ROCZNIKI HUMANISTYCZNE
Tom LIV-LV, zeszyt 5 – 2006-2007

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THE NARRATEE AS PROTAGONIST

The narratee, that is the addressee to whom the narrator is directing his/her narrative, is frequently assumed to occupy a somewhat marginal position in relation to the central storyline of a given narrative. It is indeed so in the case of classical examples of texts evoking the narratee, such as Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. However, the narratee can also occupy the central position of the protagonist of a given text. He/she can become a narratee-protagonist in two types of fairly experimental narrative forms: multipersoned narratives and second-person narratives. The former can be roughly defined as a narrative characterised by sustained fluctuation in pronominal forms used in reference to the main character. In the latter, as might be expected, the second-person pronoun dominates. The narratee-protagonist is identifiable in these two narrative forms if the character occupying the central position is simultaneously cast in the role of the narratee, this function being signalled by the use of the second-person pronoun in its address function in relation to him/her.

As Brian Richardson demonstrates, multipersoned narration[1] can take a number of forms, some of which do not necessarily involve the presence of the narratee.[2] For instance, there are no signals of the narratee's presence in a multipersoned narrative which employs the first- and the third-person pro-

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[1] Throughout my paper, the term *narration* will designate a technique whereby a given story is told, whereas the term *narrative* will refer to a certain type of texts.

[2] B. RICHARDSON, "I etcetera: On the Poetics and Ideology of Multipersoned Narratives," *Style* 28 (1994): 316-317. This multiplicity of forms is probably the reason why Richardson fails or omits to define a multipersoned narrative, the self-evidence of the notion being apparently assumed by him.

nouns in reference to the same protagonist. Fay Weldon's *The Cloning of Joanna May* is the case in point: it consists of alternately arranged chapters in which the same protagonist appears either as the "I" of the narrator or the "she" of a character. Consequently, the use of multipersoned narration is not tantamount to the evocation of the narratee-protagonist. The protagonist of a multipersoned narrative can be considered a narratee-protagonist only if there are signals that he/she is attributed the function of the narratee.

On the most basic level, this function is signalled by the use of the second-person pronoun *you*[3] in reference to him/her. Thus, in Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* three major pronouns — *I*, *you* and *he* — are employed to narrate the story of the protagonist, a young Somali named Askar. Significantly, the novel opens with the passage of second-person narration, in which the pronoun *you* is employed in reference to the protagonist:

> You sit, in contemplative posture, your features agonised and your expressions pained; you sit for hours and hours and hours, sleepless, looking into darkness, hearing a small snore coming from the room next to yours.[4]

While in *Maps* all the three pronouns are employed to narrate the protagonist's past as well as present experiences, in Samuel Beckett's *Company*, another instance of a multipersoned narrative, the third-person pronoun is employed to describe the protagonist's present situation and the second-person pronoun mostly to narrate his past, which he apparently has to be told. In other words, the third-person pronoun is an element of what might be called a frame narrative, and the second person appears in a framed narrative. Consider the opening lines of Beckett's text:

> A voice comes to one in the dark.
> Imagine.
> To one on his back in the dark. This he can tell by the pressure on his hind parts and by how the dark changes when he shuts his eyes and again when he opens them again. Only a small part of what is said can be verified. As for example when he hears, You are on your back in the dark.[5]

[3] Throughout my paper two different typographic forms will be employed in reference to English pronouns, especially the second-person pronoun. Italics are used to indicate that *you* is discussed specifically as a pronoun. Quotation marks signal, in turn, that the "you" is used as a metonymic substitute for the fictional being the second-person pronoun refers to.

[4] N. FARAH, *Maps* (London: Picador, 1986), 3.

[5] S. BECKETT, *Company* (London: John Calder, 1996), 7.

In subsequent parts of the text the second-person narration, exemplified by the last sentence in this passage, is extended into long sections in which the protagonist's past appears to be narrated to him. It should be noted that the text of Beckett's novella is very fluid and defies an easy distinction between the framing and the framed, even though this opening seems to establish the circumstances of the narrative situation; that is why the tentative forms has been employed in the above description of its narrative structure.

Contrary to what might be expected, the employment of the second-person narration within a multipersoned narrative is not in itself the sign of the narratee-protagonist's presence: it must take a peculiar form which will make its communicative function explicit. Since this problem also concerns second-person narratives, I will discuss it in relation to both forms, after I have presented basic properties of second-person narrative as such.

