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## Chapter 1. Theorising the 'You Effects'

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# 1 Theorising the ‘You Effects’

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## 1.1 A General Trend across Genres?

### 1.1.1 *The Personalising Game in Marketing*

One of the most obvious effects of the pervasive use of the second-person pronoun ‘you’ across discursive genres has been to produce an artificial form of intersubjectivity. Of course, ‘you’ in advertising is by no means new. We need only to recall the McDonald’s ads from the 1970s. You may remember the jaunty melody of the ‘Grab a bucket and mop’ TV commercial in 1971. It ended on ‘You deserve a break today, so get up and get away to McDonald’s’. There are two striking points in this line: the use of the second-person pronoun and the two imperative forms that prompt the viewer and potential customer to take action. The joyful atmosphere of dancing employees, as they scrub down and mop up (‘There’s nothing so clean as my burger machine’), changes what is in fact an imperative call to action into a merry invitation. The directness of the MacDonal’d’s ad, which appears to have captured the force of the ‘you’ effects as described by today’s marketing and advertising strategists, seems almost avant-gardist!

The change in emphasis from the advertiser to the reader/viewer seems part of a change in perspective, as captured in Tom Trush’s book, *The ‘You’ Effect. How to Transform Ego-Based Marketing into Captivating Messages That Create Customers* (2012). The book, which shows how decisive the use of the second-person pronoun can be, was written to help business owners and entrepreneurs develop the most efficient and attention-grabbing marketing materials. A study carried out by the Department of Psychology at Yale University even concludes that the second-person pronoun is the most ‘persuasive’ word (Trush, 2012: 2). As potential clients (called prospects) are daily inundated with thousands of messages, an entrepreneur who contents herself with showcasing her brand and product in an ego-centred approach is sure of losing the capacity to attract people’s attention. Trush explains, ‘Many business owners and entrepreneurs continue force-feeding promotional messages as if their product or service is the only game in town. They push pitch after

pitch with little concern for people's fading attention spans' (Trush, 2012: 21–2).

A good marketing strategy for Trush consists of switching from 'I' / 'we' to 'you', shifting viewpoints from what the company wants to say about itself to what the prospect wants to hear. He continues:

You see, your prospects are only concerned about themselves. When your content is filled with repeated uses of the words 'we,' 'our' or your company name, you make your marketing message all about you.

This is like being that guy at a party who only talks about himself, laughs at his own jokes and always has a story that tops whatever anyone else says. (Trush, 2012: 2)

The use of 'you' establishes a personal relationship between human beings; as a result, selling sounds like an intimate conversation: 'The easiest way to incorporate your prospects into your marketing message is to create content that reads more like a conversation and less like a corporate essay. When you use the words "you", "your" and "you're", you tell prospects your content is written specifically for them' (Trush, 2012: 2).

More specifically, what 'you' enables the businessperson to do is to enter the prospects' minds, to understand their wishes and expectations and to translate these into a tagline that will be the direct answer to the prospects' needs. Trush quotes this instance of the switch from an ego-based to an addressee-oriented perspective that tells the prospect how she will benefit from the product:

Recently I was working on a piece and the original headline was 'The new standard in high performance storage.' We changed it to read, 'The guaranteed easiest way to double your storage abilities, boost efficiency and slash your operating costs.' So, we're taking it to the next level. We're giving people an end result with that storage device. (Trush, 2012: 150)

The recourse to 'you', therefore, does not reflect an ideological evolution in marketing. It merely offers a mirror image of an 'I' perspective. It amounts to a mere reversal of what remains an ego-centred, albeit concealed, approach that still needs prospects to do what business owners want: buy their products. This simple strategic reversal can be observed in the evolution of the L'Oréal slogan 'Because you're worth it!' that has used different personal pronouns across time. The famous slogan worked wonders when it appeared. The brand was looking for a slogan for its hair dye (a more expensive product than the American competitor, Clairol's Nice'n Easy). In order to justify the extra ten-cent cost, a twenty-three-year-old copywriter, by the name of Ilon Specht, came up with 'Because I'm worth it'. This slogan went on to make L'Oréal the leader in hair dyes in the 1980s. Interestingly, the deictic shift from 'I' to 'you' occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century when the slogan became 'Because you're worth it'. In using a you-first strategy, not only

does the L'Oréal ad make the addressee believe she is worth as much as the spectacular specimen of womanhood who is addressing her, but it takes away the potential ego-centrism of the addressor, thus democratising beauty, so to speak. For Tungate (2011), when the first actress (Cybill Shepherd) uttered the slogan, it suited the feminist demands of the time, promoting equality and self-fulfilment for women. He adds, 'And it endured – at least until 2004. By then, the feminist message had been diluted and the line seemed arrogant and narcissistic, especially on the lips of an actress earning millions of dollars in endorsement fees' (Tungate, 2011: 70). Since 2009, the direct address of 'Because you're worth it' has been replaced by a more inclusive variant ('Because we're worth it'). According to Tungate (2011: 70), this was designed to strengthen 'the connection between consumers and the brand'. This evolution towards a collective 'we-ness' seems to go one step further by transcending the I-you dyad via a more inclusive 'we' (you and I) pronoun, creating a fictitious community of spirit through the product (or the brand).

### 1.1.2 *The Expansion of 'You'-Oriented Strategies across Genres*

The dissimulation of ego-centred marketing finds an echo in the anthropomorphising strategy used in certain ads or notices that use animated objects in the anticipation that humans can identify with them. Consumers are asked to relate to the speaking 'I' in the usual conversational mode. This is part of what Katie Wales (2013, 2015) calls the 'Alice in Wonderland' principle, as Lewis Carroll's 'Eat me' or 'Drink me' signs down the rabbit hole appear as literary precursors to today's marketing tricks. Although it is hard to situate the rise of the phenomenon precisely, Wales sees it as emerging in the 1990s, as more and more ads came to adopt a speaking voice that directly addressed the consumer. From a brief 'Try me' to more developed forms such as 'Buy me now before you lose me forever' or 'Once you've opened me, pop me in the fridge and drink me within 4 days', these ads adopt the perspective of the object with the aim of achieving a more personal involvement of the consumer. This transfer from an 'it-you' to an 'I-you' relationship through prosopopoeia exploits the spontaneous tendency in human beings to give prominence to 'speakers' rather than 'inanimate entities' according to what linguists call the Animacy Hierarchy (Croft 2003, Corbett 2012; see Gardelle and Sorlin 2018 for an overview). Objects become conversational partners that attract our attention through the attribution of a human voice. It is by focusing the attention of the consumer on the animated product that the agents (i.e. the sellers) are enabled to conceal themselves behind the animation of the puppet object. In *Persons and Things*, Johnson (2010: 19) sees this animation of commodities as a form of 'fetishism' used to manipulate the consumer, and she denounces the phony conversation that we are supposedly having with a conversing object:

a speaking thing can sell itself; if the purchaser responds to the speech of the object, he or she feels uninfluenced by human manipulation and therefore not duped. We are supposed not to notice how absurd it is to be addressed by the Maalox Max bottle, or Mr. Clean, or Mrs. Butterworth, or the Quaker Oats man, or Aunt Jemima, or the Elidel man, or the Aflac duck... It is as though the relation between buyer and commodity were the entrance to a relationship—*res ipsa loquitur*.

The aim of such a strategy is to seem less face-threatening in its approach; the indirectness and liveliness of the I-mouthpiece supposedly sugar coat a more direct and impersonal appeal. Wales (2015: 101) gives the example of ‘I’m a shopping basket, please use me’ as compared to the more impersonal, potentially patronising ‘This is a shopping basket, please use it’. The same can be said of what she calls ‘eco-speak’, which can be found on recycling bins (‘Please recycle me’), as a way of drumming up empathy with the speaking object, thus standing a better chance to induce an environmentally friendly responsible behaviour.

Wales (2015: 97–8) interprets this new trend towards prosopopeia as part of the ‘imperative speech act of consumerism’ which consumers have grown accustomed to. In the new version, ‘Buy me’, though still using the same imperative speech act, sounds less imperative than ‘Buy this product’. This new way of reaching out to the consumer seems to have spread to other fields and media. In France, the informality of advertising and marketing discourse can now be detected even in news broadcasts where, for example, the addressee-oriented perspective of ‘votre 13h’ (‘your midday news’) is preferred to the more impersonal ‘the midday news’. This trend has been extended to the very presentation of the news topics. On France’s Channel 2, for instance, the second-person pronoun pops up across the screen in news titles such as ‘votre santé’ (your health) or ‘vos impôts’ (your taxes). This pretends to construe the addressee as more than an impersonal viewer. In the fiercely competitive field of news broadcasts, with the arrival of 24-hour news channels, this modernisation of news broadcasting is part and parcel of the drive to attract viewers’ attention and consequently keep audience ratings high. However, the risk for the producer is that, as the viewer becomes more accustomed to it, this second-person strategy may very well lose the involvement effect desired. The added risk for the viewers is that we become so used to the technique we no longer realise just how manipulatively directive the technique can be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another example of this are the imperative news feeds of the type ‘Watch the tennis game now live on...’, ‘Listen to President Macron’s response to the health crisis’ and so on that constantly bombard our mobile phones. There appears to be no perception on the part of the smartphone user of how directive these news feeds are. After our attention (and action) has been skilfully directed towards one event rather than another, we passively receive them as news and/or entertainment on offer. While for smartphones this imperative form may be chosen for its

Twitter also seems to have adopted the more familiar and informal ways of connecting with readers used in marketing discourse. Moncombe (2017), for instance, shows that compared to traditional headlines, the use of 'you' is more frequent in the Twitter promotion of the article than in the actual article on the newspaper website:

Hoverboard ban: What are the penalties for riding on the pavement? What will happen if I use an outlawed Segway? (The Independent, 12 October 2015)

What could happen if you use an outlawed Segway (@Independent on Twitter, 12 October 2015)

Note the use of the more generic first-person pronoun 'I' meaning 'anyone' rather than the second-person 'you' in the non-Twitter headline of the article. The Twitter version, on the other hand, addresses the reader more directly with the hope of making her feel like clicking on the tweet link to access the newspaper article webpage. As in all good marketing strategies, the 'you' option adopted by the social network seems to show concern for the reader herself and the way the topic can relate more personally to her. The conversational tone also reflects the interactive nature of the social network medium.

