOOR.

Section Three:

You Shall Know Our Velocity, Dave Eggers

Published editions:

You Shall Know Our Velocity, McSweeney's (September 2002, USA)

You Shall Know Our Velocity, Hamish Hamilton (2002, UK)

Sacramento, McSweeney's (February 2003, USA)

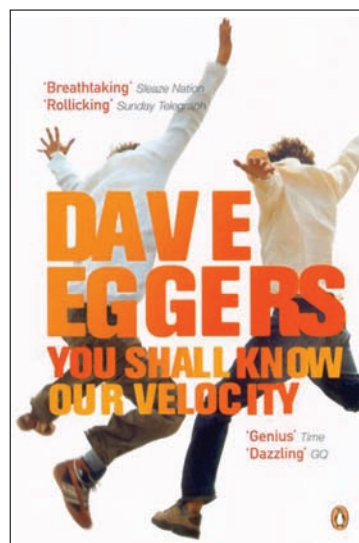
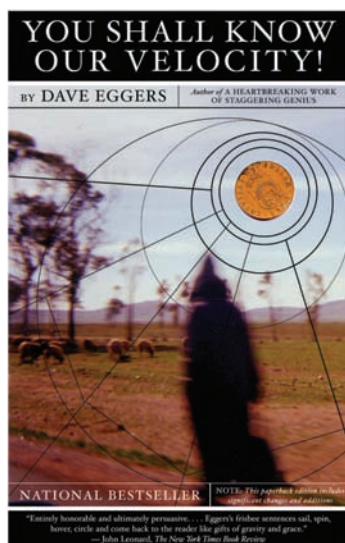
You Shall Know Our Velocity!, Vintage/Random House (July 2003, USA)

You Shall Know Our Velocity, Penguin (April & June 2004, UK)

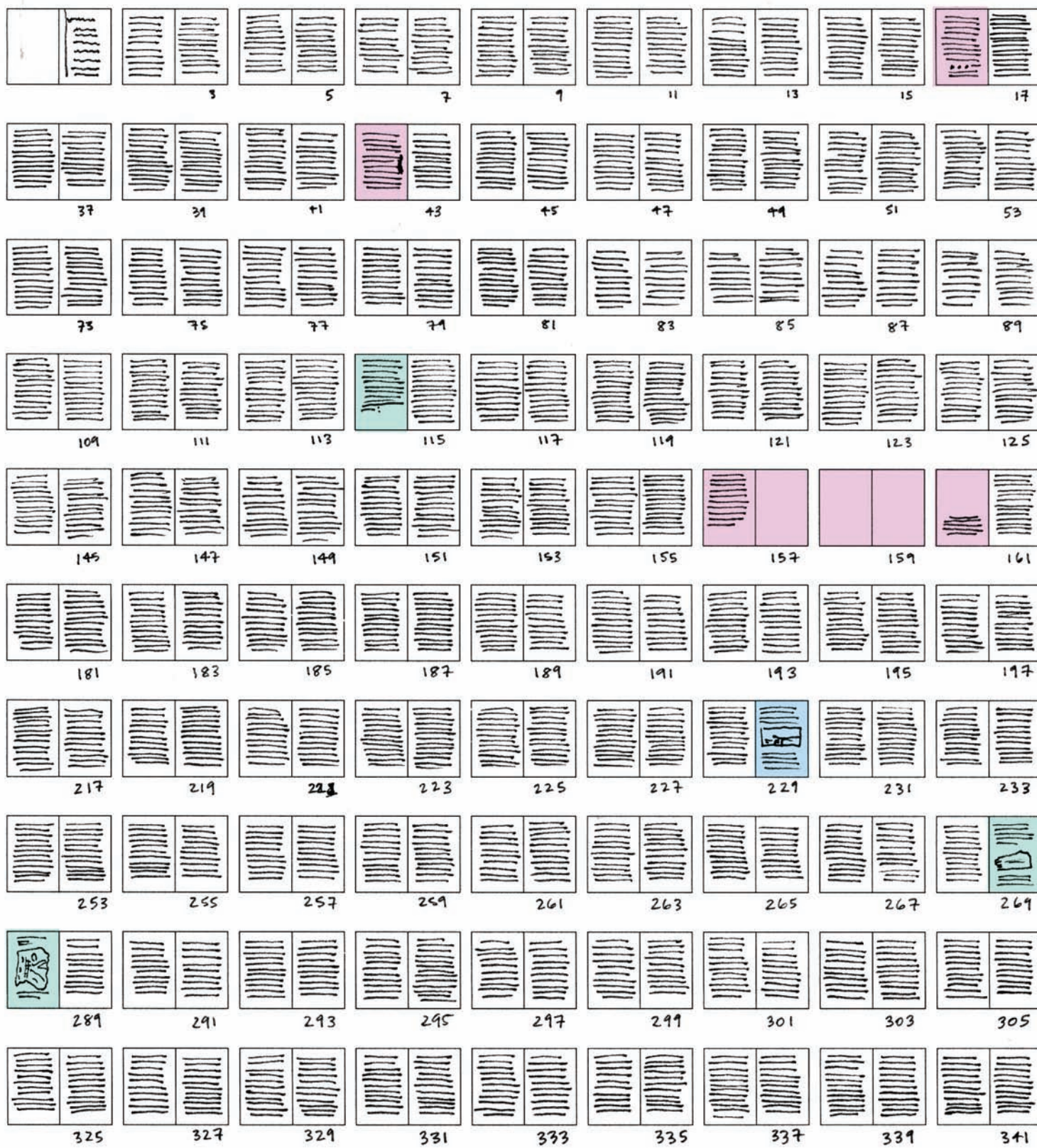
Analysed editions:

You Shall Know Our Velocity, McSweeney's (September 2002, USA)

You Shall Know Our Velocity!, Vintage/Random House (July 2003, USA)



Thumbnail Schema: *You Shall Know Our Velocity*



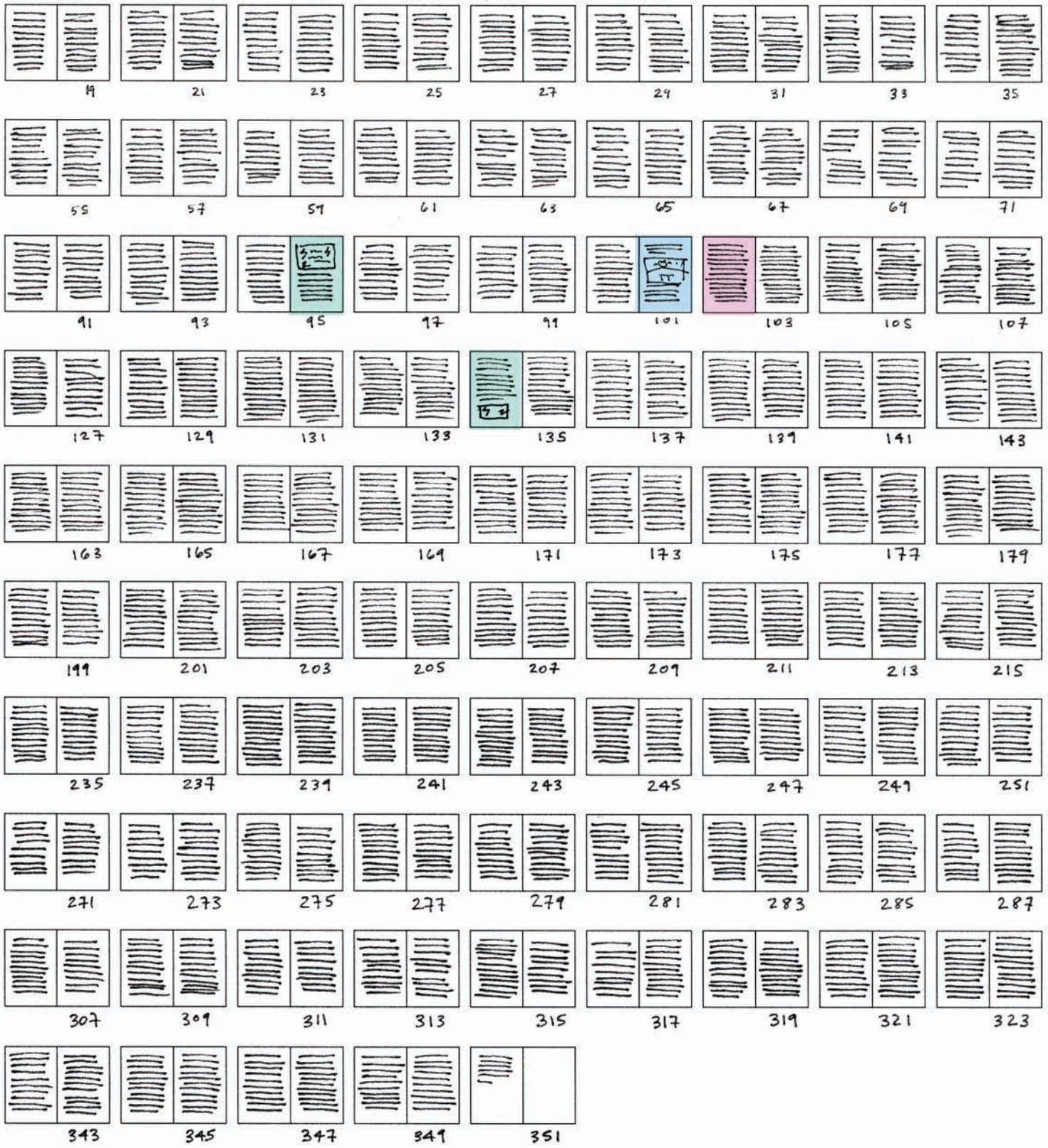
■ TYPOGRAPHY

■ PHOTOGRAPHS

■ EPHEMERA

■ DIAGRAMS

■ ILLUSTRATIVE ELEMENTS



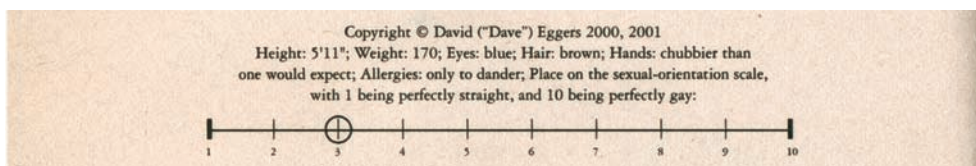
i) Contextual information

In 1998, Dave Eggers established *McSweeney's*, an ever-expanding umbrella enterprise that publishes books, anthologies, magazines, DVDs and a web site.¹⁴ Common to the various publications is an interest in challenging literary conventions and irreverent sense of humour. Of interest to this research is the delightfully atypical presentation of *McSweeney's* publications, a testament to Eggers' interest in the book form beyond its function as a vessel for text:



Eggers' confidently titled memoir *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* was a finalist for the 2001 Pulitzer Prize and widely praised for its idiosyncratic stylistic devices, such as the introduction of fictional elements and playful manipulation of text on the preliminary pages:

¹⁴ Eggers enjoys difficult titles, as *McSweeney's* demonstrates: the name shifts between different aspects of his ventures. *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* is the literary journal, but is sometimes given alternate titles. The 'internet tendency' (website) is called a variety of things involving the name 'Timothy McSweeney', for example: 'Timothy McSweeney speaks prophecy through novocaine-numbed lips'. For simplicity, the diverse publishing venture run by Eggers is referred to in this exegesis as *McSweeney's*.



Like Safran Foer, Eggers is a reluctant ‘next big thing’ in a competitive publishing marketplace. His interaction with the media – particularly critics of his work – is the topic of essays in literary journals and from students of literature.¹⁵ In reviews, essays and interviews about any of Eggers’ work, it seems obligatory to acknowledge his cult literary status,¹⁶ and particularly the best-selling memoir.

His dedication to the aesthetic value of book objects, coupled with his reputation as an experimental writer, has forged a new contract between Eggers and his readers. The *McSweeney’s* enterprise allows Eggers to bypass the mercantile middleman – the commercial publishing house – and simultaneously perform the roles of author, editor, publisher, designer, publicist and self-critic,¹⁷ and so communicate more directly with the reader than has conventionally been possible. Eggers also uses his web site to communicate directly with his readers, correcting typos and other minor errors from his books, and publishing letters between himself and critics of his work.

15 Two noteworthy examples are Sarah Brouillette’s essay in *Reconstruction* (2003) and Suzanne Samples’ MA thesis (2007). Brouillette is a literary scholar based at MIT who focuses on the relationship between emerging literatures and the globalised cultural marketplace. Her essay is particularly noteworthy because she applies Genette’s model of paratext to understand Eggers’ books and milieu. However, aside from commentary on Eggers’ dedication to unconventional packaging, Brouillette omits any mention of graphic devices. Brouillette’s essay was my first encounter with paratextual theory, which I immediately recognised as valuable to design discourse and this research. Samples’ thesis, which references Brouillette, does offer analysis of the photographs and other graphic devices, though strangely without actually showing them – she describes them in her own words.

16 In addition to his memoir, Eggers’ reputation comes from founding seven (and counting) volunteer-run writers’ centres across the USA, providing support for underprivileged children and winning a 2008 TED prize for advocating direct community and business engagement with public schools: <www.tedprize.org/dave-eggers>. He also wrote the screenplay for Spike Jonze’s film adaptation of Maurice Sendak’s children’s classic *Where the Wild Things Are*. Eggers studied painting and worked as a graphic/publication designer, which accounts for his design awareness.

17 And is alternatively praised and criticised for this. Brouillette’s essay delves into this aspect of Eggers’ work.

ii) Synopsis

**Picaresque' is a sub-genre of fiction that features the adventures of a roguish hero.*

A picaresque* novel, *You Shall Know Our Velocity* (from here, simply *Velocity*) recounts the adventures of narrator Will and his childhood buddy Hand, as they embark on a fool's errand – to circumnavigate the globe in a week, handing out \$32,000 to strangers. Three major events lead to this bizarre philanthropic caper. First, a light-bulb manufacturer pays Will an outrageous sum by to use his silhouette in their logo: “So I'd been given \$80,000 to screw in a lightbulb. There is almost no way to dress it up; that's what it was ... Was it a joke on me, Will Chmielewski – something about Poles – sorry, *Polaks* – and their abilities insofar as lightbulb screwing goes?” (41)

Second, their other childhood friend Jack dies in an horrific car crash. Third, while clearing out Jack's storage space, Will is violently assaulted by three anonymous men, inflicting numerous unexamined internal injuries and grotesque scabbing on his face and back. Broken, lost and dangerously neurotic, Will convinces Hand to join him in 'disseminating' his unwanted fortune to strangers who seem deserving of the money.

Before they even depart, Will's grand plan begins to unravel. He is shocked to learn travel vaccinations require an appointment, that flights are subject to change and delay due to weather conditions, and crossing the international dateline means “haemorrhaging hours all over the Pacific.” Having allocated only a week to prepare for the trip, Will speculates most people they deal with think they are assholes. Will and Hand embody the stereotype of awkward back-pack wearing tourists, blundering around the world in dirty cargo pants and shouting pidgin English at foreigners.

Throughout the novel, Hand attempts to relate a strange story to Will, but is constantly interrupted – it is not until the end that he can engage Will long enough to tell it. The Jumping People were a Chilean tribe who believe they carried the souls of their ancestors on their backs like mountains. To bear this weight, they learnt to run and hop and leap around with their mouths open, to 'lighten the weight of their mountains.' They fled the Spanish invasion of their island, but left one message painted on the cliff above the village: “You Shall Know Our Velocity!”¹⁸ Will's narrative, broken into seven parts – the seven days of the journey – describes how he jumps and leaps around trying to lighten the weight of his sorrow – sometimes literally, as in Morocco when he makes an unsuccessful jump from a moving car into a horse drawn cart – and also metaphorically – the journey is a series leaps to exotic locations. Will's narrative skips around in time to reveal

18 This is a greatly simplified account of the tale, the full version appears on pages 319-327 of the novel.

more about his relationships with Jack, Hand, his mother, and the events that led to his current mental volatility. However, from the first sentence, Eggers undermines the reliability of Will's narrative. Will begins: "Everything within takes place after Jack died and before my Mom and I drowned in a burning ferry in the cool tannin-tinted Guaviare River."

Aside from apparently telling the story from the grave, the details of Will's account often do not add up, and he is prone to bouts of fainting and crippling paranoia.

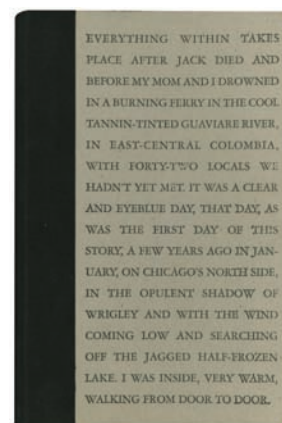
iii) Graphic devices

Velocity was originally published in 2002, by *McSweeney's*. This hardback edition featured thick creamy stock with deckle-edges and colour photographs, graphics and ephemera. The first sentence is stamped onto the raw cardboard cover – the title and author appearing only on the spine.¹⁹ The narrative runs from the front cover onto the inside cover, all the conventional preliminary pages – the imprint page, part title and title pages, acknowledgements and dedication pages – are omitted entirely. Six lines of text, printed on the inside back cover, list thank yous, acknowledgements and the *McSweeney's* logo and address, but no copyright or other publishing information. The novel is virtually stripped of all conventional paratext.

Where Safran Foer and Hall prepare readers for unconventional graphic devices by slipping 'teaser' image/s between the cover and the title page – the photographic frontispiece and the small typo-graphic shark – Eggers announces his experimentation more prominently. This manipulation of paratext warns the reader – through the unusual embossed cardboard/cloth presentation, the first sentence appearing on the cover, absent preliminary pages, as well as the improbability of a deceased narrator speaking in the present tense – that this book challenges the conventions of a novel. In this way, Eggers notifies readers before they even reach the primary text that he is presenting us with a novel that will challenge our expectations.

The graphic devices within the novel can be categorised as: illustrative elements; ephemera; and photographs.

A deckle-edge is the rough, irregular edge of a page that is usually cropped in the production of a book, but occasionally left on as a decorative element.




¹⁹ *McSweeney's* produced 50,000 books in this initial printing: 10,000 sold exclusively via the website and the remaining stock to be sold in independent bookstores that already stocked *McSweeney's* publications (no major chain stores).

Graphic Type One: Illustrative elements

Illustrative elements are integrated first to interrupt the pace of the narrative, drawing our attention to small moments that are significant for Will, and second to amplify the irony of a particular situation.



Interrupting pace to focus on a small moment

After the unusual cover, the next graphic device appears on page sixteen, when Will and Hand, accompanied by Will's twin nieces, are shopping for the trip:

In the parking lot we watched a trio of milk-white Broncos drive by——and we all stopped momentarily. It was bad enough that they still made them in that color, but to see three at once seemed to bode ill. The girls were unimpressed,

Spotting three cars of the same generic model and colour in a city car park is not especially odd. Will's eight-year-old nieces are unimpressed, but Will is paranoid that this sight may 'bode ill', without explanation of where this superstition stems from. It is not necessary for us to know exactly what 'a trio of milk-white Broncos' look like – here, the images themselves are less important than the reason Will (or Eggers) includes them. By presenting tiny reproductions of the three cars on the page, Eggers forces us to neurotically hone in on this seemingly insignificant detail with Will; removed from the context of a busy shopping centre car park and squeezed so closely and uniformly into the line of type, the reader must take an unexpected visual pause that mimics Will's experience. However, based on one reviewer's interpretation, my experience may not mimic Will's very closely at all:

There is a scene early in the book in which the characters see three white Broncos, and they riff on white Broncos post-OJ ('how could they even make them in that color?'). Inserted into the text are three pictures of what appear to be Mercedes M-Class vehicles—decidedly not Broncos." (Watman 2002)

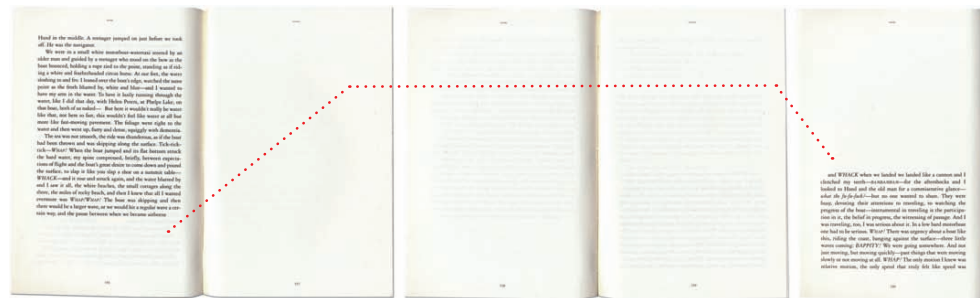
As neither a car enthusiast nor follower of the OJ media-circus, I did not make these connections. An online search reveals Broncos looks like this  not this , and that the press coverage of the OJ Simpson case does persistently comment on the model of his car (or, more accurately the friend's car he was driving). Is it relevant that the cars, according to this reviewer, are 'decidedly not Broncos' even though Will specifies that they are? Was I really supposed to link Will asking how 'they' could 'even make them in

that color' with the fact OJ Simpson drove one? If so, it would seem I missed the *meaning* of this device. Alternatively, they are deliberately wrong, establishing Will as an unreliable narrator. Either way, the device works on more than one level. Aside from these allusions outside the novel, these little cars alter the pace of reading – they force a pause in the flow of the narrative – and emphasize Will's neurosis. This experiential function is unavoidable, even if the subtextual meaning could be missed.

