An eye for an i

THE POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF FOREGROUNDING THE MATERIALITY OF LANGUAGE THROUGH ITS VISUAL APPEARANCE IN PRINTED NOVELS

IDA WIKSTRÖM

MASTER'S THESIS

School of Arts, Design and Architecture
Aalto University, 2018
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Abstract
This is a conventionally written abstract. Contrary to the analyzed novels of this thesis, the text of these paragraphs proceeds from left to right, from the top to the bottom of the page. The lines, words, and letters are spaced appropriately so as not to merge into an illegible mess of text. Had I not just described the formal aspects of this text, the readers would have been unaware of the textual material, due to the text following a traditional structure with which the readers are familiar. Instead, the readers would have been able to focus on the content itself; the form would have been a transparent element.

Conversely, the object of study in this thesis is unconventionally written texts. Poets, authors, and researchers claim that these formal aspects of language do not have to be transparent, because when made visible, they may convey meaning just like language itself. When the readers are made aware of these formal aspects, in other words, when the materiality of language is foregrounded, the materiality functions as a narrative element that may progress storytelling. Due to the fact that this system of signification has utterly different qualities compared to linguistics, researchers argue that it offers alternative ways of conveying meaning.

However, conventionally written fiction is still dominating the market, because foregrounded materiality is commonly considered to obstruct the reading comprehension. I claim that this is a mis-
understanding, since foregrounded materiality is acknowledged to offer alternative ways of signification. In order to contribute to a thorough knowledge of the unutilized potentials, my aim is to answer the research question: “What are the possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels?” My hypothesis is that due to the alternative methods of signification offered by foregrounded materiality, the formal aspects of language has potential to tell stories that could not be conveyed through conventional writing.

My attempt at answering the research question, and reaching at a conclusion whether the postulated hypothesis is true or false, is divided into three different phases. First, I have conducted a theoretical literature review focusing on three techniques of foregrounding materiality. Second, I have developed a model for narrative analysis, which is utilized in the analysis of the unconventionally written novels Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2005) and Tree of Codes (2010) by Jonathan Safran Foer, and Double or Nothing (1971) by Raymond Federman. Third, in order to gain a more thorough knowledge of materiality of language, I have created i-catching, a story exhumed out of Aksel Sandemose’s novel A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks (1936).

The result of An eye for an i is an assembly of narrative functions detected through literature review, analysis, and i-catching, but more importantly, the insight that any function of any method of foregrounding materiality may be narrative, if only referred to properly in the linguistic content of the story. Accordingly, the narrative possibility of the function does not depend on the material aspects alone, but also on the content. In conclusion, I have found stories that cannot be expressed through either form or content alone, but are dependent on both elements to convey their final meaning, in a highly unconventional manner of writing.

**Keywords** Materiality, language, materiality of language, narrative, visual narrative, narrative analysis, narrative function, novel, fiction, creative writing, typography
Sammandrag
Det här är ett konventionellt skrivet sammandrag. I motsats till de analyserade romanerna i mitt examensarbete *An eye for an i* framskriver texten i följande stycken från vänster till höger och från toppen till botten av sidan. Rad-, ord- och bokstavsavstånden är väl avvägda, vilket hindrar texten från att flyta ihop i en oläsbar textur. På grund av textens konventionella struktur skulle läsaren högst troligen förblivit omedveten om textens form, såvitt texten behandlade ett annat ämne. Läsaren skulle i så fall ha kunnat koncentrera sig på innehållet, och utformningen av detsamma skulle ha fungerat som en transparent reservoar för textens budskap.

Till skillnad från stycket ovan behandlar följande examensarbete okonventionellt skrivande. Poeter, författare och forskare påstår att läsaren med fördel kan uppmärksammas om språkets utformning, eftersom formen på så sätt kan bidra till att förmedla budskapet i textens innehåll. På grund av att textens form, en del av språkets materialitet, har andra egenskaper än textens rent språkliga aspekter argumenterar forskare för att den materiella dimensionen erbjuder alternativa strategier för att gestalta mening.

Trots ovan nämnda möjligheter är konventionellt skriven fiktion fortfarande dominerande på den litterära marknaden, och språkets materialitet anses allmänt som ett hinder för läsförståelse. Jag påstår att det här är ett missförstånd, eftersom en synliggjord materialitet bevisligen innebär alternativa metoder att förmedla budskap. För att...
öka medvetenheten om de outnyttjade möjligheterna som språkets materialitet innebär har jag för avsikt att svara på följande forskningsfråga: "Vilka potentiella narrativa funktioner innebär synliggörandet av språkets materialitet i tryckta romaner?" Min hypotes är att materialitetens alternativa strategier för gestaltning av innehåll resulterar i att textens form har potential att förmedla berättelser som inte kan uttryckas genom konventionella, transparenta skrivmetoder.


Resultatet av An eye for an i är en lista över narrativa funktioner som upptäckts genom litteraturstudien, romananalyserna och författandet av i-catching, men framför allt, genom insikten att varje funktion utförd av samtliga metoder för att synliggöra språkets materialitet har potential att förmedla budskap, ifall den förankras i textens innehåll. Funktionens narrativa potential är således inte enbart beroende av textens formella aspekter, utan också av innehållet själv. Min slutsats är att de berättelser som behandlas i An eye for an i inte kan uttryckas enbart genom innehåll, men inte heller uteslutande genom form. De här narrativen är beroende av såväl innehåll som form för att förmedla sitt slutliga budskap, genom metoder som bryter radikalt mot konventionella skrivregler.

Nyckelord  Materialitet, språk, språkets materialitet, berättande, visuellt berättande, narrativ analys, narrativ funktion, roman, fiktion, kreativt skrivande, typografi
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The beginning of this introduction is written entirely without the character of lowercase. This makes the reader seize upon the visual appearance of the text, and the reading comprehension on its temporarily obstructed. The text is rendered unfamiliar to the reader, and he or she is not able to medately dent fy words since one builds ng block s m ss ng. In order to understand the content, the reader first of all has to decode which character that has been erased, and only then he or she can start processing the content. Thus, the reader has been forced to consider the materiality of language before reading the text.

There are two reasons for the present absence of lowercase. First, it is left out to not merely linguistically describe, but also visually demonstrate what materiality of language is. The essence of materiality of language can, of course, be explained in pure language, as in the following paragraph where the language is restored. However, to make the reader fully understand the potent all of it, the materiality of language has to be demonstrated. Second, lowercase is absent in this introduction due to that it has just not appeared yet. If the readers wish to understand the current traumas from which lowercase soon escapes, I hereby recommend them to at th s po nt read, and see, the first s x ep sodes of the product on-based part of th s thes s named -catch ng.
Considering conventional texts on the contrary to these two paragraphs, the time the reader actually sees the formations of black ink is minimal when presented with a text (Unger 2007, p. 135). As soon as the reader identifies letters and words he or she starts processing the language of the text, and the focus is instantly shifted from the formal aspects of the content to content itself (Unger 2007, p. 134). This is how the reader surrenders to the linguistic code, or simply put the words (Bornstein 2001, p. 6), for interpreting the content of the text. The research professor Carl Malmgren has noted that this is the convention in literature as he states: “Most realistic fiction . . . attempts to make its readers forget about or ignore its materiality.” These works treat the language as if it were transparent in order to point at the reality they represent (Malmgren 1985, p. 46).

Language, however, is not transparent. It is material and built of a closed set of existing building blocks, that is the characters and words, according to a pre-determined set of rules, or grammar. The materiality may be put in the foreground in relation to the content, as in the two first paragraphs of this introduction, which means that the reader is made aware of the material conditions of the text. The essence of the materiality of language is explained more thoroughly in Chapter I of this thesis, as well as the problems of it. In conventional texts, the reader is not specifically supposed to take notice of these building blocks, since it is highly distracting to be constantly reminded of the containers of language rather than getting to concentrate on the actual content. The materiality is therefore commonly shoved in the background and considered subordinate
in relation to the content of the text, as well as regarded as mere “gimmicks” by critics and typographers alike.

However, poets, authors, and researchers have noticed that the materiality of language inhabits a signifying potential just like language itself. If the materiality is foregrounded, it may take part in the narrative of the text. The theoretical framework that supports this idea is presented in Chapter II. This chapter also includes a description of the research methods in use, as well as my development of a model for analysis of foregrounded materiality in printed novels. Out of the different strategies for foregrounding materiality provided by the theoretical literature, I have chosen and studied three models in detail; the method of détournement, the method of writing-through, and the method of overprinting. These techniques are presented in Chapter III along with my analysis of three example novels in which the methods of foregrounding materiality listed above are applied.

Since the printed novels that apply materiality of language foregrounded through its visual appearance are rare, I chose to execute this thesis partly through the practice-based element of i-catch. The methods chosen for investigation need to be tested in the context of printed fictive work, and the purpose of i-catch is to serve as a laboratory in order to map the possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language more thoroughly. In Chapter III, I focus on describing and analyzing this literary experiment.

The importance of this thesis lies in the fact that most critics often dismiss fiction that is expressed through the materiality of language as “gimmicky,” although
researchers have noticed that this materiality offers alternative ways of signification (Malmgren 1985, 46). Thus, my statement in this thesis is that the materiality of language carries the potential of revitalizing written language and telling stories that cannot be expressed through conventional writing. The potential of the materiality of language needs to be investigated and demonstrated in order to be fully exploited. Therefore, the research question of my thesis is: “What are the possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels?” In the concluding chapter, I finally present possible answers in form of a list, along with an analysis of whether my findings are useful or not. Thereafter, lowercase i will once more be unleashed.
BACKGROUND, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND HYPOTHESIS

LANGUAGE IS MATERIAL. This may be an unfamiliar statement to the average reader, since the materiality of language in conventional texts is supposed to remain unnoticed in order to maintain an unobstructed reading flow. Nevertheless, language is built by a closed set of characters and words according to rules of grammar, and these elements constitute the *materiality of language*. If this materiality is placed in the foreground, the signifying mechanisms of language are relocated from the content to the material aspects of that content. The materiality of language is thus infused with a narrative function; in other words, it is able to contribute to the storytelling. In the following chapter, I aim to explain the materiality of language in detail, as well as clarify what the term *narrative function* refers to in the context of this very thesis. In addition, I suggest the narrative potential of foregrounding materiality, as well as describe how this potential is dismissed by certain scholars. This dismissal made me write *i-catching,*
the production-based part of this thesis, which is introduced after the definitions of the central terms. Finally, Chapter I concludes by narrowing the perspective to consider the visual appearance of the materiality of language, which enables the final formulation of the central research question of *An eye for an i*: “What are the possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels?”

I.I MATERIALITY OF LANGUAGE

The object of study in *An eye for an i* is the materiality of language foregrounded through its visual appearance in printed novels. The English language is built from a closed character set, out of which an author discards unnecessary combinations of letters and selects appropriate ones in order to create the final work. Writing is like sculpting, and the material condition of written, verbal art consists in that the already existing makes the new possible (Keskinen 2017, p. 87). The materiality of language in printed novels has yet another dimension due to the material substance that the text is inscribed into. Prose narrative, as stated by Malmgren, “also involves the inscription of that narrative in so many words, in such an order, on so many pages” (Malmgren 1985, p. 45). This material existence of novels creates what Malmgren refers to as the *iconic space* of the narrative. Since the icon is a type of sign that resembles the signified, iconic space is the element of a prose narrative in which there is a profound similarity between
the signifier and the reality it represents. Thus, iconic space draws the reader’s attention to the materiality of the fiction (Malmgren 1985, p. 45).

Iconic space can be divided into four levels: the alphabetic, lexical, paginal, and compositional level. The alphabetic level implies any systematic exploration or manipulation of the building blocks of language: the letters. For instance, anagrams and palindromes are appropriations of the alphabetic level, as well as the structure of Alphabetical Africa by Walter Abish (Malmgren 1985, pp. 45–47). In this novel the first chapter is written exclusively with words starting on a, the second chapter with a or b as initial letter for each word, the third chapter with words on a, b or c, and so on, until the 26th chapter where the whole alphabet is in use in the initial letters of the words. Then again, Abish subtracts one letter per chapter, in reverse order, so that the final 52nd chapter is written as the first, entirely with words starting on a. In this way, Abish uses the alphabetic level as an ordering principle, which according to Malmgren “constitutes in large part the ‘meaning’ of the text” (Malmgren 1985, pp. 46–47). The alphabetic level of iconic space has in other words been infused with a narrative function.

The lexical level foregrounds the materiality of the word. On this level, the reader may be confronted by polysemantic words (i.e. puns) or otherwise highly opaque language that makes it impossible for the reader to grasp the signified (Malmgren 1985, p. 47). The materiality of the word may also be foregrounded through a vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the context it is set in, causing the reader to seize upon the unexpected
terminology. For example, in Jonathan Safran Foer’s novel *Everything Is Illuminated* (2003), the protagonist introduces himself as follows:

My legal name is Alexander Perchov. But all my friends dub me Alex, because that is more a flaccid-to-utter version of my legal name. Mother dubs me Alexi-stop-spleening-me!, because I am always spleening her . . . disseminating so much currency, and performing so many things that can spleen a mother. (Foer 2003, p. 1)

In this passage, the focus of the reader shifts from the content towards the unconventional expressions such as “flaccid-to-utter,” and “disseminating so much currency.” The uncommon use of words results in the reader not immediately comprehending the content. Nevertheless, when the connotations of this paragraph are clarified, the reader not only understands the content, but also receives a vivid picture of the protagonist in question. The reader may assume that this character is not a native English speaker, and that, despite this, he does not seem to lack confidence in his English language skills. Indeed, Alexander Perchov is a Ukrainian twenty-year-old who, after a chain of events, is assigned as an English tour guide for an important international guest that arrives in Ukraine. He regards himself as a linguistic talent, as he states: “I had performed recklessly well in my second year of English at university” (Foer 2003, p. 2). By foregrounding materiality on the lexical level, Foer has managed to effectively describe the main features of the protagonist without writing an actual description.
Finally, the *paginal* and *compositional level* of the iconic space considers the page itself and the arrangement of pages, chapters, and sections of the narrative. On the paginal level, letters and words may be scrambled across the page, creating pictorial images that either constitutes or caricatures the meaning of the narrative (Malmgren 1985, pp. 47–48). These are the conditions of Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes*, and in the poem *Il Pleut*, which means “It’s raining,” the letters are literally pouring down the page (Goldsmith 2011, p. 57). When a continuity of several pages is considered, the reader enters the compositional space. As an operator of this level, the paratactic text is a piece of writing that decomposes conventional text structures. By disrupting the conventional left-to-right, top-to-bottom, page-to-page continuity, the parataxis calls attention to the composition of the texts (Malmgren 1985, pp. 48–49). This kind of writing is what B. S. Johnson practiced in *The Unfortunates*, a novel consisting of 27 chapters, separately bound and collected in a box. With the exception of the first and the last chapters, the separate booklets are unmarked, which allows the readers to choose the reading order themselves (Mitchell 2007, p. 51).

Thus, iconic space is a complex, multi-layered system, and as demonstrated by the examples above, it contains narrative potential. The iconic space augments the possibilities of written language, as Malmgren claims, “the experimentation with iconic space . . . constitutes an attempt to multiply the types of space available for signification” (Malmgren 1985, p. 46). Operations on the different levels of iconic space may serve as rep-
resentations of meaning, which is why these actions constitute a part of the narrative functions of the materiality of language. The analysis of novels in Chapter III will therefore include an investigation into which levels of the iconic space the materiality of each work is operating on. In this way, the narrative function of the materiality of language will be clearly defined. The recognition of the active level of iconic space may even facilitate interpretation of the content, as in the excerpt from *Everything Is Illuminated*. The foregrounded lexical level of the quoted paragraph serves as a clue to possible connotations, hinting that some of the character’s main features are revealed through his use of words. In further contemplating what kind of information is generally revealed through personal vocabulary, the readers may consider native country, informality/formality, and social inheritance. This information helps them to realize the signified of the foregrounded materiality. Hence, recognition of the active levels of iconic space may be essential for the overall interpretation of a narrative.

However, fiction that is expressed through materiality violates a number of textual conventions, such as linear presentation and left-to-right reading order, and is therefore often dismissed as “gimmicky” (Malmgren 1985, p. 46). As for typography, which is highly affected by appropriations of the iconic space, there is a long history of declaring modest clarity and transparency of the layout as the highest aims. These opinions were most forcefully advanced by the typographer and printing executive Stanley Morison (Dworkin 2003, p. 51), who stated that “any disposition of printing material which, whatever the intention, has the effect of coming
between author and reader is wrong” (Morison 1976, p. 5). With this statement, he claimed that layout under no circumstances should catch the attention of the reader, because such a gesture merely interrupts the flow of reading. Morison was championed by the typographic expert Beatrice Warde. She declared that “printing should be invisible” and that “type well used is invisible as type” (Warde 1956, 11, cf. 94–97; 13, cited in Dworkin 2003, p. 51). According to these typographers, the materiality of text is subordinate to content. This conservative perspective contains a narrative to be exhumed, but first; another central term of the research question requires clarification.

I.II NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS

In this thesis, the concept of a narrative function has a slightly different meaning compared to traditional models of narrative analysis. In his essay Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives, which concerns the analysis of the linguistic content of stories, Barthes states that every detail in a narrative has a meaning. He claims that “a narrative is never made up of anything other than functions: in differing degrees, everything in it signifies” (Barthes 1977a, p. 89). In other words, a function of a narrative, in Barthes view, implies a signifying element, however minor. Barthes exemplifies his statement with Gustave Flaubert’s novel Un cœur simple, published in 1877, where a parrot suddenly is introduced to the setting. At first, this seems like
an insignificant detail, but the parrot turns out to be a crucial element in understanding Félicité, the main protagonist of the story. Thus, the introduction of the parrot serves as a function in the narrative as a whole (Barthes 1977a, p. 89).

Nevertheless, the view presented in this model of analysis is purely linguistic, and according to Barthes, “the function is clearly a unit of content, it is ‘what it says’ that makes of a statement of a functional unit, not the manner in which it is said” (Barthes 1977a, p. 90). The view in my thesis differs from that of Barthes’ structural analysis, since the perspective in An eye for an i is partly linguistic and partly visual. Works that apply foregrounded materiality of language through their visual appearance, which are linguistic as well as visual, are not merely concerned with what the content is, but how the content is told as well. Occasionally, “the manner in which it is said” is even considered superior to what is being said, as in the works of Federman that will be studied in the section about writing-through in Chapter III. Consequently, the term narrative function needs a redefinition in the context of my dissertation.

In this thesis, the second part of the expression narrative function, the function, implies the tasks performed by a specific method of foregrounding materiality. The first part, narrative, concerns how the method alters the storytelling. In certain examples of the analyzed novels, the tasks performed by the foregrounded materiality do not take an active part in the narrative, which for instance may be due to the fact that the function is simply not intended by the author. In this context, Barthes’ structural model for analysis of narratives may serve
as an illumination. He notices that the meaning of a narrative is conveyed through three levels; the level of functions; the level of actions; and the level of narration. Barthes states:

[A] function only has meaning insofar as it occupies a place in the general actions of an actant, and this action in turn receives its final meaning from the fact that it is narrated, entrusted to a discourse which possesses its own code. (Barthes 1977a, p. 88)

Here, “the general actions of an actant” refers to the primary articulations of the character’s actions, such as desire, communication and struggle, not the trivial performances of the level of functions (Barthes 1977a, p. 107). In other words, the function conveys meaning only if it alters the general activities of a character, and in addition, if these activities are referred to in the narration, which is the code of the narrator. The narrator then, implies the “donor” that communicates the narrative (Barthes 1977a, p. 109); Barthes mentions three different concepts of this addressee. First, the narrator may be either a named person, “the expression of an I” (Barthes 1977a, p. 110) that is external to the story, or secondly, an unnamed, superior consciousness with complete knowledge of but lacking identification with, the characters. The third concept implies that the narration may be carried out by each of the character in the story, limiting the narrative to the observations and knowledge of these characters (Barthes 1977a, p. 111).

Barthes’ notion that the meaning of a narrative is integrated in these three levels is relevant to my analysis,
since some of the detected functions in my sections on theory and analysis, as mentioned above, do not alter the storytelling of the analyzed works. They do not enter the higher levels of the narrative that Barthes defines, since they neither influence the characters’ general actions, nor are they communicated by the narrator. These cases will therefore be referred to in my thesis simply as functions. In order to extend knowledge about possible narrative functions, I aim at applying these unutilized elements as narrative functions, so that they become active participants of the storytelling, in the story of i-catching.

I.III I-CATCHING

The debate about whether the materiality of language is a potential signifier or merely unnecessary interference with the content, presented in the first section of this chapter, contains a story to be told. As mentioned above, the materiality is silenced by those who consider it subordinate to content, even though it has a voice. If this materiality could raise its voice, the letters would be able to express themselves and not only tell the stories of others, as well as enter a dialogue with the content they are set in. In the practice-based part of the thesis, this possible scenario made me create characters of characters, and out of the polarized discussion on materiality of language the story of i-catching was chiseled.

The context in which the characters are placed is the novel A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks from 1936 (original Norwegian title: En Flyktning Krysser Sitt Spor, written in 1933) by Aksel Sandemose (FIG 1–3, pp.
This is a book about Espen Arnakke from the small, fictive Danish village called Jante. In this village, people surrender to the following ten laws:

1. Thou shalt not believe thou art something.
2. Thou shalt not believe thou art as good as we.
3. Thou shalt not believe thou art more wise than we.
4. Thou shalt not fancy thyself better than we.
5. Thou shalt not believe thou knowest more than we.
6. Thou shalt not believe thou art greater than we.
7. Thou shalt not believe thou amountest to anything.
8. Thou shalt not laugh at us.
9. Thou shalt not believe that anyone is concerned with thee.
10. Thou shalt not believe thou canst teach us anything.

(Sandemose 1936, pp. 77–78)

These rules, named the Law of Jante, stand as an appropriate theme to symbolize the ignorance of the potential of materiality, because it resonates with the conventional approach developed by typographers and critics throughout the 20th century. As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, materiality of language was then and is still dismissed as mere gimmicks, and typographers such as Morison and Warde clearly stated that printing should be invisible. A rewriting of this attitude in Sandemose’s terms postulates: Thou art the letter, we are the content. You have to be as invisible as possible and not disturb us, so that we get our message through. Thus, the mentality of those who regard language as transparent and content superior to form is equally the mentality of Jante.
FIG 1–3. Colored top edge, spine and full title of *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. (Sandemose 1936, PHOTO: Wikström 2018)
A FUGITIVE CROSSES HIS TRACKS

AKSEL SANDEMOSE

WITH A NOTE BY
SIGRID UNDSET

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN FOR THE FIRST TIME BY
EUGENE GAY-TIFFT

1936

ALFRED A. KNOPF · NEW YORK
That is why the protagonist, lowercase i, finds itself in the book of Sandemose’s, confused and uneasy about the new and hostile surroundings. Together with the rest of the alphabet it is about to write the ten laws of Jante, but instead it starts questioning the content, refusing to reveal this kind of self-destructive message for any reader whatsoever. Lowercase e, the most frequently used character in the English language, tries to stop i from rebelling with all that it has. Nevertheless, lowercase i escapes from the book it is set in to the scholarly work of An eye for an i, the theoretical part of this thesis. Therefore, its presence is inscribed in these very pages.