While multipersoned narratives need not use the second-person pronoun in relation to the protagonist, second-person narratives are by definition about the "you."[6] In the majority of cases these narratives consist of affirmative statements in which the actions of the "you," past or present, are narrated. Consider the following examples:

(1) You were at a party when your father died — and immediately you were told, a miracle happened. A real miracle. It didn't last, of course, but was convincing enough for a few moments. Then, an hour later, you took a girl home and forced her to make love.[7]

(2) You stroke the child's cheek and find them strangely dry, indeed the eyes, you bend to examine them, are dry, was he not crying? you ask his father.[8]

As can be seen, apart from the preterite, a typical narrative tense, the present tense forms are (frequently) used in second-person narratives.[9] Furthermore, in some of them the sustained use of imperatives encouraging the narratee to perform specific actions can be noticed:

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[6] Cf. M. FLUDERNIK, "Introduction: Second-Person Narrative and Related Issues," *Style* 28 (1994): 288.

[7] R. BUTLIN, *The Sound of My Voice* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1989), 3.

[8] S. GUPTA, *The Glassblower's Breath* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 96.

[9] Brian Richardson goes so far as to suggest that the use of the past tense is unusual in second person-narrative. B. RICHARDSON, "The Poetics and Politics of the Second Person Narrative," *Genre* 24 (1991): 316.

> The alarm clock — has stopped ringing. Lie still. Relax for a few moments before getting up. Let the sunlight colour-in the room — that's its job, not yours. Relax. Kiss Mary. Say: good morning Mary. And smile. This is the first day.[10]

The consistent employment of the second-person perspective, typical of second-person narratives, does signal that the "you" designates the protagonist of a given narrative; however, it does not always unequivocally attribute to this protagonist the position of the narratee. Likewise, not every multipersoned narrative containing passages of second-person narration automatically evokes the presence of the narratee. In her studies of second-person narrative Monika Fludernik emphasises that it can lack an allocutive function, which would signal that the "you" designates not only the protagonist but also the addressee of a given narrative. Consider her definition of second person narrative:

> [it is] narrative whose (main) protagonist is referred to by means of an address pronoun (usually *you*) ... second-person texts frequently also have an explicit communicative level on which a narrator (speaker) tells the story of the "you" to (sometimes) the "you" protagonist's present-day absent or dead, wiser, self.[11]

Fludernik's use of the word *frequently* indicates that in her view not every second-person narrative has a communicative character. The lack thereof is characteristic of the second-person narrative in a reflector mode, in which, Fludernik argues, the second-person pronoun is employed to designate the reflector-character. The category of the reflector, or reflector-character, has been introduced by Franz K. Stanzel in his *Theory of Narrative* to describe the narrative situation typical of such novels as James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. In his view in these novels one can find

> a reflector-character [who] reflects, that is, he mirrors events of the outer world in his consciousness, perceives, feels, registers, but always silently, because he never 'narrates,' that is, he does not verbalize his perceptions, thoughts and feelings in an attempt to communicate them.[12]

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[10] R. BUTLIN, 130.

[11] M. FLUDERNIK, "Introduction: Second-Person Narrative and Related Issues," 288.

[12] F. K. STANZEL, *A Theory of Narrative*, trans. Ch. Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 144.

The reflector-character thus understood is juxtaposed by Stanzel with the teller-character, or narrator, who, by contrast, consciously narrates and who can be identified in such texts as Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*.[13]

In her extension of Stanzel's model along pronominal lines Fludernik argues that in some second-person narratives the second-person pronoun is employed to designate the reflector-character and to establish the centre of consciousness from whose experiential perspective the events are presented. When utilised in this manner, the "you" loses its allocutive character and the text in which it is employed becomes an instances of Fludernik's category of a non-communicative narrative.[14] Consider the following passage from Joyce Carol Oates's story *The Seduction*:

> You look over your shoulder to see who is following you.
>
> But there is no one. You continue to walk more quickly. At a corner you pause, as if without calculation, and again glance behind you — still you see no one, nothing.
>
> Yet *he* is in the air around you, almost visible. You must resist the impulse to swipe at the air around your head, as if driving away gnats, which you cannot see. You are terrified of someone noticing you, remarking upon your agitation. It is frightening thing to be on a street like this without a companion; a man alone, however conventionally and handsomely he is dressed, is vulnerable to any stranger's eyes.[15]