A similar pause is forced later in the novel, when Will describes being on a powerboat surging through waves. He breaks the sentence “the pause between when we became airborne...



...and WHACK when we landed” with several blank pages. Turning those pages to get to the end of the sentence, we experience the soaring pause as Will does. Similar to Hall’s build up to the shark attack ,and Safran Foer’s daybook entries, graphic space affects reading pace. The execution of this break is particularly effective because it starts toward the bottom of the first page, soars across the facing page, the double page spread, then comes back down to almost where it started. Our eyes are forced to follow the trajectory of the boat:

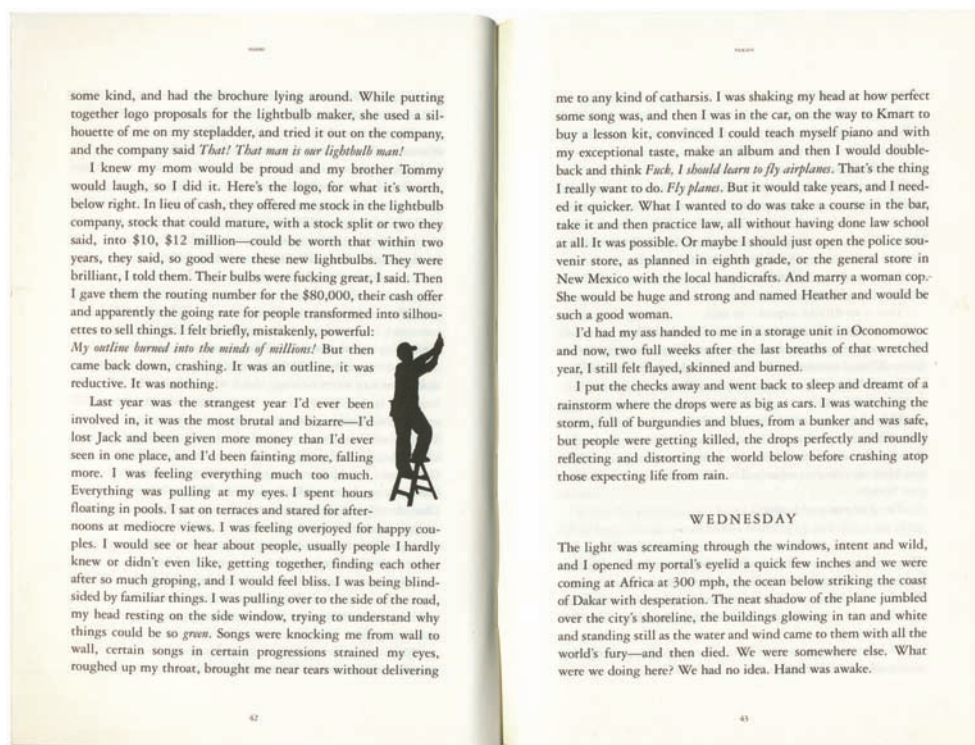
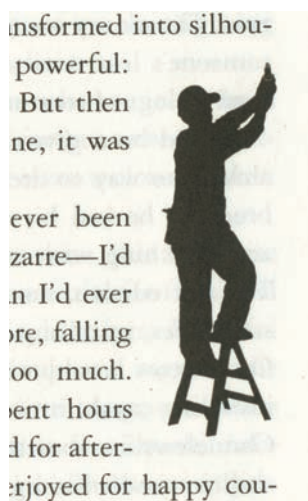


(My red line)

Whether this is a typographic device (an absence of typography) or an illustrative device (a presence of white space) is debatable but irrelevant for the purposes of the argument here – this device allows us to share the velocity of one of the few moments in the novel that Will experiences pure exhilaration.

Visual irony

Will embeds the silhouette for which he was paid \$80,000, simply captioned within his narrative: “Here’s the logo, for what it’s worth, below right.”



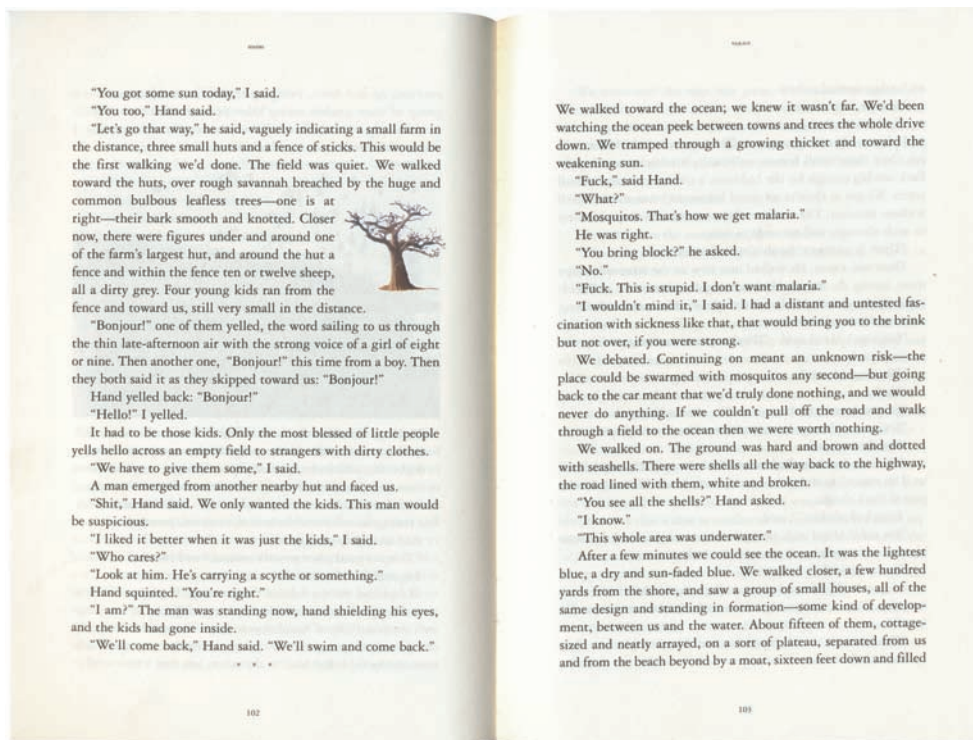
The graphic is amusingly banal, and entirely unrecognizable as Will, or any individual for that matter. The awkwardly proportioned silhouette is not an engaging shape – it is difficult to imagine how this would be incorporated into a memorable logotype or packaging design. In surrounding text, Will states: “I felt briefly, mistakenly, powerful: *My outline burned into the minds of millions!* But then came back down, crashing. It was an outline, it was reductive, it was nothing.” (42)

Will’s embarrassment at being paid such a ridiculous sum for an unidentifiable silhouette becomes more satirical when we see it presented on the page. Will could have said – ‘you couldn’t even tell it was me’ or ‘it could have been anyone’, but the irony resides in the gap between what we are told and what we can see.²⁰

Only one other graphic in the novel appears presented in a similar way to the silhouette. Sixty pages later, a small graphic of a tree is aligned with the gutter of a left-

20 Brouillette links Will’s fictional situation with the real situation Eggers’ faced when profits from his memoir came rolling in – she calls this “a text about Eggers’ career and his overriding concern with the idea of ‘selling out.’” (1) This knowledge, possessed by Eggers’ fans, deepens the irony that he was paid so highly for the silhouette – a memoir could be described as a silhouette of a person’s life.

hand (verso) page. The placement of the graphic is noteworthy because this composition is unusual. Graphics in books are conventionally centred or aligned with the outer margin of the page, where they are less obstructed by the fold into the gutter.



was quiet. We walked
 reached by the huge and
 at
 closer
 one
 it a
 deep,
 the
 distance.



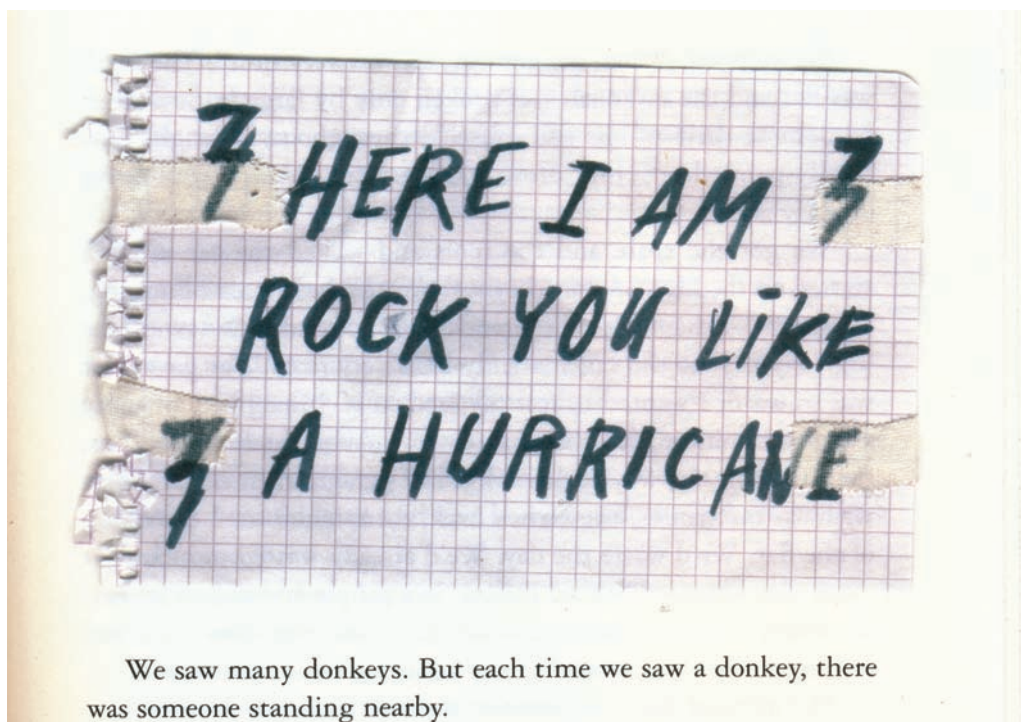
In contrast to Will's silhouette, this tree is not a significant narrative element – these trees are mentioned here in passing, but not again. No other graphic reproductions of unusual foliage occur in the novel, despite the fact that Will is constantly exposed to unfamiliar landscapes. Unlike Will's silhouette, which amplifies irony, or the Broncos, which alter pace and highlight detail, this tree graphic does not extend or alter the literary description in a significant way – it is a direct illustration of the written text. Why has Will, or Eggers, included this element? Moreover, what is it? Even on close scrutiny I am uncertain whether this tree is a photograph or a painting. Perhaps I have missed something, some allusion or pun, but I cannot describe this graphic element as integral to the primary text. This graphic frustrates me – it is stylistically inconsistent with any of the other graphic devices in the novel, and appears to serve no literary purpose. In fairness, it is likely most readers would skim over this tree without much thought, as I would skim an allusion to something I did not understand – I skimmed whole passages of Eco's *Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, which is pocked with literary allusions beyond my repertoire. My irritation is the seemingly irrelevant inclusion of this one device weakens the use of the other, more effective graphic devices in the

novel. This ineffective device gives weight to the argument that graphic elements add little to novels. It appears my reaction was not isolated – while thumbnailing the later Penguin (2004) edition, I realised this image was omitted.

Graphic Type Two: Ephemera

Notes handwritten by Will, Hand and people they meet along the way, are integrated into the narrative to create visual irony, as Will's silhouette does, by opening a space between what the character sees and what we see as readers. These notes are also provided as visual 'evidence' within the narrative, to create a sense of authenticity.

Giving away free money proves more difficult than Will imagined – whom to give it to, and how? One of the more eccentric methods of dissemination involves taping cash to a donkey. Will tells us that Hand writes a note 'of greeting and explanation' in black marker pen on graph paper that says:

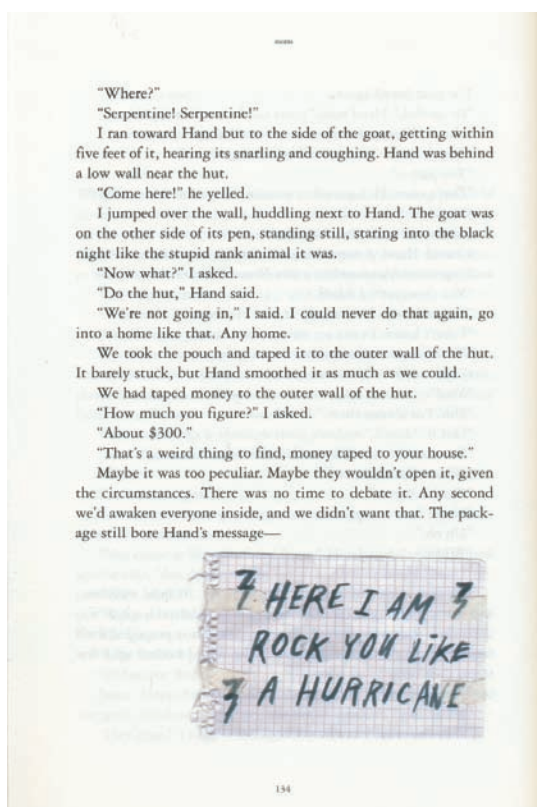
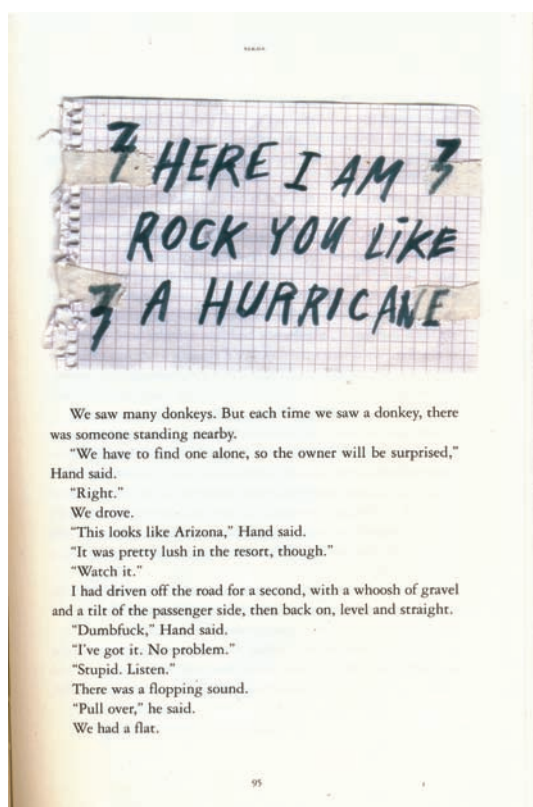


A written description of this note would convey the weirdness of the act – “Here I am rock you like a hurricane” is neither a greeting nor an explanation. It is actually a lyric from a Scorpions’ song – unlikely to be understood by the donkey owner, or perhaps some readers (although I knew this as a song lyric, I had to search for the band name).

Some readers may immediately pick the reference, and some miss it entirely. As with the OJ Simpson link to the Broncos, regardless of whether the reader understands the pop culture reference associated with this note, the juxtaposition between this ridiculous phrase and the small fortune in local currency it contains, is ironic.

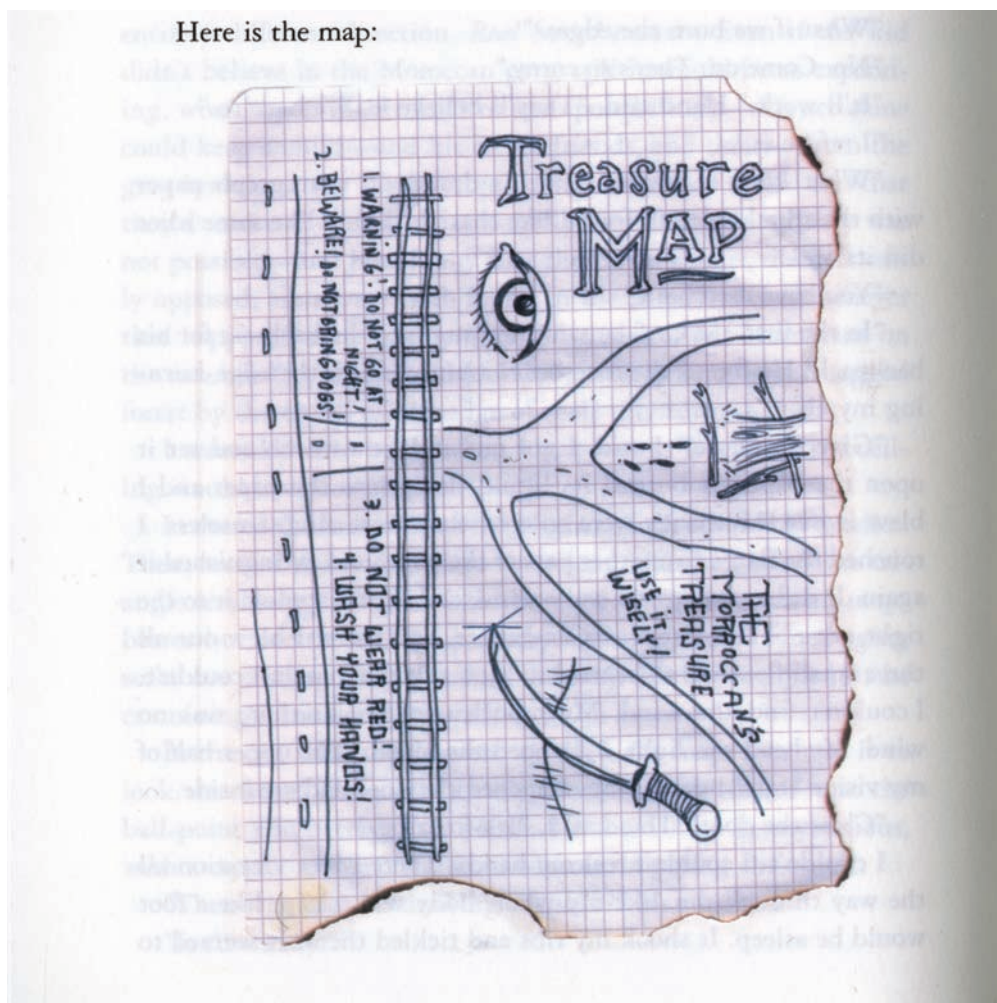
Showing the actual piece of ephemera deepens the irony, by revealing additional information. The messy penmanship, wonky lightning bolts reminiscent of scribbles on a teenager's pencil case, and the roughly torn and taped grid-paper show us how childish this would appear to the donkey owner, something Will and Hand appear oblivious to. Will includes the ephemera, proud of what they presented to the local people; Eggers includes it to show us how juvenile and odd the act actually is. The donkey-taping scheme fails, but later they tape this same envelop to the side of a house, and again, it is presented on the page.

If a device is repeated, we assume it is significant, and the author wants us to reflect upon it. It seems it still has not occurred to Will and Hand that the note is ridiculous – Will never tells us he thinks it is funny, but by including it twice, Eggers seems to. The repetition of the same element places emphasis on it, a technique similar to repeating themes, motifs or descriptions in writing (although I wonder, why smaller and right justified this time, as shown below – does this reduction in size acknowledge that the impact is lessened on a second viewing, or did this size simply fit better on this particular page?).



To understand this note better, it is helpful to compare it to similar devices.

