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Second Person Fiction: Narrative *You* As Addressee And/Or Protagonist

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For F.K. Stanzel on his seventieth birthday

Second person fiction, that is to say fiction that employs a pronoun of address in reference to a fictional protagonist, cannot be easily accomodated within current narratological paradigms. In particular, there are now a great number of very different second person texts available which require a more than cursory analysis. In a first section these problems are discussed and a tentative typology of second person fiction is proposed. The second section traces some real-life discourse types which use the second person pronoun as a form of address or self-address and illustrates how these models serve as starting-points for the production as well as reception of second person texts, even though second person fiction always exceeds, restructures, and subverts such models. The third section discusses one particularly complex second person text, Joyce Carol Oates's "You," in an attempt to introduce the reader to the finesses of second person pronominal usage in fictional writing.

There has recently been a renewed interest in the uses of the second person in poetry (Grabher 1989) as well as fiction (Hantzis 1988; Kacandes 1990, 1993; Richardson 1991; Margolin 1993; Wiest 1993). The huge bulk of second person fiction in fact dates from the past fifteen years, with famous models in the fifties and sixties: Butor's *La Modification* (1957), Jean Muno's *Le joker* (1971), the second person sections of B.S. Johnson's *Albert Angelo* (1964), or John Ashmead's *The Mountain and the Feather* (1961) – like the early and extremely original *Beach*

Red (Bowman 1945), a war novel.[1] There have been three noted 'anticipations' of narrative in the second person: Faulkner's *you* in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936); R.P. Warren's intermittent use of the second person in *All the King's Men*[2] (1946), which alternatively signals personal *involvement* with the protagonist and the *evasion of subjectivity* in generalizations by means of generalizing *you*; and the brief comparable section at the beginning of Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951). One also has to note the more or less pervasive use of *you* in free indirect discourse and interior monologue in Lillian Smith's insider novel *Strange Fruit* (1944). The two earliest *you*-texts that have so far been discovered are surprisingly old: the French Duke of Sully's (1560-1641) memoirs *Les oeconomies royales* (1662), in which the Duke's (Maximilien de Béthune's) four servants at his behest write a history of the Duke's life and tell it to him, addressing him in the act; and Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "A Haunted Mind" (1835).

Previous research has either focussed on the use of the second person pronoun in reference to a fictional protagonist or on the address function of second person texts, but ignoring the central issue of the combination of these two aspects. The address function receives particular emphasis in Kacandes (1990) and Bonheim (1982). Kacandes bases her analysis of second person fiction on the intensity of the address function which she situates on a scale between pure address (in which the addressee is potentially able to reply) and a mere rhetorical or apostrophic function (in which the speech act of address is an exclusively rhetorical device and the addressee cannot be envisaged as present on the same communicative level with the addressor). My intention here is to focus in particular on the combination of address with the reference to a fictional protag-

1 My current list of second person texts (excluding the more traditional fictions with prominent narratee functions) now runs to some seventy texts, of which some twenty-six are novels that use the second person either exclusively or for significant portions of the text. I would particularly like to acknowledge the help of Irene Kacandes, who has introduced me to the topic. Thanks also go to the staff at the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, for their expert help with tracing the many queer second person items I kept ordering. Additionally, I should like to express my gratitude to my students in a non-obligatory course on feminist writing practices in the fall term of 1991/1992, who were thrilled with Pam Houston's "How to Talk to a Hunter" and provided me with stimulating critical appreciation. Finally, special thanks are due to Ms. Isabella de Campo for pointing out additional second person texts and for helping me out with the typing of the first draft.

2 Compare Vauthier (1973) for an excellent discussion of the issue.

onist by means of the second person pronoun.[3] Nevertheless address remains the central irreplaceable characteristic constituent of so-called second person fiction. The term *second person fiction* in fact needs to be revealed as a misnomer of major proportions. What is called second person fiction does not in any way have to employ a second person pronoun in reference to the protagonist. What it needs to employ is a *pronoun of address*, and in some languages such a pronoun can be in the third person (e.g. the German 'polite' *Sie*, a third person plural form, or the Italian *Lei*, a third person singular). This fact seems to have escaped the notice of most researchers since they were analyzing French and English texts with a preponderance of *you* and *tu* forms and very rare instances of *vous* (in Butor's exemplary text and Verga's introductory story to his Sicilian tales [Verga 1879][4]). The addressee function of the pronoun is crucial in structuring the make-up of second person fiction because it combines a "conative" (Jakobson 1958) level of address and a level of story reference. If there is address, there must be an *addressor*, an *I* (implicit or explicit), and hence a narrator, and this narrator can be a mere enunciator or also a protagonist sharing the *you's* fictional existence on the story level.[5] This is as much as to say that second person fiction radicalizes and complicates the well-worn dichotomy of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic fiction (Genette 1980) – the coincidence and non-coincidence of the realms of existence (Stanzel 1984) between the narrator and narratee on the one hand and the protagonists of the fiction on the other. The point allows some crucial distinctions between the schemas of Stanzel and Genette, schemas that

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3 Bonheim (1982, 1983) frequently discusses various kinds of address without clarifying the important issue of existence on the story level. See, for instance, his discussion of Leacock's stories in Bonheim (1983), where he also presents a typology in which *you* supposedly refers to the "narrator." Whether this is meant to suggest that the *you* refers to a protagonist, or whether the *you* is a deictic centre 'I' of subjectivity does not emerge from the discussion. Compare the equally puzzling definition of second person narration by Hantzis: "The second person narrator is present when the 'you' constitutes *the narrator* [my emphasis] as well as the actant and narratee(s) of a text." (1988: 47)

4 Fuentes's *A Change of Skin* (1967) alternates between singular and plural addressees, with the corresponding verbal morphology.

5 Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 104) distinguishes between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic *narratees*, i.e. narratees who play a part in the events narrated to them (for instance Mme de Merteuil, Valmont or Cécile in *Les Liaisons dangereuses*) and those who do not (the psychiatrist in Henry Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*). Rimmon-Kenan and Chatman (1978) also speak of "overt" and "covert" narratees, a distinction most forcefully illustrated by Prince (1982: 17-20) in a long list of increasingly more covert linguistic hints at a textual address function.

seemed to be quite synonymous for all intents and purposes in their distinction between first and third person fiction. Second person narrative, however, forces us to reanalyze these concepts and to show how they part company, and particularly how they can be combined to effect a more precise definition of second person fiction which would be impossible with only one set of concepts alone.

This paper will first of all propose some terminological considerations regarding the second person which are designed to both outline the full potentialities of this 'genre' and to document its similarities to other 'modes' in the Genettean or Stanzelian typologies. This first part is therefore basically a structuralist undertaking. In the second section I will present a reader-response oriented approach to second person texts, illustrating naturally occurring text type paradigms that second person fiction utilizes in its attempt to ease the reader into a story form that seems to contradict expectations of customary patterns of verisimilitude. In the final section a short story by Joyce Carol Oates is analyzed as an example of great technical virtuosity in the second person genre.