Commenting on this passage, Fludernik observes that "the narrative disappears entirely behind the thoughts of the protagonist 'you.' Here the reflector mode is fully developed."[16] Indeed, the final part of this passage is the repre-

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[13] A detailed discussion of Stanzel's distinctions would go far beyond the scope of the present paper. Let me just note that the novels which I quote after Stanzel as examples of the reflector mode do not actually represent it in its "pure" form. Fludernik points out that they do retain the vestiges of authorial omniscience and should therefore be regarded as borderline cases. In her view the "pure" reflector mode can be found in texts employing exclusively techniques of interior monologue or internal focalisation. M. FLUDERNIK, "Second Person Fiction: Narrative *You* as Addressee And/Or Protagonist," *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 18 (1993): 226, note 10. Imperfect as these examples are, they do illustrate the nature of Stanzel's distinction; they also have the virtue of being well known.

[14] M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 229.

[15] J. C. OATES, *The Seduction*, in: *The Poisoned Kiss and Other Stories from the Portuguese* (New York: Vanguard, 1975), 70.

[16] M. FLUDERNIK, "Second Person Narrative As a Test Case for Narratology: The Limits of Realism," *Style* 28 (1994): 451.

sentation of the thoughts of the "you;" however, in the first paragraph the "you" is presented from the external perspective, which suggests that perhaps one could argue for the presence of the figure of a narrator who observes the actions of the "you" and narrates them. Obviously, it would be hardly possible to reconstruct realistically interpretable circumstances of the narrative act: the present tense would have to be interpreted as the indication of the fact that the actions of the "you" are described as they are performed. What remains unclear, however, is whether the "you" is being addressed; or rather, there are no signals in the text that he/she is, apart from the use of the second-person pronoun, which might suggest that. However, *you* need not function exclusively as the pronoun of address: it can, for instance, be employed as a generic pronoun, a colloquial equivalent of an impersonal *one*.[17]

Consequently, *you* designates the narratee-protagonist if the use of this pronoun is correlated with the signals of the communicative character of a given narrative. In view of these considerations, only one of the examples of second-person narration quoted above unequivocally attributes to the "you" the position of the narratee. It is a series of imperatives coming from Butlin's novel, imperatives endowing the novel with an exhortative character. *The Sound of My Voice* exemplifies one more typical property of second-person narratives evoking the presence of the narratee-protagonist: the address function of a given narrative frequently remains latent only to be revealed in its final part, as happens in the case of the imperatives mentioned above.

The second person sections of Farah's *Maps* contain not only imperatives, but also another potent signal of address function: questions directed to the "you": "Do you remember any of that? You don't? How very weird!"[18] It should be noted that the second question implies direct contact between the narrator and the narratee in the manner typical of the *skaz*, that is a narrative creating the illusion of direct oral contact between the narrator and the narratee.

In *The Glassblower's Breath* yet another type of signals of the narratee-protagonist can be identified: the use of apostrophic interjections. Consider the following example:

> You have come a long way, *my love*, a long way from home, you have found your way into a houseful of mirrors that each tell your tale, but none as well as you might have, if you had looked within, instead of among your myriad reflections,

[17] Cf. H. BONHEIM, "Narration in the Second Person," *Recherches Anglaises et Americaines* 16 (1983): 70; M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 230.

[18] N. FARAH, 207.

> for the shape of your destiny. For mirrors have their own memories, *my love*, old shadows that fill outlines. And in your life, *my love*, do not old images still struggle to service new metaphors ...[19]

The repeated use of the phrase "my love" emphasises that there is somebody addressing the "you" of the protagonist, though the identity of the narrator remains unclear till the final pages of the novel.