A second example seems to substantiate my claim that Will, at least, is unaware how silly these notes are. Burying a wad of cash, they draw a ‘pirate map’ leading to the treasure. Will tells us he wants it to be “mysterious, with a cryptic and ancient aura, without implying the occult” (286) and presents the map to us:



Sitting in the car, they argue about whether burning the edges will mask the fact it is drawn in ballpoint pen on graph-paper. Hand wonders: “What kind of treasure map is drawn on neat graph-paper with the spiral holes all frayed like that? It’ll look like some idiot did it.” He instructs Will to burn the edges, then wonders whether the knife looks too scary. Hand suggests shiny knives are less scary, and Will points out to us: “See how I made the knife shiny? I think it worked.” (289)

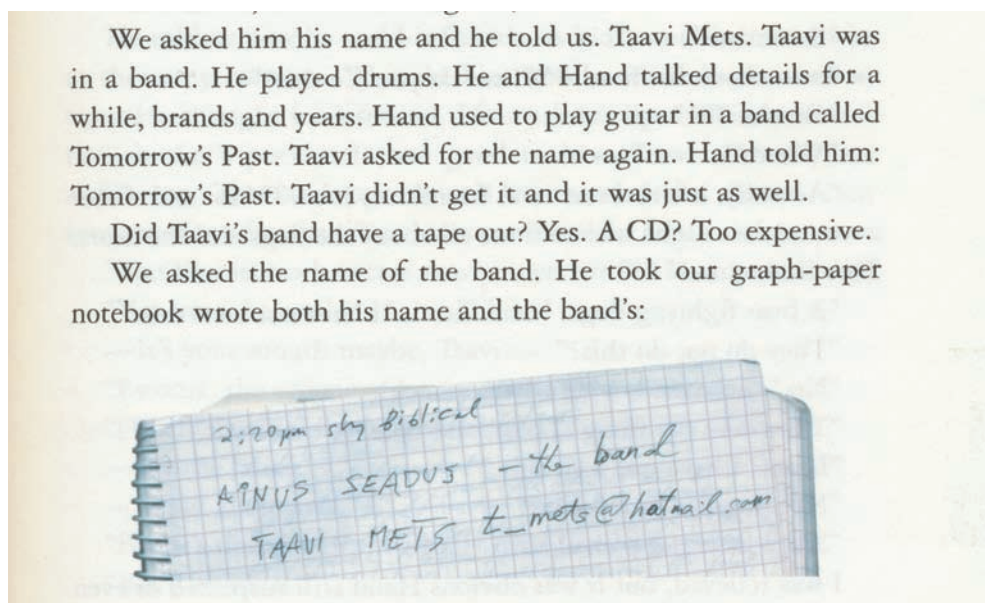
Will sincerely discusses these graphic considerations, then points out: “Hand did the Moroccan-style writing—though Hand is not such a skilled speller—and made up the rules.” (287) Will passively mocks Hand for misspelling ‘Moroccan’s’, while Eggers

subtly teases him for drawing the map at all.

Will includes this map and the ‘Here I am’ packages proudly and earnestly, while Eggers includes it to create a sense of irony, opening a gap between Will’s perception of these notes and ours. Yet for this to work, we must believe that Will, not Eggers, made the notes.

These notes may look simple, or in Hand’s words, as though “some idiot” made them, but they are conceptually complex devices within the novel. In examining them, considering the difference between author and character is important. On the page, they present as a kind of trompe l’oeil – there is a sense that these are ‘authentic’ documents because they physically exist, they are scanned in from actual pieces of ephemera. They are believable not only because we are told these notes were produced on graph-paper with a ballpoint pen or black marker – and here they are, produced with these tools – but because from what we know of the characters, the childish handwriting and silly phrases are fitting – we believe these are words that Will and Hand would use, and the graphic sophistication they are capable of. The realistic rendering and graphic style appropriate to the characters make us read these devices as ‘real’, and momentarily forget that Eggers, not Will, produced them. This realism allows the ephemera to act as ‘evidence’ that the adventure took place.

In another scene, Will and Hand pick up a hitchhiker, a young man who wants to be a musician. Hand asks him to write his name, and the name of the band for them:



The note is written on graph-paper, consistent with the other ephemera, but the

I also emailed the address provided, but the postmaster at hotmail informed me that delivery to that recipient failed.

handwriting is different from the other notes, so we infer that it is written on their notepaper, by someone else. As such, this note is offered as proof this person existed. I checked MySpace to see if either the band or Taavi were listed. Further confusing the authenticity of these notes, a man called Taavi Mets plays drums in the band Ainus Seadus: www.myspace.com/ainusxseadus. Eggers has gone to great measures to construct verisimilitude within the novel, both verbally and visually.

In another example, after an impromptu game of basketball, Hand gives a group of boys a pen and paper to write their names. Will leaves a space for this paper, then explains: “I lost this piece of paper. I am so sorry. I can’t believe I lost it.” (114-115) He need not inform us the paper existed. The fact he admits losing it and apologises as if he has let us down seems to prove that he is showing and telling us an accurate account of events, in as much detail as he can offer. The apology for the absent ephemera draws our attention to the importance Will places on the included ephemera. Which raises an issue – how is Will able to include the other ephemera if it was taped to the side of a house or buried? If copies of the ephemera were created to include in the book, does the trip suddenly become more of a literary stunt (for Will) than an earnest attempt at random philanthropy? Already, Will’s reliability as a narrator is in question (again, how can he be narrating if he is dead?) but the absent and possibly inauthentic ephemera instils Sebaldian unease. The lines between fiction and reality are blurred by the inclusion of these hand written notes by both the protagonists and the people they meet along the way.

Graphic Type Three: Photographs

In an ill-fated slapstick moment, Will decides to jump from their moving car onto the back of a horse-draw wagon. The episode takes an amusingly long time to play out, and results in Will bouncing off the wagon and hitting the road.

Describing the carts he wants to jump onto, Will states:

We drove up and down the airport road seven times, trying to time it with a series of different carts. Here's one:



They were all perfectly shaped and traveling slowly enough, but every time we were close, something went awry. A cop behind

Although Will does not tell us he took this slightly blurry photograph, we assume he did because it is blurry and not particularly well composed, like a travel snap. Including the photograph puts us in Will's shoes, or more accurately, his seat in the car, as he anticipates the event. The photograph is used as evidence – this is exactly where it happened, though not necessarily this actual cart. In addition, it sets the tone of the scene more completely. The cart driver's bewildered gaze watching Will (us) indicates how odd this scenario appears to the locals, and the blurriness of the photograph reminds us that the car is moving quickly as Will works up the courage to jump. Similar to some of Safran Foer's photographs, this image is a meditative aid, asking us to pause and think about the scene, from both Will and the cart driver's perspective. Through this image, we are able to switch between Will's perspective behind the camera, and the cart driver looking straight at us.

Another photograph appears relatively early in the novel, following this passage (100):

A flock of small black birds came across the building in a desperate way. They weren't in any kind of formation, just fifty of them, all flying in the same direction, each with its own path. Not every one with its own path, I guess, but so many of them, which struck me. I don't know why it struck me then but had never struck me before. When we see birds flying in a flock, we expect them in formation. We expect neat V's of birds. But these, they were flying in more of a swooping swarm, a group fifty feet left to right, twenty feet top to bottom. Within that area they were

swerving up and down, swinging to and fro, overlapping, like a group of sixth graders riding bikes home from school. Which would imply not only free will but a sense of fun, of caprice. I mean, I want to know what this bird:



is thinking. How does he feel his flight? Does he know the difference between stasis and swooping? Birds were so much better

This fleeting moment moves Will, he uses the photograph as an aid to explain why.

The randomness of choosing this particular unremarkable bird is funny, and something best communicated visually: these birds are flying past – Will needs to freeze the moment to isolate the one he has chosen to obsess upon. Had the description been something like ‘I wanted to know what one of the birds somewhere in the lower-middle section of the flock was thinking’ the specificity, and therefore humour, would be lost.²¹ Like the three white Broncos, Will isolates this detail and provides a window into his unstable mental world. The specificity of “this bird” is inherently funny and sad at the same time.

The circle need not be red to mark the exact bird. However, the redness carries particular associations. A red correction pen, like the one Thomas Schell uses to highlight errors in the *New York Times*, suggests a particular purpose – it is the pen of an editor, drawing attention to a detail. In the Penguin B-format edition of the novel, all the photographs and ephemera are reproduced in greyscale:

²¹ Beryl McAllhone and David Stuart’s book *A Smile in the Mind: Witty Thinking in Graphic Design* (1998) describes different types of graphic wit and offers diverse examples of effective graphic wit in print design.

swerving up and down, swinging to and fro, overlapping, like a group of sixth graders riding bikes home from school. Which would imply not only free will but a sense of fun, of caprice. I mean, I want to know what this bird:



is thinking. How does he feel his flight? Does he know the difference between stasis and swooping? Birds were so much better

Something is lost by reproducing this photograph without colour, in the same way the grey scale version of Danielewski's *House of Leaves* loses the associations with blue screens and hyperlinks when the word 'house' is not printed in that specific blue. The main function of the device – to identify a particular bird – is not altered, but the visual impact, engagement and additional associations are. It is almost inconceivable that descriptive passages or verbal devices would be cut out of an edition of a novel to make it shorter and therefore less expensive to produce, so why is acceptable to 'edit' the visual devices in this way? Altering these devices seems, to me, to equally compromise the integrity of the work.

Hand's Interruption: But wait, there's more

A radical 'interruption' occurs not within the novel (or, not in the version I read) but in another edition. Multiple editions of *You Shall Know Our Velocity* exist, and two of these include an extra forty nine page section called 'An Interruption, by Francis R. "Hand" Wisneiwski' inserted three quarters of the way through the book.²² The first is a limited edition published through McSweeney's (2003), retitled *Sacrament*, and the second is the Vintage edition, yet again retitled: *You Shall Know Our Velocity!* – note the exclamation

²² A "pseudo-sequel" to Hand's interruption titled 'The Only Meaning of the Oil-Wet Water' appears in an anthology of Eggers' short stories, *How We Are Hungry*. It is not discussed here because it does not contain graphic devices.

point (also 2003). In producing these different editions, Eggers shatters literary conventions and completely redrafts the author-reader contract.

Neither the Australian Penguin nor the early McSweeney's editions I own include Hand's 'interruption'. I was unable to get hold of the limited McSweeney's edition *Sacrament* – only 2,000 were printed, and signed by the author. The Vintage edition was unavailable in Sydney bookstores. However, Eggers supplies a PDF of this new section on the McSweeney's web site, for interested readers to download for free.²³

According to this additional section, Hand is bewildered and angered by Will's version of events. He rents a beach-house in New Zealand two years after the publication of the original book to 'fix things' by writing his own version of events, which he anticipates the publisher will insert in future editions between Will's Sunday and Monday (the fifth and sixth days of their adventure), at "about the point where [Hand] personally found the plot, or whatever it was, to begin waning." (251)

The insert is graphically framed within a red border and ends with a full red page, creating a clear distinction between Hand's and Will's narratives. It is page numbered, to indicate exactly where it should fall in the novel (Hand also tells us this in his narrative) and presented with crop marks so we can cut the pages to size and insert them in the book, if we so desire. (See facing page)

Hand claims Will's narrative is plagued by three "enormous and unjustifiable lies": 1) Jack is an entirely fictional character – "There was no Jack ... Will and I had always been a duo ... so you can imagine my frustration when I see this manuscript and throughout there is this third person, missing but present ... a saint of some kind, better at everything"; 2) Will was not violently assaulted at the storage unit – "No one beat up Will; Will went to Africa with a face as clear as could be"; 3) Will's mother, who Will describes incessantly telephoning at every stage of the trip, actually died eight years before they depart, leaving Will without family. Hand claims to not understand Will's motivation for so wildly fabricating fundamental elements of the story, what he calls throwing in a "random cookie-cutter background tragedy," but speculates that Will invented and killed Jack as a proxy for his mother: "Jack is there so Will could write about pain."

²³ Online: <http://mcsweeneys.net/links/faq/download.html>

AN INTERRUPTION

by Francis R. "Hand" Wisniewski

MONDAY, A DIFFERENT ONE

I MIGHT AS WELL start here. This is Hand, writing almost two years after the action taking place in this book. I sit on the second floor of a house much too big for one. The house is in New Zealand, in the Coromandel peninsula, and its occupant, thirty-one years old, of strong body but a mind that swerves and sputters, is alone. There is rain here, in a village called Matarangi, in a valley facing a bay, surrounded by green hills, under a ceiling of rain.

At first there was no rain. I arrived on a cloudless Tuesday and expected the best for my stay. I have rented this place, old, leaning left, on the end of a wide beach, for just over two weeks, so finally I can do what for around two years now—since the initial appearance of the book you've been reading—I've wanted to do. It's appropriate, I hope, that I add my contribution here, at about the point when I personally found the plot, or whatever it was, to begin waning. There will be corrections here, and explanations. I'll try to keep my rage and bewilderment in check.

Here in New Zealand, I sat down with the book sooner than

Hand describes his interruption as being based on his “more accurate notes and memories” and, of most interest to this study, his photographs from the road-trip, which he decides to “sprinkle throughout.” Hand’s interruption completely undermines Will’s credibility as a narrator, causing the reader to question what they have read. Hand’s narrative strives to establish credibility by directly addressing readers as ‘good people’ and ‘sweet people’, and making us implicit accomplices to his version of events: “did you know this?” and “This is our task, to untangle the chords.” Referred to as ‘breaking frame’, literary scholar David Lodge notes this strategy is favoured by Postmodern writers, “who disown a naïve faith in traditional realism by exposing the nuts and bolts of their fictional constructs.” (Lodge 1992:11) However, Hand’s narrative reliability is as questionable as Will’s. He describes himself as being “of strong body but a mind that swerves and sputters,” admits to drinking vodka while writing, and his timeline of events does not add up. First, he claims both the road-trip and the publication of Will’s book occurred simultaneously ‘almost two years’ ago, which is an unfathomably expedient publication schedule, especially considering, as Hand explains, that the publisher had to commission a ghost-writer to pen the introductory paragraph. Most erroneously, Hand later states Will has been dead for “almost three years now,” dating Will’s death before the trip.²⁴ Both narrators have gaping discrepancies in their versions of events. Who are we to believe? Through Hand’s interruption, Eggers presents us with two unreliable narrators. The interruption is an extraordinary display of authorial control of a literary work. Eggers, through Hand, changes our reading of the text, within the text. Everything we have read to page 251 is suddenly debunked.

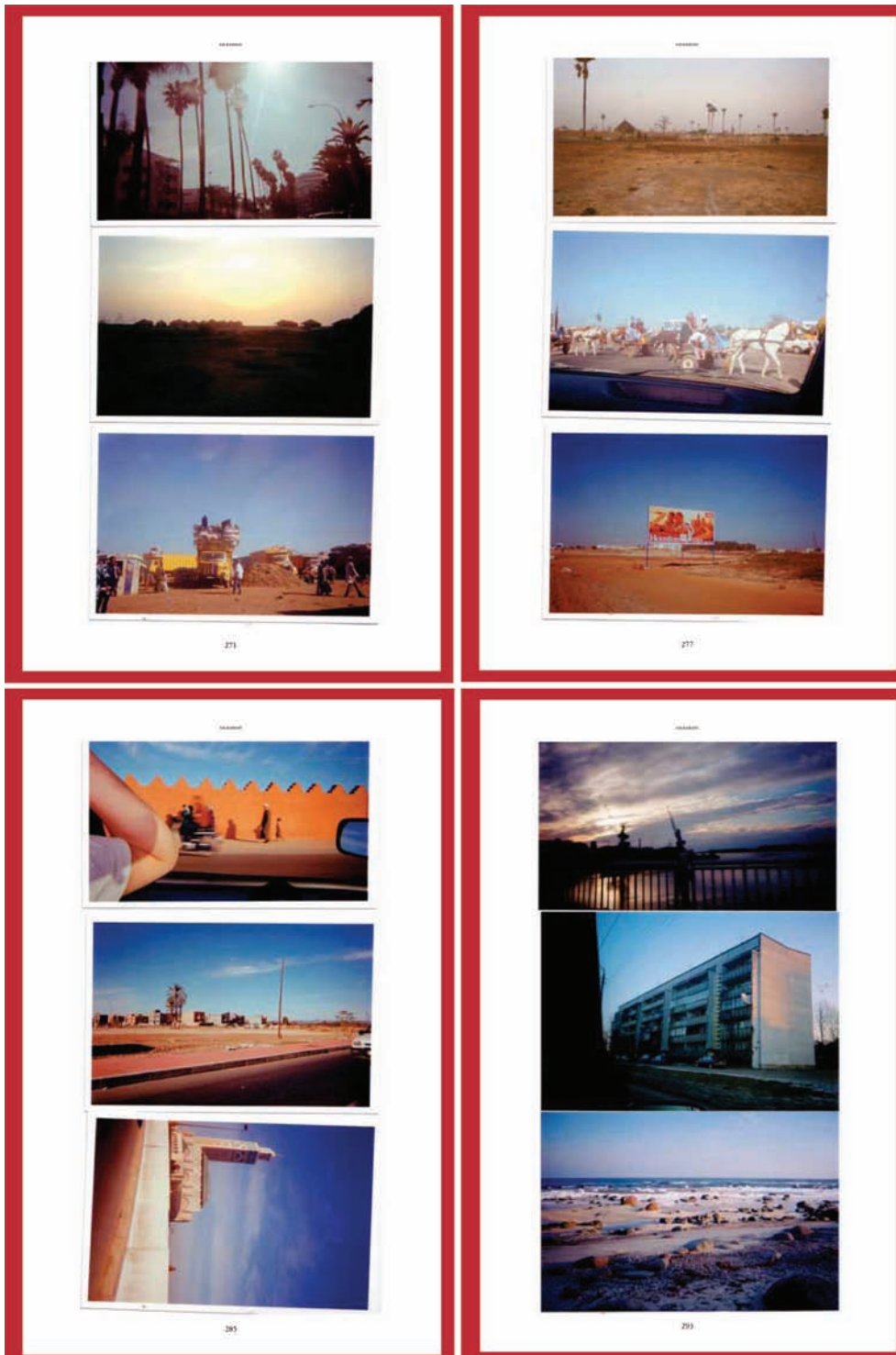
Will and Hand’s narratives are both corroborated with photographs and other visual evidence of events/places where the action occurred. Hand describes a premeditated desire to document the trip: “The idea we came up with, well before we left, was something we coined Performance Literature ... what we had planned was a book conceived, then acted out, then transcribed, then ostensibly made into art.” (281)

Perhaps this solves the problem of the authenticity of the ephemera. If the intention, from the outset, was to document the process, Will is likely to have either photographed the ephemera or made multiple copies at the time with the intention of including them in ‘his’ novel.

Hand’s photographs are not noticeably different to Will’s in terms of composition

²⁴ In addition to these three monumental deceits, Hand notes a hive of smaller untruths, for example, brother Tommy is fictitious – Will was an only child, and twin nieces Mo and Thor were actually two years old at the time, rendering all Will’s flashbacks and the postcards he writes them during the trip impossible.

or artistry. Both are amateur – often slightly unfocused, with an arm in the window or an unexpected car edging into the frame. Four full pages of photographs are included:



These photographs look familiar to us – they are the holiday snaps our friends and ourselves collect and, increasingly, share on the Internet through sites like Flickr and Facebook.

However, despite looking similar in terms of content and artistry, two graphic

differences distinguish Will and Hand's photographs. First, where Will's photographs are seamlessly embedded into the layout, Hand's appear as photographic ephemera. A thin white border and drop shadow lift them off the page, they overlap slightly and some are sideways – implying they are stuck to the page with sticky tape, which Hand mentions buying. This small distinction reminds us that Hand's interruption is a manuscript – he submits it to the publisher for inclusion in 'future editions'. The photographs are stuck to the page, not scanned and reproduced like Will's. In addition, where Will's photographs are consciously embedded into the narrative, using in-text captions such as "here is the map:", Hand's are clustered together, pasted onto separate sheets. Hand's less thoughtful integration implies he has stuck in his own travel photographs simply because Will included some in his book – anything Will can do, Hand can do too. Hand is keen to distinguish between his narrative and Will's (with the red border), but equally eager to show he is as capable as Will is. Theirs is a boyishly competitive friendship. Additionally, through the inclusion of these amateur photographs, Hand is 'proving' he went to these places too.

The only photograph to appear integrated into Hand's narrative, rather than 'stuck' to a full page, is this one that, it would seem, he has taken in New Zealand while writing his version of events:

"I'll wash up afterward," she said.
And she did, and I was there.



SUNDAY

Sonje has a great walk. It's slinky, in that her feet precede her

iv) Critical response

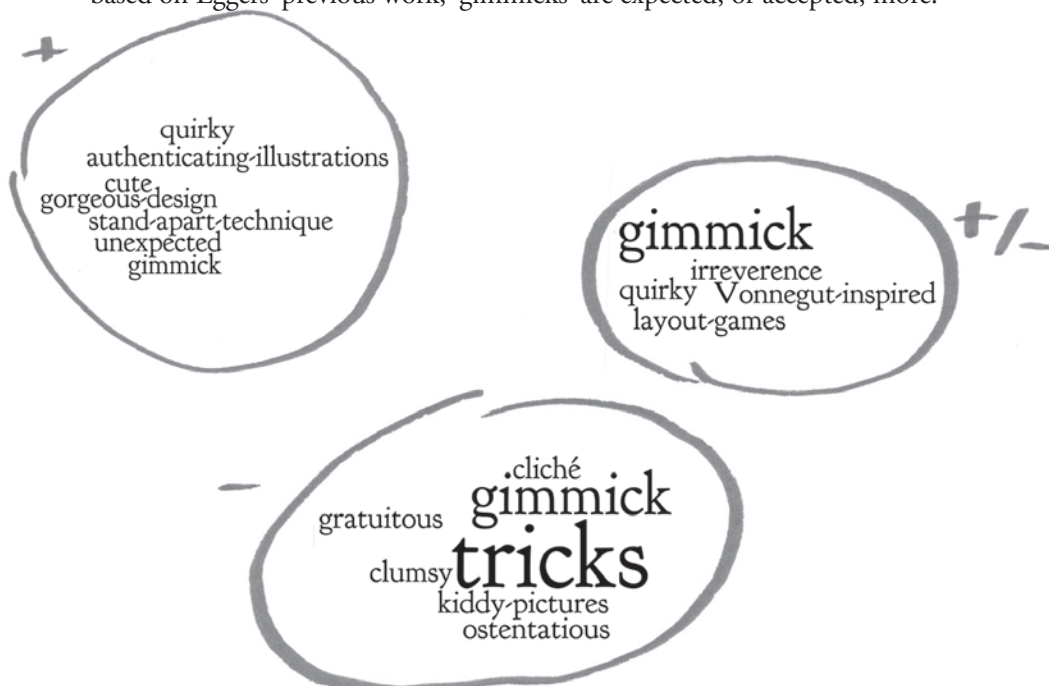
In the 'Reader's Guide' to *Velocity* on the Vintage (publisher) web site, one question addresses the graphic devices, and is listed first:

1. *You Shall Know Our Velocity* contains drawings, photographs, and reproductions of notes and maps that Will and Hand create in the story. How surprising is it to come upon such visual elements in a literary text? What do they add to the novel? In what ways do they challenge the conventions of the novel form?