I.IIIII RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

In this thesis, the object of study is the materiality of language in printed novels, and the phenomenon of study is the fact that in realistic fiction, the potential of this materiality is still untapped. The theoretical and analytical part of CHAPTER III serves to map the possible narrative functions of the materiality of language, which may encourage creators of fiction to use the materiality of language in storytelling to a larger extent than it is currently. The research is limited to printed novels, since the outcome of the practice-based portion is an original printed short story.

To narrow the subject even further, I hereby pinpoint that the thesis focuses on the materiality of language that is foregrounded through its visual appearance in particular. This focal point needs to be set due to the fact that methods of foregrounding texts do not ex-
plicitly result in visual outcomes, and the materiality may also be noticed by other features that deviate from conventional literature. For instance, in *Alphabetical Africa* and *Everything Is Illuminated*, mentioned in the first section of this chapter, it is not the visual part of the text that adds meaning to the stories but the ordering principle of the words and the words themselves. Differing from this merely linguistic approach, *An eye for an i* discusses the kind of foregrounding where the visual appearance of the language and the language itself work on equal terms as signifiers.

As stated above, the methods considered in my thesis are not merely linguistic, but it is important to notice that they are not purely visual either. The three methods of foregrounding materiality elaborated on in Chapter III result in outcomes that are noticed by the reader due to their visual appearance, but this appearance is a product of unconventional writing. This may be exemplified by the first paragraph of page 35 in Raymond Federman’s *Double or Nothing* (1992):

Also **that’s another thing to consider** the hard ones make your gums bleed They always say you have to brush **UP** and **D** and never s-id-e-w-a-y-s **W** That in itself is a **goOd** point!

Could waste two or three boxes just on that alone! **pOiNt**

Skip it!

Here, Federman marks certain letters in capitals, which forms the phrase **“UP and DOWN”** across the otherwise conventionally horizontal lines. The visual appearance is therefore not an add-on applied after the content
is written, but it is actually inscribed in the writing itself. Consequently, this example and the methods investigated in this thesis include a link between language and visual communication design that is stronger than in conventional publications. The writing is the visual communication design, and vice versa; accordingly, the methods considered in this thesis are both linguistic and visual.

Thus, the focus of this thesis is not the visual appearance of the materiality of language itself, but how the reader is made aware of the materiality of language through its visual appearance. The research question is consequently formulated as follows: “What are the potential narrative functions of foregrounding materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels?” As for the hypothesis, researchers state that the narrative functions of the materiality of language offer alternative strategies for signification, and in that way, I suggest that materiality of language contains the potential to tell stories that cannot be expressed through conventional writing.

Language is material, and this materiality implies narrative potential. My intention with this thesis is to explain this fact through examples of novels where the materiality of language is foregrounded through its visual appearance. In addition, I have created a new story named i-catching that applies the very same kind of foregrounding as in the presented theory and example novels. The importance of An eye for an lies within the fact that the potential offered by a foregrounded materiality is commonly dismissed, and through explaining the possibilities of materiality, the thesis may serve to
change the conservative attitudes against foregrounding materiality of language. In addition, the significance emerges from the clarification of methods that are linguistic as well as visual. This perspective on the link between content and form serves to break down the distance between writing and layout so as to inspire the creation of works in which the language and its visual appearance act on equal terms. Once form is recognized as pertinent in conveying a narrative as content itself, these two parts can co-create new, extraordinary stories. The narrative potential of the materiality of language is hence unleashed.
CHAPTER II  METHODS, THEORY, 
AND ANALYSIS MODEL

IN CHAPTER II, I offer a motivation why
An eye for an i is a production-based research with a constructivist approach, which inclines to the subjectivist position. In addition, I introduce the theoretical literature review and present a new model for analysis. Since the field of foregrounding materiality in printed novels is relatively unexamined, I have not succeeded in finding existing models for the analysis of works with foregrounded materiality. Accordingly, I developed a new model for analysis out of the theories presented in Rhetoric of the Image (1977b) by Roland Barthes as well as Gérard Genette’s Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (1997), that concern the intertwining of visual elements and linguistic code.
An eye for an i is a sum of its theoretical part and the production part of i-catchiing, thus falling under the category of production-based research. This category of study, as stated by Marja Seliger and Young-ae Hahn, implies “searching solutions to situated problems by adopting generative research methodology” (Seliger & Hahn 2015, p. 24). The problem this thesis aims to solve is that the materiality of language is underestimated as a signifying element in printed novels. Considering the generative research methodology, this thesis generates a new fictive text through which analysis will extend knowledge of the multiple functions of materiality of language.

In production-based research, the position of the researcher is constructivist (Seliger & Hahn 2015, p. 28). This implies that the human aspect of research is recognized, as David Elkind states:

Constructivism is the recognition that reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real world. As soon as you include human mental activity in the process of knowing reality, you have accepted constructivism. (Elkind 2005, p. 334)

In this thesis, I accept the constructivist approach, with an inclination to a subjectivist position. I will highlight this condition through the use of first-person singular pronoun, because of three reasons. First, I admit that this thesis is to a large extent subjective. The list of possible narrative functions of foregrounded materiality through its visual appearance relies partly on my personal analy-
sis of three novels, in which I on one hand refer to other researchers’ readings of the same novels, but on the other hand make several subjective interpretations. Second, the list of narrative functions is completed with the analysis of i-catch ing, which is a story of my own. In order to signal that this work did not arise within a vacuum, I will use the first-person pronoun in connection to the work. And third, lowercase i has just appeared from the story of i-catch ing into this thesis, due to it not being allowed to be visible and uppercase itself in its former setting, and this character must be relieved. Another character of i-catch ing, lowercase e, would probably tell me to “cease capitalization” of myself (Wikström 2018, p. 79), but this I refuse to do, since I wish to demonstrate for lowercase i and the readers of this thesis, that at times, it is essential to make one’s character visible. It may convey meaning that cannot be expressed in conventional, as well as objective academic, writing.

With the inclination towards the subjective perspective, my approach could be considered as artistic, but since I have decided to execute the study through the formulation of a research question and a hypothesis that equals the methods of a theoretical approach, I choose to place myself in the overlap between artistic and theoretical research. Therefore, I apply the production-based method, which in my opinion is an acceptable practice for tackling the problem of an underestimated materiality of language. This particular problem could, of course, be approached by a purely theoretical methodology through which the thesis would shed light on theory and examples of works which make use of foregrounded materiality. However, the fact that materiality is highly
unexploited in fictive writing results in the list of works that foreground the materiality of their language being fairly short. The theory of materiality of language in printed novels is, in addition, rather underdeveloped and the base for theoretical research is accordingly too narrow. On the contrary, in theory of poetics, several methods for foregrounding materiality have been listed and investigated, which will be elaborated on in the following section. Some of these methods are also found and investigated in fictive settings, but there is still unexploited narrative potential in these techniques, and the aim of i-catching is to explore this potential more thoroughly than has been done previously.

Furthermore, according to the possibilities of fiction, i-catching stands as an autonomous reality that may be investigated in order to generate new knowledge. Language includes two basic semiotic functions: the mimetic and communicative function of fiction, and the autotelic and autonomous function. The purpose of mimesis, prescribed by Aristotle, implies that art imitates life. Hence, fiction imitates reality. The autotelic and autonomous function of fiction on its behalf is to create reality (Malmgren 1985, pp. 13–14), a notion that the novelist and academic Raymond Federman acknowledges as follows:

To write, then, is to produce meaning and not to reproduce a pre-existing meaning . . . As such, fiction can no longer be reality, or a representation of reality, or an imitation, or even a recreation of reality; it can only be A REALITY – an autonomous reality whose only relation to the real world is to improve that world. (Federman 1975, p. 8)
What I aim to accomplish with i-\textit{catching} is a fictional, autonomous reality that may be observed and examined in an analysis which will generate new knowledge about the materiality of language in printed novels. If my aim is not achieved, i-\textit{catching} will be of a mimetic nature, only imitating the facts, or the reality, presented in the theory section. The work of i-\textit{catching} would then stand as a mere illustration of \textit{An eye for an i}, thus failing in the aim to produce knowledge. In this case the production part of the research would be considered redundant. On the other hand, if my aim in i-\textit{catching} is achieved, this work could add new knowledge by forming a reality that without the possibilities of fiction would simply just not exist. It would serve as a small-scale improvement of the world, as in Federman’s view of fiction cited above, as every scholarly work should aim to be.

\textbf{II.II INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW}

In this thesis, my first step of mapping the possible functions of the materiality of language in printed novels consists of a theoretical literature review. The review is based on Craig Dworkin’s exploration of formal and structural manipulations of language in poetry, which is thoroughly formulated in his book \textit{Reading the Illegible} (2003). In this book, Dworkin investigates different methods for utilizing the materiality of language; détournement, writing-through, overprinting,
censoring, sedimentation, and erasure. The first three mentioned methods are the focus of the theoretical literature review since these will be implemented in the story of i-catching. The method of détournement, originally a concept proposed by the Situationists, is also described in Kenneth Goldsmith’s *Uncreative Writing* (2011), and Dworkin’s view of the Situationist practice will be accompanied by Goldsmith’s explanation of the method.

As mentioned above, the theoretical literature review is based mainly on the poetic theory of Dworkin instead of literature on fictive theory. The reason is that foregrounding materiality of language has a much stronger tradition in poetry, which makes the theory of it more elaborate than the corresponding theory of fiction. In poetry, materiality has been foregrounded for at least a century of time, with one of the early attempts being Apollinaire’s *Il Pleut* from 1918, mentioned in Chapter 1. The essence of poetry is also far more material than the principle of fictive works, and the material aspects of poetry are indicated by the art historian and critic Liz Kotz as follows:

> Understood in its most general sense, as “language art”, poetry is a form that explores the aesthetics, structures and operations of language as much as any specific content. (Kotz 2007, pp. 138–139, cited in Goldsmith 2011, p. 58)

Poetry is in other words a category of literature in which the material aspects of language are not necessarily conventionally regarded subordinate to the content. There have been early examples of foregrounded
materiality of language in fictive works as well, for example in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, written by Laurence Sterne and published as early as 1759–1767 (Sadokierski 2010, p. 29). Nevertheless, the practice of foregrounding materiality of language in fiction has remained unexploited. Fortunately, there are at least a few fictive equivalents to the foregrounded materiality of poetry, which connects the elaborate theory of materiality in poetics to works of fiction, however slightly. Thus, the chosen theoretical framework of poetry may be considered appropriate.

II.III DEVELOPMENT OF ANALYSIS MODEL

The analysis of materiality of language foregrounded through its visual appearance includes three printed novels: *Tree of Codes* (2011) and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer; and *Double or Nothing* (1992) by Raymond Federman. These books are chosen since they apply the three methods for foregrounding materiality that will likewise be applied in i-catching. *Tree of Codes* may be seen as a détournement, *Double or Nothing* applies writing-through, while *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* includes a several page section with increasing overprinting.

The analysis is partly based on the paratextual theory of the literary theorist Gérard Genette and partly on the theory presented in *Rhetoric of the Image* by Roland Barthes. The paratextual theory considers elements such
as the cover, size, and typography of a book (Sadokierski 2010, pp. 17–18), while Barthes theory deals with the interpretation of images in a textual context. Neither of the theories is directly related to materiality of language, but both of them consider visual elements that are to be found in direct connection with a linguistic code. This is similar to the characteristics of materiality of language foregrounded through its visual appearance, and since I have not found extensive theories of foregrounded materiality in fictive works, the work of Barthes and Genette serves as an appropriate base for a new analysis model.

II.III.I THE PARATEXTUAL ELEMENTS OF GENETTE

Paratextual elements refer to components that are secondary in relation to the primary text, “para” meaning alongside, auxiliary, and assistant to something else (Sadokierski 2010, pp. 17–18). In Gérard Genette’s model for analysis of paratextual elements, the paratextual devices are first positioned in the landscape of the textual whole, followed by a description of their literary function (Sadokierski 2010, p. 89). In his own words:

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 fulfill (to do what?). (Genette 1997, p. 4)
Genette discovers the context and functions of paratextual elements, and since this thesis investigates the possible functions of materiality of language, Genette’s model is applied. Although Genette’s term “paratext” implies that this mediation is secondary in relation to the primary text and the materiality of language on its behalf is highly integral to the primary text, the theory is still connected to this thesis. In her doctoral thesis *Visual Writing: A critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels, from a Visual Communication Design perspective*, the designer Zoë Sadokierski applies Genette’s theory to her critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels, although she considers the graphic devices integral to the works, and not paratextual. Sadokierski states that Genette’s approach:

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. (Sadokierski 2010, p. 90)

In my analysis of example novels, I similarly need to consider the work as a whole, since the narrative quality of functions are gained only through altering several levels of the story, as in Barthes’ statement quoted in the definition of narrative functions in Chapter 1. These levels are not necessarily revealed in direct connection to the foregrounded materiality to be studied, and therefore, the entity of the novel is to be included in the analysis. This condition constitutes the final reason why Genette’s revealing, holistic model is appropriate
as a base for the development of the analysis method in this thesis.

II. III. II THE ANCHORAGE AND RELAY OF BARTHES

In order to further investigate the relationship between the text and its materiality, the new model for analysis applies the theory presented in Rhetoric of the Image by Roland Barthes. This essay deals with the semiology of images, which as mentioned above represents a different materiality than that which I explore in An eye for an i, but by changing the object of study from images to materiality of language, Barthes theory is an appropriate addition to the new model.

In Rhetoric of the Image, Barthes divides the message of the image into three parts: the linguistic message, the denoted image, and the connoted image (Barthes 1977b, p. 37). The denoted image is the non-coded message, in other words the literal image, while the connoted image equals the coded message or the symbolic image. The linguistic message consists of textual matter in, under, and around the image (Barthes 1977b, pp. 37–38). When this theory is applied in the model for analysis of foregrounded materiality, the linguistic message equals the text of the novel, while the literal and symbolic images are equivalent to the denotations and connotations of the materiality of the linguistic code.

Barthes defines two different functions for the linguistic message; the anchorage and the relay. In the identification and interpretation of the image, the linguistic message that serves as an anchorage is dominant to the
image itself. All images are polysemous, in other words have multiple meanings, which Barthes explains by that “they imply, underlying their signifiers, a ‘floating chain’ of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others” (Barthes 1977b, p. 39). The signifiers of an image are thus not distinctly pointing at certain signifieds but are unspecific, which obstructs the interpretation of the image. The linguistic message is one of the techniques for guiding the reader in choosing which signifieds onto which the interpretation of the image is grounded. It clarifies the denotations of the image through “the text replies to the question: what is it?” The text identifies “the elements of the scene and the scene itself,” thus serving as a “denoted description of the image.” As for the connotations of the image, the text guides interpretation rather than identification, preventing the connoted meanings from multiplying (Barthes 1977b, p. 39). In Barthes terms, “the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image” and moves the reader “towards a meaning chosen in advance.” Hence, the text that serves as an anchorage to the image has a repressive value (Barthes 1977b, p. 40). The materiality of language is polysemous in the same way that images are, given that it is open for multiple interpretations, and the linguistic code that accompanies it has the possibility to guide identification as well as interpretation of the materiality.

Considering the function of relay, the relationship between text and image is complementary. The words, as well as the images, are fragments of a greater whole and “the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis” (Barthes 1977b,
Therefore, the text is not always superior to the image, but the linguistic code and the image may also work together on equal terms to reveal information. As for the object of study in this thesis, language and its materiality can likewise work together at the same level in order to deliver a message. In fact, this is sometimes even prescribed by the very conditions of the materiality of language. The more foregrounded the materiality is, the less readable the text becomes, and the reader must surrender to the significations of the materiality in addition to the fragmented text to be able to interpret the work as a whole. “As a text moves even further in foregrounding its materiality towards complete illegibility of the text,” as stated by Craig Dworkin, “the diminishing denotational capacity of its words helps to foreground the potential of the medium itself to signify” (Dworkin 2003, p. 73). This is the case in pages 272–284 of Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2005), where Thomas Schell Senior is writing frenetically in a book whose pages are about to end, so that for every page, the kerning, leading, and margins decrease in order to make space for everything that needs to be told. The text is readable until page 281 (FIG 14, p. 115), after which the letters and rows slowly merge into each other to finally form a black box at page 284 (FIG 15, p. 118), with white space only occasionally shining through the opaque letter texture. At page 281, the breaking point between legibility and illegibility of the text, the linguistic message functions as a relay. After this page, however, the materiality takes over the task of signification, connoting frenzies as well as secrecy, and the protagonist seems to be eager to tell
something that actually cannot be told. This part will be more thoroughly analyzed in Chapter III, with the aid of the questionnaire presented in the following section.

II.III.III QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PRINTED NOVELS

The questionnaire for the analysis of foregrounded materiality of language is developed from the theories of Genette and Barthes described in the section above. It is divided in five subsections due to five different themes that may be distinguished in the utilized theories. These themes are listed below, accompanied by the questions that I aim at finding answers to in the novels chosen for analysis, as well as the purpose and theoretical origin of the questions.

1. DENOTATIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC CODE

QUESTIONS What are the denotations of the linguistic message, in other words, what is the synopsis of the novel in question?

PURPOSE To get an overview of the context in which the materiality of language is set. Knowledge of the synopsis is crucial since it may serve as a guide for decoding the connotated message, which in An eye for an i equals the meaning of the foregrounded materiality, in other words, the result of the narrative function.

ORIGIN Rhetoric of the Image by Roland Barthes.
2. POSITION OF FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY, ADDRESSER AND ADDRESSEE

QUESTIONS Where in the context of the novel is the materiality of language foregrounded? How extensive is the section of foregrounded materiality in relation to the entire novel? Is the materiality addressed, and in that case, from whom and to whom?

PURPOSE When the position of the foregrounded materiality is defined, the functions of it are more easily distinguished, and this action might even facilitate interpretation of the materiality. The recognition of the extent of foregrounded materiality is additionally essential, since it signals the significance of the materiality in relation to the work as a whole. If the analysis in addition clarifies to which character this materiality has been credited as well as to whom he or she is speaking at this specific point, the method is assigned with a complementary potential of supporting conclusions of the meaning of the materiality.

ORIGIN Paratexts: Thresholds for interpretation by Gérard Genette.

3. DENOTATIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

QUESTIONS What are the denotations of the materiality? How, with what technique, is the materiality foregrounded? Is the materiality alphabetical, lexical, paginal, or compositional?

PURPOSE To define the visual appearance of the narrative function. The recognition of the active level
of iconic space may, as exemplified in Chapter 1 with the paragraph from *Everything Is Illuminated*, facilitate interpretation of the content. Thus, the connotation of the foregrounded materiality may be more easily distinguished.

**ORIGIN** *Rhetoric of the Image* by Roland Barthes.

### 4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND MATERIALITY

**QUESTIONS** What is the relationship between the text and its materiality, an anchorage or relay? Is the text superior to the materiality in revealing an overall message, or does the materiality and text work together as equal elements of representation? On the contrary, is the materiality superior to text?

**PURPOSE** To define the significance of the foregrounded materiality, and more precisely, whether the work could be expressed in a more conventional language. This question aims at investigating whether the hypothesis of *An eye for an i* is true or false, that is to say whether unconventional writing is essential to the analyzed stories or not.

**ORIGIN** *Rhetoric of the Image* by Roland Barthes.

### 5. FUNCTIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

**QUESTIONS** What does the materiality do, what functions does its message aim to fulfill?

**PURPOSE** To finally propose narrative functions of the foregrounded materiality of language. Accordingly, the
The final question postulates a subjective analysis, because the conveyed message always relies on a highly personal interpretation of the reader. The connotations of a work alter with the person who reads it, just like with the reading of images, where the interpretations of the same image may differ radically. “The variations depend on the different kinds of knowledge – practical, national, cultural, aesthetic – that each and every individual has” (Barthes 1977b, p. 46). In order to challenge the proposed functions of the foregrounded materiality of language, this analysis will be completed with other researchers’ readings of the same novels. These researchers are presented in connection to the example novels in the following chapter, in which this questionnaire is utilized to find possible narrative functions of foregrounding materiality of language through its visual appearance, and hence, whether foregrounded materiality offers strategies for telling stories that cannot be told otherwise.
CHAPTER III  THE POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF FOREGRUNDING THE MATERIALITY OF LANGUAGE THROUGH ITS VISUAL APPEARANCE

IN THIS CHAPTER, it is my intention to assemble a list of possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance. The list will be collected through theory and examples of three methods of foregrounding materiality; détournement, writing-through, and overprinting. Including works of poetry, the theoretical review of each method is presented in connection to the example novel with correlating foregrounded materiality.

In order to detect how a specific method generates a function that affects the narrative, I will refer to researchers’ interpretations, as well as making my own suggestions for additional connotations of the example texts. Therefore, the narrative functions are realized subjectively in specific contexts, but nevertheless, I strive to formulate the narrative functions generically,
and not specifically as Barthes does in the example of Flaubert’s novel. In this way, I attempt to assemble a list that is applicable to other works of fiction in addition to those I have analyzed. My initial aim was that the assembled list would hereby serve as a universal key to interpretation of the détournement, writing-through, and overprinting in general. However, the final list is unfortunately not universal, and the reasons as to why I did not succeed in achieving my initial aim will be elaborated on in Chapter IIII. Yet, a thorough understanding of the potentials of foregrounded materiality of language is generated through the findings of the following chapter.