What the examples above have emphasised is that personal pronouns are instrumental in building perspectives and in attributing positions to both speaker and addressee. To feel addressed by a product that says, 'Buy me' is to have adopted the perspective of an 'I' speaker addressing a 'you'. The choice of personal pronouns can influence the way readers perceive the speaker's position and their own relation to it. As many linguists (Benveniste 1966, Lyons 1977, Jarvella and Klein 1982, Levinson 1983, Bühler 1990, Fillmore 1997) have shown, pronouns belong to the category of 'person deixis': in using a pronoun, an addressor orientates what she says towards her own temporal and locational situation of enunciation. Interpreting person deixis thus requires 'knowing certain aspects of the communication act in which the utterances in question can play a role'. That is to say, it requires knowing 'the identity of the interlocutors in a communication situation' as well as the place and time from and at which the addressor speaks (Fillmore, 1997: 61). In the literature devoted to the topic, the speaker's position is referred to in spatial terms and the perceptual locus of the addressor is called a 'deictic centre' (Bühler 1990 [1934]). As demonstrated in Deictic Shift Theory (DST), processing deictic cues implies projecting oneself into the addressor's deictic centre to determine the personal, temporal and locational characteristics of the situation of utterance (Duchan et al. 1995).

conciseness, it cannot be denied that these suggestions of topics or entertainment are directives at heart.

Rather than speaking of 'roles' in the communicative events, I prefer the term 'positioning' (used by Davies and Harre 1990 and O'Connor, 1994: 53) for its more dynamic rendering of meaning negotiation and position processing. As O'Connor (1994: 53) indicates, the process of positioning identifies 'the act of stance taken or assigned, explicitly or implicitly in the participation framework of discourse management'.

Lecerle's (2019: 13–37) analysis of Field Marshal Kitchener's 1914 slogan 'Your Country Needs YOU' compellingly illustrates this positioning of speaker and hearer. Designed after the huge losses of the British Army against the Germans, when the British government sorely needed volunteers, the poster features the Minister of War, a military hero, pointing a finger at the viewer. Through the quasi-physical contact established by this gesture, the passer-by, upon seeing the poster, is ascribed a position – that of the soldier he is asked to become. For Lecerle, drawing on Althusser's definition of ideology as 'what *interpellates* individuals into subjects' (Althusser, 1976: 12), what takes place here is an interpellation that leads to the creation of two subjects (both addressor and addressee), while at the same time ascribing a specific place to them.<sup>2</sup>

In Althusser's terms (1976: 108), individuals become subjectified at the very moment they are 'subjected' (*assujettis*). The implied authoritative intonation of the imperative form in Kitchener's slogan, which in fact takes the form of an assertion, fulfils what Jakobson (1960) termed the conative function of language, as it aims to spark off a certain response in the addressee. Lecerle demonstrates how the refusal to comply with the call of the slogan would immediately identify you as a cowardly traitor to the cause. Interpellation seeks to make any 'counter-interpellation', that is any reply that would run counter to Kitchener's order word, impossible. Lecerle (2019: 35) points to the particular historical context of the slogan. Though today, an ad designed to enrol would-be soldiers would focus on the professionalism required rather than on the military patriotism of old, for Lecerle 'the interpellation technique' has remained intact.

Today's political slogans can hardly adopt the directness of Field Marshal Kitchener by assigning voters a place and a direction to follow. And history shows that the second-person pronoun has been used by very few American presidents.<sup>3</sup> Apart from Lincoln's 1860 'Vote yourself a farm' campaign

<sup>2</sup> I keep the French term, as most translators of Althusser have done, after trying to render it by 'hailing'. Lecerle (2019: 257) indicates that translators adopted the loan translation even though the English term, borrowed from French in the nineteenth century, strictly means parliamentary interpellation and does not include the 'Hey you!' interjection of the police officer as used by Althusser as an example of interpellation. In the 'Hey you!', the police officer *interpellates* the person hailed *into a subject* at the very moment she responds by turning round.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete list, see [www.presidentsusa.net/campaignslogans.html](http://www.presidentsusa.net/campaignslogans.html)

slogan, it was Lyndon B. Johnson who, in 1964, used the direct address in his campaign slogan to urge American citizens to vote, 'The stakes are too high for you to stay at home'. He was referring to the threatened use of nuclear weapons by his opponent, Barry Goldwater. An interesting mixed mode of third-person reference with a second-person perspective was used by Barry Goldwater himself, whose team came up with an insidious message designed to appeal to the deep feelings of citizens, in response to media criticism about Goldwater's extremist views, 'In your heart you know he's right'. The direct address to the audience originates from a deictic centre that is not the candidate himself but some impersonal speaking voice that comes to his defence. The distance established with the candidate through the personal pronoun ('he') makes it possible for him to protect himself by having someone else speak for him on his behalf to the voters.<sup>4</sup> In political slogans there are therefore several ways of implicating the voters and bringing them to identify 'the stance taken and assigned, explicitly or implicitly' (O'Connor 1994).

It seems, however, that in recent political slogans, personal pronouns have once again come to play a role. We only need to think back to Barack Obama's inclusive 2008 slogan ('Yes, We Can') that found an echo in 2014 in Pablo Iglesias Turrión's Spanish 'Podemos' party (meaning 'we can'). It is interesting to note that the parties that have lost in major elections have used adjectives in their slogans. In the case of Hillary Clinton's 'Stronger Together' in the 2016 presidential election or 'Stronger, Safer, Better off' used by David Cameron as the Remain slogan for the referendum on Europe, this more indirect, soft-play approach has proved unsuccessful. By contrast, the 'winning' slogans have relied on a more direct, interpersonal, interactive mode: 'Make America Great Again' (US), 'Take Back Control' (UK). Although Donald Trump seems to have been unaware of the filiation, his 'Make America Great Again' is virtually the same slogan as Ronald Reagan's 1980 'Let's Make America Great Again'.<sup>5</sup> Digging into the art of political storytelling, Sergeant (2020: 135) comes to the same conclusion on the inclusive power of the imperative forms – in these winning slogans they are 'urging participation' and involvement from the electorate.

This brief detour through the genre of the political campaign slogan shows that personal pronouns (and their combination) are instrumental in

<sup>4</sup> As Sergeant (2020: 132–3) recalls, the slogan did not fare well in the end as '[a]lmost immediately this was lampooned by his critics with alternative versions such as "In your guts, you know he's nuts" and "In your heart, he's too far right"'.  
<sup>5</sup> However, the campaigning Trump hesitated between the exhortative request for joint action in 'let's make America great again / we will make America great again', and repeatedly used a more addressee-oriented imperative form that left it up to the people to make the right choice by voting for him ('Make America Great Again'), where he adopts the 'you' effect recommended by marketing strategists.

orchestrating focalisation and fostering projection into the different positions they set up. Another discourse that is of special interest to us in this book is literary discourse. The defamiliarising effect that accompanies the reading of a narrative written entirely or mostly in the second person may be part of the reason novelists opt for this unusual pronoun: it tends to involve readers in unprecedented ways. The 'you' pronoun used in fictional texts has been shown in psycholinguistic research to be a better attractor than other pronouns because the personalisation it implies appears to have an impact on depth of processing and thus on memory (Sanford and Emmott, 2012: 255). One probable explanation for this is that in the 'you narrative', the information seems to be presented as more relevant to the self/reader and is thus more likely to make it more interesting to her (Sanford and Emmott, 2012: 177).

As the next chapters will demonstrate, the 'you' effect, as exploited in marketing strategy, finds a certain echo when it is used in literary discourse – but only a certain echo. In the same way as 'you' engages potential clients in active interaction when it invites them to continue reading through a 'You can click here' link, or a 'I want to learn more',<sup>6</sup> 'you' engages the literary reader in unexpected ways when it is used in a narrative. But it is the 'polysemy' (Wales 1996) of the pronoun that will prove to be so exciting, and so innovative. Indeed, what 'you' indexes fluctuates in a way that will become clear further down, when I propose a theoretical model of potential references for 'you'. Not only has the emergence of second-person narratives changed the way readers relate to the pronoun – we have always been more accustomed to 'I' or 'he/she' – it has incited narratologists to modify traditional narratological models that could not accommodate this new form. There is undoubtedly an 'oddity' in 'you' narratives, and that is what we are going to explore now.

### 1.1.3 *How Odd Are 'You Narratives'?*

Traditional narratological theories have proved robust for the study of the traditional categories of fiction. Thus, Simpson (1993: 51) adopts the grammatical division of first- and third-person narratives when he categorises first-person novels as Category A and third-person novels as Category B.

In a footnote, the author concedes that this categorisation excludes odd pronominal narratives ('we', 'you' or 'they' narratives), inviting the reader to decide whether a specific Category C should be established for them.

<sup>6</sup> It has been proved that inviting potential clients to continue their reading through incentives like, 'You can click here' or 'I want to learn more' has an impact on their memory. They remember the information four days later better if they have clicked into it through those links (see Guéguen 2014, 2016).

However, since the publication of Simpson's book, there has been a burgeoning of 'odd' pronominal narratives, and the question of whether 'you narratives' should be cast in a category of their own has come to the forefront.<sup>7</sup>

The problem with a clear distinction along pronominal lines is that it prevents us from seeing the kinship between pronouns highlighted by linguists and narratologists. For Genette (1972: 252), there is always an implicit presence of an 'I' enunciator behind a third-person narrative. Conversely, first-person narratives are about an 'I' that can be construed as a third person, that is someone about whom something is said (Joly, 1990: 21). Joly's assumptions are based on Guillaume (1987: 183). Going against the grain of those wanting to remove the third person from the personal pronoun paradigm, Guillaume contends that *la troisième personne est partout* (the third person is everywhere). Likewise, the third person can also be included in the second person with the idea that 'you' is construed both as the person who is talked *to* and the person who is talked *about* (see Gardelle and Sorlin, 2015: 4).