The fact that publisher's reading guides are addressing graphic devices further demonstrates an acceptance of, and interest in, these additions to literary landscape. Yet, again, some critics dismiss the devices in this novel as gimmicks, as shown in these word clouds, from twenty five reviews of the novel:



Below, divided into positive, neutral and negative usage in the review, for the first time the word gimmick is used neutrally as often as it is used as a negative criticism. Perhaps, based on Eggers' previous work, 'gimmicks' are expected, or accepted, more?



Eggers tackles the criticism that these devices are gimmicks head-on in both his published works and epitextual writing. On the copyright page of *Heartbreaking Work*, he states:

The author wishes to reserve the right to use spaces like this, and to work within them, for no other reason than it entertains him and a small coterie of readers. It does not mean that anything ironic is happening. It does not mean that someone is being *pomo* or *meta* or *cute*. It simply means that someone is writing in small type, in a space usually devoted to copyright information, because doing so is fun... In general, not everything that is new is trendy; not everything that is different is gimmicky; not everything that is truthful must fall within well-known formal parameters. (2000)

A well-publicized (personal) email brawl with *New York Times* critic David Kirkpatrick (about *Heartbreaking Work*) is published on the McSweeney's site. In it, Eggers states: "The part about it not being some marketing ploy is important to me. Seems like any time anyone wants to do something different it's called a ploy—as if to punish anyone who wants to deviate from custom."²⁵

Eggers is playful with form – the McSweeney's publications demonstrate his interest in materiality, and both his memoir and this novel manipulate paratext in a way that is subversive, challenging publishing conventions. His use of graphic devices is also playful, confusing the distinction between author and character. Eggers is a high profile author, known largely from the way he presents himself in his memoir. Following this memoir with a novel narrated by a character who appears so similar to Eggers himself is a clever device, further blurring the lines between fiction and reality in Eggers' public identity.

²⁵ In response to Kirkpatrick's review, Eggers wrote a counter argument, and published all their correspondence on the McSweeney's website – over 10,000 words of it. The feud was so well covered in the media, some wondered if this was, in fact, a brilliant marketing strategy.



Reflections on the primary study

Although the novel has existed in virtually the same codex-form for three hundred odd years, stylistically, it has always been evolving. Wood states: “The novel is the great virtuoso of exceptionalism: it always wriggles out of the rules thrown around it.” (83) As social conditions shift, novelists find different ways in which to comment on society, and speculate about future or alternate worlds. Ours is now a world more dominated by visual images than ever before, and novelists are finding ways to comment on this world. In a 1923 manifesto, El Lissitzky called for a new kind of writer, capable of producing books to be read “through the eye not the ear.” Jonathan Safran Foer, Steven Hall and Dave Eggers are such writers. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Raw Shark Texts*, and *You Shall Know Our Velocity* break the graphic rules conventionally ‘thrown around’ the novel, presenting us with hybrid texts composed by both words and graphic devices.

The quotation from Doris Lessing that opens this chapter expresses the author’s frustration at not being able to articulate her experience through words. She thinks ‘bitterly’ that a graphic symbol might be better, but does not actually integrate such a symbol into her prose. These new hybrid novelists, on the other hand, do integrate graphic devices with written text, to describe and comment on a visually rich society. In doing so, they redraft the contract of expectations between author and readers of a novel, and expand the ways in which a novel can communicate.

In addition to integrating graphic devices in their novels, these three authors rethink the novel in other ways. Safran Foer has multiple narrators in different eras, which he also employed in his previous novel, and experiments with form in his essays and edited anthologies. Hall expands the site of the novel from the codex book into the virtual realm with hidden chapters, clues and interactive conversations. Eggers challenges the publishing industry by self publishing and releasing different editions, playing with the idea of having a ‘definitive’ experience of a novel. All three authors have some training in design or art – whether they create graphic devices themselves (Eggers and Hall) or art direct their creation (Safran Foer), these writers understand the potential for graphic elements to function as literary devices, and affect readers’ experience of a text. Looking back to the novels examined in the preliminary study in Chapter Two, many other hybrid novelists have similar art and design backgrounds – Plascencia, Pessl, Smith, Haddon, Self and Abbot produced the graphic devices themselves, and Danielewski and Rawle painstaking-

ingly typeset their entire novels. Although Eco, O’Conner, Castro and Sebald sourced most of their images, and Clarke commissioned the illustrations for *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, none included graphic devices by the suggestion of a publisher, as was the case with early illustrated novels or special illustrated editions of existing novels. All these writers demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the potential for graphic elements to function as literary devices in their novels, and have at least basic competence in producing hybrid documents – if they cannot actually produce the hybrid text, they can art direct a designer or image maker to do so. These hybrid novelists are all the ‘creators’ of the graphic devices in their novels, in that they conceived of them as integral components of the primary text.

In the introduction, I employ M.H. Abrams definition of a genre as a “set of constitutive conventions and codes, altering from age to age, but shared by a kind of implicit contract between writer and reader.” (Abrams 1985) James Wood suggests the success of a novel is based on how well the author introduces us to their fictional construct. Wood says: “I think novels tend to fail not when the characters are not vivid or deep enough, but when the novel in question has failed to teach us how to adapt to its conventions.” (93) Based on previous publications, Eggers and Safran Foer can assume readers will anticipate unconventional devices in their work. On the other hand, Hall appeared without a reputation as an unconventional writer, so crafted one through publicity and media outlets. However, all three introduce their graphic devices incrementally: Safran Foer with a photographic frontispiece; Hall in slowly revealing smaller, simpler organisms in the build-up to the Ludovician; and Eggers by running his first sentence on the cover and offering an early glimpse of the three tiny Bronco photographs, embedded in a line of type. In doing so, they teach us to adapt to unconventional graphic devices in their novels. By Wood’s definition, these are successful novels because the authors ‘teach us’ how to ‘read’ the unconventional devices.

Graphic experimentation in novels is not new. Avant-garde writers have been experimenting with and subverting conventions since the beginning of the genre, as Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) and Abbott’s *Flatland* (1884) demonstrate. However now these novels are not considered unusual enough to be sectioned off as experimental. These are mainstream publications. Over the course of my research, more hybrid novels have been published, and more attention is being paid to them in literary criticism and academia, by critics who support the integration of graphic devices and critics who dismiss them, as the word-cloud diagrams illustrate.

Although Safran Foer, Hall and Eggers all publicly defend their use of graphic devices as integral to their novels, they do not explain how these devices work. Aside from author-critics like Wood and Lodge, writers rarely unpick their literary devices for us – one rarely reads a writer’s explanation of how a metaphor or allusion ‘works’ in their novel. This is the role of the critic, not the author. Therefore, in this chapter, I offer critique of three hybrid novels, informed by insights revealed using the analytical tools developed in Chapter Four. The critique aims to illuminate ways in which the graphic devices ‘work’ – how they function as part of the primary text. It is the critique of a single reader; *an* interpretation, not *the* interpretation. Other critics, using the same analytical tools, may produce different critiques of these three novels. Again, I stress that the analytical tools are designed to reveal insights about graphic devices that the reader can translate into informed critique.

This chapter now concludes with reflections on the analytical tools developed through this thesis: the typology of devices; thumbnail schemas; word clouds/epitext analysis; and questionnaire.

Typology of devices

Grouping the graphic devices by type according to the typology developed in Chapter Two was useful for both the analysis of devices and discussion of that analysis. Discussing the devices according to graphic types was more efficient than discussing the devices chronologically. For example, the doorknob photographs in *Extremely Loud* are spread throughout the novel, but most effectively discussed as a set. Grouping graphic devices also allowed comparison between different iterations of similar devices. For example, by comparing Will’s silhouette and the silhouette of the tree in *Velocity*, it is clear that the first illustrative device is integral whereas the second one seems to be simply an illustration of the written text.

However, as discussed following the preliminary study of hybrid novels in Chapter Two, this typology is not definitive. The analysis of these three exemplar novels revealed two additional sub-types: *typo-graphics*, from *The Raw Shark Texts*, and *absent ephemera*, from *Velocity*. As more detailed analysis of hybrid novels is conducted, new breeds of graphic device are likely to emerge. Again, I offer the typology as a skeleton which requires fleshing out, rather than a definitive taxonomy of graphic devices.

Thumbnail schemas

The critique in this chapter demonstrates that the process of thumbnailing novels can reveal insights about the graphic devices within those novels. For example, while sketching the thumbnails for *Extremely Loud*, I noticed that the five similar photographs of door-knobs are all different images; the thumbnailing process revealed a new insight.

These thumbnail schemas were also invaluable when considering the novel as a whole text. I kept them on hand while analysing and critiquing the novels, to identify patterns, and to have an immediate visual reference for where graphic devices appeared. The thumbnail schema was a tool for my own analysis and critique.

In addition, the thumbnails are useful as a visualisation aid to communicate to others. Aside from giving a succinct visual synopsis of graphic devices in each novel – what type, how many, and where – the schema could be used to efficiently make specific arguments. For instance, explaining that the convention for presenting photographs in *Extremely Loud* is to place them within the text box, rather than full bleed, is more directly shown than told; the thumbnail schema is a visualisation tool for communicating critique.

Word Clouds

Like the thumbnail schemas, the word clouds function as a tool for revealing insights by – highlighting descriptive words and phrases used in reviews of the novels – and as a way of visually communicating this information in a succinct way.

These particular word clouds did not reveal any significant insights, but supported the insight that ‘gimmick’ and similar descriptors are frequent criticisms of the graphic devices in hybrid novels, revealed through the word clouds created in the preliminary study. For future analysis of hybrid novels, documenting how the descriptors used in reviews shifts over time, or in different kinds of publications, could be revealing.

Captioning

A final, but important reflection from this primary study relates to captioning. I describe the graphic devices in hybrid novels as ‘uncaptioned’, but I need to clarify what this means. Captions usually perform two functions – first, they attribute authenticity to an image by crediting an artist or acknowledging ownership by an archive or copyright holder, and second, they pin a written explanation to the image, ‘fixing’ its intended interpretation, as discussed in Chapter Two. To include such a caption in a novel would disrupt the verisimilitude the novelist works so carefully to create. Without attribution or

explanation, the authenticity of the graphic devices in novels is deliberately vague – the distinctions between author and character, between actual and fictional worlds, are blurred, extending the artifice of the novel.

Yet if we define a caption more loosely as the written text that relates, in some way, to an image, then the graphic devices in hybrid novels do have captions. To function as part of the primary text, graphic devices must be linked to narrative – sometimes in close proximity (in *Velocity*, graphic devices are often embedded within written passages as evidence, like the treasure map or Will’s silhouette) and sometimes more remotely (the scrapbook images in *Extremely Loud* are clustered together, isolated from the written passages they relate to). Regardless of proximity, graphic devices always link to some written description or idea in the novel. Reflecting on this, it strikes me as useful to define different kinds of captions. These considerations extend the questionnaire developed in Chapter Four, as part of the set of analytical tools.

An instructional caption or label: This type of caption reads like a scientific or textbooks caption. For instance, Hall’s captions for the clues he finds on the trail of Dr Fidorous, or the descriptive caption of the conceptual boat. If attribution is included in the caption, it is within the fictional world (which character created or included the graphic within the novel), rather than actual attribution (whether the author created or sourced the graphic).

A frame caption: When Eggers presents a photograph or piece of ephemera, he introduces it with a framing caption, such as “Here is the map:” (288), or “Here’s the logo, for what it’s worth, below right.” (42) The factual tone of these captions asks that we read these images as evidence, something the character is showing us: ‘see, here it is’. The ‘frame’ is made by the character or narrator directly acknowledging the presence of a graphic device – they present it to us like a picture, but do not provide attribution or explanation for how to interpret the image.

An in-text caption: A reference to the graphic device, or situation where the device came from, within the narrative that is not attached to or beside the image. Again, the scrapbook in *Extremely Loud* relies on this type of captioning. For example, the description of Oskar and Thomas looking at a picture of a tennis player in the newspaper appears fifty pages before the photograph of the tennis player. No explicit links are made between these two images, one written and one visual, but the image makes sense in relation to the

written passage that precedes it. Safran Foer trusts us to make the link, without specifically captioning it.

J. Hillis Miller discusses writer/illustrator Edward Gorey, who often uses captions that describe, but not explain, an image. Hillis Miller says: “The effect of such a picture with explanatory caption is strange. It shows that even verbal narratives are made of synchronic segments that are obscure when their causal links to before and after are broken.” (1994: 67) We have a sense that there is a narrative happening, but we are uncertain about what it is. Hillis Miller continues: “The power of a picture is to detach a moment from its temporary sequence and make it hang there in a perpetual non-present representational present, without past or future.” (ibid) In other words, an image can invite meditation, as I argued many of the images in the three novels discussed in this chapter do. These images are not only meditative, but memorable.

Throughout this thesis, I assert that analysis of graphic devices in isolation will not lead to rich critique. In the same way that the literary function of a metaphor is best understood in the context of the larger textual whole, a graphic device must be analysed in relationship to the written text, and within the context of the novel. As I have redefined the term here, captions in hybrid novels are not short, sharp sentences or paragraphs that pin images to the page with an intended interpretation. They are more loosely related passages or phrases, linked conceptually but not necessarily in spatial proximity. This looseness allows the graphic devices in hybrid novels to float like live butterflies, rather than those pinned to a specimen card.

In the same way that I anticipate my typology of graphic devices will evolve with further analysis of hybrid novels, I speculate that more ways to describe the relationships between written and graphic devices in hybrid novels will emerge as more of these novels are analysed and critiqued. Again, this thesis builds a foundation for explaining the function of graphic devices in hybrid novels, to be built upon by further studies.



As a Visual Communication Designer, I have taken the role of the critic and explained how, and how effectively, these graphic devices work. ‘Common readers’ – to borrow Wood’s term – may experience these devices similarly as I, but are less able to explain how this experience happened. I offer explanations for how the graphic devices affected my

reading experience, as a 'guide' for other readers to understand and critique their experience of the novels.

One of the joys of reading well written criticism is the writers' use of descriptive language. To assign a set of vocabulary to the critique of graphic devices limits the expressive potential of the critic. The reading guides of Jame Woods and David Lodge appealed to me not only for the quality of their analysis, but the quality of their expression. In fact, many reviews of Woods' book note that his descriptions are often as pleasurable to read as the texts he discusses. The analytic tools are designed to reveal insights about graphic devices, which the critic can then articulate in their own, unique manner.

Nevertheless, I cannot shake the feeling the analysis in this chapter is like repeating lines from a film in a poor imitation of the character's voice. What is lost in retelling, or explaining these graphic devices in language is the intimate experience with the narrative. The affective power of graphic devices comes from experiencing them in context, and that can never be described linguistically, in retrospect. I find myself, like Lessing, frustrated by my limited ability to discuss graphic devices in an appropriate manner. Art historian Michael Ann Holly states that writing about visual art is similar to viewing it:

"[it] can on occasion console, captivate, and enrapture. The act of trying to put into words, spoken or written, something that never promised the possibility of a translation can at rare moments blur the boundaries between author and work, enveloping the writer in a greater world of mutual understanding. Usually language gets in the way. The enchantment that transpires between beholder and work of art has no name because it resists linguistic appropriation." (Holly 2007)

I present this critique using visual quotations and examples of the hybrid texts as much as possible, while also considering the experience for the reader. Too many images can be overwhelming and cause the reader to skip over them, or dwell for too long, losing the thread of the argument. Likewise showing too much of the seductive prose on the pages of the novels can distract the reader, and change the tone of the critique I present. Writing hybrid criticism is a relatively new but exciting area to explore.



6.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS



THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS THESIS ESTABLISHES A DEMAND FOR CRITIQUE OF hybrid novels by those versed in word-image interplay, and suggests that Visual Communication Designers have such expertise. In response, this thesis critiques graphic devices in hybrid novels, from a designer's perspective. This conclusion first reviews the findings of the research: 'the curious eye' as way to describe the value of practitioner-research; criteria for identifying hybrid novels; a typology of graphic devices; a set of analytical tools; and a close reading of three hybrid novels, which acts as a 'reading guide' for other critics. Second, it recommends future implications, for both Design and Visual Studies. Finally, it discusses how this thesis argues in an appropriate form: it is itself a hybrid text.

Findings

The Good Eye of the practitioner, the Curious Eye of the practitioner-researcher

Coming to this research from practice, I spent a significant amount of time reading around and thinking through the muddy distinction between design practice and design research. This thesis proposes a distinction between the 'good eye' of the practitioner and the 'curious eye' of the practitioner-researcher. Both 'eyes' are critical, but to different ends. The practitioner's good eye is informed by tacit knowledge, developed across three domains: scholarship (pedagogical and self-initiated study), reflections on personal process, and professional experience. The good eye focuses on knowing how; it critically informs decisions in practice. Alternatively, the curious eye of the practitioner-researcher explicitly articulates the tacit knowledge of the good eye, in order to extend a discipline. The curious eye asks questions, researches and theorises. Through this thesis, I turn my practitioner's good eye into a researcher's curious eye. My understanding of practice deeply informs my approach to scholarship, both in the questions I ask and the analytical approaches I take.

The introduction quotes Rick Poyner asking, amid conversations about designerly thinking as a 'value adding' strategy for business: what else might design be? This thesis answers: Design might 'add value' to exploratory and discursive critique of hybrid texts. As producers of hybrid texts, designs can offer unique and valuable insights to inform the critique of such texts.

Criteria for identifying hybrid novels

Recognising confusion between hybrid novels and other hybrid literature, I establish three criterion to identify hybrid novels: the books must be novels, as opposed to other types of

literature; the graphic elements must be ‘written’ as part of the original manuscript; and the graphic elements must be integral to the text, rather than supplementary illustrations. These criteria define hybrid novels as unconventional, and differentiate them from other hybrid texts in which graphic elements are expected to appear. However, as the ‘fringe dweller’ examples – *Alice In Wonderland* and *The Motel Life* – from Chapter Two demonstrate, these criteria are not always clear-cut, and occasionally require deliberation by the reader. In particular, it is occasionally debatable whether a graphic element is an illustration of the text, or an integral device within the text. The analytical tools presented in Chapter Four guide readers toward informed decisions about whether books meet the criteria.

Typology of graphic devices

The preliminary study of hybrid novels led to a typology of graphic devices: photographs, illustrative elements, ephemera, diagrams, and unconventional typography. Identifying familiar graphic types provides a starting point for discussing graphic devices, and makes them less ‘alien’ to apprehensive readers. The questionnaire presented in Chapter Four guides readers toward informed critique of different graphic types.

Several devices that hover between graphic types are also described: ‘implied ephemera’, ‘absent ephemera’ and ‘typo-graphics’. The typology is presented as a ‘skeleton’ with the expectation that further research, by myself and other scholars, will generate additional graphic types to flesh it out.

A set of analytical tools for critiquing graphic devices in hybrid novels

Following W.J.T. Mitchell’s call for visual critique that is exploratory and discursive, I develop a set of analytical tools to reveal insights about graphic devices. These tools are not prescriptive; they allow multiple critiques of graphic devices to coexist, embracing the polysemic nature of images and hybrid texts. The tools are ‘practice-led’, developed through my design-erly understanding of word-image interplay, and strategies from design practice.

1) *Sketching thumbnail schemas*: This deconstructive exercise encourages ‘thinking through the hand’, a particular kind of critical meditation that encourages reflection on how graphic devices inhabit the page, and how they relate to each other in the context of the textual whole. This visualisation method is also a presentation aid.

