Cohesion, Style and Narrative in Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

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A Thesis Presented to the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the MA Degree

May 2012

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors, Hilde Hasselgård and Jakob Lothe, for their guidance and helpful advice.

A big thanks also to Torunn “Tunhild” Johansen for proofreading and comments (and pug memes!).

And finally, I would like to thank my parents and my sister for their support and encouragement.

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0 Introduction

0.1 Introduction/motivation

Ruqaiya Hasan (2007) says about literature that it is "a kind of art; it differs from other arts by being verbal art; i.e. the "art" in verbal art is essentially crafted with language" (Hasan 2007: 16). My motivation for writing this thesis is that I have always been interested in the relation between language and literature. How do linguistic choices in a literary text make us interpret and appreciate them in the ways that we do?

I was fascinated by *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* the first time I read it because I had never encountered a novel which made such extensive use of visual elements. After having enrolled in the Master's programme at the University of Oslo, I decided to use this opportunity to investigate how linguistic and other meaning-making resources have been used to create such a distinctive novel.

0.2 Aim of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to carry out an interdisciplinary study which combines analyses of cohesion, literary style, multimodality and narrative strategies in the novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer. The aim of the study is to show what it is that helps the reader make sense of the meanings that emerge through the use of different narrators and different modes of expression in the novel. The novel contains three narrators, and although their narratives may be seen as self-contained, I posit that patterns of reference, lexical cohesion and parallels tie their narratives together to make a unified whole. This thesis aims to show how patterns of reference, lexical cohesion, style and narrative organisation work together to create this unity of meaning in and across the verbal and non-verbal text.

Because I have chosen to take so many aspects of the novel into account, it has been necessary to opt for a broad scope rather than an in-depth analysis of each aspect of the text. I have endeavoured to maintain a perspective that is both interdisciplinary and broad enough to encompass all the features of the text which were significant to my interests. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is a multi-faceted novel, and I feel that it deserves a multi-faceted analysis, in so far as this can be accomplished within the frame of a master's thesis.

0.3 Material and method

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close is a novel written by Jonathan Safran Foer, published in 2005. It is about a nine-year old boy called Oskar Schell, who lost his father in the 9/11 attacks. A year after his father's death, Oskar discovers a key as he is looking through his father's possessions. The key is in a little envelope labelled "Black". Oskar is convinced that the key holds a significance to his father, and is determined to find out what it opens. He begins an eight month long search to find the lock that the key is for.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close is also the story of Oskar's grandparents and how they came to be married. The two of them survived the bombing of Dresden during World War II, and they both escaped to the United States separately. They meet by coincidence in a bakery in New York and decide to get married. We learn through their parallel narratives that Oskar's grandfather was in love with Oskar's great-aunt and was going to marry her before she was killed in the bombing. Oskar's grandfather (whom we will refer to as Thomas Sr.) and his grandmother (whom we will refer to as Grandma) agree never to have children, but Grandma ends up breaking this rule and gets pregnant without Thomas Sr.'s consent. Thomas Sr. leaves when he finds out about her pregnancy, and attempts to "explain" through his narrative why the two of them could not make their marriage work. Grandma's narrative includes many of the same events, and shows "her side of the story", so to speak.

Toward the end of the novel, we learn that Thomas Sr. returns to New York after seeing his son's name (which is the same as his own) on a list of the people who were killed in 9/11. Grandma reluctantly lets him back into her life and into the apartment they used to share under the condition that he will not reveal himself to Oskar. We realise that the person Oskar refers to as his grandmother's renter is in fact his grandfather.

Oskar and Thomas Sr. do end up meeting each other in the end, and Oskar includes him in the final stage of his quest. It is not until then that Oskar realises the truth about Thomas Sr.'s identity.

The method adopted in this thesis is to do a close reading of the whole novel in order to gain an overview of how the narrative is organized and which features of the text make it coherent. In Chapter 1, section 1.2 and chapter 2, section 2.2.2, we will analyze shorter excerpts of text to demonstrate features of cohesion and stylistic features respectively, and then discuss these in light of the theories used.

0.4 Theoretical background

Systemic-functional linguistics is a theory that is well-suited for our present purposes because it takes as its starting point the social nature of language – any text is a functional act of communication between people, and is situated within a context of culture. Furthermore, SFL views expression in language as a result of a choice, and this in turn implies that the choices are motivated by something – in other words, the speaker's communicative goals.[1] In this thesis, we shall be concerned with cohesion, which is the grammatical and lexical links that make a text hang together. The main source we will be using for our analysis of cohesion is Halliday and Hasan's seminal work *Cohesion in English* (1976). We will give a detailed description of what cohesion is in chapter 1.

Stylistics is a discipline that aims to account for how linguistic choices affect the meanings and effects of literary works. The approach to stylistics that we will follow in this book is that of Leech and Short (1981), which is considered to be influential within the field. Leech and Short's approach to stylistics draws on both systemic-functional grammar and elements from narrative theory, and is therefore well suited for our purposes.

Narrative theory is the study of the components of narratives and of the different strategies that writers or tellers may employ when constructing a narrative. Narrative theory is a large field, and in this thesis we shall only be concerned with certain elements of narrative theory, namely time, narrative voice, and focalization. We will give a description of stylistics and relevant terms within narrative theory in chapter 2.

0.5 Previous research

There are several examples of studies which combine systemic-functional linguistics and literary analysis. Nørgaard (2003) includes cohesion in her extensive study of two literary texts, as we shall see later, while Halliday (1971) and Kennedy (1982) focus on transitivity patterns. Hasan (1989) takes a broader perspective and comments on all linguistic features which are distinctive in the texts she studies.

Halliday (1971) carries out a study of the language in William Golding's *The Inheritors.* In this article, Halliday has selected four passages from the book for his analysis and focuses mainly on the choice of verbs and transitivity patterns. He argues that the linguistic choices

[1] see for example Martin and Rose 2007: 4-5 about social context.

that Golding has made are "a reflexion of the underlying theme" (Halliday 1971: 350), and shows how the transitivity patterns provide the reader with "a particular way of looking at experience" (Halliday 1971: 345, 347). Halliday has picked out four passages of the story which he has labelled A, B and C. He describes a stylistic shift between these passages and labels the two different styles of writing "Language A" and "Language C" (the language in passage B is a sort of transition between Language A and Language C (Halliday 1971: 354). Language A presents the world through the eyes of the Neanderthals, or more specifically the character Lok, who observes the "new people" who move in on his group's territory, while Language C presents the world from the Homo Sapiens' point of view. Halliday writes about Language A that it creates an impression of "ineffectual activity" because verbs which are normally transitive are used intransitively, and in many cases the subjects of the clauses are not people but parts of the body or inanimate objects (Halliday 1971: 349). Processes typically only involve one participant. It is a situation where "people act, but they do not act on things; they move, but they move only themselves" (ibid.) In Language C, most of the clauses contain transitive verb phrases in which "a human agent is acting on an external object" (Halliday 1971: 356). Halliday argues that this difference between the language of the two sections reflects the novel's underlying theme in the sense that "the theme of the entire novel, in a sense, is transitivity: man's interpretation of his experience of the world, his understanding of its processes and of his own participation in them" (Halliday 1971: 359).

Kennedy (1982) applies Halliday's approach to two different texts, one is an excerpt from Joseph Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent,* and the other is James Joyce's short story "Two Gallants". Kennedy uses transitivity analysis to show how the characters in the texts are construed as regards their involvement in both their own actions and the actions that are directed at them. The excerpt from *The Secret Agent* which Kennedy analyzes is one in which Mr. Verloc is murdered by his wife. Kennedy shows how Mr Verloc is construed as "a passive observer of an act he can do nothing to prevent" (Kennedy 1982: 88). Mrs. Verloc, on the other hand, is construed as "detached" from her actions; because of the "avoidance of clauses with Mrs. Verloc as actor" (Kennedy 1982: 89). Instead we read about how the carving knife has vanished right after "her right hand skimmed lightly the end of the table". In the following passage the knife is construed as moving up and down as if by itself; the knife is "planted in his breast" through "a plunging blow, delivered over the side of the couch", but none of these clauses feature Mrs. Verloc as the "doer" of the action (Kennedy 1982: 86, 88). Kennedy therefore argues that this creates an impression of Mrs. Verloc as someone who is

acting without deliberate intent. In the second part of his paper, Kennedy analyzes transitivity patterns in Two Gallants and shows how they reflect the asymmetrical relationship between Lenehan and Corley – Lenehan is construed for the most part as a "passive observer", whereas Corley is portrayed as an active, determined individual who "gets what he wants" (Kennedy 1982: 92-94). Kennedy also shows how the difference between the two men as individuals and the tension between them emerges in the text through choice of mood (in the dialogue between them) and the lexis that is used to describe their physical appearance and movements (Kennedy 1982: 94-96).

Hasan (1989) shows how texts of various types may be analyzed stylistically using systemic-functional linguistics. She analyzes nursery rhymes, a poem and a short story and points out features of language which are especially prominent and meaningful in the different texts. The analysis of the short story is the one that is the most relevant to this paper. Hasan analyzes the short story *Necessity's Child* by Angus Wilson and shows how the author's linguistic choices express the theme (or what Hasan interprets as the theme) of the story.

Hasan divides the story into what she calls *movements*, which she defines as a stage in the story which has a "clear nexus of its own" and "centres around a discrete event, or state" (Hasan 1989: 56). Hasan has picked out six excerpts which she comments on, showing how the use of language varies in different movements. She uses the term *stylistic shift* to refer to variation in the mode of expression in the text, or in other words, the grammatical structures that have been used, such as rankshifting (clauses that have a nominal function within a sentence), modality, conditionality, transitivity patterns and so on. Hasan also comments on stylistic features of the text such as parallelism, rhythm and assonance.

Hasan finds that the use of the conditional construes "the sense of the unattainable" (Hasan 1989: 61) and that this in turn emphasizes the protagonist's feeling of inadequacy and inferiority. She also finds that the combination of the conditional and various modal tenses creates the contrast between the "imaginary" (the protagonist's daydreams) and the "real" (what actually happens). Another important observation Hasan makes is that although the point of view from which the story is narrated shifts between that of the main character's perspective and that of an impartial (omniscient) observer (which Hasan refers to as subjective and objective planes of narration), the impartial observer is "partial" to the main character, because he seems to observe the main character's thoughts as feelings as well as his actions, while the other characters are described only in terms of their observable behaviour.

Since the impartial observer is "selective in admitting what/who he is omniscient about", the selection becomes meaningful (Hasan 1989: 69). Hasan argues that this tweaking of perspectives influences how the readers perceive the story and who they sympathize with.

Nørgaard (2003) provides a comprehensive systemic-functional study of two texts by James Joyce; the short story "Two Gallants" and the novel *Ulysses.*

Nørgaard's analysis of "Two Gallants" is divided into three sections dealing with each of the three metafunctions, and in each of these sections she comments on features that are especially prominent.

As regards cohesion in "Two Gallants", Nørgaard discusses certain foregrounded patterns and shows how Joyce uses cohesive devices to construe the characters' point of view (as with Hasan's partial/impartial observer) and to play with the readers' assumptions and expectations. For example, Nørgaard discusses an episode in the story where a participant who has already been established in the narrative is referred to in indefinite form ("a woman came running down the steps…") Nørgaard argues that this is a conscious choice on Joyce's part because he is narrating the story from a specific character's point of view:

> the indefiniteness reflects the fact that this is how Lenehan perceives things. From a distance, Lenehan simply cannot see who the woman is, hence the indefinite expression, which, in turn, encodes the perspective. (Nørgaard 2003: 144)

Nørgaard also explains how the use of "unresolved cohesion" creates a sort of *in medias res* effect which can influence the readers' interpretations in different ways. One example of unresolved cohesion is the reference to "the city" in the beginning of the story, where the identity of the referent is not retrievable neither within nor outside the text. It could be argued that most readers would infer that "the city" refers to Dublin in this story given the title of the book it appears in and their knowledge of Joyce in general. However, Nørgaard points out that readers who did not have such background knowledge would merely interpret "the city" as "just any city" and that the foregrounding would simply have the effect of drawing their attention to the spatial setting (Nørgaard 2003: 141-2). She also mentions that this sort of unresolved cohesion (which in other cases could also apply to cataphoric reference) is a device that creates the impression that the reader has a "shared experience" with the writer and that the text they are reading is a "slice" of a larger text (Nørgaard, ibid., Halliday and Hasan 1976: 298).

Nørgaard pays special attention to lexical cohesion in *Ulysses*. There appears to be a parallel between metaphors that recur in the text and the lexical items that form part of these metaphors. This combines with the non-metaphorical uses of the same lexical items and creates a subtle cohesive effect (e.g. the parallel between the description of the china bowl that had stood at Dedalus' mother's bedside and the description of the bay as a "bowl of bitter waters") (Nørgaard 2003: 166-8).

Nørgaard argues this sort of cohesive relation may be interpreted much in the same way as lexical collocation. Although there is no *conventional* semantic relation between the lexical items that form part of the metaphors Nørgaard discusses, there appears to be a relation between them in this particular text. Lexical collocation is a fuzzy concept, and semantic relations between lexical items often depend on the context. Nørgaard describes her own notion of lexical sets as being "slightly broader" than that of Halliday and Hasan's (since it includes metaphorical connections), and argues that her findings seem to indicate that there is "a tendency within literature to employ as an important meaning-making resource the creation of new, surprising cohesive ties through the building up of unusual lexical sets" (Nørgaard 2003: 169-70).

Nørgaard also discusses the interplay between reference and the construal of perspective in *Ulysses* as she does in her analysis of "Two Gallants". The stream-of-consciousness technique that Joyce weaves into the narrative to make it seem like the reader can "listen in" on the character's thoughts is characterized by use of unresolved exophoric reference (Nørgaard 2003: 178-9), that is, exophoric reference to things which are accessible to the character inside the fictional reality, but which have not been introduced into the discourse. The exophoric reference remains unresolved, and thus urges the readers to infer the meanings of these references as far as they go. According to Nørgaard, Joyce's use of unresolved cohesion can be seen as a comment on how difficult it is to represent reality through language, since our perception of the world is always subjective (Nørgaard 2003: 182).

0.6 Plan of study

This thesis has two chapters, one about cohesion (chapter 1) and one about narration and stylistics (chapter 2). In chapter 1, we will give an overview over the different kinds of cohesion that may be present in a text, as described in Halliday and Hasan (1976). We will then give a detailed analysis of all kinds of cohesive ties and interaction between cohesive

chains in three excerpts (one for each narrator) which are rendered in Appendices 1-3. In chapter 2, we will carry out narrative and stylistic analyses of each of the characters's texts. The stylistic analyses will be based on a longer sample from each narrator's text as well as shorter, supplementary examples. We will also examine the chronological organisation of events and the use of focalization in the novel. We will draw on chapter 1 to show what patterns of cohesion obtain across the different narrators' chapters, both in what we shall term the verbal and the non-verbal text.

1 Cohesion

1.1 What is cohesion?

Halliday and Hasan (1976) define a text as any stretch of discourse of any length which forms a ”unified whole” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 1). In any given text, there are semantic links between elements which are maintained across sentence boundaries. These contribute to creating a sense of unity, or in other words, they have a cohesive function. Halliday and Hasan use the term *cohesive tie* to refer to such semantic links between elements in a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) group the different linguistic resources that can be used to create cohesion under the headings reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

Words that are used to signal **reference,** such as personal, demonstrative and comparative pronouns have little semantic meaning on their own; rather they have an indexical function which means that they are typically used to “point to” something. The meaning of reference items must be retrieved by determining what it is they are being used to refer to in a given text. A series of items which all refer to the same entity are *co-referential.*

1) That night we ordered General Tso’s Gluten for dinner and I noticed that Dad was using **a fork**, even though he was perfect with chopsticks.”Wait a minute!” I said, and stood up. I pointed at **his fork**. “Is that fork a clue?” He shrugged his shoulders, which to me meant **it** was a major clue. (p. 8)

In example 1, the items *a fork*, *his fork* and *it* are all co-referential. We note that the fork is introduced into the text in indefinite form, and then it is tracked pronominally. This signals to the reader that it is the same fork that is being referred to.

This kind of text-internal reference is known as *endophoric reference*. Endophoric reference points to entities which have either already been established in the discourse, or which will be introduced at a later stage. Reference that is made to items outside the text is known as *exophoric reference* – these are referents that have not been introduced into the discourse but which are accessible to the interlocutors in the outside context (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 33). Moreover, there is *homophoric reference,* which is a kind of generalized exophoric reference that is seen as “universally” accessible, not only in a given situation but in a larger sense. Halliday and Hasan say that exophoric reference “contributes to the CREATION of text, in that it links the language with the context of situation; but it does not contribute to the

INTEGRATION of one passage with another so that the two together form part of the SAME text" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 37). Literary discourse is a communication process where the participants (i.e. the author and the readers) are separated in space and time. It is not "language in action" in the same way a conversation or other face-to-face verbal interaction is. Authors do not address readers directly, even though they may have a notion of who they are typically "writing for". When authors write, they will make exophoric or homophoric reference to things which they assume will be familiar or relevant enough to readers for the reference to make sense.

Reference can either be *anaphoric*, which means that it points back to a referent that has already been established in the text, or it can be *cataphoric*, which means that it points forward to something which is yet to be introduced. Anaphoric reference is illustrated in example 2), where *him* is interpreted by recourse to the preceding *the renter.* Example 3) shows cataphoric reference; the clause initial *it* gets its meaning from the following context.

2) **The renter** had been living with Grandma since Dad died, and even though I was at her apartment basically every day, I still hadn't met **him.** (p. 69)

3) **It** isn't anymore, but for a long time it was **my dream to take over the family jewelry business** (p. 7)

Personal reference is used to refer to participants (including inanimate and non-human referents as well as human ones) using personal pronouns, possessive determiners or possessive pronouns (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 43).

4) Grandma lives in the building across the street. **We**'re on the fifth floor and **she**'s on the third, but you can't really tell the difference. Sometimes **she**'ll write notes for **me** on **her** window, which **I** can see through my binoculars, and once Dad and **I** spent a whole afternoon trying to design a paper airplane that **we** could throw from our apartment into **hers**.

In example 4 above, the first *we* refers to Oskar and his mother. *She* and *her* refer to Grandma, *I* refers to Oskar, and the second *we* refers to Oskar and his father. *Hers* refers both to Grandma and to her apartment (this is also an example of substitution, which will be discussed later in this paper).

Demonstrative reference can be either neutral (*the*) or selective (*this/that, these/those, here/there, now/then*). When used exophorically, demonstrative reference items can signal proximity (*this, these, here, now*), or distance (*that, those, there, then*) from the speakers or the situation. The use of *the* signals that whatever is referred to is close or relevant enough to

the speakers for the identity of reference to be obvious. *The* can also indicate that the speaker is referring to an entity that has already been established in the text (i.e. anaphoric reference).

> 5) Abby Black lived in #1 in a townhouse on Bedford Street. It took me two hours and twenty-three minutes to walk **there**, and my hand got exhausted from shaking my tambourine. There was a little sign above **the** door that said the poet Edna Saint Vincent Millay once lived in the house, and that it was **the** narrowest house in New York.

In example 5, *there* is anaphoric and refers back to the townhouse on Bedford Street. The *the* in *the door* does not refer back to any door that has been mentioned before, but given the context we sensibly assume that Oskar refers to the front door of the house. The *the* in *the narrowest house (…)* is anaphoric and refers back to the house.

Comparative reference is different from the other kinds of reference in that instead of setting up a relation of co-reference, it sets up a relation of contrast (Halliday 1985: 294). We might say that comparative reference sets up a relation of "indirect" co-reference since it refers indirectly to another participant or circumstance in the text with which the new element is being contrasted. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that "likeness is a referential property. A thing cannot just be "like"; it must be "like something" (ibid.: 78). The fact that the interpretation of a comparative reference depends on the interpretation of another element in the text is what makes it a cohesive device.

Comparative reference is made using words like *another, different, same, bigger/smaller,* and so on, or by other wordings which imply a contrast, such as in example 6, where two different adjectives premodifying *plan* mark the comparison:

> 6) That was **my great plan**. I would spend my Saturdays and Sundays finding all of the people named Black and learning what they knew about the key in the vase in Dad's closet. In a year and a half I would know everything. Or at least know that I had to come up with **a new plan.**

Substitution and **ellipsis** can be nominal, verbal or clausal. There are certain items in English which can be used as substitutes for different kinds of referents. Halliday and Hasan refer to these as *pro-forms.* Pro-forms are also semantically void in the sense that they do not have much meaning in their own right; their meaning depends on what sort of referent they are replacing. The nominal pro-forms are *one/ones* and *same*, the verbal pro-form is *do* (also commonly referred to as *pro-verb "do"*), and the clausal pro-forms are *so* and *not.*

> 7) One of the things we found were **the old two-way radios** from when I was a baby. Mom and Dad put **one** in the crib so they could hear me crying, and sometimes, instead of coming to the crib, Dad would just talk into it, which would help me get to sleep. I asked Mom why he kept those. (…) Anyway, I put batteries in **the two-way radios**, and I

thought it would be a fun way for me and Grandma to talk. I gave her **the baby one**, so she wouldn't have to figure out any buttons, and it worked great. (p. 102)

8) I sat there while he made all the kids **crack up**. Even Mrs. Rigley **cracked up**, and **so did** her husband, who played the piano during the set changes.

Ellipsis can be seen as a form of substitution where the presupposed element is replaced by a void rather than a pro-form. It contributes to cohesion because it makes us "presuppose something by means of what is left out" (Halliday 1985/1991: 296).

9) In other words, if everyone wanted to play Hamlet at once, they couldn't [**Ø]**, because there aren't enough skulls! (p. 3)

10) I'd experienced joy, but not nearly enough **[Ø]**, could there ever be enough **[Ø]**? (p. 33)

11) She said, "I cry a lot too, you know." "I don't see you cry a lot". "Maybe that's because I don't want you to see me cry a lot." "Why **not**?" "**[Ø]**Because that's not fair to either of us." (p. 171)

Example 9 is an example of verbal ellipsis. The ellipted element is indicated with an "[Ø]". The verb phrase that is omitted here is "play Hamlet".

In example 10, we see an instance of nominal ellipsis, where the ellipted element is "joy". A non-elliptical version of this sentence would be something like *I'd experienced joy, but not nearly enough joy, could there ever be enough joy?*

Example 11 displays what Halliday and Hasan call "WH-ellipsis". WH-ellipsis occurs when an answer to a WH-question (i.e. a question that introduced by *what, which, when, where, who, etc.*) is direct, that is, the answer to the question presupposes the question's clause structure, but it does not repeat it. So if the dialogue in example 11 had not displayed ellipsis, Oskar's mother's reply would be something like *I don't want you to see me cry a lot because that's not fair to either of us.* We also see that a clause is ellipted in Oskar's question "why not", where *not* is a substitute for *[why] do you not want me to see you cry a lot?.*

Substitution and ellipsis are defined as a relation that exists on the lexicogrammatical level rather than on the semantic level. These devices are therefore text-bound, and are rarely used exophorically, unlike reference which is deictic and more flexible. Substitution and ellipsis are also restricted with regard to how far back into the text they can refer. In order for the meaning of an ellipted or substituted item to be retrievable, it must refer to something that has been mentioned recently in the preceding text.

Conjunction is a cohesive device that shows how one span of text "elaborates, extends or enhances another, earlier span of text" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 539). These relations

are marked by the use of conjunctive adjuncts (adverbial groups or prepositional phrases) as well as the conjunctions *and, or, nor, but, yet, so, then.* Both Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) provide elaborate and detailed overviews over the classification of all kinds of conjunction. It is not necessary for our present purposes to look at all the subcategories and the items they comprise in detail; therefore we will only discuss the main categories.

The elaborating relation has two subcategories, namely *apposition* and *clarification.* Apposition serves to "re-present" or "restate" an element by exemplifying, while clarification serves to summarize or to make the preceding text appear clearer or more specific (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 541).

The category of extension has the subcategories *addition* and *variation.* Addition "expands" the text; it adds elements to the text using items that are classified as either positive (*e.g. and, also ...),* negative (*nor),* or adversative (*e.g. but, however…),* while variation introduces elements that are in some way presented as "alternatives" to what has gone before, and includes items that are either replacive (*e.g. instead),* subtractive (*e.g. apart from that*) or alternative (*e.g. or (else), alternatively*).

