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They are coming for you, to take you to the firing squad, the gallows, the
stake, the electric chair, the gas chamber. You have to stand up; but you
can't. Your body, gorged with fear, is too heavy to move. You'd like to be
able to rise and walk between them out the open door of your cell with
dignity; but you can't. So they have to drag you away.

Or, it is coming, it is upon you and the others; bells or sirens have gone off
(air raid, hurricane, rising flood), and you've taken shelter in this cell-like
space, as out of harm's way as you can be, and out of the way of those
trained to cope with the emergency. But you don't feel safer; you feel
trapped. There's no place to run, and even if there were, fear has made your
limbs too heavy, you can barely move. It's an alien weight that you shift
from the bed to the chair, the chair to the floor. And you are shivering with
fear or cold; and there is absolutely nothing you can do except try not to be
any more terrified than you already are. If you remain very still, you pretend
that this is what you have decided to do.

(Sontag, The Volcano Lover 2.4.217; original emphasis¹)

You wondered if the man had made sense to the others since you didn't
understand him. You were looking at the other faces for clues when Misra's
image came right before you, placing itself between you and the men you
were staring at. You would remember the same image when, years later, at
school and in Mogadiscio, you were shown the pictures of Egyptian mum-
mies by one of Salaado's relations, namely Cusmaan. The image which
insisted on imposing itself on your brain was that of a Misra, already dead,
but preserved; a Misra whose body, when you touched it, was cold as ice,
as though it had spent a night or two in the mortuary. But there was an
incredible calmness about her corpse, as if she herself had abandoned her
life much with the same preparedness as Armadio, Karin's late husband,
had surrendered his to the Archangel of Death. There was no struggle, no
pain, death came as welcome guest—and stayed, that was all. Somehow you
consoled yourself, remembering that she looked like a corpse when asleep,
with her hands neatly clasped together across her mountain of a chest and
barely a snort or noise issuing from her nostrils. Did she not playfully act
as though she were dead a couple of times? You rationalized that your mind
conjured up these ugly images because you felt guilty at parting with her,
guilty at leaving without her. Then you told the image to vanish—and it did.
And you were staring at the men’s faces, in silence, in the kind of thank-you-God hush which comes after a Muslim has sneezed.

(Farah, Maps 123)

Most people, when you tell them that you work on second-person fiction, stare at you in amazement: “how can a narrative be in the second person?” they ask you and then immediately go on to offer, by way of helpful comment, a remark like “O you mean texts which keep addressing a narratee? Like dramatic monologues? or the epistolary novel?” Such encounters frequently end, you will see, with a recommendation of a new second-person text. You rush to the library or bookshop to get a copy and take it to bed that night with high expectations of yet another second-person text to add to your bibliography, but the moment you lay eyes on the text, your hopes evaporate and your excitement ebbs: it is another one of those with a (maybe) personalized narratee, sometimes in admittedly impossible situations of address: for instance, the (dead) narrator’s (Edgar’s) harangue to his colleague Addi in Ulrich Plenzdorf’s Die neuen Leiden des jungen W. (1973). This tirade is triggered by Addi’s comments about Edgar to Edgar’s father. (Mr. Wibeau is interviewing the friends of his son, trying to find out about his death.) Here Edgar, already dead, chides Addi for his sanctimonious “Edgar war ein wertvoller Mensch” (“Edgar was a valuable person”):

Addi, du enttäuscht mich. . . . Ich dachte, du machst das nicht mit, über einen, der über den Jordan gegangen ist, diesen Mist zu reden. (87)

Addi, you disappoint me. . . . I’d thought you wouldn’t repeat such crap about somebody who has kicked the bucket. (My translation)

Edgar also begs Charlie, his would-be girl friend, not to cry about him (86) and in similar manner exhorts his best friend, Willi, to remain faithful to their ideas (17), and he tries to keep Addi from enlightening his father about his (Edgar’s) recent visit to him (102-03). (Edgar had disguised himself as a plumber.) Clearly these posthumous interventions by Edgar are metaleptic crossings of the existential levels between narrators and characters but made particularly grotesque in this case by the pretense that the dialogue is unmediated—Edgar does not “narrate it”—and by the fact that Edgar’s voice is that of a dead man’s. In no way is Edgar therefore narrating Addi’s story to him, which could be regarded as a minimal requirement for second-person narrative proper.

The two quotations at the very beginning, on the other hand, (incipiently) illustrate the second-person mode. I have deliberately chosen two little-discussed texts in order to get away from the standard illustrations: Michel Butor’s La modification (1957), Italo Calvino’s If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler (1979), or Jay McInerney’s Bright Lights, Big City (1984). The first quotation from Susan Sontag’s recent The Volcano Lover (1992) is one of many interesting
passages employing the second-person pronoun in the generalized meaning of “you,” “one.” (There is also quite a lot of actual reader address and addressing of a fairly specific narratee figure [e.g., 138-39], features that in equal measure apply to Plenzdorf’s novel.) The Sontag passage represents a preliminary stage of second-person fiction and indeed sounds very similar to the openings of second-person texts such as those collected in Lorrie Moore’s *Self Help* (1985) or Tama Janowitz’s *Slaves of New York* (1986). No story develops from this initial situation, however, a story, that is, in which the “you’s” experiences would be reported: the events are told specifically about the Cavaliere in the third person, instead. Sontag therefore does not move into a second-person text proper although she well might have after such an opening paragraph.

The Nuruddin Farah passage, on the other hand, is a true and proper instance of second-person narrative from a novel in which first-, second- and third-person narrative alternate chapter by chapter. The you is here no longer anchored to a virtual narratee, to a generalized “you” that might appeal to the reader as an identificationary option: it exclusively refers to the protagonist. Askar’s experiences are specific, they are narrated as having occurred in the past, and there is even a slight distancing, a hint of interpretation, evaluation, and ignorance in relation to the Askar of the past. However, no personalized narrator appears on the scene, nor can we be entirely certain that the distancing proceeds from an Askar of a later point in time looking back on his own experiences. (The issue cannot easily be resolved within the novel since the alternation between first-, second- and third-person segments prevents the establishment of a uniform “point of view,” and the many visionary experiences also make it quite impossible to draw a definite line between the realistic and fantastic parts of the fiction: Farah’s story in this respect is very close to the magic realism of Márquez.) A sentence like “You would remember the same image when, years later, at school... you were shown...” presupposes a perspective later than those school days, but the temporal location and consciousness attached to this perspective remains vague, allowing both for the existence of a very covert narratorial voice and for the postulation of multilevel reflectoral self-analysis on Askar’s past, who, one could argue, remains the internal focalizer throughout the novel. The first-person sections do not resolve this ambiguity either because even there Askar’s voice of narration is not anchored in a definite here-and-now, and the concluding passage of the narrative, Askar’s arrest, is reported within the final third-person segment, where it merges the three grammatical persons in a concluding paragraph of “mythic” quality (246).

If you have wondered about a definition of second-person fiction, reader, it will follow anon, complete with a discussion of the problems involved in such an attempt at delimitation. As you will see, the phenomenon of second-person fiction proves fairly resistant to unequivocal definition particularly if one pays attention to the historical sources of the genre and considers its anticipations and incipient manifestations in passages such as the one from Sontag cited earlier.
1. Definitions

One of the major handicaps to an adequate treatment of second-person narrative has been the lack of an unequivocal definition of what exactly is a second-person text. The major problem in this regard—and one that has been dogging even this special issue—appears to be the necessity of finding the golden proportion between "real" second-person texts and other fiction using the second-person pronoun in interesting and potentially significant ways. Seeing that second-person narrative is still rare enough to cause most readers pause, it does not seem to make much sense, that is, to insist on an overly restrictive definition of the phenomenon if this move then results in neglecting uses of the second person in (literary) texts that are precisely those that second-person fiction proper evolved from or relates to in the experience of readers. On the other hand, subsuming second-person fiction under the entire spectrum of second-person (i.e., address) forms in narrative risks diluting the very specificity and originality of the phenomenon. In addition to this, recent more searching analyses into the second-person realm have uncovered a wide variety of second-person texts that can no longer easily be classified under one and only one form of second-person fiction, a factor that complicates the issue of definition even further. Finally, in light of the difficulties of integrating second-person texts within standard narrative theories, second-person narrative can be regarded as a touchstone for the very basis of narratological models and particularly of their fundamental categories. As a consequence, it becomes problematic to define second-person texts by reference to the very models and categories that have proved inadequate to an incorporation of second-person fiction in the first place. This theoretical deadlock can only be resolved by rewriting narrative paradigms in a way that will as a matter of course accommodate second-person texts, and the theoretical papers in this issue attempt to do just that: to discuss second-person narrative on the backdrop of broader models of the narrative genre.