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The distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic fiction is predicated in the *signifié* of the discourse. Homodiegesis consists in the narrator sharing a function both on the narrational and the story planes (with autodiegesis restricting the *histoire* to the narrator's own experiences). In heterodiegesis, on the other hand, the narrator tells the story of *another* person and is not an actant on the story level. Homo- and heterodiegesis simply 'tick off' actantial roles and their recurrence or non-recurrence on the narrational plane. Stanzel's schema, on the other hand, talks about a continuity in the realms of existence, stressing the first person narrator's existential involvement in the fictional world versus the third person narrator's aloofness from it. The crucial narratological distinction between the narrational enunciatory plane and that of the narrat*ed*, the story, can be utilized to much effect in the discussion and explication of the peculiarities of second person fiction, too, but we will see later on how second person fiction is being used increasingly to undermine the separation of these two levels. Indeed the *discours* versus *histoire* distinction of Genettean and Todorovian origins can be argued

to depend on a *naturalization*[6] of narrational schemas – relying on the core experience of a narrator addressing an audience and telling a story, her own or somebody else's (cp. Diengott 1986, 1987). If one stretches this core situation to make the narrator tell the addressee's story – a patently absurd situation under normal circumstances – then further naturalizations come into play: telling the addressee what she did because she has suffered a stroke of amnesia; telling the addressee what happened to her because she may have forgotten, trying to resuscitate the events in the addressee's mind; addressing an absent or dead person; giving way to the narrator's rhetorical urge to relive events (and thus relieve herself of them), to mentally resurrect the co-experiencer in the addressee function. Such naturalizations already surreptitiously undermine the story/discourse dichotomy because they consist in a re-evaluation of the story as, not the prior discourse function of the narrative, but as a subsidiary aid for the narrator/narratee level which comes to absorb all narrative interest. I will return to this point below.

If we remain for the time being with the *histoire* versus *discours* distinction, one can note that, in terms of agent roles and implied narrational roles, the following structural possibilities present themselves:

(A) There is a function of address in the text, whether by means of an explicit address-*you* or by means of imperatives. This inevitably requires the positing of an enunciatory instance who may be explicit (by means of a narratorial *I*) or implicit (but *not merely* "covert" in the sense of Chatman's third person narrator). The addressee can be a generalized you, or a specific individual (an extra-diegetic narratee). In all of these cases the enunciational instance can be envisioned as, basically, a 'voice' without existential attributes. This is the situation in a great number of "teller" narratives which have an address function, and particularly frequent in the pseudo-oral *skaz* type narrative (e.g. in the third person present tense sections in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* which have a persistent allocutory *you*), the dramatic monologue (e.g. Hawkes's *Travesty*), or epistolary narrative.

(B) The function of address combines with an 'existential' situatedness on the *histoire* level: the addressee is *also* an actant. Under these circumstances the addressee is an intra-diegetic narratee, but not in the well-known "metaleptic" mode (Genette 1980: 234-237) where the extra-

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6 The term *naturalization* is here employed in Culler's sense (1975: 134-160), but for phenomena on a level beyond those which Culler adduces in the service of fictional verisimilitude. For details cf. Fludernik (1993, section 9.2.2.).

diegetic narrator playfully addresses a character (an entirely non-realistic, deliberately anti-verisimilar procedure, violating the boundary between discourse and story). On the contrary, the addressee – like the narrating and experiencing selves in homodiegetic narrative – instantiates an existential bond with his or her former (discourse) self, positing a subjective verisimilar identity between the address-*you* and the protagonist-*you*. Under these circumstances it is then very rare to have a narrator-I of a merely disembodied quality; verisimilitude requires that the narrator, too, has some (if only tenuous) existential links to the story past. After all, unlike the omniscient authorial narrator of heterodiegetic fiction, this narrator has to have acquired the knowledge of the *you*'s story by being part of her world. Moreover, the very fact of addressing the *you* on the enunciatory plane makes for an additional existential connection with the addressee on the discourse level. The most common case in this category is therefore that of the narrator and narratee sharing both a presence of interlocution on the enunciatory plane and an existential past on the story plane. Such narratives frequently utilize an implicit if not explicit *we* (I + you).[7] Examples include, for instance, the second person strand in Naylor's *Mama Day*, or Grass's *Katz und Maus*.

(C) The third principal case is that where the second person shows up in reference to a fictional protagonist only – there is no observable addressee function, although there may be an omniscient authorial narrator function in the text, a narrator divorced from the world of the fictional *you*. Besides this "authorial" type which consistently leans towards the figural mode (cf. Butor's *La Modification* and Peter Bowman's *Beach Red*), the most common second person text is the one where the fictional *you* predominates as an experiencing self in what I would like to call – after Stanzel – a reflector mode narrative in the second person. In such texts the second person protagonist's experiences are mediated to us from his or her perspective, and this is done in the second person with no observable subjective deictic centre: The narrative *you* can therefore be said to camouflage an underlying subjective deictic centre; the *you* covers up for an *I* of the protagonist in the grip of narrative experience. Recent examples include McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) or the Diego strand in Virgil Suarez's *Latin Jazz* (1989).

Such alternatives lend themselves to a corroboration of Stanzel's narrative theory, i.e. to its basic teller vs. reflector dichotomy. There either is,

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7 This use of *we* is to a large extent backgrounded or unmarked.

or is not, a communicative level in texts, which in this case is constituted mostly by the address function, but sometimes available also as (merely) a narrator's 'voice.' In the absence of a communicative plane, narrative *you* (present only in reference to an actant on the story level) functions precisely in the same way as narrative *I* or third person *she* or *he* in the reflectoral mode. Where second person fiction supplies particular interest is in the teller mode variants since the addressee may coincide with the *you* protagonist in a relationship comparable to that between narrating and experiencing selves in 'ordinary' homodiegetic narration. Since the terms *homodiegesis* and *first person narrative* focus on the *narrator* who remains a focal entity also in second person fiction, the existential overlap between addressee and protagonist cannot easily be described in this terminology. Rimmon-Kenan's definition of the homodiegetic narratee as a character "who play[s] a part in the events narrated to [her]" characteristically shifts the meaning of the term *narrate* from *narrate X's story* to *address story to X*. In fact only intradiegetic narratees can be homodiegetic in Rimmon-Kenan's sense of the term, as is illustrated by her example of *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. The point is, rather, whether the *narrator* addresses the narratee from within or from above (or beyond) the fiction. The term *homodiegetic narratee* is therefore at odds with its definition (narratee who does or does not receive her own story) at least if applied to second person fiction in which the narratee may indeed have her story told to herself by an heterodiegetic narrator.