The category of enhancement includes those items that are used to show how the elements in a text relate to each other in terms of cause and effect, time and space or what has been discussed elsewhere in the text. The enhancement category has the subcategories *spatio-temporal, manner, causal-conditional* and *matter.*

Spatio-temporal conjunctions marks spatio-temporal relations that exist both within the text (how the text unfolds in time) or in the outside world. These are known respectively as internal and external conjunctions. Spatio-temporal conjunctions are further divided into the categories simple and complex, depending on their semantic content. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain that "those that are called "complex" are the simple ones with some other semantic feature or features present at the same time" (ibid.: 545). For example, the spatio-temporal conjunction *next* is simple, while *next time* or *next day* are complex.

Manner conjunctions have a comparative function and they create cohesion by contrasting an element with something that has been described in the preceding text (and this comparison may be positive or negative, i.e. "is like" or "is unlike") or expanding upon an element with focus on means (e.g. "thus").

Causal conjunctions can either be realized by items that have a *general* causal meaning (*e.g. therefore,hence*), or items that have more *specific* meanings that express result, reason or purpose. The conditional conjunctions can be positive, negative or concessive. According to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) view, some of the causal-conditional conjunctions can also be seen as being either external or internal in that they can express both causal relations or conditions in the real world and causes and conditions that lay the premises for the line of argument that is being presented in a given text (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 257).

Matter conjunctions create cohesion by linking an element in the text to what has been discussed earlier in the text. Halliday and Matthiessen comment that "many expressions of matter are spatial metaphors, involving words like point, ground, field; and these become conjunctive when coupled with reference items" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 547). Matter conjunctions are subdivided into positive and negative, either expanding on something in the preceding text or contrasting it with something.

Lexical cohesion is "the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 274).

Lexical cohesion is created either by reiteration or collocation. Reiteration refers to different ways in which a lexical item may be repeated. It can be repeated straightforwardly (i.e. the same word), or repeated through the use of a synonym, near-synonym or superordinate.

In the excerpt that is reproduced in Appendix 2, we can for example see how the word *note* is introduced in line 6 and repeated in lines 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 22. In some of these instances there is co-referentiality between the items, and in these instances there is therefore a "double" cohesive tie that is both grammatical and lexical (e.g. "a note" in line 6 and "my note" in line 10). We might say that the repetition of a lexical item creates a semantic continuity in the text which sometimes overlaps with and is reinforced by grammatical cohesive ties. In example 12, we see an example of lexical cohesion where there is no co-referentiality:

> 12) One million pieces of paper filled the sky. They stayed there, like a **ring** around the building. Like the **rings** of Saturn. The **rings** of coffee staining my father's desk. The **ring** Thomas told me he didn't need. I told him he wasn't the only one who needed. (p. 225)

What we see in example 12 is how the author exploits the polysemy of the word *ring* to juxtapose different imagery. The repetition of the word *ring* ties these images together and mimics the narrator's train of thought.

In the excerpt in Appendix 2 we can also see an example of how reiteration through synonymy works, for example the relation between the items *toss* (l. 15) and *throw* (ll. 19, 23). It might also be argued that there is a near-synonymous relation between the items *glass* in line 23 and *shards* in line 24, since it is clear that *glass* refers to broken glass in this context.

Reiteration through hyponymy occurs when a lexical item is repeated by a superordinate term, such as the relation between *dollars, cents* and *money* and *the rest* (by which we understand "the rest of the money") in the excerpt in example 13 below:

> 13) When the cab driver pulled over in front of the building, the meter said **$76.50**. I said, "Mr. Mahaltra, are you an optimist or a pessimist?" He said, "What?" I said, "Because unfortunately I only have seven **dollars** and sixty-eight **cents**." "Seven **dollars**?" "And sixty-eight **cents**." "This is not happening." "Unfortunately, it is. But if you give me your address, I promise I'll send you **the rest**." He said, "Keep your seven dollars and sixty-eight cents." I said, "I promise I'll send you **the money**. I promise." (p. 147)

A lexical item can also be reiterated using a general noun. General nouns are nouns that can be used to point out a large number of referents, or in other words, they have "generalized reference" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 274). For example, the general nouns *thing* and *stuff* may refer to any sort of concrete, inanimate entities, *creature* can refer to any non-human, animate entity, and so on. General nouns can be seen as a kind of super-superordinates, or in Halliday and Hasan's words, "superordinate members of major lexical sets". We can see an example of this in example 14:

> 14) A few weeks after the worst day, I started writing lots of letters. I don't know why, but it was one of the only **things** which made my boots lighter. (p.11)

Halliday and Hasan use the term *collocation* to refer to lexical items that "stand to each other in some recognizable lexicosemantic relation" and which "do NOT depend on referential identity and are NOT of the form of reiteration accompanied by *the* or a demonstrative" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 285, 287). Collocates may for example be synonyms, near-synonyms, antonyms, converses or they could belong to an ordered series of words.

Collocates can also be semantically related in the sense that they belong to the same field of meaning. For example, Halliday mentions groups of words like *candle, flame* and *flicker*; *sky, cloud, sunshine, rain,* and so on (ibid.: 286). It is a semantic relation that ties these items together, and not a referential one - it can hardly be claimed that clouds or rain are a "part of" the sky in a meronymic sense. On the other hand it would be reasonable to say that we think of these things as related phenomena, and so their co-occurrence in a text would be cohesive.

For example, the items *building, apartment, window, door, doorman, elevator* and so on in Appendix 2 are related in this way. Lexical cohesion is shaped by the text it is a part of, so that each item acquires a "text meaning":

> Without our being aware of it, each occurrence of a lexical item carries with it its own textual history, a particular collocational environment that has been built up in the course of the creation of the text and that will provide the context within which the item will be incarnated on this particular occasion. The environment determines the "instantial meaning" or text meaning, of the item, a meaning which is unique to each specific instance. (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 289)

This means that it is not just the meaning of a particular word that makes readers perceive it as semantically related to other items in a text, it is also a matter of how it fits into the context of a particular text.

Hoey (1991) points out that the notion of collocation which is presented in Halliday and Hasan (1976) is different from the traditional view of collocation, i.e. "the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context" (Hoey 1991: 7). Halliday and Hasan describe lexicosemantic relations between words which can be much looser and context-dependent, so it might not be possible to claim that the items they refer to as "collocates" really co-occur with greater than random probability. Collocation (in its usual sense) is mostly studied at the phrase or clause-level, while cohesion is always studied at text-level. Therefore it is reasonable that "collocation" here refers to how words typically co-occur *in a text* as opposed to collocation in the phraseological sense. The tendency to co-occur which Halliday and Hasan describe is, as we have already seen, more a matter of what sorts of things we perceive to belong to the same fields of experience, whether in general or in a given text.

1.2 The distinction between grammatical and lexical cohesion

Halliday and Hasan distinguish between cohesion that is realized through grammar (grammatical cohesion) and cohesion that is realized through vocabulary (lexical cohesion) (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 6). Reference, substitution and ellipsis belong to the category of grammatical cohesion, while lexical reiteration and collocation belong to lexical cohesion. Conjunction is typically described as a "borderline case" which straddles the divide between grammatical and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion relies on the closed systems of grammar, while lexical cohesion relies on choices that are more open-ended and, arguably, more text-specific. Conjunction is a relation which may be "interpreted grammatically in

terms of systems", but an interpretation of conjunctive relations typically involve lexical relations as well (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 304). Halliday and Hasan stress the fact that the difference between lexical and grammatical cohesion is "a matter of degree" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: ibid.). Reference items can display both grammatical and lexical cohesion at the same time, for instance when there is both a definite determiner signalling anaphoric reference and a repeated lexical item. Cohesion is always a relation of *meaning*, it is never just a matter of formal relations.

The classification sketched out above shows how the various types of cohesion differ in terms of how they are realized in a text. Another way of classifying types of cohesion is by taking into account what meaning they have in a text, as Halliday and Hasan show (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 304). From this point of view, cohesive elements are categorized according to the meaning relations they construe, which is either relatedness of form, relatedness of reference or semantic connection. In the table below we see how Halliday and Hasan place the different types of cohesion within these categories.

Nature of cohesive relation:	**Type of cohesion:**
Relatedness of form:	Substitution and ellipsis, lexical collocation
Relatedness of reference:	Reference, lexical reiteration
Semantic connection:	Conjunction

The types of cohesive devices that fall within the "relatedness of reference" category typically point to a referent whose identity must be retrieved from the context (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 308). Halliday and Hasan argue that reference items are "basically exophoric" in the sense that their original function in language is to refer to referents that are retrievable in the extralinguistic context. Therefore they view the endophoric use of reference items as an "extension" of this sort of primary exophoric use (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 305). Lexical reiteration can be seen as a lexical form of reference, and as we shall see, lexical reiteration and pronominal reference often combine to track participants in a text, or to form what Hasan (1985) calls *identity chains.*

The cohesive devices that belong in the "relatedness of form" category are items which rely on the preceding text for interpretation, that is, their meaning must be recovered from the text.

This type of cohesive device is therefore seen as being "basically endophoric". As we have seen above, this form of cohesion is text-bound; the meaning of substitutes or ellipses cannot be interpreted without a context. Lexical collocates are placed within this category because their cohesive function depends on how they relate to the rest of the text. One might say that lexical collocates are cohesive because speakers perceive them to be semantically associated with other elements in the text (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 318). Lexical collocates behave differently from substitutes and ellipses in that they are "not constrained by structural relationships", and instead of filling a slot or signaling a grammatical relationship, they "serve to transform a series of unrelated structures into a unified, coherent whole" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 320). Lexical words which do not stand in a referential relation to each other but which are perceived to be semantically related (whether in terms of synonymy, near-synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, or in other ways) contribute to creating a "continuity of lexical meaning", and are therefore cohesive.

Conjunction is a "non-phoric" form of cohesion, which means that instead of referring to elements that are recoverable from the text or context of situation, the meaning of conjunctions is to "represent semantic links between the elements that are constitutive of text." (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 321). In other words, conjunctions contribute to cohesion by signaling how different parts of a text should be interpreted in relation to each other. Instead of creating a continuity of form or reference, conjunctions create a semantic continuity in linking the meanings of a text together and indicating how they are meant to be interpreted (Halliday and Hasan 1976: ibid.). The relations in meaning which conjunctions express can either be ideational, which means that they link together the actual messages of the text, or "the content of what is being said" (Halliday and Hasan 1976: ibid.) or they can express interpersonal meanings, which means that they link together different stages in the communication process.

In short, we might say that cohesion can be classified (roughly) as either grammatical or lexical in terms of what form of *expression* they take in a text, and that the different forms of cohesion express different sorts of *continuity of meaning.*

1.3 Patterns of cohesion

Hasan (1985) discusses the ways in which grammatical and lexical cohesive devices combine to create texture. Hasan draws on the theoretical framework from Halliday and Hasan (1976),

and focuses especially on the interplay between reference and lexical cohesion. She uses the terms *co-reference, co-classification* and *co-extension* to describe different kinds of cohesive tie between elements in a text. Co-referents have an identical referent, while co-classification is the relation between items that refer to items that are different, but which belong to the same "class" or category of things. Co-extension applies to words which are perceived to "belong to the same general field of meaning" (Hasan 1985: 74), corresponding roughly to the term *collocation* as used in Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Hasan also introduces the term *cohesive chains* in this article. Cohesive chains are sets of items that are related to each other "by the semantic relation of co-reference, co-classification, and/or co-extension" (Hasan 1985: 84). There are two kinds of cohesive chains: identity chains, which track a referent throughout a text, and similarity chains, which link together items which are not co-referential but semantically related through co-classification and co-extension (i.e. lexical cohesion). In any text there will be longer and shorter cohesive chains; and chains which run from the beginning to the end of the text are *text-exhaustive* (Hasan 1985: ibid.). Text-exhaustive chains typically track the central participants in a text.

A key point that Hasan makes in this text is that it is not the presence of chains in itself that creates texture; rather it is the *interaction* between the chains which is important. There is interaction between chains when "at least two members of one chain (stand) in a relation to two members of another chain". A cohesive chain will include *central, non-central* and *peripheral* tokens – the central tokens of a chain are the ones that interact with members of other chains, the non-central tokens do not interact, and peripheral tokens are items that do not enter into any chain at all (Hasan 1985: 93). Chains that interact with other chains to a large extent are *focal chains.* Hasan argues that continuity of chain interaction achieves "cohesive harmony" and that this lays the groundwork for a coherent text.

1.4 Analyzing cohesion

This section will show an extensive analysis of all kinds of cohesive ties in three excerpts from *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*[2]. The first excerpt is taken from the chapter *Googolplex,* in which Oskar talks about finding the key in his father's closet.

[2] The excerpts are reproduced in appendices 1-3.

The second excerpt is from the chapter *Why I'm Not Where You Are 9/11/03,* narrated by Thomas Sr. It is a letter addressed to Thomas Jr., in which he explains how he tried to contact Grandma after he returned from Germany.

The third excerpt is taken from one of the chapters titled *My Feelings* and is narrated by Grandma. It is a letter addressed to Oskar in which she recalls 9/11 and the following days.

We will be looking at what sorts of cohesion is present in these texts, how referents are tracked, and finally how the excerpts differ when it comes to cohesion and texture.

1.4.1. Reference

Oskar's text is not addressed to anyone in particular; it is a straight-forward first person narrative. The people Oskar refers to are himself, his mother ("Mom"), his father ("Dad"), his mother's friend Ron, and Grandma. There are also two minor participants who are only mentioned once, without being tracked further on in the text:

> 15) […] I had thought about giving it to **Sonny, the homeless person who I sometimes see standing outside the Alliance Française**, because he puts me in heavy boots, or maybe to **Lindy, the neat old woman who volunteers to give tours at the Museum of National History**, so I could be something special to her, or even just to someone in a wheelchair. (ll. 6-10)

Oskar, his parents, Grandma and Ron have all been introduced at an earlier point in the novel, but in this excerpt they are referred to by name before they are tracked pronominally:

> 16) As for the bracelet **Mom** wore to the funeral... (l. 1) -- **She** said it was the best gift **she**'d ever received. I asked **her** if it was better than the Edible Tsunami… (ll. 10-12)
> 17) **Dad**'s last voice message (l. 2-3) -- even though **Dad**'s coffin was empty, **his** closet was full (l. 43)
> 18) I asked her if she was in love with **Ron** (ll. 12-13) – I would have asked if **they** heavy-petted each other.. (ll. 16-17)
> 19) … the *Collected Shakespeare* set that **Grandma** bought for me when **she** found out I was going to be Yorick. (ll. 62-63)

Thomas Sr.'s text is a letter to Thomas Jr., and so the "you" in Thomas Sr.'s text refers to him. We see that Thomas Jr. is introduced in the beginning of this letter as *my child.* Having read the novel up to this point, the reader is likely to recognize Thomas Sr.'s style of writing as well as the title of his letters ("Why I'm Not Where You Are"). This title is used for all of Thomas Sr.'s portions of the novel, with different dates attached. It is likely that readers will have no difficulty in assigning reference to the deictic expressions *you, I, your mother, your father* and *your son* since it is clear who is speaking. Grandma's name is never revealed in

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, and in this excerpt we see that she is introduced as *your mother* in line 6 and tracked as *she* and *her.*

We see that Thomas Sr. refers to Oskar as *Oskar* and *your son* in lines 4 and 6, while in lines 9 and 10 he refers to him as *a boy* and *the boy.* From line 6 and onwards, Thomas Sr. tells the story of the day when he returned from Germany and started contacting Grandma by sending her notes. At first it seems that the reference to Oskar as *a boy/the boy* is a sign that Thomas Sr. is not aware that he has a grandson, but we learn on page 273 that he knows, after having read in Thomas Jr.'s obituary that he left behind a wife and son. Be that as it may, Thomas Sr. has never seen Oskar before, so at this point Oskar is a stranger to him; he is "a boy".

The doorman is introduced as *your mother's doorman* and is then tracked as *the doorman* and *he.*

Grandma's text is also a letter, addressed to Oskar, and again she uses deictic expressions which should be easy for the reader to disambiguate given the context. Grandma refers to Oskar's mother as *your mother* (as with Grandma, Oskar's mother's name never appears in the novel) and to Oskar's father as *your father.* Thomas Sr. is mentioned in lines 38-39, where he is referred to as *your grandfather.* These three referents are all introduced with a full noun phrase and are then tracked pronominally. She never uses any names. *I* and *you* naturally refers to Grandma and Oskar.

Grandma makes oblique references to other people in her text, for example *they* in lines 71-73:

> **They** thought there would be thousands of injured people. Unconscious people. People without memories. **They** thought there would be thousands of bodies. **They** were going to put them in an ice-skating rink.

Grandma is watching the news on television, and so *they* probably refers to the police, the fire brigade or some other sort of public authority which was responsible for handling the aftermath of 9/11. Grandma is learning of this through the TV, and the identities of the people who have said these things probably do not matter to her, so they become a vague "they".

We see the same type of reference in line 15, where she says *She called the newspapers.* ***They*** *didn't know anything,* where *they* could either refer to the journalists or to whoever picked up the phone at the editorial offices. Again, Grandma cannot know exactly who they are, and it is not important.

In lines 52 and 56 and 71-73, Grandma refers to the victims she sees and hears about on TV as *people waving shirts out of high windows, injured people* and so on. This is a sort of generalized reference, and the different instances of *people* throughout this excerpt are co-classificational and not co-referential.

In lines 68-69 she refers briefly to *everyone your father knew, and everyone who might know something.* These references occur only once and can be seen as an instance of esphoric reference since the identity of the referents is given within the noun phrase (Martin and Rose: 172).

Non-human participants are introduced and tracked in different ways in these three excerpts. Oskar introduces the Morse code bracelet in the first sentence of his text. This is an anaphoric reference, since the bracelet has already been introduced in the first chapter in the book in which Oskar and his mother and grandmother are driving to funeral (p. 7)[3]: "She was wearing the bracelet I had made for her, and that made me feel like one hundred dollars".

The bracelet is referred to several times throughout this paragraph as *it* and *the bracelet,* and there is comparative reference between *the bracelet* and *other Morse code jewelry:*

> 20) I made her other Morse code jewelry with Dad's messages – a necklace, an anklet, some dangly earrings, a tiara – but the bracelet was definitely the most beautiful, probably because it was the last, which made it more precious. (ll. 20-22)

What we see in example 6 is reference and lexical cohesion working together. We notice a semantic link between the word *jewelry* and the different items he mentions, a link between *jewelry* and *bracelet,* as well as the comparative reference between *the bracelet* and *other Morse code jewelry.*

In the section where Oskar is in his father's closet, going through his things (ll. 37-76), a number of inanimate participants are introduced and tracked. First of all, there is the closet, which is introduced as *Dad's closet* in line 37 and tracked as *his closet* and *it* in lines 43, 44 and 76. There is also reference to parts of the closet, such as *the doorknob* (l. 42) and *the highest shelf* (l. 59). Oskar mentions some of the things he looks at in the closet (ll. 44-48), and refers back to it all as *his things* and *stuff that he had touched* in line 50.

The tuxedo plays a pivotal role in Oskar's discovery of the key, and it is introduced in line 52 as *his tuxedo* before it is tracked as *it* (l. 53, 55) , *his tuxedo* (l. 54) and *the tuxedo* (ll. 58, 60,

[3] Page numbers refer to the 2005 Penguin paperback edition of *Extremely Loud, Incredibly Close.*

65). The next three participants which are introduced and tracked are the blue vase, the envelope, and the key inside the envelope. The difference between these participants and the closet and the tuxedo is that while the latter two are familiar to Oskar, he has never seen the vase before, nor the things he discovers inside it. The unfamiliarity of these participants is indicated through the use of indefinite articles (*a pretty blue vase, an envelope, a key).* Once they have been introduced into the text, they are tracked using *it* or definite noun phrases (e.g. *the vase*, l. 66, and *the key,* l.77).

We see some examples in the text of reference that does not point to individual referents, but which point to larger stretches of text. This is what is known as **text reference**.

> 21) I started inventing things, and then I couldn't stop, like beavers, which I know about. People think they cut down trees so they can build dams, but in reality it's because their teeth never stop growing, and if they didn't constantly file them down by cutting through all of those trees, their teeth would start to grow into their own faces, which would kill them. **That's how my brain was.**

In example 21, *that* points back to the whole explanation that Oskar gives about beavers. Although it could be possible to formulate a paraphrase of what he says, *that* still refers to something which is larger than a single referent – it refers back to the meaning of the preceding clause complex as a whole.

Text reference can also be comparative, as in lines 57-8: *"If I hadn't noticed anything else weird, I wouldn't have thought of the tuxedo again. But I started noticing a lot*." The phrase *anything else weird* points forward to the next thing that catches Oskar's eye, i.e. the vase on the highest shelf in the closet, and at the same time it points back to the "weirdness" of the tuxedo that had not been put away.

The same type of reference occurs again further on in the narrative: *I started to clean everything up, and that was when I noticed something else weird*. Here "something else weird" refers back to both the tuxedo and the vase, as well as indicating the next thing Oskar is about to discover: the envelope with the key in it that was inside the vase. This type of comparative text reference connects the narrative events by drawing on what has already been presented and pointing forward to what is about to be presented.

We can also see an example of text reference in Thomas Sr.'s text, in line 20, where he writes "(…) for how long could it go on?". Here *it* points back to the situation he has been describing in lines 6-20, that is, writing notes, watching, waiting, receiving vague replies, or no reply, and so on.

Another type of reference that is present in these examples is what Martin and Rose call **bridging reference**, that is, reference which points "indirectly backwards" to something else which has already been established in the text. The identity can therefore be "inferred" based on the nature of the other element (Martin and Rose 2007: 172). The way this kind of reference works is similar to lexical cohesion since its interpretation depends on our understanding of the world and the cultural context. The examples Martin and Rose use to illustrate this show the connection between such items as *stab* and *knife* (Martin and Rose: ibid.).

Let us consider these examples from Oskar's text:

> 22) One night (…) I went to Dad's closet. (…) Mom was with Ron in the living room, listening to music too loud and playing board games. She wasn't missing Dad. I held **the doorknob** for a while before I turned it. (ll. 37-42)
> 23) I started to clean everything up, and that was when I noticed something else weird. In the middle of **all that glass**, there was a little envelope, about the size of a wireless internet card. (ll. 71-2)

In example 22, we infer that *the doorknob* refers to the knob on the closet door, as we have already mentioned above, and in example 23, we infer that *all that glass* refers back to the vase shattering on the floor as Oskar fell down. The lexical cohesion between these items probably play a role when we make these inferences, but there is also a relationship of reference between them.

In Thomas Sr.'s text, we see several examples of participants that are introduced with a definite article and whose identity is inferrable through bridging reference. In most of the cases it is because their meanings are given by the context of situation, for example *the door, the building* and *the window* in lines 8, 9 and 12. Since we know that Thomas has handed a note to the doorman and is standing across the street watching, we infer that it is Grandma's apartment building, the main entrance door and a particular window in her apartment that he is referring to. The window through which Thomas Sr. and Grandma are communicating is referred to alternately as *the window* (ll. 12, 13, 16) and *her window* (ll. 15, 18-19, 23, 24), and we understand this to be the same one. The phrase *the building across the street* is an example of esphoric reference.

In Grandma's text, there are many participants which occur only once and which are introduced with a definite article, such as for example *the phone, the bathroom, the windows, the living room, the park, the television, the ground, the floor* (ll. 6, 14, 19, 44, 45, 47, 92) and *the building* (l. 8), *the police* (l. 11) and *the fire department* (l. 16). As in Thomas Sr.'s text,

these are referents which are given by the context. We expect someone's home to have windows, a bathroom, a phone and so on, so these participants do not need to be established in the same way as other participants. The police and the fire brigade do not need any introduction either; the reference to them can be said to be homophoric rather than bridging reference. *The building* in line 8 refers to the World Trade Center, a reference which is unambiguous considering what the novel is about. The same is true for *the smoke* in line 19, the images on television that Grandma describes in lines 50-64 and 84-100 (*bodies, planes, buildings).* Whoever chooses to read this novel will have extra-textual knowledge of 9/11, and will therefore be able to assign reference to the planes, buildings, and smoke that are introduced as given information. However, we may also note that these items become part of the textual universe of the novel and can to a great extent be interpreted on the basis of the text itself (as we do with the parts of the story that do *not* have an extra-textual basis).