In what follows I will review a few of the definitions that have so far been proposed for second-person narrative, explaining their assets and disadvantages and the special perspective from which they were developed. An appropriate beginning is Gerald Prince's dictionary definition of "second-person narrative":

A narrative the NARRATEE of which is the PROTAGONIST in the story s/he is told. Butor's A Change of Heart is a second-person narrative. Genette 1983; Morrissette 1965; Prince 1982.

(Prince, A Dictionary of Narratology 84)

Prince quotes the classic study on second-person fiction, Bruce Morrissette's "Narrative 'You' in Contemporary Literature," which refrains from a specific definition of "you" narrative, mentioning Michel Butor's La modification (1957), Rex Stout's How like a God (1929), and John Ashmead's The Mountain and the Feather (1961) as the only consistent second-person texts. Morrissette is mainly
interested in tracing models for the technique and documenting its proliferations in twentieth-century literature and some films, and he notes some striking prefigurations of the second-person form in Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner (*Absalom Absalom!*), Robert Penn Warren, and others.

Mary Frances Hopkins and Leon Perkins in their 1981 article “Second Person Point of View in Narrative” straightforwardly characterize the narrative “you” as “an actant by definition” and therefore “internal to the story” (whereas the addressee in most third-person narratives is external to the story), but they go on to note that “the relationships of this ‘you’ to the external reader may vary within the text, providing a source of complexity in the texture of the story” (121). Hopkins and Perkins particularly insist on the reportative character of second-person narrative and on the specificity of the actions of the “you” protagonist: “The you-utterance is neither command nor accusation, nor yet generalization, but report” (122). (Hopkins and Perkins here distance themselves from Morrissette.) The authors also note the frequent use of the narrative present in second-person fiction, and they eliminate (poetic) apostrophe on the grounds that it lacks a “dual time,” the necessary duality between the time of narration and that of the story narrated. Hopkins and Perkins, moreover, discuss various different types of focalization in second-person narrative. Thus, Mary McCarthy’s “The Genial Host” is described as “second-person, limited omniscience” (125) and Rumer Godden’s “You Need to Go Upstairs” as “second-person-personal,” with the authors proposing that “[t]he narrator is entirely within the protagonist” (127). Hopkins and Perkins conclude that “[t]he only major narrative effect denied this mode [i.e., second-person fiction] is the ‘absent narrator’” (131).

It is unfortunate that Prince’s dictionary fails to mention this important article. His two other references are entirely misleading: neither Gérard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (the 1983 date refers to the French original) nor Prince’s own *Narratology* devote any reasonable space to second-person fiction. Genette (133-34) subsumes second-person narrative (which he calls a “rare but very simple case” [133]) under heterodiegesis and moves on to the issue of plural forms of narrative “person” both in the homo- and the heterodiegetic realms. Prince’s own discussion of the issue consists in presenting an invented two-sentence passage and noting that “we learn nothing explicit about the narratee as such, except that he takes part in the events recounted to him: we do not know what he thinks of these events as he is told them; we do not perceive what his attitude towards the narrator and his narration is; and so on and so forth” (17).

Since then more work has been done on second-person narration, and second-person texts have proliferated and been (re)discovered in great number. I would particularly like to mention the work by Helmut Bonheim, a leading German narratologist, to whom we owe the discovery of numerous second-person stories in recent Canadian fiction and who has coined two evocative terms to describe the typical ambiguity and multifunctionality of the second-person pro-
noun in second-person texts. Bonheim uses the term “referential slither” (“Narration” 76) to denote the “you’s” inherent capacity for addressing both the actual reader and a narratee as well as denoting a fictional protagonist and—as Bonheim, I think mistakenly, argues—“the narrator” into the bargain (74-75; cf. Richardson 311). Bonheim’s second term, “conative solicitude,” used in the title of his 1982 paper on second-person narrative, manages to pinpoint one of the more prominent emotional effects of second-person narration: namely, its decidedly involving quality, which provokes much greater initial empathy with second-person protagonists than with first- or third-person characters.5

Besides Bonheim’s work there have been two theses on second-person narrative (Hantzis; Kacandes “Narrative”) and some interesting work on the narratee by Paul Goetsch and Barbara Korte, who document a great diversity of reader roles of varying specificity and personification. One can additionally note Robyn Warhol’s study of the engaging narrator as an interesting attempt to take a fresh look at the reader role (as manifest in the fictional narratee) in nineteenth-century fiction by women authors. The most recent studies in second-person narrative have decisively added to this general framework both by taking account of the large variety of second-person texts (Richardson and Fludernik, “Second Person Fiction”) and by probing into the theoretical intricacies of the mode (Margolin).

Richardson defines second-person fiction as “any narration that designates its protagonist by a second-person pronoun. This protagonist will usually be the sole focalizer, and is generally the work’s narratee as well” (311). Richardson’s definition differs from Prince’s (given earlier) in that Prince makes the protagonist’s narrateehood the principle criterion of second-person fiction; Richardson, by contrast, sees reference to the protagonist as central and makes narrateehood a secondary criterion. One should add immediately that, although most second-person fiction is indeed written in the second-person pronoun form, the choice of pronoun is that of an address pronoun (or of other elements of address such as the imperative) rather than, specifically, of you; in some languages the address pronoun can be a third person or plural form within that language’s morphological system.

These grammatical complexities are discussed in great detail in Uri Margolin’s “Narrative ‘You’ Revisited.” Margolin’s characterization of second-person narrative is a multilevel definition involving the notions, on one hand, of a proportion between address you’s and constative (i.e., narrative) you’s and, on the other, of specificity (versus recurrency, or the generic use of you in the meaning of “one”):

- The presence of a singular global narrator on the highest level of textual embedding, such that the whole (fictional) discourse originates with him or her;
- The presence of numerous instances of “you” in his or her discourse, oral or written;
- The majority of these “you” instances refer to a narrated rather than communicative “you”;

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Richardson’s formulation allows for second-person fiction without a narrator’s “I” and without an (extradiegetic) narratee (hence his rewriting of Prince); Margolin, on the other hand, insists on the presence of a narrator but is pragmatic about the uses of the you in the text’s function of telling a story. I have myself somewhat endorsed Richardson’s viewpoint since I have noted a great number of second-person texts that have neither a narrator nor a narratee (i.e., current addressee of the discourse), texts which I see as unequivocal instances of reflector-mode narrative (Stanzel, Theory of Narrative 141-84).

In passages such as these, frequently described in terms of “the narrator” being referred to as “you” (Bonheim, “Narration” 74) or subsumed under first-person narrative (Passias 199-200), the protagonist’s experience is narrated from her own perspective and the pronoun you consistently refers to the protagonist. There is no traceable narrator’s I or narrative “voice” (no evaluations, predictions, etc.), nor is there an intrafictional (though extradiegetic) you in the here and now of the act of narration: that is, a listener to whom the story is being told. Readers, of course, may feel sorely tempted to identify at first, but only so long as their situation overlaps with the protagonist’s (Richardson 312); as soon as the protagonist becomes too specific a personality, becomes, that is, a fictional character, the quality of the presumed address to an extradiegetic reader in such texts evaporates. Nor are these passages instances of a character narrating the story
to herself. In both cases the text renders what must be the perceptions and impressions of the protagonist. Even in the Sontag passage, where Mrs. Hamilton distances herself from her own actions, this distancing is part of her experience and not an act of narration.