This proximity of the third-person pronoun to the other pronouns (and vice versa) leaves the question open as to whether we need to construct a Category C to deal with second-person novels. Given the proximity just mentioned, would it make more sense to see 'you narratives' in which the protagonist is both narrator and narratee – that is self-addressed narratives – as part of Category A? In such cases, 'you' is in fact a disguised 'I'. Likewise, would it make sense to subsume 'you narratives' in which the 'you' protagonist is a character referred to as 'you' but is not the direct addressee as part of Category B? If the protagonist is not talked *to* but talked *about*, then the third person could have been chosen instead. The problem with this dual categorisation is that it does not take into account a simple fact: If 'I' most of the time can only refer to the person who says 'I', and if the reference of a third-person form can most of the time be easily retrieved, the flexible, diverse and sometimes ambiguous reference of 'you' renders any simple classification illusory, as has been underlined by many a 'you narrative' specialist (Morrissette 1965, Hopkins and Perkins 1981, Prince 1985, 1987, Margolin 1986, Hantzis 1988, Richardson 1991, 2006, Kacandes 1993, Herman 1994, 2002, Bell and Ensslin 2011, Macrae 2012, 2016, 2018, Iliopoulou 2019). In fact, as this book will show in detail, the second-person pronoun tends to hesitate between the first and third person in the pronominal paradigm. Richardson (2006: 22) points out the 'irreducible oscillation between first and third person narration that is typical of second person texts' as the dubious 'you' pronoun 'constantly

<sup>7</sup> Whether 'you narratives' should be ranked with 'we' and 'they' narratives is a question for another book. See Fludernik (2011), who has worked extensively on 'we narratives' and for a stock list of such 'we' novels.

threaten[s] to merge . . . with another grammatical person’ (Richardson, 2006: 20–1). DelConte (2003: 204) speaks of an ‘overlap of second-person with either first- or third-person because second-person is also either first- or third-person’.

Taking Michel Butor’s *La Modification* (1957) as the forerunner of the flourishing of ‘you narratives’, Fludernik (1993, 1994a) was the first to clearly mark the ground by proposing an inventory of such narratives, particularly from the 1970s onwards but including earlier instances in the two previous decades (see Fludernik 2011 for an updated analysis and stock list). More importantly, she offered a new model of narrative forms giving centre stage to ‘you’. Traditional telling/showing narratological typologies – such as Stanzel’s dichotomy between the narrating self and the experiencing self, or Genette’s categories of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic – were seen to be inadequate when it came to the study of ‘you narratives’. Fludernik saw the need to switch from the telling/showing perspective to one that was clearly oriented towards the narratee. She could thereby highlight the communicative dimension of the circuit between a narrator and the one who is at the ‘receiving or interactive end of that communicative frame’ (1994b: 446):

My solution to this conundrum was to propose a synthesis of the Stanzelian and Genettean typologies, which transfers the concepts of narrating and experiencing self to the addressee. It thereby creates the distinction between an addressee-*you* and an experiencing-*you*, with the same ‘identity of realms of existence’ characteristic operating between them as is familiar from Stanzel’s first-person narrative in relation to narrating and experiencing self. At the same time, I extended Genette’s concepts of homo-/heterodiegesis to a distinction between narratives with, or without, a communicative level, inventing the terms homocommunicative and heterocommunicative fiction. In homocommunicative fiction, the narrator and/or narratee are also protagonists on the level of the story, whereas in heterocommunicative fiction neither of them has an existence on the story level – they only exist on the extradiegetic level of narrator–narratee communication. (Fludernik, 2011: 106)

Fludernik’s model (Figure 1.1) still allows for the distinction between the story world and the narration world (i.e. the extradiegetic level), but it takes into account the way both narrators/narratees on the narration level can also function as protagonists in the story.

She goes on to map six different potential configurations in ‘you narratives’. The first, minimal configuration features ‘you’ as sole reflector on the story level only. This is the only necessary element for it to be a ‘you narrative’. The most encompassing configuration (Category F) is when ‘I’ and ‘you’ are present on both levels: a homodiegetic narrator (participating on both levels) communicates with a ‘homoconative’ narratee also present on both levels. In other words, the first-person narrator addresses ‘you’ on the narration level and tells about their past interactions on the story level (the addressee often only

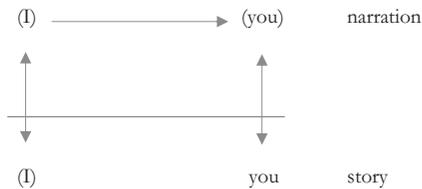


Figure 1.1 The communicative situation in ‘you narratives’ (From Fludernik, 2011: 107)

exists in the imagination or may no longer be alive).<sup>8</sup> Fludernik hastens to add that her diagrams are only ideal categories that cannot do justice to the fluidity of the positions that can shift within a single narrative. She prefers speaking of a ‘sliding scale’ within all these subcategories (2011: 122), especially as there is yet another potential possible reference for ‘you’ – the reader.

Although the linguistic model I present in the next section follows Fludernik, I have a broader conception of the ‘you narrative’. Indeed, in defining a ‘you narrative’ as one ‘which uses a pronoun (or term) of address in reference to the main protagonist of a story’ (2011: 105), Fludernik fails to include the author–reader relationship in her mappings. Whereas she restricts ‘you narratives’ to those novels referring to the main *protagonist* as ‘you’, leaving out authorial communication with the reader, my conception of ‘you narratives’ includes the authorial/narratorial direct address to the reader. This broader outlook allows me to propose a model that applies to both fictional and non-fictional narratives (for instance essays or autobiographies). The model starts with face-to-face interactions between self and other. This should not be seen as a reductive construal of interpersonal communication but as a template that can be built on or expanded from, depending on the genre and medium one wishes to focus on.

The next chapters intend to explore the use of the second-person pronoun in different genres (non-fictional narratives, novels, prefaces, postfaces and digital fiction). In these, readers cannot respond to what they read as they would in face-to-face interactions. But I will use the conversational I-you dyad

<sup>8</sup> The different diagrams, from 1A to 1F, can be found in Fludernik, 2011: 107–13. Diagram B (quite rare) illustrates a ‘non-communicative *I-and-you* narrative’ which extends configuration A as the first- and second-person protagonists cohabit on the experiential level, but there is no narrator or narratee on the extradiegetic level. Diagram C is more common: a ‘first-person narrative with you protagonist’, which has a narrating and also an experiencing ‘I’ sharing an experience with the ‘you’ protagonist, but there is no address to ‘you’ (the ‘you’ referent may be absent or dead). Diagram D is a ‘homodiegetic you narrative’ (that is, the narrator tells the story of a protagonist who is also the narratee), but in some cases there is no such thing as an ‘embodied’ narratee in the extradiegetic world (especially in novels written in the manner of a self-help guide). Lastly, Category E concerns self-addressed narratives.

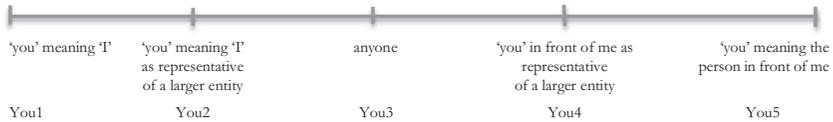


Figure.1.2 Continuum of reference of the 2SG (From Kluge, 2016: 504)

of ordinary exchange as a starting point and highlight how the ‘you’ address differs in (written) narratives not only across time but also across media. We will see in [Part IV](#), for example, how twentieth- and twenty-first-century digital fiction seems to simulate an interaction that is closer to face-to-face exchange. In the next section of this introductory chapter, my aim is to propose a theoretical model for ‘you narratives’ that transcends the opposition between the fictional and the factual, cutting across genres more comprehensively.

## 1.2 A Linguistic Starting-Point

### 1.2.1 Face-to-Face Interaction

I start with standard face-to-face interaction. This allows me to develop my conception of fictional and non-fictional narrative as an extended pragmatic act (see [Section 1.3](#)). My analysis is based on Kluge’s 2016 continuum, in her study of the second singular person in the Spanish and French subcorpus of C-ORAL-Rom (Cresti and Moneglia 2005). It focuses on five ‘focal points’ as shown in [Figure 1.2](#).

The numbering of the five ‘you’ is mine: I shall keep using these numbers for ease of reference. Kluge explains that You1 is used when the speaker, obviously referring to herself, ‘hides’ behind the second person, thus presenting her own experience as something that is potentially generalisable and/or comparable to what others might have experienced themselves. You2 is used by a speaker speaking on behalf of a larger entity, presenting herself as a ‘typical representative’. Kluge gives the example of travel narratives in which the speaker describes her traveling experience to addressees who have not visited the places she is describing. Although the narrative is clearly based on personal experience, the nature of the second person is such that it ‘lends itself to generalization to others as well’ (Kluge, 2016: 505). You3 has a broader reference that includes ‘anyone’, as the experience related could be generalisable to everyone. You1 to 3 are examples of the use of the pronoun where form and function are disconnected: the ‘you’ form is ‘uncoupled’ from its deictic function of address (Herman, 2002: 340).

The next You on the continuum is closer to its traditional function of address. But here again Kluge establishes two categories. Between You3

(meaning anyone) and You5 that refers to the person in front of the speaking 'I', there is a You4 where the hearer (but not the speaker) is presented as 'representative of a larger entity'. Kluge takes the example of a person selling cooking utensils to a group of potential buyers in a market, bringing them to imagine using these moulds and bowls in their own kitchen,<sup>9</sup> '*you will also cook without fat / right? . . . the first one will serve you to / # for the conservation in the deep freezer / # in the freezer / # and the other one will help you with cooking / # since you will always be cooking with a closed lid/#*'. This is how she analyses the missing link between generic and personal address, '[The seller] does not address them exclusively or particularly, but posits them as typical representatives of a larger entity, encompassing "anyone who has bought these moulds and uses them for cooking"' (Kluge, 2016: 504). Because of the lack of context in her corpus data, Kluge remarks that it was sometimes hard to distinguish between You1, 2 or 3, as there was no way to determine whether the speaker was speaking only about herself, or presenting her own experience as potentially representative of a larger group or even of any human being.

