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'You Are About to Begin Reading': the Nature and Function of Second Person Point of View in Narrative.

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Abstract

This study asserts that second person point of view functions as a distinct category of point of view, which has been discounted by critical theorists. Second person point of view is defined in this study as a particular use of the second person pronoun. The "you" in second person point of view texts generates an alternating pattern of identification and displacement that constructs an intersubjectivity among narrative elements--narrator, actant, and narratee(s). Therefore, common uses of the "you" to refer only to the reader (narratee) of a text or to the actant in a text do not constitute second person point of view texts.

The theory of second person point of view developed in this study argues that second person point of view issues challenges to traditional concepts of narrative subjectivity and authority. The rejection of the traditional sign of subjectivity and authority--the stated or implied "I"--combined with the proposition of an alternative--the multiple "you"--expresses the particular challenges of second person point of view.

The challenges to narrative subjectivity and authority issued by second person point of view indicate the postmodern impulse of second person point of view. By exposing, undermining, and revising traditional concepts of

narrative, second person point of view texts participate in the postmodern culture, which seeks to disabuse notions of truth invested in form. The unique challenge of second person point of view to subjectivity participates in contemporary feminist practice as well. Because women have been consigned to the role of nonsubjective "other," "otherness" is of particular interest to feminist theorists and critics. Second person point of view, as defined in this study, constructs a "discourse of others" in the voice of the multiple "you." In this way, second person point of view invests "others" with the subjectivity denied them by the traditional "first person singular fiction of selfhood."

This study proposes continued research of the implications for contemporary literary theory and practice and performance theory and practice offered by second person point of view.

Chapter One

Introduction

Statement of Problem

Continuing critical interest in narrative point of view may, as Susan Lanser argues, convey the impression "that the concept has been fully examined, if not overworked" but, as Lanser concludes, "in actuality its implications have been underestimated and underexplored."[1] This study contends that second person point of view constitutes a singularly "underexamined and underexplored" area in critical discussions of point of view. By a near consensus critics dismiss second person point of view by ignoring it or by labeling it mere experiment. These critics argue implicitly, by failing to mention second person point of view, or explicitly, by reducing second person point of view to simple experiment, that second person point of view produces no significant effects in a textual world.

This study proposes that second person point of view is as distinct an alternative in narrative as the more common first and third person points of view. Accordingly, this study proposes that second person point of view functions in narrative fiction as a distinct device that produces distinct effects and constructs a unique textual world.

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[1] Lanser, The Narrative Act, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 13.

Specifically, the theory developed in this study posits that second person point of view generates a special "intersubjectivity" of narrative elements, which entails a distinct relationship among narrator, character, narratee, reader, and author. Further, the intersubjectivity constructed in second person point of view extends distinct challenges to concepts of narrative subjectivity and narrative authority that may be seen to participate in contemporary postmodern culture.

The distinct nature and function of second person point of view are indicated in the working definition of second person point of view offered as a part of this introductory discussion. Subsequent chapters of this study clarify, amplify, and extend this definition as they develop a theory and practice of second person point of view.

A working definition of second person point of view begins with the statement that second person point of view constitutes a particular use of the pronoun "you" in narrative texts. Certainly the use of "you" in narrative is not new. Narrative texts often employ the second person pronoun to refer to the reader (or audience). The second person pronoun also substitutes for "one" in narrative texts.[2] However, the peculiar identity of the "you" in

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[2] Several authors have identified uses of "you": Bruce Morrissette, "The Narrative 'You' in Contemporary Literature," Comparative Literature Studies 2 (1965): 1-24; Mary Frances HopKins and Leon Perkins, "Second Person Point of View in Narrative," Critical Survey of Short Fiction ed.

second person point of view texts differentiates their use of the pronoun from other uses.

Both Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins distinguish "genuine" second person texts on the basis of the identity of the "you." Specifically, Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins assert that the "you" must refer to a character (as opposed to a reader or to a general "one") for a second person text to exist. Morrissette eliminates all uses of "you" that are "addressed frankly to an audience" and those that substitute for "one."[3] HopKins and Perkins state, "Obviously the 'you' addressed must be an actant; otherwise we are dealing only with the you-narratee present at least implicitly in every narrative. . . ."[4] The theory proposed in this study offers an addition to the requisite distinctions suggested by Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins.

The theory developed herein posits that the "you-actant" is only one dimension of the identity of the "you" in second person point of view texts. The "you" in second

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Frank N. Magill, (New Jersey: Salem Press, Inc., 1981), pp. 119-32; John J. Capecci, "Who Is You: The Performance of Second Person Narration," presented at the Southern Speech Communication Association Convention 1987. As indicated, this discussion will be developed in subsequent chapters.

[3] Morrissette, 6.

[4] Mary Frances HopKins and Leon Perkins, p. 6. The term "actant" is used by structuralist and poststructuralist critics and may be understood to correspond to the term "character." A fuller definition of "actant" is provided later in this study.

person point of view texts houses multiple subjects, referring to the narrator, the character, and the narratee/reader simultaneously. Thus, in order for second person point of view to be present, there will be a conspicuous absence of any voice speaking outside the "you." In order words, in second person point of view texts no first or third person pronoun functions to indicate the presence of a narrator who speaks out to a separate "you" who is not the narrator but rather a character or narratee/reader. Furthermore, the context cannot allow a separation of the subject housed in the "you," even if the separation is only implied. The simultaneous reference to the narrator, character, and narratee/reader constructs an intersubjectivity in second person point of view texts.

The intersubjectivity constructed by second person point of view issues exciting challenges to the understanding of narrative subjectivity and authority and offers intriguing insights into narrative structure. The absence of traditional signs of subject status--the stated or implied "I" present in first and third person point of view texts--questions traditional conceptions of subjectivity and authority.

Traditional notions of subjectivity posit the first person pronoun as the sign of a present subject. Second person point of view texts constitute subjects without the use of the traditional "I." Although initially it might be

argued that an implied "I" coincides with the "you," the theory developed in this study suggests that second person point of view's intersubjectivity prohibits the insertion of a single "I," even by implication. No single "I" accounts for the multiple subjects housed in the you of second person point of view. The nontraditional constitution of subject in second person point of view necessarily yields a nontraditional narrative authority. Traditionally, the authority of a text is vested in a subject. The multiple subjectivity in second person texts resists the impulse to locate a single authorized textual voice, or indeed, textual vision. Second person point of view also revises traditional notions of narrative structure. Traditionally constructed texts offer an authorized narrator who authorizes other subjects and the experience of the text. The narrator in these texts is granted subjective priority and, hence, privilege over other subjects. Second person point of view foregrounds the relational nature of point of view. Intersubjectivity refuses the assignment of subjective priority or privilege.

The working definition offered above requires further clarification and development to provide a more complete understanding of the nature and function of second person point of view. A review of the critical conceptions of point of view and person by narrative theorists provides initial clarification and development.

Point of view names an area of both historical and contemporary concern in narrative theory. Certainly the conception of point of view has altered during the growth of narrative study. However, point of view remains a common avenue by which critics seek to understand and explain the experiences constructed by narrative texts. The relationship between point of view and person appears in the inherited grammar of point of view that employs personal pronouns in its typology. As identified by Wayne C. Booth, point of view categories include first person major participant, first person minor participant, third person omniscient, third person limited omniscient, and third person observer.[5]

Traditional concepts equate point of view with the perspective or the angle of vision from which a story is told. That is, point of view is located in the narrator or narrating voice. Angle of vision and perspective indicate the focus and attitude expressed by the narrator. Questions of focus specify the narrator's level of involvement in the narrative world; questions of attitude specify the relationship of the narrator toward the narrated world. The designation of person serves as one way to indicate the involvement and relationship of the narrator in the textual

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[5] Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, 2nd edition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983). Although Booth was not the first critic to construct a typology of point of view, his grammar continues to be the most influential in critical discussions of point of view.

world.

Third person point of view narrators are external to the narrated world. These narrators typically employ third person pronouns to refer to characters, establishing the distance between the speaking voice and the world about which it speaks necessitated by the location of the narrator outside the fiction. Coincidentally, third person specifies uninvolved or less involved narrators. Even omniscient or limited omniscient third person narrators maintain distance, if only through the distance inherent in the third person pronoun.

First person point of view denotes the location of the narrator within the narrative world. The first person pronoun, while not exclusively constitutive of a first person narrator, inserts the narrator as participant into the narrative world.[6] The narrator's personal participation in the text distinguishes first person point of view. The degree to which any first person narrator participates in the text may vary. Booth's identification of first person narrators as "major" or "minor" participants indicates this variance. While point of view and person are not synonymic,

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[6] Bertil Romberg, Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First Person Novel, (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1962), p. 4. David Goldknopf contributes to the discussion of first person point of view when he asserts that the "I" is not the only sign of a first person narrator, "The Confessional Increment: A New Look At the I-Narrator," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 28 (1969): 13-21. HopKins and Perkins cite Goldknopf's discussion, see p. 1.

"categories of person pervade our discussions of point of view."[7]

Contemporary explorations of point of view develop and extend the concept. Contemporary theorists consider the text an interactive system constructed by the narrating voice that constitutes the narrated world and the elements of that world, including the character of the narrator, the characters, and the narratee/reader. These theorists suggest that point of view specifies the ideology and world view of a text, not just the narrator constructed by the author to tell her/his story. These discussions often combine concepts of person and point of view.

Point of View

Henry James' initial exploration of narrative fiction, leading to the identification of the "central intelligence" generated continuing interest in point of view.[8] For James, the central intelligence names the consciousness that constructs the narrative world. That consciousness is housed in the character in focus in a text, whether or not that character is the "central" or main character in the action of the narrative. James was particulary concerned that the integrity of point of view be maintained throughout

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[7] HopKins and Perkins, p. 2.

[8] James, The Art of Fiction and Other Essays, ed. Morris Roberts, (New York: np, 1948).

a text. What is "seen" in a narrative is restricted, for James, to the what the character in focus sees. Thus, James' discussion and practice of narrative point of view disparaged the use of information or direction that came from outside the vision of the focus character. First person texts restrict their visions to the central character of the narrative indicated by the "I." Third person texts focus on a single character in order to construct a consistent point of view. Joseph Beach notes that, as a writer:

> James carries the principle of the limited point of view farther than any writer had ever done. Even when, rarely, he feels it necessary to give an outside view of the central character of the moment, he has his ways of getting it done without seeming to tell you himself, as author, what it is he wants you to see.[9]

James' concern that point of view be housed in, limited to, a character in the narrative and his assertion that "outside views" function as the voice of the author intruding into the integrity of the text indicate his belief that the character narrates her/his own story, even when that story appears in the third person. Future discussions of point of view allow that what James perceives as an outside voice may

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[9] Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, (New York: D. Appleton Century, Incorporated, 1932) p. 198. Beach's discussion notes that the single character focus did not always mean that only one character was in focus in James' work, but that only one character at a time housed the point of view of a given text, pp. 198-9.

be a narrator (rather than an author) who is distinct from the character(s) s/he narrates.

Following James' work, Percy Lubbock's treatise on The Craft of Fiction similarly equates point of view with the angle of vision of the story--what is seen/shown.[10] Lubbock considers that the point of view of a text belongs to the character on whom the text focuses. Thus, in a first person text the point of view is that of the character-narrator. Although Lubbock acknowledges that a third person text has a narrator who is not the character, he locates the point of view in third person texts elsewhere than in the narrator. For example, Lubbock argues that the point of view of The Ambassadors belongs to Strether, even though he is not the narrator. The story constructs a focus that matches Strether's angle of vision and expresses an attitude sympathetic to Strether. Focus emerges as the more important of the criteria. That is, the sympathy housed in the narrative is less necessary in determining point of view than the fact that the reader "sees" the textual world through or as it relates to Strether. Lubbock considers the choice of first and third person voice in terms of their ability to reveal the thoughts and emotions of the character from whose point of view the story is depicted. Considering The Ambassadors in particular, Lubbock ponders what effect

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[10] Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 37. Lubbock's work was originally published in 1921.

a change in the person of the voice, from third person to first person, would have on the story.[11] Specifically, Lubbock considers the change to the first person voice of Strether. Lubbock concludes that, although the same story could be told, a change in the person of the textual voice would significantly alter the dramatic tension the story achieves. By allowing that the "same" story could be told regardless of a change in the person employed, Lubbock limits the choice of person to a matter of style. It is important that Lubbock does not consider the effect of a first person substitution in which another voice tells the story of The Ambassadors. That is, Lubbock only considers the substitution of the first person voice of Strether, which can reveal Strether's thoughts and feelings as the third person voice does, and thereby preserve point of view as Lubbock defines it. Lubbock's work limits the importance of point of view within the spectrum of narrative tools:

> The point of view gives only a general indication, deciding the look that the story is to wear as a whole; but whether the action is to run scenically, or to be treated on broader lines, or both--in short, the matter of the treatment in detail is still unsettled, though the main look and attitude of the book has been fixed by its subject.[12]

Lubbock thus equates point of view with a character of the

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[11] Lubbock, p. 163.