2) *Questionnaire for graphic devices*: These questions provoke critical reflection on graphic devices by considering: graphic type; reproduction; creator and audience, both fictional and actual; originality; location; and repetition. I anticipate this questionnaire will be

extended as further critique of hybrid novels is conducted. It may also be expanded according to the needs of different audiences. A literary critic with limited art or design education may require additional explanation of the implications of technical reproduction (typographic grids, framing, bleed) or more basic vocabulary for describing graphic qualities.¹

3) *Reviewing epitexts*: This exercise seeks insights by analysing documents published around the novel such as author interviews and book reviews, highlighting adjectives and comparisons to other texts. A kind of content analysis, it requires the researcher/critic to consider the epitext being analysed, and develop ‘codes’ for the patterns of phrases and adjectives that emerge. Visualising this information in word or cloud maps is an effective presentation tool.

Close analysis of three hybrid novels, as a ‘reading guide’

Inspired by the reading guides of practitioner-critics David Lodge and James Wood, this thesis argues that hybrid texts benefit from analysis that asks a critic’s questions and offers a designer’s answers. Close analysis of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Raw Shark Texts*, and *You Shall Know Our Velocity* demonstrates that the designerly analytical tools developed through this thesis can inform critique of hybrid novels. I reiterate that this is *a* critique rather than *the* critique of these novels; it is a guide to demonstrate the effectiveness of the analytical tools, not a definitive ‘reading’ of the graphic devices in these novels.

Future implications

Implications for Design

This thesis demonstrates how a designer can contribute to scholarly knowledge, through *reflections on* and *articulation of* the design process. It is not a model for all scholarly practitioner-research, but an example that is situated within Visual Communications Design, specifically print design, and more specifically book design. I argue that more concrete examples of design research are required to fuel the ‘design research debate’; to effectively evaluate different approaches to design research, case studies are essential. I suggest that design research develop more designerly analytical tools to supplement the methods borrowed from other disciplines. In doing so, we avoid having our field defined by other disciplines, and stake further claim to ‘designerly ways of knowing’ as distinctive expertise.

I introduce Gérard Genette’s theory of paratext to describe devices that are supple-

¹ Anticipating readers of this thesis possess such knowledge and vocabulary, I have not discussed ‘basic’ terminology or technical descriptions.

mentary to a primary text, and act as ‘thresholds to interpretation’. For the purposes of this thesis, I expand Genette’s description of material, typographic and graphic devices from a designer’s perspective, renaming it the ‘articulate package’. More generally, the ‘articulate package’ is a useful way to describe what Visual Communication Designers do: the task of the designer is rarely to originate a primary text. Rather, designers mediate the reception of a text. I suggest that ‘articulate packaging’ is an effective way to discuss the value and function of design and warrants further development.

Implications for Visual Studies

Through the writing of authoritative figure W.J.T. Mitchell, Chapter Three introduces Visual Studies as an interdisciplinary field that calls for exploratory and discursive approaches to the study of images and hybrid texts. Visual Studies is a fertile field for Visual Communication Design to both harvest and sow ideas. I borrowed key ideas from Mitchell, and other authoritative visual scholars, to build a theoretical framework for this thesis. In return, I offer analytical tools and critique of hybrid novels that is useful to writers of hybrid texts, and those who read and critique them.

Alongside this research, I developed a series of lectures and a workshop (see Appendix D) targeted at writers interested in producing hybrid texts. The diversity of the participants at the workshops, and feedback from the lectures, confirms a current interest in hybrid texts and a demand for new pedagogical approaches to their analysis and critique. I suggest several ways design can further meet the demand for distinctive approaches critiquing hybrid texts:

a) Through public lectures and presentations. Design offers a unique position on word-image interplay that sits between conventional literary criticism and conventional art criticism. Yet, due to the relative newness of the field, other disciplines are often unaware that this expertise exists. The response to public lectures of this thesis was overwhelmingly positive, and often one lecture led to more lecturing opportunities.

b) Through workshops with writers interested in creating hybrid texts, and designers interested in collaborating with them. The workshop developed within this thesis focuses on photography and ephemera, but could easily be extended to include other types of graphic devices. In addition, workshops that encourage collaboration between writers and designers/image makers would be valuable. The workshops would also benefit from targeting specifically fiction or specifically non-fiction writers, as strategies for integrating graphic devices may differ.

c) ‘Reading guides’ for critiquing hybrid texts. Chapter Five is a template for

such a guide. To supplement the available reading guides from literary studies, such as those written by James Wood and David Lodge, design needs to produce books, or book sections, on ‘how design works’. These publications must be critically acute and widely accessible, as demanded by visual scholars.

Design rationale: writing in an appropriately hybrid form

As stated in the Introduction, the third aim of this thesis is to consider how design scholarship might most effectively be argued. Here, I present an argument about hybrid texts, as a hybrid text. I use the ‘language’ of my discipline to express scholarly research.

Graphic devices are integrated through the thesis such as the fish-fowl line-break dinkus:



‘fish nor fowl’, which proves problematic for critics with a primarily linguistic background: [It] is the text that is usually examined most closely, with commentary on the artwork brought in as an afterthought. What should be considered, it seems to me, is the interplay between the two art forms, which lies at the heart of why these works differ from any other. (Hammond & Hietzel 2004)

The way to question hybrid literature, then, is around the *interplay* between word and image. It is not a matter of asking ‘what do these images mean?’ but ‘how do these images function as part of the text?’ Hammond suggests close versus in both verbal and visual communication should come forward: “As our society gets more and more visually sophisticated, we need to seek out those who can understand, analyze, and translate for us that interplay.” (ibid)

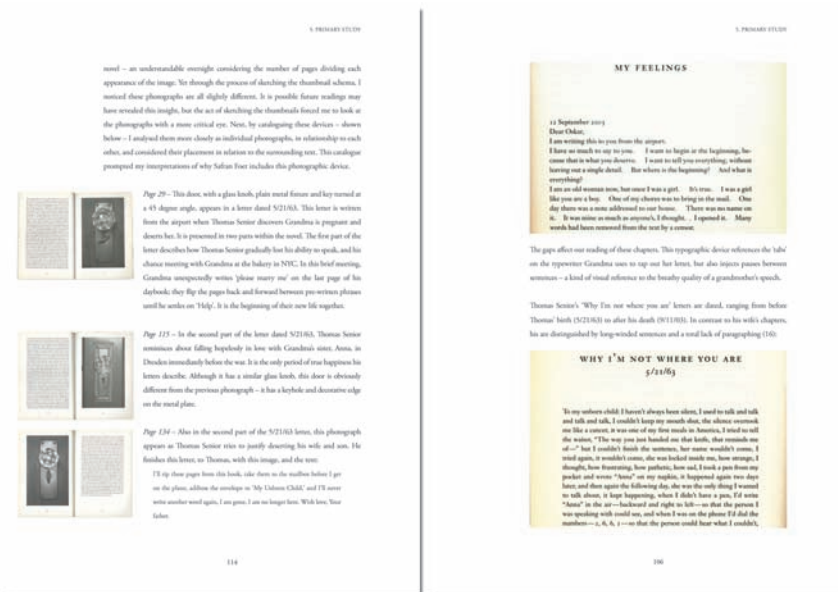
Understanding and analysing the interplay between word and image is fundamental to Visual Communication Design. Translating that understanding is more problematic. This thesis analyses an insufficiently explained literary phenomenon from a design perspective, and translates it to a broad audience.



Design is a relatively young practice, and younger still as a field of scholarly enquiry. As such, debates about what design research is, or could be, dominate much design scholarship. Helen

< Page 8 of this thesis introduces an illustrative element, a hybrid ‘fish-fowl’. The device is placed next to a quotation that calls for consideration of the *interplay* between words and images in hybrid texts. Below this passage, the device is used as a line-break dinkus. Throughout the rest of the thesis, this dinkus is a visual reminder that these hybrid novels – neither ‘fish nor fowl’ – are curious creatures that demand new analytical approaches.

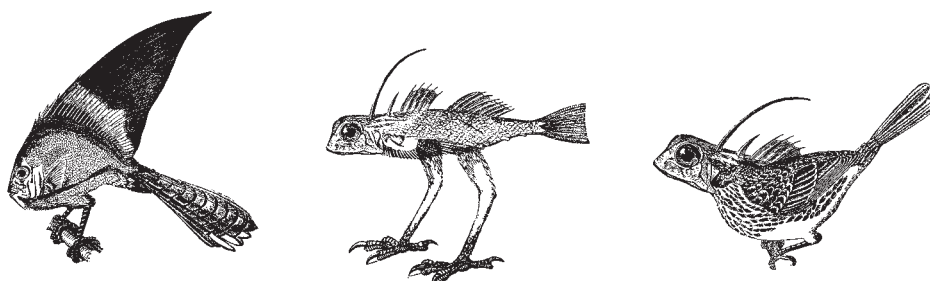
Chapter Five, in particular, demonstrates how graphic devices can be integral to the text, rather than illustrations of the text, as discussed in the reflective conclusion:



< Scans from the hybrid novels being discussed were reproduced alternatively as: small vignettes to show the graphic devices being discussed without distracting the reader with the written narrative; or at the size they appear in the novel, as visual quotations, giving the reader as close an approximation to the experience of reading the novel as possible.

Printing the ‘black and white’ pages in colour also gives a sense of materiality; the paper texture is reproduced, communicating the ‘feel’ of the novel, similar to the way well produced art criticism includes photographs that show the detail of brush strokes or the canvas.

As hybrid literature evolves, it will be interesting to see how design scholars produce research in languages most appropriate to the content. For so long, Design has borrowed from more established fields. Now, we find ourselves in a position to return the favour.



EPILOGUE:

In the early stages of this research, I was disappointed that hybrid novels did not appear to present new opportunities for design practitioners. Hybrid novelists are working in a designerly way, rather than collaborating with designers. However, ironically, through the research a new space has opened within my own practice. Allen&Unwin, a publisher I have worked with for seven years, began a graphic novel list in 2006. I was invited to speak to the editorial and marketing staff about graphic novels, and to design the ‘book packages’ for five books so far.

In addition to these graphic novels, several hybrid novels are in development. For an upcoming publication titled ‘Five Wounds’, I collaborate with writer Jonathan Walker and illustrator Dan Hallett, typesetting the novel to resemble an old Bible. I have begun collaborating with writers on several projects, such as the piece ‘Serious hair’ in *Trunk Volume One* and ‘A Most Generous Act’ in *Trunk Volume Two*. This shift in my practice was not a deeply conscious occurrence; until I began to consider what to do next, I did not recognise what I had established. I suspect I will realise how the research process has influenced my practice in more ways, over time.

Appendices



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Appendix A:

*Survey sent to readers, writers and critics,
and a list of hybrid novels, compiled from survey responses*

Email text:

Dear _____ ,

I am writing to you because I am fairly certain that you read novels. As part of my doctoral research, I am compiling a list of novels with images in them (photographs, drawings, diagrams, experimental typography). If you know of any novels with images reproduced on their pages, could you please send me the author and title, and other publishing information where possible (publisher, year, city).

I am not interested in (well I am, but not here):

Graphic novels, children's picture books, artists' books or illuminated manuscripts.

Examples of novels with images in them are:

Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (experimental typography, black/blank pages)

Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (photographs, typography)

Dave Egger's *You Shall Know Our Velocity* (photographs, graphic notation)

Any of Kurt Vonnegut's books with his weird little drawings

Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (unconventional typesetting)

Marisha Pessl's *Special Topics in Calamity Physics* (drawings)

Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (old comics and other ephemera)

There is also a list on my blog (www.zoesadokierski.blogspot.com) of titles I already know, running down right hand side of the blog.

Thank you, in advance, for your help.

Zoë Sadokierski

The letter, above, was emailed to two hundred and forty-five writers, critics, academics and readers. Seventy six responded. I found copies of as many of these novels as possible, through bookstores and libraries, and borrowing from personal collections. The following 'long list' of 102 hybrid novels is compiled from my own discoveries, the suggestions from the survey which I confirmed by sight, and those a publisher could confirm contained graphic devices. This list is by no means complete, but it offers proof that this is, in fact, a phenomenon worthy of further study. It is not set in Harvard (UTS) referencing style. The alternate formatting seems to me to be more practical for this list – the date is less relevant than author and title.

- Abbott, Edwin A. *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions; With Illustrations by the Author, A SQUARE*. Seely & Co, 1884. Scientific/mathematical diagrams throughout.
- Auster, Paul. *City of Glass*. Faber and Faber, 1985.
Maps and diagrams. Adapted into an experimental graphic novel by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli, *City of Glass: The Graphic Novel* in 2004 by Picador.
- Bantock, Nick. *Griffin and Sabine Trilogy*, Chronicle Books, 1991–3;
The Egyptian Jukebox, Viking, 1993;
The Venetian's Wife, Chronicle Books, 1996;
The Forgetting Room, Harper Collins, 1997;
The Museum at Purgatory, Harper Collins, 1999;
Alexandria, Chronicle Books, 2002;
The Morning Star, Chronicle Books, 2003.
Heavily illustrated novels, usually orrespondence between characters.
- Bennett, Ronan. *Zugzwang*. Bloomsbury, 2006.
Diagrams of a chessboard in different stages of play throughout the book. Originally published in weekly instalments in *The Observer*, with illustrations by Marc Quinn.
- Bester, Alfred. *The Demolished Man*. Shasta Publishers, 1953;
The Stars My Destination (Tiger! Tiger!). Sidgwick and Jackson, 1956.
Unconventional typography, represents characters thought patterns.
- Bolaño, Roberto. *The Savage Detectives*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007 (trans. Natasha Wimmer).
Drawings, graphic poems.
- Calvino, Italo. *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*. Harcourt Brace & Company, 1977 (1969)
Characters 'speak' to each other via tarot cards, which are reproduced in the text.
- Carey, Edward. *Alva & Irva: The Twins Who Saved a City*. Harcourt, 2003.
Photographs of a plasticine city the characters build.
- Castro, Brian. *Shanghai Dancing*. Giramondo Press, 2004.
Photographs, ephemera, family trees.
- Charters, David. *At Bonus Time, No One Can Hear You Scream*. 2004.
Photographs by Alice Rosenbaum.
- Clarke, Susanna. *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*. Bloomsbury, 2004;
The Ladies of Grace Adieu and Other Stories. Bloomsbury, 2006.
Victorian bookplate style illustrations scattered throughout.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Diary of a Bad Year*. Text Publishing, 2007.
Three stories run along the page.

- Coupland, Douglas. *Generation X: Tales for an accelerated culture*, St. Martin's Press, 1991;
Microserfs, Regan Books/Harper Collins, 1995;
J-Pod, Random House/Bloomsbury, 2006.
 Unconventional typography: emoticons, digital 'white noise', implied ephemera.
- Crichton, Michael. *The Lost World*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
 Typography and illustrations resemble scientific/ computer code. Increasingly complex chapter head drawings.
- Danielewski, Mark Z. *House of Leaves*. Pantheon Books, 2000;
Only Revolutions: A Novel, Pantheon Books, 2006.
 Unconventional typesetting.
- Drescher, Henrik. *Postal Séance*. Chronicle Books, 2004.
 Anthology of postcards and letters written to the dead.
- Dubosowski, Ursula. *The Red Shoe*. Allen & Unwin, 2006.
 Implied ephemera (newspaper clippings) and illustrated first chapter.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*. Harcourt, 2005.
 Colour and greyscale pop culture ephemera from the narrator's childhood.
- Eggers, Dave. *You Shall Know Our Velocity*. McSweeney's, 2002; Vintage, 2003; Penguin, 2004.
 Photographs, ephemera and diagrams.
- Erickson, Steven. *Our Ecstatic Days*. Simon & Schuster, 2005.
 Unconventional typesetting reminiscent of *House of Leaves*.
- Esquivel, Laura. *Malinche*. Washington Square Press, 2006.
 Illustrations (by Jordi Castells) interspersed throughout.
- Eugenides, Jeffrey. *Middlesex*. Bloomsbury, 2002.
 Pen drawing, of a sign for a hermaphrodite peepshow.
- Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. Jonathan Cape, 1929.
 One drawing of an eye pp. 264.
- Federman, Raymond. *Double or Nothing*. Swallow Press, 1971/Fiction Collective Two, 1991.
 Typesetting varies throughout.
- Fforde, Jasper. *Thursday Next* books – *The Eyre Affair*; *Lost in a Good Book*; *The Well of Lost Plots*; *Something Rotten* and *First Among Sequels*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2001–2007.
 Implied ephemera.
- Gessen, Keith. *All the Sad Young Literary Men*. Viking, 2008.
 Illustrations and photographs.

- Gruen, Sara. *Water for Elephants*. Algonquin, 2006.
Photographs.
- Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Jonathan Cape, 2003.
Diagrams, typeset in sans serif typeface.
- Hall, Steven. *The Raw Shark Texts*. Cannongate/Harper Collins, 2007.
Typographic shark, photographs, diagrams, implied ephemera.
- Hodgson, Barbara. *The Tattooed Map: A Novel*, Chronicle Books, 1995;
The Sensualist: An Illustrated Novel, Chronicle Books, 1998;
Hippolyte's Island: An Illustrated Novel, Chronicle Books, 2001;
The Lives of Shadows: An Illustrated Novel, Chronicle Books, 2004.
'Scrapbook in nature' – photographs, clippings, maps, drawings, floor plans, ephemera.
- Hooper, Chloe. *A Child's Book of True Crime*. Knopf/Random House, 2002.
Illustrated chapter openers in a children's book style.
- Johnson, BS. *The Unfortunates*. Secker & Warburg, 1969/Picador, 1999.
A 'book in a box' containing 27 unbound chapters – some single pages, some four or six page signatures. First and last chapters are marked, the other 25 are either current action or flashbacks depending on the order you read them in.
- Kidd, Chip. *The Learners*, Scribner, 2008.
Unconventional typesetting.
- Klimowski, Andrej. *Horace Dorlan*. Faber & Faber/Allen&Unwin, 2007.
Written text interspersed with surreal sections of comic style narrative.
- Larsen, Reif. *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet: The Lost Images*. Penguin Press, 2009.
Maps, marginalia, drawings and diagrams. Amazon.com features a media 'trailer' showing pages from the book, and a selection of 'lost images' – graphic devices Larsen cut out, annotations explaining why.
- Maso, Carole. *The Art Lover*. New Directions, 2006.
Photographs, newspaper clippings, ephemera.
- Mazzucco, Melanina G. *Vita: A Novel*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
Photographs throughout.
- Murakami, Haruki. *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Kodansha International, 1982;
Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World. Kodansha International, 1985.
In-text line drawings, illustrated chapter pages.
- O'Conner, Joseph. *Redemption Falls*. Harvill Secker, 2007.
Photographs, ephemera, implied ephemera.

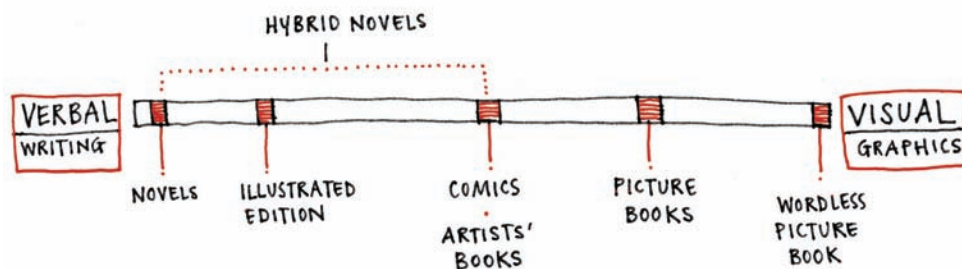
- Ondaatje, Michael. *Coming Through Slaughter*. House of Anansi, 1976.
Two photographs
- Picoult, Jodi. *The Tenth Circle*. Allen&Unwin, 2005.
Graphic novel sections as the ‘voice’ of one character.
- Perec, George. *Life, A Users’ Manual*. Hachette, 1978/1987 (trans. David Bellos).
Diagrams, drawings.
- Pessl, Marisha. *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*. Viking, 2006.
Line drawings.
- Plascencia, Salvador. *People of Paper*. McSweeney’s Books, 2005.
Unconventional typesetting, blacked out sections, drawings, die-cut.
- Pynchon, Thomas. *Crying of Lot 49*, J.B. Lippincott Co, 1966.
Drawing of the “muted post horn”.
- Rawle, Graham, *Women’s World*. Atlantic Books, 2005.
Entirely collaged from magazine text/images.
- Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*. Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1972.
Photographs and illustrations (sourced).
- Reuss, Frederick. *Mohr: A Novel*. Unbridled Books, 2006.
Forty-seven photographs
- Robbins, Tom. *Still Life With Woodpecker*. Bantam Books, 1980.
Drawings of ‘phases of the moon’ on the chapter pages.
- Robinson, Ray. *Electricity*. Picador, 2006.
Typography and layout reflect the protagonist’s epilepsy.
- Safran Foer, Jonathan. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Houghton Mifflin, 2005.
Photographs, ‘pen’ marks, unconventional typography, found images.
- Sebald, W.G. *The Emigrants*, Harvill Press, 1993;
The Rings of Saturn, Harvill Press, 1995;
Vertigo, Harvill Press, 1999;
Austerlitz, Random House, 2001.
Photographs and ephemera scattered throughout.
- Self, Will. *The Book Of Dave*. Viking/Penguin, 2006.
Maps in front and back (by Mark Rowson).

- Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabaret*. Scholastic, 2007.
Detailed pencil drawings – a young adult cross-over.
- Simon, Claude. *The Battle of Pharsalus*. Jonathan Cape, 1971 (1969) trans. Richard Howard.
Pictograms, sections in all caps, Greek letters and unconventional layout.
- Smith, Michael. *The Giro Playboy*. Faber and Faber, 2006.
Drawings.
- Smith, Zadie. *Autograph Man*. Penguin, 2004.
Drawings and diagrams.
- Steadman, Ralph. *Doodaaa–The Balletic Art of Gavin Twinge: A triography*. Bloomsbury, 2002.
Drawings and ephemera.
- Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Ann Ward; Dodsley; Becket & DeHondt, 1759-1767.
Unconventional typography, blank pages, black pages, marbled pages.
- Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Random House, 1972.
Ralph Steadman's illustrations the book.
- Tomasula, Seven & Farrell, Stephen. *Vas: An Opera in Flatland*. The University of Chicago Press, 2002.
Fully illustrated collaboration; diagrams, drawings, experimental typography.
- VanderMeer, Jeff. *City of Saints and Madmen*, Wildside Press, 2002.
Maps, illustrations, ephemera.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*. Delacorte Press, 1969;
Breakfast of Champions. Delacorte Press, 1973;
Slapstick (Lonesome No More!). Delacorte Press, 1976.
'Calligram' pen drawings.
- Welsh, Irvine. *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, W.W. Norton, 1995;
Filth, Vintage Press, 1998.
Typography represents someone coming in and out of a coma; typographic tapeworm takes over the page throughout the book.
- Weisberg, Joseph. *An Ordinary Spy*. Bloomsbury, 2007.
Blacked out words/sentences throughout the text.
- White, Trudy. *Table of Everything*. Allen & Unwin, 2000.
Ink drawings (she also produced the illustrations for *The Book Thief*).
- Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. Pam MacMillan/Random House, 2005.
Drawings (attributed to a character).

Appendix B:

Other hybrid literary types

This appendix presents a small diversion into types of literature that exist in the borderlands around hybrid novels: illuminated manuscripts, visual poetry, artists' books and graphic novels. This diversion is relevant for two reasons. First, these other types of literature were frequently recommended as examples of hybrid novels, despite clearly falling outside the criteria. The regularity of this confusion warrants explicitly articulating what hybrid novels are not. Second, because these other types of hybrid texts are more well-known than hybrid novels, it is worth considering how they are studied and discussed, in particular graphic novels. Examining these other types of hybrid texts informed my thinking about hybrid novels, particularly in the early stages of my research.



Illuminated Manuscripts

Mike Sharples¹ describes medieval manuscripts as an ‘infusion’ of words and pictures – scribes produced these hybrid documents at a time when word, image and materiality were still in harmony. A medieval writer or copyist considered paper stock, illustrations and visual composition an ‘indissoluble’ part of the text. (Sharples 1999: 130) Illustrative elements like decorative drop caps, borders and small vignettes – painstakingly hand painted in expensive inks and gold foils – were symbols of wealth and authority. In addition, illuminations served as mnemonic devices (memory aids) within long texts. Visual prompts remind the reader where they are in a text, similar to the way literary devices such as rhyming verse and alliteration prompted oral storytellers. (Ong 2002) By Diana Klemin’s definition of illustration, cited in Chapter Two, the purpose of illustration has changed little since the dawn of book culture: “a decoration or explanation that makes a text memorable and explicit.” (1970:17)

Illuminated manuscripts are mostly religious texts, occasionally non-fiction texts like historical documents, and rarely literary works such as versions of Virgil’s *Aeneid* and other long verse. The widespread practice of illumination had died-out by the time the novel emerged. The advent of

¹ Sharples is a Professor of Learning Sciences, and Educational Technology. Two chapters in his book *How We Write: writing as creative design* were thought-provoking reads in the context of this thesis: ‘Writing as Design’ and ‘Writing Images’.

printing rendered hand-scribing unnecessary, and only extraordinarily cherished texts were illuminated. Studies of illuminated manuscripts tend to focus on religious iconography, and rarely the interplay between word and image, although Elizabeth Chaplain recognises the function of the illustrations in the Book of Kells: “the images are not tied down to a single interpretation because they are not captioned. Instead they are open to multiple interpretations; or – to put this in mediæval terms – they manifest, indeed illuminate, the infinity of God’s word.” (2006: 43) James Bettley (2001) and David Bland (1969) discuss how the beauty and complexity of illuminated manuscripts greatly influenced later movements in book arts and visual poetry.

Book Arts and artists’ books

Materiality plays an important role in book arts and artists’ books. These books border on fetish objects – they are three-dimensional artworks as much as vessels for content. Numerous lists of links to international book arts centres, programs, and educational organizations have been compiled online. Two comprehensive sites are the Book Arts Web² – <www.philobiblon.com> and the Centre for Fine Print Arts, UK – <www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/artbkmks.htm>.

Artists’ books exist at the crossroads of several different disciplines; scholar and book artist Johanna Drucker describes artists’ books as a ‘zone of activity’ particular to the 20th Century that exist over and around other literary fields: “Artists’ books define a very specific zone of activity in terms of communication—one that has a relation to independent publishing, fine arts print making, and traditional book crafts, but which cannot be comfortably contained within the conceptual parameters of any of these fields.”

Moreover, in *Century of Artists’ Books*, Drucker argues artists’ books are the 20th Century art form par excellence, appearing alongside every major art and literary movement.³ Unlike novels, word-image interplay is a convention within artists’ book culture, and the materiality of the object is often as significant as the content it contains. Artists’ books are rarely long enough to be considered novels and are generally not produced for commercial publishing.

Visual Poetry

Literary scholar Michael Riffaterre suggests reading poetry is inherently different from reading prose: you read a poem once to *identify* the semiotic structure, and then again to *understand* the structure. You necessarily re-read poetry. Before reading a poem, the visual presentation – the shape of the poem on

² Maintained by Peter D. Verheyen, hosted by the Rare Book School, Charlottesville, VA, USA

³ Arguments about apostrophe placement aside, it is notoriously difficult to pin down a single, simple definition of the genre of artists’ books. In lieu of tackling this here, I pose two questions that illuminate the problem: what is *art* and what constitutes a *book*? For more detailed analysis of the problems with terminology, see Johanna Drucker’s prolific writing on the topic: 1994, 1995, 2005; and also Farman 2007 and Hubert & Hubert 1999.

the page – acts as a signpost to interpretation. As such, poets are often consciously experimental with form; unusual layout and graphic elements are, if not convention, at least not unexpected.⁴



Nick Keys, *New Babylon* Sydney, 2006



Derek Beaulieu, untitled (for Natalee and Jeremy)



William Blake, "The Tyger, 1794

Poetry enjoys a long tradition of illustration, such as the illuminated poetry of William Blake⁵ and Virginia Woolfe. It is apparent that these visual poems influenced Steven Hall's typographic shark, and perhaps Jonathan Safran Foer's playful use of space and pace.

Picture books:

In picture books, a story is narrated through parallel verbal and visual narrative strands,⁶ where images are not supplementary but compose a significant part of the content. Some scholars suggest 'picturebook' be written as one word because "the union of text and art that results in something beyond what each form separately contributes." (Driggs Wolfenbarger & Sipe 2007; Lewis 2001; Marantz 1977) This description aligns with my understanding of hybrid novels – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The complex interplay between verbal and visual in picture books is well documented. Aparna Gollapudi summarises three main types of interaction between written text and illustration in picture books: "Pictures can reinforce the content of the text by accurately 'illustrating' it; they can reconstruct the written narrative by focusing on aspects of the story other than those communicated by the

4 Johanna Drucker writes extensively on the materiality of the word in poetry, see *The Visible Word* (Drucker 1994), *Figuring the Word* (Drucker 1998). Jerome McGann, a literature professor with interests in media and cultural studies, collaborates with Drucker to write around materiality and textuality, and also writes on visual poetry (McGann 1993). Willard Bohn (Bohn 1993) writes on visual poetry and the cross over into zones like artists' books, as Drucker does.

5 W.J.T. Mitchell wrote his doctoral thesis on the visual poetry of William Blake.

6 Some picture books can be entirely wordless. These wordless books are not necessarily more simplistic narratives – Gregory Roger's children's book *The Boy, the Bear, the Baron, the Bard* (Allen&Unwin, 2005) and Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (Lothian, 2007) are two examples of highly sophisticated wordless picture books. Tan's book won the NSW Premier's literary prize in 2007, an accolade usually awarded to a novel or other work of adult fiction. Wordless woodblock novels by artist such as Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward and Eric Drooker are sophisticated narratives for older readers.

words; they can even tell a different story altogether.” (2004:112) These second two functions are worth considering in relation to hybrid novels. Graphic devices could amplify different aspects of the story or to contradict the story in some way.

In an article investigating the well-known form of picture books as a ‘route into sophisticated polysemic reading’ for new media texts, M. Mackey and J.K. McClay (2000) describe picture books as ‘still’. Every time you open a book the words and pictures will be in the same place. However, they recognise that each reading of those words and pictures is potentially unique:

[T]here is always room for the reader’s attention to move between words and pictures in a different way each time, so that the reader constructs fluid and plural possibilities out of what seems at first glance to be a singular text. The page is still, a fixed point of reference, yet the polysemy of the storytelling systems opens up new spaces. (191-2)

This notion reiterates that hybrid texts open new spaces with the potential for multiple readings to coexist, and echoes Mitchell’s description of a ‘third space’ where word and image combine.

There is also a noteworthy trend in picture books created for grown-up readers. (See Webb 2003; Davies 2006) These books differ from children’s books only in the sophistication of the written narrative, and sometimes the explicit nature of the illustration. Often shelved as ‘gift books’.



Left, two pages from Nick Bantock’s *The Venetian’s Wife* (1996) and right, an illustration from Audrey Niffenegger’s *The Three Incestuous Sisters* (2005).

The fact that these books sell indicates the existence of an adult readership receptive toward hybrid literature.

eBooks/hypertext publications:

eBooks are generally digital versions of existing books, designed to be viewed on devices such as Amazon’s Kindle or Sony’s Bookeen. New technologies, such as Apple’s iPad, allow for eBooks to be more experimental in content – better image quality and colour display allow for the inclusion of

more visual material – as well as dynamic compositions – they can shift in response to user interaction. This thesis chooses not to include analysis of eBooks and hypertexts because it specifically focuses on printed novels. However, this area is a rich territory for future study.

Graphic Novels

Graphic novels are worth discussing in some detail because they illuminate two issues that are relevant to hybrid novels: the issue of credibility with the ‘literary elite’, and a different kind of reader/reading.

A suitable label – establishing credibility in the literary domain

Acclaimed writer/illustrator Art Spiegelman offers this simple definition of a graphic novel: “a comic book that needs a bookmark.” (Witek 2004) By this definition the difference between ‘comics’ and ‘graphic novels’ seems fairly insignificant. On a material level, comics are shorter and stapled like a magazine, whereas graphic novels are longer and bound like a book. In terms of content, a comic depicts an episode of an ongoing story featuring consistent characters, whereas a graphic novel presents a more complete narrative – it tends to be one-off, or an anthology that encompasses an era of a particular story. As forms, one is thicker and glued while the other thinner and stapled. As narrative styles, the terms ‘comic’ and ‘graphic novel’ are virtually interchangeable.

Will Eisner originated the term ‘graphic novel’ in the 1970s, while attempting to shift his longer works out of comic shops and into bookstores. (Hatfield 2005: 29) By the mid-1980s the ‘new genre’ was widely accepted, with *Maus* (Art Spiegelman 1985), *The Dark Knight Returns* (Frank Miller 1986) and *Watchmen* (Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons 1987) commonly cited as forerunners, but equally important work by comic artists such as Lynda Barry, Dave Sim, Chester Brown, Dan Clowes and Gilbert and Jaime Herandez.

Yet many artists reject the term graphic novel. The label is easily exposed as ineffectual: publications labelled graphic novels are often neither graphic (in terms of content or visual style), nor novels (they may be memoir, biography, or historical narratives).⁷ However, objections from artists are often directed less at the logic of the term and more at the implications of creating a term that distances these works from comics. It is claimed the label ‘graphic novel’ intends to boost the cultural credibility (and therefore mass-market sales) of what has traditionally been considered a ‘low brow’ narrative form for children and the illiterate. Career comic reviewer Andrew D. Arnold elaborates: “Comic artists, regardless of their subject matter, have traditionally hovered in the artistic hierarchy somewhere above pornographers but below the children’s book authors.” (Arnold

⁷ The fact that many of these books are not novels is worth noting, as the criteria determining exemplar hybrid novels excludes them from my study.

2007: 15) Among a host of well-respected reviewers, writer/artists and cultural critics whose essays form the special issue of *World Literature Today*, Arnold recognises that this cultural elitism is shifting: “There are more comic poets today than at any time before, thanks to the comic medium’s explosive growth in the last five years. Like traditional poets who work at the cutting edge of the English language, these artists create the pathways that others will follow.” However the sense that the label ‘graphic novel’ has been tacked on to boost commercial interest in the medium is still a point of contention for many comic artists.

Initially, I anticipated conceiving a label that would more flamboyantly distinguish between ‘regular’ and ‘hybrid’ novels. Now, it seems that originating a new label for hybrid novels would merely be ‘othering’ them for the sake of claiming new territory. My interest is not in explaining these hybrid novels as a new literary genre or type, but shift in a known genre, in response to a more visual culture.

Alternate reading

Charles Hatfield’s book *Alternative Comics* is based on a noteworthy claim – that comic art is a form of writing, and therefore comic interpretation is a type of ‘active reading’. This claim rejects the comparison between comics and film, based on the idea that comics require more active participation by the reader than the ‘passive’ viewing of film: “Comics, in recent criticism, are not mere visual displays that encourage inert spectatorship but rather texts that require a reader’s active engagement and collaboration in making meaning.” (2005: 33)⁸ Hatfield describes how early scholarship of the medium suggests either that comics are an effective aid to literacy – a kind of stepping stone via an ‘easier’ form of reading – or else comics are obstacles to literacy because they encouraged ‘lazy’ act of ‘picture reading’, which some alarmists claim lead to reading disorders. What both perspectives neglect is that comics are not interchangeable with conventional reading. (For more detailed discussion see Hatfield: 33-36; Carrier 2001).

Perhaps the hesitance to accept graphic novels into the literary fold is simply an uncertainty of how to read them. Scott McCloud’s handbook *Understanding Comics* presents a well established set of narrative conventions show/tell us how to read comics – frames and gutters, speech bubbles, soundtrack text. You have to learn how to read the language of a graphic novel before you can appreciate one. This is not an easier form of reading because it has pictures, like a children’s book, it is a different way of reading. You need to read and look simultaneously, a technique especially difficult for those accustomed to reading quickly. The sparseness of written language requires the reader to interpret much of the narrative through images –not dissimilar to ‘reading’ life: by inter-

⁸ Though Hatfield recognises the problems with describing film viewing as passive, he expands his argument to distinguish between the mechanically paced viewing of a film and the static images presented in juxtaposition with each other that read more like writing.

preting environments, gestures, body language and facial expression. ‘Graphic novel’ is more than a format; it is a unique way of narrating where word and image are integrated and inseparable.

Internationally, French *bandes dessinées* and Japanese *manga* have long been accepted literature for adults.⁹ Considering hybrid texts such as graphic novels inferior to written literature seems to be a particularly Western publishing judgement. However, at the moment it is worth noting that graphic novels are experiencing a cultural elevation. Literally hundreds of contemporary articles from librarians and educators advocate the educational value of graphic novels and offer lists of appropriate works for different age groups, from children to adults. Graphic novels are even being recognised in literary circles: Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and Chris Ware’s *Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid in the World* won the Guardian’s First Novel Award in 2001. *New York Times* reviewer Charles McGrath suggests graphic novels are: “what novels used to be—an accessible, vernacular form with mass appeal.” (McGrath 2004)

Reading a hybrid text, composed by *word and image*, is an entirely different activity to reading words alone. Hatfield refers to comics as “an art of tensions” and elaborates: “we continue to distinguish between the function of words and the function of images, despite the fact that comics continually work to destabilize this very distinction. This tension between codes is fundamental to the art form.” (37) What is important to understand is that the *tension*, or the *interplay*, is central to the communication. Rather than interpreting images in isolation, comics require us to ‘read’ them as part of the primary text. Academic David Carrier claims philosophers and art historians have insufficiently appreciated the ingenuity of comics as a narrative form, with distinct and innovative narrative strategies. *The Aesthetics of Comics* is Carrier’s contribution to the field, stating: “a popular art form deserves serious philosophical attention.”

Eddie Campbell argues that analysing the way we read comics helps to understand new kinds of hybrid texts: “the strategies that have been devised for long-range pictorial reading will contribute significantly to an emerging new literature of our times in which word, picture and typography interact meaningfully and which is in tune with the complexity of modern life with its babble of signs and symbols and stimuli.” (Campbell 2007:13) Campbell makes an interesting point here; that the ‘new literature of our times’ will be in tune with modern life. This thesis argues that in order to tell stories after the ‘pictorial turn’, visual elements could best evoke and describe those visual stimuli.

For a detailed account of the rise of the graphic novel, see my essay ‘Word and Image in Contemporary Fiction’ in *Heat 15: Luminous gerberas*, 2007.

9 For a description of the subtle differences between these forms, see Couch 2000.

Appendix C: *Sundays – thinking through making*

This appendix reports on a design project that informed my thinking about appropriate language for critiquing hybrid texts. The project involved making three books that experiment with integrating different types of graphic devices into a written text, then presenting these books in a gallery space. This project was conducted alongside the preliminary study of hybrid novels, discussed in Chapter Two. For this reason, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between insights that emerged through that preliminary study and this design activity; the reflective process was cyclical.

The impetus for this project was the regularity with which other scholars, particularly from the social sciences, expressed surprise that I was not using existing semiotic taxonomies of word-image relationships in my research. Academic studies of hybrid texts – particularly websites, newspapers, advertising and textbooks – have produced a range of taxonomies attempting to describe verbal-visual interplay in non-fiction documents. Many of these ‘image-text’ taxonomies are based on systemic-functional linguistic and semiotic systems, which generally describe images as expanding on the written text (elaborating, extending or enhancing) or projecting additional information to support the written text. See: Kong 2006; Marsh & White 2003; Martinec & Salway 2005; Varga 1989. These analytical models are applied to non-fiction texts in which images are expected to appear, and behave according to known conventions. I argue that graphic images are not expected to appear on the pages of novels, and that writers are employing these images in unconventional, and unexpected ways. Therefore, these taxonomies seemed inappropriate for my research. However, due to the persistence of the surprise, I tested their usefulness through design practice.

This project is a process of thinking through making. Through reflecting on my practice, I tested the usefulness of the vocabulary and taxonomies offered by existing social science studies. In addition, I considered graphic devices from the perspective of a creator, to reflect upon how these devices are used, and why: What type of device is appropriate for different kinds of content? How could graphic devices do more than support or illustrate in a paratextual capacity?

The exhibition gave me a deadline to work to, the anticipation of public scrutiny encouraged a high level of ‘finish’, and it provided a way to generate dialogue, test language and receive feedback. I consider the insights revealed through the process of designing the work research, more than the exhibition itself.

The following pages are reproductions of explanatory posters, hung on the walls of the gallery space.



This exhibition forms part of my doctoral research through the School of Design at UTS. My research investigates an emerging literary phenomenon: the integration of typo/graphic elements in prose-fiction (*novels with pictures in them*). This is of interest to Visual Communication Design because it reveals writers working in a 'designerly' way: writers are borrowing rhetorical techniques from the graphic designer's toolbox (*writers are integrating things like photographs, illustrations, and experimental typography into their narratives*).

Practice led / based research:

My research is **practice-led**. While working as a book designer, I noticed novels appearing with unexpected elements like drawings, photographs and experimental typesetting **integrated** in the written text



JPod
Douglas Coupland



House of Leaves
Douglas Coupland



The Motel Life
Willy Vlautin



Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close
Jonathan Safran Foer

but could find little written about this phenomenon – an issue identified in **practice led** to my research topic. Originally, I asked: *Could this phenomenon open new spaces in practice for designers to engage in content origination rather than content presentation?*

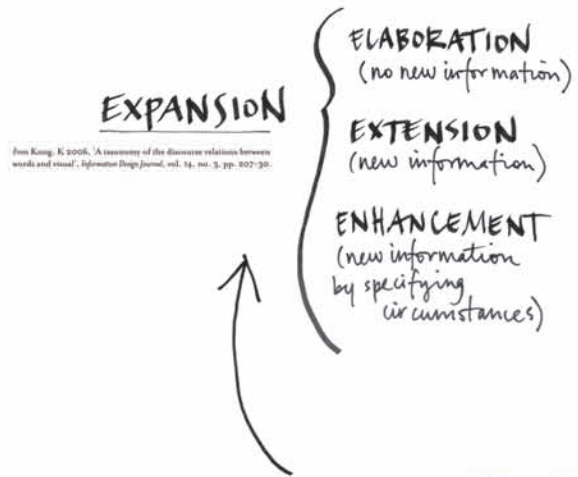
I spent the better (*or worst*) part of a year grappling with several taxonomies of word-image relationships. To determine whether these taxonomies are useful for my research, I decided to investigate through practice. What **insights** about a phenomenon could be revealed by designing for/within that phenomenon (*through critical reflection and articulation of the design process*)?