What I find interesting in Kluge's continuum of what she calls 'generic seconds' is that it shows the scope of potential references for 'you' beyond the classic function of address it is basically associated with. This enables me to highlight what I see as the two opposite poles of self and other. Of course, potentially, all these types of 'you' are addressive, but some of them more clearly address some other being outside of the speaker's deictic centre. The left-hand side of Kluge's continuum is self-oriented, with the speaker concealing herself behind a 'you' meaning 'I'. You1 and You2 belong to what Gelabert-Desnoyer (2008: 413) calls 'self-referential experientials' where 'while intimately linked to the speaker, there is a lower degree of attachment to the speaker and, thus, a more open interpretation in respect to other referents'. The more the cursor moves towards the centre ('anyone'), the higher the degree of detachment from self. These cases where personal experience is converted into something shareable are what Kitagawa and Lehrer 1990 (after Laberge and Sankoff 1979) and Maitland and Wilson (1987: 497)<sup>10</sup> call the 'situational insertion' type that makes it possible for the speaker's experience to be embedded within the experience of a wider class of people. The right-hand side 'you' are clear addresses to another self (the person(s) in front of you) although for You4, the address may include the addressee actant but may not be exclusively or uniquely addressed to (a)

<sup>9</sup> Kluge's translation and transcription symbols, see pp. 504–5.

<sup>10</sup> 'Situational insertions arise where the speaker converts his personal experience to one that might be shared by his addressee' (Maitland and Wilson, 1987: 497).

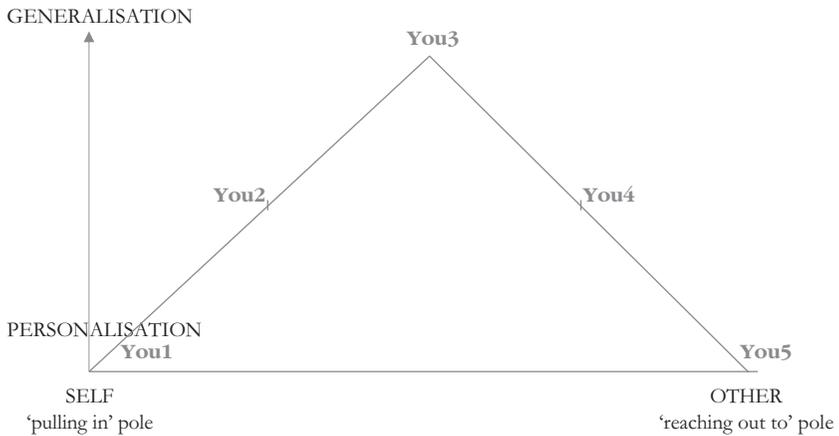


Figure 1.3 A double continuum

specific person(s). Although Kluge worked on French and Spanish, her distinctions can easily be applied to the English second-person pronoun.

### 1.2.2 *Adapting the Model to Written Narratives*

Fludernik’s narratological descriptions and Kluge’s pragma-linguistic analyses can be combined if we transform the spectrum into a two-dimensional diagram. Fludernik’s (1994b: 461) is an apt summary, ‘*You* is typically ambiguous in its applications to self and other and to a definite or indefinite reading’. We therefore need a model that integrates these aspects by adding a variable to Kluge’s linear spectrum. We can make her continuum more dynamic by taking into consideration the level of potential genericity of the pronoun along a vertical axis (see Figure 1.3).

To the self-referring, pulling-in *You1* that incites the reader to share the self’s experience, on the left side, and to the reaching out *You5* of the Other on the right, I have indeed added a variable on the vertical axis of Figure 1.3. The further down you go on the axis, the narrower the reference to ‘you’ becomes. The higher up you go, the higher the degree of genericity. The higher the genericity the further one is from referential properties and specific references to ‘you’ and the closer one arrives at a ‘context free deictic centre’ (Martínez, 2015: 148), extending to generalisation and universality.

*You3* is thus non-deictic or pseudo-deictic in that its ‘interpretation does not depend directly on any feature of the non-linguistic context of the utterance’ (Anderson and Keenan, 1985: 260). In fact, impersonal *you* belongs to a category that Malamud (2012), after Kaplan (1989), calls ‘arbitrary

monsters'<sup>11</sup>. Impersonal indexicals like the English *one*, *you*, or the German *man* and *du* are monstrous in the sense that 'on the one hand, unlike other indefinite N[oun]P[hrase]s, these constructions are used indexically; and on the other, unlike typical indexicals, they exhibit indefinite-like variability' under the influence of the linguistic environment (Malamud, 2012: 4). To the indexical component at the heart of 'you' must be added the 'indefinite-like variable', which Figure 1.3 tries to capture.

Given their level of genericity in a context-free reference, the best examples of You3 are those found in the anonymity of truisms or sayings. These often involve both the addressor and/or the addressee or neither of them. As they are detached from any anchorage in the specific 'here and now' of the speaker/hearer, they are prime examples of these 'arbitrary monsters'. Such detached from anchorage stance is ideal in its ambiguity. As Wales (1996: 78) has pointed out however, even in its impersonal uses 'you' remains inherently egocentric as 'a speaker's observations on life will invariably be coloured by their own subjective attitudes and experience'. This is corroborated, for example, in Stirling and Manderson's (2011: 1584) findings derived from their interviews with women who had undergone mastectomies after a diagnosis of breast cancer. The data here shows that few generic 'you' with absolute general reference can be found.

The You2 and You4 focal points occupy an intermediate position between definiteness/specificity and indefiniteness/genericity. You4 is less inherently ego-centric and more other-oriented, yet the addressee is not specifically or uniquely addressed. There seems to be an inherent plurality in this kind of 'you' that could apply to many addressees in this situation. Likewise, You2 on the left of the diagram refers to anyone that would be in this specific situation – the speaker presenting herself as representative of a group. This tallies with Stirling and Manderson's more common findings of reference for 'you' as 'a contextually defined general subgroup', with 'you' meaning 'anyone [who falls into the group under discussion]' (1584). Therefore, these different types of 'you' should not be conceived as fixed positions, but as points of stability between which the reference remains unstable (and sometimes hard to fix at all).

In the specific genres I am interested in (fictional and non-fictional narratives), Kluge's final You4 and You5 categories cannot be maintained without alteration. In literary texts, the real person 'in front of me' in face-to-face interaction is the flesh and blood reader. As she belongs to a different 'world', the actual reader will have to be removed from the story world and her position

<sup>11</sup> 'You' can be named a 'shifting indexical' because it acts like the shifting operators that Kaplan (1989) calls 'monsters'. Pronouns are called 'arbitrary' when they do not 'involve antecedents or bound-variable interpretations' (Malamud, 2012: 2).

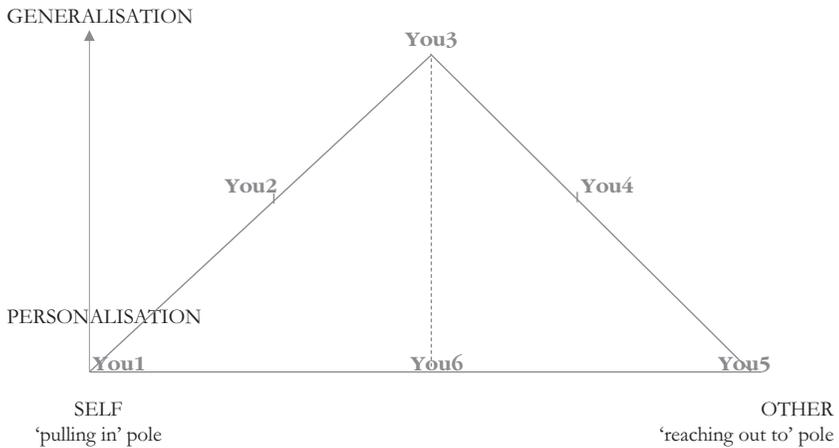


Figure 1.4 The six points of reference in 'you narratives'

marked on a separate line. In fictional narratives, if the author decides to resort to a narrator, **You5** would become the narratee: a more or less delineated individual the text is clearly addressed to. But **You5** can also be found in reported dialogues where characters interact with one another using the I-you dyad within fiction, in a way similar to face-to-face interactions in real life. As a more 'contextually defined general subgroup', to use Stirling and Manderson's terms, **You4** in narratives may indicate an apostrophe to the (implied) reader. The reader, although a single entity as 'actant', is not an individuated entity – otherwise she would be a specific **You5** narratee. An address to the readers through **You4** is an address to a set of referents positioned between personalisation (specific narratees, **You5**) and generalisation (impersonal **You3**).

Phelan's expression 'authorial audience' comes in handy here. Since the singular form 'audience' can refer to a plurality of readers while at the same time leaving their number implicit, this hybrid nature perfectly finds its place in the **You4** slot in my figure. As Phelan explains, 'The authorial audience is neither wholly hypothetical nor wholly actual, but instead it is a hybrid of readers an author knows or knows about – or at least an interpretation of such readers – and an audience the author imagines' (Phelan, 2017: 7).<sup>12</sup>

Lastly, as Figure 1.4 shows, for cases where 'you' refers to an objectified protagonist who is not necessarily or clearly an addressee (**You5**), a sixth and

<sup>12</sup> Here is another definition of the authorial audience Phelan gives in an earlier book, 'a combination of an author's hypotheses about actual audiences and the author's decisions (conscious or intuitive) about the qualities she or he wants the audience to have' (Phelan, 2005: 27).

final category must be added in addition to Kluge's five slots. I have chosen to place it on the vertical axis of You3, on the bottom 'personalisation' line. Indeed, in its purest form, You6 is neither a form of self-reference (You1) nor does it, deictically speaking, address the protagonist as a narratee on the level of narration. To mark the difference between You1, 5 and 6 on the bottom line, I would say that in self-referential 'you' narratives, the protagonist-narrator talks *about* herself (You1). On the other hand, when a narrator addresses a delineated narratee in a clearly established situation of communication, the narrator can be said to be speaking *to* the narratee (You5). Between those two positions, You6 denotes cases where the narrator is speaking *on behalf of* the protagonist.

Borrowing the term from the cinema, Iliopoulou (2019: 79) convincingly speaks of a 'voice-over' narrator to characterise what for me is a You6 narrative in which the narrator speaks both about and to the protagonist, or rather on her behalf. Right in the middle of the bottom line, at a point of equilibrium, You6 fuses/combines or transcends the referential and addressive functions of the second-person pronoun. Thus, on the bottom line of [Figure 1.4](#), just as You3 includes neither the addressor nor the addressee, or implies both of them independently, You6 problematises their identity. As the origin of the voice-over may not be entirely clear, and the protagonist referred to as 'you' cannot be the addressee in the strict sense of the term, You6 fits the bill in that it allows for this floating identity. Adichie's short story 'The Thing Around Your Neck' studied in [Chapter 8](#) will give an illustration of this 'you'.