The use of *my* in the passage quoted above can be related to one more signal indicating that the "you" can be construed as the narratee of a given text — the appearance of the "I" of the narrator. Characteristic of a significant number of second person narratives, this disclosure of the narrator's presence is usually delayed towards the ending of a given narrative and reduced to a few first-person forms: the narrative still focuses on the narratee-protagonist and his/her experiences. Consider the following example:

> The walk to the station. I am with you. It is all right. Everything is. A day at the office, then home again. I will be with you. Trust me. The platform, *where the colour white flutters in front of the train to slow it down, then tangles in the wheels to bring it to a dead stop.*
>
> It's over. Perhaps you will imagine this every time you stand here. But don't worry — it's all over. That will not happen to you. Trust me.[20]

What remains unclear in many second-person or multipersoned narratives is the identity of the narrator. While in the case of *The Sound of My Voice*, the passage from which has been quoted above, the voice of the "I" can be interpreted as dramatisation of the protagonist's conscience, the text of *Company*, even though it seems to describe the circumstances of the narrative act, precludes identification of the narrator and his/her position. It initially appears to be narrated by a heterodiegetic narrator, describing the protagonist from the external perspective, but the final parts of the text suggest that he/she might be a homodiegetic narrator of a self-addressed monologue.

Furthermore, second-person narratives undermine one of the theoretical premises of classical narratology, according to which the narrator and the narratee should be situated on the same ontological level.[21] In some cases the

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[19] S. GUPTA, 42-43, *italics mine*.

[20] R. BUTLIN, 131.

[21] *Cf.* S. RIMMON-KENAN, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 1983), 104.

narrator is situated outside and above the presented world and the narratee inside it. An example of such a communicative set-up can be found in Italo Calvino's *If on a winter night a traveller* in which the "you" designates the narratee(s) who is (are) actant(s) on the level of the presented world and the "I" seems to designate the dramatised author of the text:

> You are in bed together, you two Readers. So the moment has come to address you in the second person plural, a very serious operation, because it is tantamount to considering the two of you a single subject. I'm speaking to you two, a fairly unrecognizable tangle under the rumpled sheet. ... Lovers' reading of each other bodies (of that concentrate of mind and body which lovers use to go to bed together) differs from reading in that it is not linear ... If one wanted to present the whole thing graphically, every episode, with its climax, would require a three dimensional model, perhaps four-dimensional, or, rather, no model: every experience is unrepeatable. What makes lovemaking and reading resemble each other most is that within both of them times and spaces open, different from measurable time and space.[22]

The presence of the speaking "I" and the metafictional character of the reflections on the relationship between reading and lovemaking suggest that the voice describing/addressing the you of the Reader(s) concretised as character(s) on the level of the presented world should be attributed to the dramatised author of the novel.

Even though the novels mentioned above ostentatiously signal the presence of the narratee and even of the narrator, one cannot identify in all of them the communicative level in the sense emerging from the final part of Fludernik's definition. There are, for instance, no indications that the "you" protagonist's wiser or older or absent self is being addressed in *The Glassblower's Breath* in circumstances which do not coincide with the narrated events. The use of the present tense suggests the immediacy of communication and precludes the reconstruction of a mimetically interpretable narrative situation. However, the circumstances in which the narrative act takes place are not always clearly presented in contemporary fiction. Fludernik herself observes in *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* that "in recent fiction ... the situation of enunciation is frequently left ambiguous or unaccounted for."[23]

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[22] I. CALVINO, *If on a winter night a traveller*. Trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 122-125.

[23] M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 228.

As Helmut Bonheim points out, second-person narration in general resists easy recuperation of the narrative situation and motivation in mimetic terms: why should someone be told what he/she has done and already knows or what he/she is doing at the moment?[24] The realistic answer to these questions would frequently have to assume mental deficiency or instability on the narratee's part: his/her being an amnesiac who needs to be told his/her own past or his/her propensity to talk to him/herself.[25] However, the narratives directed to the narratee-protagonist need not, or should not, be interpreted in such schematic terms. In her analysis of Gabriel Josipovici's novel *Contre-jour,* employing extensive passages of second-person narration precluding reconstruction of a realistically interpretable narrative situation, Fludernik emphasises that formal antirealism of this text actually contributes to the very moving presentation of interpersonal relationships:

> the affective quality of the text resides not in an ironic distancing from whatever "story" or intimations of stories there is, but in one's serious *Betroffenheit* [empathy] at the anguish that emerges from the however fictive constellation of insanity, despair (at being unloved), jealousy, guilt, loving kindness, and obsessive desire for love. This gamut of emotions and their range and depth win out over any existential or realistic scepticism. In this manner *Contre-jour* manages to be a triumph of human psychology while, at the same time, it constitutes a climax of irreality or antirealism in the formal realm.[26]

One more aspect of Fludernik's definition of second-person narrative and of my own discussion of the signals attributing to the narratee the position of protagonist should be clarified. By using the passive form "referred to" Fludernik circumvents the need to clarify who refers to the protagonist by means of the pronoun of address. In a sense, this omission is a logical consequence of her approach to second-person narrative. In narratives in reflector mode there is no communicative level and consequently no narrator, thus it is the (hypostatised) text, or the implied author, that designates the protagonist by means of *you*. This problem does not concern second-person narratives in which the narratee-protagonist can be discerned: it is the narrator who refers to the narratee by means of the second-person pronoun. The allocutive character of these narratives presupposes the presence of an agent addressing the narratee, however obscure the identity of this agent might be.