I will propose a preliminary definition of second-person narrative as narrative whose (main) protagonist is referred to by means of an address pronoun (usually you) and add that second-person texts frequently also have an explicit communicative level on which a narrator (speaker) tells the story of the “you” to (sometimes) the “you” protagonist’s present-day absent or dead, wiser, self. In such contexts the narratee acquires a fictional past through the narrative in progress. The narrative projects an addressee by means of the second-person pronoun, and that speech act of address evolves into a narration of the “you’s” past experiences. Conversely, the narrator very frequently emerges not only as a present-day speaker or teller of the tale. “He” has personally known the “you” in the past (how else would “he” have learned the story “he” is telling?) and very often shared the “you’s” experiences, participating in the events recounted in the story. (One might even call such narratives “I” and “you” narratives, and some of them actually use the pronoun we in intermittent fashion throughout.)

As my definition already implies, second-person texts are “open” in several respects. They can accommodate a variety of “you’s” and a variety of “I’s,” and a combination of these. Second-person narratives, in so far as a speaker or addressee emerges from the text, moreover, tend to move along and across another boundary line, that between the discourse and the story. This state is true not only to the extent that narrator and addressee acquire past story selves, or, viewed from the other end of the telescope, the protagonist becomes a listener and addressee; second-person narratives additionally tend to project a story from the discourse level through the very act of address, a story that then need no longer relate to a fictional past set apart from the present of narration (and address). This is the type of second-person narrative that Richardson has so felicitously dubbed the “subjunctive mode”:

Back at home, days later, feel cranky and tired. Sit on the couch and tell him he’s stupid. . . . He will try to kiss you. Turn your head. Feel suffocated.

(Moore 57; qtd. in Richardson 320)

“You” narrative’s propensity for being told in the present tense and for evoking and creating the story out of discourse material is also noted by Margolin, and this propensity ties in well with what Kacandes in the present collection discusses as second-person fiction’s apostrophic quality. As Jonathan Culler has noted so aptly, apostrophe in poems tends to bring into being a fictional world although it apparently foregrounds the process of poetic creativity rather than the referential aspects of the apostrophically evoked objects (135-54). In second-person fiction, on the other hand, the discourse that uses you serves primarily to invent
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a "you" and its story, and it only secondarily deflects the reader's interest onto the speaker's position. Margolin's principle of balance is a criterion of crucial importance also for the distinction between standard homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrative: if the narrator is involved with the action in a merely "marginal" manner as a bystander or contemporary witness, the discourse will usually be considered a heterodiegetic one since the story is "about" somebody other than the narrator's past self even if the narrator through his past experience enables the story to be told in the first place. Margolin's criterion of proportion, in particular, serves to explain the difficult distinction between the very common "second person" form of the dramatic monologue and "second-person fiction proper." To the extent that a dramatic monologue shifts its emphasis from the situation of talking or self-expression to the telling of a story with the current addressee as its prime protagonist, that text moves towards second-person fiction. Hawkes's Travesty (1976), Gabriel Josipovici's Contre-jour (1986) or Carlos Fuentes's "Alma Pura" ["Pure Soul"] (1964) travel that path only imperfectly, remaining with the mode of enunciation and self-expression. These texts also involve the narrator's past selves to such an extent that the addressee and the narrator are protagonists of equal weighting. The story, then, is one of shared experience, not solely that of the "you" protagonist.

Second-person fiction is, moreover, "open" on the scale between narration and interior monologue, where the text's address function can frequently be read as an instance of self-address. As with the dramatic monologue, the distinction between interior monologue and second-person fiction can prove to be entirely arbitrary. In Contre-jour and "Alma pura," it is the fact that a distinct narratee is being addressed, which clarifies that the texts need to be read as dramatic monologues, even though the narratee may prove to be dead or a figment of the speaker's imagination. The line is even less easy to draw when the verisimilitude of self-address is at stake. Most critics agree that the second-person sections of Fuentes's The Death of Artemio Cruz (1962), the three second-person passages in the fourth chapter of Mario Vargas Llosa's The Green Mansion (La casa verde [1965]), and the second-person sections in Stout's How Like a God (1929) are interior monologues that illustrate a variety of uses of the second-person pronoun for the purpose of self-narration (the evocation of memory of past experience, imperative self-exhortation [Don Anselmo in The Green Mansion], and address to an absent other [Don Anselmo's evocation of Toñita in the three passages of part 4 of the novel]). Rita Gnutzmann's informative article on what she calls "the novel in the second person" ("la novela . . . en segunda persona" [100]), however, demonstrates that a large number of texts that are usually not read as interior monologues lend themselves to being interpreted in this manner. Gnutzmann, whose subject should actually be specified as "second-person interior monologue," includes Butor's La modification and Fuentes's "Aura" among her texts, but both of these also provide good evidence for not being interior monologues. In the case of the Butor novel, the use of vous (rather than informal
or colloquial tu) for the address personal pronoun strongly argues against reading the text as Léon Delmont addressing himself, nor is the extensive description of Delmont’s surroundings convincing as part of an internal self-address: it would be highly unlikely for Léon to describe to himself what he is registering visually. Gnutzmann’s point of view, however, becomes quite intelligible when one looks at “Alma Pura,” where the speaker (Claudia) addresses her dead brother Juan Luis and does so in a monologue of simultaneous narration that collapses the report about her journey to the airport with her apostrophic re-evocation of her girlhood with Juan Luis and their eventual alienation. On the other hand, narrative statements about Claudia’s actions argue against a categorization as straightforward interior monologue. If one can realistically interpret Claudia’s text as interior monologue, it would naturally belong on Gnutzmann’s list. Although the narrational element does not predominate in the story, it is, however, sufficiently foregrounded to affect the verisimilitude of the monologic reading, turning the text into another borderline case such as Travesty or Contre-jour.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SECOND-PERSON NARRATIVE

The above remarks already begin to address major narratological issues: for instance that of the category of “person” (a category rejected with some justification by Genette [Narrative Discourse Revisited 97]) or the even more crucial dichotomy between story and discourse, discours and histoire. Second-person narrative, moreover, flies in the face of any “realistic” conceptions of fictional story telling: it is one of the most “nonnatural” or contrived types of narrative since real-world speakers would not usually narrate to the current addressee their own experiences in the present or in the past. In this connection it is particularly noteworthy that the “realistic” situation of courtroom telling or of eliciting an amnesiac’s recollection of his past self (as in Ralph Milne Farley’s “The House of Ecstasy” and Lew Landers’s film Man in the Dark) constitutes a fairly marginal story-telling context among second-person narratives.

The major three types of second-person story (viewed from the perspective of their relation to a realist reading of the text) are (a) “I” and “you” narratives (in which the narrator shares a fictional past with the narratee and can therefore be “in the know” about it); (b) the entirely nonrealistic case of a pure rendering of a second person’s consciousness; and (c) the playful metafictional case of a deliberate manipulation of the irreality and ambiguity factors of the second-person pronoun. Although, obviously, many texts will shift among these modes, Oriana Fallaci’s Un uomo (1979) can be mentioned as a good example of the first type: the narrator has learned the protagonist’s story from his own mouth and by way of poetic license is allowed to recreate it in semiomniscient fashion, addressing the “you” who must obviously be on her mind even though he is dead. McInerney’s Bright Lights, Big City, on the other hand, provides us with
no naturalizations of any realistic story-telling situation except to the extent that one wants to argue that the protagonist is telling the story to himself. That explanation does not work well in the case of the McInerney novel although it has, for instance, been proffered for Butor's *La modification* (where it is equally inappropriate); Fuentes's *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1962), on the other hand, provides a convincing example case for such a naturalization. The third type of second-person text openly plays with the reality status of the story, and here, too, the field of experimentation extends from "proper" second-person narrative into dramatic monologue (the Josipovici novel) and experimental fiction per se (Beckett's *Company*). Typical examples of the third type of second-person story radically undermine realistic readings of the text, usually at first proposing a situation that appears to be readable in realistic terms or in one of the two previous modes only then to undermine that reading. One can mention here Joyce Carol Oates's "You" or Cortázar's "Graffiti" (discussed by Irene Kacandes in this issue). In these, realistic story telling frames collapse from internal evidence.