Again, I see the six positions as mere points of reference in a model that must be dynamically conceived. In predominantly You6 narratives, the pronominal reference can at times give the impression of coming close to self-address. Some linguistic cues point towards the protagonist being also the narrator. Or, when the narrator uses imperative forms, building up some form of pragmatic interaction with the protagonist-narratee, they can lean more towards the addressive side.

A good example of these slip-sliding references of 'you' can be found in self-help books. Here the reference of 'you' can move from You4 in the form of imperatives that could be addressed to the authorial audience, to a You5 addressed as narratee in the typical instructional mode of the self-help guide. But sometimes the protagonist is fleshed out, so much so that the narrator seems to describe a situation on her behalf rather than establishing her as addressee/narratee. Here is an extract from Lorrie Moore's 'self-help' short story:

Meet in expensive beige raincoats, on a pea-soupy night. Like a detective movie. First, stand in front of Florsheim's Fifty-seventh Street window, press your face close to the glass, watch the fake velvet Hummels inside revolving around the wing tips; some

white shoes, like your father wears, are propped up with garlands on a small mound of chemical snow. All the stores have closed. You can see your breath on the glass. Draw a peace sign. You are waiting for a bus.

He emerges from nowhere, looks like Robert Culp, the fog rolling, then parting, then sort of closing up again behind him. He asks you for a light and you jump a bit, startled, but you give him your ‘Lucky’s Lounge—where Leisure Is a Suit’ matches. He has a nice chuckle, nice fingernails. He lights the cigarette, cupping his hands around the end, and drags deeply, like a starving man. He smiles as he exhales, returns you the matches, looks at your face, says: ‘Thanks.’ (Moore, 1986, ‘How to Be a Woman’: 3)

The imperative forms of the beginning (‘Meet in . . . stand in front of’) could well be an address to the authorial audience (You4), but the more and more detailed specificities of the situation seem to indicate a delineated fictional character-narratee (You5). The more ‘fleshed out’ the protagonist becomes, the more the narrative moves away from the instructional mode of self-help texts (see Fludernik, 1996: 171), into a You6 text where the narrator describes, on the protagonist’s behalf, what she is doing (‘You are waiting for the bus’). In other words, You4 and You5 can at times ambiguously conflate in a self-help guide, embodying what Richardson calls the ‘hypothetical’ or ‘subjunctive’ form.<sup>13</sup> But the second-person pronoun can also oscillate between speaking on behalf of (You6) and to the protagonist (You5).

Authors (strategically or unconsciously) exploit ambiguous ‘you’ for the reader to untangle, the ultimate interpreters being indeed the actual readers. Depending on the interpretation they choose to give of the different ‘you’ (as potentially intended by the authors), readers will position themselves towards the pronoun in specific ways. As will become clear in the next section, rather than focusing on the specificities of the different ontological worlds, I am interested in how authors and readers negotiate meaning through the encoding and decoding of ‘you’. In reaching out to an audience outside the ontological threshold, You4 can be said to exceed the fictional frame, but for me it has its place on the figure because it is inscribed *in* the text. Besides, as I will show in [Chapter 2](#), You4 can also refer to an intra-textual addressee that has generic characteristics. Thus, the same You4 can indifferently refer to both extradiegetic and diegetic entities on the figure. What is more intriguing to me is the way readers/viewers potentially feel addressed by a ‘you’ that pragma-linguistically cannot address them (or at least not uniquely). It all depends

<sup>13</sup> Richardson distinguishes this type marked by ‘the consistent use of the imperative, the frequent employment of the future tense, and the unambiguous distinction between the narrator and the narratee’ from two other types of you narrative he identifies: the ‘standard form’ where ‘you’ denotes a single protagonist and the ‘autotelic’ kind that makes the extradiegetic reader part of the narrative (see Richardson, 2006: 19–35).

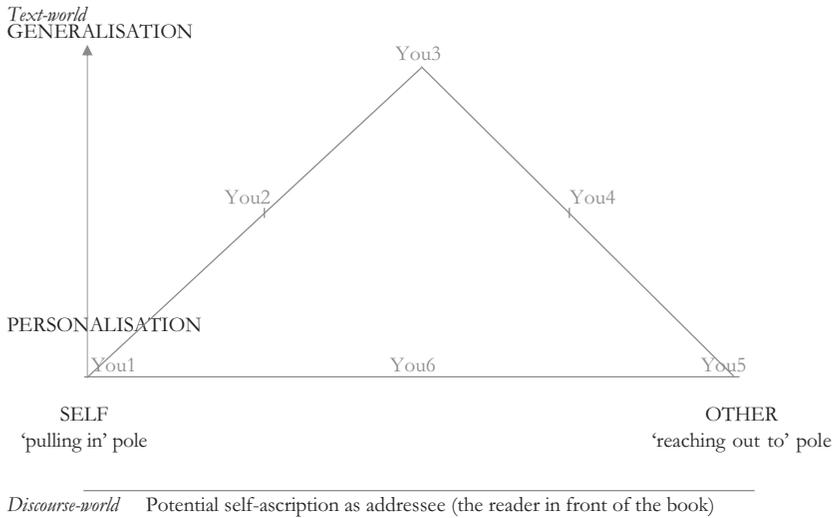


Figure 1.5 Adding the actual audience's level

on how willingly the flesh-and-blood reader self-ascribes the property of this 'you' in the relevant situation.

### 1.2.3 *The Flesh-and-Blood Reader*

Kluge's You5 (face-to-face addressee) disappears in the model, yet its flesh-and-blood counterpart in the narrative version is essential to the success of the 'you' effect. But it must appear on a separate level and so a line must be drawn to clearly distinguish what Werth (1999), Gavins (2007), Whiteley (2011), and Gavins and Lahey (2016) in their Text World Theory call the 'text-world'. The text-world is the mental representations the reader has of the world being described. It is opposed to the 'discourse-world', which corresponds to the real world that the participants in the speech event belong to (Gavins, 2007: 9). This discourse-world, as opposed to face-to-face communication, is inevitably 'split' in novels (Gavins, 2007: 26), as the reader's context may be separated from the author's by several centuries.

What is situated above the added line in Figure 1.5 features the various references of 'you' in the text (as envisaged by the writer). The second line brings in the notion of 'self-ascription' (Wechsler 2010) from the point of view of the actual reader, to determine whether she is willing to 'self-ascribe' as an addressee/speech act participant when reading/hearing 'you'. As mentioned

above, these two levels seem to be separate but the way the flesh-and-blood reader may reconstruct the reference (potentially) chosen by the author for 'you' is part of joint negotiations of meaning while reading. The reader is called upon to negotiate her own positioning vis à vis what she thinks the reference of the second person is.

In just the same way as advertisers and marketing strategists manage to get the consumer to self-ascribe, so may the reader be made to self-ascribe as addressee even though she knows she is not uniquely addressed. Wechsler's *de se* theory accounts for the fact that different addressees may be concerned by an utterance and yet each addressee understands that the pronoun refers to them via self-ascription and not to their addressed neighbour. If a teacher says to Tommy and Mary, 'Write your name at the top of the page', Wechsler (2010: 353) states, 'Even if Tommy and Mary are both addressees, Tommy understands the teacher as instructing him to write his own name, not Mary's. This is exactly what the *de se* analysis predicts. The second-person pronoun is specified for self-ascription BY each addressee. So each addressee *x* is being told to write *x*'s name at the top of the page, not just to write the name of some addressee'.

My contention is thus that *potentially* the reader can self-ascribe the property of being the addressee even if she is not primarily addressed. Of course, as we shall see, the potential degree of 'address' differs depending on the nature of 'you'. In the case of You4, the address is not potential, it is linguistically cued by the text ('you the (authorial) reader'). What remains uncertain regarding You4 is how the actual audience would want to respond to the direct address. The real reader is always free not to accept the position the text assigns her. She can indeed refuse to self-ascribe and occupy the authorial audience's position.

On the left-hand side of the diagram (see [Figure 1.5](#)), the reader is not *obviously* addressed. Yet, probably because of what Wales (1996: 59) terms the pronoun's original 'strong interpersonal base', even if the address is not outright address, 'you' can create what I will call *an effect of address*.

Though expressed in different terms, this 'effect of address' has been noted by a number of scholars. Kacandes (1993: 139), for example, suggests that 'you' extends an 'irresistible invitation' to the reader, while Ryan (2001: 138) speaks of the instinctive tendency in each of us to think 'me' when we hear 'you'. And De Hoop and Tarenskeen (2015: 173) go so far as to suggest that, even in its generic use, 'you' incites a self-ascription before ultimately being 'overruled by the context in which [it] is used'. As for cases where the pronoun is 'neither a term of address, nor *not* a term of address' – when it simultaneously refers both to a 'storyworld participant' and an 'extrafictional addressee' – Herman (1994, 2002: 363) adopts the term 'doubly deictic you'.

Herman's 'doubly deictic you' constitutes a category of its own.<sup>14</sup> As this book will show, I think that the doubly deictic effect cuts across the different uses of 'you' throughout the continuum. In this respect, I agree with Macrae (2012) who shows that the reader can be made to align with the position of a delineated addressee (You5 in my model), especially if this 'you' shares some characteristics with the reader. Thus, it is my contention that the reader can potentially feel addressed in all cases of 'you' mentioned in the model. As Mildorf (2016: 151) makes it clear, the effect of the second person is 'reader-specific' and it depends on how willing the reader is to engage in the attempt to bring her in. This implies that whether we find ourselves on the right or the left-hand side of the spectrum, we readers are free to resist. We are at liberty to ignore the address and/or turn down the invitation.

Thus, our position as readers will differ according to whether we find ourselves effectively addressed (right side) or experiencing an effect of address (left side). In You5 cases, the 'you' is usually a clearly delineated narratee the reader can hardly identify with. The reader remains an 'overhearer' (Goffman 1981) of a communication between a narrator and an identified narratee. The actual audience can at times identify with You5 depending, as just mentioned, on whether they may share some characteristics with the narratee (see Macrae 2012). In You1 and You2 cases, the effect of address to the reader is more indirect but invites intimacy in the reader's alignment with the author/narrator's 'you' descriptions. As I will show in the next chapters, 'you' works as a facilitator that eases the reader's mind into the speaker's mental perspective. For, as Martínez has underlined, the force of 'you' in its doubly deictic potential is to bring the reader closer to the speaker's deictic centre, 'Double deixis entails the contextual anchoring of the reader at a physical, perspectival, emotional, and evaluative location very close to the focalizer's or narrator's, thus favouring perspectival alignment and identification' (Martínez, 2015: 156).