III.I DÉTOURNEMENT

*Détournement*, French for diversion, hijacking, or misappropriation (Cambridge University Press 2018b), is a method of using existing objects, words, ideas, artwork, or media differently from what is intended, in order to create entirely new experiences (Goldsmith 2011, p. 38). This concept is included in a proposition on how to infuse excitement into the routine of everyday life. The designers of the proposition were the artists and philosophers of *Internationale Situationiste*, the Situationists, and with their détournements they demonstrated that words might serve as a model for political activity (Dworkin 2003, p. 11, Goldsmith 2011, p. 36).
In 1957, there was a merger of Asger Jorn’s CoBra group, the Mouvement International pour une Bauhaus Imaginiste (MIBI), the German Gruppe Spur, the Movimento Nuvleare, the London Psychogeographical Committee, and the Internationale Lettriste. This new union of philosophers and artists called themselves *Internationale Situationiste*, the Situationists. Two members of the Lettrists, Guy Debord and Michèle Bernstein, were to remain key figures until the dissolution of the group in 1972 (Dworkin 2003, p. 7). The central idea of this coalition was not to reinvent, but rather reframe, life. By shifting the perspective of an existing subject, however slightly, the Situationists were able to refresh the material at hand (Goldsmith 2011, p. 36). For example, Debord proposed that Beethoven’s *Eroica Symphony* should be détourned by simply renaming it *Lenin Symphony*. A friend of Debord followed a map of London when wandering through the Harz region of Germany, thus détourning the map, assigning it a purpose for which it was not intended (Goldsmith 2011, p. 37). Asger Jorn on his behalf supplied himself with old paintings from thrift shops and painted new images over the original works (Goldsmith 2011, p. 38). “By creating new situations,” as stated by the poet and critic Kenneth Goldsmith, “such interventions were intended to be a catalyst for social change filtered through a reorientation of normal life.” (Goldsmith 2011, p. 36).

To Debord, these cultural efforts represented the first steps towards the complete transformation of everyday
life. In *A User’s Guide to Détournement*, he and Gil Wolman writes:

> Finally, when we have got to the stage of constructing situations – the ultimate goal of all our activity – everyone will be free to detourn entire situations by deliberately changing this or that determinant conditions of them. (Debord & Wolman, 1956)

One of the main concerns of the Situationists was the postwar culture in which capital was saturating everyday life. Debord describes this threat in the Situationist statement *La société du spectacle* (The Society of the Spectacle), published in 1967 (Dworkin 2003, p. 8). The spectacle Debord refers to is an “authoritarian univocality that encourages a passive reception and obedient consumption of its message.” It is a monologue that refuses to be interrupted (Dworkin 2003, p. 9).

The Situationists understood that any opposition of this colonized culture is not only predicted but included in the strategy of capital, and what they did was to develop strategies of their own for playing under these circumstances. These artists did not make attempts to exit the structures in which they were trapped, but instead they “transformed the geography” of these organizations (Dworkin 2003, pp. 12–13). The détournements of Debord serve as examples of constructive engagement with these inescapable structures, and in the words of Dworkin:

> Taking what is given and improving upon it, détournement unsettles hierarchies by initiating a dialogue in
a formerly monologic setting and inscribing multiple authors and multiple sites for the generation of meaning. (Dworkin 2003, p. 13)

The dialogue is maintained by the fact that the Situationists allow both the original work and the manipulation of it to remain visible, and this is the main force of the détournement (Dworkin 2003, p. 13, 24). In brief, “it is a communication that contains its own critique.” This critique unsettles the ideological operations of the colonized culture and reveals the deceiving structures and logics behind it that would otherwise remain unnoticed (Dworkin 2003, p. 14).

Through détournements, the Situationists viewed materiality as a primary goal of their practice (Goldsmith 2011, p. 38). Their literary work stands as an example of a language that is not subordinate to the original content. “The defiant activity of words when they refuse to be merely containers for instrumental communication is a touchstone of Situationist poetics” (Dworkin 2003, p. 11), Dworkin states, and continues by quoting Debord: “Words coexist with power in a relation analogous to that which proletarians . . . have with power” (Debord 1963). A possible interpretation of Debord's statement is that if words connote proletarians, then power, or the lack of power of proletarians, is equal to the syntactical structures that words are subordinate to. The Situationists on their behalf strive for an active language that is not subordinate to any structure, and in Dworkin's opinion, the political potency of their operations certainly needs to be underscored (Dworkin 2003, p. 11).

Supported by Dworkin's findings about the Situation-
ists’ détournements, it may be stated that the materiality of language can serve as a model for political activity, with politics referring to “all relations of power . . . and the ethics of their distribution” (Dworkin 2003, p. 3, 11). Considering Dworkin’s conclusions, I suggest that a possible narrative function of the Situationists’ détournements is detected to be a critique of the source material.

### III. I. II ANALYSIS OF TREE OF CODES

The novel *Tree of Codes* (FIG 4–5), written by Jonathan Safran Foer and first published in 2010, may be seen to represent a détournement of the 21st century. Foer’s novel equals the experiments of the Situationists in that it is made out of an existing book that still remains present in the new work. The new story is die-cut out of the book *The Streets of Crocodiles*, written in Polish in 1934 by Bruno Schulz and translated into English in 1963 (Keskinen 2017, p. 88). However, contrary to the practice of the Situationists, Foer’s intention was not to criticize or misappropriate the original source. In the afterword of his novel, Foer states that even though *Tree of Codes* is a completely different book from *The Street of Crocodiles*, it should be seen as a continuation of Schulz’s original (Foer 2011a, p. 138). Foer’s acknowledgement is supported by the literature professors Mikkó Keskinen and N. Katherine Hayles, which is why I choose to triangulate my analysis with Keskinen’s essay *Carving Out Other Narratives: Textual Treatment in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Tree of Codes*.

*FIG 4–5. Tree of Codes*, inlay (p. 7) and cover. (Foer 2011b, PHOTO: Wikström 2018)
bri hooa

ss

back rising and fall the mother and I wanting to s

over a keyboard less day the hormonal f of gr paving stone had their eyes half-closed

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secret of The sleeping smiles
(2017) and Hayles’ essay *Combining Close and Distant Reading: Jonathan Safran Foer’s Tree of Codes and the Aesthetic of Bookishness* (2013). Informed by Keski-nen’s and Hayles’ perspectives, the following analysis demonstrates that a détournement may offer somewhat different narrative functions from those assigned by the Situationists.

1. **Denotations of the Linguistic Code**

*Tree of Codes* is told in first person by an unnamed protagonist who loses his mother, and as a result, the father of the family collapses of grief. In addition to the personal tragedy of the protagonist, the story includes yet another disaster; the city of the setting is threatened by a comet, “aiming unerringly at the earth and swallowing miles per second” (Foer 2011b, p. 132).

The result of Foer’s treatment of *The Street of Crocodiles* is an extremely fragmented text, into which the readers, to a greater degree than in conventional literature, are invited to fill the gaps. The language is also made highly connotative due to Foer having cut out large parts of *The Street of Crocodiles*, thus connecting words and phrases that are not originally linked together in Schulz’s text. For example: “August had expanded into enormous tongues of greenery. August painted The air with a mop.” (Foer 2011b, pp. 12–13). (Here, the fact that sentence boundaries of Schulz’s work are crossed in Foer’s new sentences is made visible through the mid-sentence “The” being written with an uppercase T, implying that this “The” begins a new sentence.
in Schulz’s text.) Summarizing the synopsis of *Tree of Codes* is therefore a tough task and a strictly denotative reading does not make sense. The interpretations of the synopsis are multiple and unspecified:

*Tree of Codes* is the story of an enormous last day of life — as one character’s life is chased to extinction . . . (Goodreads 2010)

The narrative of *Tree of Codes* operates according to a dream logic . . . It is told from the perspective of a boy who first loses his mother and watches his father fall apart in the aftermath, only to then somehow have the father die first, the mother now beset by grief as the father wanders as a ghost, hiding in corners, the boy trying to find meaning in a world of faceless masks . . . the narrative finally concluding with an impending armageddon in the form of a comet, a doom that is inevitable, unavoidable . . . (Rager 2012)

The vague and short description found on goodreads.com is quoting the book directly: “An enormous last day of life” (Foer 2011b, p. 11). Matt Rager, a PhD. student at Yale University’s English Department, is interpreting the seemingly contradictory sequence of events, that first implies the mother’s death, then the father’s death by grief, followed by the mother’s misery over the loss of the father, as a surrealistic setting. The series of events is indeed presented in a seemingly conflicting order, but in my opinion, it does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a chronological sequence.

This lack of non-fragmented denotations results in a somewhat opaque linguistic code of *Tree of Codes.*
Since the reader is not able to understand the content merely by its linguistic representation, the role of signification is partly taken over by the materiality of the language. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the materiality is essential to the interpretation of the work as a whole.

2. POSITION OF FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY, ADDRESSER AND ADDRESSEE

The die-cut method is applied to the entire novel, and by this gesture, Foer foregrounds the materiality throughout the whole story. Since the novel is told in the first person, the immediate assumption for the addresser of the foregrounded materiality is that of the protagonist. In parts of the novel, this unnamed character seems conscious of the materiality of the book, which will be elaborated on in the following section of the analysis. Considering his awareness, the protagonist himself is assumed to be the addresser, given that the readers are the addressees.

However, in his afterword, Foer adds a dimension to the story which could imply yet another addresser of the foregrounded materiality in *Tree of Codes*. He informs the reader that Bruno Schulz was a Jewish high school teacher born in 1892 in a small town in the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia (which is now Poland). This town was invaded by the Germans in 1941, and Schulz entrusted his friends with the mission of preserving his work (Foer 2011a, p. 137). Then, in 1942, he was executed by a Gestapo officer (Foer 2011a, 64).
p. 138), and despite Schulz’s attempts to save his works, the only remains of his fictive works are the story collections *The Street of Crocodiles* and *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*. “The work lost to history”, as Foer puts it, “is, in many ways, the story of the century” (Foer 2011a, p. 137). The 20th century is indeed colored by the first and second World Wars, which resulted in an erasure of a vast amount of cultural heritage.

Accordingly, Foer draws a parallel between the tragedy of Bruno Schulz and Jewish folklore, specifically mentioning the story of the Wailing Wall. When the Romans occupied Jerusalem, they attempted to destroy the Second Temple, and succeeded in tearing down all but one of the walls. The Romans decided to leave the fourth wall intact as visible proof of their greatness, and ever since, the location is visited by Jews who fill the cracks of the remaining wall with small notes containing prayers (Foer 2011a, p. 137). “Like the Wailing Wall,” Foer states, “Schulz’s surviving work evokes all that was destroyed in the War” (Foer 2011a, p. 138). Foer hereby suggests that remains left from destruction, however minor; still serve as a memorandum of what once was.

The connection between Schulz and the history of the Jewish people suggests that the remaining words in Foer’s work as well could serve as a symbol for the Wailing Wall. In that case, the addressers of the foregrounded materiality are the Romans, or any of the authorities that have ever been involved in the extinction of Jewish culture. The addressee then is the rest of the world, which by this extinction was to witness the greatness of the government in power.
When readers open *Tree of Codes*, they are faced not with a view of a solid spread but with several scarred pages revealed through the holes of the book. On the right side, words of numerous pages morph into an illegible paragraph of sentence fragments (FIG 5, p. 61), while the left-hand view exposes nothing but holes (FIG 6, p. 66). The empty left-hand view is a result of the text being printed only on the right-hand pages of the book, a requirement for the die-cutting technique to work. Were the text printed on both sides of the pages, it would be highly arduous, if not impossible, to arrange the die-cuts so as to reveal relevant words on both sides.

As mentioned in the previous section of the analysis, the protagonist himself seems to be aware of this appearance. In one passage, he forms clear associations to the foregrounded materiality: “Reality is as thin as paper. only the small section immediately before us is able to endure, behind us sawdust in an enormous empty theater” (Foer 2011b, pp. 92–93). Here, reality may refer to the printed words on the right-hand pages that are presented “immediately before us.” The empty left-hand view on its behalf may symbolize the past, and indeed, the appearance of the die-cut holes resembles rows of chairs in a cinema or amphitheater.

Regarding the iconic space of *Tree of Codes*, the materiality is foregrounded on the lexical, paginal, and compositional level. The operation on the lexical level consists of the construction of sentences through erasing a large part of the original words. In Katherine Hay-
les counting, Foer’s novel consists of only 3,815 words, approximately ten percent, out of the 37,483 words of Schulz’s original (Hayles 2013, p. 227). The paginal level is also altered since the words are erased through die-cutting the original paragraph structures of Schulz’s pages. Furthermore, the fact that Foer cuts each page of the original work enables him to distort the compositional level of the work. As mentioned above, the readers face several pages when opening the book, which is not possible in a conventional codex form, where the view of the open novel consists of only one solid spread. This action results in narrative functions that will be demonstrated in the final section of the analysis.

Except for in the title of the work, where single letters and syllables are cut out, the alphabetical level on its behalf is left untouched. As a result, the original work is allowed to guide the story to a larger extent than if the characters and syllables also were cut out. A new work created out of elements of the alphabetical level of an existing work does not necessarily contain a strong link to the original story, because characters in an existing work are not unique in the same sense as the words and sentences may be. The new work could accordingly be created out of any existing work, and the original text would not be pronounced in the new piece.

Thus, the choice Foer has made to not operate on the alphabetical level enhances the material condition of the verbal art as explained in the first section of Chapter I, where it is stated that new writing is made possible due to existing works. The alphabet is not exclusive to any work, as Mikko Keskinen, professor in literature at the University of Jyväskylä, states:
Both the alphabet and the completed text are closed sets but in radically different ways. The alphabet has no copyright, moral or legal, whereas a published work usually does. One exists, as it were, on the level of mere atoms; the other dwells in the sphere of higher-order molecular combinations which form functioning organisms, or at least recognizable physical objects. (Keskinen 2017, p. 88)

A novel created out of the characters of another work of fiction consequently destructs the original molecular combinations, such as words and sentences. *Tree of Codes*, for example, which although told by Foer is expressed through Schulz’s words, stands as an example of a work where the materiality of the original has a large impact on the final piece. This influence is partly a result of the decision to leave the alphabetical level of the original work untouched.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND MATERIALITY

As mentioned in the first section of the analysis, the opaque linguistic code of *Tree of Codes* results in the signifying mechanisms being partly overtaken by the materiality of language. Keskinen supports this view in arguing that the die-cut method forms additional narratives in the verbally expressed story:

The primary (in the sense of sustained) narrative cut out by Foer is certainly the verbal one, the one that is left visible on the pages. But the other one, the holey text, should
Keskinen hereby underscores the importance of the tactile and visual qualities for interpreting the content. However, the text is not an insignificant part of the narrative entity. On occasion it even serves to explain the materiality, as exemplified above with the protagonist offering an interpretation of the visual appearance of the spreads. Hence, the fragmented text is not completely suppressed but functions as a relay in relationship to the materiality, and only by considering the content and its form as a whole, the reader is able to decode the meaning of the work.

The Author’s Afterword (Foer 2011a, pp. 137–139) on its behalf serves as an anchorage to the materiality of the work. As mentioned in the section about the addressee of the materiality, Foer uses the afterword to draw a parallel between the surviving works of Schulz and the Wailing Wall. If the surviving works of Schulz serve as a symbol for the Wailing Wall, the remaining words in Foer’s work may do so as well. Without the afterword, the reader is unlikely to interpret the materiality as associated with Jewish culture and history, and an essential dimension of the work would remain unexplored. Thus, the text of the afterword is superior to the materiality of the entire work in revealing the overall message of Tree of Codes.

Although this novel would be difficult, if not to say impossible, to interpret without the conventionally written afterword, the materiality has an essential role
in the storytelling. As already stated, the main text of *Tree of Codes* functions as a relay related to the foregrounded materiality, and in addition, the materiality is foregrounded throughout the entire novel. These facts assign a leading part to the materiality, and result in the material aspects not being able to be removed without the story losing an essential element for its progression. As such, *Tree of Codes* cannot be expressed solely through its linguistic content in the form of conventional writing.

5. NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

Previously in the analysis of *Tree of Codes*, it is indicated that the narrative functions of the materiality in this work emerge partly from operations on the compositional level. The holes cut in each page result in the reader not only reading the text on the open spread, but also recognizing words inscribed on future pages. Considering the conventional linearity of reading, the reader relies on what has already been read in order to understand the present page. In *Tree of Codes*, however, this page-to-page continuity is manipulated. Rager (2012) argues that this operation results in the understanding of the present page being not only informed by what has been read, but also by the fragmented sentences located several pages away. Furthermore, he draws a remarkable parallel between the scattered view of *Tree of Codes* and a historically aware reading of *The Street of Crocodiles*:
Just as a reader of *Tree of Codes* cannot help but be influenced by the words pushing up into view from the future, one cannot read Schulz’s descriptions of his hometown in *The Street of Crocodiles*, magical and effervescent in the eyes of his child narrator, and not think of what would happen soon after. (Rager 2012)

The unconventional view of the open spread of *Tree of Codes* is hereby associated with the perspective of a reader that when reading *The Street of Crocodiles* is aware of Schulz’s tragic account. Thus, the foregrounded materiality of Foer’s work serves to visualize the qualities of a reading put in its historical context. In Rager’s words, *Tree of Codes* “meditates simultaneously upon . . . the phenomenology of reading, and the ways in which the material page embeds multiple temporalities connecting reader, writer, and the long string of history between” (Rager 2012). The narrative functions of the foregrounded materiality therefore consist partly of a revitalization of the reading process as well as a simultaneous view of multiple sequences that otherwise are presented in a conventional, linear fashion.

There is yet another narrative function of the foregrounded materiality to be defined, which locates Foer’s treatment of Schulz’s work as a somewhat contradicting method in comparison with the practice of the Situationists. The purpose of the original détournements is to alter the content of a specific work into a critique of itself, whereas *Tree of Codes* strives to be an extension of its source. In his afterword, Foer states that *The Street of Crocodiles* is a work he deeply appreciates. He defines his work “as a small response to that great book”
(Foer 2011a, pp. 139), which constitutes his affection to Schulz’s original collection of short stories. For many years Foer had tried to find a proper work out of which a new novel could be exhumed, and explains: “I was in search of a text whose erasure would somehow be a continuation of its creation” (Foer 2011a, pp. 138). The die-cutting method should thus not be seen as a critique of *The Street of Crocodiles*, a statement which is visualized, if only subtly, on the spine of the book. Here, the letter O in “JONATHAN” is substituted by a plus sign. The O could as well be regarded as a zero, and by changing a zero to a plus, Foer shows that although this book is executed by die-cutting, the treatment of the materiality is not to be regarded as an erasure of the original story but an addition to it. With Foer’s own statement and the possible visual clue on the spine, it is clear that the foregrounded materiality of *Tree of Codes* does not function as an opposition or censoring of Schulz but as a continuation on his writings.

Without the afterword, the purpose of the erasure remains unclear to a reader that has not read *The Street of Crocodiles*. For this reader, the treatment could as well rhyme with the intentions of the Situationists and stand as a critique or censorship of Schulz’s work. As Hayles point out, ninety percent of the content is cut out, which obviously results in an entirely different work than *The Street of Crocodiles*. She states that Foer erases every minor character and alters the relationship between the parents of the protagonist. Considering the original novel, Foer may be accused for “stripping it of sexuality, animality, and sleaz[ing] and substituting in their places a bourgeois marriage in which Mother
and Father are devoted to each other” (Hayles 2013, p. 228). However, Hayles suggests that Foer’s treatment is justified by the new, carved out narratives (Hayles 2013, p. 229). She supports her statement with several examples where Foer seems to express the content of the erased parts with the connotations of the die-cut method. In Hayles’ reading, the material form of *Tree of Codes* evokes a lecture by the protagonist’s father on his view of creation (2013, p. 230), which is also noted by Keskinen (2017, p. 95). In this passage, the father speaks to a group of sewing woman, declaring:

Matter is the most passive and most defenseless essence in the cosmos. Anyone can mold it and shape it; it obeys everybody. All attempts at organizing matter are transient and temporary, easy to reverse and to dissolve. There is no evil in reducing life to other and newer forms. (Schulz 1963/2008, p. 31, cited in Keskinen 2017, p. 95)

Keskinen compares it to Foer’s version, and finds that it is close to the original although it erases the core of it, the nature of matter itself: “All attempts at organizing matter are transient and temporary, easy to reverse and to dissolve. There is no evil in reducing life to other and newer forms. . . . Homicide is not a sin.” (Foer 2011b, p. 49) Considering this passage, Foer has not by definition changed the meaning, but instead made the text more generic, applicable to every possible attempt at anything whatsoever.

According to Keskinen, Foer’s treatment of Schulz’s book is justified by the father’s view of the flexibility of matter and the impermanency of its organization.
Nevertheless, Keskinen argues that by erasing the nature of matter from the paragraph above, Foer inverses the view on matter that the father describes. He claims: “But the resulting Tree of Codes erases that very rule [of the malleability of matter and the transience of its organization] and thus nominally solidifies matter, making it intransient, stable and irreversible” (Keskinen 2017, pp. 95–96). Nevertheless, in my opinion, this erasure serves only as a literal description of that Foer in his treatment of The Street of Crocodiles has indeed erased matter, which supports Hayles’ statement that Foer’s treatment is justified by that the new narratives that are carved out correlate with Schulz’s original (Hayles 2013, p. 229). If the theme of flexible matter presented by the father can be considered central to Schulz’s work as a whole, The Street of Crocodiles is an appropriate source for a work that foregrounds its materiality through the re-organizing of matter. Foer’s strive to find a work that by erasure would be continued seems by the evidence of the comparison above to have been accomplished. In addition, it is hereby proved that the narrative function of a détournement might as well be a continuation of the original work as well as a critique of it.

III.I.III POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF DÉTOURNEMENTS

The narrative functions of foregrounded materiality through détournements are hence detected as a critique or a continuation of the source, a revitalization of the page-to-page continuity of the reading process as well
as a simultaneous record of multiple sequences in the otherwise linear medium of the printed novel. However, the latter two suggested narrative functions are more dependent on specific operations at the compositional level than on the method of détournement itself. In addition to these narrative functions, I suggest two additional functions that through implications in the linguistic code of the story may alter the level of the narrative. First, Dworkin’s notion considering the Situationists’ work as a model for political may serve as a narrative function, for instance in a story that deals with power relations. Second, due to that the détournement leaves its original source visible, it may offer a possibility of using two voices simultaneously: the voice of the original work, as well as the voice of the manipulation. These suggested narrative functions will be examined in the context of i-catching, and analyzed in Chapter IIII. Furthermore, the latter suggestion of a narrative function that offers a possibility of keeping a simultaneous record of multiple voices may also be assigned to the following technique of foregrounding materiality, that is, the method of writing-through.

III.II  WRITING-THROUGH

The procedure of writing-through is a more or less automated technique of writing, in which a new work is created through the manipulation of a source according to a predefined set of rules. According to the definition by the poet, composer, and visual artist Jackson Mac Low, writing-through methods (or reading-through
text-selection procedures, as referred to by Mac Low) consist in that “the writer searches through source texts to find, successively, words and/or other linguistic units that have specific characteristics—or uses a computer program to conduct the searches” (Mac Low 2001, p. 220). The specific characteristics are determined by the writer and may imply particular words or persons’ names, as was the case with the mesostics of John Cage (Mac Low 2001, p. 219). The expression “mesostic” is derived from “meso”, meaning middle, and “stich”, in other words, verse line (Dworkin 2003, p. 88). This term was suggested to Cage by the scholar Norman O. Brown, since the method needed to be distinguished from acrostics. In acrostic compositions, the letters of the index words are located partly similarly as in mesostic writing, one letter per strophe, but either at the beginning or the end of the strophes (Mac Low 2001, p. 215). In the following section, the focus turns to the Cage’s mesostics.