* I will not, in this introduction, broach the crucial question of the category of person; this is done very extensively in the more theoretical articles that follow. Suffice it to note at this point that, paradoxically, the study of second-person fiction does not—as one would be likely to expect—result in a theoretical model that proposes first-person, second-person, and third-person texts (pace Ursula Wiest, the "you-Erzählsituation" is precisely a proposal that does not suggest itself as a solution). Wayne Booth's remarks on "the most overworked distinction" (150) are here endorsed to the extent that the mere criterion of "personhood" does not manage to characterize texts in really useful ways. Genette's and Stanzel's criteria of homo- versus heterodiegesis and the "realms of existence" respectively come much closer to fulfilling a major premise for narratological explanation of the function of "person" in narrative texts, and they both crucially rely on the prior *discours-histoire* ("text-action") distinction. Both models, however, fail to integrate second-person texts in a convincing manner, a fact that has led me to reconceptualize the binary opposition of homo- versus heterodiegesis on the lines of a scale between homocommunicative and heterocommunicative narratives ("Second-Person Fiction" 225). My model not only demotes the "person" category to a mere morphological—that is, grammatical feature—but it additionally proposes that the deictic properties of personhood are neutralized in the realm of reflector-mode narrative, where any pronoun can refer to the reflector protagonist and establish internal focalization. Contributors to this volume have answered the question of the status of person in ways different from my own proposal; they all agree, however, that the category "person" needs to be rethought along new lines as soon as narratives using the second-person pronoun, impersonal *one*, or other ungendered (as well as invented) pronouns such as *na* or *per* appear in fictional texts.

As regards the crucial story versus discourse dichotomy—the hub on which narrativity turns for Seymour Chatman and Genette—this problem is addressed
specifically by my own contribution to this collection, but it underlies most of the papers in one form or another. Postmodernist fiction (and second-person texts are frequently regarded as typical instances of postmodernist writing) is noted for its subversive tendencies, and the undermining of the "realist" story-discourse dichotomy ("live now, tell later") recurs as a common instance of postmodernist "playfulness." Most theories of postmodernism (Linda Hutcheon, Brian McHale, Werner Wolf) define such crossings of the story-discourse boundary as typically postmodernist "infractions" of realist expectations; viewed from the perspective of postmodernism, however, story and discourse are not entities to be presupposed in one's reading or one's theory but, on the contrary, meaning effects operated in the interests of a realist story model; rather than being basic to narrative, the story-discourse distinction then acquires a specific ideological and historical cast as a device linked to the establishment of an illusion of "reality." Infractions there are in postmodernist fiction but only in relation to readers' expectations; as regards narrative categories, it is simply the case that story and discourse parameters do not prove particularly useful in dealing with such texts except when reader expectations are contravened with particular verve so that the "infraction" in and by itself helps to explain the "meaning" or "point" of the text.

A third important area of narrative theory that is immediately relevant to second-person fiction is the relation between the narratee (and "you" protagonist) and the implied reader or real reader (depending on the kind of narrative model one uses). This issue is the major question discussed in James Phelan's paper below. The intricate and ambiguous involvement strategies for which second-person fiction is so notable have received ample discussion in most treatments of second-person narrative, but their crucial theoretical implications for a model of narrative communication are rarely noted. The rather fluid merging between the roles of the extradiegetic narratee with whom a reader may or may not want to identify, the implied reader (with whom one expects the actual reader to identify) and the real reader has been noted most impressively by Goetsch in his analysis of concretely visualized reader figures (intra- and extradiegetic narratees) in a large corpus of German and English novels. It is important, however, to put these issues in perspective by specifying what kind of communicational model one wants to utilize for narrative. In particular, the status of the implied narratee has recently come under considerable pressure from the theoretical perspective mostly in the wake of the recent attack on the category of the implied author. (Compare Genette's skeptical remarks on the concept [Narrative Discourse Revisited 135-54], and recent work by Ansgar Nünning and William Nelles, who criticize the diffuseness of the term in Chatman's formulations [Coming to Terms 90-108].) Any model of narrative transmission will, moreover, have to decide on the position and "existence" of the narrator within its communicational frame: that is, it will have to take a stand on the question of narratorless texts (advocated, primarily or most vociferously, by Ann Banfield).
The above points again serve to show that no feature of narrative can be discussed in splendid isolation and that the theoretical model one chooses inevitably prestructures the terms of the debate about categorial distinctions and, ultimately, the “placing” of second-person texts. It is for this reason that this special issue has ended up as a collection on second-person fiction and related issues rather than as an in-depth analysis of second-person texts per se.

3. A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SECOND-PERSON FICTION

Since the essays that follow will address the great diversity of second-person texts as well as discussing marginal instances of “almost-second-person” forms, I will here merely add a brief history, noting early cases of second-person narrative and tracing the anticipation of the “narrative” use of address pronouns in literature. I will exclude from consideration the epistolary novel and the dramatic monologue since these have received ample attention as genres. (It needs to be admitted, however, that studies of epistolary fiction or of the dramatic monologue naturally do not focus on the constellation of telling a person’s story to her or him, which would be the standard case of second-person narration in letter writing or in the dramatic monologue if one told a story about the addressee to herself.) In the following I will concentrate on a number of pre-1900 texts. Other early texts, like Rex Stout’s How Like a God (1929), Peter Bowman’s Beach Red (1945), Max Frisch’s “Burleske,” or Mary McCarthy’s “The Genial Host,” have already received some attention in the work of Morrissette, Kacandes (“Narrative”), Brian Richardson, and Margolin. I will start with the use of the second person in St. Augustine’s Confessions, point out an incipiently narrative use of you in the early thirteenth-century Ancrene Wisse, present the nearly perfect second-person narrative of Lydgate’s “Legend of St. Gyle,” and, for the seventeenth century, discuss Aphra Behn’s “The Lover’s Watch” and Maximilian de Béthune’s Les oeconomies royales. From the nineteenth century, Hawthorne’s “The Haunted Mind” (and two other stories) as well as two “out of the way” tales by Alexandros Papadimitris and Giovanni Verga will receive attention. Of these, Hawthorne’s “The Haunted Mind” is the first “real” case of a second-person text in the modern sense of the term with Béthune’s oddity and Lydgate’s text close runners-up.

Saint Augustine’s early fifth-century Confessions are, of course, an autobiography. However, in comparison to present-day autobiographies, their makeup is curiously apostrophic and self-decentered. The entire Confessions are addressed to God, who is involved at each and every point of the story as well as continuously invoked in its telling. Book 1 starts with a triple-chapter invocatio and praise of God, and the first details about Augustine’s life (in chapter 6) clearly make God the major agent in the drama of Augustine’s infancy:
The comfort therefore of a woman’s milk did then entertain me: yet did neither my mother nor nurses fill their own breasts, but thou, O Lord, didst by them afford a nourishment fit for my infancy, even according to thine own institution, and those riches of thine, reaching to the root of all things. Thou also ingraftedst in me a desire to suck no more than thou suppliest them with; and in my nurses to afford me what thou gavest them: for they were willing to dispense unto me with proportion, what thou suppliest them with in abundance. (13)

It is God, as the prime Mover, who provides for little Aurelius and controls even his natural urges (his desire to suck no more than is preordained for him). In so far as Augustine contravenes this preordained behavior, he is in fact succumbing to sin. Yet even then is he entirely embraced by God, turning to Him when he prays to be spared his merited punishment for truancy (1.9.28-29). God does not only determine Augustine’s own personal life but everybody else’s too. This becomes apparent, for example, in the events around Aurelius’s baptism, which his mother manages to arrange against her husband’s wishes by the help of God: “And herein didst thou assist her to overcome her husband” (1.9.35).