We may contrast these referents with the ones that are introduced with an indefinite article and which are tracked, such as the staples and tape for the posters, or the rolling suitcase:

24) She took the posters downtown that afternoon. She filled **a rolling suitcase with them.** (l. 37)

    Your mother came home late that night. **The suitcase** was empty. (l. 66)

25) She took **a stapler**. And **a box of staples**. And **tape**. I think of those things now. The paper, **the stapler**, **the staples**, **the tape**. (ll. 40-41)

The reference to these objects are not given by the context in the same way, which explains why they need to be introduced like this. We see that Grandma refers to the scarf she is knitting as "that scarf" in line 18 ("All afternoon I knitted **that scarf** for you"). This is because the scarf has been introduced earlier in the chapter (p. 224, "(…) knitting you **a white scarf**").

There are other examples in this text where the use of the definite article may be seen as bridging reference. In example 25 above, we see that Grandma mentions *the paper,* which refers to the paper they are using to make missing person posters. The same is true for *the volume* and *the ice* in examples 26 and 27 below:

26) When you fell asleep with your head on my lap, I turned on the television. I lowered **the volume** until it was silent. (ll. 47-48)
27) Remember when we went skating a few months ago and I turned around, because I told you that watching people skate gave me a headache? I saw rows of bodies under **the ice**. (ll. 74-75)

We interpret *the volume* as related to *the television* in the same way as we interpret *the living room* and *the bathroom* to be related to the idea of a home. In example 27 the idea of skating naturally entails the idea of ice. It seems that the line between homophoric reference and bridging reference can be somewhat fuzzy.

In Thomas Sr.'s text there are examples of participants that are introduced with an indefinite article and tracked using a definite article; and there are examples of participants that are introduced with a definite article. In the latter case, the identity of the referents are retrievable from the context, as we shall see.

The first mention of a note is in line 6, where Thomas Sr. writes *I gave a note to your mother's doorman*; this note is tracked as *my note* in line 10. In line 12 he says he left *another note* with the doorman, which sets up a relation of comparative reference with the first note. Grandma replies with *a note written on the window* in line 13. Thomas tries to contact her some more after this, and in line 18-19 he says *The next morning I went back, there was* ***a note*** *on her window,* ***the first note****, "Don't go away"(…).* It seems that the use of the indefinite article is meant to "mimic" the way Thomas Sr. perceives this situation: as he is approaching the building, he sees that there is a note on Grandma's window. He walks closer, hoping that it will be a reply to the question he has been trying to ask her, but when he is close enough to be able to read it, he sees that it is the same one as before.

In line 20, Thomas Sr. mentions yet another note, which is also co-classificational with the other mentions of *note*, including *there was* ***no note*** *on her window* in lines 22-23.

The other non-human participants in this excerpt which are introduced with indefinite articles and tracked pronominally or with definite articles are *pebbles* and *apple. Pebbles* are first introduced in line 15 when Thomas Sr. says "I gathered a handful of pebbles", and tracked as *them* and implicitly through ellipsis in line 16 ("I threw some more"). There is comparative reference between this mention of *pebbles* and the one in lines 19 -20, where we have "(…) I gathered pebbles, I threw **them**, **they** tapped like fingers against the glass (…)". The word *apple* is introduced and tracked in the same way. It is first mentioned in line 21: "(…)I found a market on Broadway and bought an **apple** (…)" and is tracked further on as *the apple* (ll. 23 and 24).

The definite article in *the streetlight* seems to indicate that Oskar and Thomas Sr. have arranged to meet under a certain streetlight. In the preceding chapter[4], Oskar gets the idea of going to the cemetery to dig up his father's coffin, but it is not until this part of Thomas Sr.'s narrative that we learn anything of the plan being put into action. As mentioned before, Thomas Sr. calls his text a "letter" in which he addresses Thomas Jr. It is obvious, however, that it is not a letter in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather a journal entry. This explains why Thomas Sr. refers to the streetlight as given information when neither the addressee in the text nor the actual reader could know which streetlight is being referred to – this shows that Thomas Sr.'s discourse is actually "self-addressing".[5] In the larger discourse situation this creates the effect of letting the reader feel like they are reading Thomas Sr.'s private journal. We also see that he refers to the limousine in definite form, not because Grandma arriving home in a limousine is something ordinary, but because at the point of writing this journal entry it would have been explained to him that they had been to the funeral that day. It is also possible that the omission of certain characters' names in the novel (i.e. those of Oskar's mother, Grandma, and Grandma's parents) is meant to create an effect of familiarity.

We see a similar example in Grandma's text, where she refers to "the picture from your vacation" (l. 24). The reader will have heard about the last holiday Oskar and his parents went on before his father died (p. 14), but there is no way that the reader could know which picture Grandma is talking about. Oskar, on the other hand, would probably know. This sort of use of the definite article helps the writer create a credible text in that the things which are familiar to the addressee in the text (i.e. Oskar) are presented as given, even though it is new information for the real reader.[6]

In Oskar's and Thomas Sr.'s texts there are mentions of place names, such as Broadway in Thomas Sr.'s text (l. 21) and the reservoir in Oskar's text (l. 45-46). Oskar also mentions the Museum of Natural History and the Alliance Française (ll. 7-9). These are exophoric references that point to specific referents in the outside world and which are presented as given information. These referents are not necessarily accessible to all readers, but even if readers are not familiar with New York, they would still probably know that Broadway is a well-known street, and that the reservoir refers to the reservoir in Central Park. Both the Alliance Française and the Museum of Natural History are institutions that exist outside of the

[4] P. 259 in 2005 Penguin paperback edition.
[5] See further chapter 2, section 2.2.2.3 about Thomas Sr.'s style.
[6] We shall discuss the relationship between the communication between narrators and narratees on one hand and implied author and reader on the other in chapter 2, section 2.5.

text and which can be assumed to be fairly well-known, and even if they are not, readers would probably assume that they represent places in New York.

1.4. 2. Substitution and ellipsis

There are some examples of substitution and ellipsis in Oskar's text, such as in example 28:

> 28) We used to Greco-Roman wrestle on the floor in there, and **[Ø]** tell hilarious jokes, and once we hung a pendulum from the ceiling and **[Ø]** put a circle of dominoes on the floor to prove that the earth rotated. (ll. 37-40)

There are two instances of ellipsis in this example, which are indicated with "[Ø]". The first element that is ellipted is a clause, i.e. *we used to.* The second ellipted element is the subject *we*, and so this is an example of nominal ellipsis.

In example 29, there is another example of clausal substitution:

> 29) Even though I knew I shouldn't **[Ø]**, I gave myself a bruise. (ll. 69-70)

The clause that is ellipted here is *give myself bruises* or *give myself a bruise.*

The use of ellipsis in Oskar's discourse is grammatically motivated. His use of ellipsis does not place a strain on the reader in terms of working out the connections between the ellipted elements and the visible text, it is rather a grammatical device that improves the flow of his text and prevents his sentences from becoming too long and cumbersome. In example 28, the clause *we used to* and the noun phrase *we* can be ellipted since they are co-ordinated clauses within a clause complex. In example 29, Oskar avoids redundant repetition of the verb phrase by ellipting it in the first part of the sentence.

In Thomas Sr.'s text, most of the examples of ellipsis occur in sentences where the subject and finite verb phrase of a clause is omitted, such as in lines 5 and 22, for example:

> 30) "(…) I'll close this book and **[Ø]** find him under the streetlight (…)" (l. 5)
> 31) "(…) I would turn around and **[Ø]** walk away (…)" (l. 22)

In these two examples and other ones like them, the clauses are part of co-ordinated clause pairs where there is no ambiguity as regards who is being referred to, and this allows for ellipsis. However, Thomas Sr. typically writes full sentences that run on each other separated by commas, so that it looks like he is writing and remembering simultaneously.[7]

[7] See chapter 2, section 2.2.2.3.

In example 32 we see an example of an ellipted noun phrase:

32) "I gathered a handful of pebbles and tossed them at her window, nothing happened, I tossed some more **[Ø]**" (ll. 14-16)

Thomas Sr.'s texts are like Oskar's in that the ellipsis is a grammatical device that contributes to the elegance and readibility of the text. As we shall see in our analyses in chapter 1, section 1.5.2 and chapter 2, section 2.2.2.3, Thomas Sr.'s texts are generally very repetitive. If he did not use any ellipsis at all, they would have become repetitive to the point where they would have been difficult for readers to process.

In Grandma's text, we see clausal ellipsis in the parts of the text where she reproduces the dialogue between Oskar and Oskar's mother in lines 4-9:

33) She asked if your father had called.

No. **[Ø]**

Are there any messages on the phone?

No. **[Ø]**

You asked her if your father was in the building for a meeting.

She told you no. **[Ø]**

We see here that the clause structure in the preceding sentences are presupposed, but not repeated.

In examples 34 and 35, we see examples of verb phrase ellipsis. In example 34, the ellipted verb phrase is *go home,* and in example 35 it is *were you*:

34) Your mother told me I could go home.

I told her I didn't want to. **[Ø]**

35) Sometimes I felt your eyelids flickering. Were you awake? Or **[Ø]** dreaming?

We also see that Grandma's way of writing is characterised by noun phrases that are separated from other clauses by punctuation and in which one might say that there is an "implied" subject and verb phrase, as in examples 36 and 37 below:

36) It was just the two of us. You and me. (l. 43)
37) We didn't talk about what was on top of us. What was pinning us down like a ceiling. (l. 45-46)

In example 36, the noun phrase *you and me* presupposes the *it was (just)* in the preceding sentence. The same can be said for example 37, where the clause *we didn't talk about* is presupposed.

In other cases, it is less clear whether there is ellipsis or whether Grandma has put in a full stop where one would usually expect a comma or a coordinating conjunction:

> 38) She said she wasn't going to use the whole picture. Only your father's face. (ll.25-26)
> 39) She took a stapler. And a box of staples. And tape. I think of those things now. The paper, the stapler, the staples, the tape. It makes me sick. Physical things. Forty years of loving someone becomes staples and tape. (ll. 40-42)
> 40) They thought there would be thousands of injured people. Unconscious people. People without memories. (ll. 71-72)

Example 38 could be re-written either as "She said she wasn't going to use the whole picture. (**She said) she was only going to use** your father's face" or as "She said she wasn't going to use the whole picture, only your father's face". The former alternative would partly presuppose the structure of the preceding sentence, but only partly. The phrase "only your father's face" is not a full sentence on its own, it relies on the preceding discourse, but it is a less clear-cut example of ellipsis than the ones we discussed e.g. in examples 34-35. The same can be said for example 40, where we could imagine the full stops being replaced either by a comma or by a full sentence in each case (i.e. "They thought there would be thousands of unconscious people". "They thought there would be thousands of people without memories").

In example 39, we see that the phrases "and a box of staples" and "and tape" presupposes "she took". Further on, the phrase "the paper, the stapler…" presupposes "I think of..". However, when we come to the phrase "physical things", we cannot identify an ellipted clause structure, even though the phrase clearly fits into the context as far as reference and lexical cohesion is concerned.

We may note that there is a difference between the use of ellipsis that can be seen in examples 33-35 and the use of ellipsis that can be seen in examples 36-40. In examples 33-35, the use of ellipsis is grammatically motivated, as we saw in Oskar and Thomas Sr.'s texts. It may be said to be part of common writing practice; a practice which helps the flow and readibility of one's discourse. In examples 36-40, however, it might be argued that Grandma's use of ellipsis is *stylistically motivated* as well as grammatically motivated. By peeling away clause structures and phrases, Grandma can "zoom in" on be the essential parts of her message.[8]

[8] See further chapter 2, section 2.2.2.2 about Grandma's style.

We will be looking more closely at stylistic features of character discourse in chapter 2, section 2.2. At this point we will only observe that the tendency towards full stops and "disconnected" noun phrases in Grandma's text makes it seem more meditative; she dwells on each message before moving on to the next. We may contrast this with Thomas Sr.'s text where there is an overuse of commas, which gives the impression that the discourse moves forward more rapidly.

1.4. 3. Conjunction

None of these excerpts display a lot of conjunction or variety in types of conjunction. More specifically, we only find the word class of conjunctions, and not the grammatical class of conjunctive adverbials. Conjunctive adverbials are generally more pervasive in expository or argumentative texts, and may be said to belong to a more formal style (see e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 880). The texts we are concerned with here, especially those narrated by Grandma and Thomas Sr., are characterised by a style which leaves it to the reader to infer the causal or temporal relations between the meanings that are expressed.

The conjunctions that are present in the excerpts are *and, but, so* and *or,* and they express different meanings.

The conjunction *but* usually expresses an adversative meaning. In Oskar's text, for example, Oskar mentions the different people he had considered giving the bracelet to (example 15), and then he says "but instead I gave it to Mom". Here *but* seems to be used in the same sense as "nevertheless" or "anyway": although he had the noble intention of giving the bracelet to these other people he felt sympathy towards, he still decided to give it to his mother.

We also see some examples of *but* having an adversative meaning in Grandma's text:

41) I don't know how much you understood, **but** you probably understood everything. (l. 36)

42) I wanted to be empty like an overturned pitcher. **But** I was full like a stone. (l. 99)

In other examples, *but* indicates that what comes after is contrary to what could have been assumed or expected. Consider example 43, taken from Oskar's excerpt:

43) Why wasn't [the tuxedo] hung up with his suits? Had he come from a fancy party the night before he died? **But** then why would he have taken off his tuxedo without hanging it up? Maybe it needed to be cleaned? **But** I didn't remember a fancy party. I remember him tucking me in (…) (ll. 52-56)

The conjunction *so* can express a causal connection, much like "therefore", as in examples 44-45:

44) I asked her if she was in love with Ron. She said, "Ron is a great person," which was an answer to a question I didn't ask. **So** I asked again. (Oskar's text, ll. 12-14)

45) (…) there was no note on her window, **so** I threw the apple (…) (Thomas Sr.'s text, ll. 22-23)

The conjunction *and* is cohesive when it has an additive function (as opposed to a co-ordinating function, cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976: 234-5), and so does *or*, as we shall see.

In examples 46-48, we see how *and* adds to the meaning of the preceding information:

46) As for the bracelet Mom wore to the funeral, what I did was I converted Dad's last voice message into Morse code, **and** I used sky-blue beads for silence, maroon beads for breaks between letters, violet beads for breaks between words (…) (l1. 2-4)

47) To my child: I wrote my last letter on the day you died, **and** I assumed I'd never write another word to you (…) (Thomas Sr.'s text, ll. 2-3)

48) You tried to find her eyes, **and** that was when I knew that you knew. (Grandma's text, l. 10)

In example 49, taken from Oskar's text, we see how the conjunction *or* can be additive:

49) I wanted to tell her she shouldn't be playing Scrabble yet. **Or** looking in the mirror. **Or** turning the stereo any louder than what you needed just to hear it. (ll. 17-19)

The conjunction *and* can also express temporal or causal connections- We see an example of *and* expressing a causal meaning in example 50, taken from Oskar's text:

50) His tuxedo was over the chair he used to sit on when he tied his shoes, **and** I thought, *Weird.* (ll. 52-53)

Example 51 shows how *and* can be interpreted as expressing temporality:

51) But then I had the tips of my fingers on the vase, and the tragedies started to wobble, **and** the tuxedo was incredibly distracting, and the next thing was that everything was on the floor, including me, and including the vase, which had shattered. (Oskar's text, ll. 64-66)

Here it seems that *and* links together these events in a consecutive order: he is about to grab onto the vase, *and then* the books he is standing on start to wobble, *and then* he gets distracted by the tuxedo, and therefore he loses his balance and everything topples to the floor. The difference between the additive, temporal and causal meanings are not entirely clear-cut in this case; it could be that Oskar is losing his foothold and getting distracted simultaneously, and in that case *and* would have an additive rather than a temporal meaning. And there is also a causal connection between the wobbling books and the distracting sight of the tuxedo, and

Oskar falling to the floor. This could indicate that simple conjunctions such as *and* may display more than one meaning at a time.

The excerpts chosen for analysis in this chapter are representative for the novel as a whole as regards the types of conjunctions that are used and the meaning they have. Grandma and Thomas Sr.'s texts tend to display co-ordinating (e.g. *and*) and adversative conjunctions (*but*). Oskar often uses *or* in the additive sense, as in example 44, as well as *and, but* and *so.* Generally speaking, Oskar uses conjunctions to a greater extent than Grandma or Thomas Sr. do, as can be seen in the excerpts in Appendices 1-3.

1.4. 4. Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion can be classified either as reiteration or collocation, as we saw on page 6. Lexical reiteration can take different forms and can be subdivided into the categories repetition proper, synonym, near-synonym, superordinate or general noun.

Reiteration and co-reference can often overlap, but reiteration without co-reference is also cohesive. According to Halliday and Hasan,

> reference is irrelevant to lexical cohesion. It is not by virtue of any referential relation that there is a cohesive force between two occurrences of a lexical item; rather, the cohesion exists as a direct relation between the forms themselves (…). (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 284)

We can see examples of repetition proper in example 52 and 53 below, taken from Oskar's text:

> 52) I started inventing things, and then I couldn't stop, like beavers, which I know about. People think they **cut down trees** so they can build dams, but in reality it's because **their teeth** never stop growing, and if they didn't constantly file them down by **cutting down all those trees**, **their teeth** would start to grow into their own faces, which would kill them. That's how my brain was. (ll. 32-36)
>
> 53) There was **a pretty blue vase** on the highest shelf. What was **a pretty blue vase** doing way up there? (ll. 59-60)

In addition to these, there are several items which are repeated in the text several times, such as *bracelet,* as we have already discussed, and *tuxedo, closet, key,* and so on. There is a table in Appendix 4 displaying the number of repeated items and the way they are tracked in cohesive chains.

In section 1.4.1, we saw that the items *the bracelet* and *other jewelry* are related to each other both by comparative reference and lexical cohesion. This is because *jewelry* is a superordinate

to *bracelet* and the other kinds of jewellery Oskar mentions (earrings, necklace, etc.). Another example of the superordinate-subordinate relation between items is that between *Scrabble* and *board games* in lines 18 and 41.

There are several examples of general nouns in the text, such as *things* and *stuff,* e.g. when Oskar is in the closet, looking at his father's clothes: "it made my boots lighter to be around his things, and to touch stuff that he had touched" (ll. 49-50), and when Oskar lists everything that makes him feel anxious:

> 54) Even after a year, I still had an extremely difficult time doing certain **things**, like taking showers, for some reason, and getting into elevators, obviously. There was a lot of **stuff** that made me panicky, like suspension bridges, germs, airplanes, fireworks (…) (ll. 24-26)

Another form of lexical reiteration can be seen in the very beginning of the excerpt, where Oskar describes how he made the bracelet. We recognise the words *beads* and *string* as parts of the bracelet, and so this is an example of meronymic reference. We see another example of this where Oskar refers to *the Collected Shakespeare set* as "the tragedies", by which he means some of the volumes that form part of the set: "I went to my room to get the *Collected Shakespeare* set (…) and brought those over, **four tragedies** at a time" (ll. 61-63), and then: "**the tragedies** started to wobble (…)" (l. 64). The same thing might be said for the connection between *Morse code* and the items *breaks between letters, breaks between words, silence, long and short beeps* and *blips.* These all refer to the signals that make up Morse code and so they can be said to be "parts of" Morse code.

Another kind of repetition which occurs in this excerpt is repetition by nominalization. This might be classified as a kind of "near-synonymy". For example, when Oskar says in line 32 that "I started **inventing things**, and then I couldn't stop…", and then later in line 37 he says "One night, after what felt like a googolplex **inventions**.." he is referring to the same action. We see the same kind of relation between "(…) I **gave it** to Mom. She said it was the best **gift** she'd ever received" (ll. 10-11).

Yet another kind of near-synonymy occurs in example 20 below:

> 55) The average person **falls asleep** in seven minutes, but I **couldn't sleep**, not after hours (…) (ll. 48-49)

We recognize a near-antonymous relation between *falls asleep* and *couldn't sleep.*

In Grandma's text, there is repetition of whole clauses as well as words. In line 18, Grandma says "All afternoon I knitted that scarf for you. It grew longer and longer.", and in lines 23 and 44, she repeats the sentence "The scarf grew longer and longer."

In lines 22 and 82 she repeats the sentence "That made her cry, because she had been depending on me", referring to two different situations in which Oskar's mother reacts to something Grandma says to her.

In lines 50 to 64, where Grandma is watching the news on television on 9/11, she describes the images that appear on the screen by repeating the phrases *planes going into buildings, bodies falling, people waving shirts out of high windows* and *buildings falling.* Later on, Grandma has "flashbacks" of these images, as can be seen in lines 84-90, 95 and 98 where she is walking home from the skating rink. This creates a stream-of-consciousness effect where Grandma's feelings are not narrated (i.e. she does not explicitly state that she is remembering these images or thinking about that day), but shown.

This sort of reiteration is distinctive since it is not a matter of repetition of mere words or groups, but of whole clauses or clause-like structures. Enkvist (1976) calls this sort of cohesion *iconic cohesion,* and says that it leads to "syntactic homomorphism". Enkvist includes in his definition sentences which are not exactly the same, as in Grandma's text, but sentences which display the same syntactic structure and thus create cohesion in that they "complement" each other syntactically. Enkvist writes that "each sentence is a "picture" of each other sentence at a certain level of description" (Enkvist 1976: 66).

In Grandma's text, the sentences which are repeated do not only function cohesively, they also contribute to the minimalist style that distinguishes Grandma's discourse from the other two voices in the novel.

Participant tracking and reference patterns will be discussed more fully in the section about lexical chains. When participants are tracked, they are also reiterated, and as we can see in table B, items such as *window* and *note* are reiterated quite a few times in Thomas Sr.'s text. We also see that words describing processes are reiterated in Thomas Sr.'s text, for example *write* (ll. 2-4, 13, 16, 20), *watch, change, touch, leave (a note), gather, toss,* and *throw.*

Iconic cohesion is less present in Thomas Sr.'s text, but we do for example see that he reiterates the structures *the next morning/day I…* in lines 13, 18 and 20-21 and *there was a note/there was no note* in lines 13, 18, 22-23.

There are many examples of lexical relations in these excerpts which may be classified as lexical collocation. As mentioned before, lexical collocation is a fuzzy concept and relies more on the context of situation or culture than on the language or lexicogrammatical choices in the text.

Let us consider for example the part of Oskar's text where he has snuck into the closet and is looking at his father's possessions. Oskar mentions *his white t-shirts, sneakers, laces, his fancy watch, his metal shoehorn, his slippers, the pockets of all his jackets, the hangers, his tuxedo, his suits, the highest shelf* and so on. We could say that all these items correspond to our idea of what is typically part of an adult man's wardrobe, and so these things cohere with the item *closet.* The same can be said for the relationship between *key* and *locks,* and all the different objects Oskar thinks the key might belong to, such as desks, drawers, doors to different rooms, and a jewellery box.

A similar tendency is present in Thomas Sr.'s text. There are examples of lexical collocation where there is a "node" word that displays lexical cohesion with several other items. For example, the word *write* is a lexical collocate of *letter, word, pen, this book, note,* and *daybook.* It might be argued that the collocation between *write* and each of these items is stronger than the lexical collocation between the items themselves, in so far as there is lexical collocation between them. This type of lexical cohesion is therefore not hiearchical like for example meronymy or hyponymy.

We also see lexical collocation between items such as *pebble* and *toss* and *throw,* and between *window* and *glass* and *shards* in Thomas Sr.'s text, and between items such as *call, phone, messages,* and *busy, fell asleep, awake* and *dreaming,* and *knit* and *scarf* in Grandma's text. When we commented on these words earlier in this chapter, we saw that this can also be seen as a form of reiteration because of the contiguity that exists between items such as *window* and *glass,* and between the idea of glass breaking and the word *shards.* This is yet another example of how different types of cohesion can overlap.

Another example of lexical collocation is the one where Oskar lists all the things that make him uncomfortable (ll. 24-29). The interpretation of these items does require some extra-linguistic knowledge, apart from the general cultural expectations that help readers interpret "normal" lexical collocation. For one thing, one would of course have to know about 9/11, and the significance that 9/11 has to this particular story. One would probably also have to know that shoes, abandoned bags, sewers and subway grates are typical places where bombs

may be placed. The things mentioned here do not stand in any relation to each other as regards synonymy, hyponymy, or meronymy, and they cannot be regarded as converses or parts of ordered lexical sets. Rather it is the specific context of 9/11 that sets up the lexical relation between these items.

When Oskar talks about his anxiety or grief, he usually does so in metaphorical terms. The metaphor he uses the most is speaking of his "boots" being either light or heavy, and he also talks of "zipping himself up in the sleeping bag of himself". These metaphors are idiosyncratic, but their meanings are nevertheless quite transparent given the context. The references to "heavy boots" in line 8 and "it made my boots lighter" in line 49 therefore refer to the same field of experience, as it were.