[12] Lubbock, pp. 265-6.

text and specifies focus and attitude as aspects of point of view.

In The Twentieth Century Novel, Beach echoes earlier identifications of point of view as the angle of vision exhibited in a story. Beach also provides an in depth discussion of manipulations of point of view, as they may be used to reveal the inner life of a character (or characters). In this discussion, Beach extends Lubbock's sense of a narrator outside the character in focus. Beach posits that point of view may belong to an outside voice. This outside voice permits a view of the character not possible if the text is limited to the character's point of view. For Beach, point of view also identifies the expression of the action, what Lubbock calls "the treatment in detail" of a text. The narrator reports the action and therefore houses that action. Here, Beach foreshadows the contemporary conception of point of view as that which constructs the whole of the textual world through the voice that speaks it. Beach asserts that an author's choice of point of view may determine (and be determined by) more than the "look and attitude" of the textual world.

Beach posits that different choices about the personal pronoun employed in a text constitute different styles with which to tell the same (or similar) stories. Specifically, Beach acknowledges James' use of third person and other writers' uses of first person to achieve similar

psychological studies of characters by revealing and exploring their thoughts and feelings.[13] Beach includes a recognition of a use of the second person pronoun in his discussion of choices. His comments about second person will be discussed later in this study.

Norman Friedman continues to expand the significance, if not the definition, of point of view. In his historical summary, Friedman contends that point of view constitutes a distinct "critical concept."[14] Working from a belief that the goal of fiction is to produce a complete illusion and that the study of fiction should determine how it achieves its effects on readers, Friedman asserts that the choice of point of view in narrative "is as crucial as verse form in poetry."[15]

While Friedman echoes earlier critics by asserting that point of view is the angle of vision of the story, he offers a different relationship between focus and point of view. While Lubbock identifies point of view according to the focus of the story, attributing point of view to the character from whose angle of vision the story is seen (including where the narrator speaks as the character),

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[13] Beach, p. 280.

[14] Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Robert Murray Davis, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969), pp. 142-71. Note: Friedman's article was originally published in 1955.

[15] Friedman, p. 133.

Friedman privileges the narrator by listing first in his analysis of narrative the question "who is talking."[16] Thus, Friedman conveys the sense that the narrator may choose to align her/himself with a character, but the narrative voice remains distinct and constitutes the point of view in a text. Third person narrators better reveal the implications of Friedman's discussion because first person narrators merge the roles of narrator and character. The third person narrator, as noted, allows for the sense of a storyteller separate from the character in focus.

Friedman's discussion appears to extend the concept of point of view, but his typology is divided according to angles of vision and reinforces a traditional definition of point of view.[17] Also, Friedman's final category of "camera" posits a text in which there is, ostensibly, no narrator. He also echoes James' assertion that the outside voice belongs to the author. In addition, Friedman, like Lubbock, restricts his discussion of person to first person (character narrator) and third person (author narrator).

Booth reinforces the sense of the importance of point of view when he identifies the narrator as the most significant aspect of the narrative text in The Rhetoric of

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[16] Friedman, p. 118.

[17] Friedman, pp. 131-2. Friedman's typology: Editorial Omniscience, Neutral Omniscience, I-Witness; I-Protagonist; Multiple Selective Omniscience; Selective Omniscience; Dramatic Mode; Camera.

Fiction. Booth views narrative as a rhetorical act because it is spoken. He asserts that "nothing the writer does can be finally understood in isolation from his attempt to make it all accessible to someone else. . . . The novel comes into existence as something communicable."[18] For Booth, point of view both resides in and constructs the primary communicator in narrative--the narrator. Booth's treatise influences twentieth century concepts of narrative, including those that ground this study. Still, it is important to acknowledge that Booth's articulation is not universally accepted and to note a divergent view. In Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction, Ann Banfield challenges Booth's concept of narrative directly:

> There are thus at present two possible alternative theories of narrative style, one which is subsumed under communication theory where every sentence has a speaker and every text a narrator and hence every sentence is subjective, and another which divides the sentences of narrative into those with a subject and those without. As a consequence of the latter, every text cannot be said to have a narrator.[19]

Banfield argues for the latter theory of narrative style. By her own admission, Banfield's concept of the optional narrator receives negative criticism from literary theorists

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[18] Booth, p. 397.

[19] Banfield, Unspeakable Sentences, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 11.

who are unwilling to give up the notion that narrative requires a narrator and constructs a point of view.[20] The discussion developed in this study concurs with the majority view that challenges Banfield's suggestion that a narrator, and therefore a point of view, are not necessarily present in a narrative text. Clearly Booth's "communication" framework for narrative, which posits point of view as the most significant element of narrative, is more relevant to this study.

To understand Booth's concept of person and its relationship to point of view, one must acknowledge what one critic has termed a pivotal moment in criticism. Dorrit Cohn contends that critical discussions of person may be divided neatly in agreement or disagreement with Booth's original description of person: "Perhaps the most overworked distinction is that of person."[21]

In a discussion made ironic by the context of this study, Cohn suggests that Franz Stanzel's treatment of person disagrees with Booth and offers a more adequate critical approach to the concept of person. She writes, "Stanzel's intensive, even-handed discussion of the long-neglected opposition of person is a welcome corrective to

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[20] Banfield discusses the critical attacks on her work in her introduction (pp. 1-22) and alludes to these attacks throughout her discussion.

[21] Cohn, "The Encirclement of Narrative: On Franz Stanzel's Theorie des Erzahlens," Poetics Today 2 (1981): 163; Booth, p. 150.

the person-blindness of other modern theorists."[22] Stanzel's model, to which Cohn refers, places the concept of person in a central position in narrative point of view. However, as will be discussed in the following section, Stanzel's construction of the categories of person available in narrative--first person and third person--gives no account of second person narration.[23]

A full account of Booth's conception of person and point of view includes the continuation of his discussion in the Afterward to the 1983 edition of The Rhetoric of Fiction. In the Afterward, Booth acknowledges his inadequate critical treatment of person and reverses his original position. Booth writes that he was, "Plain wrong. [Person] was radically underworked. It had been talked about a lot, more than most aspects of technique, but the talk had been, like mine following the comment, superficial."[24] In spite of his acknowledgement of the need for further comment on person and point of view, Booth provides none.

Contemporary critic Richard Pearce echoes Booth's estimation of the significance of point of view when he says, "Narrative is distinguished from all other forms of

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[22] Cohn, 163.

[23] Stanzel, "Teller-Characters and Reflector-Characters in Narrative Theory," Poetics Today 2 (1981): 5.

[24] Booth, p. 412.

art by the voice of the narrator who intercedes between the subject and the listener or reader."[25] For Pearce, as for Booth, point of view is contained in--determined by and determining--the narrator. Point of view further houses (determines) the nature of the textual world. In fact, Pearce grounds his description of the divergence of contemporary fiction from traditional fiction partially in contemporary manipulations of the role of the narrator.[26]

Lanser selects point of view as the sole focus of her study of narrative. She posits point of view as the primary element of narrative. Lanser remarks, "[Robert] Scholes and [Robert] Kellogg are not overstating, then, when they claim that point of view controls 'the reader's impression of everything else'."[27] Lanser's investigation of point of view yields a conception of point of view as a combination of technique and ideology. The narrator does not contain point of view, but participates in the production of point of view within the text. Lanser's belief that point of view is the relationship between a narrating subject and the literary system (textual elements) emerges in her delineation of three categories--status, contact, stance. These categories specify dimensions of the narrator's

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[25] Pearce, The Novel in Motion, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), p. 56.

[26] Pearce, see especially pp. 56-65.

[27] Lanser, pp. 12-3.

relationship to textual elements: the narrator's relationship to the act of storytelling, the audience, and the story, respectively. The narrator's relationships combine to construct point of view and thus the world of the text. Lanser contends, "[Point of view] is central to the text's 'overall task of constructing the world'."[28] Lanser defines point of view as a function of several textual dimensions:

> As "content" point of view communicates attitudes between personae--author, narrator, narratee, characters--a set of responses to a represented world, a representation that is itself an ideological construct. As aesthetic method, point of view reflects a system of artistic and literary conventions through which the culture permits the translation of social reality to artistic text. At a still deeper level, point of view has powerful potential for structuring discourse either to evade or to obscure censorship, that is, to respond to the conscious and unconscious effects of ideology on the production of consciousness and on its aesthetic verbalization.[29]

Lanser's concern with textual ideology and her sense of text as an interactive system reflect the contemporary concept of point of view as something beyond simply the narrator who tells a story or the angle of vision from which a story is told. Clearly, Lanser opens a space for the reader and the author as participants in the textual interaction. However, the involvement of the author does

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[28] Lanser, p. 57

[29] Lanser, p. 101.

not represent an intrusion to be avoided. Rather, the presence of the author constitutes one element among many in the production of the text. Thus, point of view does not reside in the author either.

As noted earlier, Lanser's discussion also includes a recognition of the inadequate critical treatment of point of view. The expansion of the concept of point of view to incorporate literary, social, and ideological contexts, invites consideration of innovative (nontraditional) constructions of point of view, including second person point of view.

Theorist and writer Michel Butor writes about the concepts of point of view and person, asserting that the notion of person as a physical individual must be altered. For Butor, person is a function which arises from inside a mental and social milieu.[30] Butor's comments are of special interest in this discussion because his novel, La Modification, constructs a second person point of view.

The inadequacy or superficiality of the critical study of narrative point of view and person and the contemporary assessment of the importance of an understanding of them to narrative theory indicate the need for continued studies of point of view. The critical treatment of second person point of view appears negligible even in the context of the

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[30] Butor, "L'Usage des pronom personnels dans le roman," Essais Sur Le Roman, (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 8.

general inadequacy of point of view studies. The relative absence of critical consideration makes second person point of view an area that merits exploration.

The following review of the critical treatment of second person point of view serves as a foundation for the theory of second person point of view proposed in Chapter Two.

Second Person Point of View

The conception of second person point of view proposed in this study posits that second person texts employ the "you" to house the narrator, character, and narratee/reader of a text simultaneously. In most discussions of point of view, consideration of second person is either absent or superficial. Critical treatments of second person point of view vary along a spectrum from complete neglect to claims of its significance. Critics fail to acknowledge the possibility of a second person point of view, dismiss the use of "you" as anomaly, limit the identity of the "you" to a narratee/reader, or assert that the "you" is really a disguised first or third person point of view in which the narrator/character speaks of/to her/himself. Each of these actions diminishes the potential of second person point of view. Clearly, the failure to recognize the possibility of second person point of view, either by ignoring the device or characterizing it as anomaly, means that on class of

distinctive narratives can make no contribution to concepts of narrative. Recognitions of the "you" that limit its function either to a reference to a narratee/reader or as a disguised first or third person narrator also diminish the possible contribution of second person point of view to an understanding of narrative. The first action reduces second person point of view to a variation of the "Dear Reader" device. The second avoids second person point of view altogether by treating it as if it were something else. As noted, Friedman constructs a model of point of view that fails to accommodate the possibility of a second person narrative text.[31] Stanzel's grammar of fiction also prohibits a second person text by specifying the opposition of only first and third person as one of the categories of mediacy in narrative.[32]

Beach briefly discusses Rex Stout's How Like A God, one text that employs a second person point of view. Beach acknowledges that the use of the second person is "extremely interesting." He concludes that the "you" is a disguised first person point of view, "He is talking to himself, as it were. . . ."[33] Indeed, it is as a way of disguising the

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[31] see footnote 8 for a listing of Friedman's typology.