Image is a problematic term for this research: in brief, in **literary discourse**, images are mental representations, imagery conjured in the mind of the reader as they read the written text, whereas in **design discourse**, images are physical visual representations, produced on a surface (paper, screen, object, etc). I have yet to find a more suitable term.

This exhibition showcases some of that investigation. It is a **practice-based** research method; a way of **thinking through making**.

Questions driving this project:

- > When could design elements become **content** rather than **packaging**?
When are typo/graphic elements *inter* rather than *para* textual ... when are they literary devices rather than supplementary illustrations?
- > What are the potentials for typo/graphic elements to **expand** a written text?
To alter **what** is being communicated (*meaning*) or **how** it is communicated (*experience*)?



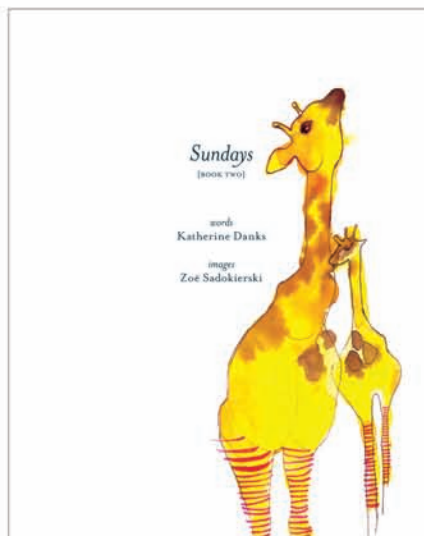
In this exhibition,

a single short story {*Sundays* by Katherine Danks} is **expanded** using three different **typo/graphic techniques (modes)**:

1. typography



2. illustration



3. photography



The three separate versions of *Sundays* are presented as individual books. Viewers are invited to sit and read each book, then reflect on how the typographic, the illustrative and the photographic elements in each version affected their reading.

How do these different typo/graphic elements affect the **meaning** of the text? The reading **experience**?



Design process:

Design concept (strategy):

Concept before technique: decide **what** you want to say (*concept*) then consider **how** you want to say it (*technique/mode of expression*). What do I, the designer, want to contribute to this particular text? What is the **most effective** way to do so? When is design self indulgent (*leaving my mark as the designer – closing the reader's options*) and when does/could design expand the written text (*combination of word and image open options for the reader to engage with the text in a new way*)?

<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - family/neighbours - community - small town (v. Big Smoke) depression? * What's the difference between delusion + fantasy? 	<p>Characters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEROINE DAD BROTHER BILL R. STAKE MAX 2 SHERIFF DEPUTY 	<p>Images</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> giraffe (album) petrol station diary text/forms wheel fat woman dancing CIRCUS POSTERS?
---	---	---

Q: Where's Mum?
Is Heroine happy?
↳ tragedy or comedy?

↳ NARRATIVE SHIFT
between 1st + 3rd
(omniscient narrator + protagonist)

1. Where's Mum? Why is she never mentioned – Heroine and her Dad sit around looking at photo albums of giraffes, not family albums. Did she leave or die?
2. In the final edit, this line was added by the writer: "It was with perhaps the same speed that Heroine's hopes rose for endless Sundays that laughter about her campaign grew, even Heroine's dad and Brother Bill had a little chuckle about it." My initial reading of the text was as a whimsical fable. This addition changed my reading entirely – Heroine suddenly became a silly girl with an unrealistic fantasy (is she delusional or just unhappy?)

How can I suggest/ask these things through design?

Format (articulation of process and presentation of artefacts):

Process: design journal (brainstorm concepts before visualising) includes a section for reflections on the design process as I work. **Reflective practice** – articulate motivations as I work. Revisit these reflections after producing final design artefacts. *What did I intend to achieve? Did I achieve what I intended? Were there surprises? What changed during the design process?*

Artefacts: 3 separate books so the different techniques can be considered independently (*does/could mode affect communication?*). Format chosen based on a standard book size (demi); ultimately aim to package this as one book, including annotated process – working within professional parameters.

counting system to do with 7s? every 7th page blacked out?

or just pg #

trying to count

overlap typeface, size + distortion?

how do you show overheard conversation? Show 'character' of those 'speaking'?

Reflection: seem to be doing 2 things – distinguishing between diff narrative voices (clarifying) and adding another layer of 'narrative' either thru illustration or ideas like numbering system or black 7th page (elaborating)?

SIZE based on a standard?

CUT B-FORMAT? too small in hand

148

120

annotation

(look at Tschichold's pg. construction?)

2:3

DEMI 140 x 208 mm

[book] 195

[annotation] 33

too tight?

USE WIDE MARGINS, CAN CUT INTO LATER.

20

21

28

30

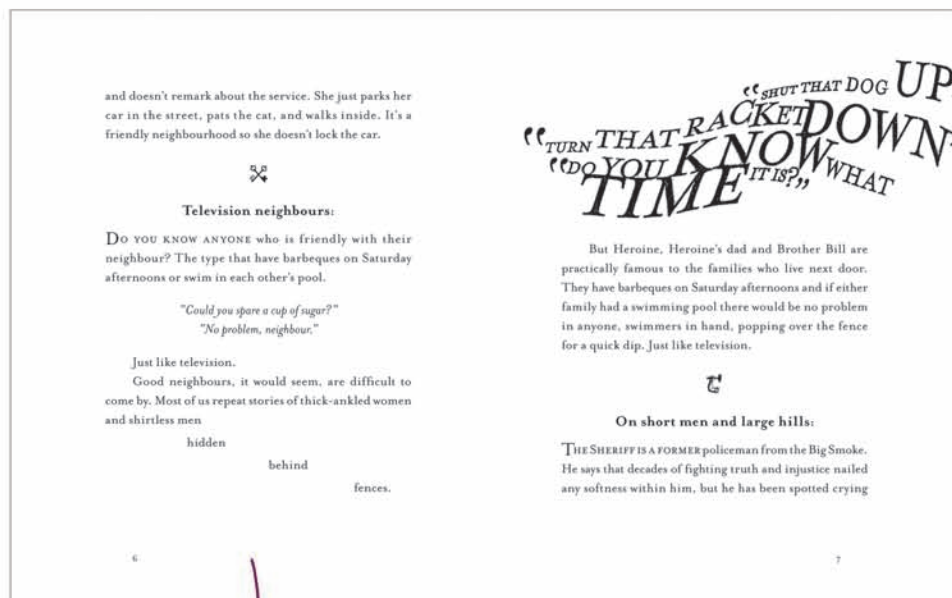
folio 13mm ↑

8mm indent

I. typographic

I had difficulty conceptualizing ways to add **new information (extension)** typographically. Ways to **enhance** or **elaborate** the written text were more obvious – **elaborating** tone of voice or volume (size, texture) and **enhancing** pace (spacing, composition).

Perhaps visual allusions could be considered **extension** – the written text is extended by evoking a more complete mental image than words alone?



extend

Visual allusion: using spacing to **extend** the idea of neighbours peeking through fence railings.

"SHUT THAT DOG UP,"
"TURN THAT RACKET DOWN,"
"DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"

elaborate →

Tone of voice: I wanted this text to 'sound' aggressive – as a visual juxtaposition to the 'polite' italics opposite. I designed it digitally, then roughed it up on the photocopier. Texture, size and spacing **evoked** aggressive volume and tone of voice.

"SHUT THAT DOG UP,"
"TURN THAT RACKET DOWN,"
"DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"

Heroine, Heroine's dad and Brother Bill are to the families who live next door. Saturday afternoons and if ei- pool there would be no -nning over

in the movie theatre on several occasions. No one really knows why he came to Heroine's town – which hasn't experienced crime in years – but there have been many jokes about why the short man chose to build his house on the large hill.

/

On that sinking Sunday afternoon feeling (PART ONE):

FOLLOW HEROINE AS SHE WALKS upstairs and down the hall of her home. Sit with the cat on her bed as she watches sunset's spidery fingers weave through the trees. She thinks she misses the sun as it sinks.

See her standing by the window, rehashing the past week in her mind. Seven days of stolen glances, bank balances and missed trains are mentally filed and sorted as she looks for patterns and closure. With her toes curling on the tiles, she analyses each loss and each win until their meanings are impotent and her mind is still.

...

8

→ enhance

Pace: using space/composition (awkward gaps in paragraph, three blank pages) to **enhance** the idea of Heroine drifting into Sunday afternoon depression. **Emphasis by omission:** the reader is forced to pause and reflect as Heroine does, the blank pages interrupt (affect) the reading experience. **Evoke** loneliness/solitude/ silence.

On the mysterious petition taped to the telegraph pole in town:

**MONDAY HATERS
U★N★I★T★E!**

Do you loathe the first day of the week? Does it make you feel grumpy on Sunday afternoons? We have a solution. Sign the petition below and have everyday but Sunday outlawed! Never get that 'Sunday afternoon feeling' again.

**JOIN THE
SUNDAY SUPPORTERS
★ FESTIVAL ★**

on the third weekend in August when we will petition the Sheriff to make everyday Sunday

For more information call
Heroine on 1800-SUNDAY

16

On random acts of beauty (PART ONE):

HIS FINGERS HAD BLED before R Starr earned \$10 from busking outside Blue's Cafe. It was twilight – that most promising time of day – but most people had already left for home and Blue was closing early. Another couple of songs, he thought, as 20 cents chinked into his guitar case.

*“Elvis, play some
Elvis for us, love.”*

his enormous benefactor said, as her chubby arms almost swallowed her male companion. He tried to remember the cords as the pair flicked their shoes off on to the footpath.

17

→ **Implied ephemera:** resembles the 'actual' pole poster. **Elaborate** using visual "evidence" (verisimilitude)?

R. Starr interrupted the shoeless dancers on the grass. He was a little upset that he had to break his set with formalities but what's-her-name looked like she was in a hurry. "The chief of the Sunday Supporters club Ms.

ah,"

he quickly looked at his schedule.

"Heroine would like to say a few words."

The spotlight followed Heroine towards the microphone as the crowd stopped and leaned on one another, huffing and puffing. "More than 150 signatures," she said to a smattering of applause, while those at the back resumed dancing to an imaginary beat. "Thank you for your support, the Sunday Supporters Club would now like to officially present the petition to the Sheriff," she said, holding up the petition for effect. Then, with more grandeur than perhaps was need, she added:

28

29

↑ elaborate

Tone of voice: enhance or elaborate the sense of movement, evoke the sing-song voice of the fat dancer. Characterisation?

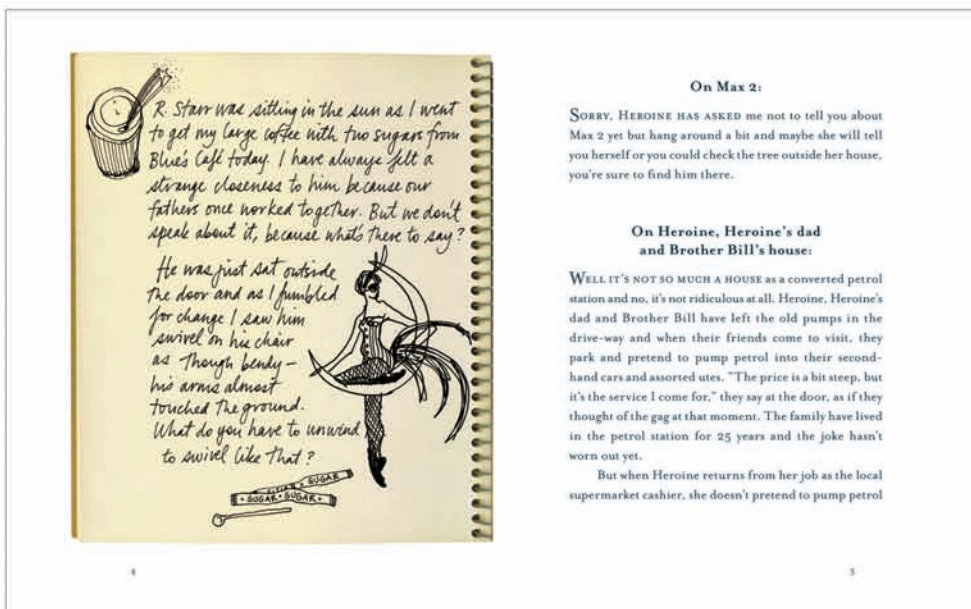
← **Tone of voice: elaborate** Heroine's overly grandiose statement. Dramatisation?



2. illustrative

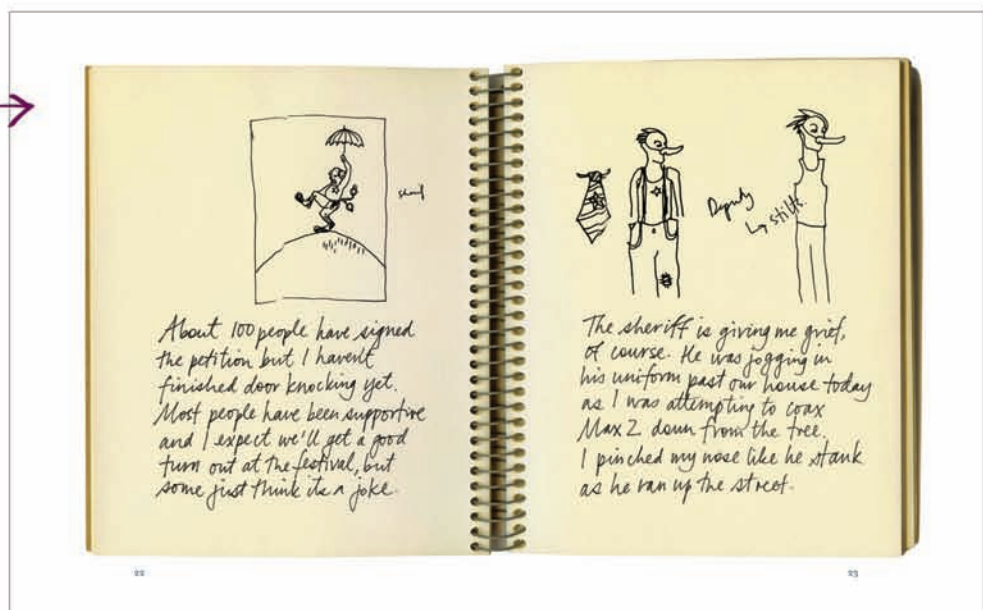
Although it was tempting to illustrate this version like a picture book with full colour images throughout, this would alter the **narrative form** – from a piece of prose-fiction with some typo/graphic devices to an illustrated book. I am interested in the potential for typo/graphic elements to be used as **literary devices** within written prose, not as supplementary illustrations. This distinction is subtle, but important.

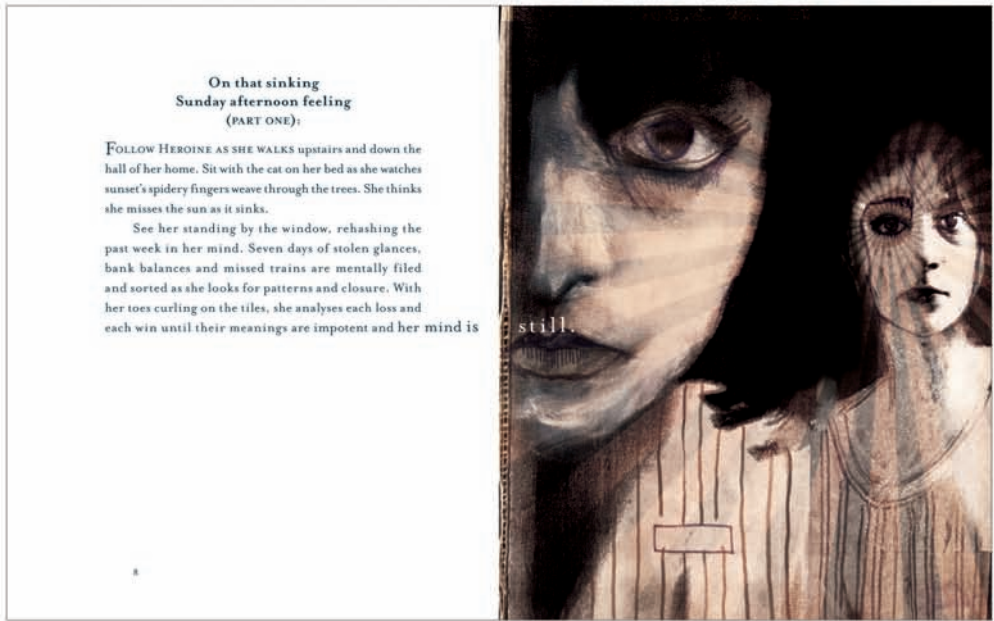
To **extend** the juxtaposition between Heroine's reality (*she lives with her father, works in a supermarket, has a stalker and is depressed on Sunday afternoons*) and her fantasy (*a world where every day is Sunday so she never gets heavy hearted at the approach of Monday morning*): **extension** of the written text by suggesting more information (speculating further?) about her reality versus her fantasy world.



elaborate →

Characterisation: Heroine's diary written in 'her' hand. Sketches of carnival/circus characters as part of her fantasy life, introduction to illustrative device that follows...





**On that sinking
Sunday afternoon feeling
(PART ONE):**

FOLLOW HEROINE AS SHE WALKS upstairs and down the hall of her home. Sit with the cat on her bed as she watches sunset's spidery fingers weave through the trees. She thinks she misses the sun as it sinks.
See her standing by the window, rehashing the past week in her mind. Seven days of stolen glances, bank balances and missed trains are mentally filed and sorted as she looks for patterns and closure. With her toes curling on the tiles, she analyses each loss and each win until their meanings are impotent and her mind is



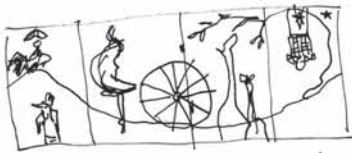
B+W →

extend

Visual allusion:
adding visual information to **extend** the idea that Heroine's fantasy is frivolous in comparison to her reality.

As her "mind is still", the reader moves through her eye from reality (dark, moody, sparse colour palette – realistic figures)

... to her imagined world
(vibrant, hyper coloured,
fantastical imagery)...



On urgent, bossy Monday:

YOU WAKE AND SLOWLY bend into Sunday, where coffee from the corner store delights and newsprint from the front page decorates your elbows. And then, is it that time already? Monday knocks like an impatient aunt. Its echo straightens your smile as your mind trips forward. Can you feel it? Knock, knock, it's here already.

**On that sinking Sunday
afternoon feeling
(PART TWO):**

HEROINE SPENT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS with her family because she felt protected when they were within shouting distance. After all, she thought, who could hurt her when her dad was in the house?

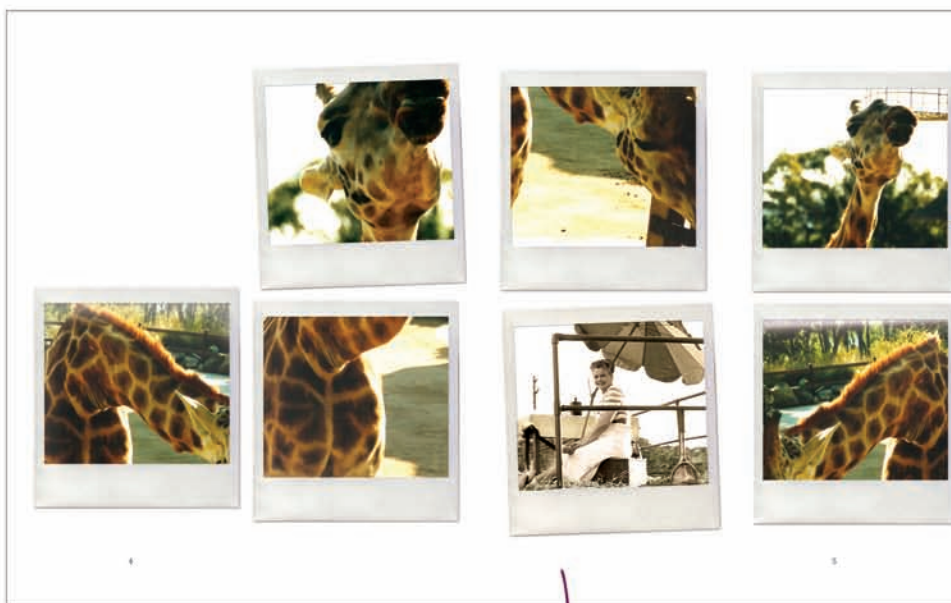
So at about the time the shadows lengthened on the driveway petrol pumps, Heroine's dad would hear the soft padding of his daughter's feet upstairs as she watched sunset by the window. But he never called her for dinner or asked if she wanted a drink. It was Sunday after all and he had his cryptic crossword to complete.