Grandma also makes use of metaphor in her text, for example in lines 45-46 and 99:

> 56) We didn't talk about what was on top of us. What was pinning us down like a ceiling. (ll. 45-46)
>
> 57) I wanted to be empty like an overturned pitcher. But I was full like a stone. (l. 99)

Generally speaking, one would only have to know the English language to be able to see a link between the idea of having something on top of you and being pinned down, and the converse relationship between *full* and *empty*. However, it can be argued that in order to be able to appreciate the relevance of these metaphors, one needs to look at the text as a whole. The interpretation of these metaphors is therefore dependent on what has gone before in the text. We also see that there is a similarity between Grandma's way of describing her mood and emotions and Oskar's "boot metaphor", i.e. in terms of heaviness and lightness.

In Oskar's text, we also see an example of text-specific lexical collocation between the items *turning the stereo louder than what you needed just to hear it* (ll. 18-19), *listening to music too loud* (l. 41) and *playing music too loud* (l. 67). There is lexical collocation between the items *stereo* and *music*, and *music*, *playing* and *listening*, and *playing* and *stereo* and between the forms *louder*.. and *too loud*. In the latter case there is a semantic connection because it is clear that Oskar considers playing music louder than what you need to just hear it to be inappropriate for someone who is grieving, and so that is what he means by the music being "too loud".

1.5 Cohesive chains

In this section, we will take a closer look at the identity and similarity chains that are present in each excerpt, and the degree of interaction between these chains.

The tables A, B and C show the chains that have been identified in each excerpt. The underlined words identify the referents; they are not meant to be counted as tokens. The number of tokens there are of each lexical unit in the texts is indicated by the numbers in parentheses. When there is no number in parentheses, this means the token occurs once. The words in square brackets are words which refer to more than one participant (such as *we*, *each other*), and the words in italics show references that occur in reported speech (such as when a character addresses another, for example using *you/your*).

1.5.1 Oskar – Table A

Identity chains	Oskar: I (72), me (9), my (3), *Oskar*, myself (4), [we] (3), [us] Oskar's mother: Mom (6), she (11), *you*, [they] (4), [each other], her (6) Thomas Jr.: Dad (8), he (9), his (11), him (2), [we] (3), us (1) Ron: Ron (5), [they] (4), [each other] Grandma: Grandma – she Sonny: Sonny, the homeless person… - he Lindy: Lindy, the neat old woman… - her Beavers – they (2), their (3) Volumes of Shakespeare set – the *Collected Shakespeare* set… - those – four tragedies at a time – a stack that was tall enough – all of that - the tragedies Thomas Jr.'s tuxedo: His tuxedo (2) – the tuxedo (2) – it (3) Thomas Jr.'s closet: Dad's closet – in there – his closet (2) – it The vase – a pretty blue vase (2) – it - the vase (2) – a blue vase The envelope – A little envelope (2) - it The key – a key – a weird-looking key – a fat and short key – the key (2) – it (4) The bracelet – the bracelet Mom wore to the funeral – the bracelet – it (6)
Similarity chains	Used (beads) – make – made Sky-blue beads – maroon beads – violet beads Morse code – silence – breaks between letters – breaks between words - long and short beeps

	– blips Dad's last voice message – Dad's messages Most beautiful – most precious Giving - gave – gift – make her (jewelry) The bracelet - anklet – necklace – tiara - other Morse code jewelry [The key in the vase] – a normal key - the key I wear on a string around my neck Scrabble - board games Turning the stereo up loud – listening to music too loud Cracking up too much – cracking up His closet – his t-shirts, his jackets, his slippers, his metal shoehorn, laces, sneakers, the hangers… - the highest shelf His tuxedo – his suits His tuxedo – fancy party

The three text-exhaustive chains which are the most central in this excerpt are the identity chains that refer to Oskar (in the first person), his mother ("Mom") and father ("Dad").

The identity chains which refer to other, less central participants typically only stretch across a couple of paragraphs. We see that the bracelet is introduced in line 2 and is tracked until line 22. There is chain interaction between the chain that refers to the bracelet and the chains that refer to Oskar, his mother (for example "**I** gave **it** to **Mom**"), and his father.

The first mention of the closet is in line 37, and this chain of reference continues to line 76. Within this portion of the text, several of the things that Oskar discovers inside the closet are introduced and tracked. We can see how Oskar's attention shifts from one thing to another as the identity chains succeed each other. For instance, Oskar notices the tuxedo in line 52, and the oddness of the tuxedo leads him to notice another odd thing, i.e. the blue vase. In line 73 the key is introduced, and while the chains that track the closet, the tuxedo, the chair, the books, the vase and the envelope end here, the key is tracked until the end of the excerpt in line 83. The chain interaction in this segment is centred around the the chain that refers to the closet, since that is where this narrative event takes place. In a sense the identity chains that refer to these participants branch out of the chain that refers to the closet.

The mention of the things Oskar looks at in the closet ties them both to the identity chain that refers to Oskar's father (***his*** *white t-shirts,* ***his*** *sneakers,* ***his*** *jackets,* ***his*** *tuxedo…*) and to the identity chain that refers to Oskar, since he looks at them, touches them, notices things, and so on (e.g. ll. 45-48). Oskar also describes things without explicitly saying that he smells or

notices them, such as when he says "even after a year it (i.e. the closet) still smelled like shaving" (ll. 43-44) and "his tuxedo was over the chair he used to sit on when he tied his shoes, and I thought, *Weird.*" (ll. 52-53). These references to the closet and the tuxedo do not enter into chain interaction with the chain that refers to Oskar, but they might still be said to be cohesive. For instance, when Oskar says in line 57 "If I hadn't noticed anything else weird (…)", he refers indirectly back to line 52-53. In this case and other similar ones, the readers would infer the connection between "and I thought, *Weird*" and "if I hadn't noticed anything else weird".

From the point where Oskar finds the key (l. 73) and until the end of the excerpt, there is interaction between the identity chains that refer to Oskar and to the key, as he tries it in *all of the locks in the apartment* (ll. 77-84).

1.5.2 Thomas Sr. – Table B

Identity chains	Thomas Sr.: I (41), me (6), my (3), [we], your father Thomas Jr.: you (4) , your (2) Oskar: Oskar, [we], your son, a boy, the boy Grandma: your mother , she (9), her (10) The doorman: your mother's doorman , the doorman (4), he (3) Notes: A note – my note A note – it – *it* A note – the first note Grandma's building: the building (2), her building Her window: the window (3) - her window (6) – the glass - *that* The apple: – an apple – the apple (2)
Similarity chains	Write – pen Write – word - note - letter Write – this book, my daybook The building – the building across the street Watch – see Hands - touch Building – door – doorman – apartment - window – elevator Window – glass - shards

	This book – my daybook Pebbles – some more Tossed – threw Go away (3) - leave – go - turn around – walk away

In Thomas Sr.'s text, the chain referring to the addressee, Thomas Jr., only goes from line 2 to 6. The chain that refers to Oskar is not tracked beyond line 6 either. The chains that are text-exhaustive in Thomas Sr.'s text are the ones that refer to Thomas Sr. himself, Grandma, and the doorman.

In Thomas Sr.'s text, there is a high degree of interaction between the chains that refer to Thomas Sr. himself, Grandma, the doorman, and the notes that are passed between them. Some of the references to notes are not tracked in identity chains, but form part of similarity chains. This is true for the references to *another note* in line 12 and *a note* in line 20.

In lines 6-7, and 10, the chain that refers to Thomas Sr. interacts with the chains that refer to the first note he sends, and to Grandma's doorman. The latter chain is also linked to the identity chain that refers to Grandma since the doorman is introduced into the discourse as *your mother's doorman.* In line 12, the chains that refer to Thomas Sr. and the doorman interact with one of the similarity chains that refer to notes (*another note).* The identity chain that refers to Thomas Sr.'s first note interacts with the identity chain that refers to Grandma in line 10 as well.

In line 13, the identity chain that refers to Grandma's note interacts with the identity chain that refers to her (*There was **a note** written on **her window***), and these two interact again in lines 18-19.

The identity chains that refer to Thomas Sr. and the doorman interact with the identity chain which refers to the third note Thomas Sr. writes in lines 16-18. In line 20 there is another mention of a note (*I wrote a note*) which is not tracked, but which is linked to the other notes by comparative reference.

Another set of chains which display interaction are the one that refers to Thomas Sr. and the ones that refer to the pebbles he throws and the window he throws them at. The pebbles that are mentioned in lines 15, 16 and 19 are not co-referential, but enter into a similarity chain. In

lines 15 and 20, the chains that refer to Thomas Sr. and to the pebbles also interact with the identity chain that refers to the window (*her window* in line 15 and *the glass* in line 20).

1.5.3 Grandma – Table C

Identity chains	Oskar's mother: your mother (5), she (27), her (12), herself, [we] (3), [each other], *you're, I* Grandma: I (39), me (6), [we] (6), *your*, my (6), *Mom* (2), [us] (3) Oskar: you (20), your (13), [us] (3), [we] (3) Thomas Sr.: Your grandfather – he - him Thomas Jr.: your father (4), my only child The scarf: that scarf – it - the scarf (2) The posters: posters - the posters - them The suitcase: a rolling suitcase – the suitcase The stapler: a stapler – the stapler The staples: a box of staples – the staples – staples The tape: tape (2) – the tape Dead bodies: thousands of bodies – them – rows of bodies
Similarity chains	Call: called – messages – phone – busy – speak The picture: the picture from your vacation - a different picture – so many pictures… Your face – your father's face The posters – the paper Knitted – scarf Television – volume – pictures Eyes – tears Asleep – awake Bodies falling - thousands of injured people – unconscious people – people without memories – thousands of bodies Ice-skating rink – skating – watching people skate Ice skating rink - ice Strong – weak Empty - full

The chains in Grandma's text that are text-exhaustive are the ones that refer to Grandma herself, Oskar and Oskar's mother.

We see interaction between the chains that refer to Mom and Grandma and the missing-person posters they make. In lines 19-20 Grandma says *She asked me if I thought we should make posters,* and in line 37 she says *She took the posters downtown that afternoon. She filled a rolling suitcase with them.*

We also see some chain interaction in lines 40-42, where the identity chains that refer to Mom and Grandma interact with the chains that refer to the stapler, staples and tape. Grandma says *I think of those things now. The paper, the stapler, the staples, the tape.* In line 96 we see that *Staples and tape* occurs again, on its own. This is typical of Grandma's texts, and when a phrase occurs on its own like this, it usually means that it is what Grandma is thinking of in the moment of writing; it is an impression that comes to her mind.

Apart from the two instances described above, Grandma's text displays a low degree of interaction between the chains. Grandma's "impressionist" style makes it difficult to point out clear cases of chain interaction. The chain interaction is in many cases made "invisible" in because of the wordings Grandma chooses. For example, when she says *the scarf grew longer and longer* (e.g. line 23), we understand this "growing" to be a result of Grandma knitting the scarf. There is an implicit link between Grandma and the scarf, but because of the wording it is not present in the actual text.

The same is true of the minor sentence types that are repeated throughout lines 50-64, 84-90, 95, 98 and 100. In 50-64, these minor sentences describe what Grandma sees as she watches the news broadcast. There is an implicit interaction between the chains that refer to Grandma, the television and the images on television in this part of the text, but it is obscured by the way it is expressed. In the rest of the text, these sentences are meant to "show" that Grandma thinks about these images, or that she has "flashbacks".

1.6 Summary

As we saw in the preceding section, the excerpts are different as regards the degree of interaction between the cohesive chains.

A characteristic of Thomas Sr.'s prose is that it is highly repetitive. This is not just true of the excerpt in Appendix 2, but of all his texts. As we saw in section 1.5.2 above, there is a high degree of interaction between the focal chains in the excerpt, that is, the identity chains that refer to Thomas Sr., the doorman and Grandma, and to the notes (which are also linked together through a similarity chain). These chains also realise the main meanings of the excerpt. Thomas Sr. chooses wordings which sustain semantic ties throughout the text, for example he says *I gave a note to your mother's doorman (…)* (ll. 6-7)*, I couldn't see if the doorman gave her my note* (l. 10)*, I left another note with the doorman* (l. 12)*, I wrote a note in my daybook, (…)I ripped it out and gave it to the doorman* (ll. 16-17). We see that this repetitive way of narrating the communication process is cohesive.

Oskar's text is slightly longer than Thomas Sr.'s, and we see that Oskar moves from one subject to another. His prose is thus also not as repetitive. In the first paragraph of Oskar's text (ll. 2-23), we see that there is a high degree of interaction between the identity chains that refer to Oskar, his parents and the bracelet he talks about. From line 37 to 58, there is interaction between the chains that refer to Oskar, Dad, and Dad's closet. At the end of the excerpt, as we mentioned in section 1.5.1, we see a high degree of interaction between the chains that refer to Oskar and the key.

Grandma's way of writing is characteristically non-cohesive, and we see this in the excerpt in Appendix 3. Grandma's impressionistic style often leaves out the connections between the participants and actions, and this also makes the surface text less cohesive. We saw in section 1.5.3. above that Grandma's use of minor sentences (e.g. *Planes going into buldings, Bodies falling..*) is meant to show the images she watches on television and then later "sees" in her mind as she remembers them (or cannot avoid remembering them). But as long as there are no phrases such as ***I watched*** *the planes going into buildings* or ***I thought of*** *the falling bodies,* there is no interaction between the chain that refers to Grandma and the one that refers to these images, which in turn does not contribute to cohesive harmony.

This is not to say that Grandma's text is less *coherent* than the other two, but it does mean that the reader's understanding of the text will rely more on inferences made on the basis of contextual information. The differences in texture is part of what distinguishes these texts from each other, as well as other stylistic features, as we shall see in Chapter 2, section 2.2.

2 Narrative theory and stylistics

This chapter will give a narrative and stylistic analysis of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.* We will look at how the different storylines are deployed in the book and how certain events are narrated differently by different characters. We will also be concerned with what role patterns of reference and lexical cohesion play in linking the different chapters of the novel together into a coherent text.

Narratology is a large field and it is not possible or relevant to analyze all aspects of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* within the space of this thesis. We shall therefore focus on the relationship between the chronology of events (the *story*) and the order in which they are presented in the novel (the *discourse*) and on narration and focalization. In relation to narration and focalization, we shall also look at what distinguishes the different character-narrators' style, based on the theoretical framework in Leech and Short (1981).

2.1 Introduction

Narratology is the study of how narrative texts are structured. We may define a narrative as a succession of connected events which are situated in space and time (Lothe 2005: 3). An event may be defined as a change of states, or in Rimmon-Kenan's words, "something that happens, something that can be summed up by a verb or name of action (…)" (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 3).

Most narrative theorists distinguish between the events that make up a story on an abstract level and the actual discourse (or other means of signification) that tells the story in a given narrative situation. In other words, we may think of narratives as consisting of the "components" of a story on one level and an actual text in which these events are presented on another. The French structuralist Gérard Genette used the terms *histoire* and *récit* in his seminal work *Narrative Discourse* (1972). In English there are several terms that are used to describe these aspects of narrative, and in this thesis we will use the terms *story* and *text* as they are defined in Rimmon-Kenan (2002):

> 'Story' designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. Whereas 'story' is a succession of events, 'text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling. Put more simply, the text is what we read. (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 3)

It is only the text that is directly accessible to the readers; it is through the text that they acquire an understanding of the story events and the chronological order in which these events are meant to have happened in the fictional world (which may differ from the order in which they are presented in the text) and of the causal or logical connections between the story events. There may also be gaps in the text where it is up to the reader to infer these connections based on the information which is in fact available. The structure of the text may therefore influence the reader's understanding of and attitude towards the story and "story world".

Any tale entails a "teller". In narrative discourse, the agent who "speaks", who tells the story, is the narrator. It is common to distinguish between narrators in terms of voice, that is, whether the narrator is telling the story in the first or third person (see section 2.1.2 below). It is also common to distinguish between narrators in terms of whether they are part of the story or not, and to distinguish between different types of *focalization*, that is, the particular viewpoint or filter through which the text is narrated (this will be further discussed in section 2.1.3).

2.1.1. Time

As we mentioned in section 2.1, a narrative is a succession of events that unfold in space and time, and these two aspects are inextricably linked. However, there has been a trend in narrative theory to focus more on time than on space. It might have been interesting to include the spatial aspect in our analysis *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, but for our present purposes we shall have to limit our scope to time.

Time has two dimensions in narrative. On the one hand, there is the *story-time*, or the chronological order in which story events may be imagined to have happened, and on the other hand there is *text-time*, which is the temporal order in which events are presented in the text. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) writes that "time in narrative fiction can be defined as the relations of chronology between story and text" (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 44). While story-time is mimetic of temporal relations as we experience them in "reality", so to speak, text-time is spatial rather than temporal: it is the "linear (spatial) disposition of linguistic segments in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan: ibid.). Readers reconstruct the temporal order of events in the process of reading, but the actual process of reading is necessarily linear (we read sentence after sentence, chapter after chapter…).

The Genettian terms *order, duration* and *frequency* are widely used to describe the discrepancies between text-time and story time. In this thesis, we shall mostly be concerned with **order**, which is the "relations between succession of events in the story and their linear disposition in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 46). Narratives typically display what Genette calls *anachronies,* which means that the story events are presented in the text in a way that departs from the "natural" chronology of the story. Anachronies are divided into two main categories, namely *analepses* and *prolepses.* An analepsis is "an achronological movement back in time" (Toolan 2001: 43), in other words it is a reference to an event which has happened at a point which is earlier than other events which have been narrated in the text. A prolepsis is a "flashforward", or an achronological movement forward in time, so that an event is narrated at a point before earlier events have been mentioned (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 46).

Duration is the "time events are supposed to have taken versus the amount of text devoted to their narration" (Rimmon-Kenan). It is difficult, if not to say impossible, to measure how much time it takes to narrate an event. It might be argued that duration is a question of emphasis rather than time; since it is a question of how much of the text is dedicated to narrating important or significant events in contrast to other events which are given less attention.

Frequency is the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated in the text. Frequency can be *singulative* (telling once what happened once), *repetitive* (telling n times what happened once), or *iterative* (telling once what happened n times) (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 58). In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* there are certain events which are narrated by more than one character-narrator, and we shall look more closely at these in section 2.3.2.

2.1.2 Narration

There are several ways of labelling and distinguishing between different types of narrators in narrative fiction. Lothe (2005) follows the practice of dividing narrators into the categories *first-person* and *third-person narrator,* which he defines this way:

> In addition to being a narrator, the first-person narrator is in other words *active in the plot*, i.e. in the dynamic shaping of the text's action, events, and characters. The third-person narrator is on the other hand outside or "above" the plot, even though he is also in the text. (Lothe 2005: 21)

Bal (2009) uses the terms terms *character-bound narrator (CN)* and *external narrator (EN),* which correspond to Lothe's *first person* and *third person* respectively. Bal is reluctant to use the terms *first-person* and *third-person* because she claims that the narrator is the "subject" of the narration regardless of whether he or she refers to him- or herself; and that this underlying subject is implied in any narrative text (Bal 2009: 21.). In this sense, all narrative agents, whether or not they figure in the narrative at story or text level, are "first-person".

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) uses the terms *homo-/heterodiegetic* and *intra-/extradiegetic* as they are defined in Genette (1972: 244-48). The terms *homodiegetic* and *heterodiegetic* distinguishes between narrators who are participants in the story events (homodiegetic) and the ones who are not (heterodiegetic). The terms *intradiegetic* and *extradiegetic* refer to the narrators' involvement at the discourse level of the narrative. Extradiegetic texts are texts in which there is an "external" narrative which frames the main narrative of a story, such as in *Arabian Nights* (Bal 2009: 57).

For our present purposes, we shall stick to Lothe's terms *first person/third person.* All the three narrators in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* are first-person narrators. They are a part of the stories they narrate, and they refer to themselves using first-person pronouns. In each chapter, deictic terms such as *I, you, your mother, your father* change referents. Although there is an alternation between different narrative voices, the characters are the same, and in many cases we see that the same story events are narrated by more than one character. Therefore we may say that it is the context and style which help the reader to keep track of who is speaking and whom they are speaking about, since each "I" refers to a different person, and the use of personal names is rare.

2.1.3 Focalization

Focalization is the perceptual viewpoint through which the story is presented. In any narrative, the story is presented from a certain viewpoint, and storytelling is therefore inevitably subjective. We may think of the story events as existing in and of themselves on a level that is separate from the narrative text, but any presentation of these story events entails what Bal calls "a vision" of the story. In this sense, focalization is a "layer between the

linguistic text and the fabula"[9] (Bal 2009: 145, 149), because the choice of angle determines the linguistic choices that the writer must make when articulating the discourse.

The focalizer and the narrator are two separate entities. In first-person, retrospective narratives, such as the ones we shall be concerned with in this thesis, narrators typically recount events that have happened at an earlier stage, so that the events they narrate are focalized through the viewpoint of their former selves. As we shall see in our analyses in section 2.3.2, the focalization in the different narrators' texts reveals the extent of their knowledge in different situations, as well as their attitudes towards situations and other characters.

Focalization involves a "focalized", that is, the object of the focalization, as well as a focalizer. The focalizer is the one who perceives, and the focalized is what is being perceived (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 75). In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the narrators include many of the same events in their stories, and so they focalize the same events and characters, and sometimes they also focalize each other. This gives the reader an impression of how the narrators relate to each other and the events they are involved in, as we shall see in section 2.3.2.

Moreover, focalization can either be external or internal, and in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, it is clearly internal. This means that the focalization is located within the represented events (Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 76).

2.1.4 Implied author and implied reader

The term *implied author (IA)* first appeared in Booth (1961), who defined the implied author as the author's "implied version of himself" (Booth 1961 [1983]: 70) or his "second self". The IA is not identical with the real author; but may be seen as a duplicate of the real author's voice or a depersonalized version of the real author.

We may define the implied author as a narrative agent who is responsible for presenting or organising the narrative, whether the narrative is first-person, third-person, or mixed. No matter what sort of narrator is present *in the text*, there is an IA who enables the narration, without being present in the text. Toolan (2001) writes that

[9] Bal uses the term "fabula" in the same way as we use "story".

> [an] implied author can be retrospectively projected on any text, narrative or otherwise. In the case of literary narratives, the account of an implied author that a reader develops tends in practice to have much to do with authorial intention and meaning. (Toolan 2001: 65)

Chatman (1990) argues that this authorial intention and meaning is present in the text as a guiding principle - "the reader's source of instruction about how to read the text and how to account for the selection and ordering of its components" (Chatman 1990: 83-4). In other words, the IA is the agent that is responsible for the pragmatic meanings of a text seen as a whole; it is the image of the author-figure the reader constructs based on the sort of values presented in the text. As Booth put it, "our sense of the implied author includes not only the extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all the characters" (Booth 1961: 73). The implied author is thus responsible for the system of values that is presented in a given text, or the impression the reader will have of the intention behind and attitude towards what is being presented in the text –

> it amounts to an answer to the reader's own question: 'What sort of person, with what sort of interests and values, must the author be, to have produced this text with the preoccupations and meanings that I take it to have?' (Toolan 2001: ibid.)

The implied reader is likewise not identical with the real readers of a novel, but is rather a depersonalized addressee. The implied reader is not the same as the narratee, either. The narratee, if there is one, is visible in the text. In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* there are two main narratees, namely Oskar and Thomas Jr., to whom Grandma's and Thomas Sr.'s letters are addressed. The implied reader, on the other hand, is an abstract participant who is not visible in the text, but rather an outside participant, the hypothetical receiver of the narrative. Toolan defines the implied reader as "a picture, based on the text in its totality, of the kind of reader or archetypal reader that real readers assume the text has or had in mind as its audience" (Toolan 2001: 68).

Chatman visualized the communicative situation of literary discourse with the following diagram:

Real author → Implied author → Narrrrator → Narratee → Implied reader → Real reader

(Chatman 1978, quoted in Rimmon-Kenan 2002: 87). What we see in this diagram is how the different levels of the text are embedded. The outermost layer is the real-world situation in which an actual author publishes a work which is read at some later time by a number of actual readers. The innermost layer is the text itself, which has a narrator (whether first- og

third-person) and in some cases a narratee. In between these two layers we have the implied author and implied reader, who are not a part of neither the text nor the situation(s) in which the text is created or read. Instead we may say that they are participants which exist only on a conceptual level that is external to the story.