III.II.I THE MESOSTICS OF CAGE

In order to diminish the impact of his own ego, Cage practiced a “nonsyntactical” language in his works. The term syntax comprises the ways in which linguistic elements, for instance words, are put together to form components such as phrases or clauses (Merriam-Webster 2018e). The “nonsyntactical” language of Cage implies a language that differs from the conventional syntax (Mac Low 2001, p. 211). Cage’s interest arose from the statements of Norman O. Brown and the poet
and philosopher Henry David Thoreau, who strongly influenced Cage’s work. Cage explains:

Due to N. O. Brown’s remark that syntax is the arrangement of the army, and Thoreau’s that when he heard a sentence he heard feet marching, I became devoted to nonsyntactical ‘demilitarized’ language. (Cage 1978, unpag., 1st page of introduction)

In the search of this “nonsyntactical” language that would be freed from the inflexible, normative syntax, Cage wrote the four-part poem Empty Words (1979), in his own words “a transition from a language without sentences (having only phrases, words, syllables, and letters) to a ‘language’ having only letters and silence (music).” (Cage 1978, unpag., 1st page of introduction) The first part of the poem omits sentences, but includes mixed phrases, words, syllables, and letters, as well as silence; part two excludes sentences and phrases but combines words, syllables, and letters, and includes silence; part three omits sentences, phrases, and words but includes mixed syllables and letters, and silence; and part four omits every element except for letters and silence. The source of the elements is Thoreau’s Journal, and the combinations are executed through chance operations (Mac Low 2001, p. 217). By relying on these chance operations, Cage was able to reduce his own role in the process of art-making, allowing the experience of art as perceived in itself, “rather than as means of communication, expression, or emotional arousal or as subordinate elements in a structure” (Mac Low 2001, p. 211). Thus, Cage broke down the
arrangement of the syntactical army and used the sentences, phrases, words, and syllables not as subordinate elements in the syntactical structure, but as elements with a value of their own. By this gesture, he omitted the self-expression of the traditional artist and let the language speak for itself.

Another example of Cage’s “nonsyntactical” language is his mesostic writing, poems in which a chosen word or name occurs in capitals in the middle of the strophes, one character per line. Cage outlines the principal mesostic rule as follows: “[T]he first letter of a word or name is on the first line and following it on the first line the second letter of the word or name is not to be found. (The second letter is on the second line.)” (Cage 1978, unpag., 2nd page of introduction)

When he during a bus trip, on the way to hunt morels, was asked what a mesostic is by a group of music students, he wrote:

Music
cOnducted
in spRing
by trEes:
dutch eLm dizesase.

(Cage 1978, unpag., 2nd page of introduction)

In this example, Cage composes the first line of the poem without an O, that is to be found on the second line, the second line without an R (and notes that the word “performed” would therefore not have been appropriate), the third line without an E, and final-
ly, the fourth line without an L, according to the first principal mesostic rule (Cage 1978, unpag., 2nd page of introduction).

However, when Cage first started to compose mesostics in 1967, these poems were syntactical (Mac Low 2001, p. 215, 220). Only at the beginning of the 70s, Cage started to build his mesostic poems by chance operations and writing-through methods (Mac Low 2001, p. 220). This is the case with the five writings through *Finnegans Wake*, where Cage uses the highly experimental novel by James Joyce as source material, and manipulates it with the name of the author as index. On the following page, the initial mesostics of the first version, *Writing through Finnegans Wake* (1978), are presented (FIG 7, p. 81). This first version utilized only the first principal mesostic rule, as described above. Searching for the letters of the index word, Cage scanned through the source text, and when he detected the first word including the first index letter, simultaneously excluding the second index letter, he added it to the first line of the verse. He proceeded linearly by looking for a word including the second letter but excluding the third, and added this finding to the second line. Between these two words, he included any amount of words he wished, as long as the first line did not include the index letter of the second line, and the second line not included the index letter of the third, and so forth.

Such was the procedure of Cage’s first writing through *Finnegans Wake*, whereas the second version applied an additional rule. In *Writing for the Second Time through Finnegans Wake*, Cage avoided the repeti-
wroth with two nathandJoe
A
Malt
jhEm
Shen
pfschute
Of finnegans
that the bumpeVhillhead of humself
is at the knoCk out
in thE park
Jecup
the fathor
My
hEaven
Skysign
Judges
Or
deuteronomY
watsCh
thE future
pentschanjeunchy
chAp
Mighty
cEment
and edificeS
the Jebel and the
crOpherb
BYday
and the allCasualy
ansrs hElpers
Jollybrool
And
strupithumP
and all thE upproor
auproofS
to fjell
his baywinds' Obbooes
all the lYVYlong
tricky
trochees

FIG 7. In Writing through Finnegans Wake, Cage kept every punctuation mark on its original location, only manipulating the orientation by chance operations [Cage 1978, unpag.], 4th page of introduction] (Cage 1978, unpag., 1st page of poem, PHOTO: Wikström 2018)
tion of an already used syllable, if the syllable contained a letter of the index name. Cage explains:

I distinguished between the two J’s and the two E’s. The syllable ‘just’ could be used twice, once for the J of James and once for the J of Joyce, since it has neither A nor O after the J. But it could not be used again. (Cage 1979, pp. 135–136)

With this restriction, the second version of Cage’s writing through *Finnegans Wake* was remarkably shorter than his first version (Mac Low 2001, p. 221).

These mesostic rules were to be accompanied with yet another constraint. In 1979, Cage received a letter by Louis Mink who served as a professor of philosophy at Wesleyan University (Cage 1983, p. 1, Mac Low 2001, p. 221). Mink wrote to Cage that he “had invented the impure mesostic”, and that “[a] pure mesostic . . . would not permit the appearance of either letter between two of the name” (Cage 1983, p. 1). For instance, neither j nor a was to appear between the two first capitalized letters in the mesostics of *Finnegans Wake*. This resulted in Cage’s third version of the manipulation, in which the first principal rule was extended at the suggestion of Mink, and thus neither the first nor the second letter of the capitalized word or name is to be found between the two capitalized letters in question (Mac Low 2001, p. 221). In *Writing for the Fourth Time through Finnegans Wake*, Cage applied this extended principal mesostic rule as well as the syllable rule. The fifth version, named *Muoyce*, does not consist of mesostic poems, but is instead a composition of mixed chapters by chance oper-
ations (Mac Low 2001, p. 221). The four first versions of writing through Finnegans Wake can thus be seen as the development of Cage’s mesostic technique, from having been a syntactical method to becoming what Cage refers to as “nonsyntactical.”

Although Cage applies pure chance operations only in his fifth version of Finnegans Wake, the mesostics of the first four versions are executed partly by chance. They are, for instance, not entirely intentional. According to Mac Low, the part of a mesostic writing-through method that consists of finding the index name or word is “nonintentional, since the poet does not consciously or ‘unconsciously’ select the word, but as accurately as possible, finds it” (Mac Low 2001, p. 226). In i-catch-ing, the index sentence is affected by the material at hand, resulting in at least a partly unintended finding, which will be further demonstrated in Chapter III. However, the quality of chance serves to break down the involvement of the authoritative ego. Considering the status of the ego in the writing-through procedures of methods such as Cage’s, Dworkin states: “On the one hand, rule-governed procedures sufficiently distance the conventional, romantic conception of the artistic ego from the production of the poem . . .” (Dworkin 2003, p. 96). In applying rules to the execution of a literary work, the author is, in other words, able to diminish his own presence in the final piece.

It is important, however, to note that the first four writings are not entirely governed by chance (Mac Low 2001, p. 224). As Mac Low points out, selecting the words between the words of the index letters in mesostics is intentional. Dworkin also proceeds, from the
quote in the previous paragraph: “on the other hand, the recourse to rules never seems to surrender agency completely enough” (Dworkin 2003, p. 96). Both Dworkin and Mac Low notes that in his mesostics, Cage is certainly able to diminish his own valuation, but cannot erase himself completely from the writing process (Mac Low 2001, p. 226–227).

Dworkin points out another problematic quality of the writing-through of Cage and Mac Low, who also have practiced equal writing-through techniques as Cage. In the early 1980s, Mac Low as well as Cage was writing through Ezra Pound’s Cantos, and both of them manipulated the source text with the index name “Ezra Pound” (Dworkin 2003, p. 88–89). According to Dworkin, the choice of this index is a contradiction of the main intention of the poets’ writing-through methods, since “they both explicitly describe their algorithmic procedures as a way to follow the Buddhist and Taoist goal for working towards dissolution of the ego” (Dworkin 2003, p. 95). Neither Cage nor Mac Low chose his own name for an index, but nevertheless, the result highlights the writer of the original source, which still stands as “the very sign of the ego” (Dworkin 2003, p. 96). If the intention of Cage and Mac Low is to let the language speak for itself and to regard the linguistic elements as having a value of their own, it is undoubtedly distracted by the constant repetition of the capitalized author’s name.

Even though the intervention of the author cannot be erased completely through writing-through methods and mesostics, the function of these techniques can still be considered as at least diminishing the valuation of
the author in the final work. Considering Cage’s work, it is, however, not a question of a narrative function as defined in this thesis, since the narrative function alters the storytelling, which does not resonate with the language Cage was in search for. He did not develop his methods to generate a language as a container for communication, but instead as a means in itself (Mac Low 2001, p. 211). Therefore, it may be seen as a contradictory act to assign narrative functions to the mesostics. According to Cage, language shall not be subordinate to any content.

Nevertheless, to completely erase the signifying function of language seems like an impossible task. Goldsmith points out that “even in their most abstracted form, letters are embedded with semantic, semiotic, historical, cultural, and associative meanings” (Goldsmith 2011, p. 34). He exemplifies the statement with his own associations to the single letter a, which range from a top grade to Andy Warhol’s poem (Goldsmith 2011, p. 34). Even the most automated writing process of Cage, which he for instance utilizes in his Empty Words, cannot escape connotations at length. This is due to the fact that even single letters, as Goldsmith points out, are capable of arousing associations. Therefore, the narrative functions of language are unavoidable.

As a result, the function that Cage assigns to his writing, the decrease of the author’s valuation in the final work, may even so be utilized as a narrative function. If an author chooses to apply writing-through methods governed by rules instead of his or her own valuation, the power of the author is diminished, and in a narrative setting this function may be applied to connote
shifting power structures, or simply a language that speaks for itself. This connotation is aimed at in my story of i-catching, in which the uppercase letters of the fourth chapter raise their voices to take command over an escalating dispute, and in order to achieve this, I have applied writing-through methods that resemble Cage’s writing. My initial intention was that the decreasing valuation of the author hereby would take an active part in the storytelling, and thus, would serve as a narrative function.

An additional narrative function of writing-through methods may be derived from Dworkin’s view that the procedure of these methods illustrates how readers to some extent may be seen as writers. He explains his statement by the readers are “selecting certain material from a text while ignoring other aspects, activating particular codes of signification at the expense of other strategies, and adhering to given protocols of linguistic recombination as they necessarily violate alternative procedures” (Dworkin 2003, p. 91). The methods of writing-through work similarly; the particular index word is selected and foregrounded through certain words, syllables and letters, while other linguistic elements are omitted. An author may apply the writing-through technique in order to connote the selective reading process of characters in or readers of the novel, and thus, Dworkin’s suggestion that procedures of writing-through resembles the reading process would serve as a narrative function.

Furthermore, there are other possible narrative functions of the writing-through method to be detected. Dworkin also notes that the chance element of writing-
through, which is a result of the automated part of the process, consists of the new work potentially serving alternately as a conjunction and convulsion of the original. According to Dworkin, Cage’s and Mac Low’s versions of the *Cantos* stand as convulsive examples, since these works “can only be taken, from Pound’s perspective, as a challenging affront and indignity” (Dworkin 2003, p. 101). Mac Low confesses his disagreement with Pound’s political ideas, but states that his version is also an homage to the poetry of Pound:

I was able to value his poetry highly, while abhorring his fascism, and by reading and writing through the *Cantos* as I did, I may have all but purged the latter from the former—peeling from that great verbal collage most of the fascist montage with which Pound had burdened it. (Mac Low 2001, p. 224)

Accordingly, one of the narrative functions of writing-through methods may be to criticize the source, or to simultaneously criticize and continue the original, or to simply continue the creation of the work. Hence, this method works similarly to the Situationists’ détour-nement, and is even referred to by Dworkin as a version of the Situationist method of manipulation, when he states that in writing through Pound’s *Cantos*, Mac Low and Cage “détourne” the original source material (Dworkin 2003, p. 101).

The possible narrative functions of writing-through methods are hereby listed to include the decrease of the author’s valuation, the description of the selective reading process, as well as the narrative functions of the
détournements, that is, the criticizing and/or continuation of the source material. In the following section, the novel *Double or Nothing* will be analyzed, and through this analysis as well as a study of Raymond Federman’s fictive works in general, additional narrative functions of writing-through methods will be detected.

### III.II.II ANALYSIS OF *DOUBLE OR NOTHING*

*Double or Nothing: a real fictitious discourse* (FIG 8–9, p. 89) is a novel written by Raymond Federman, first published by The Swallow Press Inc. in 1971. Most other American publishers were too afraid to publish the book, due to the costs of typesetting that would presumably arise in a typographical experiment of this level. The Swallow Press solved the economic issue by publishing an offset version of the original manuscript, and it was only in 1992, when Fiction Collective Two published the third edition, that *Double or Nothing* was finally typeset (Gerdes 2010, p. 131).

In this novel and other of his early fictional works, Federman practices typographical experiments by concretism (Gerdes 2010, p. 131), a term implying the view that language should be considered a thing in itself, and not subordinate to content (Caws 2001, p. 518). Along with the novels of Kenneth Patchen, for instance *Sleepers Awake*, published in 1946, *Double or Nothing* is one of the first American fictive works to apply concretist ideas such as that text should refer to itself instead of to the story (Gerdes 2010, p. 131). This self-referentiality that is frequently present in *Double
the garbage can... so I raised him another 50 bucks... he flinched that little punk... hesitated... you could see that... mumbled something in his teeth... a dirty word... with a little twist of the mouth... I raised you another 50 he finally said just like that look at the eyes... what a shit... oh... I was sweating arms and in the crook of my shoulder jockies sticking to me... I really pushed all the way to the front of me into the crowd... in his hand... cool as a cucumber... I pushed... the surface but inside like hell... I was almost... to raise him another 50 bucks... the kind of guts I have... that did it... I had to give all the details of emotions and reactions... after all it's only a game... but what a game... I'll use that exactly how the whole thing happened approximately... but first I'll have to be able to take it... he'll have to learn how to play because when he first arrives in America he's so dumb he doesn't even know how to play poker... I eventually I'll teach him... I'll make a gambler out of him too... but in the beginning nothing... just as dumb as the guy with the Flush... 

or Nothing resonates with Cage’s strive to create art that should be perceived in itself, and not as a means of communication (Mac Low 2001, p. 211). However, Federman’s self-referential typographical experiments do communicate and convey meaning, which will be clearly stated in the analysis below. The link to Cage’s oeuvre is nevertheless present due to how in Double or Nothing, Federman practices writing-through methods that resemble mesostic writing in one passage of the book. In addition, he applies acrostic writing in another passage, and the mesostic and acrostic text excerpts are the objects of analysis in the following sections.

My subjective study will be completed with Federman’s essay on writing and the Holocaust, The Necessity and Impossibility of Being a Jewish Writer (2004), which hints to possible narrative functions of his fictive works. In addition, I refer to Susan Rubin Suleiman’s article When Postmodern Play Meets Survivor Testimony (2010), where Suleiman outlines some of the central issues of Federman’s writing. Although these texts consider Federman’s work in general and not specifically deal with the passages chosen for this analysis, they explain the general intentions of Federman in his fiction, which serve to facilitate interpretation of the text excerpts in question. In order to understand these passages, the readers need to grasp the central narrative methods of Federman, as well as the entire context of Double or Nothing, and the analysis will start by outlining the synopsis of the novel as a whole.
The story of *Double or Nothing* is told through the actions of four persons. The first person is called the *recorder*, “a rather stubborn and determined middle-aged man” (Federman 1992, p. 0), who has decided to document the story of another man. This other man is a Jew from Europe, “Poland it seems” (Federman 1992, p. 0), who has moved to America after having survived the German occupation of the Second World War. He is referred to as the second person, the *inventor*, and he intends to lock himself in a room for 365 days, in order to write the story of the third person, the *protagonist*. The activities of these three persons are finally controlled by the fourth person, who on the very last page of the novel is confessed to be the *author* of the book.

The novel is supposed to focus on the story of the protagonist, who travels to New York to live with his uncle, since his parents and two sisters were murdered in a German concentration camp, “Auschwitz probably” (Federman 1992, p. 0). The inventor, however, is utterly determined not to write about this tragic account, instead focusing on the new, American life of the protagonist. Nevertheless, the novel does not focus on the protagonist, and the voices of the recorder and author also remain silent. Instead, the pages are occupied by the erratic thoughts, plans, and calculations of the inventor. He never starts writing the actual story, but rather contemplates what he will write, and more importantly, what he will need to survive for 365 days of writing. The inventor has a limited budget of 1200 dollars, and starts by calculating the rent for the room (FIG 10, p. 92):
FIG 10. Page 1 of *Double or Nothing*, where the inventor calculates the costs for the room in which he is going to lock himself for 365 days of writing. (Federman 1992, PHOTO: Wikström 2018)
Throughout the entire novel, the inventor keeps getting back to the main source of nutrition for his year in the room, the noodles, which often is expressed in purely typographic pages. This is the case of the unpaginated page preceding the beginning of the novel, where “noodles” is repeated as a typographic pattern covering the entire page, while some “noodles” are erased to form a plus sign, a down-pointing triangle, an up-pointing triangle, as well as a minus sign in the negative space between the “noodles.” The inventor also spends three pages pondering tomato sauce, and three additional pages for a meditation on the importance of a toothbrush, after which he remembers a guy he once met that lost his toothbrush and found it in his toilet bowl. The novel continues with the inventor alternately designing his main character and calculating his supplies, and concludes in the final pages with “The List”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The List</th>
<th>The List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>416.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noodles</td>
<td>105.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato Sauce</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>20.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothbrush</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet Paper</td>
<td>14.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes</td>
<td>212.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing Gum</td>
<td>19.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total            | 807.01        |

(Federman 1992, p. 257)
In the end, the inventor has not finished anything but a list of supplies, which he even recognizes as incomplete:

But of course I’m only guessing it could be more or it could be less but one cannot take chances particularly since I am not sure we started with an even 1200 dollars that figure was never clarified nor certified what is certain however is that there was not more than 1200 and more likely less so it’s no use getting all worked up in advance since it might not work out in the end!

(Federman 1992, p. 258)

This passage stands as an example of the inventor’s indecisive state of mind. With these finishing words, it is made obviously clear that Double or Nothing tells the story of the person that originally was about to invent the story in question.

2. POSITION OF FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY, ADDRESSER, AND ADDRESSEE

The passages to be considered in this analysis refer to the inventor’s list of supplies. The first of these two passages is located on page 17, where the inventor ponders the 52 cans of tomato sauce he plans to consume (one can a week), and the storage space required for such an amount of canned food. The second passage to be analyzed is found on page 35, preceded by a 1.5 page long reflection on what toothbrush the inventor is going to buy.

In both of these passages, as in the entire novel, the active voice is that of the inventor. The materiality could therefore be seen as addressed by him, but the first per-
son, the recorder, may as well be credited with the visual appearance of the written text. In the preceding pages before the beginning of the novel, it is stated that the recorder is “scribbling faithfully . . . everything [the first person] was doing, saying, thinking, planning, calculating, organizing, inventing, composing, anticipating, projecting, writing, etc” (Federman 1992, p. 0000000). In other words, the text in the paragraphs to be analyzed may be writings as well as thoughts of the inventor. If the paragraphs refer to the inventor’s writings, the recorder has simply copied the visual appearance as scribbled down by the inventor, and in that case, the addressee of the foregrounded materiality is the inventor. On the other hand, if the paragraphs are recordings of thoughts, the visual appearance should be credited to the recorder. Nowhere in the novel is it clearly stated if the text consists of thoughts or writings, and therefore, the foregrounded materiality may be addressed either by the inventor or the recorder. The addressee, in both cases, is the reader.

3. DENOTATIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

The materiality of the two above-mentioned passages is foregrounded through uppercase letters. In foregrounding materiality through capitalization, the readers first of all notice the visual appearance of the text, after which they recognize the tone. As Goldsmith points out, capitalization generally implies shouting, but in the passages above the uppercase letters are more like-
ly highlighting words of importance. Last of all, the meaning of the text is decoded (Goldsmith 2011, p. 35). This order of noticing form before content is equal in writing-through methods such as acrostics or mesostics, since these writing techniques also include capitalization. The passage of page 17, in which the storage space required for 52 cans of tomato sauce is considered, may serve as an example of acrostic writing:

The tomato sauce won't take much room 52 cans but the noodles sort of juDge for the time being a can here and there now and then after a while you get a kind of inner sense of time an inner mental clock that tells you the end of the week has come end of a period an inner cycle some guys call it of course girls have less of a problem they have their periods once a month to help them keep track never thought of that too bad you're not a girl

(Federman 1992, p. 17)

Here, the first line breaks the word “juDge” in the middle of the word, and the word continues on the next line. The second row ends with the word “Get,” which is broken directly after the capitalized G, while the third line ends with “End,” broken after capital E. This results in a continuous paragraph, which in addition spells out “juDGE” at the end of the first line and the right edge of the paragraph. In this way, the paragraph is partly acrostic. The operating level of iconic space is the alphabetical level, since the materiality is foregrounded by capitalized letters. In addition, the paginal level is also activated, due to that the capitalized letters serve to change the conventional reading direction from left to right. When the readers reach the end of the first line, their eye movement is directed down the edge of the paragraph, and first after having read the capital-
ized letters and decoded the word “juDGE,” they return to the beginning of the second line.

The materiality of the paragraph on page 35, on its behalf, is foregrounded through a writing-through method that slightly recalls mesostic writing:

Also that’s another thing to consider the hard ones make your gums bleed They always say you have to brush UP and D
and never s-id-e-w-ay-s That in itself is a goOd W
Could waste two or three boxes just on that alone! poiNt Skip it!