[32] Stanzel, "Second Thoughts on Narrative Situations in the Novel: Toward A Grammar of Fiction," Novel: A Forum on Fiction 11 (1978): 247-64.

[33] Beach, p. 281. Beach's comments focus on Rex Stout's How Like A God.

first person address that Beach finds Stout's use of the second person pronoun interesting.

Just as Booth's treatment of the concept of person is, by his own admission, superficial, so too is Booth's discussion of second person point of view. Booth identifies and examines first and third person point of view in the main body of his text. A consideration of second person point of view is relegated to a footnote, where Booth comments: "Efforts to use the second person have never been very successful, but it is astonishing to see how little real difference even this choice makes."[34] Although he indicates that more than one effort at second person has been made, Booth cites only a single text specifically, Butor's La Modification.

As indicated by Booth's comments, Butor's novel constitutes one of the few second person narratives to receive critical attention. Because Butor's novel employs second person point of view, it would seem inevitable that critical discussions of the novel address the presence of the "you." However, a review of the treatment accorded La Modification further illustrates the failure of criticism to account for second person point of view. As in the general discussions of point of view, absence and superficiality characterize the examinations of second person in Butor's text.

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[34] Booth, p. 150.

La Modification

Lois Oppenheim's "Situating Butor on the Horizon of Contemporary Critical Perspectives," fails to mention the use of second person point of view in La Modification.[35] Michael Spencer, in Michel Butor, labels the use of the "you" a "peculiarity."[36] Banfield twice refers to La Modification as an "exception that proves the rule" in her argument that true narrative excludes the second person.[37]

As noted in Beach's discussion, critics approach second person point of view as disguised first or third person point of view. Mary Beth Pringle, Morton P. Levitt, and Shlomith Rimmon each attribute the "you" narration to the main character of La Modification (Leon Delmont) in a first person substitution. Pringle writes, "Delmont says of himself, 'You are more and more cut off. . . . "[38] Levitt

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[35] Oppenheim, "Situating Butor on the Horizon of Contemporary Critical Perspectives," The Review of Contemporary Fiction 5 (1985): 144.

[36] Spencer, Michel Butor, (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 64. Spencer allows that the peculiar "you" in La Modification functions as an interesting device by which Leon may narrate his story. Thus, Spencer assigns to second person both an element of anomaly and an element of disguise.

[37] Banfield observes the "phenomenon literary criticism calls 'third person point of view'" and concludes, "The only other sentences found in narration with a point of view are sentences of first person narration" (p. 88). See also Banfield, pp. 304-5.

[38] Pringle, "Butor's Room Without a View: The Train Compartment in La Modification," Review of Contemporary Fiction 5 (1985): 116.

concludes, "From his opening sentence as he enters the compartment, Delmont refers to himself as 'you'. . . ."[39] Similarly, Rimmon writes that the narrator of La Modification addresses himself in the second person (italics mine).[40] Although Katharine Passias argues that conceiving the second person as a disguised first person narrator limits the possibilities of the text, her conclusions all but suggest that the second person pronoun in Butor is "really" a first person pronoun. Passias states that, "The underlying form of the narrative pronoun is the first person."[41]

Dean McWilliams' study of Butor's novels concludes that Butor's second person functions as a disguised third person. McWilliams' discussion offers an extreme example of critical discounting. When McWilliams quotes a passage from La Modification, he removes what he views as a disguise by translating the second person pronoun in the original French to the English masculine third person pronoun, ". . . he fears they may deliver him 'not only to the demons in [his] own mind but to all those who haunt [our] race'" (italics

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[39] Levitt, "Michel Butor: Polyphony, or the Voyage of Discovery," Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction 14 (1972): 34.

[40] Rimmon, Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics, (New York: Methuen, 1983).

[41] Passias, "Deep and Surface Structure of the Narrative Pronoun vous in Butor's La Modification and its Relationship to Free Indirect Style," Language and Style 19 (1976): 201.

mine).[42] McWilliams does not substitute third person pronouns for Butor's second person pronouns in all of his translations. However, McWilliams' action indicates that he considers the use of the second person pronoun to have limited significance in the critical understanding of the Butor's text. Thus, reading within McWilliams' critical view, the second person pronoun may be "read over" even when it is preserved in translation.

Not every discussion of La Modification fails to account for its second person point of view. In a second study, Oppenheim constructs a relationship between the constitution of character and reader as subjects and Butor's choice of pronoun.[43] Oppenheim also notes the innovative aspect of second person narration: "the 'vous' pronoun serves to eliminate the analytical explanations that were the framework for the novel in the early part of this century."[44] Specifically, Oppenheim contends that the second person compels the addition of the reader to the analytical framework of the novel.

Critical responses to La Modification reflect the same

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[42] McWilliams, The Narrative of Michel Butor, (np: Ohio University Press, 1978), p. 42.

[43] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity: A Phenomenological Study of Butor's La Modification, (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, Publishers, 1980), pp. 31-2.

[44] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 31.

degrees of recognition of second person point of view that typifies the general discussion. Critics alternately ignore Butor's use of second person, devalue it, or assert its significance. The above review demonstrates that most of the critical discussions of Butor's novel, like most of the general critical discussions, fail to attach any significance to second person point of view.

In addition to appearing as a topic in general studies of point of view and as an issue in discussions of Butor, the use of second person point of view appears as the primary focus of three critical explorations. Jonathan Holden's "The Abuse of the Second Person Pronoun" offers a negative appraisal of the use of the second person in lyric.[45] Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins assert that second person point of view in narrative merits critical interest and examination.[46] A consideration of each of these explorations follows.

The pejorative attitude suggested by its title frames Holden's conception of second person. Holden focuses on the use of second person in poetry and does not discuss its possible function in narrative. However, the conclusions he reaches about the use of the "you" echo the critical discounting of second person observed in general discussions

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[45] Holden, "The Abuse of the Second Person Pronoun," The Rhetoric of the Contemporary Lyric, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

[46] Morrissette, 1-24 and HopKins and Perkins, pp. 119-32.

narrative point of view and so contribute to a review of the critical treatment of second person. Holden characterizes second person as "the 'you' that commits itself to nothing and can turn the finest poem into an empty elegant-sounding workshop exercise."[47] Holden argues that the second person pronoun is a weak and even dangerous substitute for a first or third person. Examining Philip Booth's "Still Life," Holden suggests three possible identifications of the "you." Two of the three specify first person disguises while the third specifies a third person disguise. He complains that the "you" confuses and weakens the experience of the poem: "Without [an identification of the third person], we have to assume that the 'you' is a substitute for the first-person pronoun, in which case. . . the substitution kills most of the poem's feeling."[48] Holden further contends that the second person pronoun is a meaningless technical manipulation that interferes with the reader's participation in the text.[49]

Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins sharply depart from the indictment and dismissal of the second person pronoun which characterizes Holden's essays. Both essays focus on the use of second person in narrative. Morrissette establishes a historical background, examines twentieth-

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[47] Holden, p. 45.

[48] Holden, pp. 41-2.

[49] Holden, pp. 41-7.

century use, and analyzes the significance of second person point of view.[50] He then constructs an initial typology of uses of second person point of view. Morrissette specifically addresses two ways in which second person point of view is critically discounted. Concerning the belief espoused by Holden and others that the second person pronoun is a meaningless technical manipulation, Morrissette states:

> Far from constituting a technical 'trick' (through it may degenerate into exactly that), narrative 'you,' although of comparatively late development, appears as a mode of curiously varied . . . resonances, capable of producing effects in the fictional field that are unobtainable by other modes or persons.[51]

Morrissette also responds to the concept of "you" as disguised "I." Although he notes texts in which the second person pronoun functions as a mask for the first person pronoun, he also suggests the multiple possibilities opened through the particular manipulation represented by the second person pronoun.[52] At the end of his 1965 article, Morrissette addresses the need for critical attention to second person point of view:

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[50] Morrissette, 2. Note that Morrissette's article focuses on Butor's use of "vous" as a starting point for investigation. In one footnote Morrissette explains, "No survey of reviews of the English translation [of La Modification] has been attempted; in general, Anglo-Saxon comment on such technical novelties tends to be superficial and summary" (21).

[51] Morrissette, 2.

[52] Morrissette, see especially 2, 15-21.

> One may doubt that novelists will ever adopt the 'you' mode as their general practice, but even if it occurs only occasionally . . . or is used only as a framing device . . . it seems destined to persist. Whether it will undergo further evolution is uncertain, but it seems safe to state that it is already a mode that future rhetoricians of fiction must take into account.[53]

HopKins and Perkins state that their purpose is to extend the discussion of the significance of second person point of view begun by Morrissette. Accordingly, they offer a more comprehensive consideration of second person narrative texts than attempted by Morrissette.[54] More specifically, HopKins and Perkins compare the effects created by substituting pronouns "to clarify relationships between narrator, protagonist, and narratee."[55] HopKins and Perkins examine "variations of distance and opportunities for irony in [first and third person narratives]."[56] In their discussion, HopKins and Perkins delineate the roles available to the first and third person narrators. First person major character, minor character, and observer narrators and third person omniscient, limited omniscient, neutral, and absent narrators and the play of distance achieved by each are considered.[57] Their delineation of

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[53] Morrissette, 21.

[54] HopKins and Perkins, p. 2.

[55] HopKins and Perkins, p. 2.

[56] HopKins and Perkins, p. 3.

[57] HopKins and Perkins, p. 3-6.

effects lead HopKins and Perkins to partially characterize second person point of view as highly flexible, "A careful study of second-person narrative mode will demonstrate its flexibility in allowing for all the various effects of the other two narrative modes. . . ."[58] HopKins and Perkins' conclusion echoes Morrissette's:

> We do not presume to predict the growth and development of second-person-point-of-view, but we insist that [the examples considered] already assert its flexibility and viability as a narrative mode. It will bear watching.[59]

Morrissette's, HopKins and Perkins' contributions are particulary significant given the minimal critical accounting of second person point of view.

In addition to the in-depth discussions of the value of second person point of view provided by Morrissette, HopKins and Perkins, positive estimations of second person appear incidentally in contemporary narrative studies.

Concerns about the role of the reader in the construction of narrative texts occasionally involve critics in considerations of second person point of view. The "you" in a second person text may activate the reader in two ways. First, as discussed previously, the "you" may be seen to refer to the reader directly. Second, the "you" may be seen to refer to a character with whom the reader is compelled to

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[58] HopKins and Perkins, p. 6.

[59] HopKins and Perkins, p. 27.

identify. The second conception of the "you" and its relationship to the reader characterizes contemporary concerns.

Contemporary critics argue that the reader identifies her/himself as the "you" in the text. Thus, second person point of view functions as a device that constitutes the reader in the text. Oppenheim notes, "[The second person] assumes, through a unique form of identification, the presence of the reader as he is not only the accomplice in the action of the novel but, in a sense, he is named as the protagonist as well."[60] Other critics comment on effects on the reader of identification with the second person pronoun. Douglas Messerli says that second person point of view enacts the self-consciousness of postmodern texts by activating the reader in the fictional process.[61] McWilliams also asserts that second person point of view "transforms the reader's passivity into active involvement."[62] Theorist Denis Donoghue suggests that the use of "you" compels the reader to participate in a text by "gaining a hold on the audience."[63]

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[60] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 31.

[61] Messerli, "The Role of Voice in Nonmodernist Fiction," Contemporary Literature 25 (1984): 293-4.

[62] McWilliams, p. 55.

[63] Donoghue, Ferocious Alphabets, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 23.