The intermediate positions of the implied author and implied reader are interesting as regards *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* for several reasons. For one thing, Oskar's portions of the narrative do not appear to have a narratee. However, the style in which it is written is colloquial, so that it seems like Oskar is telling his part of the story verbally to someone who is never named or addressed. Along with the illustrations and facsimiles, this oral style makes Oskar's part of the narrative seem like he is talking directly to the Implied Reader while displaying his "Stuff That Happened To Me"-scrapbook. Grandma og Thomas Sr., on the other hand, address their letters to specific people, and it seems as though their letters were never meant for anyone else's eyes. Thus Oskar's texts appear to be directed straightforwardly to the implied reader, whereas Grandma's and Thomas Sr.'s texts are "shown" to the implied reader by the implied author.

Another reason why the relation between the implied author/narrators and implied readers/narratees is interesting is because we see that certain meanings and wordings are repeated in the different characters' texts, even though they do not have access to each other's narratives in the story world. It is the implied author who is responsible for making these patterns and similarities visible; and it can be argued that the implied author is communicating something by doing so, as we shall see in our analysis in section 2.5.

When reading a novel such as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, which contains three distinct first-person narrators, the reader will infer the connections between the story events and reconstruct their "natural" chronological order through the way these events are presented and sequenced. As we saw in section 2.1, it is only through the text that readers have access to the story world. The text therefore shapes and constrains the reader's understanding of the story world since it will contain implications about how connections between events and characters may be interpreted. The text is also the reader's only way of accessing the characters in the story. In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, the characters emerge as characters through their own first-person discourse and the way in which they choose to express themselves. Thus, while narrative theory is a useful tool for analyzing the

organizational structure of a text, stylistics can provide an insight into what significance linguistic choices may have, as we hope to illustrate in section 2.2.2.

2.2 Style

Stylistics is a discipline that is dedicated to "explaining the relation between language and artistic function" (Leech and Short 1981: 13). By "style" we shall thus mean the linguistic choices that distinguish a text, in terms of syntax, lexis, punctuation, metaphor, parallelism and even layout.

In this thesis we shall be concerned with the stylistic features that set the different narrators' chapters apart in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. We shall compare and contrast the different narrators' styles and show how these stylistic features contribute to establishing these narrators as characters in the text and how it influences the readers' perception of them.

2.2.1 Deviation and prominence

Leech and Short's (1981) approach to style is related to Halliday's systemic-functional view of language. This means that in analyzing a text, wordings should be studied "in terms of what an author *has* written against the background of what he *might* have written" (Leech and Short 1981: 22).

In stylistic analysis, one will look for features that are especially salient, or *prominent.* Prominence is the "basis for our sense of the particularity of a style" (Leech and Short 1981: 50). It is a psychological notion, and readers' ability to pick up on distinctive linguistic features in text will vary according to their background and experience. Despite this variation, Leech and Short still suggest that people may generally be said to have a *stylistic competence,* that is, an inherent ability to respond to style.

Another term which is central to stylistics is *deviance.* Leech (1985) states that "to be stylistically distinctive, a feature of language must deviate from some norm of comparison" (Leech 1985: 40). The norm that is deviated from can either be *absolute,* that is, a norm that applies to the language as a whole, or *relative,* i.e. a norm that is provided by a limited number of other, comparable texts. The concept of deviation has been criticised because of the difficulty in obtaining sound statistical proof. It can be difficult to measure the extent to which a text deviates from comparable texts.

Leech and Short use the term *style markers* to refer to particular linguistic features which are selected for analysis in a given text. This selection must be based on an "intuitive observation" (Leech and Short 1981: 69). Leech and Short go on to specify a framework of stylistic categories which may be taken as a point of departure for a stylistic analysis (Leech and Short 1981: 75-80).

For our present purposes, it seems reasonable to adopt an approach that is mostly concerned with prominence, and dealing with deviance if and when "deviant" wordings occur. Our definition of deviance in this thesis is limited to linguistic choices that depart from usual conventions of written English prose, such as punctuation, for instance.

We will focus on stylistic features which are distinctive of each of the narrative voices in the novel, and point out patterns which recur in the different characters' speech. The purpose of this description is to point out which style markers help distinguish each narrator's discourse, which we claim is what helps the reader tell them apart.

2.2.2 Style in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

In this section, we will give an account of the stylistic features that are typical of each character-narrator's discourse. The method we have adopted for this purpose is to select a main sample for each of them based on a general impression of each narrator's style. Based on this general impression of their writing styles we created a check-list of features that was concerned with punctutation, speech report, lexical choices and sentence types. We went on to choose longer stretches of text from each narrator's text which contain more than one of the features which we consider to be characteristic of their style. The main sample is supported by other, shorter examples which serve to further illustrate tendencies that are present in the main sample or to exemplify features which are not present, but which we nevertheless consider to be important. Another reason why we opted for using a longer, main sample and complementary, shorter examples is that a longer example makes it clearer for the reader what effect the stylistic features have when they are *combined* in a longer chunk of text rather than one or two isolated sentences.

2.2.2.1 Oskar

The chapters that are narrated by Oskar differ from those narrated by Grandma and Thomas Sr. in that they are not letters or diary entries, and they are not addressed to any specific

person. In contrast to Grandma's or Thomas Sr.'s texts, Oskar's prose does not display anything particularly remarkable when it comes to sentence length or punctuation.

His style is more colloquial than that of Grandma and Thomas Sr. He uses informal language, slang expressions, and sometimes we see that he uses discourse markers which we typically associate with spoken language, such as "anyway" and "obviously", which we see in example 1 below. Oskar's style also differs from that of Grandma and Thomas Sr. in that he consistently uses the same or similar wordings and phrases. His choice of lexis and wordings reflects his age, for example slang expressions such as *cool, neat, crack up* (instead of "laugh"), *wimpy,* and so on. Oskar also has some quirky expressions of his own, such as saying simply *Jose* instead of the whole phrase (i.e. "No way, José"). The idiosyncratic elements in Oskar's speech are part of what creates him as a character. It is common for people to have "favourite" words or expressions which they tend to (over)use in their everyday speech. Oskar's frequent use of "Jose!" and "what the?" is part of what makes him vivid as a character and creates the illusion that he is telling the whole story to us orally.

1) What about a teakettle? What if the spout opened and closed when the steam came out, so it would become a mouth, and it could whistle pretty melodies, or do Shakespeare, or just crack up with me? I could invent a teakettle that reads in Dad's voice, so I could fall asleep, or maybe a set of teakettles that sings the chorus of "Yellow Submarine," which is a song by the Beatles, who I love, because entomology is one of my *raisons d'être,* which is a French expression that I know. Another good thing is that I could train my anus to talk when I farted. If I wanted to be extremely hilarious, I'd train it to say, "Wasn't me!" every time I made an incredibly bad fart. And if I ever made an incredibly bad fart in the Hall of Mirrors, which is in Versailles, which is ouside of Paris, which is in France, obviously, my anus would say, *"Ce n'etais pas moi!"*

   What about little microphones? What if everyone swallowed them, and they played the sounds of our hearts through little speakers, which could be in the pouches of our overalls? When you skateboarded down the street at night you could hear everyone's heartbeat, and they could hear yours, sort of like a sonar. One weird thing is, I wonder if everyone's hearts would start to beat at the same time, like how women who live together have their menstrual periods at the same time, which I know about, but don't really want to know about. That would be so weird, except that the place in the hospital where babies are born would sound like a crystal chandelier in a houseboat, because the babies wouldn't have had time to match up their heartbeats yet. And at the finish line at the end of the New York City Marathon it would sound like war. (p. 1)

There are certain phraseological patterns which recur in Oskar's speech. He has an active and associative mind, and he is constantly coming up with ideas for more or less likely inventions. When he is thinking of these, he often uses questions, usually introduced by "what if…?" or "what about/how about…?", as we see in example 1 above. There is no narratee present in Oskar's parts of the narrative, so the use of questions here is likely to be self-addressing; it is a way of mimicking the thought process behind the inventions. Oskar also uses questions when he is narrating episodes where he is curious about something, or when he is puzzled. The way Oskar uses questions adds to the overall impression of him as an extroverted, curious

and naive child. As we can see in example 1 above, Oskar's train of though springs from one idea to another, and this gives his texts a sense of lightheartedness which is in contrast to the grief and anxiety he struggles with.

He is fond of boasting his knowledge on a range of topics, and when he mentions something he knows about, he frequently phrases it "like x, which I know about", and sometimes "which I know about, but wish I didn't". This occurs twice in example 1, and it is a pattern which occurs frequently in Oskar's speech:

2) I dug up (…) a refrigerator magnet for sushi, **which I know about, but wish I didn't.** (p. 9)

   I don't know why, but as I was working, I couldn't stop thinking about that day Mom and I went to the storage facility in New Jersey. I kept going back to it, **like a salmon, which I know about.** (p. 106)

   (…) Gerald told me to get back into the car so I wouldn't be decapitated, **which I know about but really, *really* wish I didn't.** (p. 317)

French words and phrases in his speech frequently occur in Oskar's speech. Oskar takes French lessons, and often "shows off" his knowledge of French in his narrative,. The French expression he perhaps favours the most is *raison d'être,* which occurs several times in Oskar's portions of the novel, such as in example 1. We also see Oskar using French in dialogue with other characters, such as when he runs his finger along the top of a microwave, holds up his finger and mockingly tells Abby Black that *"c'est sale"* (p. 93), or when he tells his mother that he is *"très fatigué"* (p. 168).

The tendency towards "showing off" which we see in Oskar's habit of code-switching and emphasising all that he *knows about* can be seen as an expression of Oskar's wish to appear knowledgeable and worldly despite the fact that he is no more than nine years old. As we learn from his narrative, Oskar does not seem to fit in well at school and appears to prefer the company of adults. His showing off can be interpreted as a sign that he is self-conscious of his age and would like to appear wiser and more mature than he is; but in practice this behaviour only serves to draw attention to the fact that he is a child and that he craves praise and acknowledgement from adults.

Since most of Oskar's narrative deals with his search for the lock, and this search involves walking around New York and talking to people, Oskar's chapters contain more dialogue than the others, and a greater number of characters. When reporting dialogue, Oskar mostly uses a combination of indirect and direct speech. When there is direct speech, he uses quotation marks and he usually does not shift the line to mark the turns in the dialogue:

3) The next morning I told Mom I couldn't go to school again. She asked what was wrong. I told her, "The same thing that's always wrong." "You're sick?" "I'm sad." "About Dad?" "About everything." (p. 42)

A feature of Oskar's discourse which also differs from the other narrators' discourse is how genre conventions are exploited. On pages 145-146, Oskar describes his rage towards his classmates, his mother and grandmother, and everyone else in a violent fantasy which is written like a stage script.

At first he shows the actual dialogue from the adapted Hamlet play that Oskar and his class are rehearsing at the top of page 145. He shows the names of the "characters" in smaller, uppercase letters, with stage directions written in italics within square brackets. Further down the page he writes (in ordinary prose) *Maybe it was because of everything that had happened in those twelve weeks. Or maybe it was because I felt so close and alone that night. I just couldn't be dead any longer.* After this he introduces a new passage of "script" that shows him insulting Jimmy Snyder, the boy who bullies him at school. At first it is unclear whether this is something that is actually happening or not; whether Oskar actually does rebel against the script and starts insulting Jimmy Snyder on stage during play. Eventually, however, the "stage directions" describe Oskar as smashing Snyder's skull, which

4) is also RON's skull (for letting MOM get on with life) and MOM'S skull (for getting on with life) and DAD'S skull (for dying) and GRANDMA'S skull (for embarassing me so much) and DR. FEIN'S skull (for asking if any good could come out of DAD'S death) and the skulls of everyone else I know. (p. 146)

At this point, the reader realizes that this is Oskar's inner dramatization of his pent-up frustration.

Similarly, the chapter "Happiness, Happiness" opens on page 187 with a transcript of the recording Oskar has brought to class for "Show and Tell". This transcript is also presented with the speakers' names in small, uppercase letters, and readers will notice immediately that the tone and vocabulary of the language is different from Oskar's. Instead of reading Oskar's summarized or paraphrased version of the recording, the reader is presented with the whole recording, and this happens before they know the context and relevance of the recording. This creates an "in medias res"-effect and is a part of the narrative strategy that is followed in Oskar's portions of the novel (and to extent also Thomas Sr.'s portions), in which both textual and visual elements are *shown* to the reader before their full significance becomes clear through the unfolding (written) narrative. In addition to showing his suppressed anger through the "script", and showing the transcript of the recording, Oskar frequently quotes letters he has received, and shows pictures he has taken or pages from his scrapbook. This is something

we shall go into detail about in section 2.4 about multimodality. For now, suffice it to say that Oskar's portions are more "multi-textured" than Grandma's and Thomas Sr.'s portions, because of the greater variety of textual and visual modes.

2.2.2.2 Grandma

Grandma's style is characterized by short, simple declarative sentences which often contain only a single participant and a single process, as we see in example 5:

> 5) When I was a girl, my life was music that was always getting louder. Everything moved me. A dog following a stranger. That made me feel so much. A calendar that showed the wrong month. I could have cried over it. I did. Where the smoke from a chimney ended.
>
> How an overturned bottle rested at the edge of a table.
>
> I spent my life learning to feel less.
>
> Every day I felt less.
>
> Is that growing old? Or is it something worse?
>
> You cannot protect yourself from sadness without protecting yourself from happiness.
>
> He hid his face in the covers of his daybook, as if the covers were his hands. He cried. For whom was he crying?
>
> For Anna?
>
> For his parents?
>
> For me?
>
> For himself?
>
> I pulled the book from him. It was wet with tears running down the pages, as if the book itself were crying. He his his face in his hands.
>
> Let me see you cry, I told him.
>
> I do not want to hurt you, he said by shaking his head left to right.
>
> It hurts me when you do not want to hurt me, I told him. Let me see you cry.
>
> He lowered his hands. One one cheek it said YES backward. On one cheek it said NO backward. He was still looking down. Now the tears did not run down his cheeks, but fell from his eyes to the ground. Let me see you cry, I said. I did not feel that he owed it to me. And I did not feel that I owed it to him. We owed it to each other, which is something different.
>
> He raised his head and looked at me.
>
> I am not angry with you, I told him.
>
> You must be.
>
> I am the one who broke the rule.
>
> But I am the one who made the rule you couldn't live with.

> My thoughts are wandering, Oskar. They are going to Dresden, to my mother's pearls, damp with the sweat of her neck. My thoughts are going up the sleeve of my father's overcoat. His arm was so thick and strong. I was sure it would protect me for as long as I lived. And it did. Even after I lost him. The memory of his arm wraps around me as his arm used to. Each day has been chained to the previous one. But the weeks have had wings. Anyone who believes that a second is faster than a decade did not live my life. (pp. 180-181)

Another important feature of Grandma's style is the way in which she uses questions. Sometimes she uses questions to convey feelings such as wonder, confusion or exasperation, such as on page 224 when she asks herself "Why was it necessary to torture him?" when watching someone being interviewed by an insensitive news reporter on television. We also see that Grandma uses questions to convey a more poignant thoughtful mood. These questions appear to be rhetorical, such as in example 5 where she asks *Is that growing old? Or is it something worse?*

Another quasi-rhetorical question which occurs and which is repeated in the book is the question *Why does anyone ever make love?* We see that Grandma asks herself this question (or poses the question rhetorically) for the first time on pages 84-85, where it is repeated three times. In this chapter she is describing the moment where she makes love to Thomas Sr. for the first time. Later she repeats this question on page 177, where she describes how they make love in "Nothing places" in their home (we will explain what this means later) and hints at her suspicion that he thinks of someone else (i.e. Anna) when they make love. The question is repeated again on page 181, where Grandma talks about the argument she and Thomas Sr. have about her pregnancy before he leaves her. The question itself may be said to be quite vague, but it acquires a rhetorical force through being repeated in these contexts. It implies that Grandma has in a sense felt that she was entitled to a child, and that making love would be meaningless if she was never going to have a child.

The most eye-catching feature of Grandma's discourse is perhaps her use of double spaces and line shifting. This creates a lot of space in Grandma's texts, which may be meant to carry a symbolic meaning (see for example page 176, *I hit the space bar again and again and again. My life story was spaces*).

Another prominent feature of her style is that she lets minor sentence types such as noun phrases and shorter clauses stand on their own, as we commented on in Chapter 1. This creates a sense of slowness; it seems as if Grandma pauses to dwell on each meaning before moving on to the next. We can see this effect at play in example 5 above, for example where she says *A dog following a stranger/Where the smoke from a chimney ended/How an*

overturned bottle rested at the edge of a table. We also see this in Appendix 3 where Grandma repeats the phrases *planes going into buildings/bodies falling/buildings falling.*

The stylistic features we have described above (quasi-rhetorical questions, double spaces, line shifting, minor sentence types) combine to create Grandma as a character who is sensitive, brooding, and meditative. Her style can come across as somewhat obtuse, especially her questions and minor sentence types can seem open-ended. We also see that Grandma favours reporting her thoughts directly, without much elaboration or explanation. Grandma seems to invite the reader to make sense of what she says rather than indicating an obvious path for interpretation. She does not explicitly express her feelings towards the events she narrates (such as her childhood memories, for instance), but the wordings she chooses conveys a sense of tenderness (for example, *The memory of his arm wraps around me as his arm used to* in example 5).

Grandma mostly uses direct speech when she quotes others or reporting dialogue, but she does not use quotation marks. Instead, she often shifts the line, and sometimes she uses speech verbs like "said", "told", "asked", or when reporting exchanges between herself and Thomas Sr., "wrote", "pointed at" or "showed" (i.e. Thomas Sr. showing either his left or right hand) to mark the turns in dialogue.

Grandma's style differs from that of Oskar and Thomas Sr. as regards the types of cohesive ties that are present. As mentioned in chapter 1, there are several instances of iconic cohesion, or in other words larger chunks of discourse that are repeated throughout the chapters or across chapters. Lexical repetition proper also occurs frequently, for instance in example 5, where the items *my thoughts, my mother's pearls, [my mother's] neck, [my mother's] pearls* are repeated, and in examples such as 6 below:

6) Although **he never said it**, I could tell that my uncle had befriended the inmate. He had also lost a wife, and was also in prison. **He never said it**, but I heard in his voice that he cared for the inmate. (p. 77)

Another characteristic of Grandma's style is references to participants which stretch across large parts of text. Even rather minor characters can be referred to long after they have been introduced, for example when she is talking about her childhood. On page 228, for example, we find the passage in example 7 below:

7) Sometimes I felt like the space was collapsing onto us. Someone was on the bed. **Mary jumping. Your father sleeping. Anna kissing me.** I felt buried. **Anna holding the sides of my face. My father pinching my cheeks.** Everything on top of me. (p. 228)

In this chapter, Grandma has crawled under Oskar's bed, where Oskar has gone to hide on 9/11. At this point, Grandma has begun to realize that Thomas Jr. is probably injured or dead, and she is overwhelmed by this as she is lying there and trying to calm Oskar down. already told of on pages 78 and 181-3, and the reference to "your father" (i.e. Thomas Jr.) refers to a period of time which Grandma hardly speaks of at any point in the novel. We see here that the references she makes span over a considerable number of pages, and that they refer to points in time which are far removed from each other (her own childhood versus that of Thomas Jr., for instance). This is a characteristic feature of Grandma's style: she brings the past and the present together by making associations between her memories and newer experiences or observations. Sometimes she creates these associations simply by juxtaposing "snapshots" from her mind, as in example 5, and sometimes she also draws on lexical associations between words to show her train of thought. In chapter 1, we commented on the passage in example 8 below, in which Grandma exploits the polysemy and homonymy of the word *ring(s):*

8) One million pieces of paper filled the sky. They stayed there, like a **ring** around the building. Like the **rings** of Saturn. The **rings** of coffee staining my father's desk. The **ring** Thomas told me he didn't need. I told him he wasn't the only one who needed. (p. 225)

In the text that precedes example 8 on page 225, we have the following bit of text:

9) I remember the worst storm of my childhood. From my window I saw the books pulled from my father's shelves. They flew. **A tree that was older than any person tipped away from our house**. But it could have tipped the other way. (p. 225)

Then on page 232, where Grandma is sitting and watching the images of the burning and falling towers over and over again on television, there is the following quote:

10) Bodies falling.

Buildings falling.

The rings of the tree that fell away from our house. (p. 232)

What we see here is how Grandma's memories of her childhood blend into what she is experiencing on 9/11, and that the pain of losing her family in Dresden is coming back to her as she realizes that she has lost her son. This is never written explicitly, however. As is typical for Grandma's discourse, connections between events, reasons for decisions and associations between past and present are only implied, never spelled out.

This "blending" effect is achieved by a combination of reference and lexical cohesion. Grandma is at once referring back to an event she has introduced in the preceding discourse, and at the same time she is creating a semantic link between the *rings of paper* she sees

circling the burning twin towers and the *rings of the tree* which was uprooted during that storm she witnessed as a child. Moreover, there is a symbolic connection between the rings of the tree and all the time that has passed between the moments she recalls. When her memories and impressions are blended like this, it makes it seem like we are invited into Grandma's mind, as it were, and experiencing the world as she does, or in other words, it creates a stream-of-consciousness effect.

2.2.2.3 Thomas Sr.

Thomas Sr. also uses short clauses and minor sentence types. The difference between his and Grandma's style is that Thomas Sr. breaks normal conventions when it comes to punctuation, and he often uses a comma where one would expect a full stop. We also see that his texts are mostly written in one long paragraph, except for the pages that show the pages of his daybook which he uses to communicate to the outside world (e.g. pp. 19-27).

Thus we see that while Grandma uses full stops, double spaces and shifted lines to create a sense of space and slowness in her prose, Thomas Sr.'s prose seems to move faster. Since Thomas Sr. has lost the ability to speak, writing in his daybooks is the closest he comes to speaking (apart from gesturing and displaying his palms). It therefore seems like he writes as if he is talking.

11) Only a few months into our marriage, we started marking off areas in the apartment as "Nothing Places", in which one could be assured of complete privacy, we agreed that we never would look at the marked-off zones, that they would be nonexistent territories in the apartment where one could temporarily cease to exist, the first was the bedroom, by the foot of the bed, we marked it off with red tape on the carpet, and it was just large enough to stand in, it was a good place to disappear, we knew it was there but we never looked at it, it worked so well that we decided to create a Nothing Place in the living room, it seemed necessary, because there are times when one needs to disappear while in the living room, and sometimes one simply wants to disappear, we made this zone slightly larger so that one of us could lie down in it, it was a rule that you never would look at that rectangle of space, it didn't exist, and when you were in it, neither did you, for a while that was enough, but only for a while, we required more rules, on our second anniversary we marked off the entire guest room as a Nothing Place, it seemed like a good idea at the time, sometimes a small patch at the foot of the bed or a rectangle in the living room isn't enough privacy, the side of the door that faced the guest room was Nothing, the side that faced the hallway was Something, the knob that connected them was neither Something nor Nothing. The walls of the hallway were Nothing, even pictures need to disappear, especially pictures, but the hallway itself was Something, the bathtub was Nothing, the bathwater was Something, the hair on our bodies was Nothing, of course, but once it collected around the drain it was Something, we were trying to make our lives easier, trying, with all of our rules, to make life effortless. But a friction began to arise between Nothing and Something, in the morning the Nothing vase cast a Something shadow, like the memory of someone you've lost, what can you say about that, at night the Nothing light from the guest room spilled under the Nothing door and stained the Something hallway, there's nothing to say. (p. 110)

The passage in example 11 above shows three sentence which are typical of Thomas Sr.'s texts. There are 24 main clauses contained within the first single sentence. These clauses are

not particularly long or complex, but Thomas Sr's punctuation clearly deviates from common conventions. Even though the sentences are often unusually long, Thomas Sr.'s texts are not ungrammatical or difficult to read. It rather seems like reading a transcript of his speech (if he had been able to speak). While Grandma seems to invite the reader to pause and reflect on what she writes in each line, Thomas Sr. discourse moves rapidly on. We also see that there is some variation in sentence length, so that the rhythm of his discourse varies somewhat. It may be that this alternation in sentence length mimics the alternation in rhythm in speech. In example 11, the first sentence is much longer than the two others. This example is of course lifted from a longer text; but it seems that the reason why this sentence is longer than the others is because it is a "chunk" of discourse where he explains what "Something" and "Nothing"-zones are. In the text that follows, Thomas Sr. tries to explain why the regime of rules and zones become difficult to follow.

While it is easy to explain what "Something" and "Nothing"-zones *are,* it is perhaps not as straightforward to explain why they did not make life easier, as they were meant to. In the last two sentences in example 11, and the rest of the text that follows on pages 110-111, the sentences become gradually shorter. We may wonder if the longer sentences are meant to show Thomas Sr. "speaking" more intensely, or in other words faster. As he is explaining what the rules were all about, he is "speaking fast", but then as he starts to explain how the rules ended up making everything more difficult rather than easier, his "speech" slows down, and his sentences become shorter.