... back to the mundane reality as
Monday morning approaches.



3. photographic

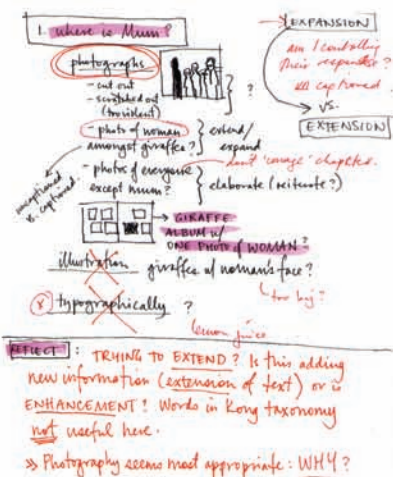
Heroine and her dad spend time together laughing at photograph albums filled with pictures of giraffes, rather than family members, and Heroine’s mother is never mentioned. I wanted to **extend** this in some way – slipping a photograph of a woman among pictures of giraffes ‘asks’ this question by adding visual information.



→ enhance

Using polaroids **enhances** the **tone/mood**: a polaroid has the quality of a snapshot rather than an ‘artistic’ shot (although a polaroid is the only type of photograph that cannot be reproduced, so it is a kind of artwork in itself). This choice of media **extends** a sense of nostalgia (old technology, washed out tones)

↓
extend



New information is added with the photograph (text is **extended** by the graphic device), but without forcing a particular reading – the photograph is uncaptioned, leaving the ‘meaning’ floating ... rather than telling the reader (closing meaning), the uncaptioned photograph opens new possibilities for the reader. The uncaptioned photograph asks questions of the reader, rather than providing answers.

Like the polaroids, this is an amateur photograph – the point is not the **aesthetic quality** of the graphic device, but the idea of it.

On the mysterious petition taped to the telegraph pole in town:



14

15



16

On random acts of beauty
(PART ONE):

HIS FINGERS HAD BLED before R Starr earned \$10 from busking outside Blue's Cafe. It was twilight – that most promising time of day – but most people had already left for home and Blue was closing early. Another couple of songs, he thought, as 20 cents chinked into his guitar case.

"Elvis, play some Elvis for us, love," his enormous benefactor said, as her chubby arms almost swallowed her male companion. He tried to remember the cords as the pair flicked their shoes off on to the footpath.

On the word on the street:

IT WAS WITH PERHAPS the same speed that Heroine's hopes rose for endless Sundays that laughter about her campaign grew, even Heroine's dad and Brother Bill had a little chuckle about it.

But although her friends exchanged quiet smiles when they spoke of Heroine's campaign, there were few who did plan to go to the festival. After all, who doesn't like a ferris wheel and a bit of fairy floss?

17

↓
extend

visual metaphor **extends** the the gap between Heroine's dream of a world with only Sundays and the reality that the town is laughing at her – visual juxtaposition between her enthusiasm (rampant pole postering) and the reception from her community (scrunched in the gutter).

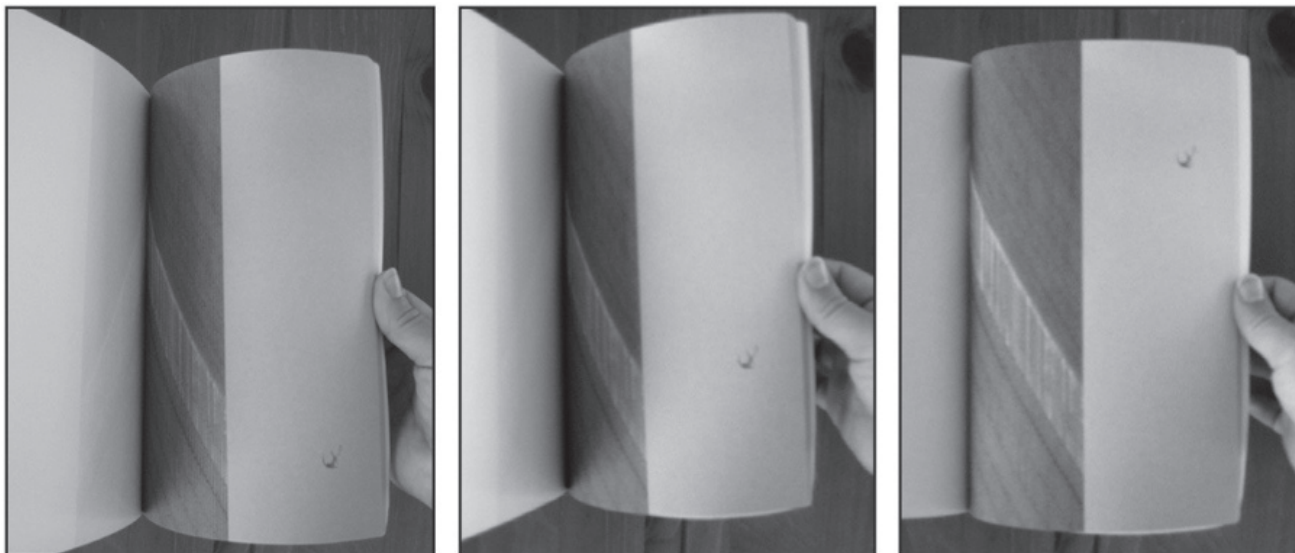
Appendix D:

Writing workshops – experimenting with graphic devices

Coming from a design background, I felt it was important to talk to writers about how they might use graphic elements in their creative process. This appendix presents the outline, notes and some visual material I compiled as a workshop to run with writers. The workshop was run three times on: May 27, 2007; October 20, 2007; and July 19, 2009. Each session ran for four hours, with a half hour break.

Participants included: a nurse interested in using photographs in her scholarly reports; an historian wanting to integrate archival photographs and ephemera in publications; a photographer interested in finding out how writers work, to collaborate with them; eight MA creative writing students who are writing memoirs and interested in integrating graphic devices; two doctoral candidates, one writing on poetry, the other on W.G. Sebald; three creative writing tutors interested in new approaches to teaching writing; two high school English teachers introducing graphic novels to their curriculum; and a collection of amateur writers, just wanting to learn.

To run these workshops, I obtained ethics clearance from the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee, clearance number: UTS HREC REF NO. 2007-87A



Photography from the Greek photos (light) and graphos (writing); literally ‘writing with light’. A **photograph** is the result of recording light patterns reflected from objects onto a sensitive medium through a timed exposure, using a mechanical, chemical or digital camera.

Ephemera is a range of transient, everyday items, usually printed on paper, for specific and limited use. For example: pamphlets; leaflets; packaging; invitations; cards; menus; posters, ticket stubs, stamps.

Writing *with* graphic devices

[photographs *and* ephemera]

July 19, 2009

OVERVIEW:

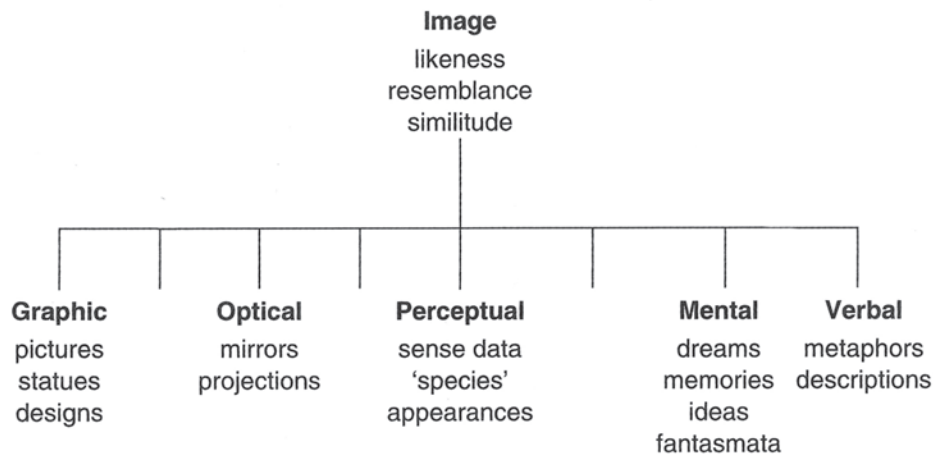
The workshop begins with a presentation of innovative hybrid texts – writing in which word and image combine to form a reading experience that is neither purely verbal, nor purely visual. Novels and essays by Jonathan Safran Foer, Umberto Eco, Mark Danielewski, Dave Eggers, Graham Rawle, Marjane Satrapi and David Sornig are discussed.

Following this introduction, a series of structured writing exercises allow participants to experiment with two approaches to ‘writing’ with images:

First, using images as triggers for creative writing (*inspiration*) and;

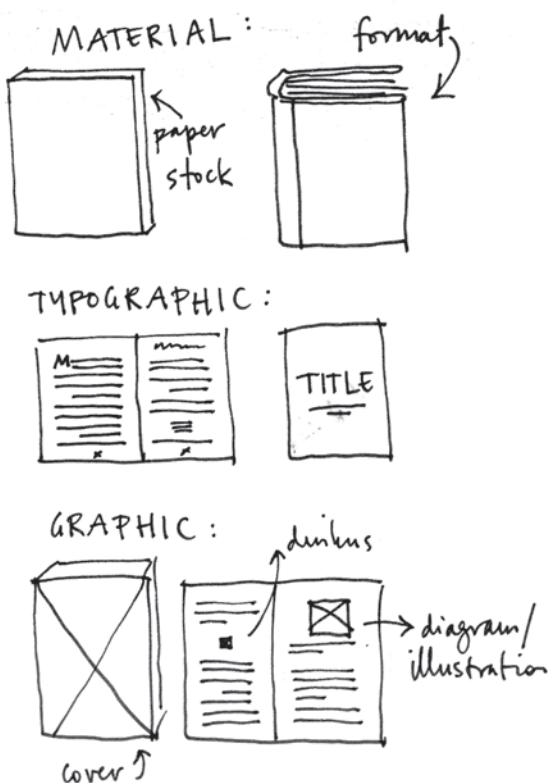
Second, integrating images into texts as graphic narrative devices (*communication*).

In the first instance, images are used to inspire characters, setting, events and plot. We will write ‘up to and out of’ images. In the second instance, images are embedded into the fabric of the narrative, to be read as part of the text. We will begin to explore ways in which images could communicate things that words alone could not – how could images do more than illustrate a written text?



Mitchell, W.J.T. 1986, 'What is an Image?' in *Iconology: Image, Text, and Ideology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, pp. 7-14.

Conventional graphic devices (in novels):



Books discussed:

Eco, Umberto 2005, *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*, trans. G. Brock, Harcourt Books, Florida.

Safran Foer, Jonathan (ed) 2006, *A Convergence of Birds*, Second edn, Hamish Hamilton, London.

Safran Foer, Jonathan 2005, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Houghton Mifflin, New York.

Satrapi, Marjane 2003, *Persepolis*, Pantheon Books, New York.

Sebald, W.G. 1998, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. M. Hulse, 2nd edn, The Harvill Press, London.

Selznick, Brian 2007, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, Scholastic, New York.

Further Reading

Barthes, Roland 1984, *Camera Lucida* Flamingo.

Berger, J and Mohr, J 1982, *Another Way of Telling*, Writers and Readers

Krauss, Rosalind 1982, 'When Words Fail', *October*, Vol. 22, pp. 91-103

Scott, Clive 1999, *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language*, Reaktion

Poyner, Rick 2003, 'Visual prose', *Eye Magazine* no. 49, vol. 13.
Online: www.eyemagazine.com/opinion.php?id=71&oid=242

Trachtenberg, Alan (ed.) 1980, *The Classic Essays on Photography*, Leete's Island Books.

Wells, Liz 2000, *Photography: A critical introduction*, 2nd edn, Routledge, London.

SESSION 1: Captioning



CAPTIONING: EXERCISE ONE

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CAPTIONING: EXERCISE TWO

Exercise 1: Write four different captions for the photograph supplied, no more than two sentences. Each caption should inspire a different reading of the image.

Discussion: Read captions aloud, compare commonalities and differences.

Reveal that the handwritten caption on the back says: Bert, 1924 Concord.

Exercise 2: Caption the six empty/blank/white squares.

Discussion: Read captions aloud, identify different forms/perspectives/ideas implied ... snow through a window, the pentagon under budget cuts, writer's block.

Exercise 3: From the random photograph supplied, write a one sentence caption. Pass your caption to another participant without showing them your photograph. From the descriptive caption you have received, describe the photograph as you imagine it. [collection of snapshots from my collection]

Discussion: Supplementing versus subverting: Tom Gauld's postcards (from *Robots, Monsters, etc.*, Cabanon Press, 2005) Graphic wit, opening gaps in meaning.



CAPTIONING: EXERCISE THREE — DISCUSSION

SESSION 2: Writing up to and out of a single image

Exercise 1: Based on the photograph supplied, write a detailed character study, in note form or prose.

Discussion: What visual cues inspired your description (clothing, expression, body language, environment, perspective)?

Exercise 2: Write an entirely different description from the same image.

Discussion: How did you shift your perception? Volunteers can read pieces. What were common 'readings'? What were unique perspectives?



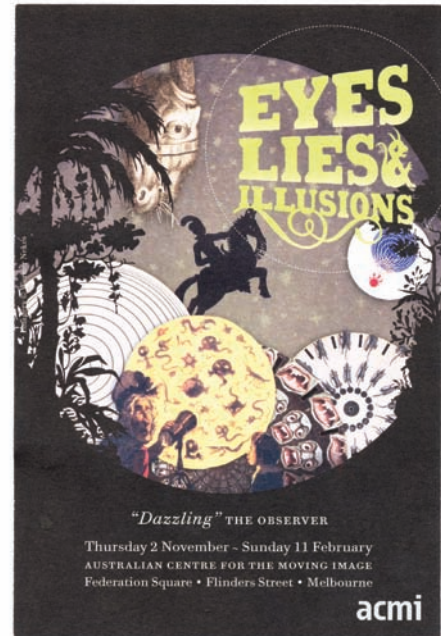
SESSION 3: Writing up to and out of a sequence

Exercise 1: Each table will be supplied with four photographs/pieces of ephemera. Arrange them in any order and – individually – write a short passage inspired by the sequence of images.

Discussion: What visual cues inspired your narrative? Did the relationship between two images inspire the action? What connections did you make between the different images? How did your interpretation differ from other people at the table?

Exercise 2: Shuffle the order of the images and write a second passage or plot outline, inspired by this sequence.

Discussion: What changed? Narrative potential of images in sequence.



SESSION 4: Integrating images into a text

Reading from David Sornig's paper.

Discussion: When might it be appropriate to include images within prose? What could images communicate that words alone could not? How could you source or generate photographs for narrative purposes? Discuss how to broach the use of images with a publisher.

Australian academic David Sornig, discussing a student who, despite his suggestion otherwise, submitted a creative writing assignment with a series of photographs:

“As I considered the piece, I was left with the feeling that indeed the text was somehow enhanced by the photographs of the student, and not just in the literal illustrative way that the student had intended. Despite the amateurism of the photographs, and probably because of it, the piece appeared to be more aesthetically complete than had been intended and I wished I could have taken this into account when grading it. But there were two reasons I couldn't: there was no indication in the explanatory notes accompanying the piece that the student had actually intended this level of sophistication; and nowhere could I find any sense that I had the scope or expertise to judge the quality of the images and their contribution to the meaning of the text.

It also struck me that in the student's resistance against my suggestion about the value of using images, I was coming across a writer, the type of whom might be becoming increasingly common, for whom the first impulse is toward image rather than text; the same neonate who figures in Jonathan Franzen's equation of generations when he writes in his essay 'The Reader in Exile' that 'For every reader who dies today, a viewer is born': the product of a culture that has absorbed into itself the centrality of the image in the way Urry articulates in his seminal study of the culture of tourism *The Tourist Gaze*: 'Our memories of places,' he writes, 'are largely structured through photographic images and the mainly verbal text we weave around images when they are on show to others.' Image first. Text second. ...

The writer, the literary writer, even the student writer in a course of study in Creative Writing at a tertiary institution, need not be puritanically warned away from engaging more directly with the image. Rather, it might be useful to explore avenues of experimentation, to engage with the ways in which the text and the image are being used in tandem in the practice of contemporary literary fiction and explore how it might be possible to deduce something about the writing process and how images contribute to the aesthetic effect of the work as a whole.”

Sornig, David 2004, 'Picturing the Story: Image and narrative in Brian Castro and W.G. Sebald', *TEXT*, vol. 8, no. 1.

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR NOTES

Introductory presentation: Hybrid texts

First, what is an image? W.J.T. Mitchell's 'family of images' succinctly illustrates that there is no single, simple answer to the question 'what is an image?' [diagram in package] In Mitchell's diagram, a graphic image resides at one end of the spectrum, and verbal at the other. Within literary discourse an image is constructed verbally; descriptive language evokes mental images in the mind of the reader. Reading prose, an image appears gradually like a chemically developed photograph, word upon word, sentence upon sentence, until the image forms clearly in the mind of the reader:

The slow ceiling fan sliced the thick, frightened air
into an unending spiral that spun slowly to the floor
like the peeled skin of an endless potato.
Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things*

In contrast, within design discourse, an image is a graphic representation produced on a surface – a photograph, a drawing, a projection, a shape scratched in dirt. The immediacy of a graphic printed on the page enables readers “to quickly and intuitively spot relationships—between here and there, this and that, words and gestures, ideas and expressions.” (Stephens 1998: 63)

Verbal images and graphic images are deciphered using difference in perceptual modes – the human brain perceives language and images in different ways. Leonard Shlain explains:

To perceive things such as trees and buildings through images delivered to the eye, the brain uses wholeness, simultaneity, and synthesis. To ferret out the meaning of alphabetic writing, the brain relies instead on sequence, analysis and abstraction. (Shlain 1998)

Therefore, when discussing how images work, it is essential to specify exactly what kind of image we mean.

The reason this is important to understand is that images in novels are conventionally drawn in the mind of the reader, not on the page of the book. The novels we will look at now are unconventional, because images – like photographs, drawings, diagrams, ephemera and experimental typography – appear printed on the page. Explain graphic conventions in novels [diagram in package], then show a range of hybrid novels, for instance: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *A Convergence of Birds*, 'A Primer for the Punctuation of Heart Disease'; Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*; Dave Eggers' McSweeney's publications; Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves*; Graham Rawle's *Women's World*.

Discuss how conventions are important, because they manage our expectations as readers:

- > photographic manipulation in a newspaper, versus *Ralph* magazine.
- > James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*.

New writers are emerging, writing for a generation of readers who have different expectations, different understanding of textual conventions: use Eggers and Safran Foer as examples.

Discussion B: Captioning

To 'fix' their floating ambiguity, linguistic captions are almost always attached to images, pinning an intended reading to the work. It is rare for images to appear unaccompanied by any text at all – even abstract paintings are captioned to gallery walls. Therefore, almost all images we encounter are, in fact, hybrid texts, pinned like butterflies within a linguistic frame.

Roland Barthes describes the function of captions as to anchor an image within a written text. Barthes: captions are “intended to fix the floating signifiers in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs.” Stuart Hall expands on Barthes' theories of textual anchorage, arguing that a caption pinpoints one of a range of possible meanings and amplifies it for the reader. Therefore, captioning is reductive – it reduces the range of possible interpretations. Elizabeth Chaplin, a social scientist specialising in photographic theory, suggests that readers are so familiar with captions that they barely register them as verbal instructions, instead perceiving “an image whose meaning is clear (whose meaning is 'given').” See the further readings.

When images are left uncaptioned, they are allowed to float. They can be interpreted in many different ways. Chaplin calls this polysemy – images have multiple meanings. Because of this, when analysing an image, the question 'What does this image mean?' is very difficult to answer. What does it mean to whom, in which context? “The question of meaning has been thoroughly explored—one might say exhaustively—by hermeneutics and semiotics, with the result that every image theorist seems to find some residue or 'surplus value' that goes beyond communication, signification and persuasion. ... We need to reckon with not just the meaning of images, but their silence, their reticence, their wildness and nonsensical obduracy.” (Mitchell 2005: 9-10)

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> Tom Gauld: The lovely thing about Gauld's work is the interplay between word and image. You could describe these scenarios in words alone, but the humour comes from the immediacy of the image, which is then changed by the written caption. The text doesn't give you everything, neither does the image. It's when the two are combined, when the viewer achieves 'closure' that it works.

Appendix E:

125 reviews of hybrid novels, analysed to generate word clouds

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