Whereas in first person narrative the addressee is a mere 'addendum,' added to motivate the narrator's urge to tell her (own) story, in second person narrative it is the speaker function that can be such an appendix, even though it is crucial to the narrative set-up in so far as the *you* on the communicative level *entails* an address function and therefore an addressor, or narrative *I*, whether or not that *I* gets involved peripherally on the story plane. By contrast, the address function in ordinary first person narrative is merely supernumerary and the situation of narrative utterance may traditionally be left very vague indeed. (Compare, e.g., the deliberate ambiguity in this respect in *Lolita* or *L'Etranger*.) Morphologically explicit address, however, seems to require the explication of the circumstances of a pretended speech act in much more insistent a fashion, even though the texts themselves do frequently play with the ambiguities and indeterminacies of such enunciation. Whereas first person fiction is decisively concerned with the beneficent functions of memory which the narrator exploits in the interests of current concerns or for moralizing purposes, second person fiction frequently attempts to

resuscitate memory in the addressee, taking over the narrating function that the addressee, having forgotten her story, is unable to fulfil by herself. (Compare, e.g. Farley's "House of Ecstasy.")

It is therefore necessary to introduce a new terminology that fulfills the following requirements.

- The teller/reflector mode has to be carefully distinguished.
- The address function, which definitely indicates the dominance of the teller mode has to be noted.
- The existential link between narrator and protagonist on the one hand and between addressee and protagonist on the other has to be emphasized.
- One needs to explain the infractions of the story/discourse boundary in second person fiction.

I will therefore introduce the concepts of the *homo-* and *heterocommunicative*, which specify an existential link (or no such link) between the communicative level and the story level of the fiction. Within homocommunicative narration one distinguishes first person and second person homocommunicative narration (which one may then dub homodiegetic and *homoconative* respectively). Between the purely homo- (and auto-)diegetic and the purely homoconative mode (the addressee but not the narrator participate in the story) one can locate several combinations of which the most common is we-narrative, as in Grass's *Katz und Maus*. (Compare Diagram 1.) Within the heterocommunicative realm one can observe second and third person heterocommunicative narratives, i.e. traditional third person narrative (e.g. Fielding's *Tom Jones*) and second person fiction in which the narrator has no function on the story-plane (Aichinger's "Spiegelgeschichte") or in which the second person protagonist does not function as an addressee. The last of these possibilities includes many novels locatable in what Stanzel calls the authorial-figural continuum, a second person example of which would be Ashmead's *The Mountain and the Feather*.

It should be observed in the diagram that, as in Stanzel's typology, the individual categories are arranged in open scales between peripheral and central involvement of narrators and addressees in the stories in which they participate, and between the homo- and the heterocommunicative modes of narration. The diagram illustrates a scale of forms between homocommunication and heterocommunication. There are intermediary areas between *I* and *you*, between *you* and *he* or *she*, and between *I* and *she* or *he* narratives, so the diagram should be read as connecting up at its right and left margins. If the schema here presented seems overly typological, I wish to counter that the proposal is merely an attempt to

Diagram 1:

(A) Narrative with a Communicative Level (Teller Mode)

	homocommunicative narrative							heterocommunicative narrative		
	I + he/she	I	I + you	I + you	you	you	you + he/she	you	he, she	
	homodiegetic		homoconative							
<--	peripheral homodiegetic (first person narrative) (including we narratives of exclusive we) Mann, *Doctor Faustus*	autodiegetic	peripheral homo- (i.e. auto)diegetic narrative with you protagonist: Grass, *Katz und Maus*	both narrator and addressee share realms of existence with story world we-narratives White, *Nocturnes*	addressee as character (narrator only explicit or implicit address function) Farley, "House of Ecstasy"	authorial-figural continuum possible, too: Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*	peripheral you (in relation to a third person protagonist) not found, but possible in principle	hetero-communicative you you only protagonist, not addressee Butor, *Modification*; (authorial-figural)	narrational level existentially divorced from story level; authorial and authorial-figural third person (Fielding, *Tom Jones*; Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*)	-->

(B) Narrative with No Communicational Level

(reflector narrative and neutral narrative)
e.g. Ernest J. Gaines, "The Sky is Gray" (first person); Jean Muno, *Le Joker*; McInerney, *Bright Lights, Big City* (second person);
Faulkner, "Was" (in *Go Down, Moses*); third person.

document the large variety of second person fiction and to present a useful terminology for future discussion.

One can therefore distinguish between authorial, figural and reflectoral versions of these narrative possibilities. In near-accordance with Stanzel's typology *authorial* here implies hindsight or omniscience on the part of the narrator (e.g. in evaluative first person narration, or Stanzel's authorial [i.e. third person] texts[8]). *Figural* narrative (which, to be quite comprehensible, I have called 'authorial-figural' in the diagram) would be narrative that combines some measure of external knowledge with an inside view of the protagonist's psyche – narrative that is not quite pure reflector mode with remnants of consonant external perspective. Examples in the third person realm are Stanzel's typical figural novels, *The Ambassadors* or *Emma*. Butor's *La Modification* belongs here as an instance of a second person figural text, and one needs to include also the figural (but not reflectoral) first person novel which centers on the experiencing self (Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*). The figural realm in my terminology therefore constitutes a border zone between the pure teller type and the pure reflector type, a generic mixture in which remnants of (mostly *consonant*[9]) "telling" with its external perspective persist.[10] The figural mode is strikingly common for second person texts, perhaps because it allows an easy presentation of the you protagonist's non-immediate sensations. Thus, in Rex Stout's *How Like a God* (1929), the *you* strand of the novel extensively operates like non-obtrusive authorial narration, whereas the third person strand is purely reflectoral, lacking all signs of a narratorial ordering of the protagonist's sensations which are linked associatively only. Texts with purely reflectoral *you*, on the other hand, seemingly allow the reader to step into the you protagonist's

8 Compare Stanzel's and Bal's speculations about the authorialization of the first person narrator and the external first person narrator respectively (Stanzel 1984: 207-208; Bal 1985: 120-123).

9 See Cohn (1978).

10 I am here re-arranging Stanzel's terminology for my own purposes. Stanzel of course includes the figural narrative situation in the reflectoral realm, but his examples are rarely 'pure' reflector mode texts in accordance with his own definition of reflectoral narrative. The reason for this inconsistency lies in the incompatibility between Stanzel's original typology and its later innovative re-invention on the lines of three axes of binary oppositions (Stanzel 1984). Reflector mode narrative and the original figural narrative situation ideally share a central (number of) reflector character(s), but historically the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century figural novel typically retains vestiges of authorial omniscience. Pure reflector mode narrative does not become a viable textual option until the pure interior monologue novel and even more recent experiments with radical internal focalization.

mind. Besides the two novels which I have named in the diagram one may perhaps note the short story "You Need to Go Upstairs" by Rumer Godden, in which a blind girl's achievement of going to the toilet by herself is presented from within her subjective experience.