The arm of God never entirely leaves Augustine, not even when he is at the very bottom of the “slough of sin,” immersed in his pagan lore (cf. “And thus much truly . . . thou then wroughtest for me” [4.3.157]), and God, of course, plays a major role in Augustine’s conversion:

These things then I thought upon, and thou wert with me: I sighed, and thou heardest me: I wavered up and down, and thou didst guide me: I wandered through the broad way of this world, yet didst thou not forsake me. (6.5.285)

Of course God is not the main protagonist in Aurelius’s tale: after all, this is an autobiography, nor can God be described in terms of a human agent. Nevertheless, the narrative in The Confessions is already very similar to that of a novel in which “I” and “you” participate in a shared experience and the “I” tells the “you” about it usually after the “you’s” (sometimes merely metaphorical) death. The Confessions, that is to say, “work” in a manner similar to texts like Günter Grass’s Katz und Maus (in which the “you” protagonist, who is probably dead, has his story told by a peripheral first-person narrator, his former friend) or, to choose another example, Jane Rule’s This is Not for You, in which the experiences of the “you” are ostensibly at the center of attention but are really subordinate to the narrator’s (failed) attempt at a relationship with the addressee. Augustine’s autobiography prefigures such structural possibilities although the ideological (i.e., theological) groundings of the book naturally point in the direction of a very thematic concern with the I-you relationship. Unlike latter-day
very secular relationships, the individual's relationship to God is, of course, of major philosophical and metaphorical significance, and it is this profound embeddedness of man within the embrace of God's power that has so poignantly been lost to us as James Olney shows in his comparison of Augustine's _Confessions_ with Beckett's _Company_ (878-79).

Besides the _Confessions_, other medieval texts of a religious cast frequently employ the address pronoun to designate the writer's relationship to God, whether in invocations, mystic literature, or in homiletic discourse. In so far as God is made the prime agent of the writer's past experiences, these texts incipiently open themselves to the telling of God's "story," God's enactments on earth. Since God is not a human agent and the effects He wrought on the writer's life a case of divine intervention, of Parousia, such second-person story telling cannot become a full-blooded anticipation of what is after all a postromantic if not postrealist form of narrative. I have, however, happened upon a passage from the _Ancrene Wisse_, the early thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses, which has a human subject as its addressee (the anchoress) and includes her potential feelings and spiritual experience in the scope of its projections:

Now then, on the other hand, turn to the world; and always the more you have, the more will fail you. And serve, when you would not serve God, this false and worthless world; and you shall be cruelly oppressed by it as its slave in a thousand ways, have two regrets from every pleasure, and you shall be cruelly oppressed by it as its slave in a thousand ways, have two regrets from every pleasure, and you shall be cruelly oppressed by it as its slave in a thousand ways. And serve, when you would not serve God, this false and worthless world; and you shall be cruelly oppressed by it as its slave in a thousand ways.

Now you know that they have treacherously betrayed you; for under the outward appearance of happiness, instead of delight you often have hell on earth, and unless you draw back, you are preparing the other hell for yourself. Ask these queens, these rich countesses, these proud ladies, about their way of life; certainly, if they give it careful thought and admit the truth, I have them as witnesses, they are licking honey off thorns. They pay for all that sweetness with twice as much bitterness—and that will be clearly shown later in this treatise. It is nowhere near gold, all that glitters here; but no one but themselves knows what they often suffer.

The anchoress's specific and yet generically relevant experiences in the proposed hypothetical _casus_ of her having succumbed to the lure of this world are evoked with great vividness, lending the fictive situation an aura of actual identificationary potential. The phrase "Now you know that they have treacherously betrayed you" reveals the anchoress's mental realizations that correspond to the addressee's imagined experiences. In a modern reading of such a passage one is apt to interpret this sentence as a presentation of the anchoress's mind from her own perspective, internally focalized on the now of the experience she undergoes. However, such internal focalization cannot be identified with a protomodernist technique since this thought is, after all, only a projection under firm authorial control. As a didactic evocation of what the feelings of the addressee at a given point should be when following the author's instructions to imagine herself in
a certain situation, the passage works in an entirely convincing manner, and it prefigures the possibility of extended mind projection in the second person.

A third interesting example is John Lydgate's "The Legend of St. Gyle," in which the life of the saint is actually told in the second person. This comes as close to a second-person text as one can go, and it is clearly authorial since the writer ("Lydgate" as narrator and invocator) obviously does not share St. Giles's world with him. So authorial is this rendering of St. Giles's life that the "discussing" (Weinrich) quality of the text almost drowns out the presentation of the story as story: after all, the writer prays to St. Giles and remembers his life as a strategy of meditation apparently not primarily in order to tell St. Giles's story for the reader's entertainment or information. I cannot here quote the full text of the second-person segment (which runs from lines 43-328) but will merely present one stanza that treats of St. Giles's wound, which he received from an arrow shot at his favorite doe during the king's hunting expedition:

The kyng, the bysshop, thy story who lyst rede,
Of that kyngdam cam to thy presence
Hurt with an arwe, sauh thy wounde bleede,
Proferd amendis and gold for ther offence;
The kyng in wyl thy wrong to recompence,
By the assigned of hooll affeccyoun,
To bylde of monkis in Goddis reuerence,
A monasterie with-Inne his regioun. (165; st. 17, lines 129-36)

Whosoever wishes to read thy story [learns that] the king and the bishop of that kingdom came to thee, who wast hurt by an arrow, and they saw thy wound bleed and proffered amends and gold for their misdemeanor. Meanwhile the king, in order to recompense thee for the wrong done to thee, moved by religious feelings, commanded that within his realm beside thee [i.e., at the place where St. Giles was living as a hermit] a monastery for monks be built to the honor of God. (My translation)

The passage is clearly authorial. Note, for instance, the summarizing quality and the reference to readers' acquaintance with St. Giles's story from his ("thy") book. It also consistently refers to the protagonist, the saint, in the second person.

I now jump forward two centuries to Aphra Behn's "story" "The Lover's Watch," a translation of Balthasar de Bonnecorse's La montre (1666). Like much instructionary discourse, this little tale does not concern a story that has happened in the past but evokes a scenario of future action imagined as present to the current reader and future agent. In so far as this addressee is presented as having thoughts and emotions, this fantasy, however, acquires the quality of a fiction, and it does so particularly on account of the comparison with present-day second-person fiction in the present tense such as Moore's Self-Help. Compare, for instance:

Put extra salt on the popcorn because your mom'll say that she needs it because the part where Inger Berman [sic] almost dies and the camera does tricks to elongate her torso sure gets her every time.
Think: Geeze, here she goes again with the Kleenexes. She will say thanks honey when you come slowly, slowly around the corner in your slippers and robe, into the living room with Grandma’s old used-to-be-salad-bowl piled high [with popcorn]. (Moore 49)

with the beginning of the Behn text (after the introductory letters between the lovers):

EIGHT O’CLOCK
AGREEABLE REVERIE

Do not rise yet; you may find thoughts agreeable enough, when you awake, to entertain you longer in bed. And ’tis in that hour you ought to recollect all the dreams you had in the night. (207)

The writer imagines her lover Damon to be easily swayed by a beautiful woman and pictures his slide into possible unfaithfulness by rendering Damon’s perceptions:

It is true, in seating yourself at table, I would not have you placed over against a very beautiful object, for in such a one there are a thousand little graces in speaking, looking, and laughing, that fail not to charm, if one gives way to the eyes, to gaze and wander that way; in which, perhaps, in spite of you, you will find a pleasure. And while you do so, though without design or concern, you give the fair charmer a sort of vanity in believing you have placed yourself there, only for the advantage of looking on her; and she assumes a hundred little graces and affectations which are not natural to her, to complete a conquest, which she believes so well begun already. She softens her eyes, and sweetens her mouth; and in fine, puts on another air than when she had no design, and when you did not, by your continual looking on her, rouse her vanity, and increase her easy opinion of her own charms. Perhaps she knows I have some interest in your heart, and prides herself, at least, with believing she has attracted the eyes of my lover, if not his heart; and thinks it easy to vanquish the whole, if she pleases, and triumphs over me in her secret imaginations. (223)

Like Moore’s text, the Behn story frequently employs the will of conjecture, but it also never forgets about the instructing “I,” the mistress. For this reason Behn’s text never loses the quality of letter writing and of personal communication: the fantasy of ruling her lover’s day by her clock during her absence from him is enacted within a foregrounded discourse context and for this reason evinces less narrativity than the Moore stories. One’s reasons for excluding Behn from second-person fiction “proper,” however, are clearly a matter of balance: more discourse than “story.” As an uncanny anticipation of late twentieth-century narrative technique, on the other hand, this text remains truly astounding.