As defined in this study, second person point of view does implicate the reader. However, the simple correlation of "you" with the reader denies the multiple subjectivity possible in second person point of view, just as does conceiving second person point of view as a substitution for first or third person point of view. Whether the "you" is seen as referring directly to the reader or as referring to a character with whom the reader then identifies, the intersubjectivity of second person point of view is denied.[64]

In a movement beyond a simple correlation of "you" with the reader, both Gerald Prince and Gerard Genette construct models that locate second person point of view in terms of a relationship between or among textual elements. Although neither critic elaborates the concept of second person narration specifically, their comments suggest a fuller understanding of the concept. Genette asserts the separate existence of the narratee and reader. However, Genette says, readers may experience varying levels of identification with narratees in different texts. Referring to the epistolary novel, Genette posits that the use of the second person constructs an intradiegetic narratee that,

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[64] Spencer cites the disservice done by this correlation to concepts of reader identification, "Reader identification--for this is what the argument becomes, reduced to its essentials--is far too complex a matter to be equated with the deployment of a certain grammatical form" (p. 80).

"We, the readers, cannot identify ourselves with. . . ."[65] Still, the "you" creates an appeal to the reader (receiver).[66]

Prince does not fully integrate the possibility of second person narration into his theory, but he does consider the function of the second person pronoun in narrative texts: "any second person pronoun which does not (exclusively) refer to a character and is not uttered (or 'thought') by him must refer to someone whom the narrator is addressing and therefore constitutes a trace of the latter's presence in the narrative."[67] Thus, Prince indicates the possible first or third person disguise achieved by the second person pronoun. If the you is spoken or thought by a character referring to her/himself, it functions as first person discourse. If the you refers to another it functions as third person discourse. Prince then posits "Another possibility-and a relatively seldom exploited one. . . is the second person narrative, where the events narrated pertain to a second person. . . ."[68] A brief exploration of the possible identities of the "second person" follows.

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[65] Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 260.

[66] Genette, p. 261.

[67] Prince, Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative, (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982), p. 8.

[68] Prince, pp. 14-5.

Prince suggests that the second person may designate the narratee, function as a character name or construct an ambiguous relationship between narrator and character.[69]

Contemporary concerns with elements other than the reader also occasion considerations of second person point of view. Patricia Jaeger locates the significance of second person point of view in its function as a contemporary narrative device. Jaeger frames her discussion in the postmodern world of used up and dysfunctional forms.[70] Jaeger identifies experimentation with point of view as a postmodern technique of capturing the elusive reality of contemporary society. She posits second person point of view as an innovative "attempt to grasp elusive reality."[71] However, Jaeger views these forms of experimentation as alternate ways to achieve the same effect achieved by traditional narrative techniques. Therefore, second person in La Modification simply "address[es] the central character, Leon."[72]

Judith Kegan Gardiner's focus on the fragility of identity and women's writing notes that some women writers employ second person point of view. Confronting the

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[69] Prince, pp. 15-7.

[70] Jaeger, "Three Authors in Search of an Elusive Reality: Butor, Sarraute, Robbe-Grillet," Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction 6 (1963): 66.

[71] Jaeger, 77-78.

[72] Jaeger, 77.

problems of identity involves manipulating relationships among narrators, characters, and readers. Gardiner writes, "The author judges what would be an exciting way of revealing the character's secret to the reader, and so on. As a result, novels by women often shift through first, second, and third person and into reverse."[73]

Gardiner's comments echo Oppenheim's questions, cited earlier, about the constitution of reader and character in second person narratives.[74] Another echo of Oppenheim sounds in Ellen W. Munley's examination of Nathalie Sarraute's text, "Mon Petit."[75] Munley explores Sarraute's attempt to generate an intersubjectivity among narrator, narratee, character, and reader. The second person point of view employed in "Mon Petit" creates a world of flexible identities "where ego boundaries are fluid and where you experience my experience of you and I experience your experience of me" as one kind of inter-subjectivity.[76] Munley observes:

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[73] Gardiner, "On Female Identity and Writing by Women," Critical Inquiry 8 (1981): 357.

[74] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 31.

[75] Munley, "I'm Dying But It's Only Your Story: Sarraute's Reader on Stage," Contemporary Literature 24 (1983): 233-58.

[76] Munley, 240.

> The vignette 'Mon Petit' is set up so that the reader must identify with the chapter's narratees designated by the plural pronoun 'you.' She must follow the suggestions addressed to 'you' by the narrator if she is to find out what is happening inside the individual 'mon petit'.[77]

Finally, Bonnie Costello advances the idea that the significance of the "you" resides in its inherent ambiguity. Discussing the "you" in the poetry of John Ashbery, Costello states:

> Critics have speculated on the role and nature of this ubiquitous, amorphous 'other,' suggesting that the 'you' serves as a reimagined self, an erotic partner, a syntactic counterword. It serves, of course, all these functions; its importance lies in its ambiguity.[78]

Costello contends that, even in the context of its ambiguity, the "you" always, necessarily, houses at least the reader. Thus, she invests second person point of view with both ambiguity and multiplicity.[79]

Jaeger, Gardiner, and Munley hint at the possible effects of second person point of view in narrative. Although Costello's discussion focuses on poetry rather than narrative, it too suggests possible effects of second person point of view in narrative. These articles suggest that a fuller understanding of the use of second person point of

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[77] Munley, 236.

[78] Costello, "John Ashbery and the Idea of the Reader," Contemporary Literature 23 (1982): 494.

[79] Costello, 495.

view will contribute significantly to contemporary discourse on the constitution of subject and the construction of a textual world. Therefore, these studies join the studies offered by Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins and the essays that ignore or discount second person point of view to indicate the need for a fuller delineation of the uses of second person point of view. An understanding of the uses of second person point of view contributes to an understanding of the functions and effects of second person point of view in narrative. As Lanser suggests, critics attempting to confront literature within its literary, social, and ideological contexts "ask why a given device has been selected, what it can tell us about the communicative act, what difference another choice would have made, and how the technique works in the particular text."[80]

Description of Method

This study employs the method of dramatic analysis to examine the presence and effects of second person point of view in narrative. Dramatic analysis contends that narrative constructs a communication situation in which someone speaks a specific discourse in a specific time and space in a specific textual world to one or more persons. Dramatic analysis asks questions about each of the dimensions of the communication situation and their

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[80] Lanser, p. 29.

relationship to each other. The dynamic nature of the communication situation is acknowledged in dramatic analysis, which thus accounts for the relational nature of point of view.

Lanser observes that narrative discourse is predicated "on a multifaceted and dynamic interaction between a subject and one or more listeners, the perceived object, and language itself."[81] She continues, "point of view is essentially a relationship rather than a concrete entity."[82] Similarly, Wlad Godzich observes a shift in the focus of recent narrative theory "to who is telling the story to whom. . . ."[83]

Dramatic analysis involves an identification of who is speaking to whom, when and where, about what, and why. Delineating these elements specifies the individual components of narrative--the narrator, narratee, character, reader, the language that constructs them as well as their inter-relationships. The communication framework of dramatic analysis recognizes that the speaker of a text, while always inside the textual world, may be inside or outside the action (story-world) of the text, that the listener may be inside or outside the textual world, and

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[81] Lanser, p. 4.

[82] Lanser, p. 13.

[83] Godzich, "Foreword," Ross Chambers, Story and Situation: Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xv.

that the speakers and listeners exist in a relationship that may allow text and story boundaries to be crossed.

While dramatic analysis has roots in Burke's concept of Dramatism, Gudas grounds the relationship between dramatic analysis and narrative in Booth's concept of narrative as communication:

> That prose fiction may be regarded as dramatic utterance--the speech act of a storyteller or narrator who need not (perhaps should not) be identified with the real-life author--became commonplace in narrative theory after the publication of Wayne C. Booth's The Rhetoric of Fiction in 1961.[84]

Gudas further recognizes the relationship between dramatic analysis and performance of literature studies. Studies in performance of literature necessarily enact a dramatic analysis of texts, even in the apparent absence of a systematic application of the method. The actualization of the communication situation of texts that occurs in performance of literature demands and creates an understanding of the relationships between and among the

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[84] Gudas, "Dramatism and Modern Theories in Oral Interpretation," Performance of Literature in Historical Perspectives, ed. David W. Thompson, (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 580-627. Gudas discusses the development of the dramatic analysis and its relationship to Burke's dramatistic pentad (see esp. pp. 611-12). For a full discussion of dramatic analysis, see Don Geiger, The Dramatic Impulse in Modern Poetics, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967).

narrative elements.[85]

Dramatic analysis accommodates the concerns of second person point of view in narrative in several ways. The focus on the relationship of narrative components clarifies the role of the reader, which second person point of view foregrounds. The "to whom" the speaker is speaking contains, when applied to narrative, the narratee and the reader. This categorization implies the identification of the reader with the narratee explored by Genette. The reader and the narratee share the general function of receiver, albeit in diverse ways. Dramatic analysis examines the diverse functions of the narratee and reader as well as their relationship. The combination of "who is speaking and to whom" distinguishes between actants and non-actants. The narratee, who is an actant in the text will be seen to have a different relationship with the narrator of the text and a different role in the story being told from the narratee or reader, who is not an actant in the text. A definition of second person point of view narrative will address the role of the "you" as actant or non-actant. The featuring of "who and to whom" further confronts the ambiguity and multiplicity of identity Costello notes as inherent in a second person point of view narrative. Lanser's concern with issues of ideology that inevitably

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[85] Geiger's discussion in The Dramatic Impulse in Modern Poetics provides an exploration of the connection between dramatic analysis and performance of literature.

emerge in narrative texts is addressed in the categories "what and why" in dramatic analysis.

The delineation of the narrative situation, indicated by the above discussion and required by dramatic analysis, yields a fuller understanding of the functions and effects of second person point of view in narrative.

Outline of the Study

Chapter One offers an introduction to the study and review of the literature on point of view, person, and second person point of view in narrative. Chapter Two posits a theory of the nature and function of second person point of view.

Chapter Three moves from theory to practice in a consideration of several second person point of view texts. A critical examination the function of second person point of view in the feminist short story "Leaving," by Margaret Gibson, concludes the chapter.[86]

Chapter Four explores the contributions of an enriched understanding of second person point of view to the study of second person texts themselves and the general study of narrative. Implications for contemporary concerns in narrative theory and feminist theory are considered. Suggestions for further research conclude the study.

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[86] Gibson, "Leaving," Love Stories By New Women, eds. Charleen Swansea and Barbara Campbell, (Charlotte, North Carolina: Red Clay Books, 1978), pp. 90-4.

Chapter Two

Toward a Theory of Second Person Point of View

The construction of a theory of second person point of view proceeds from the working definition proposed in this study. This study posits that second person point of view exists when the second person pronoun simultaneously houses the narrator, actant, and narratee(s) in a narrative text. This study conceives the narrator of a text as the consciousness, or persona, that produces the experience of the text by speaking it. Thus, this study assumes, along with Booth and others, the presence of a narrator in a narrative text.[1] An actant is a character in the text who participates in the action of the story. Mieke Bal provides a clarification of the actant-character in her discussion, "Sexuality, Sin, and Sorrow: The Emergence of Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3)." Bal identifies Eve, Adam, and the serpent as actants in the Genesis text, "They share the actantial position of the <u>destinateur</u>; they all play minor but indispensible parts in the [story]."[2] Bal continues her discussion by noting that actants may

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[1] For a brief review of the debate about the presence of the narrator, see pp. 14-6 of this study.

[2] Bal, "Sexuality, Sin, and Sorrow: The Emergence of Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3)," <u>The Female Body in Western Culture</u>, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985, 1986), pp. 331-2.

participate to varying degrees. Eve's independent action of disobedience "makes her powerful as a character." However, the character of the serpent is less powerful because his action is restricted, "The serpent, then, is next addressed, but not as a full subject able to speak. . . . Thus, [limiting] its position as a character."[3] Still, both Eve and the serpent function as actants in the text. The narratee(s) in a text are conceived as the audience of the utterance. Narratees may be characters in a text or readers of a text.[4] The simultaneous reference to narrator, actant, and narratee(s) creates an intersubjective relationship among the narrative elements in second person point of view texts. This intersubjectivity issues distinct challenges to concepts of narrative subjectivity and authority.

The first part of this definition refocuses dimensions of second person point of view suggested by Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins. The second part indicates the

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[3] Bal, p. 332. The relationship between subjectivity and voice plays a significant role in contemporary feminist theory. The nontraditional subjectivity and voice in second person point of view texts offers insights into this relationship that will be discussed later in this study.