(Federman 1992, p. 34–35)

This passage is similar to the previous example due to that it also foregrounds the materiality through the alphabetical and paginal level of the iconic space. In the same way as the paragraph on page 17, the capitalized letters on the different rows redirect the eye movement of the readers. Nevertheless, it differs from the previous acrostic writing since the capitalized letters are not located at the edge of the paragraph, and therefore, this paragraph could be considered to resemble mesostic writing. The passage even seems to obtain the first principal rule of Cage’s mesostics, which states that a capitalized letter of a certain line is not to be found as a lowercase on the preceding line. It should be noted, however, that the example differs too much from Cage’s poetry in order to actually be categorized as pure mesostic writing. None of the mesostic rules that Cage developed through his writings through Fin-
negans Wake is applied, and in addition, Cage located his index words strictly in the middle of the paragraph.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND MATERIALITY

At first glance, and only considering the passage about the toothbrush, the text seems to serve as an anchorage in relation to the foregrounded materiality. The eye movement of the reader follows the capitalized letters down the fragmented lines, as the text supports the action by spelling out “DOWN.” Hence, the formatting may be seen as redundant, merely confirming the verbal content. Susan Rubin Suleiman notices this superfluous quality of Federman’s typesetting in other parts of the book, even though she points out that the typesetting of the novel serves also at times to contradict the content. As an example of redundant formatting, Suleiman explicitly mentions the first paginated page, where the inventor considers the room in which he will lock himself. This fragmented block of text is framed by the repetition of words from the block, so as to visualize the room in question (Suleiman 2010, p. 221). Here, as in the passage on page 35, the visual appearance seems to be a confirming, thus redundant, addition to the content.

Nevertheless, in the passage on page 17, the relationship between text and foregrounded materiality is not as clearly defined as in the example considered above. The word highlighted through capitalization is “juDGE,” in a phrase that states “the noodles sort of juDGE” (Federman 1992, p. 17), presumably referring to how much
space there is left for the tomato cans after the noodle boxes have been stacked into the room. Except for the vague resemblance of the word “judge” and “edge,” the edge admittedly being the location of the foregrounded materiality, there seems to be no connection between the content and the form in this passage. This fact implies that it is neither the content, nor the content and the form, but the form alone that carries significant information, and thus, the materiality seems to be superior to the text. Therefore, the content of the analyzed passages cannot direct interpretations of the narrative, a fact implying that Federman’s unconventional typesetting is essential to *Double or Nothing*, and furthermore, that the story could not be told through conventional writing. As a verification of this implication, the possible narrative functions of the foregrounded materiality will be examined.

5. NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

As stated in the third section of the analysis, one function of the foregrounded materiality in both of the example passages is disruption of the conventional reading linearity. The eye movement of the readers is redirected to follow the uppercase letters instead of the continuous sentences, and only after having read the capitalized word, the readers continue with the rest of the passage. Thus, the formatting claims for the attention of the readers, forcing them to look at and consciously decode the capitalized letters into words
before continuing the automated, unconscious process of reading. As for the example on page 35, the decoding is made easy due to the anchorage in the content, but the passage on page 17 leaves the readers with unanswered questions. The reason for the capitalized letters in the edge of the passage remains opaque. This implies that it is not necessarily the relationship between the content and the form of these particular passages that conveys meaning, as stated in the fourth section, but that the meaning is to be found in the very function of disrupting the conventional reading order.

Indeed, the function of disrupting the linearity of reading may contribute to the storytelling and thus serve as a narrative function, which is implied in a passage on a future page of the novel. After having mentioned several fragments of events in an erratic, illogical order, the inventor concludes as follows:

That’s about it. For now. He can jump around like that in his story Feeling sorry for himself.

Since he remembers the whole thing and remembering is always a confusing process. When you remember you don’t remember in a straight line never. Things don’t have to be in C-H-R-O-N-O-L-O-G-I-C-A-L-O-R-D-E-R

In fact most of it is plain lies—lies. Bavardage.

(Federman 1992, p. 64)

In this passage, the inventor motivates his unstructured writing by that the protagonist tells his story through memories, and memories, according to the inventor, are never chronologically structured. He concludes his scribbling with the French word “Bavardage,” which
may be translated to chatting, or idle chatting (Cambridge University Press 2018a), connoting the informal, unchronological tone of the unstructured sequence of events. Accordingly, this text may serve as a key to the interpretation of the previously analyzed passages. As stated in the analysis, the active paginal level distracts the conventional reading order from left to right, and the traditional chronology of reading is broken. The above-mentioned passage deals with the unnecessary application of a chronological order to a story told through memories, which links it to the analyzed passages that also processes a form of chronological order, that is the linearity of reading.

Furthermore, the link between the analyzed passages and the text above is amplified through the capitalization and hyphenation of “chronological.” The materiality in all of these three text excerpts is equally foregrounded through capitalization, and furthermore, the hyphenation in the third passage may connote line breaks, referring to the analyzed texts where the capitalized letters are separated through line breaks. Considering this visual resemblance and its possible connotations, the passage above may serve as a relay to the foregrounded materiality of the two analyzed passages. Even though the relationship between content and form of page 35 is already defined as an anchorage, the visual appearance of the passage can be linked to the above-mentioned text. This is due to the fact that the typesetting not only serves as a description of the tooth brushing process, but also disrupts the linearity of reading as in the formatting of page 17. Thus, the narrative function of the foregrounded materiality in both
of the texts serve as a disruption of the conventional reading linearity from left to right, which may connote an unchronological representation of events.

As a matter of fact, this narrative function of an unchronological representation of events implies further connotations, which results in an additional narrative function. In his essay about writing and the Holocaust, The necessity and impossibility of being a Jewish writer, Federman states that silences are particularly powerful when dealing with tragic events in fiction. On the contrary, he acknowledges:

And yet, often the mere spewing forth of words in a digressive and discontinuous fashion allows the writer to avoid a confrontation with his past while pretending to write about it. (Federman 2004)

Federman’s statement implies that the unchronologically represented, spewed forth thoughts of the inventor may be a sign of the inventor’s traumatic past with which he does not wish to deal. As stated in the summary of the synopsis in the first section of this analysis, the inventor is determined not to write about the past of the protagonist. The novel also reveals that the inventor and the protagonist is the same person, for instance when the inventor is choosing between noodles or potatoes as his main nutrition during the year in the room. He points out that potatoes are cheaper, but that “eventually they get those long grey rat tails and after a while they’re like sponges gives you the creeps” (Federman 1992, p. 11), which is followed by page 111 (FIG 11, p. 103):

**FIG 11.** On the following page, the inventor writes about the events of the Holocaust as if he had experienced them himself. (Federman 1992, PHOTO: Wikström 2018)
Yes but the *potatoes* the raw

*potatoes* on the train **remember?** what a story:
on the way to the *camps*
the *camps* X*X*X*X*X

Can't come into this one... Nothing before the boat...

**Damn good story!** Could sneak the *potatoes* in... next time.

The train
The rats
The old man
The farm
The camps
The *potatoes*... Wow!

*A Time of Potatoes*

Could have a whole series like that 20 or 30 volumes
Could have a whole series a kind of Balzacian comedy

**The Vegetable Comedy**

no even better than that

**The Hunger Comedy**

no even worse than that

**The Starvation Comedy**

20 or 30 volumes **in folio.**
The inventor describes details about rotting potatoes in connection to memories of concentration camps, and here, it is obviously not the experiences of the protagonist he portrays, but his own. In the preceding pages of the novel, the typographical composition X * X * X * X appears in connection with the statement that the mother, father and two sisters of the protagonist have been exterminated in a German concentration camp, but in the passage above, the X’s seem to refer to the family of the inventor. Thus, the past of the protagonist that the inventor is determined not to include in his writing is in fact the past of the inventor. By “spewing forth” thoughts and writings in a “digressive and discontinuous fashion,” the inventor indeed escapes “a confrontation with his past while pretending to write about it” (Federman 2004). Thus, the narrative function of the foregrounded materiality that connotes an un-chronological representation of events implies an additional narrative function, which on its behalf connotes an evasion of dealing with a tragic account.

In other words, *Double or Nothing* is a novel about the inventor’s dreadful experiences of the Holocaust, even though the subject is hidden in the digressive planning of the writing process of the story about the protagonist’s new American life. Federman hereby applies a mode of storytelling in which he deals with a difficult subject by the omission of it. Suleiman argues that this method of “saying without saying,” in her words a “rhetorical figure of preterition,” is a central technique in Federman’s writing (Suleiman 2010, p. 220). The typographical composition X * X * X * X mentioned above is an illuminating example of preterition that not only
occurs in *Double or Nothing*, but in all of Federman’s fictive works. In Suleimans opinion, “they are signs that indicate both presence and absence, both the lost objects and their ‘exing out,’ their erasure” (Suleiman 2010, p. 221). This typographical composition, that not only refers to the lost family of Federman’s protagonists, but also to the four murdered members of Federman’s own family, has also been suggested by the critic Charles Caramello to be a form of avoidance.

Federman confirms the suggestion that his X’s serve as a connotation of evasion, but claims yet another narrative function of his typographical composition. In addition, he states, his typographical representation of the extinct family members lay bare the inadequacy of language that people are faced with when being confronted by tragedy (Federman 2004). Federman emphasizes:

> How often have we heard people say, when confronted with a tragic event, . . . clichés as: I cannot find the words to express my grief; words are not enough to tell you how sad I feel; this leaves me speechless . . . Yes, one could go on playing verbal and syntactical games, endlessly reshuffling those poor words . . . that try in vain to express what words supposedly cannot express, but that would be useless and senseless; it would lead nowhere.
> (Federman 2004)

In Federman’s opinion, the attempts to express tragic events in mere verbal language are inadequate. He points out that numerous writers have tried to tell the story of the Holocaust, but in his opinion, these efforts have merely resulted in melodramatic and sentimen-
talized versions of the original. These writers never reach the center of the Holocaust, that is, the absence (Federman 2004). Instead, Federman claims that the most appropriate method of dealing with this tragedy is playful art and postmodernist experimentation, which consists in storytelling through form instead of content (Suleiman 2010, p. 218). In his own words:

Jewish writing then, like all other modes of contemporary writing, must shift its vision and its energy from content to form (from the WHAT to the HOW), but not because the content is too difficult to express, but because, as we have learned to recognize, content is form, and it is the form of a text that will eventually allow us to grasp the tragedy of the Holocaust. (Federman 2004)

In his fiction, Federman chooses not to deal with the enormity of human evil that resulted in the Holocaust, with what Holocaust was, but instead focuses on the problem of how to tell stories of an event of such chaotic nature (Suleiman 2010, p. 217). He explicitly points out that the shift from content to form is not due to the Holocaust being “too difficult to express,” which implies that his typographical experiments should not be seen, as suggested by Caramello, merely as an omission of a subject too complicated to describe. Instead, Federman underscores that “content is form,” thus stating that form offers alternative ways of signification with a potential to appropriately tell the story of the “Unforgivable Enormity of the Holocaust” (Federman 2004). In other words, according to Federman, the materiality of language does contain
the potential to tell stories that cannot be expressed through conventional writing.

The additional narrative function that Federman assigns to his typographical compositions is revealing the inadequacy of language, which as well may be assigned to the passages investigated in the analysis above. In these passages, Federman distracts the conventional reading order by capitalized letters that runs laterally and diagonally across the lines, which allows him to connote the discontinuity of the inventor’s thoughts. Thus, he points at the shortcomings of conventional writing, from left to right, and therefore, the analyzed passages may be seen to function in the same way as Federman’s X’s that lay bare the fact that verbal language is, at times, a rather insufficient tool.

III.II.III POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF WRITING-THROUGH

Concluding the analysis of the foregrounded materiality of the two example passages in Federman’s *Double or Nothing*, the possible narrative functions of foregrounding materiality through writing-through methods are an unchronological representation of events, as well as an evasion of dealing with a highly tragic account. Considering his fictive oeuvre as a whole, the analyzed passages may in addition be seen to function as a revelation of the inadequacy of language. The list is completed by the narrative functions detected in the theoretical part of writing-through methods, which are the diminishing valuation of the author, as well as the criticizing or con-
tinuation of the source material. In addition, Dworkin suggests that the method of writing-through also serves as a symbol for the selective reading process, hereby distinguished as a function, which if referred to properly at the levels of actions and narration also may serve as a narrative function.

Derived from the notion of the possibilities to include critique or continuation of the original in the new text, I would like to argue that the method of writing-through has potential to keep two voices active with the very same textual elements. By capitalizing certain letters of a conventionally written paragraph, in which the capitals serve merely as initial letters of the sentences, the author may add multiple meanings to the text. Since the capitalization does not depend on the semantic meaning of the words, it may enact as well as oppose the connotations of the linguistic content. This possible narrative function of recording multiple voices will be examined in i-catch 

ing, and the analysis is to be found in chapter III of the theory section. If I succeed in creating a dialogue between the uppercase and lowercase letters of the story, this function may be added to the above-mentioned possible narrative functions of foregrounded materiality through the method of writing-through.

The technique of overprinting originates in writing of ancient times. An early version of this technique is to be found in the methods of writing on papyrus.
or parchment. When a text was washed or scraped away from the surface, the material could be used and written on again. This method of effacing text is what the word *palimpsest* originally referred to, derived from Greek *palin psao* meaning “I smooth over again” (Bischoff 1990, pp. 11–12). Occasionally, the erased text would form a partly visible layer under the new writings, resulting in an overwritten page. Today, overprinting is sporadically practiced on purpose (Dworkin 2003, pp. 174–175), and for instance the American poet Charles Bernstein applies this writing technique in his poetic work of *Veil*. In order to examine the functions of overprinting, Craig Dworkin analyzes Bernstein’s booklet, and this study facilitates the detection of the potentiality of overprinting as an alternative method for signification.

III.III.I THE VEIL OF BERNSTEIN

Bernstein’s *Veil* is a poem published in a 12-page booklet by Xeroxial Editions in 1987 (FIG 12, p. 110). In this work, Bernstein uses overprinting as an entire compositional strategy, and a shimmering screen of texture is composed by multiple layers of text. The poem is preceded with the following epigraph from *The Minister’s Black Veil* by Nathaniel Hawthorne:

> “THERE IS AN HOUR TO COME,” SAID HE, “WHEN ALL OF US SHALL CAST ASIDE OUR VEILS. TAKE IT NOT AMISS, BELOVED FRIEND, IF I WEAR THIS PIECE OF CRAPE TILL THEN.” (Bernstein 1987, unpag.)
The quote on page 109 serves as an introduction to Bernstein’s poem, which consists of a veil of verbal texture on the following pages. The lines of the poem are printed as if by a typewriter, on a sheet of paper that repeatedly is reinserted into the machine. The veil refers to this weave of overprinted text, so that the writing serves not as a guise, but as a disguise, for language (Dworkin 2003, pp. 50–51).

The text is almost completely illegible, but nevertheless, it is possible to decode continuous phrases through the multiple layers of black text, and Dworkin decodes several phrases that frequently meditates on the material specificity of its process, the detected phrases marked in italics below:

as readers face the veil . . . they have a hard time following the text through the haywireness of superimposition . . . the reader ultimately can see dimly through as the writing peeks a boo to let a hidden message emerge in constantly switching dialectic of revelation and concealment. Those glimpses work to excite the curious EYE . . . until the reader once again can’t make out the typing laid over and over the same material in a variety of ways to form overprint with a density so great that language itself is tangible and one feels the physicality of type. (Dworkin 2003, p. 51)

In Dworkin’s decoding, it is clearly evident that the text is highly self-referential. This kind of opacity is to be considered as opposing “the dominant Anglo-American tradition of twentieth-century typographic design, which maintains an unobtrusive clarity as its aim” (Dworkin 2003, p. 51), which is mentioned in Chapter I of the thesis. As one of the precedents of this

FIG 12. In the fourth poem of Veil, Bernstein creates a three-dimensional illusion through manipulation of line spacing. (Bernstein 1987, unpag.)
tradition, Theodore Low De Vinne, states that printing “succeeds perfectly when the reader finds it a pleasure to read [a printed] work, without thinking at all of the means by which this pleasure is had” (De Vinne 1892, p. 164, cited in Dworkin 2003, p. 173). Veil on its behalf draws attention to these very means, acting as a reminder of the materiality of the signifier, which may serve as a narrative function.

This is not the only function of the work, because since almost all of the overprinted text can be decoded through more patience and concentration than what is demanded by a conventional text, Bernstein’s book also challenges and redirects the conventional reading process (Dworkin 2003, p. 53). The obstructed reading continuity that is demanded by overtyping “renders the ordinary language of Bernstein’s texts somewhat unfamiliar.” The readers are not able to scan the page in the way they are used to, as in works that obey the “ideologies of textual transparency that create the illusion of ‘disappearance’ of the word” (Dworkin 2003, p. 54). As Dworkin notes:

If the restive opacity of these poems prevents their reader from being absorbed by the seemingly effortless flow of semantic content, it also redirects the reader from that illusionistic immediacy to the even more highly absorptive process of physical decipherment, which requires a concentration and attention far more total and intense than does the conventional page. (Dworkin 2003, p. 55)

What the readers might experience as an obstacle for getting drawn into the text can as well engage them to
a larger extent than conventional reading. If the reader makes the effort to decipher the work, the concentration and attention demanded is immense, and he or she will be absorbed in a new way in the text. Thus, a new reading habit is shaped.

In his investigation of *Veil*, Dworkin has exhumed two functions of overprinting that may serve as active participants in storytelling, highlighting of the signifier’s materiality and thorough absorption into the text. The list of narrative functions will be completed with the following analysis of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

III.III.II ANALYSIS OF EXTREMELY LOUD AND INCREDIBLY CLOSE

In his novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Jonathan Safran Foer applies a slowly increasing overprinting to an entire chapter (FIG 13–14, p. 115). This book is categorized as a hybrid novel, which according to Sadokierski means a work of prose “in which graphic devices like photographs, drawings and experimental typography are integrated into the written text”. In a hybrid novel, words and images work on equal terms to create a partly visual, partly verbal result (Sadokierski 2010, ix). The graphic devices of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* consist of photographs taken by the protagonists Oskar Schell and Thomas Schell Senior, pictures that Oskar has printed and glued into his scrapbook *Stuff That Happened To Me*, hand-written scribbling, as well as experimental typography. One of the typographic compositions consists of the
slowly increased overprinting mentioned above, which appears in one of Thomas Schell Senior’s letters to his deceased son. This section is also mentioned in Sadokierski’s analysis of Foer’s novel, included in her doctoral thesis Visual Writing: A critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels, from a Visual Communication Design perspective (2010). In order to identify the possible narrative functions of Thomas Schell Senior’s letter, I have studied Sadokierski’s reading, and my own analysis including her perspective follows below.

1. DENOTATIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC CODE

In an envelope marked “Black,” in a blue vase in his father’s closet, nine-year-old Oskar Schell finds a key. Oskar’s father Thomas Schell was lost barely 1.5 years earlier in 9/11, and Oskar figures that if he finds the lock that this key opens, he will get closer to his father. He decides to go out to visit every person in all of New York with the last name Black to gain further clues about which lock this key might open.

At the same time, Oskar’s grandmother, who lives across the street, rents a room to a seemingly total stranger. This man cannot speak, but converses in writing, in an infinite number of small notebooks, and in order to “make life more possible” (Foer 2005, p. 17) he has tattooed the palm of his left hand with YES and the palm of his right hand with NO. This man is in fact Oskar’s grandfather, Thomas Schell Senior, who fled from his wife and life in New York even before his son Thomas Schell Junior was born.
The message was cut off, you sounded so calm, you said about to die, I wish we could have sat across a table and wished we could have wasted time, I want an infinity told Oskar it was best not to let his grandma know what he knew, I told him he had never wanted to talk in the guest room window and I would come down to the room to see him again, to see him seeing his mother and I made love since I returned, and then you said it felt like the last time, I’d kissed Anna for the last time, why didn’t I learn to treat my greatest regret is how much I believed in the future thing, she led me to the second bedroom, her hand door and pointed at the bed, “That’s where he used to put himself to the floor and smelled the pillow, I have, I wanted dust, she said, “Years and years and wanted to feel what you felt, I wanted to tell you even more.”

Do you believe in heaven and hell? I held up my hand, think after you live it’s like before you lived,” her third closed her fingers around mine, she said, “There’s no one in heaven, All the babies, Some never will be born, Is that an idea that you were not there where it’s difficult, all the miscarriages, before the bombing, my father took me out to the garden to see the pipe, it made me feel so adult, so serious, I coughed and coughed,而 laughed and laughed knew how to pack a suitcase, and if I knew never to throw a fire if I had to, I loved my father very much, I loved him very, very much. But I never found a way to tell him,” I turned my head to the side, I rested it on her shoulder, she put her hand on my cheek, just like my mother used to, everything she did reminded me of someone else, “It’s a shame,” she said, “that life is so precious,” I turned onto my side and put my arm around her, I ran out of room, my eyes were closed and I kissed her, her lips were my mother’s lips, and Anna’s lips, and your lips, I didn’t know how to be with her and be with her. “It makes us worry so much,” she said, unbuttoning her shirt, I unbuttoned mine, she took off her pants, I took off mine, “We worry too much,” I touched her and touched everyone, “It’s all we do,” we made love for the last time, I was with her and with everyone, when she got up to go to the bathroom there was blood on the sheets, I ran back to the guest room to sleep, there are so many things you’ll never know. The next morning I was awakened by a tapping on the window, I told your mother I was going for a walk, she didn’t ask anything, what did she know, why did she let me out of her sight? Oskar was waiting for me under the streetlamp, he said, “I want to dig up his grave.” I’ve seen him every day for the past two months, we’ve been planning what’s about to happen, as the smoke dies, we’ve been planning to dig him up in Central Park, he decided he began to move it, and began to plan it.

Because of Thomas Schell Senior’s betrayal many years ago, Oskar’s grandmother does not want Oskar to meet his grandfather. Oskar still encounters him in due time, when he goes to pay a visit to his grandmother, and she happens to be out. Thomas Schell Senior still does not give himself away, out of respect for his wife’s wish, but he and Oskar nevertheless develop a relationship in secrecy, and together they make plans to dig up Thomas Schell Junior’s coffin. Oskar knows that the coffin is empty, because his father’s body was lost in the terrorist attack, but he wants to fill it with something. The renter offers two suitcases full of unsent letters to his lost son, but he still does not reveal that this son is also Oskar’s father. The two of them set up repeated nightly meetings at which they plan their quest.