A second seventeenth-century text has been discovered by Ursula Wiest: the Duke of Sully’s (1560-1641) so-called Mémoires. Wiest found the text through the intermediacy of Sir Walter Scott, who had noted it in Rob Roy in his introductory speculations about writing a tale in the second person (1-4). The Duc de Sully’s memoirs, otherwise called Les oeconomies royales, present the duke’s military exploits in the service of his king, Henry IV of France. The text presents the narrative of four of the duke’s counsellors writing up his deeds in
the form of an address to him, thus using the formal vous when reporting the duke’s actions. The introduction to the critical edition of this text notes that little is known of the many original versions of the text and that the second-person address is presumably a spurious rhetorical element: that is, the duke himself wrote the text in propria persona. This would then clearly transform this pretended historical memoir into a fictional second-person text. A later version of the book has been entirely rewritten and changed into a first-person account (Béthune, Mémoires xiii-xxi\(^\text{19}\)), an indication that the duke’s contemporaries were not particularly happy with the rhetorical device (whether one of modesty or expediency). Since the memoirs really concentrate on the wars and political circumstances under Henry IV, the duke does not surface very prominently in the text, a factor that may account for the relative obscurity of this history as an example of second-person writing. One of the early second-person passages is the following anecdote in which the young duke had criticized a mother for the way she was treating her son, lecturing her on the proper way to handle children.

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Haunted Mind” (1835)—to be placed within a context of specific reader-response strategies in Hawthorne’s sketches—is the earliest second-person text noted in Kacandes (“Narrative Apostrophe”). Hawthorne prefigures the standard movement of second-person texts in the present tense from a generalized or “generic” (Margolin) reading of the you to a specific fictional one. Unlike the twentieth-century stories built on this “referential slither” (Bonheim, “Narration” 76), however, Hawthorne’s story has a very prominent narrator persona:

Or, to vary the metaphor, you find yourself, for a simple instant, wide awake in that realm of illusions, whither sleep has been the passport, and behold its ghostly inhabitants and wondrous scenery, with a perception of their strangeness such as you never attain while the dream is undisturbed.
This narrator, in the typical manner of a garrulous contemporary with the romantic inclinations of a Washington Irving, continues in authorial manner for yet another three pages until the description or evocation of the "you’s" thoughts and emotions gain centrality:

Such a frosty sky, and the snow-covered roofs, and the long vista of the frozen street, all white, and the distant water hardened into rock, might make you shiver, even under four blankets and a woolen comforter. Yet look at that one glorious star! Its beams are distinguishable from all the rest, and actually cast the shadow of the casement on the bed, with a radiance of deeper hue than moonlight, though not so accurate an outline.

(95; my emphasis)

In the above, "look at that one glorious star!" may still be read as the narrator’s enthusiastic appraisal of the "you’s" point of view. Another authorial passage on the "depths of every heart" and the release of buried sorrows from one’s soul opens into an extended description of a funeral train, whose participants remind the "you" of his lost happiness and his shame (97). Waking, the "you" perceives very specific objects around him ("the table," "the book," "the unfolded letter," "the fallen glove" [98]), and the "you" perceives the "influence" (99) of his beloved is "over" him. This passage comes as close to internal focalization as is possible within a decidedly "authorial" frame of reader-address:

By a desperate effort you start upright, breaking from a sort of conscious sleep, and gazing wildly round the bed, as if the fiends were anywhere but in your haunted mind. . . . Your eye searches for whatever may remind you of the living world. With eager minuteness you take note of the table near the fireplace, the book with an ivory knife between its leaves, the unfolded letter, the hat, and the fallen glove. . . . As your head falls back upon the pillow, you think—in a whisper be it spoken—how pleasant, in these night solitudes, would be the rise and fall of a softer breathing than your own, the slight pressure of a tenderer bosom, the quiet throb of a purer heart, imparting its peacefulness to your troubled one, as if the fond sleeper were involving you in her dream.

(98-99)

The technique is part of a general strategy of involving the reader in the story. Hawthorne comes very close to the elaboration of a fictional "you" (as in "The Haunted Mind") in at least two other short sketches: "Footprints on the Sea-Shore" (1842) and "Main-Street" (1849). The first of these is an imaginative exercise in which the narrator projects himself on the beach and experiences a romantic immersion in Nature. The reader is taken on this ramble: "Now let us pace together—the reader’s fancy arm in arm with mine—this noble beach, which extends a mile or more from that craggy promontory to yonder rampart of broken rocks" (561-62). Note the proximal deictics ("this noble beach," "that . . . promontory," "yonder") that establish the narrator in the deictic center (Banfield) of the imagined scene and—with the reader becoming the narrator’s physical companion—locate the reader-narratee on the same level, that of the fictional story (histoire).
That a story is being told is indicated by the sudden, if temporary, shift into the preterite: "As I threw my eyes along the edge of the surf, I remember that I was startled" (562-63). The reader is immediately taken into this experience and its memory, too:

When we have paced the length of the beach, it is pleasant, and not unprofitable, to retrace our steps, and recall the whole mood and occupation of the mind during the former passage. Our tracks, being all discernible, will guide us with an observing consciousness through every unconscious wandering of thought and fancy. Here we followed the surf in its reflex, to pick up a shell which the sea seemed loth to relinquish. Here we found a sea-weed, with an immense brown leaf, and trailed it between us by its long snake-like stalk. (563)

The anaphoric evocation by means of deictic here continues, effectively positioning the narratee on the histoire level of the story.

The following paragraph introduces a "you" that is entirely ambiguous between a generalized reading ("one": i.e., "I" or "you" or "anyone") and an actual reader-narratee address:

This extensive beach affords room for another pleasant pastime. With your staff, you may write verses—love-verses, if they please you best—and consecrate them with a woman's name. Here, too, may be inscribed thoughts, feelings, desires, warm outgushings from the heart's secret places, which you would not pour upon the sand without the certainty that almost ere the sky has looked upon them, the sea will wash them out. Stir not hence, till the record be effaced. Now—for there is room enough on your canvass—draw huge faces—huge as that of the Sphynx on Egyptian sands—and fit them with bodies of corresponding immensity, and legs which might stride half-way to yonder island. Child's play becomes magnificent on so grand a scale. But, after all, the most fascinating employment is simply to write your name in the sand. Draw the letters gigantic, so that two strides may barely measure them, and three for the long strokes! Cut deep, that the record be permanent! Statesmen, and warriors, and poets, have spent their strength in no better cause than this. Is it accomplished? Return, then, in an hour or two, and seek for this mighty record of a name. The sea will have swept over it, even as time rolls its effacing waves over the names of statesmen, and warriors, and poets. Hark, the surf-wave laughs at you! (563-64)

After this, which puts the "you" on the beach as a fully imagined participant, the tale reverts to an exclusive first-person present tense ramble and—paradoxically, one might want to say—closes with the speaker's comment on his "solitary joys" on the seashore (570).

Less drastically, "Main-Street" (from The Snow-Image) addresses the discourse's "indulgent patrons" (49). The sketch is modeled on the lines of a dramatic monologue by a professional entertainer from the fairground ("take your seats") and openly calls itself a "performance" (50). The town's main street is presented when the curtain rises (before the narratee's eyes), and the audience is invited to walk up (or down) main street, guided by the narrator-tourist guide persona of the text's "I." This narrator vicariously describes his sights and experiences to the audience; he needs to, since the "real" audience could not see them even if they were presentable on a stage:
The grey squirrel runs up the trees, and rustles among the upper branches. Was not that the leap of a deer? And there is the whirr of a partridge! Methinks, too, I catch the cruel and stealthy eye of a wolf, as he draws back into yonder impervious density of underbrush.

Note again how the narrator transports himself into the imagined scene, setting up a deictic center for himself and, implicitly, for the reader-audience. (This strategy continues with the phrase “months ago” [52], where ago is to be computed from the time of Roger Conant, “the first settler,” and not the time of the here-and-now of the presenter’s discourse.)

The text also introduces personalized narratees in the audience, like the “acidulous-looking gentleman,” who complains about the entertainment (52) and also the “critic” (57). The entertainer, however, is not dismayed and continues to involve the audience in his scene, as when he notes a “hearty English shout of welcome, [which] [w]e seem to hear with our own ears” (56) and goes on to address the spectator—“But have you observed the lady who leans upon the arm of Endicott?”—and takes the commonality of their experience for granted: “Does not the vision haunt us yet?” (56).