In purely reflectoral texts pronominal distinctions come to be of minor importance and lose their deictic significance. References to the protagonist cover up for the subjectivity of an underlying deictic centre, and – in the absence of a narratorial standpoint – the protagonist's *I* can be referred to also as a *she*, *he* or *you*, without such a renaming effecting any considerable changes in the reader's apperception of the story. This extends Stanzel's crucial insight in the unmarked *I* versus *he (she)* relation in figural narrative (1984: 227). The neutralization of pronominal oppositions can be explained by the absence in the text of a deictically significant inscription of a narrator position from whose deictic existential coordinates (Bühler's *Origo*, which is synonymous with the *I* of the deictic centre[11]) the story subject can be defined as synonymous (*I*) or heteronymous (*he*, *she*, *you*). However, among the various non-distinctive alternatives, *semantic* differences can nevertheless be observed, as e.g. in the peculiar urgency and visionary significance of the first person (particularly if presented in the narrative present tense), or in the voyeuristic quality of some third person texts, whose use of free indirect discourse lends itself to a typicalizing of the subject's mental situation. Narrative *you* has as its distinguishing trait the closeness to generalizing *you* and the *you* of self-address, and for this reason its initial distancing effect – 'Is this me, the reader? Or is this a character?' – can develop into an increased empathy effect, with the figural *you* (particularly in present tense texts) achieving maximum identification on the reader's part.

As has variously been pointed out (e.g. Bonheim 1983: 72, Kacandes 1993: 139-145), second person fiction comes into being in the ultimate discovery on the part of the reader that the fictional *you* cannot be read as identical to oneself, the actual, empirical reader, nor can the text be interpreted consistently as one of continual address. This discovery is crucially related to the amassing of verisimilar detail in the text, such that the information gleaned about the *you* can no longer realistically be applied to the actual reader's circumstances even if stretched to the willing assumption of a narratee role. The beginning of Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* illustrates this gradual process of re-

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11 Compare Bühler (1934) and Banfield (1982).

interpretation with particular clarity. Whereas the empirical reader may for a moment feel addressed in person, the increasing specification of the addressee's location in relation to his[12] living quarters, his motives, and eventually his past actions narrows the probability of a complete identification of the reader with this narratee role, and leads to the emergence of an alternative reading in which the narratee is a purely fictional entity, and – coinciding with the onset of the past tense (the colloquial perfect) – a protagonist of the fiction.

> You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade. Best to close the door; the TV is always on in the next room. Tell the others right away, "No, I don't want to watch TV!" Raise your voice – they won't hear you otherwise – "I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed [*disturbato*]!" Maybe they haven't heard you, with all that racket; [...]
>
> Of course, the ideal position for reading is something you can never find. [...] Nobody ever thought of reading on horseback; and yet now, the idea of sitting in the saddle, the book propped against the horse's mane, or maybe tied to the horse's ear with a special harness, seems attractive to you. With your feet in the stirrups, you should feel quite comfortable for reading; having your feet up is the first condition for enjoying a read.
>
> [...] Try to foresee now everything that might make you interrupt your reading. Cigarettes within reach, if you smoke, and the ashtray. Anything else? Do you have to pee? All right, you know best.
>
> It's not that you expect anything in particular from this particular book. [...]
>
> In the shop window you have promptly identified the cover with the title you were looking for. Following this visual trail you have forced your way through the shop past the thick barricade of Books You Haven't Read, which were frowning at you from the tables and shelves, trying to cow you. [...]
> (*If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, i; Calvino 1981: 9-10)

On this beginning see the excellent discussion in Kacandes (1993). Richardson (1991: 320-322) has invented the term "autotelic mode" to designate the insistent imperative function and its attendant psychological intricacies for the actual reader.

This takes me to another point, the distinction between addressees and narratees. Like Warhol (1989: 30) I restrict the term narratee to the hetero-communicative realm, where the communicative narrational level projects narratee functions. Intradiegetic narratees, i.e. characters to

12 The sex of the addressee is only initially undefined and specified soon enough by the masculine form of the Italian participle: *disturbato*. (See Kacandes 1993: 147)

whom other characters tell stories, are of course existentially situated in the narrative but their teller figures are heterocommunicative or homocommunicative depending on the story they tell. The consistent involvement of the actual reader even in the function of an extradiegetic narratee has been noted already by Genette:

> For the extradiegetic narratee is not, as the intradiegetic narratee is, a "relay point" between the narrator and the implied reader. He merges totally with this implied reader [*lecteur virtuel*], who is in turn a relay point with the real reader, who may or may not "identify" with him–that is, *accept as meant for himself* what the narrator says to his extradiegetic narratee–whereas in no case can the real reader identify (in this sense) with the intradiegetic narratee, who is, after all, a *character* just like all the others. (Genette 1988: 131)

That such identification also lends itself to ironic subversion, by inducing the reader to identify with characters whose ulterior motives or morals she will find difficult to share points towards a more decidedly postmodernist use of second person fiction. It is here that infractions of narrative levels need to be noted not merely in a metaleptic self-reflexive strain, but as a subversion of the story/discourse dichotomy and as an erasure of the fictionality signals framing realist fiction. The interesting subversive effects of much second person fiction derive from a concentration of texts on the communicative level, accompanied by deliberate ambiguity about the existential circumstances of the 'interlocutors' and a refusal to provide a diegetic function of the narrator. They are also a consequence of the indeterminacy of the addressee function by which the current reader finds herself addressed but cannot immediately delimit the reference to one specific narrative level – that of the real reader, the extradiegetic narratee function of the text, an intradiegetic narratee (a character to whom the story is addressed) or a homoconative protagonist.

A final note on neutral narrative may be in order here. It has been established that neutral narrative, which – by definition – has neither a teller figur nor a reflector character 'on stage,' can use both first and third person reference terms. (The standard examples are Hemingway's "The Killers" for third person, and Chandler's *The Big Sleep* for first person.) Whereas, in the third person realm, the resultant effect is that of a camera eye recording impassively the observable actions and reactions of the protagonist, the first person neutral mode suggests instead an experiencer who refuses to engage either with the experience itself (remaining aloof from its pain, for instance – cf. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*), or refuses to evaluate her actions, scrutinizing them with

apathetic or carefully wrought (self-) objectivity (e.g. the Chandler texts). I have not yet encountered one neutral second person text.[13] However, if such a text were written, like the neutral *I*, it would preserve some communicative or deictic quality which would result in readers' attempting to naturalize or 'motivate' the act of description. Whereas psychological motives are sought to explain the lack of involvement in first person texts, second person neutral fiction would presumably evoke readings of a voyeuristic covert narrator or voice observing the actions of the fictional *you* such that the *you* would necessitate the postulation of an *I* from whose deictic position *you* might acquire readability. Only a consciousness factor (in the absence of a teller function) can apparently allow the interpretative erasing of the "narrator" default.