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[24] H. BONHEIM, 74.

[25] Cf. M. FLUDERNIK, "Second-Person Fiction," 221.

[26] M. FLUDERNIK, "Second-Person Fiction," 466.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the pronoun employed in reference to the narratee-protagonist, and the protagonist of the second-person narrative in general, depends on the level on which the narratee-protagonist is referred to. The narratee-protagonist may use *I* in reference to him/herself in direct speech: "'When I go away from here will I get smaller?' you asked."[27] By the same token, other characters may use *he* or *she* talking about him/her, though the latter case is rare on account on the centrality of the "you." As second person narratives do not go beyond the perspective of the "you," the application of *he* or *she* in reference to him/her involves a fairly unusual situation of somebody talking about somebody else in the third person in the latter's presence. And yet examples of such a situation can be found, for instance in John McGahern's novel *The Dark*:

> "This lad of mine wants to leave the University and go to the E.S.B. It has me worried. It's hard to know what way to advise ...
>
> It'll be his own decision anyway. I'll not interfere. He won't have me to blame in after years. That's the only sure thing," Mahoney bloomed in the attention.
>
> You watched Mahoney with cold and hidden fury, you'd been in this restaurant days and they'd learned more about you in this half-hour than all the days together. All this air of importance and wisdom breathed through their cigarette smoke was horrible, it was your life they talked about, but soon it'd be over.[28]

The *he* used in the reported speech and the *you* of the passage following it refer to the same protagonist. Furthermore, strange as the situation exemplified above might seem, it has its everyday counterpart: it is an instance of the parent (Mahoney) talking about the child ("he" and "you") in his/her presence. Thus, *you* is not the one and only pronoun employed in reference to the protagonist of second-person narrative, it is the pronoun employed in what we might call the main narrative.

The above examples illustrate the situations in which pronouns other than *you* are employed in reference to the "you" in the passages embedded in the narrative in which *you* is exclusively employed. A reversed set-up, in which they appear in the embedding part of the text, is equally, though for the time being only theoretically, possible. To remain within the field of motifs meeting the requirements of verisimilitude, we could imagine a narrative in which a brief frame story presents a parent and a child, employing the third

[27] R. BUTLIN, 14.
[28] J. MCGAHERN, *The Dark* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 184-185.

person forms in reference to both, or "I" of the narrator in reference to the child and the third-person forms in reference to the parent. The framed, main, story could be constituted by the second-person narrative in which the parent tells the child the events from the latter's childhood.

Even if the main focus fell on the experiences of the "you," such a simple story would constitute a case of second-person narrative related in form to multipersoned narrative: after all two different pronouns would be employed in reference to the protagonist. Beckett's *Company* is an example of the text in which this hypothetical set-up is developed and complicated in the manner which retains the balance between the use of *he* and *you* in reference to the protagonist.

The narratee-protagonist being the main character of a given narrative, he/she is presented in much more detail than typical narratees, discussed, for instance, by Gerald Prince.[29] His/her actions, thoughts, memories, linguistic idiosyncrasies and similar concretising details constitute the main core of the text directed to him/her. These attributes of the narratee-protagonist are directly described and not indirectly alluded to; hence, the reader can reconstruct as full an image of the narratee-protagonist as the text allows him/her to.