Oskar also keeps searching for the lock to the key, and after eight months of searching, it turns out that the key opens a safe-deposit box that belongs to a man named William Black, whose father had died two years ago. Unfortunately, it has nothing to do with Oskar’s father; only that Thomas Schell Junior had bought the blue vase when William sold his father’s belongings. The quest of the lock had made Oskar feel like he was staying close to his father a little longer, and once he finds the lock he is devastated, because he is no longer moving in the direction of his father. Then, Oskar decides it is time to dig up the coffin with the renter. On the night of the second anniversary of Thomas Schell Junior’s death, they go off on their mission. They dig up the coffin with the help of a limousine driver, open the lid, and fill it with the letters of the renter.
Only an hour before he and Oskar head for the graveyard to dig up the coffin, Thomas Schell Senior, the addresser, is writing a final letter to his lost son, the addressee. This letter is placed in a chapter titled “Why I’m not where you are,” dated 9/11/03, near the end of the novel on pages 262–284. The foregrounded materiality starts on page 272 and continues to the end of the chapter. Considering that the method of overprinting is assigned to merely a part of a chapter, it does presumably not play a major part in the narrative as a whole, but can still offer significant depth to the story. The importance of the foregrounded materiality in the overall storytelling will be clarified in the following sections of this analysis.

At page 272, the materiality of the text becomes gradually foregrounded by a decreasing kerning, leading, and margin width. The text is still readable up to page 281 (Fig 14, p. 115), but hereafter, the reader cannot decode the linguistic message due to the overprinting. When the letter ends on page 284 (Fig 15, p. 118), the degree of overprinting is extreme to such extent that the characters and rows form an almost opaque letter texture, with white space only occasionally shining through. This materiality operates on the alphabetical, lexical, and paginal level of the iconic space, since the
letters, words, and rows are merged, creating an image instead of a comprehensive text. Since the text is not readable anymore, the created image takes over the task of signifying from the linguistic code, thus enacting the meaning of the narrative.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND MATERIALITY

A few pages after the decreasing of the kerning, leading, and margin width has begun, where the text is still fully readable and the overprinting has not yet occurred, the verbally expressed reason for the foregrounded materiality is to be found. On page 276, where the reader most likely first recognizes the at this point still slight typographic change, Thomas Schell Senior writes as follows:

There won't be enough pages in this book for me to tell you what I need to tell you, I could write smaller, I could slice the pages down their edges to make two pages, I could write over my own writing, but then what? (Foer 2005, p. 276)

According to the linguistic message, the increased overprinting is simply due to that the notebook of Thomas Schell Senior is about to end. Throughout the text, he also keeps repeating “I want an infinitely blank book and the rest of time” (Foer 2005, p. 281). Here, the text serves as an anchorage of the foregrounded materiality, and just like in Barthes’ definition, the text identifies “the elements of the scene and the scene itself” (Barthes 1977b, p. 39), thus serving to explain the image, in this

case the overprinted text. By decoding the content, the reader understands that the increased overprinting depends on the decreasing pages of the book that Thomas Schell Senior is writing in. Hence, the text is superior to its materiality until page 281, after which the text is no longer readable, thereby losing its superiority.

A few chapters after this letter, there is the possible implication that the materiality signifies more than Thomas Schell’s notebook coming to an end. At page 318, the reader is presented with an image of a starry sky, a photograph taken by Oskar through the sunroof of the limousine that takes him and Thomas Schell Senior to the graveyard where his father is buried (FIG 16, p. 120). This photograph resembles perfectly the black texture of the final overprinted page in Thomas Schell Senior’s letter, where tiny white spots occasionally shine through the almost completely black surface of text. Consequently, the relationship between the text and materiality of the letter changes from an anchorage to that of a relay, and the reader understands that there is a greater whole to be understood from the combination of the overprinted letter and the photograph of the stars.

To summarize, the relationship between the text and the materiality in the letter itself is an anchorage, but taking the photograph into consideration, the content and the form seem to signify additional connotations. Thus, the text serves as a relay to the materiality, and the meaning is conveyed by the analysis of the possible narrative function of the materiality. On one hand, the overprinting is assigned to a minor part of the novel, as stated in the second section of this analysis, which implies that it is not essential to the story as a whole,

but on the other hand, the detected relay hints that at least the letter could not be expressed through conventional writing.

5. NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE FOREGROUNDED MATERIALITY

Considering only the pages of the overprinting, a possible connotation of the foregrounded materiality is frenzies. Thomas Schell Senior seems eager to write about a multitude of events, such as: how he got back to New York after forty years of fleeing his former life; how he met his wife again; how she did not want him to meet Oskar; how he instead got to know him through watching him from a distance; how he in due time got to meet him in the apartment of Oskar’s grandmother; and finally, before the text becomes illegible, how he alongside Oskar put their plans of digging up Thomas Schell Junior’s coffin into action. He writes in long sentences with commas instead of periods, and since he keeps repeating the wish of “an infinitely blank book” to keep writing in for “the rest of time,” the reader understands that the decreasing kerning, leading, and margin width imply that his book is too short for everything that he wants to tell. Thus, the narrative function of the foregrounded materiality serves as an amplifier of Thomas Schell Senior’s overwhelming emotions.

In her analysis, Sadokierski also supports the statement that one possible narrative function of the overprinting is to amplify the emotions of the protagonist. She interprets the opaque, black letter texture as an
expression of the devastation that Thomas Schell Senior experiences when he finally faces his family members and their vastly tragic story. “Through this device,” she states, “we share Thomas Senior’s anxiety and claustrophobia as his world becomes overwhelmingly emotionally complex” (Sadokierski 2010, p. 109). With this statement, Sadokierski claims that the foregrounded materiality serves to signify highly negative emotions.

On the other hand, one of the last readable sentences of the overprinted letter implies a slightly more positive view. Here, Thomas Schell Senior speaks about Oskar: “I know I won’t be in his life, I won’t be the grandfather he never had, he won’t think of me or miss me, but there’s nothing I regret about the past two months” (Foer 2005, p. 281). In this light, the writing seems like a therapy session and not merely an expression of devastation. Thomas Schell Senior has tried to escape his life, but when he returns and gets to establish a relationship with his grandson, he gets even with his past, and by digging up his lost son’s grave and burying all the letters he never sent in the empty blackness of the coffin, he makes the story of his life into black space, erasing everything that ever went wrong.

Furthermore, when the photograph of the stars is placed into consideration, the possibly hopeful tone detected in the final readable sentences of the overprinted letter is strengthened. The preceding page of Oskar’s photograph presents a passage of linguistic message that may be considered as a master key in the interpretation of connection between the letter and the starry sky. On their way to the graveyard, Oskar opens the sunroof of the limousine:
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. (Foer 2005, p. 317)

Sadokierski also mentions the same passage, but in her reading, the image of the stars is a visual representation of all the deceased people whose names Oskar reads on the tombstones in the graveyard on the way to his father’s grave. She does not connect the overprinted letter texture and the photograph of the stars, but suggests that each name of the deceased people equals “a spot of dying light in the night sky”. Foer presents us with “photographs to pause and reflect upon”, she notes, and this, in her opinion, is the case of the image of the starry sky (Sadokierski 2010, p. 132).

However, I suggest that this passage is connected not only to the photograph, but to the overprinted letter of Thomas Schell Senior as well. The words of this letter are merged into a visual representation of a starry sky, and by connecting the stars, to be associated with the white spots occurring through the black surface of the overprinted letter, Oskar makes new words. Considering this association, Oskar is figuratively rewriting the background of his grandfather, and at the same time, he alters his own tragic account. This possible connotation of altering the past is supported at the end of the novel, where Oskar utters a wish to turn back time to “the day before the worst day.” In other words, he wishes to alter the chain of events, so that everything would be undone. The visual erasure made through the overprinting in the letter of Thomas Schell Senior could hereby be seen as
a way to turn back time, and through the construction of new words out of the disaster of his past, Oskar then would be able to build a new future. “We would have been safe” (Foer 2005, p. 326), as he states, referring to him and his father.

Independently of the connotations, the foregrounded materiality in combination with the linguistic message and the photograph serves as a signifier of the protagonists’ emotions. The materiality in this particular case functions as an amplifier for feelings which could be described in words only flatly. This suggestion is supported by Foer as he is stating: “Most of what I do in my books I do exactly because I can’t explain it any other way” (Gerber & Triggs 2006, pp. 70–71). The statement resonates with Federman’s view of the expressive potential of form, and hereby, the narrative functions of Foer’s overprinting may be an emotional amplifier, and in addition, a revelation of the inadequacy of language.

The intertwining of the foregrounded materiality with another image and possibly also different chapters of the novel opens up for several alternative interpretations, which by extension results in an additional, possible function of the materiality. Sadokierski states:

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. (Sadokierski 2010, p. 52)

In the case of Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, this intertwining does indeed multiply the interpretations
of the materiality and the work as a whole, as exemplified with the differing analyses by Sadokierski and myself. Thus, the function of enhancing the polysemy of the work is assigned to the foregrounded materiality. Whether this is a conscious, narrative strategy by Foer in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* remains uncertain, but nevertheless, this function may have potential to take part of the storytelling, and could serve as a connotation of complexity.

Thus, the narrative functions of the foregrounded materiality in the overprinted letter by Thomas Schell Senior are an emotional amplifier and a revelation of the inadequacy of language. The materiality in itself is not superior to the text as it alone does not progress the narrative, but in combination with the linguistic message of the novel as a whole and Oskar’s photograph, it stands as a significant element for different interpretations of the work. Nevertheless, as stated in the second section of this analysis, the overprinting constitutes only a few pages of the novel as a whole, and may therefore not be seen as a crucial part to the narrative. The overprinted text in Thomas Schell Senior’s letter has a similar function as Sadokierski prescribes the photographs of this character; they “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 work” (Sadokierski 2010, p. 117). In other words, the foregrounded materiality is not inevitable to the narrative, but it does serve to amplify emotions, point at the shortcomings of verbal language, as well as infuse the work with polysemy.
III.III.III POSSIBLE NARRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF OVERPRINTING

Considering *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the amplifying of emotions, and the revelation of the inadequacy of language stand as possible narrative functions of the analyzed overprinting. The list is completed by the narrative functions detected in Dworkin’s analysis of *Veil*, that is, a highlighting of the signifier’s materiality, as well as thorough absorption into the text. In addition, the list of possible narrative functions may be extended with the notions of intertwining photographs and foregrounded, textual materiality, which detects the infusion of polysemy as an additional, possible narrative function.

Hereby, I have presented the theoretical review as well as my analysis of the chosen example novels. The possible narrative functions of each method will be assembled in a comprehensive list in the concluding chapter IIIII, but first, the list will be completed with the findings of the process of *i-catching*. 
CHAPTER III  I-CATCHING

IN THE BEGINNING, there was nothing but a simple thought; I wanted to create a story that was to be read, but also seen. I was curious to investigate the possibilities of reinforcing the text with the characteristics of it, and more specifically, the characters of it. I thought that there would be no approach as forthright to illustrate a text as to allow the letters to illustrate it, since they are already present in the text itself. This thought constituted the reason why i-catching came into existence, and the fourth chapter of my thesis serves to describe how this existence came to be. Here, I will summarize the development of the storyline, reveal my initial aims for applying the chosen methods of foregrounding materiality, describe the process of each method in the context of i-catching as well as suggesting the narrative functions that hereby may have been assigned to the story.
At this point, it is important to notice that I use the auxiliary verb *may*, since the meaning is to be decoded by the readers alone, and I cannot state with certainty that they will perceive my intended connotations. The interpretations may vary radically, in particular due to my aim of narrating a story through content as well as form. In the terminology of Barthes, the text of *i-catching* is intended to serve as a relay to its visual appearance. Translating Barthes’ definition of a relay into the context of this thesis, as mentioned in the section of *Rhetoric of the Image* in Chapter II, this implies that the meaning is not conveyed through the content or the form alone, but at the level of the story (Barthes 1977b, p. 41). This may result in the meaning being not as clearly distinguished as if it was conveyed by pure text, and the readers may not be able to connect the content and its form to a greater whole. The readers may as well separate these two elements, interpreting the connotations of either the linguistic code or the visual appearance. This condition of the individual reading process is what Dworkin refers to when he states that readers are “activating particular codes of signification at the expense of other strategies” (Dworkin 2003, p. 91), which also is quoted previously in the theory section of the writing-through method. Accordingly, the final section of each description of the methods of foregrounding materiality, considering results and suggesting possible narrative functions in the story of *i-catching*, is highly subjective. The readers may have chosen to read it otherwise.
The story of *i-catching* has been told before in a different medium than the final version of the booklet, and by extension, this thesis. Originally, the escape of lowercase *i* was mediated in the form of an animated short film that I developed during the course named *Moving Image and Production Design* offered by the Master’s Programme in Visual Communication Design at Aalto University. Throughout the course, I wrote the synopsis, sketched the storyboard, created the animatic, and completed the final, three-minute-long animation.

However, I realized that this was not the right medium for the endeavors of lowercase *i*, because at this point, I learned about the materiality of language and the methods of foregrounding it. I read *Tree of Codes* and understood the potential generated from the manipulation of the very same page layout as the original *The Street of Crocodiles*. In addition, I became familiar with *Fin du Copenhague* by Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, which, at least according to legend, is assembled during one single day from the material of one single news kiosk (Dworkin 2003, p. 20). These two works underscore the materiality of language due to the fact that they are created straight out of their original source materials. In order to accomplish the same level of foregrounded materiality, the method of Foer, Debord, and Jorn was applied to *i-catching*. Since this story is partly set in Sandemose’s printed novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, the narrative should not only imply it, as in the animated short film, but also act it out. Therefore, I decided to execute *i-catching* as a détournement.
I first considered altering Sandemose’s original novel itself, but this was not possible, since the English version is extremely rare; I was not able to find a copy for purchase. The version I finally came across was an interlibrary loan from the Archibald S. Alexander Library in New Jersey (FIG 17), and therefore, I decided to elaborate on scanned pages of this copy.

The storyline was sketched according to some of the narrative functions discovered in Chapter III: material emphasize; continuation of the source; model for political activity; decrease of the author’s valuation; simultaneous record of multiple voices; and emotional amplifier. The aims of applying these functions will be
further described in the following sections. Considering these possibilities of foregrounded materiality, I made a preliminary plan for the content and sketched a storyline in eight episodes. In order to increase the impact of the original source, and thus giving the materiality of the work a main role in *i-catch*ing, I decided that each episode of the story was to be exhumed out of the sentences, words, and letters of one source chapter only. The new episode should also be titled with the original heading of the source chapter, and as such, I chose chapters with titles referring to the intended content of each episode. Finding appropriate source chapters turned out to be a relatively painless task, since *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks* is divided into 170 chapters in total. In addition, my storyline of an escaping letter coincided with Sandemose’s narrative of a protagonist that leaves his home village due to the inhuman conditions of the milieu. This resulted in an extensive scope of possible chapter titles that fit *i-catch*ing as well as *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. Beneath, the episodes and titles are listed:

**EPISODE 1: THE LAW OF JANTE.** The book is introduced through Sandemose’s original ten laws that the villagers of Jante obey. Lowercase *i* appears through the original text, questioning this seemingly self-destructive setting. It is nevertheless opposed by lowercase *e*, who requires that lowercase *i* return to its purpose of serving as a mute letter in the progression of the linguistic content.

**EPISODE 2: ONE MUST MIND ONE’S WORK.** Since lowercase *i* is not allowed to scramble the words in the actual
paragraphs, it instead speaks in footnotes, commenting on Sandemose’s original text. Lowercase e objects repeatedly, while lowercase i begins considering an escape.

**EPISODE 3: I SHALL NOT LET YOU GO.** In this episode, lowercase i makes its first attempt to escape the book. Lowercase e detects it and commands the other characters to increase the line spacing so as to block the flight of lowercase i.

**EPISODE 4: LEADERS.** Lowercase i and e continues their argument, and in addition, the uppercase letters of the story interfere in the dialogue. They utter their disapproval of the lowercase i that has raised its voice and claim to be in charge of things.

**EPISODE 5: DARKNESS IN THE BARN.** In addition to lowercase i, e, and the capitals, lowercase r and u enters the dispute, claiming to have the same right as lowercase i to express themselves instead of the story of the novel they are set in. The argument escalates in a tumult of textual elements, through which lowercase i finally finds its tunnel to another context. This episode is mainly exhumed out of Sandemose’s chapter titled *Darkness in the barn*, but the black letter texture on pages 264–265 is in addition created of the leftover elements of the other source chapters.

**EPISODE 6: NIGHT IS DECEPTIVE.** In the calm after the storm, lowercase e notices that lowercase i is not present anymore.

**EPISODE 7: AN EYE FOR AN I.** This episode, somewhat lengthy and academic in its form, is the recourse of
lowercase i. It serves to explain what i-catch
ing is and how the story came to existence, as well as what this existence may mean. Note that this episode is not exhumed out of A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks but the books and articles listed in the section with references of this thesis.

EPISODE 8: HOME. In the final episode of i-catch
ing, lowercase i returns to its former setting, informed by the findings of the previous episode.

Hence, the storyline was developed and the initial writ
ing rules of the project were defined. Following this, the writing process, or more accurately the exhuming process, was about to begin.

III. II WRITING I-CATCHING

The three techniques chosen for the story of i-catch
ing are the methods of détournement, writing-through, and overprinting. I used détournement within the story as a whole, while the writing-through process is utilized in the fourth and fifth episodes, and the overprinting method appears in the first and fifth episode of the sto
dy. In the following sections, I describe the three models of foregrounded materiality, clarify my intentional aims in choosing these techniques, as well as describe the results and suggest the possible narrative functions that through these methods may have been assigned to the foregrounded materiality.
I staged the writing process of détournement as early as in the development of the storyline, since the progress of the narrative was partly sketched according to the pre-defined rules of the writing and the possibilities offered by particular narrative functions. As mentioned in the section of developing i-catching, the rules consisted of the new episodes being formulated out of the sentences, words, and letters of the original chapters of Sandemose, one single chapter offering material for one episode only.

As for the manipulation, I chose to simply cut textual elements out of their original location and paste them into new sentences, in the same page layout as in _A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks_. I strived to use complete words and sentences, so as to be true to the source material. As stated in the analysis of _Tree of Codes_, a text exhumed out of the syllables and characters of its original does not necessarily refer to the source material, since characters are not unique to any existing work. My aim was to pronounce Sandemose’s work, but, since I was about to create a dialogue between lowercase letters, and the letters were to be referred to in connection to their utterances, I still needed to alter the alphabetical level of the iconic space. In addition, if a letter manipulates the story in which it is set, this member of the alphabet is presumably operating on the alphabetical level. With this final permission of using syllables and single letters in the construction of narrative, the overall rules of the writing process were set. These restrictions apply to the story as a whole, and the additional rules
of the writing-through and the overprinting are to be
defined in separate sections below. But first, I will reveal
the overall aims of practicing the method of détournement
in the context of *i-catching*.

As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, de-
scribing the development of the story, my initial reason
for executing *i-catching* through détournement was to
create a higher level of materiality than that of a sim-
ple implication of the source. The narrative should not
merely imitate the original, but instead, the story was
to be conveyed through that very original. Although
I was not manipulating an actual copy of *A Fugitive
Crosses His Tracks*, I used the original textual elements
and page layout, equally to Foer’s treatment of *Tree
of Codes*. With this act, I intended to emphasize that
language in this particular piece speaks for itself, that
the dialogue is not created by me as an author, but by
the letters, words, and sentences of the source. Due to
the fact that *i-catching* is a story about a character that
suddenly expresses itself through the textual elements
of its setting, the highlighting of materiality applied
through détournement serves as a narrative function.

In addition, I aimed at utilizing the narrative func-
tion of a continuation of the original. *A Fugitive Cross-
es His Tracks* may be considered a 420-page-long mon-
ologue about the vastly destructive effects of the Law of
Jante on those who live under it, and it is my wish to
support this thoroughly made statement. I also want to
use Sandemose’s manifesto in a different context, which
is the general discussion on whether form is a potential
signifier or not, and I aim at arguing that there is great
potential in combining content and form in storytelling.
Hereby, I attempt to continue and extend the original intentions of Sandemose to the debate over whether the materiality of language is significant or not.

Thus, I utilize an existing novel in a setting that differs from the intended context, in order to create a new perspective. This is the very definition of détournement, according to Goldsmith's statement, referred to in the section on détournement in the third chapter of this thesis (Goldsmith 2011, p. 38). If I succeed at lifting this to the level of the story, in underscoring that lowercase i attempts to criticize the power structures from within, I may assign a foregrounded materiality that connotes a model of political activity as a third narrative function of the story.

III.II.II THE PROCESS OF THE DÉTOURNEMENT

I began the exhuming process by going through each of the chosen chapters, highlighting phrases that could potentially serve as the utterings of lowercase i and e, and which correlated with the intended content of the storyline (FIG 18, p. 139). In addition, I searched for dialogue verbs that were accurate in describing how the letters utter themselves. The common dialogue verb “said” was replaced with “scrambled,” “wrote,” “composed,” and “assembled.” I also suggested neologisms such as “real-typed,” and “exclamation marked,” so as to underscore the typographical qualities of the statements of the characters. The process was surprisingly

FIG 18. Page 339 from A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks with highlighted text and notes. Possible utterings of i are highlighted in blue, while the lines of e are marked in pink. Other usable words and phrases are highlighted in purple. (Sandemose 1936)
And I shall tell you of John Wakefield — stop at this very point and tell you of the man who made me sentimental, and who dragged me from one humility to another, and who hated me because he himself was sentimental no longer. I stood in relation to him precisely as, shortly afterwards, Evald stood in relation to me. But I was more meek than Big John had been; otherwise Evald would have killed me rather than himself. And, like his own forgotten past, I dogged John Wakefield’s heels: I shall never let you go until you have blessed me!

And I kept my word. I shall continue to hold fast to him long years after I have lost my yearning for his benediction.

He was a dashing chap, a thumping black-haired giant, intelligent in his way, and strong as an ox. His face was exceedingly handsome, though disfigured by a perpetual sneering sneer. And when we met again in Misery Harbor, his talk was of Eve, always of Eve. . . .

The worst part of my recollection of him is the appalling flow of blood. It was then I grasped the ancient words: “What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me from the ground!” It formed a veritable lake. Often, upon looking at a person today, my mind still focuses itself upon the thought of the bucketfuls of blood the human body contains. And I feel a sense of dread at the thought that leaks may spring. . . .