This involving effect of 'you' has been substantially evidenced in both psycholinguistic and cognitive research on what is entailed in the comprehension of a text (Ruby and Decety 2001, Brunyé et al. 2009, Ditman et al. 2010). The best way to give a reader a stronger 'palpable sense of "being there"' is to 'address her as protagonist' (Brunyé et al., 2009: 31). This is confirmed in social cognition theory (Pauen 2012, Caracciolo 2014, Gallese 2014, Pacherie 2014, Tomasello 2014, Popova 2015), which construes second-person

<sup>14</sup> Herman (1994: 378–411) differentiates between functional types of 'you' that depict either total agreement between the grammatical form and its deictic function (you addressing a narratee or apostrophising the reader) or total disagreement (when 'you' is in fact a disguised 'I' or a disguised 'one'). Doubly deictic 'you' falls in between these categories by showing neither complete agreement nor complete discord between form and function.

perspective as the only way to enact (or imaginatively re-enact) the actions and thoughts being described (I will address this recent research in various sections of the book).

The 'you' perspective thus demands of the reader an imaginary alignment with a subjective position. I agree with Walsh (2007: 99) who perceives the power of interpellation of the second person in terms of 'collaboration', that is an 'exercise of perspectival alignment'. This enables us to see the second-person pronoun as a 'strategy of focalisation' rather than a category of narration. Walsh's rhetorical approach makes it possible to get out of the classificatory conundrum that is so prevalent in both linguistics and narratology. In linguistics, as Stirling and Manderson (2011: 1585) note, most attempts at linguistic analysis of 'you' 'have focused for the most part on the classificatory rather than the contextual, with a plethora of diverse sub-types defined. This has led to seemingly contradictory claims and apparent disagreements over the functions and properties of generalized *you*'. The real question is the reason for the specific choice of the second-person pronoun. In what context and to what effect (both on the author/narrator and reader) does the writer adopt a second-person perspective in narratives? Why choose such a 'strategy of focalisation'? To what purpose? The next section is a rundown on this rhetorical approach and its ethical implications.

### 1.3 A Pragma-Rhetorical Approach

#### 1.3.1 *Putting the Author Back into the Equation*

As Fludernik has amply shown, narratologists interested in 'you narratives' have put forward their own categories and classifications. Thus, DelConte (2003: 211) isolates five configurations of distribution between narrator, narratee and protagonist depending on which functions they perform. He shows that 'you narratives' cannot be aligned with the first-person and third-person categories as the traditional notion of voice is inadequate when we deal with second-person narrations. We cannot correctly capture their specific rhetorical effects if we don't switch the critical perspective from 'who speaks' to 'who listens' (DelConte, 2003: 205). He clearly indicates that what is at stake in second-person narrative is 'by definition a point of reception not a point of seeing or speaking'. However, although he proposes a model based on a rhetorical template of 'speaker, text, and audience', he tends to leave the author figure out. Preferring to focus exclusively on the diegetic plane, he disregards the potential transgression through the ontological line and proceeds to separate text-world and discourse-world. Likewise, although she does acknowledge the presence of an author (as well as a reader), Fludernik does not integrate the author in her configurations, as described in [Section 1.1.3](#), 'in

many *you* texts the foregrounded address function implies the existence of a person who utters these exhortations, comments and commands. To the extent that the (real) reader initially feels directly implicated, he or she will also take that voice as emanating from a real person, i.e. the author' (Fludernik, 2011: 119). Thus, although 'you narratives' do call for an emphasis on the 'listener' positions the text creates, it should not entail a total absence of the author.

My rhetorical perspective in this respect recalls that of Phelan, who construes a narrative as a communicative event that is a 'rhetorical action in which an author addresses an audience for some purpose(s)' (Phelan, 2011: 56). In his conception of a narrative as a rhetorical act in which somebody tells somebody else 'on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened' (Phelan, 2017: 5), Phelan brings out the various layers of communication between authors and their audiences. These multiple and varied communicative layers 'invite or even require their audiences to engage with them cognitively, psychologically, emotionally, and ethically' (Phelan, 2005: 5). I would add that in the case of 'you narratives', the taking into account of the multiple layers of communication is even more crucial, as these relationships are paramount to the effects intended and the aims the authors may have.

Phelan distinguishes between five different audiences, among which the flesh-and-blood audience and the authorial audience. As already mentioned, the flesh-and-blood audience may resist being placed in the position of the authorial audience but for Phelan, it is by definition the designated place of the reader (Phelan, 2005: 27). In 'you narratives', the authorial audience is given an explicit existence which is rendered even more manifest through the second-person pronoun or via vocatives alluding to the reading role ('Reader' for instance). There is a third audience included in the authorial audience position in fiction, which is the 'narrative audience position'. The positions of the authorial audience and the narrative audience partake of what Phelan calls a 'double consciousness'.<sup>15</sup> The first audience perceive the characters and the events narrated as invented, while the other suspends disbelief to the point of perceiving them as real, 'the narrative audience responds to characters as if they were acting autonomously, while the authorial audience remains tacitly aware of the fiction's construction and thus interested in its "underlying . . . authorial purpose"' (Phelan, 2017: 69–70).

The fourth audience-type is the 'narratee' who by definition is addressed by a narrator (who knows nothing about the existence of the authorial audience). Lastly, Phelan's rhetorical perspective calls for the existence of a 'rhetorical reader' that would be capable of taking on both (narrative and authorial) roles,

<sup>15</sup> 'The central construct in my approach is position, a concept that combines being placed in and acting from an ethical location' (Phelan, 2017: 23).

as well as letting herself be immersed in the narrative while simultaneously remaining conscious of her reader position (Phelan, 2017: 70).

As the following chapters will make it clear, I contend that this double consciousness is at the heart of doubly deictic you that invites both intimate participation and distant awareness. Chapter 9 more specifically embraces the task of proposing a trans-medium theoretical model of real readers’ potential responses to the ‘you’ invitation in different types of ‘you narratives’, taking into account both authorial intentions and potential degrees of implication. But for now, we need to elaborate on the way ‘you narratives’ entail ethical involvement on the part of the reader.

### 1.3.2 *The Ethics of the Second-Person Pronoun*

‘You’, as it has been described by many philosophers, is the relating pronoun par excellence, linking one human to another as interdependent beings and as such it has an ethical dimension. In his ethics of alterity, Levinas (1991), for example, has emphasised the role of the second-person relationship, entailing recognition of the vulnerability and fragility in the summons of an ‘other’, calling for ethical responsibility. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, converging with Levinas’s concern for the ‘other’, there has been a renewed interest in the interpersonal nature of ethical obligation in moral philosophy highlighting the role of the second-person perspective in our responsibility to one another. Darwall’s *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect and Accountability* (2006) shows that since moral obligation involves the making of reciprocal claims on one another, there is an irreducible second-person aspect to the concept, fundamentally entailing a ‘reorientation’ of moral theory, which has not been sufficiently taken into account so far.<sup>16</sup>

This new interest is nothing but a shift of paradigm in the way one approaches such notions as ethical rights, obligations, dignity and respect. In the specific way ‘you narratives’ construct encounters between reader and character, they undeniably make an ethical demand on readers to show some responsibility or at least compassion for the ‘other’. For Levinas, the moment of ethical encounter appears to be always prior to any verbal expression of the demand for a compassionate regard (Kong, 2015: 457) and the Other is regarded as a third-person term. But as Clarkson (2005: 98) has demonstrated, his use of the third-person ‘other’ can be philosophically reanalysed in the light of the second-person pronoun:

<sup>16</sup> See also Eilan et al. (2017). Highlighting concepts dealing with the philosophy of mind as well as ethics and epistemology, the book focuses on the way we choose to relate to one another and offers a substantial rundown on the increase in works on the topic across the fields of philosophy, psychology and neuroscience.

To return more specifically to the question of pronouns, though, it seems to me that it is Levinas's failure to take due cognizance of the logical performative operation of the second person *linguistically*, together with his wish to distance himself from Buber's I-thou relation, that accounts (at least in part) for his preference for the vocabulary of the third person, rather than that of the second. (Clarkson, 2005: 100)

My linguistically oriented approach is a contribution to the ethical nature of the second-person perspective as triggered by the use of the second-person pronoun. I intend to show how readers are brought to respond to the second-person textual demand for compassion through the (re)enactment of memories, especially in trauma narratives (Chapters 4 and 5), thus enabling them to vicariously experience the life of a complete other.

Research in human sociality has shown how human relations are based on reciprocity and joint actions that are at the heart of what makes us human (Tomasello 2009). In her socio-cognitive account of 'you narratives', Rembowska-Pluciennik (2018: 161) describes the processing of the pronoun as 'a form of joint action' and as 'a socially shared process of sense-making'. What she perceives as the cognitive dynamics of the second-person pronoun is the capacity to have the reader take on more roles than is usually the case (character, narrator, authorial audience): 'The "you" form creates a space in which all the potential textual and extratextual participants of narrative communication become uncertain but interchangeable, enabling switching between dubious narrative roles' (2018: 161). This unique way of having the reader find a place in the narrator's mental space and participate in her world in some form of joint process will be given illustration in the analysis of Paul Auster's autobiographical texts (Chapter 3) and Jim Grimsley's trauma narrative in *Winter Birds* (Chapter 4), revealing what the 'you' pronoun can uniquely achieve that no other pronoun can.

The notion of ethics in narrative has been developed by Phelan. He approaches the issue not as a specific top-down theoretical approach imposed on the text, but as a bottom-up approach that concentrates on the ethics of the telling and the ethics of the told.