[4] The problematic concept of the narratee and its relationship to the reader in second person texts will be discussed more fully this chapter. Primarily, this study endorses Genette's view that the narratee may more or less correspond to "the reader," who serves as audience for the speaker in the communication situation of a text. The reader may be more or less defined in the text. The reader does not necessarily correspond to the actual reader of a text, but some blurring may occur as the actual reader assumes the role of audience for the text.

functions and effects of second person point of view and identifies the postmodern culture that frames them.

Both Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins define second person primarily according to whom the "you" pronoun refers. That is, if the second person pronoun refers simply to a reader, to a general "one" or allows an actant to speak of her/himself then a "genuine" narrative second person does not exist. To constitute second person point of view, the writers assert, the "you" must reference an actant in the narrative and must at least seem to be voiced by someone other than that actant.

Morrissette states, "Turning to prose. . . . Obviously, we must eliminate all uses of 'you' in oratory or elsewhere that are addressed frankly to an audience. Moreover, 'you' as a substitute in English for 'one'. . . [has] little or nothing to do with our subject."[5] Thus, Morrissette identifies and dismisses the "you" typical of guidebooks, cookbooks, advertisements, travelogues, courtrooms, and journalism. HopKins and Perkins echo Morrissette and provide an excellent summary of his position:

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[5] Morrissette, 6.

> Morrissette discusses the "guidebook you" ("You see the Cabildo on your left and the Presbytery on your right."), the "advertisement you" ("You will love your new car."), the "cookbook you" ("You add four eggs, then the flour mixture.") Later, he alludes to the "courtroom you" ("You went to his house, found him alone, and shot him.") Perhaps the most common usage is "you" to mean the impersonal "one," as in "When you try too hard, you get tense". . . . Morrissette denigrates the "journalistic you" . . . "You walked from the subway exit at Sheridan Square down Christopher Street and entered the Theatre de Lys."[6]

Morrissette also dismisses the use of the second person pronoun as disguised first person point of view. Morrissette asserts that La Modification is a second person narrative. Therefore, Morrissette claims that "the explanation of Butor's narrative vous as the voice of the protagonist addressing himself in an interior monologue is in error."[7] HopKins and Perkins again echo Morrissette and specify that the "you" in second person narratives "is an actant by definition."[8] Therefore, in second person

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[6] HopKins and Perkins, pp. 6-7.

[7] Morrissette, 14. The discussion of disguised first person as an inadequate explanation of second person point of view may be seen to exclude apostrophe as well. As conceived by Jonathan Culler in The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 135-154, apostrophe grants subjectivity to an addressed object ("you") by projecting the subjectivity of the speaker onto the object. Although, as Culler states, apostrophe contributes to the discussion of the "reconciliation of subject and object" (p. 143), it functions as a variation of the disguised first person address.

[8] HopKins and Perkins, p. 5.

narratives, the "'you' has performed a specific action."[9]

Discussions of the role of the narrator are less developed in Morrissette's and HopKins and Perkins' conceptions of second person point of view. Writing about the function of the "you" in second person narrative, Morrissette suggests that "The voice which says vous is less that of the character than of the author, or, better still, that of a persona, invisible but powerfully present, who serves as the center of consciousness in the novel."[10] Similarly, HopKins and Perkins observe, "Narration sufficient to establish the 'you' establishes a consciousness that generates the you-utterance."[11]

A theory of second person point of view must account for the "voice which says [you],' the "consciousness that generates the you-utterance." Because the second person pronoun may serve a variety of purposes for a variety of narrators, a distinction must be made between first and third person point of view narrators who use the second person pronoun and second person point of view narrators. A second person narrator must be present in order for a text to function as second person point of view. The second person narrator is present when the "you" constitutes the narrator as well as the actant and narratee(s) of a text.

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[9] HopKins and Perkins, p. 7.

[10] Morrissette, 15.

[11] HopKins and Perkins, p. 26.

First and third person narrators often employ the "you" to indicate actants or narratees. This use of the second person pronoun does not construct a second person point of view.

Joyce Carol Oates' short story, "You," is an example of the use of the second person pronoun by a first person narrator to refer to an actant. Marion Randall, the daughter of the famous movie actress Madeline Randall speaks to her absent mother, who is the "you" in the text. The story opens, "You are leaving the airplane. You are welcomed to the West Coast." Until nearly the end of the text, the identity of the speaker (Marion) is hidden by the second person pronoun. However, Marion clearly reveals herself as the first person narrator of the text, in its conclusion, "Yet I will record it because I want to tell you everything."[12] The revelation of the first person narrator clarifies the use of the "you" as well. The "I" houses the narrator, Marion, and the "you" houses an actant, Madeline. Although the text does not indicate whether Madeline receives the address, it might be argued that she functions as a narratee as well an actant in "You," because the address is directed to her. Certainly, Marion states that her mother is her audience. The motivation for the address is not clear until the end of the story. When Marion

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[12] Oates, "You," The Wheel of Love, (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1970), p. 362 and 379, respectively.

reveals her feelings of anger and pain at being neglected, a sense that she often constructs similar addresses, as a kind of therapy, posits her mother as an imagined presence only, suggesting that Marion is her own narratee sounding out her feelings about her mother intrapersonally.

First person texts may also use the second person pronoun to allow the narrator to speak of her/himself either to comment upon her/his thoughts or actions or to generalize those thoughts and actions. Morrissette observes this use of the second person pronoun in A Farewell to Arms, particularly in the following passage:

> In the famous "small rain" passage, a "you" surges into the interior monologue, mixed with the hero's "I": "In bed I lay me down my head. . . . Maybe she was lying thinking about me. Blow, blow, ye western wind. Well, it blew and it wasn't the small rain but the big rain down that rained. It rained all night. You knew it rained down that rained. Look at it. Christ, that my love were in my arms and I in my bed again."[13] (italics mine)

Henry clearly constitutes both the first person narrator and the actant designated by the second person pronoun.

Similarly, third person texts may generate interior monologues in which characters refer to themselves in the second person. Lillian Smith's Strangefruit consistently employs this use of the "you." For example, when Ed speaks to his sister Non about returning north with him, we read:

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[13] Morrissette, 9.

> "I've always wanted you. Ought to have taken you back last winter when Mama died. I--Up there you can be somebody--you can be somebody Non! You can--" You wanted to say it over and over. You wanted to scream it in her ears--you wanted to take the words and drive them into her flesh with your bare hands--[14]

Another example, later in the novel demonstrates the movement from the narrator to the character in interior, second person, monologue:

> Tut drove slowly home. Already late for dinner and with calls to make, he let the car move as slowly as it would through sand ruts; his mind moving with it along the ruts of right and wrong. You can't change right and wrong because somebody you love stands in the middle of the road--Then what you do, run over her?
> But if something's wrong and you do it to save Grace, then where are you--where's your ethics--where's your medical--[15]

In both of these cases, the third person narrator "steps aside" to allow the characters to "speak" to themselves about themselves. The "you" indicates the speaking character.

The second person pronoun is frequently used to address the narratee/reader in narrative texts. Indeed, the "implied you" is nearly inescapable, as HopKins and Perkins observe when they acknowledge "the you-narratee present at

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[14] Smith, Strangefruit, (New York: New American Library of World Literature, 1944), p. 10.

[15] Smith, p. 107.

least implicitly in every narrative."[16] Often the "you" addressed in these texts is not even an actant in the story. Perhaps the most recognized example of a first person point of view narrator using the second person pronoun to address the narratee/reader appears in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, when Jane declares, "Reader, I married him."[17] A contemporary example of this use of the "you" appears in John Irving's The Hotel New Hampshire. The narrator of The Hotel New Hampshire, John Berry, constructs epilogues updating the lives of characters. These epilogues are addressed to the narratee/reader indicated by the second person pronoun. The epilogue for his moviestar sister Franny illustrates this use of the "you," "Franny's Hollywood name is one you know. This is our family's story, and it's inappropriate for me to use Franny's stage name--but I know that you know her. . . . (She's why you go to the movie, or why you stay.)"[18] Thus, John Berry addresses his narratee/reader with the use of "you."

Although each of the above cited texts--"You," A Farewell to Arms, Strangefruit, Jane Eyre, The Hotel New

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[16] HopKins and Perkins, p. 6.

[17] Bronte, Jane Eyre, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), p. 513. Jane Eyre's well known declaration titles a study of women characters in fiction of the time, Patricia Beer, Reader, I Married Him: A Study of the Women Characters of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974).

[18] Irving, The Hotel New Hampshire, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), p. 383.

Hampshire--illustrates a use of the second person pronoun, none of the texts offers a second person point of view. The simultaneous reference to narrator, actant, and narratee(s) peculiar to second person point of view is absent in each text. The use of the first person pronoun by the narrator to indicate her/himself prohibits the identification of the narrator by the second person pronoun. Similarly, when third person pronouns are employed by the narrator to indicate characters, both the narrator and the characters are placed outside the "you." In either case, the use of the second person pronoun fails to construct second person point of view. Examples of second person point of view texts are examined later in this Chapter and in Chapter Three, but a consideration of the literary ground from which second person point of view emerges will illuminate the discussion of these examples.

Second person point of view emerges from the postmodern culture which influences contemporary literary theory and practice. The nontraditional situation constructed in second person texts constitutes a contemporary narrative situation and suggests the contemporary role of narrative texts. Contemporary conceptions of narrative feature the its relational nature. Further, these conceptions specify a relationship between the two worlds--internal and external--occupied by narrative. Second person point of view texts construct new relationships between the internal and

external narrative worlds and within those worlds.

Butor's discussion of the use of pronouns in narrative indicates the contemporary conception of narrative. In his theoretical essay, Butor identifies the following "pronominal functions":

> to illuminate the material of the novel both vertically, that is, its relation with its author, its reader, and the world in which it appears to us, and horizontally, that is the relationships of the characters that make up the novel, and their innermost thoughts.[19]

Other theorists, several of whom are cited in Chapter One of this study, also note the relational nature of narrative. For example, in Story and Situation Chambers defines narrative as a relational communication situation, "stories relate speakers and listeners in an act of communication they constitute."[20] This view reflects a movement away from the traditional conception of narrative as a linear communication act initiated by a speaker who constitutes listener(s) for her/his story. Instead, narrative communication is conceived as an interactive process in which narrators and listener(s) mutually participate to constitute the experience of the text. Although the narrator tells a story, the experience of the text resides in the relationship of the narrator and the listener(s)

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[19] Butor, p. 8.

[20] Chambers, p. xv.

rather than only in the story itself.

Once it is recognized that narrators and narratee(s) function as participants in the communication, other theoretical writings take on new relevance. Prince's discussion of the narrator's "distance from the narrated or narratee" implies interaction at Butor's horizontal direction. Prince asserts that the manipulation of these distances "not only helps characterize [the narrator] but also affect [the reader's] interpretation of and response to the narrative."[21] Genette identifies the vertical and horizontal directions posited by Butor as extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels. Genette locates the narratee inside the text (intradiegetic level) along with the narrator and characters. The reader, according to Genette, is external (extradiegetic level) along with the author. Genette speaks of the interaction within and between levels.[22] Lanser's model of narrative is predicated on a belief that narrative involves "a multifaceted and dynamic interaction between a subject and one or more listeners, the perceived object, and language itself."[23] Further, Lanser asserts that "point of view is essentially a relationship rather than a concrete entity."[24] Lanser clarifies her concepts of narrative and

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[21] Prince, p. 13.

[22] Genette, p. 259.

[23] Lanser, p. 4.