In the later parts of the sketch, the narrator (and the implicit audience) completely assume the mind frame of the settlers, resulting in what may be the first example of reflectorization in English literature: narrating from the deictic center of a character or a group of people in a manner that exceeds their immediate consciousness.20

Look now at the street, and observe a strange people entering it. . . . These wanderers have received from Heaven a gift that, in all epochs of the world, has brought with it the penalties of mortal suffering and persecution, scorn, enmity and death itself . . .—the gift of a new idea. You can discern it in them, illuminating their faces. . . . The Quakers have come! We are in peril! They trample upon our wise and well-established laws in the person of our chief magistrate; for Governor Endicott is passing, now an aged man, and dignified with long habits of authority,—and not one of the irreverent vagabonds has moved his hat! Did you note the ominous frown of the white-bearded Puritan governor, as he turned himself about, and, in his anger, half uplifted the staff that has become a needful support to his old age? Here comes old Mr. Norris, our venerable minister. Will they doff their hats, and pay reverence to him? No: their hats stick fast to their ungracious heads, as if they grew there; and—impious varlets that they are, and worse than the heathen Indians!—they eye our reverend pastor with a peculiar scorn, distrust, unbelief, and utter denial of his sanctified pretensions, of which he himself immediately becomes conscious; the more bitterly conscious, as he never knew nor dreamed of the like before.

But look yonder! Can we believe our eyes? A Quaker woman, clad in sackcloth, and with ashes on her head, has mounted the steps of the meeting-house. (68-69; my emphasis)

The story continues in this vein (see 76-77). The spectator’s involvement is, however, briefly brought to a halt after the first passage when the showman notes: “So thought the old Puritans” (70). The audience is still involved in the spectacle but now as a contemporary audience, watching the scene with the more enlightened and benevolent mind-set of the latter-day republican. The showman
apostrophizes the cruel whip-lashing constable in the manner of a specter that is now to be put to rest in the minds of the audience and himself.

Similar tendencies of involving the audience by means of a first-person plural form can be noted as well in “Little Annie’s Ramble” (Twice-Told Tales) and “Old News” (The Snow-Image). Again the narratee-reader is strategically involved in the fantasy or fiction of the tale with deictic properties referring to the here and now of the fictional protagonists and relating these to a “we” perspective of the narratee and the narrator, both of whom are projected into the fictional scene and experience events as if they were directly participating in them. It is only a short step from such a “we” to a “you” as we found it in “Main-Street” and “Footprints on the Sea-shore” and eventually to the inception of second-person fiction as in “The Haunted Mind.”

After this extensive discussion of early forms of second-person narrative, a very brief summary on the defining criteria may be in order. For a text to be considered as a second-person narrative there has to exist a (usually fictional) protagonist who is referred to by an address pronoun. Situations that lend themselves to initiating such a state of affairs include the invocation of the character and his story in a kind of extended apostrophe (the Lydgate example); the projection of the current addressee as the actant in a projected story (in Behn and minimally in the Ancrene Wisse); or the modulation of generalized you and the function of address to the “real” reader who thus participates within the fictional action (a technique employed in the Hawthorne examples, though with varying radicality). Second-person texts that are written in the reflectoral mode or that model themselves on the guidebook imperative are twentieth-century inventions. Definitions of second-person fiction inevitably founder on the necessity of relying on current narratological categories such as the story-discourse distinction. To the extent that innovative fiction has been undermining such categories, second-person narrative becomes very difficult to distinguish from a number of extended experiments in letter writing (e.g., Martin Walser’s Brief an Lord Liszt), dramatic monologue (Hawkes’s Travesty), self-addressed interior monologue (Fuentes’s The Death of Artemio Cruz, Samuel Beckett’s That Time), imperative discourse (John Updike’s “How to Love America and Leave It”; Moore’s stories), and even questionnaire literature (Jack Matthews’s “A Questionnaire for Rudolph Gordon”).

I want to conclude this historical survey by briefly noting the remaining two nineteenth-century texts in the bibliography: Verga’s “Fantasticheria” (1879) and Papadiamantis’s “Oloyira sti limni” (1892) (“Around the Lagoon”). Both stories have a prominent address function, and in both cases the precise situation of narration or addressing remains unspecified. Verga’s tale, the opening story of his Sicilian Tales, has an intrafictional narratee, a “voi” (the old-fashioned form of polite address) who has visited the Sicilian village (i.e., barbarity, the outposts of civilization). Like Papadiamantis’s tale, the Verga story—a classic of Italian literature—presents the romantic, rural culture’s point
of view, diffusing nostalgia for the old ways that have, alas, departed for good. Verga’s narrator, the storyteller of the collection, addresses a fine lady who has visited the village Aci Trezza with him, and he is now dedicating the stories to her. His remarks on the likes of her are ironic (if not sarcastic), yet her beauty also evokes some nostalgia on his part. Unlike her, whose mind he cannot read (as he says), the narrator understands the heroic struggle for survival that goes on among the village folk who are scourged by the visitations of hunger, poverty, and disease. The narrator appears to reside in the village still since he mentions what has become of the old woman who sold oranges to the lady and of the old fisherman, who has just died, the “poor devil.” The lady, whom the narrator appears to have met in “her world,” is repeatedly contrasted with the misery of the townfolk, who could have had her happiness had they not been beset by the many misfortunes of the poor. The narrator, at the end of this introduction to the collection, challenges the beautiful lady. Having understood the inherent riches of these poor people’s lives, he will perhaps be able to see her pass by in her horse and carriage and greet her with quiet unconcern.

In this setup it is unclear who and where the lady is, whether the text is actually addressed to her, or whether the writer merely invokes her as his muse. The “voi”—although clearly feminized to denote a tourist of large means—retains a generalized connotation that will allow a female reader to identify with this figure (the personalized narratee), sharing her guilt, the guilt of the rich and the shallow. Although a specific visit in the past is narrated, the events and encounters remain vague enough to be regarded as “typical” for any tourist. The real reader (if a woman) may therefore feel addressed to an embarrassing degree.

Papadiamantis’s story describes the “you” protagonist’s idyllic childhood, which he spends trying to catch crabs in the lagoon and watching the fishermen build boats. There is a failed love story, too, of the protagonist’s unhappy infatuation with the girl who prefers his more skillful companion, who is an expert at catching wildlife and less inhibited by his garments (the protagonist obviously comes from a middle-class family and has to wear clothing that needs to be handled with care). The narrator of this story (in spite of the many figural passages, there is a narrator figure in this story, too) intervenes at times with colloquial exclamations (I quote from the French translation), “Gamin, va!” (85), and s/he never resolves the circumstances of the telling. The narrator rhetorically asks what has become of the protagonist’s boyhood friend Christodoulis, who became a famous sailor. Has he gone to the States? “And you? You indulge in reflection, like me: that’s all you can do . . .” (85; end of story; my translation). At the beginning of the story the “you” apparently visited his former native village after seven years of absence, and the text at first appears to be a story of this visit. The bulk of the tale, however, is taken up by memories of childhood, and at the end we reach the narrator’s present, which is different from that of the visit: we are given no indication how much more time has passed between
the visit and the narrator’s discourse. Such ambiguity is very typical of twentieth-century second-person fiction.

In the above survey of second-person texts before 1900 (those that I have so far come across), I have outlined various anticipations of later models and, at the same time, tried to suggest that there has always been a great variety of second-person narrative. I have deliberately refrained from writing a “history,” implying a linear development from the available evidence. It is to be expected that many more texts will come to light especially in the devotional literature of the Middle Ages, and I have therefore considered a historical presentation premature and unwarranted at this time. The historical survey has as its major purpose to stimulate a more general interest in the question of second-person fiction, which, I hope, will result in the discovery of many more (proto)texts and eventually enrich our understanding of this neglected mode of narration. In due course, it should then become possible to write a proper history of second-person fiction.