Indeed, the ethics of the telling concerns the relationship between the author, the narrator and the audience, 'the author's treatment of the narrator and of the authorial audience will indicate something of his or her ethical commitment toward the telling, the told, and the audience' (Phelan, 2005: 20). It is thus particularly relevant to my focus on the specificity of 'you narratives', in the demand they make upon the audience for them to ethically engage in the narrative in a way that is much more explicit than is the case in other narrative forms. Phelan does not focus on 'you narratives' but in *Living to Tell about It*, he concedes their specificity, 'Although I believe that some of the principles I articulate here are relevant to such narratives, I also believe that the effects of such narratives are different enough from the character narration I analyze here

to deserve their own study' (Phelan, 2005: xi). The ethics of the told concerns 'the ethical dimensions of characters and events, including character-character interactions and choices to act in one way rather than another by individual characters' (Phelan, 2005: 9). This book investigates the degree of congruence between the ethics of the telling and the ethics of the told in the different 'you narratives' and the effects that the discord or concord between them intends to produce.

The ethical quality of the second-person pronoun can be measured in the way it entails the sharing of knowledge about the vulnerable lives of others, such as, for example, the poor in Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (see Chapter 2) or about the lot reserved to homosexuals in mid twentieth-century London in *Skin Lane* by Neil Bartlett (see Chapter 7). At its most ethical, the author's sharing of experience through the choice of 'you' renders possible what Booth (1988) calls 'the meeting of minds between author and reader' with the reader actively invited to empathetically share and experience the plight of the protagonist. As Deringer et al. (2015) and Gast et al. (2015) have maintained, what distinguishes the second-person pronoun is its clear-cut empathy-evoking power. If, in an impersonal second-person utterance, the effect of abstraction/generalisation is due to the sentential context, there is at the same time an empathy effect due to the specific contribution of the second-person pronoun (Deringer et al., 2015: 331). For Gast et al. (2015: 153), this call to empathy has as a consequence the creation of solidarity between willing participants, 'Given this shared attitude of empathy, impersonal second person forms presuppose a certain degree of solidarity between the speech participants – the willingness to share a perspective' (152).

But what about the situations in which ethical solidarity between the speech participants cannot be presupposed? This is the case for advertisers, whose aim is to persuade the viewer/reader/consumer of the need to buy their product, but whose primary interest is, of course, selling their product. Ads tend to capitalise on the fact that pronouns are not always what they seem. In cases of what I call, after Collins and Postal (2012),<sup>17</sup> 'pronominal imposture', when their notional reference disagrees with their pragmatic function, pronouns are veritable 'imposters'. The example of the 'nurse we' – 'How are we feeling today?' – is often used to show the discord between form and function: 'We' notionally stands for a first-person plural but pragmatically indexes only the patient.

In a slogan like L'Oréal's 'Because you're worth it', the designers count on the immersive quality of direct address and the willingness of the viewer/

<sup>17</sup> More specifically, Collins and Postal are interested in cases where an exterior third-person non-pronominal Determiner Phrase is employed to refer to the speaker as in 'Mummy is not happy'.

reader to identify with this 'you', despite the fact that she cannot be the unique addressee. Although it could be said to refer to a large number of women (You4), 'you' is used by advertisers with the hope that each reader/viewer will feel uniquely addressed.

Becoming Phelan's 'rhetorical reader' might lead to what Macrae (2015) in her study of charity appeals as a genre calls 'alienation' effects. This happens through Phelan's second-level consciousness, when the reader realises that what passes as an exclusive address to 'you' and 'your generosity' is in fact addressed to a plurality of addressees. The 'pulling' effect of 'you' can be countered by a 'pushing' effect whereby the reader is aware that she cannot be uniquely and specifically addressed.

Yet advertising succeeds in this very exploitation of the ambiguity of the plural/singular 'you', establishing an artificial individuation that, according to Mucchielli (2009: 96), is nothing more than 'mass individuation' or 'synthetic personalisation' (Fairclough 2001). Without any prior knowledge of the individual behind the prospective consumer, advertisers aim at persuading 'you' of the opposite. 'You' is used to trick the viewer/reader into having the impression of being the sole, unique, individuated addressee. Trickery though there may be, the capacity of the reader/viewer to project themselves into the 'you' slot should not be underestimated. It can, for instance, be measured in the fascinating eagerness with which some people self-ascribe as addressee when they read their horoscopes and willingly suspend disbelief in the impossibility of an individuated address. They see no problem in adapting the generic, context-free scenario – meant for all people born under the same zodiac sign – to fit into their specific situation.

But in both advertising and horoscopes, one can say that nobody is entirely deceived. In the case of commercials, for example, Charaudeau (2008) emphasises the semi-awareness for most people on both sides of the advertising game and speaks of 'a contract of semi-dupes'.

'You' can have even more manipulative effects. In its capacity to bring the audience to 'mentally nod' (O'Connor, 1994: 53), it can be used as a strategic device of involvement with sinister aims. Indeed, the empathy-seeking force of 'you' can be exploited by speakers who have committed crimes. In her analysis of prisoners' accounts of their stabbing others or being the victims of stabbing, O'Connor highlights the way generic 'you' pulls the listener in the prisoners' narrative in such instances as, 'You're killing someone in order to live respectably in prison' (O'Connor, 1994: 53). This utterance puts the topic at a safe distance (for both speaker and listener alike) and tends to elicit the listener's empathy by pulling her into something she might have evaluated negatively had the first-person pronoun been used. 'You' can also be used to refuse responsibility and accountability by taking the reader/viewer as participant in an unethical cause. Chapter 10 will illustrate this through the analysis

of the actor Kevin Spacey’s use of direct address to the viewer in his 2018 YouTube fictional show, where he alludes to the real-life charges of sexual assault he had to face at the time.

Lastly, the interpellatory force of the second person can compel the reader to get involved and become aware of real-world unethical phenomena. In her essay *A Small Place* that will be explored in [Chapter 8](#), Jamaica Kincaid targets specific readers (‘you the tourist’) as representatives of the white western tourists who fly every day to her native island, Antigua, to get away from their daily routine. This particularly strong interpellation of the reader, assigning her a position she cannot deny (she has been or will be a tourist), is likely to force readers to confront a reality they would not have been able to confront had Kincaid not used such direct pragmatic acts. My rhetorical approach to ‘you narratives’, in its intention to bring to the fore the pragmatic acts the authors are performing in their desire to drag the reader into their narrative, is therefore also necessarily a pragmatic one. The motivations of the authors can be manifold. Do they intend simply to inform the readers? Or are they out to move, warn or seduce them? Could the text be construed as an insult to readers? Or is there a conscious desire to manipulate them or to hold them accountable? And, in the respectively historical, cultural and personal contexts of the narratives under investigation, to what final purpose are these various motivations put to use?

### 1.3.3 *Pragmatic Speech Acts*

This book intends to explore what can be called a pragmatics of interpellation, and the grammar that accompanies it. Paratexts, where authors and readers tend to communicate more directly, will also be included in this study.

A good example of pragmatic interpellation is Mark Z. Danielewski’s dedication in his *House of Leaves*, which reads, ‘This is not for you’. Gibbons (2011), in her cognitive analysis of this five-word sentence, shows how the author creates both distance and desirability in a unique way. She draws a parallel with anti-marketing strategies (Sinha and Foscht 2007) that render a product more desirable by emphasising its ‘limited availability’. Danielewski’s use of the pronoun can be said to be purposefully ambiguous.<sup>18</sup> So ambiguous, in fact, that I am not sure where to place it on my model. Is it an

<sup>18</sup> Speaking of authorial intentions in the use of the pronoun does not mean that there won’t be a gap between the author’s intentions (that might not be fully controlled) and readers’ interpretations (see Sorlin 2020b). As does Stockwell (2013), I like to think of the complex act of meaning-making as a combination between textual imposition (textual patterns do impose preferred and dispreferred interpretations) and readerly disposition. As Phelan (2005: 47) puts it, meaning arises from ‘the feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response’. [Chapter 9](#) will come back to this key aspect.

apostrophic address to the authorial audience, in which case it would paradoxically mean that the book is not meant for the writer's intended audience? Or is the author purposefully trying to 'divide and conquer' and establish membership categories between worthy readers and other addressees? In other words, the flesh-and-blood reader can negotiate her own positioning in relation to the reference she wants to assign to the 'you' in 'this is not for you'.

By refusing to identify with this 'you' who in fact is being exhorted not to turn the page, the flesh-and-blood reader is likely to respond to this assignation by doing the exact opposite – turn the page. This strategic use of 'you' might be a way to seduce the reader into filling the shoes of the (authorial) audience Danielewski has in mind. He would thus be driving a wedge between them and those audience members for whom this book is not meant. Is this use of 'you' a trick of the author who has absolutely no intention of leaving readers on the threshold, or is it to be taken as a sign with the implicit meaning: 'You have been warned'? For Gibbons, it is clearly a trick played by the author to make us want to read on. The relationship created is that of seduction and manipulation as this act of defiance towards the addressee brings the reader to perform 'reactance'. Reactance is a term that has been popularised in the context of 'reverse psychology' and exploited by the anti-marketing strategists mentioned above (Gibbons, 2011: 22). Upon reading 'this book is not for you, move along', you are likely to counter-interpellate by reacting to the author's attempt to bypass you.

The short analysis of this simple utterance, presumably attributable to the author, brings out two elements that will be of paramount importance in the author–reader relationship studied in this book: the notions of *guidance* (from advice to the reader to strong influencing) and *freedom* (of interpretation). For Gibbons, Danielewski's choice of form in his dedication promotes the reader's freedom, 'This "emptiness" of the remainder of the page transforms the normally unremarkable operation of turning the page into a defiant performance of reactance, one which works to reassert the reader's free behaviour' (27). Prefaces and postfaces (see [Chapter 9](#)) are a genre of their own, but as I will show in the following chapters, these pragmatic acts of guidance to the reader do not only concern paratexts or other types of text that hesitate between the extratextual and the fictional. They can be found at the very heart of the narrative itself (see [Chapters 6 and 7](#)).

The pragmatic acts performed by authors must indeed be analysed in the light of freedom and ethical edification. Is the authors' guidance such as to leave the reader little interpretative freedom? Are they using polite means to steer the reader's attention in a concealed authoritative manner? To what extent is the reader invited to react to the call? As we shall see, explicit guidance of the reader in eighteenth-century literature for instance, paradoxically, does not necessarily rhyme with reduced freedom. Digital hypertext or interactive

fiction of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries does seem to call for a greater participation on the part of the reader. Could this invitation to the reader be seen as the possibility of ‘co-creation’ of the work of art? Or, drawing a direct parallel to marketing strategies with which we started this chapter, are we justified in asking whether this reader-oriented fiction is simply a mere reversal of an author-centred perspective? In [Chapter 9](#), bringing together print and digital fiction, I will provide some answers to these questions.