[24] Lanser, p. 13.

point of view with the categories "status, contact, and stance." Status, contact, and stance each specify an aspect of the relational situation operating in narrative. Respectively, status, contact, and stance indicate the relationship between the narrator and the act of speaking, the narrator and the world in the text, and the narrator and the world that produced the text. Although these relationships are separated to enable analysis, for Lanser the network of relationships working together produces point of view.[25]

Butor's horizontal/vertical directions, Genette's intradiegetic/ extradiegetic levels, and Lanser's status and contact/stance elements all indicate co-existing internal/external dimensions within narrative texts. Butor's model specifies that relationships occur within one dimension or the other. Elements in the external world--author, reader, world--are in a relationship with each other; elements internal to a text--narrator, character, narratee--are in a relationship with each other. Butor's view suggests that tension exists between these two separate dimensions and that they interact through confrontation. Genette speaks of the identification of reader with narratee and author with narrator. This identification is regulated

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[25] Lanser, p. 224. Lanser offers her model here, but, in a very real sense, the model is produced throughout her discussion.

by the different worlds occupied by these external/internal elements:

> Like the narrator, the narratee is one of the elements in the narrating situation, and he is necessarily located at the same diegetic level; that is, he does not merge a priori with the reader (even an implied reader) any more than the narrator necessarily merges with the author.[26]

HopKins and Perkins explore this relationship as well. Like Genette, they note that readers always identify with narratees, within a play of distance:

> We should concede here that the reader always has some sense of being the narratee . . . we always retain a sense of distance from the actants, however involved we get, and we never feel completely distanced as narratees no matter the circumstances within the text.[27]

Distance remains a factor in the development of relationships among narrative elements in second person point of view. However, second person point of view constructs a relationship that blurs the distinction between the internal and external (horizontal/vertical, intradiegetic/extradiegetic, status-contact/stance) dimensions of narrative. Internal and external elements are simultaneously constituted by the "you" in second person texts. The simultaneous indication of narrator, actant, narratee(s) merges the two separate worlds and constructs a

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[26] Genette, p. 259.

[27] HopKins and Perkins, p. 5.

new play of distance and identification in the relationship among individual elements.

Second person point of view blurs the distinction between the external and internal worlds inhabited by a narrative text, challenging traditional notions of narrative subjectivity and authority, and thus reflects the postmodern culture. The postmodern impulse of second person texts is illuminated by the following review of narrative subjectivity and authority as issues in postmodernism.

Postmodernism is a multi-faceted, still growing force emerging in all areas of thought and aesthetic practice. The ongoing development of postmodern culture as well as the parameters of this study make it difficult to provide a complete definition of postmodernism. However, basic characteristics of postmodernism are identifiable. Postmodern culture moves from the exegetic focus in realism, which features dimensions of product, to a diegetic focus, which features the process of production. Thus, the product of a postmodern text is the performance of its production. The featuring of process constructs a dynamic relationship among textual elements. These elements function in an inter-relationship--polyphonically rather than discretely. Two qualities may be seen to exhibit the focus on process in postmodern texts: narcissism and relativity. Postmodern narcissism is often noted as the self-consciousness of postmodern texts. For example, in postmodernism, narrative

is opposed with "non-narrative," a term that self-consciously challenges the traditional sense of narrative. The relativism espoused by postmodernism argues that reality is the product of specific cultural frameworks and not a reflection of Truth. Narcissism and relativism foreground issues of narrative subjectivity and authority. The inherent focus in narcissism on subject implicates issues of authority by altering the relationship of the subject to itself. Postmodern relativism, with its inherent denial of authority, focuses on narrative authority. Issues of subjectivity are implicated in the postmodern relativist assertion that reality results from acts of intentionality directed toward the world by the subject and not from a priori elements inherent in the world itself.[28] Postmodern narcissism and relativism function as responses to the received ideology of modernism. Several critics recognize that exposing the ideology (the cultural framework) inscribed in literature, including the ideology of subject and authority, constitutes a primary postmodern action.

Theoretical and critical juxtaposition of interactive

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[28] For a fuller discussion of the characteristics of postmodern culture, see Linda Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox, (New York: Methuen, 1980), Phillip Stevick, Alternative Pleasures: Postmodernist Fiction and the Tradition, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), and Jerome Klinkowitz, The Self-Apparent Word, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). This is an obviously partial list of the many discussions of postmodernism currently available.

external and internal textual worlds suggests an awareness of inscribed ideology. Lanser asserts that narrative functions as an ideological response "to a represented world, a representation that is itself an ideological construct."[29] Later, Lanser identifies the problematic nature of narrative ideology, which

> has powerful potential for structuring discourse either to evade or to obscure censorship, that is, to respond to the conscious and unconscious effects of ideology on the production of consciousness and on its aesthetic verbalization.[30]

The awareness of the inevitability of ideological inscription compels postmodernists to construct a particular response, as Hal Foster notes:

> With this textual model, one postmodernist strategy becomes clear: to deconstruct modernism not in order to seal it in its own image but in order to open it, to rewrite it; to open its closed systems to the "heterogeneity of texts," to rewrite its universal techniques in terms of "synthetic contradictions"--in short, to challenge its master narratives with one "discourse of others."[31]

Deconstructing modernism often involves exposing the ideology inscribed in texts. Hutcheon pursues this aspect

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[29] Lanser, p. 101.

[30] Lanser, p. 101.

[31] Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," The Anti-Aesthetic (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), pp. x-xi.

of postmodernism in her "Poetics of Postmodernism":

> Such defamiliarization and distanciation combine with a general shift of focus from the epistemological and ethical concerns of modernism to the ontological puzzlings of post-modernism (what is art? life? fiction? fact?) to allow for (potentially) a greater ideological self-awareness in literature, but also in theory. . . .[32]

The process of defamiliarizing, deconstructing, traditional conceptions of narrative both exposes modernist ideology and inscribes a postmodern ideology that questions traditional conceptions of narrative subjectivity and authority. Postmodern practice is labeled, among other things, invention, play, manipulation, and innovation. Each of these descriptions echoes John Barth's construction of postmodernism as a replenishment of exhausted forms.[33] Challenges to subjectivity and authority identify the narrator, characters, narratee, reader, and author as exhausted forms, exposed and revitalized in postmodern texts.

Traditionally, narrative authority resides in the author and narrator. The postmodern concept of the author reveals an inherent doubt of authority. Openly challenging traditional concepts, Michel Foucault's "What Is An Author?"

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[32] Hutcheon, "A Poetics of Postmodernism?" Diacritics 13 (1983): 36.

[33] Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion," The Atlantic 220 (1967): 29-34 and "The Literature of Replenishment," The Atlantic 269 (1980): 65-71.

expresses some postmodern sentiment, which identifies the author as an invalid legitimizing, author-ity construct.[34] The postmodern culture invests the author construct with the suspicion alloted all individual voices that claim to possess, and express, a "true" (author-ized) ideological vision. Valerie Minogue observes "a sense of instability, a distrust of authority, a distrust of literature itself, and a searching for new forms" in postmodernism.[35] One instance of this sense of instability arises in the presence of the postmodern author in the text. That is, unlike the author creating an image of reality (a seamless web), the postmodern author reveals the textual machinations of authorizing by inserting her/himself in the texts. Barth provides one of the most cited examples of the postmodern author's ubiquitous presence.[36] Barth appears in nearly all of his works as "the bespeckled author." An interesting construction of the author's presence appears in his novel, Letters, which consists of the character constructs writing Barth--the author construct--and sharing their thoughts on his work--their lives.

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[34] Foucault, "What Is An Author?" Textual Strategies, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141-60.

[35] Minogue, Nathalie Sarraute and the War of the Words: A Study of Five Novels, (Edinburgh University Press, 1981), p. 3.

[36] Certainly, the presence of an image of the author is not the only device used to reveal the workings of the author behind the text.

New criticism's distaste for ascribing textual authority strictly to their authors causes Booth to posit narrator credibility as a definitive measure of authority. In his review of contemporary narrative, Messerli claims, that the "emphasis authors and critics have put on the relationship between the narrator and his narrative, on the role of voice," is a primary concern of postmodernism.[37] Postmodern responses to narrator authority include the construction of in-credible narrators--narrators who flagrantly violate traditional expectations of narrators. Blatantly manufactured--self-contradictory, ignorant, unbelievable, unidentifiable, multiple, and sometimes even unhuman--narrators populate postmodern texts.[38]

Lanser's discussion of the nature of point of view provides an explanation of the popularity of postmodern reconstructions of the narrator. Lanser estimates that "of all the elements that organize [narrative] discourse. . . point of view is the most versatile: it can appear to be natural and innocuous or it can blatantly display its own artifice."[39] Lanser notes that an unmarked narrator, one who appears to be natural and innocuous, is vested with

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[37] Messerli, p. 281.

[38] A few of the many texts that contain such narrators are, Samuel Beckett, Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable, Robert Coover, The Public Burning, "The Romance of the Thin Man and the Fat Lady," and "The Babysitter," William Kotzwinkle, "Elephant Bangs Train."

[39] Lanser, p. 101.

authority nearly automatically.[40] Mary Louise Pratt asserts that "Probably the one thing [postmodernists] share is a conviction that the unmarked speech situation [in narrative] is incompatible with their own view of contemporary experience."[41] Postmodern constructions mark the narrator so that artifice is displayed and authority is challenged. Second person point of view functions as a postmodern "marking" of the narrator in its blatant challenge to traditional constructs. Hutcheon notes the "marking" function of second person point of view when she concludes that "The best way to demystify power, is, first of all, to reveal it in all its arbitrariness (to allow Calvino's narrator at the start of If On A Winter's Night A Traveler to order the reader around."[42]

Joining with, and really inseparable from, challenges to authority are postmodern queries into subjectivity. The manipulations of the narrator, designed to challenge her/his authority, also challenge the subjectivity of the narrator. Because authority is vested in subjects, postmodernism approaches the concept of the subject suspiciously. However, the narrator is not the only narrative subject challenged in postmodernism. For example, Foucault's

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[40] Lanser, pp. 149, 224.

[41] Pratt, Toward A Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 222.

[42] Hutcheon, p. 36.

treatment of the author cited earlier in this discussion demonstrates the postmodern challenge to the subjectivity of the author.[43] In addition, Hutcheon observes that "poststructuralist criticism has . . . seriously challenged today the very notion of the self as a subject that serves as source and authentication of meaning."[44] The demise of the "hero" functions as a simple version of this challenge.

Postmodern heroes are elusive, introspective, unsure, unattractive, and undetermined.[45] Although this list of characteristics echoes descriptions of the elusive, introspective, and disliked modern heroes, the postmodern difference is in the subjectivity of the heroes. Modern heroes exist as constituted subjects who possess unattractive qualities. Rather than attacking or undermining constituted subjects by rendering them unattractive, postmodern texts place subjectivity itself in jeopardy, often constructing struggles for attainment of self-hood. Butor observes that the individual in the novel can never be completely determined.[46] Marianne Hirsch notes, this

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[43] see pp. 60-2 of this study.

[44] Hutcheon, 38.

[45] A few memorable postmodern heroes are: Giovannie Bruno in Robert Coover, The Origin of the Brunists, (New York: The Viking Press, 1966); the Dead Father in Donald Barthelme, The Dead Father, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975); and Watt in Samuel Beckett, Watt (New York: Grove Press, 1959).

[46] Levitt, 28.

struggle changes the concept of self and, "It is not only the self that changes, but it is also the conception we have of the self, the conception of what it means to say 'I'."[47] The problematic "I" receives attention from many theorists who assert that the "loss of identity is a specifically human danger, and maintenance of identity a specifically human danger."[48] In addition to describing the precarious status of the postmodern subject, Hirsch's remark alludes to a function of the second person pronoun.

The concern with subjectivity affects postmodern constructions of narratee and reader as well as character and narrator. Perhaps the "replenishment" of the narratee constitutes the most complex effort of postmodernism. The deliberate exposure of the artifice of postmodern texts implicates the reader as a narratee. That is, in their self-conscious exposure, postmodern texts address the reader as narratee. When a reader inhabits a text, s/he is compelled to recognize its textuality. Certainly a legitimate connection exists between the increasing attention to the role of the reader and the development of postmodern texts. However, as Hutcheon cautions, "it is not just the implication of the reader that has brought this about."[49] Still, the implication of the reader deserves

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[47] Hirsch, "Interview," p. 271.

[48] Gardiner, 350.

[49] Hutcheon, p. 36.

consideration. Heckard contends that a postmodern text paints a landscape for the reader and encourages him to include himself in the painting and stand back to view himself."[50] The dual location of the reader--inscribed as narratee internally and as reader externally--specifies the complexity of the postmodern role of the reader.