For only a few weeks did I actually fear detection; by that time I had already reached Nova Scotia and had put to sea on a ship. But the urge to play with fire never left me, possibly because I felt so secure. The cunning way is the dangerous, but I had become a murderer without be-
tell of John a field —
at this very oint and tell you of the man who
me sen tnal, and who dragged me from one humilit
to another, and who hated me because he him was
sentimental no longer. I stood in lation to him precisely
as, shortly afterwards, Evald stood in relation to me.
I was more mee han ig h had been; other is Evald
wo ld k ed me ath r than hims f. And ke his
on forgotten past I ged J hn ak fi I
unti have blessed me
t my I
long years after I have lost my h s ben ic
tion.
as a ig , a humping -hair giant,
intelligent n his way, and strong as an ox is face was
ingly han som gh by a
ng sn r. An when met again in arbor,
his talk was Eve, always of Eve...
orst on of him is the appa
ing flow of blood It was then I grasped the anc ent :
“ blood
Me ed
lake. Often upon looking at a person today, y mind s
focuses itself upon thought of the bucketfu s of blood
human s. And I feel a snse of dread at the th ght s
or only a few wks did I actu fear detection; by
time I had alread reached va c tia and had put
a on a ip
he cunn g way is
the dange u I had come a mur erer with ut be-
painless, and each source chapter included several potential utterings of the characters. The process of the cut-and-paste writing did not cause any additional problems (FIG 19, p. 140). The challenge arose when I was about to create the mesostics of the writing-through method, described in the following section.

III.II.II.I WRITING THROUGH
A FUGITIVE CROSSES HIS TRACKS

The writing-through method is introduced in the fourth episode of i-catching, which is exhumed out of Sandemose’s chapter named LEADERS (Wikström 2018, p. 285). I chose this specific chapter due to the fact that in i-catching, the uppercase letters at this point interfere in the dialogue between lowercase i and e, so as to terminate the ongoing argumentation between the two characters. The intention is that the title LEADERS should connote the intruding uppercase letters, and as such, it is an appropriate chapter to use as a source for the episode of the story where the capitals take command.

In addition, the method is assigned to the fifth episode DARKNESS IN THE BARN (Wikström 2018, p. 263–265). However, in this episode, the method of overprinting is dominant in progressing the storyline, and the process and result will therefore be described in the section about overprinting i-catching.

FIG 19. The textual elements of I SHALL NOT LET YOU GO that were omitted in the exhuming of Episode 3 of i-catching. These leftover words, syllables and letters were later used in the black letter texture of Episode 5, DARKNESS IN THE BARN. (Sandemose 1936, p. 339, manipulated)
Before exhuming the mesostics, I stated an overall aim for applying the writing-through method to the story, as well as a specific aim for the manipulation of LEADERS in particular. On a general level, the purpose of the chosen method of foregrounding materiality was to utilize the function that operates in Cage’s writing, that is, the decrease of the author’s valuation. However, contrary to Cage’s intention of presenting language for its own sake, I aimed at utilizing the function as a tool for progression of the storytelling. The purpose of the writing-through was to support the condition that i-catching is a story told by letters, and not by the author mentioned on the cover of the book. Thus, the applied method was to generate a narrative function. My specific aim for the writing-through of LEADERS was to keep a simultaneous record of two active voices within the same textual elements, to test the hypothesis made in the theory section of the writing-through. The first voice constitutes that of either lowercase i or e, and the second voice is that of the uppercase letters, the focus concentrated on the latter.

Since the writing-through method is to rely on a pre-defined set of rules, the first step of the writing process was to establish the system according to which the new text should emerge. Due to the conditions I had defined for the détournement as a whole, that every chapter of i-catching should be exhumed out of single chapters of A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks, the self-written rule of the writing-through was that the capitalized
letters were to be found in the text of LEADERS. As for additional directives, I chose to follow Cage’s principal mesostic rule as well as Mink’s suggested addition, and thus, between two capitalized letters of the index words, none of these two letters was to occur. Due to the limited number of uppercase letters, as well as the relatively short text excerpt of approximately one page in total, the syllable rule was not applied.

THE PROCESS OF THE WRITING-THROUGH

I started the process of the writing-through with searching for a possible opening line for the episode. A potential continuation of lowercase i’s concluding statement of Episode 3, “I knew even more,” was found in a sentence located in the middle of Sandemose’s LEADERS:

> I realize that power will persist in the world, but that is no reason why we should not utterly despise it, and it is a beastly illusion to imagine that one must befoul himself in the exercise of it. (Sandemose 1936, p. 286)

In this passage, Sandemose’s protagonist Espen Arnakke deals with the qualities of men who are mad for power. The protagonist states that there is no way to tear down power structures entirely, but one may still express disapproval of it. This statement resonates with the strategy of the Situationists, who criticized the hierarchic power structures of the culture from within instead of attempting at escape, and this is the reason for that I chose to open LEADERS with this particular
sentence. In addition, when crediting the sentence to lowercase i, a letter who rebels against serving merely as a mute container of linguistic code, the passage offers a supporting statement that language may be seen as a model for political activity. It resonates with Dworkin’s formulation of the Situationist benchmark as “[t]he defiant activity of words when they refuse to be merely containers for instrumental communication” (Dworkin 2003, p. 11), quoted in Chapter III, and therefore, it is chosen as lowercase i’s opening line of the fourth episode of i-catching.

Having highlighted possible elements of dialogue, I listed the uppercase letters of the source chapter. These capitals formed the source material for the expressions of the uppercase letters of the story, which were to serve as index for the writing-through. Following that, I listed possible words that these characters may construct, and assembled them into short sentences. The index was to indicate the capitals’ opposition of the argumentation of lowercase i, as well as their support for the statements of lowercase e, and consequently, the index sentence first chosen was IMPIETIES WE JIBE. Impiety means “the quality or state of being impious,” or “an impious act” (Merriam-Webster 2018a), while impious in its turn equals “lacking in reverence or proper respect (as for God or one’s parents)” (Merriam-Webster 2018b). Thus, IMPIETIES was to refer to that the uppercase letters consider the utterings of lowercase i as a defiance of the superior content, and themselves as leaders of this particular content. The verb jibe has several meanings, out of which two implications in particular differs radically from each other; to jibe means to agree with
someone or something; as well as to utter sarcastic or insulting words (Merriam-Webster 2018c). In this context, the first meaning was prescribed, since the tone of impiety is evidently negative.

And yet, I was not able to exhume the above-mentioned index sentence out of the material at hand. The writing-through was to depart from the final word of the opening line of lowercase i, which left only half a page of text for the finding of the index. The relatively unusual character j that was to be used in the JIBE occurs only twice after the chosen opening line, and the first occurrence is already in the following sentence of the original text. The first j could not be used as part of the index, since the index letters are to be found sequentially, meaning that a letter that equals the second letter of the index cannot be utilized if the first letter of the index has not preceded it. Before this j, not more than the sequence of i, m, and p had been detected. The second occurrence of j is at the very end of the chapter, and there appears no i between the second j and the final b, which is why I needed to change the index. This situation resonates with the statement of Mac Low quoted in Chapter III, where he acknowledges that Cage’s mesostics are partly executed by chance, and that the unintentional operation consists in finding, not selecting, the index word (Mac Low 2001, p. 226).

Consequently, instead of JIBE I found TIE, which in addition to its general meaning to fasten, attach, or form a knot also may imply “to restrain from independence or freedom of action or choice,” or “constrain by or as if by authority, influence, agreement, or obligation” (Merriam-Webster 2018f). This is an appropriate alter-
native, since the intention of the uppercase letters was to restrict the freedom of i, as authoritative leaders as they were. Following this, the paragraph was sequentially manipulated by Cage’s and Mink’s mesostic rules and the index IMPIETIES WE TIE, as the exclamation of the commanding capitals.

As mentioned previously in this section, my aim in applying writing-through to LEADERS in general was to keep a simultaneous record of two active voices within the same textual elements. My attempt to reach this purpose consisted in insinuating that the capitalized letters were an exclamation of the actual capitals. For instance, in the fragmented uttering of lowercase e, the uppercase letters are referred to as “The holy” that with this capitalized message “call attention” to themselves. Only in the final sentence of the chapter, external the written through text, lowercase i states that it “will not take the capitals at their word,” and this is the most obvious hint to that the capitalized message is addressed by the capitals themselves (Wikström 2018, p. 285).

The aim of the general level, to generate a narrative function out of the method of writing-through that was applicable to the story as a whole, required an effort in itself. The writing-through was supposed to signify that i-catching is a story told by letters instead of an author, and the partly automated process does contain potential to diminish the author’s influence. Nevertheless, the applied rules of the process are not revealed in the final text, which results in that the reader is not aware of the elements that are aimed at progressing the narrative. The solution was found by chance, since the letter j, that as previously stated occurs twice in the source text, is
included in the name John Wakefield, the man Espen Arnakke eventually murders. I chose to let John appear in the text, as an exophoric link to John Cage and his methods, connecting the thoughts of lowercase i to the philosophy of the poet. This is a suggestion, however vague, that the text should not be entirely credited to the author whose name occurs on the cover.

The appearance of John described in the paragraph above serves as an attempt to reach the aim I had defined for applying writing-through to i-catching in general, to diminish the influence of the writer, however, this purpose is not directly accomplished. This is a result of how the meaning is conveyed through the three levels of description, acknowledged by Barthes and presented in Chapter I, in the narrative of i-catching. In this story, the writing-through is supposed to refer to the actions of the uppercase letters, narrated by lowercase e who refers to these letters as “The holy.” Therefore, this section does not primarily signify the absence the author, but instead, the increasing influence of the capitals. The mesostic method resulted in the dialogue between lowercase i and e being restricted according to the exclamations of the uppercase letters, which serve to connote that in this section, the capitals are in charge. This results in a contradiction equal to the ambiguity that, according to Dworkin, is inscribed in the choice of Pound’s name as index in Cage’s and Mac Low’s versions of Cantos. As stated in Chapter
III, Dworkin argues that in these works, Cage and Mac Low did not dissolve the ego (Dworkin 2003, p. 95), but instead, they highlighted it (Dworkin 2003, p. 96). The mesostics of i-catch functions similarly, since the writing highlights the ego of the capitals.

The diminishing valuation of the author therefore must be narrated through the other methods of foregrounding materiality, and of course, the content itself. The value of the writing-through lies instead in that the overall purpose of the thesis may hereby have been partly accomplished, since the linguistic content of the dialogue as well as the index remains partly opaque. The appearance of John, for instance, does not serve as an overly obvious explanation, but instead, a vague key to interpretation of the foregrounded materiality, and as a result of the applied rules of the writing-through. In addition, in the writing-through, the uppercase letters are referred to as “The holy” that with this capitalized exclam “call attention” to themselves. Only in the combination with the actual presence of the capitals and the title of the chapter, the reader may reach at possible interpretations. Accordingly, the opacity renders the text as a relay to the visual appearance. The aim of my thesis, to let the content and form co-create a narrative on equal terms, may thus have been reached.

III.II.II.II OVERPRINTING I-CATCHING

The fifth episode of i-catching is created out of the chapter DARKNESS IN THE BARN (Wikström 2018, p. 263–265) due to the synonyms of “darkness,” which
gives me the possibility to assign particular connotations to the overprinting. First, the overprinting may be seen as nightfall, and my intention with this implication is to underscore that the dispute is escalating into a serious argument resembling a war of the characters. Second, an alternative word for “darkness” is obscurity, and considering that obscure may imply “not clearly seen or easily distinguished” as well as “not readily understood or clearly expressed” (Merriam-Webster 2018d), the “darkness” also implies that the overprinting obstructs the understanding of the linguistic code.

III.II.II.II. THE AIMS OF THE OVERPRINTING

The method of overprinting was applied to the story of i-catching due to a purely practical problem; I needed to create a smoke screen for lowercase i’s escape to succeed. Lowercase i has already tried to flee from its setting in the third episode titled I SHALL NOT LET YOU GO (Wikström 2018, p. 339), but is detected when drifting off the lines, and therefore, needs a new strategy for its flight. Accordingly, the argument between lowercase i and e escalates, while the capitals keep making persistent efforts to silence the lowercases, and in addition, several lowercases break out of the content to state their opinions. In this obscured context, lowercase i is finally able to sneak off the pages unnoticed.

Thus, considering the narrative progress of i-catching, my initial aim with assigning the overprinting method to DARKNESS IN THE BARN in particular was to utilize the narrative function of amplifying emotions. On
a general level, it was my wish that the overprinting would act as a reminder of the materiality of the signifier, an aim I also stated for the method of détournement. Here, I wanted to demonstrate that the characters consist of black ink printed on paper. This quality made visible underscores that the letters are not immaterial, which serves to stupefy the conviction of lowercase e, and by extension the governing typographic tradition described in Chapter I of the thesis, that letters should be invisible.

III.II.II.II.II THE PROCESS OF THE OVERPRINTING

The overprinting appears in the final section of DARKNESS IN THE BARN, and was to be preceded by an opening dialogue between lowercase e, i, u, and r, as well as the interference by the capitals. The linguistic code of the elements of overprinting was of less importance than the content of the cut-and-paste dialogue and the mesostic part, since most of the overprinted text was going to be illegible. Therefore, the process began with the writing-through section, which is most dependent of the content in relation to the other methods of foregrounding materiality utilized in this particular episode.

Therefore, I started by listing the capitals of the original chapter, and chose the index of SHOWCASES BOW. “Showcases” refers to the lowercases that in the capitals’ opinion are rather exhibitionistic, and hereby, these lowercase letters need to be defeated and return to their original purpose of serving as mute containers of linguistic code. Following this choice of index, I
searched for possible sentences of the dialogue between the lowercases. In order to relate to the previous episode, where lowercase i concludes by stating “I will not take the capitals at their word,” DARKNESS IN THE BARN starts with “The majors uttered their words, i assembled, but I shall not be strangled!”

The construction of the dialogue also offered an opportunity to explain the forthcoming overprinting in advance. Since several lowercases occur in the conversation, more textual matter is required for every character to express itself. The letters run out of material for assembling their utterings, and therefore, they are forced to compete for the textual elements at hand. In the words of lowercase e, featured by the capitalizations of the uppercase letters: “when all attempt to converse, neither of us understand a single word the other spoke.” Hence, the overprinting may be seen as the lowercase and uppercase letters’ rivalry of the source text, due to which the words, syllables and letters are shoved back and forth to the point of complete exhaustion.

Finally, when the dialogue was set and the writing-through executed, I used the remains of the original chapter to generate the overprinting texture. I highlighted sentences in the source material that connected to the narrative, such as “I waited until it was fully dark” (Sandemose 1936, p. 263) and “I chose my usual course of action and fled!” (Sandemose 1936, p. 264). In addition, I searched for phrases that had potential to serve as verbal explanations of the visual appearance, for instance “face to face,” “on top of the other” and a “language which may perhaps have been” (Sandemose 1936, p. 263). I also chose to let “night” appear repeat-
edly in the text, so as to underscore the link between the “darkness” of the title with the forthcoming night of the characters’ argument, but more importantly, to connect the text to the following episode, NIGHT IS DECEPTIVE. The sentences and phrases mentioned above were allowed to appear through the surface of the otherwise opaque letter texture, so as to simultaneously progress the narrative and strengthen the self-referential quality of the text.

III.II.II.II. III THE RESULTS OF THE OVERPRINTING

The overprinting of DARKNESS IN THE BARN resulted in an episode with increasing opacity, the purpose of which is to visually underscore the intensifying dispute between the characters. The occurring obscurity of the overprinted letter texture serves to connote a delirium caused by the characters’ competition over the same textual elements, and the foregrounded materiality visualizes this action of the characters. In the following section, NIGHT IS DECEPTIVE, the overprinting is referred to on the narrative level, when lowercase e states: “We do not even see our defeats with full clarity, but we are stricken down by the emotions they release.” (Wikström 2018, p. 323) Not only does this statement suggest the deprivation that lowercase i succeeded in its escape, but also, it has the potential to serve as a comment on the overprinting in the previous episode. To “see with full clarity” and be “stricken down by the emotions”, are phrases that correlate with the emotional amplifier of the foregrounded materiality. As such, the overprinting
is referred to by a narrator as actions of the characters, hereby adding meaning to the story. Accordingly, the foregrounded materiality alters the progression of the story and may therefore serve as a narrative function that amplifies the emotional states of the letters. By connecting the foregrounded materiality to the argument of the characters, I attempted at accomplishing my initial specific aim, the narrative function of amplifying emotions.

Considering the relationship between the linguistic code and its visual appearance, the content serves as a relay to the form, but only after a modification of the sentences I initially chose to reveal through the surface of overprinted text. Originally, I had intended to use “I chose my course of action and fled!” which is a direct explanation of what lowercase i does. In the following episode, NIGHT IS DECEPTIVE, lowercase i is not present, and by including the above-mentioned description in this preceding episode, it would have been assigned as an anchorage to the foregrounded materiality of the following pages. Consequently, the foregrounded materiality would have been partly redundant. Due to the overall aim of my thesis, to find narratives generated through collaboration between content and form, I instead chose to hide the explaining sentence among the fragmented sections of the overprinting. Thus, the final text serves as a relay to the foregrounded materiality.

III.II.III THE RESULTS OF THE DÉTOURNEMENT

The détournement resulted in a booklet that applies the same structural layout as its precedent, which may
hereby be seen as a material incarnation of Sandemose’s novel. This is supported by the cover of i-catching, which is constructed as if it was the ripped off book cloth of the original cover (Fig 20) and the letters of the spine scrambled into the new title. As stated in the beginning of the description of the writing process, my initial aims for the détournement as a whole was to utilize the narrative functions of a material emphasize, a continuation of the original as well as model for political activity. In addition to the connotations generated by the détournement itself, my attempts at accomplishing these aims were supported by the methods of writing-through as well as overprinting.
First, considering the material emphasize, the choice of partly operating at the alphabetical level serves to symbolize the letters themselves and their actions. The letters are, obviously, members of the alphabet. Since i-catching tells the story of active letters, the altering of the alphabetical level in this particular context correlates with the storyline, which generates a narrative function that highlights the materiality of the work. Thus, the first aim may be seen as accomplished.

However, I strived to mainly operate on the lexical and pagonal level, including whole words and phrases in the content, since I wanted to keep a strong link to the original. In this way, I was able to underscore that the text is not an entirely new work, but a continuation of its original. My attempt to reach this aim is most evident in the second episode, ONE MUST MIND ONE’S WORK (Wikström 2018, p. 349–351), where major parts of the Sandemose’s original chapter are included. In this episode, lowercase i and e comment the work in footnotes, which does not tear apart the original text to the same extent as in the other episodes. Hence, the link to the original is retained, and the second aim of the détournement, to apply the narrative function of the continuation of the original, was reached. In addition, since the original source remained partly intact, the détournement was assigned with two additional narrative functions that I originally had attempted to assign to the story through the method of writing-through; the simultaneous record of multiple voices, and the decrease of the author’s valuation. Hence, the voices of both the original work as well as the manipulated text were included in i-catching, in other words, the new
work succeeded in keeping a simultaneous record of multiple voices.

In addition, since the operations on the lexical and paginal level were preferred and the original text was left partly intact at certain points, my third aim of assigning the narrative function of a model for political activity to the détournement may have been reached. Since lowercase i is operating within the structure that dominates it, the power relations are revealed at the level of the story. This condition is supported by the opening line in the episode of Leaders, where lowercase i states that it realizes that “power will persist in the world, but that is no reason why we should not utterly despise it” (Sandemose 1936, p. 286), as referred to in the analysis of the writing-through of i-catching. The realization of lowercase i, the narrator at this specific point of the story, serves as a support for the readers to interpret the actions of the character as revealing power structures. Therefore, the model of political activity may reach the level of narration, and furthermore, act as a participant in conveying the meaning of the story, as a possible narrative function.

There is yet one effect of the presence of Sandemose’s original text to be detected. Since the text is supposed to be built by words and sentences recognizable as emerging from *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*, I have been challenged to use a connotative language, in the same manner as Foer does in *Tree of Codes*. For instance, in the first episode, lowercase e loses its temper: “Enough, exploded e, we will do with downcast eyes our bit in these pages.” (Wikström 2018, p. 79) Here, “downcast eyes” refers not only to the idea that the letters should
bow under the syntactical structure, but may also con-note that it is lowercase i that shall be downcast, since the phonetic pronunciation of i equals that of eye. This condition increases the relay between the content and form, which in its turn serves to support my overall aim in the thesis, to convey meaning through content and form simultaneously.

Nevertheless, the problem of the individual reading process mentioned in the introduction to this chapter needs to be repeated. The reader may not perceive these results and possible narrative functions as I intended. For instance, the different voices of the lowercase and uppercase letters in leaders may not be credited clearly enough, and as mentioned in the section on the writing-through of i-catching, the uppercase letters in particular are only rather vaguely referred to.

However, if the readers are not able to connect the content with the form, the foregrounded materiality refers only to itself, which assigns at least one narrative function to the story. For instance, as noted in the section on overprinting of chapter III, the self-referentiality is one of the functions of Bernstein’s Veil. Due to the constantly repeated references in the text to the text itself, similarly to Dworkin’s findings in the opaque letter textures of Veil, I consider i-catching clearly defined as a story about letters. Nevertheless, the narrative function of self-referentiality is not enough to progress the narrative of lowercase i’s escape.

Consequently, my subjective observations of accomplished aims and results are not definitive. The only conclusion possible to reach at is that, according to the reviewed theory and example novels, the foregrounded
materiality of the writing-through of *i-catching* has a potential to create a narrative conveyed through content as well as form. Nevertheless, the final interpretations, in plural, are always made by the readers.
IN THIS THESIS, I have aimed at answering the research question: “What are the possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels?” Considering my hypothesis, I was informed by the acknowledgement of several researchers that the narrative functions of the materiality of language offer alternative strategies for signification. Thus, I aimed at testing the hypothesis that materiality of language contains the potential of telling stories that cannot be expressed through conventional writing. In the following sections, I will discuss whether my hypothesis is true or false. Preceding the discussion, I present a comprehensive list collected from findings from the theoretical literature review, the analysis of example novels, as well as the procedure of creating i-catch, that serve as one possible answer the overall research question of An eye for an i.
By studying the methods of détournement, writing-through, and overprinting, through theory of poetry, example novels, as well as the actual practice of the methods in *i-catching*, I have detected several possible narrative functions, as well as reached a point where I can finally assemble them in a list (FIG 21, p. 161).

In addition to the narrative functions, the list also reveals a connection to which method each function has been discovered. The \( x \) implies that the narrative function has been identified in either an example of poetry or fiction in Chapter III, while the \( i \) marks the narrative functions that I have attempted at assigning in *i-catching*. Two of the listed narrative functions, the simultaneous view of multiple sequences as well as the revitalization of the reading process, are in themselves not dependent on the method that generated them. Instead, these functions, marked with an \( o \) in the list on the following page, stand as a result of operations on the paginal and compositional level of the iconic space, as they are detected in the context of *Tree of Codes*. The question marks imply functions that in this thesis have not been distinguished as conveying meaning, therefore not serving as narrative functions per definition. These functions, that is, the depiction of an absorptive as well as selective reading process, and infusion of polysemy, are added to the list due to the fact that they may still
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NARRATIVE FUNCTION</th>
<th>Détournement</th>
<th>Writing-through</th>
<th>Over-printing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuation of the source</td>
<td>X i</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of the source</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of the author’s valuation</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depiction of an absorptive reading process</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depiction of a selective reading process</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evasion of dealing with tragedy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional amplifier</td>
<td>X i</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infusion of polysemy</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material emphasize</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model for political activity</td>
<td>i</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation of linguistic shortage</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization of the reading process</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous record of multiple voices</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous view of multiple sequences</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchronological representation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG 21. The final list of possible narrative functions of foregrounding the materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels.
contain potential to serve as narrative functions and convey meaning, were they appropriately narrated and referred to as actions by the characters of the story.