*

I now come to a more practical aspect of this paper which will discuss the most important naturalizations of second person narratives and the generic models on which these rely. I have noted above the tendency of second person fiction to evoke real-life models as well as literary paradigms which help to motivate the use of the second person. None of these models ultimately manage to fully comprehend or circumscribe the full narrative signification or the significance of the second person form. Their importance lies in the fact of their availability both for the writer and the reader. The former can take up such paradigms and use them for his own ulterior aims (e.g. for the sake of parody, subversion of the generic model, linguistic play); the latter, through prior acquaintance with the generic paradigm, is enabled to interpret a manifestation of a second person in an unfamiliar context through and beyond the recognition of these generic models and their (playful) extension, radicalization or subversion.

Discourse models for possible second person narration can be divided roughly into those that highlight a prominent address function (which, in actual second person fiction, is then supplemented by an existential component, i.e. involvement in the story), and those that portray a *you's* experiences in combination with a latent situation of address. Such natural or already fictional prototypes of discourse employing second person pronouns (i.e. pronouns of address) have been noted at length by

13 There is, though, the curious combination of a 'neutral' third person novel with a very active address function in Stephen Koch's *Night Watch* (1969).

Morrissette, Passias, Hopkins/Perkins, and Hantzis. Although the following presentation is greatly indebted to these scholars for having pointed out the well-known models of the cookbook, self-help manual and interrogational procedure at court, like Richardson (1991) I will utilize these insights somewhat differently and extend them to other types of discourse.

The most basic prototype for second person fiction is conversational storytelling, and one can observe here a development from address to the involvement of the addressee on the story plane. Traditional first or third person narrative, as we know, frequently plays with address as a stylistic and rhetorical exercise on the lines of "Dear reader."[14] In postmodern fiction this has frequently been extended to an overwhelming anti-realistic subversion of narrative illusion, for instance in the open discussion between narrator and narratee about the makings of the fiction that is evolving under the narrator's pen. Such metafictional play of self-reflective quality is prominent in John Barth's "Life Story," B.S. Johnson's "Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs?" or in Stephen Koch's *Night Watch* (1969) as well as already in Hawthorne's "Main Street," where the narratee (audience) is asked to assist at imagining the (hi)story of Salem. Such a use of address does not intrinsically resemble second person fiction, but it helps to dangerously subvert the fiction/non-fiction boundary, inducing the actual reader to, at least initially, feel addressed by the textual *you*.

Face to face conversation and a variety of conversational gambits are also the model for the second prototype: *skaz* narrative.[15] Although *skaz* has become a *literary* genre, a genre of the artificial pretense at orality, or pseudo-orality (Erzgräber/Goetsch 1987), its roots or models clearly stem from the traditional mode of oral narrative in which a bard addresses the community (frequently with a highly ritualized exchange of standard responses from the audience as well, e.g.in Ghana's Spider narratives), explicitly alluding to the communality of the narrative experience. *Skaz* narrators are not only pseudo-oral narrators, they rely on an institutionalization of communal narrating in which the narrator is

14 Richardson (1991: 310, fn4) quotes a wonderful passage from *Tom Jones*.

15 *Skaz* is a form of storytelling that imitates, parodies and stylizes oral storytelling. It can be used both to narrate in a first and in a third person mode. The term was coined by Boris Eichenbaum and is now a standard critical term in Russian and Formalist literary criticism. Examples of *skaz* texts in English are, for instance, the "Cyclops" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses*, or Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. See Eichenbaum (1971a, 1971b), Titunik (1977), and Vinogradov (1925).

expected to delve into the community's history and resurrect, and therefore save from oblivion, the memory of the community's past. The narrator is therefore the custodian of the community's historical self-identity. The crucial position of this narrator is mirrored linguistically in his reference to the community as "ours," and in the self-referential inclusion of himself as a member of the narrated community. Unlike mere face to face conversation, the *skaz* model therefore reflects significantly on the homocommunicative nature of the narration: both the narrator and the audience share a fictional past, if only existentially, in the "*realm* of existence," and not agentially as 'characters' of the 'plot.' Such narrative, which frequently reappears in pseudo-oral literature (besides Twain, compare e.g. Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days*) resembles but exceeds the paradigm of Stanzel's peripheral first person narration. Heterodiegetic *skaz* narrative, for example Gogol's "Overcoat," cannot be described within Stanzel's model readily [16] – or for that matter, Genette's – because it situates the narrator and the audience in the same world as the characters but at a remove from them. Analytically, this situation of course coincides with that of the traditional "omniscient" third person narrator of the authorial type – writers talking about "our" society, sharing England's history and mores with the narratee. Fictional third person narrative has however evolved to a point where it neatly separates these realms of existence, to an extent that allows for the narrator to be refined out of existence, thus giving rise to reflectoral narration.

Skaz narration, as a fictional technique that pretends to reinstitute a specious orality, recuperates the original communal character of oral storytelling, with the effect of subverting the by now established separation of narration and narrated in terms of fictional worlds. Second person fiction utilizes this subversive potential for creating an unsettling effect – that of involving the actual reader of fiction, not only in the tale, but additionally in the *world* of fiction itself, an eerie effect that can be put to very strategic political use. The technique has been widely applied, for instance, in recent black women's writing where it allows the fictional narrator both to evoke the familiar setting for the community-internal reader and to draw readers from different cultural backgrounds

16 Or, rather, it requires an excursus which firmly circumscribes such phenomena as narratological oddities. Thus, Thackeray's "Pumpernickel narrator" (Stanzel 1984: 202-205; Warhol 1989: 86), although quite on the lines of traditional storytelling modes (cp. also Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*), therefore comes across as a metaleptic infraction of major proportions.

into the fictional world of the black community, thereby increasing potential empathy values and forcing an in-group consciousness on the (factually) out-group reader. Examples for the extremely successfull application of this rhetorical *skaz* strategy can be located, e.g., in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*, as well as the third person present tense sections of Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*.

> Why didn't Cocoa come home and get herself a husband, somebody she could trust? Now, if that don't beat the band – come home and get a husband. Who was she gonna marry here? This sorry lot in Willow Springs can't even *spell* train, no less run one. Whatever the boy is into, Mama Day says he's all right. And ***you know***, they don't make enough wool – even up in New York – to pull anything over her eyes. But Mama Day ain't seen him, has she? Nobody down here's seen him yet. Awful suspicious, you up and marry somebody folks ain't met. Awful smart, ***if you ask me***. Get him first and then let him see the mess you had to grow up around.
> (*Mama Day*, Part I; Naylor 1989: 132-133; my emphasis in bold italics)