4. ESSAYS IN THIS ISSUE

The following essays divide into four main topics. The collection starts with three essays which analyze the narratological category of “person” and the place of second-person fiction within a typology of narrative forms. Brian Richardson’s “I etcetera: On the Poetics and Ideology of Multipersoned Narratives” approaches the issue of person from the perspective of texts that alternate between “I,” “you,” and “she” or “he” narrative, posing the hitherto ignored question of what exactly makes the crucial difference in such practice. Irene Kacandes offers an analysis of apostrophe and communication on the discourse level of narratives and illustrates options along a scale between intercommunication and pure apostrophe, citing the example of several genres. Second-person fiction (in a number of different forms) can then be discussed in relation to other addressee-oriented texts and genres. The third theoretical paper, by James Phelan, concentrates on the issues of the implied narratee, narrative audience, and other narrative instances on the receiving side of narrative models of communication, again integrating the peculiarities of second-person fiction within a larger schema of revisionary narratologies. Like Kacandes’s paper before him, Phelan’s “Self-Help for Narratee and Narrative Audience: How ‘I’—and ‘You’?—Read ‘How’” provides ample discussion of well-known fictional texts in the second-person mode, thus providing a bridge towards the second section of papers.

In the second group two essays dealing with one specific second-person text each concentrate on a close reading of the text and an analysis of the functions of the second-person pronoun. Kimberly A. Nance’s “Self-Consuming Second-Person Fiction: José Emilio Pacheco’s ‘Tarde de agosto’” concentrates on the story presentation of the protagonist’s pubertal infatuation with hero
figures, his crush on his cousin, humiliation before her boyfriend, and his subsequent painful rejection of both the cousin and the hero literature. David Herman’s “Textual ‘You’ and Double Deixis,” on the other hand, outlines the dynamics of ambiguous reference in Edna O’Brien’s *A Pagan Place*, an especially subtle second-person novel. Herman, in a close analysis of the text, demonstrates what he calls the quality of double deixis of the *you* pronoun, a distinction that echoes and reinforces the points made by James Phelan’s earlier paper.

The third section moves to texts that are not specifically second-person fiction but use the second-person pronoun in innovative and ideologically significant ways. Since a great number of second-person texts treat important issues of male-female, male-male, and female-female relationships, including the fraught mother-daughter relationship, the connection between an innovative use of pronominal reference and a particular interest in ideology and politics cannot be ignored. The two essays by Marcel Cornis-Pope (“From Cultural Provocation to Narrative Cooperation: Innovative Uses of the Second Person in Raymond Federman’s Fiction”) and by Keith Green and Jill LeBihan (“The Speaking Object: Daphne Marlatt’s Pronouns and Lesbian Poetics”) trace more widespread experimentation with form, particularly pronominal form, in texts that have decidedly political concerns, suggesting that second-person fiction is just one of the many options of ideology in a fictional format. Whereas Federman—through his many voices, reflections within reflections, and metafictional mirrorings—allows an escape from the immediate confrontation with his and his protagonist’s holocaust past, ambiguity and shifting pronominal usage in Marlatt’s *ana historic* provides a gradual access to the protagonist’s search for her own identity and orientation, a search that has to pass through many roles until it can become grounded in the “you” of her lover.

In the final section of the collection, I present some preliminary conclusions on second-person narrative and its theoretical repercussions. Although I start out by reproducing the revised Stanzelian typology that I proposed in “Second Person Fiction,” I do not abide by a typological approach but discuss the groundings of standard narratological categories in realist mimetics. My final remarks attempt to suggest more pragmatic directions for future research, proposing a number of issues that might provide a fruitful ground for narratological investigation. I close on a discussion of the uses made of second-person fiction, arguing that second-person fiction is not a strategy of “mere play” in the postmodernist manner, but is usually chosen with great care and employed with great finesse and sophistication. This claim is illustrated at length on the basis of Josipovici’s novel *Contre-jour*.

A preliminary bibliography of second-person texts and criticism was scheduled to appear in this special issue; however, owing to limitations of space, it is now scheduled to appear in the next issue of *Style*, Volume 28, no. 4, Winter 1994.
Notes

1 Unless otherwise indicated, the emphasis is always mine.

2 The reference is to Franz Karl Stanzel’s term “reflector mode” (A Theory of Narrative 59-60).

3 Classical anticipations of the second-person form include the beginning of John Hawkes’s Lime Twig (1961) or the initial passage from William Styron’s Lie Down in Darkness (1951) as well as numerous passages in Robert Penn Warren’s All the King’s Men (1946), including the very beginning of the novel.

4 I will show below that this is not the case and that the “no-narrator” option is indeed possible for second-person fiction. In fact, I read Godden’s “You Need to Go Upstairs” as precisely that and not as the “narrator being the you protagonist,” which makes no sense at all in narratological terms. Narrator is here, of course, understood in terms of linguistic voice and anchored in a speaker function of deictic proportions.

5 See also Bonheim’s summary of his research on second-person fiction in two chapters of Literary Systematics.

6 One obviously has to consider the classic studies of the narratee as well (Prince, “Notes” and “The Narratee Revisited”; Piwowarczyk; Rimmon-Kenan 103-35).

7 Compare Dorrit Cohn’s remarks in “I doze and I wake” (19-20). See also my own work on natural story-telling parameters in Towards a “Natural” Narratology.

8 The film is noted by Morrissette (20).

9 Cf. Gnutschmann (100) or Morrissette (18), where several French critics holding this interpretation are quoted.

10 Wiest, of course, does not argue theoretically that there is such a thing as a narrative situation within Stanzel’s typology or within a revised Stanzelian typology that could answer to the concept of a “you-Erzählsituation.”

11 See my own contribution to this issue below and the reprint of the diagram on p. 447.

12 The reference is to June Arnold’s The cook and the carpenter (1973) for the invented pronoun na and to Marge Piercy’s Woman on the Edge of Time (1976) for per. See especially Richardson’s paper below and my own “Pronouns of Address and ‘Odd’ Third Person Forms.”

13 Chatman takes this position in Story and Discourse and reiterates it emphatically in Coming to Terms (9).

14 In Jane Rule’s This Is Not For You (1970) the addressee has left the world for a nunnery.

15 The novel, of course, presents the narratee as unable to persuade the narrator to take her on as a lover, but the larger significance of the story surely lies in the narrator’s (moral) inhibitions about such a relationship and her eventual guilt at having unwittingly brought about the ruin (from her secular perspective) of the person she loved most.

16 The emphasized phrase in the original reads: “Nu ȝu wast ȝet ha habbeȝ itricchet te as treitres” (Millett and Wogan-Browne 6).

17 The reference is to Franz K. Stanzel’s “authorial narrative (situation)” (Theory of Narrative 58-59, 186-89). The authorial narrator—unlike the first-person narrator—does not share the realm of existence with the characters: “he” remains, in Genettean terms, extradiegetic. In second-person fiction most narrator figures are themselves involved (if only peripherally) in the stories they tell, and Lydgate’s clearly present-day story teller, who cannot
report St. Giles’s experiences from personal experience, is therefore an exception to what one could almost term the “standard” involvement of the narrator in second-person texts. It is for this reason that I proposed the categories of homocommunicative and heterocommunicative narrative in “Second Person Fiction.”

18 The 1666 edition in the British Library does not have this passage. Angeline Goreau in her biography of Behn provides a contradictory account of Behn’s role in the production “The Lover’s Watch,” calling the book a “translation from the French of Balthazar [sic] Bonnecorse” (294) and referring to the work as an “adaptation of The Lover’s Watch, a French etiquette book describing the contemporary stylized manner of making love” (39).

19 The editor notes that the strategy has been to “faire parler Sully lui-même” (“to make Sully tell his own story”), which, he argues, is the more natural way of writing one’s memoirs (xxi).

20 For a discussion of reflectorization (“Personalisierung”), see Stanzel’s 1977 article on the phenomenon as well as his later treatment of the issue in A Theory of Narrative (168-84). Compare also my own discussion of the device in George Eliot’s Mill on the Floss (“Subversive Irony”) and Towards a “Natural” Narratology (chapter 5).

21 The reference is to Stanzel’s figural narrative situation: that is, narration with preponderant internal focalization (A Theory of Narrative 186-200).

22 See earlier work on this issue by Richardson and Fludernik (“Second Person Fiction”).

Works Cited


Second-Person Narrative and Related Issues