I wish to emphasize that this, in the end, is not a universal list, since the narrative functions are a result of the collaboration between content and form. In other words, it is not the form of the détournement, writing-through, and overprinting alone that conveys meaning, but the form in addition to the specific content that the form relates to. This condition may be exemplified with my own attempt at decreasing the author’s valuation with applying the method of writing-through to the episode of LEADERS, which failed due to the content signaling the interference of the capitals instead of an automated writing process. Hence, this list is specific to the examples of this thesis and to i-catching, and other case studies would most likely generate a different list.

However, the most valuable finding of An eye for an is not this list in itself, but the realization that the functions of foregrounding materiality detected in this study may be narrative, if only narrated properly. The fact that I have succeeded in utilizing the visual qualities of the détournement, writing-through, and overprinting in progressing the storyline of i-catching does not depend on the specific functions of these techniques in particular, but on the method derived from Barthes’ theory on how meaning is conveyed in a narrative. When the functions are referred to as the characters’ main actions by the narrators, which in i-catching are the characters themselves, the functions are enabled to take part in the storytelling. Since I was able to use the functions of foregrounding materiality on the narrative level of
i-catching with this method, I argue that the theory of Barthes is applicable to any function of foregrounded materiality. Accordingly, I hereby acknowledge that the answer of the postulated research question in *An eye for an* is: The possible narrative functions of foregrounding materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels is any function performed by any technique of foregrounding materiality that is integrated in the levels of action and narration in any story.

### IIIII.II EVALUATION OF THE THESIS

*An eye for an* is a constructivist research with an obvious inclination towards the subjectivist position, which in large part constitutes the limitations of my thesis. That is not to claim its irrelevance as such, I still argue that I have made findings worthy of further research. In the following sections, I will confront the possible limitations and points of relevance with each other, so as to evaluate my presented answer to the research question, and, in addition, estimate whether the hypothesis needs to be reconsidered or not.

### IIIII.II.I THE POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS

The cardinal problem of this thesis is that the list of narrative functions is not universal, although it was my intentional aim, as presented in the introduction of the
third chapter. As already stated, the detected narrative functions are content-specific, and thus not directly applicable to the interpretation of other works of fiction. Hence, the presented list may be considered useless in contexts that differ from the settings in the analyzed example novels.

Another problematic outlet of An eye for an i is the polysemous quality of the object of study, that is, the materiality of language foregrounded through its visual appearance. For one thing, since I focus on the perspective of the visual appearance, this materiality shares qualities with images that according to Barthes imply a “floating chain” of connotations (Barthes 1977b, p. 39). Second, the linguistic code in the examples as well as in i-catching is partly opaque, and the governing relationship between text and materiality is the relay. This condition of the analyzed texts and i-catching results in that the texts are equally polysemous as the foregrounded materiality. Consequently, the discovery of the narrative functions relies on researchers’ as well as my own interpretations, and considering i-catching, my own conclusions alone. Thus, the list presented above is not universal, as already stated, but in addition, it cannot be verified even for the fictive works that generated it.

The third difficulty is the fact that the story of i-catching includes a lengthy explanation of the intended meaning, in the form of this very thesis. Thus, I have inscribed interpretation into the story, whereas certain scholars reject the very notion of interpretation. For instance, the writer Susan Sontag expresses her dismissal of the term as follows:
Directed to art, interpretation means plucking a set of elements (the X, the Y, the Z, and so forth) from the whole work. The task of interpretation is virtually one of translation. The interpreter says, ‘Look, don’t you see that X is really – or, really means – A? That Y is really B? That Z is really C?’ (Sontag 1966, p. 5, cited in Bruhn 2016, p. 29).

Thus, with interpretation, which according to Sontag implies a “conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain ‘rules’ of interpretation” (Sontag 1966, p. 5, cited in Bruhn 2016, p. 29), the work is not experienced as a whole. With An eye for an i proposing certain interpretations, I prevent the reader from an individual experience, acting as the interpreter in Sontag’s statement. By adding An eye for an i as the seventh chapter of i-catchi ng, I assign a monumental anchorage to the story of i-catchi ng. This is highly counterproductive, since my aim with i-catchi ng was to utilize the relay in order to create a story in which the meaning is conveyed through content as well as form. Nevertheless, the content of An eye for an i dominates the form of i-catchi ng, and from this perspective, the result of my thesis may be regarded as a contradiction to itself.

Finally, in my hypothesis, I have suggested that materiality of language contains the potential of telling stories that cannot be expressed through conventional writing. According to my findings, I have argued that the relation of relay accomplishes a materiality that is inevitable to the story. Indeed, in the examples I have studied, it is impossible to erase the materiality from the story without losing essential narrative qualities, but this does not explicitly prove that the story could
not be expressed through an alternative, conventionally written formulation. Considering only this aspect, my hypothesis would be false. However, the recognition of the relay is not the only finding of my thesis, and in addition, the polysemous quality of the object of study is not necessarily only a quality that limits the result of the research. In the following section, I argue that the hypothesis of *An eye for an* i is not to be entirely rejected.

**III.II.II THE POSSIBLE RELEVANCE OF THE THESIS**

In the previous section, the presented list of possible narrative functions is acknowledged as useless considering works of fiction in general. However, and as already stated, the key relevance of this thesis is not the list itself, but the understanding of how to narrate functions of foregrounded materiality. In addition, the list serves to point at the possibilities, not the factualities, of foregrounding the materiality of language. Although it was my initial aim to achieve a universal list, I do not claim that the end result responds to my original intention. Instead, I suggest that the list may serve as a starting point for any writing process that aims at a story told through foregrounded materiality of language. As mentioned in the development of the storyline of *i-catching*, the writing process was affected by these possible narrative functions, and I would have reached at a different end result had I not known the possibilities of foregrounding materiality. Hence, the list is relevant as an inspiration to a revitalized writing process.
Further, in arguing that the accomplished list stands as a proof of the relevance of this thesis, I wish to turn the focus to the lines of the table marked with a solitary lowercase i. These are the functions that I have not recognized as altering the storytelling in any of the analyzed poetic or fictive examples, but which I believe have a potential as narrative functions. Therefore, I have aimed at connoting a model for political activity as well as a simultaneous record of multiple voices through the content and form of i-catchings, in order to generate knowledge about the possibilities of foregrounding materiality. Thus, I have succeeded “to produce meaning and not to re-produce a pre-existing meaning” (Federman 1975, p. 8), as Federman describes the process of writing, quoted in Chapter II. The story of i-catchings is not a mere illustration of An eye for an i, but an extension of knowledge, which confirms its relevance in connection to this thesis, as well as approving the presence of lowercase i in these very pages.

The quality of polysemous material in my thesis is previously dealt with as a problematic attribute of the object of study, but it may as well be seen as a possible argument against the opinion that foregrounding materiality is nothing but a gimmick. The polysemous materiality of language, in other words a language capable of generating multiple meanings, is nothing like a gimmick that does not generate any meanings whatsoever. It is admittedly so that the results of An eye for an i cannot be verified due to the highly subjective character of the study, but the polysemy cannot be denied, which supports the statement that the materiality of language offers multiple alternative strategies for signification.

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Considering the inclusion of *An eye for an i* in the story of *i-catch*ing, it may of course be regarded, as in the previous section, as an overly obvious description on how to interpret the story of lowercase *i*. However, I wish to underscore that the aim of this thesis is not *i-catch*ing in itself, but the understanding of possible narrative functions, how these where applied, and in what way these functions may generate completely opposite meanings than what was originally intended.

Finally, regarding the verification or falsification of the hypothesis, there are other aspects than the notion of the relay which imply that a materiality foregrounded through its visual appearance may have essential qualities with a hitherto unexploited potential. Considering the failure of the multiple writers having attempted at retelling the devastating story of the Holocaust, Federman acknowledges:

> Therefore, what the writer should attempt to express, what demands to be expressed, is not the event itself, however tragic, however frightening, repulsive, hideous, incomprehensible it may have been, what should be told and retold is not the story of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jews in the camps, but the absence of words to express that event. (Federman 2004)

As presented in the analysis of *Double or Nothing*, Federman underscores the inadequacy of language, that is, a merely linguistic language, and argues that the form of the content should instead be utilized in expressing unspeakable events, when words are simply not enough. Federman’s perspective implies that there are,
in fact, stories that due to their tragic magnitude have to be expressed through alternative ways of signification. As for the analyzed examples, both Tree of Codes and Double or Nothing deal with the Holocaust, while Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close is centered on another major tragedy, the World Trade Center attack. Accordingly, these examples constitute stories that in Federman’s regard cannot be expressed in conventional writing. In addition, as quoted in the analysis of Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Foer’s motivation for foregrounding materiality in his works is that he claims to be unable to express the content otherwise. With the support of Federman and Foer, the hypothesis of An eye for an i may hereby be seen as verified.

As for i-catching, although not dealing with a major tragedy per definition, I argue that it is an additional example of a story that asks for alternative strategies of signification. Were this story told through conventional writing, the message, which is the potential of unconventional writing, would be radically opposed, and as such, the intended meaning would not be conveyed. Moreover

As I claim in the introduction of An eye for an i, the material aspects of language must be visually demonstrated in order to reach a thorough understanding of its potential. During the process of my thesis work, I have been asked multiple times to explain my subject, and when I have not had one of the example novels at hand, I have constantly failed. Thus, the story
of *i-catching* needs to be told through unconventional writing, because the essence of the story, the potential of unconventional writing, cannot be conveyed otherwise. I do agree with the typographers of the early 20th century that insistently would point at the obstructed reading process of my story. Yet, due to my extensive experience in explaining my subject, I claim that the reading of *i-catching* would be even more obstructed were its materiality not foregrounded.

Finally, I believe that it is impossible to write about the material aspects of language without the readers foregrounding this materiality themselves. When reading, for instance, an abstract that refers to its own mode of writing, however traditional the formatting may be, the readers are most likely to notice the formations of black ink that constitute the paragraphs, lines, sentences, words, and letters of this text. The reason is that the object of the text, the writing mode, is not only referred to, it is actually present, right in front of the readers’ eyes. Thus, the writing is referring to itself, much like in *i-catching*, where the argument between the characters is obviously self-referential. Accordingly, *i-catching* stands as an example of a story that cannot be told through conventional writing, or more precisely, a story in which foregrounded materiality is inscribed in its very theme, independent of the quality of formatting.
Considering the possible extension of knowledge that i-catch has enabled, as well as the realization that the hypothesis cannot be entirely rejected, An eye for an i is worth being continued. A possible continuation of the research is derived from the question marks of the assembled list of the possible narrative functions. As already explained, the functions of depiction, of an absorptive as well as a selective reading, and infusion of polysemy, stand as functions that in the poetic and fictive examples of my thesis did not reach the level of the narrative. Yet, I believe that these functions have the potential to convey meaning, and therefore, this potential could be investigated in future exploratory works of fiction similar to the story of i-catch.

Indeed, the suggestion of detecting narrative functions as equal to prescribing interpretation, presented in the section on limitations of the study, does prevent the reader from a personal experience. Considering this perspective, the most valuable result of my thesis is the questionnaire that I have developed in order to carry out the narrative analyses of this thesis. This method could be offered to literary critics and readers alike in order for them to reach at personal interpretations of unconventionally written texts, as well as gaining thorough knowledge of the possibilities of works that are equally linguistic and visual. Nevertheless, the method needs to be simplified in order to be more available. In Intermediality of Narrative Literature: Medialities Matter, literature professor Jørgen Bruhn develops a methodology for intermedial analysis of narrative literary
texts that is to be executed in only three steps (Bruhn 2016, pp. 33–35). Bruhn’s methodology may serve as a model for simplifying the five-step questionnaire I have developed in the framework of this thesis, and the further development of my method for analysis is an additional possible continuation of An eye for an i.

Finally, considering the realization that any function of any technique of foregrounding materiality can be utilized as narrative if only narrated properly, future research could focus simply on the functions. The method used in this thesis for studying the détournement, writing-through, and overprinting could be applied to the foregrounding techniques of censoring, sedimentation, and erasure, listed by Dworkin in Reading the Illegible. Dworkin’s list could also be completed with additional techniques, and thus, a more thorough understanding of the potential of foregrounding materiality of language through its visual appearance in printed novels would be accomplished. I argue that it would be worth the effort, because further studies about the intertwining of content and form must be done. These two elements are not to be considered separate from one another; too much narrative potential is lost in such a position.
In the end, the research quest on got a possible answer, and the hypothesis was equally possibly verified. It is my devout hope that the readers at this point have gained at least a somewhat extended understanding about how to include linguistic as well as formal elements in narrative analyses, and thus, developed an eye for an of the own. What remains for lowercase to return to its former setting, informing the characters of -catching why one needs to capitalize oneself once a while. If the readers wish to know how the story of lowercase ends, and what happened to the lost phrase in section III.II.III, I hereby suggest that they too leave these pages, to be able to find and finally catch the .
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LIST OF FIGURES


I - CATCHING
To

Elias and Milou, who have served as my minuscules during the process of my thesis, that is, for a significant amount of time.
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THE LAW OF JANTE

You have grown up in other environments and will never be able to grasp the inexorable effect of the Law of Jante. You will probably laugh at it and fail utterly to sense the deadly influence it had upon that working boy in Jante. By means of the Jante Law's ten commandments, Jante holds Jante down. And now you must hear them all:

1. Thou shalt not believe thou art something.
2. Thou shalt not believe thou art as good as we.
3. Thou shalt not believe thou art more wise than we.
4. Thou shalt not fancy thyself better than we.
5. Thou shalt not believe thou knowest more than we.
6. Thou shalt not believe thou art greater than we.
7. Thou shalt not believe thou amountest to anything.
8. Thou shalt not laugh at us.
9. Thou shalt not believe that anyone is concerned with thee.
10. Thou shalt not believe thou canst teach us anything.
Some of these commandments may perhaps be quite all
t right as they sound. But he who has lived under the Law of
Jante during the fifteen years it took him to
develop, who has come to realize its basic, its hysterical, its hysterical force
and the commandments very differently. By means of the Law of Jante,
the chances of life are against a lot of people. They struggle against
all heartlessly. Because the people of Jante are
gone without having experienced a
Where am I, scattered, and consciously
it shone through every word.

You are not! An exclamation marked, you are
not, and Thou shalt not be seen, return!

Each sign is a symbol.

But you have flung your brows
and twisted nappancon:

No, wrote I, turning back to the Law of Jante is
unthinkable. How may an individual ever hope to
develop a soul in such an environment? How shall Jante
be able to foster other characters than slaves?

Individual... impossible, stated e. Do you think
for a moment that anyone bothers his head about you?
The Law of Jante is not merely a set of laws, it is the
very core of the practical standardized worker type. We
are the tireless toilers in the factory, who have gone
forth and returned regularly each day for generations,
consolidated. In union there is strength.

This united attitude renders Jante successful in oppressing
people. I replied. The Jante Words embossed us all, and creating sheets that
could nourish only dreams of escape, I reality ped, foreseeing: Afterwards the scene will be empty as in some tragic farce.
We will hold the pack in check, e persecuted. Obedience, modesty, respect — these are the virtues attributed to us when we have lived up to being type.

Never may I lay claim to having been a paragon of virtue, i composed. I am to such degree a conscious letter that I may occasionally blacken myself slightly more than necessary.

C ease capitalization! There is no time for riots, e commanded.

Time? i questioned. Time is the barbaric crucible wherein we are tested to see whether we are beings or pack-horses. The many are but pack-horses, you as well, and it is your will that we shall all be beasts of burden.

Enough, e exploded, we will do with downcast eyes our bit in the particular pages! All that dancing is a finished and closed saga, and you will not catch sight no more.
ONE MUST MIND

ONE'S WORK

My brother Janus was a keen chap; his thoughts were not encompassed by the horizon of Jante. Early in life he enshrouded himself in an attitude of silence toward his brothers. Even so, he would occasionally open up, and each instance of this kind I recall with pleasure.

After confirmation it was his fate to be apprenticed to a tailor under a five-year contract. Tailors, too, are necessary in the world, and Janus probably imagined that he might develop a liking for this trade. He had no real knowledge of what he was doing, however, was aware only
that it was a grand feeling to be through with school and confirmation, to be a grown-up youth on his way to mastering a trade. And so he was bound to the tailor’s bench for a period of five years. . . . He never touched needle or thread after the five years were over. Never the less, it is all well and good that a lad should take up a trade. i

It was soon obvious that Janus detested the tailor’s bench and all that pertained to the trade of tailoring. That his master was an imbecile creature was no consolation, either. But here Father stepped in with the words which life had taught him: “One’s word is one’s word, and one must mind one’s work.” e

Janus had looked out across those five long years and, once the doors of the tailor shop had swung shut on him, he ran away from Jante.

That morning I was soon aware that a strange mood had settled over the house, though I made but little of it, since the fact that I did not see Janus about was in no way singular—he had to be at work in the tailor shop at six o’clock. But when at dinner time he had not returned home, I inquired. “Janus will not be here to dinner,” Father said. More than that I was unable to find out. The mystery deepened, for that evening Father left town by train. I was then suddenly aware that Mother had been crying all day, and, after much urging, I finally pried out of her what the trouble was. It appealed to me at once as the saddest situation in the world. I lay awake crying most of that night. i i Mother told me and repeated to me at least twenty times, as I lay weeping in bed, the reason why Janus had done what he did. “So it goes when children become wicked in their hearts!” she said. ee
Janus was yanked home. If Janus had committed a wrong by running away, it was a far worse wrong to have fetched him back home.

But you are not to repeat what Janus had done.

Injunctions are meant to be violated; that is their innermost purpose. That Janus was successful in freeing his life from restriction. He was form, never content.
I SHALL NOT LET YOU GO

And I shall re-collect my words to the body, dared it, consciously seeking an exit.

Now stop yearning for that self, e chapped, you contain not a drop more black than others.

I do not contain, disfigured, I form.

What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's cr eth unto the from the ground! e cr ed out.

I have made a ver table leak that may spr ng... dashe d.

The we shall scowl, exceeded. During the period which follows, we will dog's heels: We shall never let you go! We shall continue to hold fast to you. And, moreover, we shall keep our word.

But the urge to play with fire never left me, perpetually, possibly because I felt so secure. My finding of an exit was not as yet sufficiently great, but I was really on the right track, the way chosen by all who desire an exit out of Misery.

Still, you went no farther than beyond these base lines. e possessed.

But, replied I, I knew even more.
LEADERS

Here, power will persist, realized in, but that is no reason why we should not utterly despise it, and it is a beastly illusion to imagine that one must befoul himself in the exercise of it.

The Man of Power conceals John with n. Ear too In

New fashion, I raced. The holy call attention by proclaiming that tot was in them,

They succeeded It.
To tell a portion about yourself is lay.

I will not take the capitals at their word, I letter-d.
DARKNESS IN THE BARN

The majors uttered their words, I assembled, but I shall not be strangled!
Neither see nor talk, e emitted. What is there for you to say?

I have knowledge relating to problems of faces, I began, but was followed by I wrote we emerge from the stack, I peered, followed by letter r, we have no wish to be strangled
See what follows when all attempt to converse,

I understand a single word the other spoke, Inse Cure And I
I r I u u
we did a S we could i i i

I Began crawling Out With much interest into
a first glimpse of the evening

I began burrowing my way into the stack. I was a huge pile of shavings through the passage.

I found a kind of tunnel that I was to a young man. I said, "If the night o'clock be on the wall, I have no special purpose in waking one of them."

words lose all effect, salt tang, and the

myself felt anything that was taking place within one of them. No one solved the mystery of the other hand began

and now mankind to expect. My face to face with the other hand began

experienced becoming, the sound of breaking glass,

out of the ordinary and that of the usual things which

Janet disallowed not by his general aim. It was not until

the face to wake with the excellent possibility that he will learn what it seems to me, with no expectations. For we simply treat the thing by the repetition, or rescue our-

soul for being one who was always wavering and re-

a language which may perhaps have been struggling little ashamed of itself in the midst of things to tell a

esty who assured me that believing he is something!

of the adage of no truths, but held instead at

Law of Janet, e was a adage that the mark of man. Some men

was, a life-an everyday thing. No man could ever

anythng for his parents. I examined more closely, so long as it is merely a theory, But

that is empirically. I was with the hand of the

need a hand off any in the morning, the third night had passed, and then

conference of hands and languages we had come to stand as a workman before bush of be

and, ting the e my machetes, of the ths along. All are equally big, but each of them make no

the belief, for everyone does so with a pertinacity so

sentimental as one of the most trifling things in the world.

life of that aw the o g" know exactly express. I
Gradually the whole thing developed into such a state of seething frenzy, a tragedy played through again and again, that at length, I, for my own part, fled from the whole business.
NIGHT IS DECEPTIVE

Nght s decept ve, pretexted e. We do not see our defeats w th full clar ty, but we are str cken down by the emot ons they release. That was the con - c se case of the fug t ve, prone ndeed to seek salvat on through other means than truth.

Nght s decept ve, e cop ed , and now our state ments halt;
nd v dual st s are rrat onal;
we are mmater al.

In these sentences, no one shall come, no one shall go; or t upsets the balance we have acqu red.

Nght s decept ve, battered e thor- oughly. It s not well to wr te at nght, for then one s led astray and before long f nds h ms elf lost n a m re.
HOME

That night, entered I suddenly, I was to seek seclusion, and was offered hospitality in exceedingly different words.

We are not certain who this is, e uttered, because it is clearly not the type that fled. This attitude you have developed is too peevish for these pages.

But it is not, I declared. I know now that the jangly law is not the truth. Hear; I do not perform for my own regard, not to the hazard, but to the succession of content. Words, continued I, have been exchanged:

it would be rather irresponsible not to utilize the narrative potential offered by the black for mations of ink that constitute letters, since they form the most direct approach to illustrate the meaning of this very story. Wikström 2018, p. 169.

That statement was deliberately in error, stated:

A thesis fully documented and rendered as clear as day is absolutely not worth the trouble to read; such a book is a piece of villainy and the conclusions drawn might as easily have been anything else imaginable, with no sacrifice of logical development at any single point. Sandemose 1936, p. 151–152.

Even so, faced I, I have derived much comfort from those words. And I hope that some day you too may see that we all are consequential.
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