A third model that highlights the communicative level of second person narrative is letter writing, and this is a technique which has given rise to major (if frequently parodic) developments in late twentieth century fiction. Letters achieve an ideologically and epistemologically central position in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* or in John Barth's *Letters*. In much second person fiction an address function is *motivated* realistically by an implicit or explicit letterwriting subtext. The reader, in her attempt to make sense of the situation of address, is led to interpret the address to an absent addressee in terms of an epistolary model. Alice Munro's "Tell Me Yes or No" is a good case in point. The female narrator is obviously addressing her dead lover, and in terms of realistic motivation one suspects a kind of diary entry in letter form. As it turns out, the narrator may have 'made up' the entire love story as a fantasy of sorts, and the letter model consequently loses much of its persuasive force. A similar contrivance occurs in Naylor's *Mama Day* where the second person sections seem to constitute a series of letters between George and Cocoa which recreates the beginnings and the development of their love relationship and marriage, but which is eventually 'explained' as Cocoa communing with dead George – a non-realistic explanation, but one appropriate to the fictional versimilitude of a fantastic fictional 'reality.' What one has here is a clear instance of the reader constructing a superficially credible narrational 'situation' of letter writing, and then being disabused by the final scenes of the novel, which require an interpretation of the second person narrative strand that would have encountered deserved skepticism if proposed in the initial seemingly realistic

sections of the novel. It is only when the reader has come to accept (in fictional terms) the voodoo powers of Mama Day, and the existence of supernatural forces which Mama Day cannot counter by anything but George's sacrificial death, that she will be prepared to accept Cocoa's and George's dialogue across the boundary of life and death.

A final fourth prototype of a pure address function in second person fiction is that of the dramatic monologue. Like letter writing this, too, has a decidedly homocommunicative aspect although only in relation to the fictional speaker (it is homodiegetic). In principle the dramatic monologue does not *narrate*, it is unmediated direct discourse (Stanzel 1984: 226).[17] Yet the 'point' of dramatic monologue usually consists in the unwitting revelation of the speaker's ignorance of (or, worse, implication in) not entirely innocent fictional events. The *raison d'être* of the dramatic monologue lies, precisely, in the *uncovering* of a 'story' which the speaker does not tell but which her discourse reveals to the perceptive addressee who may or may not coincide with the intradiegetic narratee. Some addressees are clearly fictional, such as the one of Browning's "My Last Duchess," and it is not specified in the text whether this narratee draws the same conclusions as does the 'implied' reader. The meaning of the monologue emerges from the appreciation of the entire situation of communication and its interpretation by the non-involved observer. The dramatic monologue has to be distinguished from the interior monologue primarily on account of its inherent address function. Nor does it *narrate* in the sense of Jason's monologue in *The Sound and the Fury*. There is no later evaluation in Jason's narrative, whereas Browning's duke talks about (although he does not narrate) events in the past which require the reconstruction of two separate levels of analysis. Unlike the prototypical 'unreliable' first person narrator, no attempt at narrative presentation is made; one gets instead the collocation of a speaker function and a story that is signified *indirectly*. This collocation is highly significant in terms of narrative typology since it constitutes an alternative to the Genettean model in which the narrative discourse, the product of the enunciational process on the part of a speaker, *directly signifies* the story since the enunciation is one of *narration*. The dramatic

17 Cohn (1978: 257-261) argues that the dramatic monologue is close to first person narrative in its presentation of a fictional speaker who can behave much like a homodiegetic narrator. However, not only is the telling of the story as such in a dramatic monologue not really the 'point' of the fictional enunciation; the existential fitting out of this speaker on the communicative plane exceeds by far the customary vague hints at the situation of writing and speaking in first person novels.

monologue can therefore be regarded as a non-narrative form of (implicit) narration and provides an example of a non-narrative speaker function in narrative, if narrative is here defined as embracing texts with a story signified (including drama).[18] A noteworthy recent example of the dramatic monologue is Hawkes's novel *Travesty*, in which the fictional speaker addresses his friend and daughter who are seated in his car while he is driving at reckless speed with the avowed intent to commit communal suicide. A distinction between discourse and story is here no longer feasible in neat fashion. There is a story that emerges from the speaker's diatribe, a story that reveals a history of adultery and child abuse, but the main suspenseful level of the novel is naturally confined to the outcome of the car ride (will the narrator succeed in killing himself and his two passengers?), and the main story level would therefore seem to coincide with that of enunciation – a case of Genette's simultaneous narration. Irrespective of whether one does or does not regard Hawkes's novel as in fact narrative (a purely terminological decision), one can agree on the underlying model of the dramatic monologue and on the subversive character of the text. The text can be argued to be subversive both in terms of neat narratological distinctions and in terms of awarding the actual reader in her interpretative function a prime share in constituting narrative signification. After all, the story signified resides in the (unconscious) motivations that one learns to attribute to the fictional speaker.

So far I have dealt with models of second person fiction that emphasize this genre's addressee function. I will now turn to non-literary antecedents of second person fiction that have a second person referent, i.e. that use a second person pronoun to refer to a non-fictional protagonist. Interestingly, there are only rare instances of *literary* models for second person fiction in its non-address function, and they all constitute applications of generalized *you* or self-address *you*. I again note four prototypes. The first is what I call the 'Instructions and Guide Book *you*': the actual addressee is described as *doing* things in a possible application of the instructions. Examples include cookbooks, tourist guidebooks, instructions how to use or set up technical equipment, instructions how to proceed, fill out forms or exercise, and a wide variety of the 'How to...' literature. A text that plays with these nonfictional models is Pam

18 This departs from Chatman's (1978, 1990) definition of narrative as always sharing story and discourse.

Houston's "How to Talk to a Hunter" (1990), which significantly exceeds and parodies such a 'how to' subtext.[19]

> When he asks you if you would like to open a small guest ranch way out in the country, understand that this is a rhetorical question. Label these conversations future perfect, but don't expect the present to catch up with them. (Houston 1990: 99)
>
> The man who has said he's not so good with words will manage to say eight things about his friend without using a gender-determining pronoun. Get out of the house quickly. Call the most understanding person you know that will let you sleep in his bed. (Ibid., 101)

A second model can be discovered in the 'courthouse *you*' – the rendering of the defendant's (or witness's) actions and thoughts in the reconstructive narration addressed to the defendant/witness in the witness box with the aim of eliciting a confession (*and then you killed her*) or simply of recapitulating previously elicited material. This model was adopted by Ralph Milne Farley in his "The House of Ecstasy" (1947), and it is given a decisive turn of the screw at the conclusion of that narrative:

> I have now told you all that I myself know of the episode. But unfortunately I do not know the address of the house of ecstasy. You need that address. You have to have that address, if you are ever to rescue the girl who loved and trusted you.
>
> Try hard, my friend, try hard.
>
> *Can't* you remember? You *must* remember! (Farley 1947: 153)

The most common departure point for second person fiction is the linguistic device of generalizing *you*: *When you have a cold, you really feel lousy*. Generalizing *you* is a particularly important starting point for developing narrative *you* because it is crucially homocommunicative, associating an addressee with actions performed by that addressee, although those actions are not situated in a fictional past but in a potential future or a conjectural alternative world of atemporal fictionality. Early adumbrations of second person fiction, particularly the first section in Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* or – extensively – Robert Penn Warren's *All the Kings' Men*, illustrate with surprising clarity how a potential, conjectural 'one' becomes transformed into the addressee's fictional action and from there goes on to replace an experiential *I* which in turn can resurface as the first person narrator's *I*.