Thomas Sr. usually renders dialogue in direct speech, and he uses quotation marks and speech verbs. He does not shift the line when quoting the turns in a dialogue, but sometimes he shows only his own turns, by displaying pages of his book where he has dedicated the whole page to a single utterance.

A feature which stands out in Thomas Sr.'s prose is that it is highly repetitive, both in terms of lexical and structural repetition. In example 11, we see that Thomas Sr. repeats items such as *Something, Nothing, mark off, disappear, privacy.* We also see that he repeats the phrase "x is Something/Nothing" toward the end of the sample. Such lexical repetition contributes to making Thomas Sr.'s discourse intense and fast-moving. In contrast to Grandma's text, there is a sense of energy and pace rather than contemplation.

This tendency towards repetition also occurs in the remainder of Thomas Sr.'s chapter, as shown in examples 12 and 13 below:

12) To my child: I'm writing this from where your mother's father's shed used to stand, the shed is **no longer** here, **no carpets cover no floors**, **no windows in no walls**, everything has been replaced. (p. 208)
13) The **end of suffering** does not justify the **suffering**, and so there is no **end to suffering**, **what a mess** I am, I thought, **what a fool**, **how foolish and narrow, how worthless, how pinched and pathetic, how helpless**. (p. 33)

In example 12, we see the repetition of the negative *no.* This repetition seems to emphasize Thomas Sr.'s feeling of alienation as he is standing in the library where the shed used to be. As he looks around, he "sees" where the walls and floor of the shed should have been.

In example 13 we see lexical repetition in *end of/to suffering* and structural repetition in the phrases *what a [x]* and *how [x]*. We notice here the alternation between the phrases with co-ordinated adjectives (*how foolish and narrow* and *how pinched and pathetic*) and the phrases with a single adjective (*how worthless* and *how helpless*). This sort of repetition adds intensity to Thomas Sr.'s discourse along with his disregard for full stops. It gives Thomas Sr.'s style a sense of verbosity which contrasts to Grandma's slower and more "quiet" prose. Thomas Sr. chooses more direct ways of expressing his emotions, such as in example 13 where he adds adjective after adjective and intensifies the message through structural repetition.

Thomas Sr.'s style construes him as an expressive character. He has a lot to say and many ways to say it; yet he never seems to feel like he ever succeeds in *truly* explaining what he needs to explain, which is why he had to leave. The dynamism and restlessness of his style reflects the restlessness of his character. While Grandma was able to somehow come to terms with her fate and decided to settle down and start a new life in the United States, Thomas Sr. never found that sort of peace. It is not until he accompanies Oskar to the graveyard and buries his letters that he finds it.

As we noted at the beginning of section 2.2.2.3., Thomas Sr. and Grandma are in many ways each other's opposites when it comes to the ways in which they write. She uses short sentences, clauses and phrases that stand on their own, and creates more space in her text than what is conventional. This gives her prose a sense of slowness. He writes sentences that are much longer than what is conventional, and creates hardly any space in his text at all, which makes his texts seem more fast-paced. It is also worth noting that while Thomas Sr. is silent in the story world, Grandma appears to be quite talkative. We see this in the episode where they meet in the bakery, an episode which is narrated by both of them (see section 2.3.2). Thomas Sr. describes Grandma as chattering away, while Grandma reports on the same event in her usual "quiet" style. So while Thomas Sr. is essentially an introvert who prefers to

express himself in writing, Grandma seems to be an extrovert who would prefer talking. Despite their differences, however, we see that Thomas Sr. and Grandma choose to narrate many of the same events. The two of them lived through the same disaster, escaped to the same country, and tried living together, but chose different ways of coping with their fates.

2.3 Narrative strategies in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

In this section, we will discuss the novel's narrative structure, and comment on how stylistic features affect the narrative strategies where this is relevant.

2.3.1. Chronology

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close contains roughly two parallel storylines. One is the story of Oskar and his quest to find the lock that the key opens, and the other is the story of Grandma and Thomas Sr. and their lives before and after WW2.

These two storylines come together at the end of the novel, when Oskar meets Thomas Sr. and involves him in the search.

The novel consists of 17 chapters in total, four of these are narrated by Grandma, four of them by Thomas Sr., and the rest are narrated by Oskar. The novel begins and ends with chapters narrated by Oskar, whose narrative is also the one that is most recent in chronological time.

In the first chapter, entitled *What the?,* we see an example of prolepsis when Oskar says the following:

14) I have only ridden in a limousine **twice ever**. (p. 3)
15) I thought about that **my second time** in a limousine, when the renter and I were on our way to dig up Dad's empty coffin. (p. 7)

Here Oskar is pointing forward to the very end of the novel, so it becomes clear that he is telling the story of what happened at some point after everything that is to be told has happened. The reference to the second time he has ridden in a limousine is thus a reference to an event that will not be narrated until another 300 pages or so, and it serves to bind together the story.

Each of the narrators' texts contains analepsis within analepsis. Oskar's narration begins with the trip to the funeral, and then moves back in time to the week before 9/11, when he went on a "Reconnaissance Expedition" with his father. Then he moves forward again to the day before, when his father tells him a bedtime story for the last time, before he moves forward

again to 9/11, or "the worst day", as Oskar calls it, when he listens to his father's messages on the answering machine.

In the next chapter that is narrated by Oskar, *Googolplex,* he refers to the funeral again, and explains the significance of the bracelet he had made for his mother. At this point, the narrative has moved a year forward in time, and we learn about Ron, the key, the start of the search, and the renter. At the same time he refers back to 9/11, and explains how he replaced the answering machine with a new, identical one to prevent his mother from hearing his father's messages. This chapter also contains prolepses, such as when Oskar mentions being given the part of Yorick in the school play (p. 37), and on page 52 where Oskar refers to the whole search as "those eight months":

16) So for those eight months when I went looking around New York, and she would ask where I was going and when I'd be back, I would just say, "I'm going out. Be back later." (p. 52)

In example 16, we also see that Oskar uses the habitual modal *would* to refer to an action that has been repeated within that period of time. Otherwise, Oskar's chapters are for the most part devoted to narrating the search for the lock, and this is done in chronological order. He presents the people he meets on this quest in the order that he meets them, and each development in his search for the lock is presented chronologically. While telling the story of how he went around searching for the key, Oskar regularly points back in time, either to the time before his father's death or to the months that followed. Thus, in each chapter, Oskar depicts his father and gives an impression of what their relationship was like through anecdotes and by repeating conversations they had. The bedtime story that Oskar mentions in the first chapter is given a chapter of its own, titled *The Sixth Borough*, on page 217. In this chapter, we see that the dialogue he has already quoted parts of in the first chapter is fully rendered.

Grandma and Thomas Sr.'s chapters tell the story of how they came to meet each other and get married after they both escaped to the United States after WW2. We learn of how they meet by coincidence in a bakery in New York city seven years later and that they decide to get married. Each of their narratives also reveals what sort of relation they had to each other from the time before the war, and they both talk about their marriage with all its peculiar rules and dysfunctions. The last three chapters narrated by Grandma and Thomas Sr. are dedicated to more recent events, that is, 9/11 and the period after.[10]

[10] Grandma: pp. 224-233 and 306-314, Thomas Sr. pp.262-284.

Thus we see that at the end of the book, Oskar's narrative and those of his grandparents "catch up" with each other, both chronologically and in terms of actual events, after Oskar finally meets his grandfather and lets him take part in the final stage of his quest.

In Oskar's narrative, the main story is the quest for the lock, while the recurrent analeptic references to the time before 9/11 provides a background for that story. Through these analepses, we learn of Oskar's relationship with his father and his difficulties dealing with his grief, which helps us understand why Oskar is obsessed with his father and explains why he reacts the way he does to the people around him and the situations he gets into.

In Oskar's grandparents' narratives, the main story is the story of their post-war lives in America, while the analepses that reconstruct their past in Germany to a certain extent explains their choices and actions.

Grandma and Thomas Sr.'s narratives run parallel to each other, and for the most part Thomas Sr. is "ahead" of Grandma, so that events he has told of in his chapters are narrated again in Grandma's subsequent chapters. As we shall see in section 2.3.2 about focalization, Grandma and Thomas Sr. remember events differently. They have different attitudes and viewpoints, and they choose to emphasize different aspects of the events, and so the meanings of their stories and the connections between them emerge gradually. One might think of this as a sort of "relay" effect, because Grandma's chapters often pick up where Thomas Sr.'s chapters have left off. We shall also see in section 2.6 about cohesion that certain patterns of reference depend on this relay effect in order for the readers to be able to make sense of who or what is being referred to.

Thomas Sr.'s chapters are all letters or diary entries, and since they are dated, we see that they are at least chronological as regards the order in which they are included in the novel. The first two chapters that are narrated by Thomas Sr. are titled *Why I'm Not Where You Are 5/21/63*, which probably means that they form part of the same letter/journal entry. It becomes clear from the text that this is the day that Thomas Sr. left Grandma.

In the first chapter narrated by Thomas Sr., which begins on page 16, Thomas Sr. opens his narrative by describing how he lost the ability to speak after he came to America. He explains about getting "yes" and "no" tattooed in the palms of his hands, and about his notebooks. We hear of Anna for the first time on page 16, when Thomas Sr. says the following:

17) (…) I tried to tell the waiter, "The way you just handed me that knife, that reminds me of—" but I couldn't finish the sentence, her name wouldn't come, I tried again, it wouldn't come, she was locked inside me, how strange, I thought, how frustrating, how pathetic, how sad, I took a pen from my pocket and wrote **"Anna"** on my napkin (…)

At this point, the reader does not know who the narrator of this chapter is, nor who Anna is. Thomas Sr. also introduces Grandma in this chapter, as "your mother", and gives his version of how they came across each other in the bakery and how she suggested they should get married.

Grandma gives her own version of this event[11] in her first chapter. She introduces Thomas Sr. as "a childhood friend", and says that "He and my older sister, Anna, were friends". Although all the chapters that are narrated by Grandma are titled *My Feelings*, the first chapter is dated 12th September 2003. This date points forward to the final chapter narrated by Grandma, where she goes to the airport and talks Thomas Sr. out of leaving once again. She opens the chapter by saying *I have so much to say to you. I want to begin at the beginning (…).* This indicates that she has begun writing this narrative after Oskar has met Thomas Sr., and that the purpose of her letters to Oskar therefore is to finally answer his questions about what his grandfather was like and why he left her and Thomas Jr.. We might say that this way of opening the chapter is proleptic since it refers to the situation in which she is writing before she goes on to tell the story of her life "from the beginning".

The second chapter narrated by Thomas Sr. starts at a point in time after he and Grandma have gotten married and describes the rules they make for themselves, about "Something" and "Nothing" zones, and how he goes to the airport to collect magazines for her. He also mentions that he persuades her to write.

From pages 113-135, Thomas Sr. moves back and forth in time, between his life in Dresden and his recent life in New York with Grandma. He tells the story of how he and Anna fell in love, and he also describes his marriage with Grandma and its quirks and dysfunctions. At the same time, he makes several references to the present situation he is in, that is, sitting in the airport in 1963, writing this letter to Thomas Jr.: (*I'm sitting in an airport trying to explain myself to my unborn son*, p. 113). Reference to the "present" is also made by including pages from the book that he uses to ask people questions, and from page 135 and onwards, we see Thomas Sr.'s side of a dialogue between him and Grandma which is repeated in Grandma's chapter on pages 179-181. In other words, Thomas Sr. moves back and forth in time between

[11] Pp. 81-85.

his life in Dresden before the bombing, his recent life in America, and the situation he is in as he is writing.

Grandma's second chapter includes several of the same events as Thomas Sr.'s preceding chapter. She opens by referring once again to the "present" moment as she is writing:

18) They are announcing flights over the speakers. We are not listening. They do not matter to us, because we are not going anywhere. (p. 175)

She moves on to the same period of time as Thomas Sr. told of in his chapter. She describes their marriage and explains how she realized she wanted a baby, got pregnant without him knowing and then finally tells him about it. She describes the day he left and the day before, and she repeats the dialogue we have already seen one half of in Thomas Sr.'s chapter.[12]

On p. 181 Grandma writes *My thoughts are wandering, Oskar,* and moves back in time to her childhood. She describes her parents and repeats the story of when she came across Thomas Sr. and Anna kissing (this event has already been narrated in her own first chapter[13] and in Thomas Sr.'s second chapter), and speaks of the bombing and winter that came before it. On page 184, she moves forward again in time to the day when Thomas Sr. left her.

These recurrent analepses construct an impression of what Grandma's childhood and family life was like in a piecemeal way, and we see the same narrative strategy at work in Oskar's and Thomas Sr.'s texts. It might be argued that the main storyline of Grandma's texts is everything that happened from the moment she met Thomas Sr. in the bakery and up to the present moment (i.e. in the airport, where she sits and writes the letter), while the analepses that point back to her life in Dresden provide the background for the main story. It may seem that Grandma sees this information as relevant because it explains why her and Thomas Sr.'s marriage was so difficult and why he ended up leaving her. There is a considerable chronological stretch that has been left out of Grandma's texts, namely the period of nearly forty years in which she raised Thomas Jr. on her own, became a grandmother, and lived across the street from her son and his family. It seems the reason for this is that the purpose of Grandma's narrative is to explain who the renter is, now that Oskar has met him, even though Grandma wanted to prevent that from happening.

The same period of time has also been mostly left out of Thomas Sr.'s narrative. Thomas Sr.'s third chapter is dated 4/12/1978. Here Thomas Sr. reveals that he is in Dresden and that he is

[12] Grandma pp. 179-181, Thomas Sr. pp. 135 – 141.
[13] Grandma p. 80, Thomas Sr. p. 127.

writing from a library that has been built where Anna and Grandma's home used to be, but after this he goes back in time to when Anna gave him the typewriter, some time before the bombing, and to the day of the bombing, when she told him she was pregnant. He describes the bombing and how he survived. He also reveals that he believes Grandma was not aware Anna was pregnant.

Grandma's fourth chapter opens with the sentence *I was in the guest room when it happened.* It soon becomes clear what *it* refers to, and that Grandma has moved forward in time to 9/11. Grandma describes what she does that day after she finds out that Thomas Jr. was at the WTC. On page 231 she moves forward in time again, when she says

19) Remember when we went skating a few months ago and I turned around, because I told you that watching people skate gave me a headache? I saw rows of bodies under the ice.

Grandma describes the grief she struggles with on pages 231-232, and she also brings up the Hamlet play, which we know is quite "recent" from what Oskar has said about it in his narrative.

Grandma moves back again in time to 2001 on pages 232-233, and we read about her experience of the funeral and of receiving Thomas Sr.'s note when she returns from it. At this point, there is a change in the "relay" structure between Thomas Sr.'s and Grandma's narratives. Until now, Thomas Sr. has for the most of the events that have been narrated by both Thomas Sr. and Grandma have appeared in Thomas Sr.'s texts first and then repeated in Grandma's texts. The note, however, is first mentioned in Grandma's text. This also marks a shift in chronology, because until this point, both Thomas Sr. and Grandma have for the most part been concerned with events that happened either before their marriage or after their separation.

Thomas Sr.'s fourth and final chapter tells the story of why and when he came back, and how he went about contacting Grandma, and how she allowed him to live with her again. We learn of how he spies on Oskar and Mr. Black, and on page 280 he describes meeting Oskar. On page 281, as Thomas Sr. is running out of space in his daybook, the text grows more and more dense, until it becomes illegible at the bottom of the page. On pages 282-84, the text grows even more dense until it it is a black square on page 284. The last thing we are able read on page 181 before the text fades into darkness is

20) (…) 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, down to the smallest detail, we've even practiced digging in Central Park…

Thomas Sr. is dated 9/11/2003, which is the day before Thomas Sr. tries to leave for the second time. This becomes clear in Grandma's final chapter, when we learn that she goes with him to the airport and sits there with him, trying to talk him out of it. On page 313 Grandma refers once again to the same "now" as she was referring to on page 75: *As I type this, we are sitting across from each other at a table.*

Oskar's narrative starts to overlap with Thomas Sr.'s at the point where they meet. In the chapter *Alive and Alone,* which begins on page 234, Oskar describes meeting the renter and telling him about his mission to find out what the key is for. In Oskar's two final chapters *A Simple Solution to an Impossible Problem,* and *Beautiful and True,* Oskar takes over the narration of the trip to the graveyard.

2.3.2 Focalization

In this section, we shall comment on how the events which are narrated by more than one narrator are presented differently. The narrative strategy of presenting the same event as it is focalized by different character-narrators has several functions. In some cases, these events provide the readers with a chronological orientation and gives them a better understanding of when the events have happened in story time. It also shows how the characters interpret each others' behaviour and how they relate to each other.

Although we may say that some of these events are more central to the plot than others, even minor ones are important to the novel's structure because they help the reader keep track of the "natural" chronology, or the story-chronology. The chronology of the text is constantly moving back and forth, as we saw in section 2.3.1. It might be argued that events which are focalized by more than one narrator function as chronological anchor points for the reader.

One of the events that may be seen as quite significant is when Grandma and Thomas Sr. meet each other for the first time after the war. At this point, neither of them was aware that the other had survived, or that they had both escaped to the United States.

Thomas Sr.'s narration of this event comes first.[14] Thomas Sr. does not explicitly state that he already knows Grandma, or that he recognizes her, but he hints at it. For example, he says *We'd both come to New York lonely, broken and confused,* and later

21) "There are worse things," she said, "worse than being like us. Look, at least we're alive," I could see that she wanted those last words back (…) (p. 30)

Thomas Sr. quotes Grandma's attempt to make small talk with him, and shows how he lets her know he does not speak by pulling out his daybook and writing her a note:

22) I took my daybook out of my knapsack and found the next blank page, the second to last. "I don't speak," I wrote. "I'm sorry." She looked at the piece of paper, then at me, then back at the piece of paper, she covered her eyes with her hands and cried, tears seeped between her fingers and collected in the little webs, she cried and cried and cried, there weren't any napkins nearby, so I ripped the page from the book – "I don't speak. I'm sorry." – and used it to dry her cheeks(…) (p. 31)

In Grandma's version of this event, she does not include her own banter about the weather and such. Instead she shows how she tries to get him to confirm that he is who she thinks he is:

23) I went right up next to him.

Are you Thomas? I asked.

He shook his head no.

You are, I said. I know you are.

He shook his head no.

From Dresden.

He opened his right hand, which had NO tattooed on it.

I remember you. I used to watch you kiss my sister.

He took out a little book and wrote, I don't speak. I'm sorry.

That made me cry. He wiped away my tears. But he did not admit to being who he was. He never did. (p.81)

In Thomas Sr.'s narrative, Grandma asks him to marry her the same afternoon that they meet. He says that she takes his pen immediately after he has told her he does not speak and that she writes "Please marry me."[15] In Grandma's narrative, however, there is period of several weeks from the moment they meet until she "proposes". Grandma agrees to pose for a sculpture, and this is how they get to know each other.[16] It becomes clear in Grandma's text that although they do not fall in love with each other, Grandma feels attached to him because

[14] P. 28.
[15] Pp. 31-33.
[16] Pp 82-85.

of their intimacy and shared past, and this is why she asks him to marry her (*I did not need to know if he could love me. I needed to know if he could need me.* (p. 84)).

Neither Grandma nor Thomas Sr. says anything about Thomas Sr.'s reaction to Grandma's proposal. Grandma simply states *The next day your grandfather and I were married* (p. 85). Thomas Sr. says that he lifts her finger from the page where she has written *Please marry me* and starts flipping the pages of the book, probably to find a blank page to write on, and we see that the first page that appears as he starts flipping back is one that says *Help.* However, Thomas Sr. does not say that he points to this page or holds it up to her, so this is not something he actually "utters" in this context. However, we may still surmise that this is how Thomas Sr. *feels* about Grandma's suggestion; so it is still not a coincidence that he decides to include this page in his narrative.

The two narratives differ in that Grandma includes descriptions of what Thomas Sr. looks like when she encounters him in the bakery, and how she feels towards him. Although she obviously recognises him, she remarks that he looks smaller and that she feels an urge to protect him. She describes how it feels when he touches her as she is posing for his sculpture, and explains in detail about how he arranges her and positions her.

Since Thomas Sr. has left this information out of his narrative, we learn nothing of how he feels about touching Grandma's naked body, and we do not find out whether she is right in her assumption that he was actually trying to sculpt Anna instead (p. 83). Thomas Sr. says nothing about what Grandma looks like, whether or not he recognizes her, or what he thinks of her. The fact that he wipes her cheeks when she cries indicates that he feels some sympathy towards her, and the way he describes it even conveys a sense of tenderness (e.g. *she covered her eyes with her hands and cried, tears seeped between her fingers and collected in the little webs, she cried and cried and cried,* see example 22 above).

We may wonder why Thomas Sr. decides to ellipt events from his narrative as he has done. It is possible that Thomas Sr. is ashamed of having undressed and "sculpted" Grandma. It is possible that she is right that he was trying to create a sculpture of Anna rather than Grandma. Since he does not narrate this part of the story, we never find what his attitude is towards it.

It seems that Thomas Sr. is reluctant to marry Grandma, as the inclusion of the page that says "Help!" could indicate. It could be that the purpose of Thomas Sr.'s narrative is to justify why he left: he never felt it was right in the first place.

Grandma says about Thomas Sr. that *"He never admitted to being who he was"*. However, there are clues in both their texts that reveal that he must have recognized her. Thomas Sr. notes the inappropriateness of her comment about how they are at least still alive (*"I could tell she wanted those words back (...)"*). Grandma also says that he switches to speaking German when he asks her to come and pose for the sculpture (*"He wrote his question in German, and it wasn't until then that I realized he had been writing English all afternoon, and that I had been speaking English"*). This switch to German may be seen as Thomas Sr. giving in and admitting who he is. In his own narrative, Thomas Sr. never says anything about why he would not admit to being who he was when she first asks him, as he does not even include that part of their conversation.

Another significant event which is focalized by more than one character is the exchange of notes that goes on between Grandma and Thomas Sr. when he returns to the United States. The only mention of this event in Grandma's narrative is on page 233. We learn what the note says, and the dialogue between Grandma and the doorman reveals that Thomas Sr. appeared "desperate".

Thomas Sr. reveals what Grandma's response is in his narrative on page 267, and it appears that Grandma leaves her note (*"Don't go away"*) on the window for a couple of days.

This note has been mentioned by Oskar earlier in the novel. On page 101, Oskar speaks of an episode where he scares Grandma by hiding from her in the park. Grandma is naturally quite upset by this practical joke, and we can see why Oskar assumes that the note is addressed to him (*That night, I looked through my binoculars at her window and there was a note that said "Don't go away."* (p. 101)). According to Oskar's narrative, this happened "the week after Dad died". This leads us to realize that Thomas Jr.'s funeral must have taken place only a few days after 9/11, and that Thomas Sr. must have arrived in the United States that same day or the day before.

Events that are focalized through more than one character-narrator's discourse help the reader to keep track of the "natural" chronology of the narrative, especially in a novel such as this one, where the narration of these events are separated by so much space.

Oskar and Grandma narrate some of the same events, such as for example the limousine ride to the funeral. When Oskar narrates the trip to the funeral in his first chapter, he comments that

24) Even though I was trying hard for it not to, it was annoying me how Grandma kept touching me, so I climbed into the front seat and poked the driver's shoulder until he gave me some attention. (p. 4)

He goes on to recount the whole conversation between himself and the driver. He does not say anything about his state of mind, apart from commenting on page 3 that *the first time [he rode in a limousine] was terrible*, and that he wants to make the driver laugh because *if I could make him crack up, my boots would be a little lighter*. Oskar does not say anything about what happens at the funeral. Grandma narrates this event differently, as we can see in her penultimate chapter:

25) Your mother wanted to have a funeral, even though there was no body.

What could anyone say?

We all rode in the limousine together. I could not stop touching you. I could not touch you enough. I needed more hands. You made jokes with the driver, but I could see that inside you were suffering. Making him laugh was how you suffered. When we got to the grave and they lowered the empty coffin, you let out a noise like an animal. I had never heard anything like it. You were a wounded animal. The noise is still in my ears. It was what I had spent forty years looking for, what I wanted my life and life story to be. Your mother took you to the side and held you. They shoveled dirt into your father's grave.

Onto my son's empty coffin. There was nothing there.

All of my sounds were lock inside me.