One aspect of the manipulation of the narratee/reader is the quest for identity in postmodernism. Often this search echoes the relational structure of contemporary narrative. That is, saying "I," constituting subject, accompanies the ability to speak another as subject, "If you can say I am you can also say you are. . . ."[51] Hirsch contributes to this concept when she specifically locates the search for subject status--self-hood--inside the interplay between self and other.[52]

Second person point of view finds a particular home in the postmodern challenge to authority that subverts the expected roles of author and narrator and in the challenge to the status of subject that constructs a relational context. Justifying his discussion, Morrissette claims, "Narrative 'you' generates a complex series of perspectives

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[50] Heckard, "Robert Coover, Metafiction, and Freedom," Twentieth Century Literature 22 (1976), 211.

[51] Tanner, "Passion, Narrative, and Identity in Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre," Teaching the Text eds. Susanne Kappeler and Norman Bryson, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 124.

[52] Hirsch, "Michel Butor: The Decentralized Vision," 326.

whose multiple angles deserve to be explored."[53] When Morrissette employs the noun "series" to describe the multiple perspectives in second person text, he fails to describe the distinct contribution of second person point of view. Many postmodern texts construct multiple perspectives, whether through the presence of multiple narrators or multiple versions of a story from the same narrator. Second person texts generate their multiple perspectives simultaneously.

The use of the "you" allows authors to house the multiple perspectives of the narrator, character, narratee/ reader, and themselves together. Each perspective retains a measure of individuality and yet fully merges with others. The peculiar nature of the second person pronoun permits such a construct. Several theorists hint at this nature.

Prince notes that the "you" pronoun may designate a character or narratee while also implying a narrator (the one who voices the "you").[54] Donoghue alludes to the reader's presence in the "you" when he observes that a "you" conjures a listener, even when referencing another.[55] Messerli specifies the reader's role by observing that while the you may be individuals in the text it is "always simultaneously the reader of the text" thus creating an

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[53] Morrissette, 2.

[54] Prince, p. 17.

[55] Donoghue, pp. 22-3.

interplay of voices.[56] According to Morrissette, Pierre Deguise contributes the author to the interplay of voices. For Deguise, "the *vous* of Butor is author, character, *and* reader."[57] Deguise posits a "*vous* synthetique" in Butor's second person text.[58] Oppenheim also notes the author's presence in the equation in her contention that "the second person narrative 'allows for an ambiguous author-character relationship, with the reader oscillating between identification with the author and character.'"[59] The integration of the reader and author with the narrator, character, and narratee testifies to the merging of external and internal worlds in second person texts.

How does the second person pronoun allow the construction of what Minogue names an "interpersonal rather than individuated" area of reality?[60] Identification constitutes the primary response to "you." As Passias notes, "The reader visually records 'you,' he logically perceives 'I.'"[61] During the inevitable and inescapable process of identification, the reader recognizes that the

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[56] Messerli, 294.

[57] Deguise, "Michel Butor et le nouveau roman," *French Review*, (December 1961): 155-62, quoted in Morrissette, 23.

[58] Morrissette, 23.

[59] Oppenheim, *Intentionality and Intersubjectivity*, p. 33.

[60] Minogue, p. 2.

[61] Passias, 199.

"you" specifies the actant in the text. The cognitive process that allows the reader to understand "to whom the you refers" causes the reader to be aware of the textuality of the narrative s/he reads. Thus, the presence of the "you" functions as a postmodern display of artifice, a denial of expectation that invokes the presence of the author. The reader further acknowledges the narrator-construct from whom the "you" proceeds.

This process describes the shifting and oscillating mentioned by Munley and Oppenheim. That is, the reader of a second person text continually places her/himself in and continually displaces her/himself from the "you" while simultaneously placing and displacing others in and from the "you." Oppenheim posits this action as part of the complexity of second person point of view when she provides the notion that the "you" draws the reader in but also "pushes him outward."[62] This drawing in and pushing out--continual placement and displacement--of the reader further distinguishes the use of "you" in second person point of view from the "you" that only addresses the reader, bringing her/him into the text. Oppenheim continues, "To consider the illocutionary function of the second person narrative pronoun as primary. . . is to lose sight of [its]

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[62] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 201.

subtlety."[63] The continuous, instantaneous nature of the process inscribes in the subtlety the impossibility of a reader ever being wholly displaced from the "you" to which s/he initially commits. Thus, Messerli notes that even when the reader "comes to perceive that the fiction is addressed to someone else" s/he remains activated in the text.[64] Morrissette alludes to this dual identification when he notes the mixing of personalities and "overlapping of identities" that enhances second person narrative texts.[65] Readers of first and third person point of view texts may be activated, but the unquestionable separation of the reader from the source of the text (narrator) prohibits the same level of activation available with a second person point of view text.

The enhancement available in second person texts suggests a further contribution of second person point of view to narrative beyond its operation as a postmodern device. Hirsch identifies one aspect that enhances the reader's experience of these texts in "a radical reorientation of ourselves and of our place in the world: the reading process reveals a new vision of that world even

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[63] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 201.

[64] Messerli, 293.

[65] Morrissette, 8.

while recognizing our dependence on old habits."[66] Oppenheim believes that the process of narration enacted by second person texts holds a special appeal to the reader.[67] Oppenheim notes that the intersubjectivity constructed in second person texts, indicated by the identification and displacement process, houses their appeal.[68] Indeed, intersubjectivity functions in second person texts to compel a "radical reorientation" and construct a "special appeal." The intersubjectivity in second person texts invokes a familiarity, an intimacy, among the constitutive elements of the narrative situation. This intimacy combines with the commentary on the nature of subjects to constitute the functions and effects of second person point of view in narrative.

Munley describes the experience of a second person narrative as follows, "the reader must continually switch roles and relate to the other as to another self. . . " (italics mine).[69] Given the multiplicity of identities housed in the second person text, Munley's observation may be amended to indicate that the reader must continually "relate to others as to other selves." The nature of a

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[66] Hirsch, "Michel Butor: The Decentralized Vision," 348.

[67] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, p. 33.

[68] Oppenheim, Intentionality and Intersubjectivity, pp. 31-2.

[69] Munley, p. 250.

relationship in which the other functions at the level of another self, suggests the intimacy, the familiarity, that pervades the intersubjectivity created by second person texts. Munley's view echoes in the notion that a kind of "schizophrenia" characterizes second person texts. Morrissette suggests this notion when he discusses the ability of an outside voice, audible to the narrator or hero, to comment upon actions and thoughts as if in the voice of the narrator or hero. Thus, the self, in a sense, multiplies.[70]

While recognizing "the delight one feels in reading" second person texts, Messerli also notes that the "you" throws "the reader into confusion by presuming a familiarity. . . . "[71] HopKins and Perkins partially counter Messerli's complaint when they assert that, "The you-mode has yet another advantage. It offers the intimacy with the character enabled by the first-person mode without the presumptuous quality of the I-narrator."[72] Every "I" narrator presumes her/his right to speak and that the reader is interested, indeed cares, about what s/he has to declare. The "you" inter-subjectifies the reader, character,

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[70] Morrissette, 13. It is interesting to note here that Fredric Jameson locates schizophrenia in postmodern discourse. See, Jameson "Postmodernism and the Consumer Society," The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, pp. 111-125.

[71] Messerli, 293.

[72] HopKins and Perkins, p. 27.

narrator, narratee. Therefore, second person texts do not presume a familiarity, but construct familiarity. Further, second person texts don't impose on the reader an interest in "someone else's declaration" as does a text in which the speaker is separate from but addressing the reader. Rather, second person texts generate an intimacy built on genuine empathy among the those implicated in the "you." Passias, citing Emile Benveniste, offers another conception of the intimacy of second person narration, "According to Emile Benveniste, the second person pronoun is la personne non-je 'the person not-I'."[73] Conceiving of the other(s) as "not-I" intensifies the familiarity of the relationship. The "not-I" represents a necessary aspect of the "I." Delineating the various identities the "you" constitutes, Costello lists "a reimagined self" and "an erotic partner."[74] Both of these characterizations inscribe intimacy into the textual relationship. She specifies that, faced with a second person pronoun, a reader not only enacts a process of identification but, personally. . . ."[75] The particular intersubjectivity of second person texts may be said, in a phrase borrowed from Hutcheon, to create a "collusion between the subject positions."[76]

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[73] Passias, 198.

[74] Costello, 494.

[75] Costello, 495.

[76] Hutcheon, 39.

The idea that a collusion between subjects occurs in second person narratives presumes the subject status of the narrative entities just as does the term intersubjectivity. Perhaps no presumption is as fragile today as that one. However, the narrative process that constructs second person texts constitutes these entities as subjects joined in an inter-subjective relationship. Current critical discussions of subject status, influenced extensively by feminist theory and practice, posit that achieving voice--coming to language--is fundamental to subjectivity. One aspect of the connection between coming to language and subject-status is the ability to speak the self as subject--"I." The first person narrator, speaking "I," confers subject status for her/himself. The third person narrator confers subject status on her/himself by speaking a self-ish knowledge of others. As noted earlier in this discussion, theorists suggest that the achieved subject status relies in part on the implication of others. Thus, the "s/he" of a third person point of view text and the implied "you" in a first person point of view texts exist at the behest of the narrator to enable the narrator to be fully constituted as subject. The ability to construct an Other to guarantee subject-status belongs to an authority no longer available in this postmodern world. There is no "I" that pre-exists in order to speak the other. Therefore, alternate means of constituting self, through or along with, the constitution

of Other must be developed.

Speaking "you" mutually (simultaneously) constitutes the subject-status of the narrative entities. In the case of second person texts, it might be argued that "you" implies several "I's" (that is subjects) in the way that "I" implies at least one "you." However, no "I" exists outside the "you" in second person texts to guarantee subject-status. Authority is subverted by the inter-dependence which maintains their subject status. Second person subjectivity is ephemeral and un-author-ized outside of the voicing of the text; it persists so long as the narration persists. The inordinate intimacy constructed is grounded in this life (subject) dependence. By surrendering a false claim to individuated subjectivity, the participants moment by moment function as subject-guarantors for each other.

Second person's intersubjectivity also conveys a specific view of how humans experience their subjectivity. Munley identifies this view when she contrasts the beliefs of Wolfgang Iser and Nathalie Sarraute. According to Munley, Iser believes that contact and interaction substitute for an "experience of how people experience one another"--an experience Iser posits as outside human ability. Sarraute reverses Iser. She argues that people can experience their experiences of others. Contact and interaction house this experience. Sarraute demonstrates

her belief in the second person short story, "Mon Petit."[77] Her choice indicates the particular intersubjectivity available in second person narration. Morrissette might argue that Roland Barthes belief that second person is "'essentielle de reconciliation entre l'homme et l'univers'" agrees with Sarraute's assertion.[78]

Although problematic in several ways, Butor's discussion of the use of the second person pronoun links the need for a second person narration to the need to access language and voice. He writes that the second person pronoun "will be the most effective means to" construct "a real progress of consciousness, the very birth of language, or of speech."[79] Earlier in his discussion Butor locates the reason for the need of a "birth of language" in the fact that "[the narrator] is no longer only someone who has speech like an inalienable, irremovable belonging, like an innate faculty which he is content to exercise, but someone to whom speech is given."[80] The identification of the difficulty of accessing language--of achieving subject status--contributes to the view advocated in this study.

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[77] Munley, p. 236.

[78] Morrissette, 16.

[79] Butor, p. 5.

[80] Butor, p. 4. Note that in the original translation, the quote begins "It." I believe that Butor refers to the character who (in Butor's terms), if he were able, would serve as narrator.

The concept that someone "else" gives speech, however, posits a problematic authority. A close look at Butor's writing within the frame of the present study might permit a revision.

Butor states his concept of the origin of second person point of view as follows:

> It is because there is someone to whom one tells his own story, something about himself which he doesn't know, or at least not yet at the level of language, that there can be narration in the second person. . . If the character knew his own story in its entirety, if he had no objection to relating it, telling it himself in the first place, then the first person would take over. . . But it is a matter of pulling it out of him, either because he lies, hides something from us or from himself, or because he doesn't have all the elements, or even if he does have them, he is incapable of suitably putting them together.[81]

Although Butor fails to mention them specifically, his statement allows room for a an understanding of the play of subjectivity and authority in second person texts. Butor posits that second person texts tell the story of a character unable or unwilling to tell the story [him]self. He suggests that deception, evasion, ignorance, and/or incompetence may account for the character's inability. Refocusing the notions of inability and ignorance "at the level of language" points to issues of authority and subjectivity. If one does not know a story at the level of language, then one cannot be said to "have" that story.