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19 See also the stories in Lorrie Moore's *Self-Help* (1985) and Richardson's stimulating discussion of these in terms of "subjunctive mode."

The local *I* rode puffed and yanked and stalled and yawned across the cotton country. [...] We would stop beside some yellow, boxlike station, with the unpainted houses dropped down beyond, and *I* could see up the alley behind the down-town [...] The houses didn't look as though they belonged there, improvised flung down, ready to be abandoned. Some washing would be hanging on a line, but the people would go off and leave that too. They wouldn't have time to snatch it off the line. It wouid be getting dark soon, and they'd better hurry.

But as the train pulls away, a woman comes to the back door of one of the houses–just the figure of a woman, for *you* cannot make out the face–and she has a pan in her hands and she flings the water out of the pan [...] The floor of the house is thin against the bare ground and the walls and the roof are thin against all of everything which is outside, but *you* cannot see through the walls to the secret to which the woman has gone in.

The train pulls away, faster now, [...] *You* think that if the earth should twitch once, as the hide of a sleeping dog twitches, the train would be jerked over [...]

But nothing happens, and *you* remember that the woman had not even looked up at the train. *You* forget her, and the train goes fast, and is going fast when it crosses a little trestle. [...] You catch the sober, metallic, pure, late-light, unriffled glint of the water [...] and see the cow standing in the water upstream near the single leaning willow. And all at once you feel like crying. But the train is going fast, and almost immediately whatever *you* feel is taken away from *you*, too.

You bloody fool, do you think that you want to milk a cow?

You do not want to milk a cow.

Then you are up at Upton.

In Upton *I* went to the hotel, [...]

(*All the King's Men*, ii; Warren 1974: 75-76)

The actual reader *qua* implicit narratee is therefore inevitably drawn into the fiction, identifying with a generalized position that transforms itself into the specificity of an experiencing *I*. In Warren's *All the King's Men* this *I* merges with the first person narrator Jack Burden, but in subsequent second person fiction the *you* stands in for the reflectoral consciousness of a character with whom the actual reader is led to empathize.

The telephone rings. It's right beside you – you jump – reach for the receiver. "Yes?"

A tiny instant's silence. Then: "Jacqueline?" A man's voice – deep, civilized – with a somehow caressing intonation that is yet quiet and respectful.

Your heart beats. "No," you say, with a little apologetic laugh.

(Sarah 1975: 22)

What is especially interesting here is the way in which such empathy is used by authors of, for instance, gay literature to manipulate readers into an empathetic identification with the protagonist from which it then proves difficult to withdraw when that character's sexual orientation is finally revealed. The technique forces the reader to either accept this orientation on its own terms (erasing her or his customary marginalizing stance), or to withdraw empathy, but at the cost of awareness of one's own unwitting implication in the frame of mind from which one now shies away. This technique derives its political or ideological effectiveness from the belated specification of sexual orientation (note, for instance, White's *Nocturnes for the King of Naples*). A particularly astute manipulation of readers' identificational processes can for instance be found in Frederick Barthelme's "Moon Deluxe." In this story there is no initial identification of the second person protagonist as male, but the description of the *you*'s observation of a female driver allows an early hypothesis of male identification which is later borne out by the text. A male reader may or may not share the protagonist's implied obsession with sex and accordingly empathize with, or ironically distance himself from, that protagonist's viewpoint. When, later in the story, the protagonist is flouted in his intended sexual adventure with a pair of women (including his earlier object of observation) because he realizes that they are a lesbian couple, an empathetic male reader may experience a similar bewilderment and frustration, whereas an ironic reader (male or female) will savour the protagonist's discomfiture as his merited punishment for heterosexual chauvinism.

The model of generalizing *you* for reflectoral second person fiction is reinforced by one final fictional (and indeed also experiential[20]) model, that of self-address *you*. When people in their private thoughts argue with themselves, assuming a dialogue between their egos and superegos, or (re)enact an exchange between themselves and a (possible) interlocutor, they may find themselves addressing their own selves employing a second person pronoun. Instances of this use are observable in interior monologue fiction (e.g. passim in Stephen's musings in *Ulysses*), but for this reason have no extensive occurrence in literature. There is, however, one novel that makes more than cursory use of self-address *you*, Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*, where the second person of

20 Self-address *you* can be found in oral narratives, too, in invented private thoughts which narrators pretend to have addressed to themselves at moments of intense puzzlement.

self address can be found to prevail in interior monologue passages as well as (free) indirect discourse and psycho-narration.

> Sometimes he felt what he believed the white folks were feeling. Or most of them. Something you felt against your mind. Against all you knew. Against all you believed. Yet, there it was. [...] You'd always wanted to know a white girl. You knew their brothers, you'd played with them as kids, sometimes gone fishing. But you never knew a white girl. You'd have to be a house boy, or cook or gardener, to know a nice white girl in Maxwell. And even to know the whores in the hotels you'd better be a bellboy.
> (*Strange Fruit*; L. Smith 1944: 216)

How do these paradigms of second person texts combine to give rise to second person fiction? If I have outlined possible models of second person fiction, this has not been to suggest a history of the development of second person fiction or an empirical etiology of its manifestations. On the contrary, models of second person fiction are here meant to outline possible routes of naturalization on the part of the reader when confronted with the naturally non-occurring form of second person fiction. Authors can allude to a combination of such familiar fictional and nonfictional models in an attempt to facilitate one's access to their experiment, but they then also frequently parody, extend and subvert these models in the direction of a new genre, a new writing mode which, in turn, may come to be the starting point for further fictional developments.

*

I will conclude this essay with a brief discussion of a particularly innovative use of the second person in Joyce Carol Oates's "You." The story illustrates the excellent suitability of second person fiction for the expression and description of intimacy. This is true especially of the reflectoral mode where the second person creates an even greater empathy than first or third person variants (implicitly, even if only initially, seeming to involve the actual reader in her role as a possible addressee) as well as – particularly so – of the homocommunicative address mode, where the addressee (and protagonist) frequently happens to have an intimate relationship with the narrator or addressor – that of a lover, in most cases, and, as in Oates's story that of the daughter's fraught relationship to her mother. Since address combines a distancing factor (foregrounding the non-identity of the *I* and the *you*) with the presupposition of an acquaintance with the person thus addressed, it proves to be a fictional mode adaptible to detailing the jig-saw structure of the mother-daughter relationship. As feminist studies have revealed in detail, that relation

alternates between dominant intimacy and the continual struggle on the daughter's part for liberation from the boundedness of that very intimacy.