#### 1.4      **The Stylistics of You: Rationale and Content**

Before detailing the contents of the book and closing this chapter, I would like to make a brief comment on its title. The term *style* is both personal and collective in its reference. And it is to this fundamentally dual aspect of the term that I mean to pay tribute in my exploration of the style that is specific to ‘you narratives’. Though we do often speak of style to refer to collective aesthetic movements, it can also be the mark of a single author. The second-person pronoun is precisely caught up in this dialectics and the case studies that follow will show how the singularity of the experience described can ethically reflect on the collective. Besides, the title also refers to stylistics as a field: although stylistics is eminently linked to traditional disciplines such as linguistics and narratology, it has a broader range, extending into pragmatic stylistics, cognitive stylistics and rhetorical theory (see Sorlin [2014a](#), [2016a](#), [2016b](#), [2018b](#)). *The Stylistics of You* intends to exploit this cross-disciplinary range.

The chapters that follow will depict variations of the use of ‘you’ along the continuum in my diagram ([Figure 1.5](#)). Each will illustrate and put to the test some aspects of the model, the overall aim being to give an overview of the potentialities of the second person in different (historical) contexts.

The author–reader relationship will be studied as a pragmatic choice of the author. In order to grasp the potential effects of ‘you’ in this strategy, we will examine the context, the theme and the genre of the text as well as the linguistic surroundings/environment of ‘you’. These will prove to be decisive elements, not only in the pragmatic strategy, but also in the interpretation of the work. As we will see, the fine-grained analysis that a stylistic approach allows will provide a better account of the specificity of each text – fiction or nonfiction; short story or essay; print fiction or digital fiction; print or screen.

The book follows the continuum in my model ([Figure 1.5](#)). Starting with the self-addressed narratives and their ‘effects of address’ on the left-hand side, moving to the pragmatic addresses in the middle, we ultimately make our way to the right-hand side towards ‘authorial audience you’ – the ‘you’ into which the flesh-and-blood reader may choose to enter or refuse to project. [Part I](#) and [II](#) focus on the specific genre of autobiographies and trauma narratives. [Part III](#)

explores the author–reader channel across time (from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century). **Part IV** will take us from print to digital fiction, measuring the change in the advent of the second technological revolution, questioning the illusion of interactivity and highlighting the implications for our conception of the 'reader'.

Thus, **Part I** will deal with British and American autobiographical works whose aim is to transform personal experience into something sharable. Reading *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), we shall examine a technique of Orwell's which has so far escaped attention: he makes alternate use of the second-person pronoun, the 'I' pronoun and the indefinite 'one', as he narrates his experience as a tramp in various European cities. My point in **Chapter 2** is to try to determine the force and effects of the second person in its capacity to have the reader more directly experience what other sentient beings living in deprivation are going through. The results of the detailed analysis show that 'you' oscillates between specificity and genericity in a way subtly exploited by Orwell as he implicates the reader in his own re-living of his experience as a tramp through writing about it.

As opposed to Orwell's narrative, Auster's autobiographical dyptich (*Winter Journal* (2012) and *Report from the Interior* (2013)) is entirely written in the second person. Auster has always made it clear that his life was quite ordinary and telling it in the second person was a way to conceive of 'me' 'as anybody, as everybody'.<sup>19</sup> **Chapter 3** will show how the second-person pronoun is instrumental in the interpersonal connection Auster is ethically constructing with his readers. Auster's curious choice of 'you' for the genre of autobiography will prove to be a pragmatic device inviting the reader to meet him half way via the ethical vector that the second-person pronoun represents.

**Part II** addresses another genre. The two novels that will interest me both deal with traumatic events: in *Winter Birds* (1984) by Jim Grimsley, a narrator named Daniel narrates his childhood in a household marked by the violence, alcoholism and sexual abuse of a maimed father. *Quilt* (2010) by Nicholas Royle relates the impossible mourning of a man after the death of his beloved father. I have chosen these two books because of the specific use they make of personal pronouns. In *Winter Birds*, the narrator-protagonist's vulnerability is conveyed through the combination of the second-person pronoun with other specific linguistic elements, thus enabling the use of the pronoun to serve as a coping mechanism. Drawing from socio-cognitive theories and cognitive stylistics (particularly Text World Theory (Gavins 2007, Gavins and Lahey 2016)), I show how Grimsley's narrative does not confine itself to informing us about his own traumatic experience through Dan, but makes us feel the

<sup>19</sup> Interview of Paul Auster with Wayne Gooderham (2012).

trauma. Through an enactive 'you-oriented' style, the reader is invited to 'perform' the character's vulnerability rather than conceptualise it from an external point of view.

In *Quilt*, the diverse pronominal shifts grammatically reflect the slow disappearance of the first-person protagonist. The clearly marked 'you' passages in *Quilt* highlight the ghostly presence of a narrator that describes the character's attempt to keep it all together while letting us perceive the cracks of this narratological strategy of speaking on behalf of someone who is 'losing it' and can no longer express himself. I show that not only does the novel go down the pronominal paradigm in the switch from first-person to third-person narrative through 'you', but it also stylistically subverts the Animacy Hierarchy through a generic 'you' that knits together different groups of voices – the result being an experimental text. Royle's novel ends with an afterword that contains a classic appeal to the reader. This afterword will serve as a transition to [Part III](#) and [IV](#) of my book which are devoted to this (para) textual appeal to the reader/viewer.

In [Part III](#), I focus on the rhetoric of communication in the author–reader storytelling channel across time, gender, sex and race. [Chapter 6](#) starts in the eighteenth century, with Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, before passing on to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In [Chapter 7](#), I focus on Neil Bartlett's *Skin Lane* (2007). In each genre and each period, my study will try to determine the degree of pragmatic proximity and/or distance the authors establish with their readers.

Fielding's and Brontë's novels are analysed in the light of pragmatics theory. Although the age-old author–reader relationship in these two novels has been the topic of many studies, the different pragmatic acts the authors/narrators perform in their address to the reader are rarely accounted for. Using Warhol's broader narratological distinctions between 'distancing' and 'engaging' narrators (1986, 1989, 1995), I account for these addresses in terms of my own theoretical model to enhance the difference between the two texts. I show that other references of 'you' are present in a way never emphasised in previous studies of these novels (Brontë's in particular). Even if the selected texts cannot be raised to the level of representative novels of their times (though they have been chosen among many potential others), they can be seen as illustrations of rhetorical tendencies.

Bartlett's twenty-first-century story of a certain Mr F, who is pining away from repressed desire for a young man, provides a good illustration of how the resurgence of the more traditional conversational mode can be exploited in new ways, when associated with a particular use of the second-person pronoun. Already discussed in [Part I](#) and [II](#), the notion of strategic empathy (examined in literary studies by Keen 2006 and in socio-cognition research by Gallagher 2012, Gallese 2001 and Thompson 2001, among others) is more

thoroughly developed here. We will discover how Bartlett subtly but surely guides our ethical reaction (in the manner of Fielding) and brings us to identify with the second-person pronoun (in the manner of Brontë).

Chapter 8 foregrounds the ethics and politics of the second person in 'postcolonial' writing,<sup>20</sup> analysing the use of 'you' in yet other genres, the essay, with Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988), and the short story, with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'The Thing Around Your Neck' published in the eponymous collection in 2009. The majority of the 261 occurrences of 'you' in Adichie's story correspond to the sixth category, which I added to the theoretical model presented above (Figure 1.5). Kincaid and Adichie use two different techniques to have the reader reflect on her own position, beliefs and prejudices. Whilst Kincaid uses furious direct address (You4), Adichie's You6 type brings the reader to share the character's perspective more indirectly but as forcefully.

The final, Part IV, will make a technological leap from paratext to hypertext. Building on theories put forward by specialists in the field (Zimmerman 2004, Ryan 2006, Ensslin 2009, Bell and Ensslin 2011, Bell et al. 2014, Bell 2016), it will address the notion of 'interactivity' and readers' greater implication in the creative process in digital fiction as opposed to print fiction. I will discuss the idea of a higher degree of readerly freedom in interactive fiction, which I think needs to be challenged both narratologically and pragmatically. The diagram will be tested and adapted to foreground the specificities but also the potentialities and limits of digital art. In response to Warhol's distinction (1986, 1989, 1995) between 'engaging' and 'distancing' narrators, Chapter 9 also proposes a theoretical model for actual readers and their potential engagement in (both print and digital) fiction.

In Chapter 10, we take a look at the YouTube video posted by Kevin Spacey on Christmas Eve 2018. The actor had recently been fired from the Netflix production *House of Cards* (2013–2018), where he played the part of Frank Underwood, following sexual harassment charges filed against him, and he used this video to defend himself against the charges. I will examine how his manipulative use of the second-person pronoun can be an effective device in coaxing the viewers to align their views with those of the speaker. Spacey brazenly proceeds to adopt his Frank Underwood persona and directly addresses his audience in the same manner as Underwood in the show. In so doing, he numbs the 'cognitive vigilance' of the viewers who find themselves charmingly and threateningly persuaded to trust Spacey – a trust ostensibly based on their shared history. In the same way as an advertiser cunningly uses

<sup>20</sup> The controversy around the term 'postcolonial' will be tackled in Chapter 8.

'you' to tell us what is good for us, Spacey informs the viewers that he knows what they want – they want him back.

In the YouTube clip, the second-person pronoun loses its bond-creating ethical intersubjective power, as examined in the previous chapters. It is in fact just the opposite that takes place, as 'you' becomes a device to divide and conquer. Instead of using 'you' to bear witness to suffering and enhance a community of human feelings and emotions, the viewer becomes a hostage to the character/actor's perception. The analysis of the video highlights the points where Spacey breaks the fictional contract by offering a show *outside* the show that is authorised by no 'collective sender' (Dynel 2011a). Spacey himself is the sole authoriser, so to speak – the aptly named *YouTube* platform enabling him to force the audience to take an impossible position as both fan and citizen.

The varied references of 'you' and their specific effects will thus be seen to be borne by different pragmatic acts and higher authorial intentions. It is indeed the polysemous force of this little three-letter word that has made this 'you'-turn possible.

And so, dear Reader, if you have made it this far, please turn the page. This book is definitely for you.