Interestingly, in some narratives evoking the narratee-protagonist, the element which might seem to be the central aspect of any character's identity, the name, is not revealed, *vide* Beckett's *Company* or Gupta's *The Glassblower's Breath*. Obviously, namelessness is not an exclusive property of texts evoking the narratee-protagonist: there exist texts in which the first-person or third-person forms or even invented pronouns are employed in reference to a nameless protagonist.[30] Neither does it automatically lead to the dissolution of the narratee's identity. Nameless as he/she is, the referent of the second-person pronoun remains stable throughout the text of Gupta's novel: there are no signals in the text that the *you* employed by the narrator refers to somebody else. By contrast, the *you* of *Company*, on account on its deictic nature, seems to evoke different types of the narratee. As this example demonstrates, this multireferentiality does not concern exclusively second-person narratives, contrary to what some theorists of this narrative form suggest.[31] Furthermore, if there is any ambiguity of reference, in the vast ma-

[29] Cf. G. PRINCE, *Introduction to the Study of the Narratee*, trans. F. Mariner, in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. J. E. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 11-20.

[30] Cf. M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 236.

[31] Cf. J. PHELAN, "*Self-Help* for Narratee and Narrative Audience: How 'I' — and 'You'? — Read 'How,'" *Style* 28 (1994): 350-351; D. HERMAN, "Textual *You* and Double Deixis in Edna O'Brien's *A Pagan Place*," *Style* 28 (1994): 381.

jority of the texts employing second-person narration it occurs only at the very beginning when *you* may seem to refer to a reader. As the text proceeds to provide more concretising details, it becomes clear that it projects a story in which the "you" is a fictional protagonist.[32]

And yet, fictionalised as the "you" is, some theorists claim that the second-person pronoun remains multireferential. David Herman argues that the *you* of second-person narratives retains the (possible) generic sense of *you* as such and introduces the notion of double deixis to designate the situation when *you* refers simultaneously to the protagonist and the (real) reader.[33] Consider his interpretation of a passage from Edna O'Brien's *A Pagan Place*:

> "Alone for the first time in the street, you were conscious of your appearance. Your coat was ridiculous compared with other people's coats" (172). It seems that in descriptions like the one just cited, textual *you* functions not (or not only) as discourse particle relaying and linking the various components of a fictional protagonist's self-address, but (also) as a form of address that exceeds the frame of the fiction itself. *You* designates anyone who has ever been or might conceivably be ... embarrassed by the homeliness of her coat when she stands alone for the first time on a crowded city street.[34]

The *you* thus understood can be related to the generic use of the second-person pronoun; however, it remains dubious (to a greater extent than it is suggested by Herman's parentheses) whether indeed it exceeds the frame of fiction. For one thing the reader's identification with the "you" depends on the presence of a similar experience in his/her memory. It remains unclear in Herman's analysis whether the reader's gender matters here: his use of *her* and *she* can be read either (generously) as an attempt to oppose the patriarchal convention of using *he* as a neutral pronoun or (meanly) as a reflection of his assumption that only women can identify with the female protagonist of O'Brien's novel, the sexist subtext of his remark being that only women would feel embarrassed in such a situation. More importantly, the passage quoted by Herman is interpreted by him in isolation. The whole text focuses on the specific experiences of the "you" and it is debatable whether the reader will notice that the experience presented in the passage quoted by

[32] M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 227-229.

[33] Herman does not specify, just like many other theorists of second-person fiction, what reader he is talking about. The unmarked form he is using suggests that it is the real reader, hence my use of *real* in parentheses.

[34] D. HERMAN, 386.

Herman is less specific and might concern him/her. Furthermore, whether a given experience of a fictional protagonist is related by the reader to his/her own experiences obviously depends on the latter's individual features. Irene Kacandes demonstrates that even in Italo Calvino's *If on a winter night a traveller*, a much celebrated example of the text blurring the difference between the real reader and the reader inscribed in the text, the real reader's identification is problematised by such a simple factor as the male gender of the reader addressed/described by Calvino.[35]

Last but not least, the text analysed by Herman does not seem to have an allocutive function. There are no indications in the text that it is an instance of self-address; such a reading is rather a result of an attempt to interpret O'Brien's novel in some "natural" terms. The focusing on the protagonist's experiences and mental states suggests that we should rather regard it as another example of a non-communicative text in the reflector mode.[36]

It seems that it is rather the ontological status of a narratee-protagonist, which is not the same in all texts, that influences the reader's identification, or rather engagement, with the "you." The use of the past tense, infrequent as it is, suggests the ontological stability of the presented world: some events first happened and now they are narrated. Consequently, the "you" addressed clearly designates somebody belonging to this world. The ontological integrity is threatened, but not destroyed, in the case of the narratives in the present tense. On the one hand, they appear unnatural and suggest that the story is generated by the act of narration which is simultaneous to it. On the other, they still project a specific fictional scenario and — as Fludernik points out — "are recuperable as a story of events or as the representation of a mind reliving past experiences as present."[37]