The limousine took us home.

Everyone was silent. (p. 232-233)

Oskar does not understand why Grandma "keeps touching him". He just remarks that he finds it irritating, but does not want to let her know that. Grandma, on the other hand, interprets Oskar's behaviour as a way of dealing with his pain. We see that Grandma expresses what Oskar is not able to, both in that she includes the funeral in her narrative and that she uses the word *suffering* (rather than "heavy boots").

2.4 Multimodality

In this section, we shall look at the relation between what we shall term *verbal text* and *non-verbal text*. The reason why we are choosing this way of distinguishing between the modes of signification in the novel is because the function of the *verbal text* – that is, the conventionally formatted typed text which makes up most of the narrative – is closely linked to the *non-verbal text* – that is, the images, unusual typography and other visual elements which make up parts of the narrative. The images and typographical effects in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* are not mere illustrations or ornamentations. They form part of the narrative, and in many cases they have a cohesive function.

Our starting point for this section is an article by Nørgaard (2010) in which she analyses the use of typography and images in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* in light of Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of multimodality. Multimodality may be defined as the way in which different semiotic modes (i.e. text, typography, colour, images, layout) combine and depend on each other to create meaning in a given communicative situation. Kress and van Leeuwen have created a grammar of images based on systemic functional linguistics which seeks to explain how people interpret the meaning of images and other visual (non-textual) elements and how such elements relate to text (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006)). We will not go into detail about multimodality in this thesis, but we will look at some of the elements in the text that Nørgaard analyses and comment on how they function within the narrative. We will also comment on some elements which Nørgaard has chosen not to include in her article, but which we feel are relevant to the topics of this thesis, namely cohesion and narrative structure.

It is in Oskar's and Thomas Sr.'s chapters that we find images and unsual layout. Thomas Sr.'s chapters often feature pages with a single line on them and pictures of doorknobs within the text. This is because all Thomas Sr.'s texts are letters to Thomas Jr. which he rips out of his daybook. The pages with single lines show the pages he has been using to communicate with other people. We learn the significance of the pictures of doorknobs on page 175, where Grandma explains that Thomas Sr. took pictures of everything in their apartment and taped them into his daybook. This makes it look as if we are leafing through one of Thomas Sr.'s notebooks. It is part of what makes Thomas Sr.'s texts look like "found objects", documents that support the main narrative of the book, which is Oskar's story about his search for the lock.

Similarly, many of the non-verbal elements in Oskar's chapters also seem like documents. They contribute in some way to the meaning of the narrative, and as Nørgaard says, they create the illusion that the reader is *experiencing* what Oskar is experiencing, since in many cases the images are displayed to us before their meaning is explained in the narrative that unfolds (Nørgaard 2010: 117-118). This is the case with the pad from the art supply store, which Nørgaard uses as an example. The page that Oskar tears from the pad features scribblings and doodles in different styles of handwriting and in different colours. Nørgaard says that this particular image is significant because it links the two modes (i.e. the visual and textual) in that we both read the words on the pad and notice the colors and layout at once. Readers who look closely at the "pad pages" would notice that on page 49 the name "Thomas Schell" appears among the other words and doodles. On the following page we see that Oskar

has noticed it as well, and exclaims to the saleswoman, *"That's my dad!".* In other words, we anticipate what Oskar will "experience" in the story world before it appears in the text; it is a sort of cataphor.

There are other visual elements which have a cohesive function as well. On page 9-12, Oskar explains that his father had a habit of marking mistakes in the New York Times with a red pen. We see an example of what this looks like on page 10, where there is a portion of newspaper text with a red circle around a phrase. Oskar says on page 12 that *"Sometimes they were grammar mistakes, sometimes they were mistakes with geography or facts, and sometimes the article just didn't tell the whole story".* In other words, we learn early on in the novel that marking mistakes with a red pen is something that is typical of Thomas Jr. Oskar's explanation of what this means prepares the reader for what they will see when they reach Thomas Sr.'s third chapter, *Why I'm Not Where You Are 4/12/78.*[17] In this chapter, the text is marked with red circles in several places. We see that some of the words or phrases that have been circled are spelling or grammar mistakes. Words such as "actreses" and "refugies" are circled, and so are many of the commas which would normally have been full stops. However, we also see that some of the circled words or phrases are not grammatically incorrect or misspelt, so it seems that these elements are circled for a different reason. We also see that the amount of red marking increases drastically at the end of the letter, on pages 214-216, and this increase occurs as the narrative turns toward the bombing and Thomas Sr. describes in detail what happened to him that day, as well as attempting to explain why he left before Thomas Jr. was born. Because of Oskar's explanation on page 12, readers realise that these red markings indicate that Thomas Jr. must have read this particular letter.

In Grandma's third chapter, which follows, she says that Thomas Sr. had never written to her (*"For forty years not a word. Only empty envelopes"*[18]*).* In Thomas Sr.'s fourth chapter, on page 268, we learn that the customs guards ask him about all the paper in his suitcases, and Thomas Sr. replies *"They're letters to my son. I wasn't able to send them to him while he was alive."* At this point, it is rather unclear whether Thomas Sr. ever sent any letters or not, both he and Grandma claim he did not, but the red scribbles on pages 208-216 indicate that Thomas Jr. must have had the letter at some point. Then we encounter the following exchange between Grandma and Thomas Sr.:

[17] pp. 208-216.
[18] p. 233.

26) She said, “He tried to find you once. **I gave him that only letter you ever sent.** He was obsessed with it, always reading it. I don’t know what you wrote, but it made him go look for you.” I wrote, “I opened the door one day and there he was.” “He found you?” “We talked about nothing.” (p. 277)

At this point, readers realize that the chapter with the markings is “that only letter” Thomas Sr. had sent. In what follows, we learn that Grandma never read that letter since it was not addressed to her, and so that is what she means when she says she had not heard from Thomas Sr. for forty years.

What is more important is that we realize that the red circles do not only mark “mistakes”, they mark elements of the text that Thomas Jr. has either not understood or disagreed with. He has for instance circled the words “your mother” and “your grandfather”. The red circles reveal that Thomas Jr. did not know about the odd connection between Grandma, Thomas Sr. and Anna. It is likely that he would realise it as he got to the end of the letter, but at the beginning, on pages 209 and 210, for instance, it rather looks like “your mother” and “Anna” refer to the same person.

The increase in red markings toward the end of the letter seems to indicate that Thomas Jr. feels angry or distressed by what he is reading, because we see that he has circled bits of text such as *“I’m so afraid of losing something I love that I refuse to love anything”* and *“I love you, Your father”*. We know from Oskar’s chapter that the red circles are supposed to mark mistakes, but in this chapter the meaning of the red circles has been extended to express disagreement or protest. This use of red markings is cohesive because their meaning must be interpreted with recourse to something which has been mentioned much earlier in the novel, and in another character’s narrative. It would not have been possible for the reader to work out the meaning or relevance of the red markings if it was not for Oskar’s explanation at the beginning of the novel. Even though the three narrators’ texts are independent of each other, we see that cohesive ties such as this one obtain between them because they often speak of the same people or events. While Thomas Sr. is the narrator of this chapter, we see that the implied author gives us access to an additional bit of information by showing us the red markings directly. This is information which Thomas Sr. will not have until later in the narrative. In other words, the reader is ahead of Thomas Sr., which creates anticipation.

Grandma’s chapters do not contain visual elements, but there is nevertheless a connection between what Grandma writes about and what some of the images depict. It is Grandma’s discourse that explains why the pictures of doorknobs appear in Thomas Sr.’s chapters, for instance. If it had not been for her explanation, the readers would not have been able to work

out the relevance of these images, and thus they would have lost their mimetic function. As we mentioned above, the pictures of doorknobs are part of what makes Thomas Sr.'s chapters look like pages from his daybooks.

We also see that Thomas Sr.'s second chapter shows only his turns in a dialogue between Thomas Sr. and Grandma.[19] The turns are shown with only one line per page, as if we were flipping through pages of his daybook. It is not until we get to Grandma's second chapter that we are able to make sense of the dialogue, since she renders it with both her own and Thomas Sr.'s turns.[20] Readers recognize the context in which the dialogue is taking place, and we recognize the lines from Thomas Sr.'s chapter. In other words, this creates a cohesive tie between Thomas Sr.'s unconventional (and incomplete) way of rendering the dialogue, and Grandma's text, where the dialogue is rendered in full.

Another example of a connection between Grandma's text and visual elements is in Grandma's final chapter. Grandma describes a dream she has had in which everything that happens is reversed:

27) In my dream, all of the collapsed ceilings re-formed above us. The fire went back into the bombs, which rose up and into the bellies of the planes whose propellers turned backward, like the second hands of the clocks across Dresden, only faster. (…) (p. 307)

In the next chapter, which Oskar's final chapter and the final chapter of the book, Oskar tears the pictures of the man jumping from one of the towers out of his scrapbook. He reverses the order, so that *"When I flipped through them, it looked like the man was floating up through the sky"* (p. 325). Oskar imagines that the man in the picture could have been his father, and says that

28) And if I'd had more pictures, he would've flown through a window, back into the building, and the smoke would've poured into the hole that the plane was about to come out of. (……) Dad would've left his messages backward, until the machine was empty, and the plane would've flown backward away from him, all the way to Boston. (p. 325)

This train of thought continues until the day before 9/11, and Oskar concludes *"We would have been safe."* What we see here is thus a cohesive link between Oskar's and Grandma's narratives and the images of the falling man, with which the novel ends. The reversed series of pictures of the falling man that Oskar was talking about can be flipped, so that the figure of the falling man on the right-hand side appears to float upwards toward the tower, like Oskar describes. The flip-book effect creates a movement which is in a sense narrative since it

[19] pp. 136-141.
[20] p. 179.

marks a transition from one state to another ; it is an event. Lothe (2012) comments on the use of a still frame from a film in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz,* saying that it is "a frozen image, an image that insists on moving and yet stands still, suspended in time and space" (Lothe 2012: 237). In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* the flip-book presentation of the falling man seems like an attempt to re-create the movement, which also underscores the narrative quality of the element. Rather than being presented with a frozen image of the event, we are presented with a series of images which mark a movement. Nørgaard says about this non-verbal element that

> the image of the falling man plays a central role in Foer's novel: as a participant in the verbal narrative, as a visual image the readers must relate to firsthand, and as verbal-visual cohesive links that tie the narrative together. (Nørgaard 2010: 123)

She also adds that the flipbook-effect can be seen as an invitation from the implied author to the reader to "make the man float up again if you like" (Nørgaard ibid.), in other words, the flipbook-effect encourages the reader to "participate" in the mimesis by carrying out the same action that Oskar does (flipping the pages of the book).

The fact that the images are reversed adds to the sense of fictionality. The images that make up the flipbook are probably genuine, but in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* they become fictionalized through being embedded in the narrative discourse and through being connected to a fictional character (i.e. Thomas Jr.).

Some of the multimodal elements are not images, but unconventional ways of formatting the text. As mentioned before, Thomas Sr.'s chapters contain pages with a single line, and these are supposed to show the readers "how Thomas uses his notebooks and what it might be like to communicate with him" (Nørgaard 2010: 120). In Oskar's texts, the parts of the text that are supposed to show what he writes in his *Stuff That Happened To Me*-book are written in capital letters and are separated from the rest of the text by using narrower margins and space. We also see that the lines he reports having crossed out are crossed out in the text that is quoted in the narrative as well.[21] In both Thomas Sr.'s and Oskar's chapters, the text that is supposed to "show" the narrator's personal notebooks to the readers, the text is written in "normal" printed typography rather than handwritten text. According to Nørgaard, this reveals a sense of "postmodern irony" in that there is an "apparent urge for mimesis that at the same

[21] See for example pages 171-173.

time undermines the mimesis and thereby implicitly points to the textuality of the text" (Nørgaard 2010: 117, 120).

We mentioned in section 2.3.1 that Thomas Sr.'s words start to "grow into" each other on page 281, until the text is illegible, and it keeps on getting more and more dense on pages 282-284. Nørgaard says about this that

> the visual density is 'paralleled' by a density of meaning, since Thomas virtually tries to explain and make sense of *everything* in this chapter, and emphasis is provided in that the "same" thing is conveyed - or constructed – through two modes at the same time. Added to this, attentive readers may sense a kind of visual-verbal *cohesion*, i.e. meaning-making ties (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976), between the black pages and the verbal references to Oskar's father's grave that occur in the lines immediately preceding and following the black pages (Foer 2005, 281, 285), and perhaps even to Oskar's search for Black and the "truth" about his father. (Nørgaard 2010: 121)

The cohesion that Nørgaard speaks of here is a relation that obtains not between verbal forms or referential meaning, but the visual and symbolic meaning of the visual text on the one hand and the verbal text that accompanies it on the other. What is especially interesting here is that what starts as verbal text (on page 281) gradually becomes non-verbal text. The visual meaning of the text eschews the verbal meaning. We may also add that this transition, this "fading-out" of Thomas Sr.'s voice marks a change from his narration to Oskar's narration, which starts on page 285. As we also mentioned in section 2.3.1, this marks the point where the story lines meet and the events of the main narrative (that is, Oskar's narrative) includes Oskar's grandparents. The visual "fading-out" can also be said to mark the transition from restlessness to peace of mind as Thomas Sr. carries out the "ritual" of burying everything he had always wanted to say to his son, but could not.

In Oskar's narrative, the variation in typography seems to signal two things. In some cases it signals that the text which is set apart from the rest is quoted text – for example, when he quotes the letters people send him, the transcript of the interview he brings to Show and Tell, or when he plays back his father's answering machine messages. In other cases the variation in typography is meant to depict how Oskar experiences the world. In section 2.2.2.1, we commented on how Oskar's rage towards the people in his life is acted out in his mind as a stage play, and that he uses the same typographical conventions to describe his violent fantasy as he does when he quotes the actual script that the class is using. Instead of simply saying something like "I imagined taking off my papier-mâché skull and beating Jimmy Snyder with it", the narrative moves imperceptibly from quoting the script to showing Oskar's private

thoughts. Another example in which the typography imitates Oskar's perception is on pages 203-7 when Oskar is eavesdropping on his mother while she is arguing with Oskar's psychiatrist, Dr. Fein. We see here that fragments of their dialogue is quoted in italics with spaces in between to mark the parts of their dialogue which Oskar cannot make out. Nørgaard says about this that the "visual blank spaces appear to represent aural silence, and interestingly, line length, and hence visual space, seems related to time" (Nørgaard 2010: ibid.). The layout of this page is therefore mimetic of Oskar's experience of this situation, and since he is the focalizer of this event, the reader's experience of this situation is limited by Oskar's viewpoint and given a visual shape that reflects it.

2.5 The implied author

As we saw in section 2.1.4, we may consider there to be a narrative agent in addition to the actual narrators of a text, namely the implied author. The implied author is the mental image we have of the intention that lies behind the text – the source of the text's overall message.

In *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* there are two narratives that contain visible narratees, namely those of Grandma and Thomas Sr. Both of their narratives are letters. We may doubt whether they are really meant to be *read* by anyone, but that is irrelevant to us at this point, what is important here is that Thomas Sr. and Grandma address other characters within the fiction directly.

Oskar's narrative does not contain any explicit narratee, however, and as we have seen, it is Oskar's narrative that takes up most of the book in terms of the number of chapters and pages dedicated to it. Oskar's narrative also differs significantly in that it is much more multi-textured and multi-voiced. It contains more images, more dialogue and quoted text or speech, and plays on typography and genre conventions to a greater degree than what can be found in Grandma's or Thomas Sr.'s texts.

We might think of Oskar's texts as making up the "main" narrative of the story, while the chapters narrated by Grandma and Thomas Sr.'s are more like "found objects" or "documents" which are backgrounded against Oskar's narrative, just like the illustrations and facsimiles from Oskar's "Stuff That Happened To Me"-book.

There is nothing in Oskar's narrative that indicates that he has read Grandma's letter for him, or that he has seen Thomas Sr.'s letters or daybooks, apart from the ones Thomas Sr. uses to

speak to him. We therefore have no reason to believe that Oskar is the narrative agent responsible for showing these texts to the (implied) reader. Instead, we see that Grandma's and Thomas Sr.'s chapters are shown interchangeably throughout the book along with other documents, such as the letters Oskar receives and facsimiles from his scrapbook, and we see that there is a sort of relay going on between Grandma and Thomas Sr. since Grandma's narrative often picks up where Thomas Sr.'s narrative left off, even though Grandma and Thomas Sr. do not read each other's texts.

This leads us to construct a notion of an entity that operates somewhere in between the diegetic level and the real situation in which we read the novel. There is an intention behind the way in which the narratives are presented, and this intention originates in the implied author. We may think of the implied author as the agent which enables the narrators to speak (i.e. to narrate).

The implied author makes itself known in this novel in different ways. One way is the unreliable narration we sometimes find in Oskar's text. Despite his brightness and precociousness, Oskar is quite naive when it comes to certain facts of life, as one would expect of a nine-year old child. On page 143, Oskar remarks that he recognizes many of the people he contacted in his search for the key among the audience at his class' Hamlet play, and says the following:

29) They must have been half the audience. But what was weird was that they didn't know what they had in common, which was kind of like how I didn't know what **the thumbtack, the bent spoon, the square of aluminum foil,** and all those other things I dug up in Central Park had to do with each other. (p. 143)

An adult would know that this is probably discarded drug paraphernalia, but to Oskar they are just random objects he found on his so-called reconnaissance expeditions. What is interesting here is that Oskar would even think of mentioning these objects if he has no idea what they have to do with each other. It seems there is some other intention behind what is being said; an intention that does not belong to Oskar but to an extra-textual entity, or in other words, this is a nudge from the implied author to the implied reader.

We see other examples of these hidden jokes in the places in the text where Oskar talks about sex or about being made fun of at school. On page 190, Oskar narrates an episode where Jimmy Snyder makes fun of Oskar by asking him about his cat. Oskar often refers to his cat as "my pussy", and this is what Jimmy Snyder and the rest of the class (even the teacher) laugh at. Oskar is obviously unaware of the slang meaning of *pussy*, and comments *"I didn't get what was so hilarious".* While Oskar does not understand why Jimmy asks him about his

cat, or why everyone laughs, it is clear to the reader why it is funny. The source of this joke is therefore not Oskar, as a narrator, but the implied author, who makes the joke "over his head", so to speak.

We see another example of this on page 192, where Oskar explains that he has taught himself about *"the birds and the bees"* on the Internet. Oskar is speaking of this in an earnest and innocent way; he is simply listing all the facts he has been able to teach himself by browsing the Internet, and his choice of words shows that he has probably been looking at pornography (i.e. *cock*, *cunt*, etc.). Oskar talks about this in the same way he talks about other subjects he "knows about", such as science or trivia. He certainly does not mean to be funny. The implied author, on the other hand, clearly intends this to be funny, and draws on the shared knowledge between itself and the implied reader. The humour of this passage is based on the fact that most adults would consider that online pornography is not an appropriate (or accurate) source of information for a child. Oskar, on the other hand, uses the internet to find out about all sorts of subjects, and is not very critical of his sources. Moreover, it appears that Oskar has misunderstood some of what he has seen (*"For example, I know that you give someone a blowjob by putting your penis in their mouth"*). He is not aware that he has got it wrong, but the implied author and reader are.

Oskar is not an unreliable narrator in the sense that there could be any doubt that what he narrates is true; in fact, Oskar gives the impression of being completely honest and earnest throughout the novel. There is no reason to doubt that he gives an accurate and truthful account of how he goes about searching for the lock, for instance. The unreliable narration in Oskar's texts is rather a way of construing him as a character. Although he is an extraordinary child, he is still just a child, and so it is natural that he should be naive and somewhat immature.

Grandma and Thomas Sr. narrate many of the same events, even though they do not know much, if anything, about the content of each other's texts. They both tell the story of Thomas Sr. falling in love with Anna, about the bombing, about how Grandma and Thomas Sr. met in New York, Grandma asking Thomas Sr. to marry her, the rules they made for themselves, and about when and why Thomas Sr. left. Although they include the same events in their narratives, what they choose to emphasize and the amount of detail they go into is different. The result of this is that their narratives build on each other, so that the reader gradually reconstructs an impression of what their relationship was like. Through Thomas Sr.'s texts,

we are presented with the narrative of a man who has entered into marriage unwillingly. To Thomas Sr., Grandma is only the next best thing to Anna, and he feels guilty for feeling this way. Grandma's texts presents a woman who has entered marriage to avoid being alone, and to try to start again. Taken together, the two narratives tell the story of two people who, in their own words, "have lost everything", and who try to help each other by living together, but fail to make it work.

In addition to including many of the same events in their texts, there are many similarities in the ways that Grandma and Thomas Sr. choose to express themselves. We saw in section 2.2.2 that their styles of writing are different. Grandma's sentences are unusually short, and her use of double spaces and line shifting makes it look like her prose progresses slowly. Thomas Sr.'s style is in many ways the opposite of Grandma's. His sentences are unusually long, and his texts are not divided into paragraphs; and his text seems more quickly paced. However, Grandma and Thomas Sr. both choose metaphorical wordings which often express the same sort of meanings, and we see several examples of how they think in the same terms.

2.6 Cohesive features of the narrative

In Chapter 1, we saw what a detailed analysis of all sorts of cohesive ties may look like when applied to a short text. So far in this chapter, we have made some brief comments about how events that are featured in more than one narrator's discourse have a cohesive function because readers recognise the episodes and the participants in them.

One of the cohesive ties which is interesting as regards *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is the use of deictic terms. As we have mentioned, Thomas Sr. and Thomas Jr. have the same name: Thomas Schell. Oskar is Oskar Schell, but Oskar's mother and grandmother are just "Mom" (or in Grandma's discourse: "your mother"), and "Grandma". Grandma never uses neither of the Thomas' names; she refers to them as "your father" (and on a couple of occasions, as "my son/my only child") and "your grandfather". Likewise, Thomas Sr. only ever refers to Thomas Jr. as "my child" or "you" and to Grandma as "your mother". If it had not been for the fact that it is easy to tell the narrators apart based on their style, this use of deixis would have been very confusing, since the same forms have different referents in each chapter.

This use of deixis creates the effect that the similarities between Thomas Sr., Thomas Jr. and Oskar are highlighted. Thomas Jr. "lost" his father because Thomas Sr. abandoned him before

he was born; and Oskar lost his father in 9/11. Both of them have gone on a search to find out about their fathers, while Thomas Sr. comes back to New York upon his son's death, seeking a way to come to terms with (or repent for) the choices he made. Oskar refers to Thomas Jr. as "my dad", and Thomas Sr. refers to him as "my child", and at the end of the novel we see that they join efforts to dig up the grave and bring both of their searches to a close.

Throughout the novel, Oskar refers to Thomas Sr. as "the renter". Grandma did not want Oskar to know about Thomas Sr., and so she has told Oskar she was letting the guest room to a renter. She has also forbidden Thomas Sr. to contact Oskar, and tells him on page 276 that *"if he ever sees you, you will have betrayed me."* However, the two of them meet after all, but it is not until they have dug up the grave and Thomas Sr. is about to bury his letters that Oskar realises that Thomas Sr. is his grandfather (p. 322). On page 325, we see that Oskar refers to Thomas Sr. as "Grandpa". This means that Oskar is "withholding" this information in his first chapter, when he mentions his *"second time in a limousine, when the renter and I were on our way to dig up Dad's empty coffin"* (p.7).

As we said in the introduction to this section, the implied author is the intention behind a text, or the totality of meaning that emerges in a text. We may think of the implied author as the agent that is responsible for making the similarities and differences between the characters visible, and for arranging the chapters in such a way that the story stays coherent despite the use of pronouns rather than names. By presenting their narratives interchangeably, the implied author lets Grandma and Thomas Sr. take turns in telling "their side of the story", so to speak. Grandma and Thomas Sr. clearly have a very difficult time communicating, and the juxtaposition of their narratives show how and why this is so.

The sequencing of the chapters also makes the parallels between the stories visible. The bombing of Dresden during WW2 is juxtaposed with 9/11. Grandma's worry that all the letters she had collected as a child caused their house to burn more fiercely when it was bombed is echoed in Oskar's last chapter, where he speaks of how all the paper in the WTC (*"all of those notepads, and Xeroxes, and printed e-mails (...)")* was "fuel" for the fire (p. 325). Grandma speaks of the roof of her house collapsing and her father being caught underneath it, and this forms a parallel to Thomas Jr. who is presumably stuck in one of the collapsed Twin Towers.