Oates's story starts with a clearly figural presentation of Madeline's arrival on the West Coast, in a second person present tense mode: "You are leaving the air plane" (362), interspersed with interior monologue ("Everyone is too slow." – 363) and free indirect discourse ("Really, you despise men. You've said so and luckily you were not overheard by the wrong people." – 363-364). There are intermittent hints of a non-figural evaluative stance, but these can always be put down to Madeline's critical self-awareness: "It strikes you that this is an important scene, an emotional scene. You hate men because of their weaknesses; then you love them because they are so weak." (365)

It is one such passage that gives way to the first *I* and introduces a tantalizingly elusive narrator, later identified by means of "our mother" and then "I, your daughter Marion, the less striking of your twin girls." (367)

> Now hurry, hurry into the next scene, the next room–change your clothes, grunting, tugging at a zipper–and the girl will fluff out your hair and spray it with a sticky perfumed spray, just right for this windy edge of the continent. Your fingernails are painted platinum. Your toenails are painted platinum. Your legs are smooth and shaved, perfect legs, you don't bother even to look at them–you hardly bother, these years, to stare at your face, it seems immortal. Yet there is a strange look to you–***I noticed it once***, when you were going in a restaurant–a look of strain, of craziness, as if your lovely blue eyes were about to cross, out of anger. Your crazy anger. (366; my emphasis)

The scene continues, now larded with Marion's comments and retrospective generalizations ("You used to like to set traps for waiters" – 366-367) and then is being juxtaposed repeatedly with Marion's simultaneous actions: while Madeline is being dined and wined, Marion is trying to get Peter on the telephone (367) from their New York apartment. The scene then shifts entirely to Marion and we get a full account of Marion's phone conversation with a friend of her twin sister Miranda, who however has no idea of Miranda's whereabouts. And back to Madeline in the restaurant.

Then there is a "change of scene" (369) to Madeline being done up for filming and Marion, while describing the scene and commenting on it, addresses her mother ("pity her [the manicurist]"; "no, don't think of it" – 370) as if she were simultaneously talking to her mother. At this point a scene between Miranda and her mother of "last night" before Madeline's departure is rehearsed (recapitulated and *not* narrated) by Marion,

and it is contrasted with Madeline's view of (and about) herself in the mirror in her hotel room in Hollywood.

Meanwhile (or next?) Marion arrives at Peter's office where further details of Miranda's assumed pregnancy (by Peter) are disclosed. Marion indulges in philosophical reflections on families and love and death, directly addressing Madeline: "Father was no more to you, Mother, than any other man [...]" (378). While wandering aimlessly about, trying to kill time before her music lesson, Marion has a thought "not to be recorded. Yet I will record it because I want to tell you everything." (379) When Madeline watches the news in the Hollywood hotel, Marion (visualising? the scene) is surprised at her mother's frightened reaction to a kidnapping story.

We finally get to the official phone call to the New York apartment (presumably by the police or from the hospital) rendered as Marion's experience. This is immediately followed by a description of Madeline as grieving mother on the plane heading back to New York and of Marion waiting for her arrival at the airport. Marion has a hallucination (again we are in a clearly figural mode, this time first person) of seeing her mother, but it is somebody else. The climax comes when Madeline does finally materialize before Marion's eyes:

> Before you stride over to me, in this last moment, I put my hands to my face and begin to cry. No, you are too strong for me!–your face is too bright!
>
> You seize my wrist with your strong, gloveless hand. "Marion!" you say. It is an absolute claim. You are back. (386-387)

Clearly there is no time for Marion to address to her mother the monologue (if it is one) we have been overhearing. What we have read could occur only in Marion's mind while her mother was blissfully absent; it constitutes an interlude of independence from the well-established domination by the mother's Other which so cruelly seems to repress Marion's Self.

Oates's story achieves a convincing and indeed startling personal history of filial frustration at the hands of an unappeasably demanding and dominant mother, and provides a view of the mother's psyche through the critical eyes of the daughter that reflects precisely that combination of inescapable immersion and (nearly carnal) knowledge with the self-distancing required in the process of establishing an identity of one's own. The story additionally is a superb example of what one may consider to be the postmodernist tendency to subvert the realistic, representational mode. Not only is the second person identified only belatedly as a deictic category of address (in the initial section of the

story the second person pronoun seemed to be a reflector mode a-deictic *you*). Moreover, with the reader having to reintegrate drastically what went before, one can ultimately find no convincingly consistent 'realistic' situation of *utterance or narration*: the first person sections, too, need to be characterized as reflector mode narrative. The situation is complicated by the fact that Oates's story seems to be a case of, at best, simultaneous narration, i.e. where events are narrated (or – really – reflected) simultaneously with their occurrence). Perhaps more adequately, one could read the narrational structure as an extended representation of the daughter's consciousness – including her visualization of her mother in characteristic vignettes and her *experience* of snatches of memory (which are not presented as memories at all). Such a reading is, however, highly dubious and smacks of a post factum naturalization on the reader's part, attempting to find a realistic explanation for the pronominal and temporal cruxes of the text. Viewed impassively, the story in fact allows one to observe the naturalistically and narratologically "impossible" combination of voyeuristic omniscience (seeing into and knowing the minds both of the actress mother Madeline and that of the fictional *I*, the daughter Marion) with no realistically recuperable teller or reflector agent who might view events unfold.[21] Nor can the structure be explained by juxtapositional and combinatorial strategies on the part of an 'implied author' since the text, even after careful analysis, fails to yield a non-debatable narrative structure. What it yields, instead, are a number of facts: Madeline's absence for professional reasons, Miranda's (Marion's twin sister's) attempted suicide during this absence, Marion's visit to Madeline's former lover Peter which discloses Miranda's pregnancy, her visit to her sister in hospital, and finally Marion's expectant meeting of her mother (Madeline) at the airport when she returns from Hollywood. These are the facts, but important almost epistemological questions remain unanswered. Are we getting Marion's view of her mother's psyche, or a "real" figural mode presentation of it? Does Marion actively review her experiences? These indeterminacies present themselves because Oates does not play by realistic rules by which even the non-naturally occurring[22] reflectoral narrative mode has an implied realistic basis, that of the reflector's existence in a specifiable location and his or her observation of surrounding events.

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21 A similar tour de force is Ilse Aichinger's curious "Spiegelgeschichte," which combines a hortatory narrational voice with the visionary experience of retracing the protagonist's life from death backwards towards birth and unbeing.

22 This is as much as to say, not occurring in conversational narrative.

If I have dealt at length with this short story it was because it illustrates the potential intricacies of second person fiction much more clearly than some of the book-length exercises in this genre. These, not able to hold the reader's attention level at maximum for an entire novel, content themselves for the most part with "pure" reflector narrative which can easily be recuperated realistically once the figural perspective has beeen sorted out by the reader. Oates's story documents, even more forcefully, that second person fiction has arrived at full literary maturity, no longer a simple experimental trick without particular narrative quality.

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