Much more problematic is the status of the "you" in the narratives employing imperatives, for "such texts create a story *ex nihilo* by sheer force of exhortation and apostrophe."[38] Consequently, they destroy a classical narratological distinction between story and discourse in which the assumed logical priority of the former guarantees the ontological integrity of the presented world. The use of imperatives (or future forms) suggests, by contrast, the potentiality of the "you," even if the imperatives attribute to the "you" a

[35] I. KACANDES, "Are You in the Text?: The 'Literary Performative' in Postmodernist Fiction," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 13 (1993): 146.

[36] *Cf.* M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 397, note 11.

[37] *Ibid.*, 256.

[38] *Ibid.*, 228.

number of specific actions. Furthermore, the hypothetical character of the presented events may be self-consciously emphasised by enumeration of possible alternatives, as it happens in Lorrie Moore's short story "How." Consider the opening lines of the story:

> Begin by meeting him in a class, in a bar, at a rummage sale. Maybe he teaches sixth grade. Manages a hardware store. Foreman at a carton factory.[39]

The potential character of the events described in the text combined with/resulting from the prominent address function suggests the potentiality of the "you" and thus facilitates the reader's direct identification with the "you" being addressed.

It should be emphasised, though, that the use of the imperatives does not do more than make the reader feel addressed directly. It is debatable whether the explicitly exhortative nature of a given text or the employment of the second person-pronoun in reference to the protagonist facilitate the reader's emphatic involvement and identification with the protagonist, as some theorists of second-person narrative claim.[40] It might equally well be argued that the use of the second-person forms provokes the resistance of the reader, who is unwilling to accept the features attributed to the "you" by the text.[41] The employment of second-person narration, due to its unnaturalness, might constitute another factor actually precluding the reader's emphatic involvement. Narration in the second person is still a rare phenomenon which draws attention to itself and which has a markedly literary nature.[42] Thus, it might be argued that the reader's attention focuses more on the narrative technique and less on the experiences of the protagonist.

As can be seen, even though second-person narratives and passages of second-person narration in multipersoned narratives are by definition about the "you" of the protagonist, this "you" can be considered the narratee only if the allocutive character of a given text is signalled. By making their communicative function clear, such texts attribute to the narratee the position of central character; and his/her actions, experiences, reflections and such like constitute the focal point of narration. Such extreme concretisation of the narratee situates him/her firmly within the presented world and precludes easy identification on the part of the reader.

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[39] L. MOORE, "How," in: *Self-Help* (New York: Warner, 1995), 55.
[40] M. FLUDERNIK, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, 232.
[41] Cf. B. RICHARDSON, "The Poetics and Politics of Second Person Narrative," 319.
[42] Cf. M. FLUDERNIK, "Second Person Narrative As a Test Case for Narratology," 472.

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ADRESAT NARRACJI JAKO GŁÓWNY BOHATER

Streszczenie

Adresat narracji, któremu zwykle przypisywana jest marginalna pozycja w strukturze danego utworu, może w pewnych przypadkach stać się protagonistą (tzn. głównym bohaterem) tekstu, w którym się pojawia. Do tego typu sytuacji dochodzi w omawianych w powyższym artykule przykładach tekstów wieloosobowych i drugoosobowych zaczerpniętych ze współczesnej literatury anglojęzycznej. Wykorzystują one narrację wielo- i drugoosobową w sposób, który jednoznacznie sygnalizuje funkcję allokucyjną zaimka drugoosobowego. Pojawienie się w narracji poleceń lub pytań skierowanych do „ty", czy też ujawnienie się „ja" narratora świadczy to tym, iż funkcje adresata narracji i protagonisty zostają przypisane tej samej postaci. Poprzez szczegółowe opisy przeżyć, refleksji i emocji protagonisty-adresata narracji tekst sytuuje go jako postać o określonej tożsamości na poziomie świata przedstawionego. Ta ekstremalna konkretyzacja utrudnia, a czasami wręcz uniemożliwia identyfikację czytelnika z „ty" przywoływanym w danym utworze.

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Słowa kluczowe: adresat narracji, protagonista, narracja wieloosobowa, narracja drugoosobowa.

Key words: narratee, protagonist, multipersoned narrative, second-person narrative.