We learn that Thomas Jr. became "obsessed" with finding Thomas Sr. after receiving the only letter Thomas Sr. had been able to mail to Thomas Jr. Thomas Sr. tells Grandma that Thomas

Jr. came to see him in Dresden once, but that *"He wouldn't tell me who he was. He must have become nervous (...)"*.[22] Grandma did not know Thomas Jr. went to find his father. As we saw above, this creates a parallel between Oskar and Thomas Jr. They have both lost their fathers, and they have both gone on a search because of it, and there also an obvious parallel in that both of their fathers were named Thomas Schell. We do not find out about Thomas Jr.'s reasons for becoming "obsessed" with his father, or what his reasons were for wanting to meet him. In Oskar's case, it seems that his motivation for finding what the key is for is to deal with his grief (or as Oskar himself puts it, *"to get closer to Dad"*). Oskar's dedication to his self-imposed task creates sympathy with the reader, as well as the characters in the book. Consider for example this exchange between Oskar and Abe Black:

> *30)* While we were in the car I told him all about how I was going to meet everyone in New York with the last name Black. He said, "I can relate, in my own way, because I had a dog run away once. She was the best dog in the world. I couldn't have loved her more or treated her better. She didn't want to run away. **She just got confused, and followed one thing and then another.**" "But my dad didn't run away," I said. "He was killed in a terrorist attack." Abe said, **"I was thinking of *you.*"**

Although Oskar may not be completely aware of it, it seems that the search for the lock is a goal in itself rather than a means to an end. It is something Oskar needs to do in order to deal with his loss. Oskar's mother probably realizes this, and that is likely to be why she helps him "behind his back", as Oskar realizes on page 291.

Searching for the lock gives Oskar a purpose and helps him get through the days, and at the end of the novel it seems that it is something that has helped him come to terms with his father's death. Going to the cemetery with Thomas Sr. and burying the letters is symbolic of both of them coming to terms with the losses they have experienced.

The overall theme of the novel may be said to be the nature of grief, and the process of grieving. The characters in the novel grieve in different ways and have different ways of trying to work through their grief. Oskar is angry with his mother for starting what he assumes is a romantic relationship with a new man, but it turns out that she met this man in group therapy and that he actually is, as she has insisted all along, just a friend.[23] Oskar generally resents the idea of moving on with life, but we see at the end of the novel that Oskar's experience has helped him move on as well.

Grandma and Thomas Sr. have different ways of dealing with grief. Grandma reaches out for help, while Thomas Sr. pulls into himself. Thomas Sr.'s loss of speech may be seen as a

[22] pp. 277-78, + "that only letter you ever sent" makes up the chapter on pages 208-216.
[23] See e.g. pp. 35-37, 315-316.

reaction to the trauma he has experienced. Grandma wants to start again, she wants to leave behind her German identity and to assimilate and become an American (hence her diligent effort to learn to speak idiomatically by reading magazines), and she wants to have a family. She wants, as she says, to *"not be alone"*. Thomas Sr. goes along with this reluctantly, it seems. He holds on to Grandma because she is all that remains of his life in Germany. They end up living next to each other rather than together, or as Thomas Sr. himself says

31) (…) I thought we could run to each other, I thought we could have a beautiful reunion, although we had hardly known each other in Dresden. It didn't work. **We've wandered in place, our arms outstretched, but not toward each other, they're marking off distance,** everything between us has been a rule to govern our lives together, everything a measurement, a marriage of millimeters, of rules (…) (p. 109)

The implied author presents a novel which shows how grief affects people differently, and how they react to it.

The implied author presents these narratives next to each other and invites the reader to trace the parallels between them and to interpret the meanings that emerge from them as relevant to each other. Their meanings depend on each other; since the reader's interpretation is arrived at through an interpretation of all three narratives and how they relate to each other.

3 Conclusion

3.1 Summary of findings

The main goal of this thesis has been to explore the relation between language and narrative organization in a novel that employs a variety of semiotic modes. In our attempt to fit all these different aspects into this thesis, we have examined the text both locally and holistically in terms of cohesion, style, narrative strategies and the interplay between verbal and non-verbal text (i.e. multimodality).

In chapter 1, we discussed how cohesion works and what an extensive analysis of cohesion may look like when applied to a short amount of text. We found that the degree of cohesion can differ in different styles of writing, but that this does not necessarily affect coherence. The analyses in chapter 1 showed that "unusual" cohesion can sometimes serve to construe the narrators' viewpoints. In section 1.4.1, we saw that Thomas Sr. refers to Oskar as "a boy" and "the boy" even though he is telling the story at a point in time where he knows well who Oskar is. This is because his narration is focalized through his former self. The same narrative technique is used in the part of the excerpt where Thomas Sr. approaches Grandma's window to see if she has replied to his note. He sees that there is a note on the window, but it turns out to be the first note.

We also found in 1.4.1 that the use of definite articles and deixis can be used to create a sense of familiarity. This sense of familiarity is part of what creates the illusion that *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* is made up of a collection of personal narratives and letters which we are allowed to read.

In section 1.4.4, we found that the interpretation of lexical cohesion often depends on knowledge of the cultural context, and that some such knowledge is needed to make sense of the lexical sets in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.* Lexical cohesion can also be text-specific, and the idiosyncratic metaphors that the narrators use set up text-specific contexts which influence the readers' understanding. We also saw in this section that iconic cohesion occurs, especially in Grandma's texts. This use of cohesion is part of Grandma's impressionist style, and helps tie her texts together despite the fact that her texts are remarkably uncohesive in terms of other types of ties.

Section 1.5 showed that cohesive harmony depends on a large extent on how processes and participants are construed. The more repetitive the prose is, the higher the degree of chain interaction. When for example agency is implied rather than expressed, cohesive harmony is weakened. This does not necessarily mean that the texts are less *coherent*, but it means that readers will have to infer the connections between processes and participants. Grandma's texts generally display less cohesive harmony, but as we saw in chapter 2, she and Thomas Sr. narrate the same key events, and so their texts tend to complement each other in that they supply bits of information which the other narrator leaves out.

In chapter 2, we discussed the stylistic and narrative features *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, and we saw that patterns of cohesion obtain across the different characters' narratives and across the semiotic modes that have been employed.

What we have found is that the total meaning of the novel emerges as the reader gradually works out what the connections are between Thomas Sr. and Grandma, Thomas Sr. and Oskar, and Thomas Sr. and Thomas Jr. While Oskar's narrative may be seen as the "main narrative", Thomas Sr. and Grandma's texts form a storyline that runs parallel to Oskar's narrative, and which is chronologically earlier (in the story world). These connections are to a large extent textually based – the reader recognizes that the same events, people and things are referred to throughout the novel, although the referring expressions sometimes vary.

As we have seen, we can point to an implied author in the text, that is, an underlying intention which seems to indicate to the readers how these narratives are meant to be seen in relation to each other. The implied author can be seen as an entity that "enables" the narrators to speak. The implied author has apparently also selected which of Thomas Sr.'s letters to include in the novel, and we see that the result of this is the "relay" effect that goes on between Thomas Sr. and Grandma's chapters. The fact that these two narrators include many of the same events in their narratives is cohesive both in that they *refer* to the same moments, places, objects and people, and also in that it prompts the reader to compare and contrast the accounts they give of the events.

The distinctive quality of each of the narrators' styles serves to make them unique as characters and thus makes them distinguishable from each other. This is important in *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* because of the use of first-person narration and deixis. As we have mentioned in the thesis, there are several characters in the novel who are not named, such as Grandma and Oskar's mother. The stylistic features of the texts enable the

reader to disambiguate the deictic terms (such as *you, I, your mother/father*) and keep track of whose story they are reading.

We have also seen instances of cohesion between the verbal meanings in one character's discourse and the non-verbal meanings in another's (as when Grandma speaks of her dream where everything moves backwards, followed by the flipbook of the falling man in Oskar's final chapter). The verbal and non-verbal components of the text are integrated *because of* the cohesive ties between them. This is why we refer to the non-verbal elements as non-verbal *text* rather than "images" or "illustrations": they are not meant just to provide ornamentation; but are in fact part of the total meaning of the discourse. The interpretation of both verbal and non-verbal elements often depends on a mutual understanding of the two.

Interpreting the theme of the novel as a whole would also require a consideration of how these three narratives relate to each other. Hasan (2007) writes that the theme of a literary work

> is not declared to the reader directly by the author. Rather, it is inferred on the basis of the foregrounded patterns of relations between events, characters, and experiences that are presented in any instance of verbal art. (…) Between the work of verbal art and the ultimate inference of its theme lies the receivers' ideological stance, as well as their understanding of the meaning-making resources of the language in which they encounter the text. (Hasan 2007: 23, 25)

We conclude that it is the implied author who is the source of the theme, since the implied author is responsible for presenting and sequencing the narratives. The implied author is therefore the entity that indicates the parallels and likenesses between events and characters in the story, which on a higher level may be thought to communicate a "message" about the human condition, or in other words, the theme of the novel.

When considering the novel as a whole, several parallels and motifs emerge. The narrators are not aware of these parallels since they do not have access to each other's texts. The reader, on the other hand, has the privilege of a "panoramic" view of everything that is presented within the novel, and thus these parallels and motifs emerge more clearly for him or her. As we touched upon at the end of chapter 2, the theme of this novel seems to be the nature of grief and how people go through the process of grieving differently.

There is a parallel between several of the male characters in the novel in that they have some unfinished business with a father who for some reason is lost to them. Oskar lost his father in 9/11. Thomas Jr. grew up without his father and became obsessed with finding him after receiving a single letter from him. William Black, who turns out to be the rightful owner of

the key, was estranged from his deceased father and was as desperate to find the key as Oskar was desperate to find out what it was for.[24] And Thomas Sr., who abandoned his son, has spent his life trying to "explain himself" in letters, but to no avail.

The main female characters in the novel, Grandma and Oskar's mother, remain unnamed. We may also note that their reaction to grief and the way they go about dealing with it is different from that of the male characters. Both Grandma and Mom focus on moving on and starting new lives, without restlessly searching for "answers" about the past, like Oskar and Thomas Sr. do. The fact that they do not have names serves to background them against the male characters, whose actions are given a greater emphasis.

It also seems that the strategy of letting some of the characters remain nameless is to highlight the somewhat complicated nature of their history: Grandma is Thomas Sr.'s wife, although she was originally supposed to become his sister-in-law. Thomas Sr. is Thomas Jr.'s father, but the person he truly loved and wanted to marry was the woman who would have been Thomas Jr.'s aunt. The only people whose names Thomas Sr. uses is Anna and Oskar; he only refers to Thomas Jr. as *you* or *my child* and to Grandma as *your mother.* Likewise, Grandma only uses the expressions *your mother/your father* when referring to Oskar's parents in her letters to him.

The omission of names and use of deixis has several effects. First, it highlights the interpersonal dimension of the letters, since both Grandma and Thomas Sr.'s letters have a specific addressee, and everyone else who is mentioned in the letter is tied to the addressee through the use of the pronoun *your: **your** father, **your** mother, **your** grandmother,* and so on.

Second, it emphasises the personal losses that the characters have suffered. Oskar, Grandma and Thomas Sr. have all lost their fathers, Grandma has lost a husband and a son, Thomas Sr. was the husband and father who was lost, and he himself has lost "everything", as he says. Losing someone means being bereaved of someone who in some sense belonged to *you.* This naming strategy is an example of what Hasan would call "symbolic articulation" – the linguistic features of the text reflect the text's higher-level meaning.

[24] pp. 292-300

3.2 Limitations and questions for further research

Since I have considered so many different aspects of the novel in this thesis, I have had neither the time nor the space to truly go into depth with any single subject; but opted for a broad perspective instead. I feel that this choice is justified by the fact that this is an interdisciplinary thesis which deals with a rather unusual text – when the approach is interdisciplinary and eclectic, and the object of study is as multi-faceted as is the case here, it only seems natural that a broad perspective should be adopted (otherwise it would have been necessary to choose a single discipline, that is, either linguistics or narrative theory).

A film version of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* was released in February 2012. Since the work with this thesis started in August 2011, I have not had the opportunity to compare the written and film version of the narrative. This could however be an interesting area of research, especially in terms of narrative theory.

In terms of stylistics, it might have been interesting to investigate how the narrators' ages are reflected in their discourse. Oskar's style shows quite clearly that he is a child, especially when contrasted with his grandparents' discourse – but where exactly does this difference lie? Another theoretical perspective which might have been interesting to bring in is pragmatics, which could be used to account for how readers infer the meaning of the narrators' utterances, perhaps especially when it comes to Grandma or Thomas Sr.'s discourse.

3.3 New insights

We hope to have shown in this thesis that cohesive ties obtain in and *across* different semiotic modes. As the verbal and non-verbal text is integrated; the reader's interpretation of the novel as a whole is based on their interpretation of the meanings that emerge in both the verbal and non-verbal text.

We hope to have shown that while the traditional understanding of cohesion deals with grammatical or lexical links between lexical items or chunks of discourse, we may also understand cohesion as a connection between the semantic meaning of non-verbal elements and the accompanying verbal text.

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Appendix 1 – Excerpt from the chapter *Googolplex*[25]

As for the bracelet Mom wore to the funeral, what I did was I converted Dad's last voice message into Morse code, and I used sky-blue beads for silence, maroon beads for breaks between letters, violet beads for breaks between words, and long and short pieces of string between the beads for long and short beeps, which are actually called blips, I think, or something. Dad would have known. It took me nine hours to make, and I had thought about giving it to Sonny, the homeless person who I sometimes see standing outside the Alliance Française, because he puts me in heavy boots, or maybe to Lindy, the neat old woman who volunteers to give tours at the Museum of Natural History, so I could be something special to her, or even just to someone in a wheelchair. But instead I gave it to Mom. She said it was the best gift she'd ever received. I asked her if it was better than the Edible Tsunami, from when I was interested in edible metereological events. She said, "Different". I asked her if she was in love with Ron. She said, "Ron is a great person," which was an answer to a question I didn't ask. So I asked again."True or false: you are in love with Ron". She put her hand with the ring on it in her hair and said, "Oskar, Ron is my *friend*." I was going to ask if she was humping her friend, and if she had said yes, I would have run away, and if she had said no, I would have asked if they heavy-petted each other, which I know about. I wanted to tell her she shouldn't be playing Scrabble yet. Or looking in the mirror. Or turning the stereo any louder than what you needed just to hear it. It wasn't fair to Dad, and it wasn't fair to me. But I buried it all inside me. I made her other Morse code jewelry with Dad's messages – a necklace, an anklet, some dangly earrings, a tiara – but the bracelet was definitely the most beautiful, probably because it was the last, which made it the most precious. "Mom?" "Yes?" "Nothing."

Even after a year, I still had an extremely difficult time doing certain things, like taking showers, for some reason, and getting into elevators, obviously. There was a lot of stuff that made me panicky, like suspension bridges, germs, airplanes, fireworks, Arab people on the subway (even though I'm not racist), Arab people in restaurants and coffee shops and other public places, scaffolding, sewers and subway grates, bags without owners, shoes, people with mustaches, smoke, knots, tall buildings, turbans. A lot of the time I'd get that feeling like I was in the middle of a huge black ocean, or in deep space, but not in the fascinating way. It's just that everything was incredibly far away from me. It was worst at night. I started inventing things, and then I couldn't stop, like beavers, which I know about. People think they cut down trees so they can build dams, but in reality it's because their teeth never stop growing, and if they didn't constantly file them down by cutting through all of those trees, their teeth would start to grow into their own faces, which would kill them. That's how my brain was.

One night, after what felt like a googolplex inventions, I went to Dad's closet. We used to Greco-Roman wrestle on the floor in there, and tell hilarious jokes, and once we hung a pendulum from the ceiling and put a circle of dominoes on the floor to prove that the earth rotated. But I hadn't gone back in since he died. Mom was with Ron in the living room,

[25] pp. 35-38 in 2005 Penguin paperback edition

listening to music too loud and playing board games. She wasn't missing Dad. I held the doorknob for a while before I turned it.

Even though Dad's coffin was empty, his closet was full. And even after more than a year, it still smelled like shaving. I touched all of his white T-shirts. I touched his fancy watch that he never wore and the extra laces for his sneakers that would never run around the reservoir again. I put my hands into the pockets of all his jackets (I found a receipt for a cab, a wrapper from a miniature Krackle, and the business card of a diamond supplier). I put my feet into his slippers. I looked at myself in his metal shoehorn. The average person falls asleep in seven minutes, but I couldn't sleep, not after hours, and it made my boots lighter to be around his things, and to touch stuff that he had touched, and to make the hangers hang a little straighter, even though I knew it didn't matter.

His tuxedo was over the chair he used to sit on when he tied his shoes, and I thought, *Weird.* Why wasn't it hung up with his suits? Had he come from a fancy party the night before he died? But then why would he have taken off his tuxedo without hanging it up? Maybe it needed to be cleaned? But I didn't remember a fancy party. I remembered him tucking me in, and us listening to a person speaking Greek on the shortwave radio, and him telling me a story about New York's sixth borough. If I hadn't noticed anything else weird, I wouldn't have thought about the tuxedo again. But I started noticing a lot.

There was a pretty blue vase on the highest shelf. What was a pretty blue vase doing way up there? I couldn't reach it, obviously, so I moved over the chair with the tuxedo still on it, and then I went to my room to get the *Collected Shakespeare* set that Grandma bought for me when she found out that I was going to be Yorick, and I brought those over, four tragedies at a time, until I had a stack that was tall enough. I stood on all of that and it worked for a second. But then I had the tips of my fingers on the vase, and the tragedies started to wobble, and the tuxedo was incredibly distracting, and the next thing was that everything was on the floor, including me, and including the vase, which had shattered. "I didn't do it!" I hollered, but they didn't even hear me, because they were playing music too loud and cracking up too much. I zipped myself all the way into the sleeping bag of myself, not because I was hurt, and not because I had broken something, but because they were cracking up. Even though I knew I shouldn't, I gave myself a bruise.

I started to clean everything up, and that was when I noticed something else weird. In the middle of all that glass was a little envelope, about the size of a wireless Internet card. *What the?* I opened it up, and inside there was a key. *What the, what the?* It was a weird-looking key, obviously to something extremely important, because it was fatter and shorter than a normal key. I couldn't explain it: a fat and short key, in a little envelope, in a blue vase, on the highest shelf in his closet.

The first thing I did was the logical thing, which was to be very secretive and try the key in all of the locks in the apartment. Even without trying I knew it wasn't for the front door, because it didn't match up with the key that I wear on a string around my neck to let myself in when nobody's home. I tiptoed so I wouldn't be noticed, and I tried the key in the door to the bathroom, and the different bedroom doors, and the drawers in Mom's dresser. I tried it in the

desk in the kitchen where Dad used to pay the bills, and in the closet next to the linen closet where I sometimes hid when we played hide and seek, and in Mom's jewelry box. But it wasn't for any of them.

Appendix 2 - Excerpt from the chapter *Why I'm Not Where You Are 9/11/03*[26]

To my child: I wrote my last letter on the day you died, and I assumed I'd never write another word to you, I've been so wrong about so much that I've assumed, why am I surprised to feel the pen in my hand tonight? I'm writing as I'm waiting to meet Oskar, in a little less than an hour, I'll close this book and find him under the streetlight, we'll be on our way to the cemetery, to you, your father and your son, this is how it happened. I gave a note to your mother's doorman almost two years ago. I watched from across the street as the limousine pulled up, she got out, she touched the door, she'd changed so much but I still knew her, her hands had changed but the way she touched was the same, she went into the building with a boy, I couldn't see if the doorman gave her my note, I couldn't see her reaction, the boy came out and went into the building across the street. I watched her that night as she stood with her palms against the window, I left another note with the doorman, "Do you want to see me again, or should I go away?" The next morning there was a note written on the window, "Don't go away," which meant something, but it didn't mean "I want to see you again." I gathered a handful of pebbles and tossed them at her window, nothing happened, I tossed some more, but she didn't come to the window, I wrote a note in my daybook – "Do you want to see me again?" – I ripped it out and gave it to the doorman, he said "I'll make sure she gets it," I couldn't say "Thank you." The next morning I went back, there was a note on her window, the first note, "Don't go away," I gathered pebbles, I threw them, they tapped like fingers against the glass, I wrote a note, "Yes or no?" for how long could it go on? The next day I found a market on Broadway and bought an apple, if she didn't want me I would leave, I didn't know where I would go, but I would turn around and walk away, there was no note on her window, so I threw the apple, anticipating the glass that would rain down on me, I wasn't afraid of the shards, the apple went through her window and into her apartment, the doorman was standing in front of the building, he said, "You're lucky that was open, pal," but I knew I wasn't lucky, he handed me a key. I rode the elevator up, the door was open, the smell brought back to me what for forty years I had struggled not to remember but couldn't forget.

[26] pp. 267-8 in 2005 Penguin paperback edition

Appendix 3 – Excerpt from the chapter *My Feelings*[27]

When your mother came home, she gave you such a fierce hug. I wanted to protect you from her.

She asked if your father had called.

No.

Are there any messages on the phone?

No.

You asked her if your father was in the building for a meeting.

She told you no.

You tried to find her eyes, and that was when I knew that you knew.

She called the police. It was busy. She called again. It was busy. She kept calling. When it wasn't busy, she asked to speak to someone.

There was no one to speak to.

You went to the bathroom. I told her to control herself. At least in front of you.

She called the newspapers. They didn't know anything.

She called the fire department.

No one knew anything.

All afternoon I knitted that scarf for you. It grew longer and longer. Your mother closed the windows, but we could still smell the smoke. She asked me if I thought we should make posters.

I said it might be a good idea.

That made her cry, because she had been depending on me.

The scarf grew longer and longer.

She used the picture from your vacation. From only two weeks before. It was you and your father. When I saw it, I told her she shouldn't use a picture that had your face in it. She said she wasn't going to use the whole picture. Only your father's face.

I told her, Still, it isn't a good idea.

She said, There are more important things to worry about.

[27] pp. 228-231 in 2005 Penguin paperback edition

Just use a different picture.

Let it go, Mom.

She had never called me Mom.

There are so many pictures to choose from.

Mind your own business.

This is my business.

We were not angry at each other.

I don't know how much you understood, but you probably understood everything.

She took the posters downtown that afternoon. She filled a rolling suitcase with them. I thought of your grandfather. I wondered where he was at that moment. I didn't know if I wanted him to be suffering.

She took a stapler. And a box of staples. And tape. I think of those things now. The paper, the stapler, the staples, the tape. It makes me sick. Physical things. Forty years of loving someone becomes staples and tape.

It was just the two of us. You and me.

We played games in the living room. You made jewelry. The scarf grew longer and longer. We went for a walk in the park. We didn't talk about what was on top of us. What was pinning us down like a ceiling. When you fell asleep with your head on my lap, I turned on the television.

I lowered the volume until it was silent.

The same pictures over and over.

Planes going into buildings.

Bodies falling.

People waving shirts out of high windows.

Planes going into buildings.

Bodies falling.

Planes going into buildings.

People covered in gray dust.

Bodies falling.

Buildings falling.

Planes going into buildings.

Planes going into buildings.

Buildings falling.

People waving shirts out of high windows.

Bodies falling.

Planes going into buildings.

Sometimes I felt your eyelids flickering. Were you awake? Or dreaming?

Your mother came home late that night. The suitcase was empty.

She hugged you until you said, You're hurting me.

She called everyone your father knew, and everyone who might know something. She told them, I'm sorry to wake you. I wanted to shout into her ear, Don't be sorry!

She kept touching her eyes, although there were no tears.

They thought there would be thousands of injured people. Unconscious people. People without memories. They thought there would be thousands of bodies. They were going to put them in an ice-skating rink.

Remember when we went skating a few months ago and I turned around, because I told you that watching people skate gave me a headache? I saw rows of bodies under the ice.

Your mother told me I could go home.

I told her I didn't want to.

She said, Have something to eat. Try to sleep.

I won't be able to eat or sleep.

She said, I need to sleep.

I told her I loved her.

That made her cry, because she had been depending on me.

I went back across the street.

Planes going into buildings.

Bodies falling.

Planes going into buildings.

Buildings falling.

Planes going into buildings.

Planes going into buildings.

Planes going into buildings.

When I no longer had to be strong in front of you, I became very weak. I brought myself to the ground, which was where I belonged. I hit the floor with my fists. I wanted to break my hands, but when it hurt too much, I stopped. I was too selfish to break my hands for my only child.

Bodies falling.

Staples and tape.

I didn't feel empty. I wished I'd felt empty.

People waving shirts out of high windows.

I wanted to be empty like an overturned pitcher. But I was full like a stone.

Planes going into buildings.