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[81] Butor, pp. 4-5.

Experience is constituted in language. Therefore, the character may be said to be unable to speak [his] story because [he] is not the subject of that story. Without subject status, the character possess no authority (right, ability) to speak the story. It seems to become [his] story when the second person narrator implicates the character. Yet, the nature of the "you" necessitates that the story remains the narrator's, the narratee/reader's, and the author's. Multiple perspectives inform the second person narrative. Butor's argument errs in its subtle echo of the bias that posits second person as a disguised first person text. All "I's" are absent in a second person text. Subjectivity constitutes itself mutually, indirectly, inter-relationally.

The reference to absent "I's" requires clarification. In their treatment of second person point of view, HopKins and Perkins suggest that "The only major narrative effect denied [second person] is the 'absent narrator'."[82] The statement suggests two interpretations. The statement clearly recognizes the blatant artifice of second person narration. However, it also alludes to the presence of an individually identifiable narrator in a second person text. Perhaps Genette's specification that "Absence is absolute,

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[82] HopKins and Perkins, p. 26.

but presence has degrees" illuminates this paradox.[83] That is, while all "I's" are indeed absent from second person texts, narrators, characters, narratee/readers, and authors are subjectively present. The potential play of degrees of presence inheres in the intersubjectivity of the narrative personnel. That is within the multiple selves the voices may alternately sound more distinctly like one or another of the entities therein inscribed.

Conclusion

The theory tentatively constructed specifies that second person point of view exists when the narrator, character, narratee, and, consequently, the reader and author are simultaneously constituted in the pronoun "you." Second person point of view thus creates a special intersubjectivity that involves a new intimacy among narrative personnel and affirms the relational nature of subjectivity. Thus, second person point of view participates in the challenges of postmodern culture to traditional conceptions of authority and identity.

Further understanding of the theory posited herein emerges by replacing the device in its narrative context. As Lanser realizes:

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[83] Genette, p. 245.

> Surely it is as unproductive for critics to pass judgment on isolated literary devices as it would be for linguists to set forth a hierarchy of sentence structures or for art historians to rank colors or even styles according to abstract moral properties. What is important is how a given device operates in a specific context, what it reveals, how it relates to other textual elements and to the conventions of its time and place, and what effects it can generate.[84]

Chapter Three of this study aims to extend the understanding of second person point of view by examining several second person texts. Narratives considered by Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins and those considered by other writers are re-considered in light of the theory herein developed. More recent texts are then considered. An analysis of Gibson's "Leaving," which demonstrates the functions and effects of second person point of view and indicates the significance of these effects in the context of feminist theory, follows this review.

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[84] Lanser, p. 28.

Chapter Three

From Theory to Practice

Several texts demonstrate the functions of second person point of view in narrative. Identifying a practice of second person point of view requires a recognition of the difficulty of isolating a "pure" point of view in any text. Because narrative point of view continually constructs and is constructed by all of the elements of a narrative text in relationship, point of view functions tenuously. "Slippage" may subtly or overtly reveal this tenuous nature in any text.

HopKins and Perkins note one kind of slippage when they agree with Romberg that the presence of a first person pronoun alone does not generate a first person point of view text.[1] Another kind of slippage appears in HopKins and Perkins' discussion of third person point of view texts:

> [Third person narrators] may be fully omniscient, with privileged information about all characters, or partially omniscient, or omniscience may be limited to a single character. The later of course most nearly resembles a first person narrator; in both cases we get the story through the consciousness of one person (italics mine).[2]

HopKins and Perkins suggest a third instance of slippage in John Collier's "The Chaser." They write, "'The Chaser,'

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[1] HopKins and Perkins, pp. 1-2.

[2] HopKins and Perkins, p. 3.

though it contains no privileged information of any kind, seems to be third-person limited. . . " (italics mine).[3]

A fourth potential for slippage in point of view resides in the fact that point of view may change during a text. E. M. Forster's concept of "bouncing" suggests this; criticism of frame-tales, such as Wuthering Heights, and of much contemporary narrative explicates it.[4]

These comments indicate the problem of locating pure concepts of point of view in a specific textual experience. The first statement notes that individual signs of point of view may not always be trusted; a first person pronoun does not always signify a first person point of view. Secondly, types of point of view often function with great similarity to other types; third person point of view omniscient to a single character resembles first person point of view; "camera angle," which HopKins and Perkins call "perspective," may function to make a third person observer. This functional similarity also appears in HopKins and Perkins' discussion of "The Chaser," which seems like a third person limited omniscient point of view.

HopKins and Perkins conclude that, in spite of the lack of privileged information which typically characterizes third person limited omniscient point of view, "The Chaser"

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[3] HopKins and Perkins, p. 4.

[4] HopKins and Perkins mention Forster's concept, p. 4.

"seems" to function as a third person limited text. HopKins and Perkins examine the narrative and find: "we always get only the young man's perspective, and we appreciate the irony of the old man's remarks no less than if the young man were his own narrator."[5] The significance for this study of HopKins and Perkins' conclusion lies in its indication of possibilities. For example, a different examination of the text may excuse the apparent perspective (as HopKins and Perkins excuse the absence of privileged information) and conclude that "The Chaser" operates with third-person observer point of view.

These comments demonstrate both that it is possible to describe point of view as it operates in a text and that by its nature point of view eludes a tight critical grasp. The subtlety and multiplicity of second person point of view makes slippage and elusion inevitable. The following discussion examines a variety of texts to develop an understanding of the operation of second person point of view: first, a text that uses the second person pronoun but does not constitute second person point of view; several texts that operate primarily with first or third person point of view but contain instances of second person point of view; and, finally, second person point of view texts.

Morrissette refers to Ralph Milne Farley's "The House of Ecstasy" as an "ingenious piece of curiosa" in a footnote

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[5] HopKins and Perkins, p. 4.

to his discussion of the use of second person in narrative.[6] Morrissette describes the text as follows:

> . . . the author consistently addresses the reader as "you," stating that he proposes to relate something which "actually happened to you." . . . For I know something about you--something deeply personal--something which, however, I am afraid that you have forgotten." The "you" text which follows, involving an impotent, sadistic, voyeur hypnotist, one of his beautiful girl victims, and "you," is cleverly explained at the end by having "you" left hypnotized with all his (you) memory of the events narrated erased. With the "frame" of amnesia (post-hypnotic) removed, a story would be left in the purest "you" mode.[7]

Although he identifies the amnesia frame as the obstacle to second person point of view, Morrissette fails to indicate how the frame restricts the point of view. A closer look at the opening and closing of the text reveals that the frame houses the "I" narrator of the story and the coincidental identification of the reader as the "you." The text opens:

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[6] Morrissette, 23.

[7] Morrissette, 23.

> This actually happened to you. And when I say "you," I mean you--now reading these very words. For I know something about you--something deeply personal--something which, however, I am afraid that you have forgotten.
> You're puzzled? You don't believe me? Read on, and I'll prove it to you--you'll see that I am right. To begin with, where were you at eight o'clock on that warm evening of August 4, 1937?
> You don't remember? Oh, but I hope you will, my friend. For, as you read on, you will realize the importance of remembering every detail of that eventful night.
> The weather was warm and muggy. It made you restless in the house, until finally you went out for a little walk--down to the store at the corner, to buy a package of cigarettes--to take the air.[8]

The frame includes all the narration that precedes "The weather was warm and muggy," which begins the "story." The text ends:

> You consider yourself to be a man of your word, don't you? And yet you have never returned to the house of ecstasy to rescue that girl, although you solemnly promised her that you would.
> I have now told you all that I myself know of the episode. But unfortunately I do not know the address of the house of ecstasy. You need that address. You have to have that address, if you are ever to rescue the girl who loved and trusted you.
> Try hard, my friend, try hard.
> Can't you remember? You must remember.[9]

The frame begins again with "I have now told you all that I myself know of the episode."

The presence of this "I" narrator constitutes the text

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[8] Farley, "The House of Ecstasy," ed. Alfred Hitchcock, Fireside Book of Suspense, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947), p. 144.

[9] Farley, p. 153.

as a first person narrative. The identification of the "you" as the reader reading the text further indicates that the point of view is not second person. Certainly, the relationship of the actual reader and the you in this text is, as Morrissette notes, clever. However, the point of view that constructs the text is a first person point of view. This text issues no challenge to the authority of subject; the "I" narrator declares her/his subject status and guarantees that of the you in relationship to her/him. No ambiguity imbues the "you" in this text; the "you" is (only) the reader. Morrissette accurately suggests that if the post-hypnotic frame--and thus the "I" narrator and the specification of the limited identity of the "you"--was removed a second person text would remain. However, the amnesia of the actant in the story would complicate such an alteration.

Although the guiding, knowing, "I" narrator of "The House of Ecstasy" prohibits the construction of a second person text, second person point of view can appear embedded in texts primarily characterized by another point of view. Two previously mentioned texts, How Like A God and Strangefruit, illustrate this occurrence.

Morrissette describes How Like A God as follows, "[The novel] has sixteen chapters, in each of which narrative "you" is strictly adhered to. Separating the chapters are

bridging passages in italics, in the third person. . . ."[10]

Morrissette identifies the third person passages as bridges between second person passages, which he identifies as the "main text." It is interesting that Morrissette divides the text in this manner. That two texts are present seems clear--identified both by differences in pronouns and by style (i.e. one text in italics). However, identifying the main text is problematic. Certainly, the second person passages constitute the majority of the words in the text. However, the text opens in third person, as follows:

> He had closed the door carefully, silently, behind him, and was in the dim hall with his foot on the first step of the familiar stairs. His left hand was in his trousers' pocket, clutching the key to the apartment two flights up; his right hand, in the pocket of his overcoat, was closed around the butt of the revolver. Yes, here I am, he thought, and how absurd! He felt that if he had ever known anything in his life he knew he would not go up the stairs, unlock the door, and pull the trigger of the revolver.[11]

Of course, the prior use of third person does not constitute it as the main (or primary) device either. However, as the opening passage continues, the second person pronoun functions as indirect discourse spoken from the mind of the would-be killer:

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[10] Morrissette, 12.

[11] quoted in Morrissette, 13. This passage appears in italics in the text.

> His mind seemed suddenly clear and intolerably full. . . . A vast intricacy of reasons, arguments, proofs--you are futile, silly, evil, petty, absurd--he could not have spoken in all his years the limitless network of appeals, facts, memories that darted at him and through him as his foot sought the third step.[12]

The "vast intricacy of reasons" are seen as darting at and through the main character. These descriptions reflect the ambiguity of this "you." At various times the "you" may be seen to functions as the character addressing himself, the character addressing his intended victim (darting through him), and the intended victim's voice addressing the character (darting at him). One moment that illustrates this ambiguity appears when the third and first person passages overlap:

> You counted on, a bitter voice said to him; yes, you might count on that, you might count on anything except yourself. . . . is followed by You have always betrayed yourself, most miserably at those moments when you most needed the kind of fortitude . . . ."[13]

Morrissette offers this analysis of the "bitter voice" the character hears: "a rhetoric of self judgment (or judgment by an outside 'voice' which must nevertheless be audible to the narrator or hero). . . (italics mine).[14] HopKins and Perkins suggest that the voice speaking the "you" in How

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[12] quoted in Morrissette, 13. The text appears in italics.

[13] quoted in Morrissette, 13.

[14] Morrissette, 13.

Like a God "seems to be a second-person other self."[15]

Certainly the functions described by Morrissette, HopKins and Perkins may belong to a second person point of view. However, the prior constitution of the character as "he" by a narrator prohibits the "you" from constituting the character's subjectivity. This character is already constituted as a subject by the narrator's voice that speaks "him" into existence and onto those stairs. It is also interesting to observe the storytelling authority housed in the third person passages that, as Morrissette observes, construct the narrative sequence: "It is in the italics sections [third person] that the associative jumps occur which link the chapters in a psychological rather than a chronological design. . . ."[16] The "you" passages then, as indicated in the text itself, emerge from "his" consciousness--whether they speak in his voice or to him in his victim's voice. Although the "you," by virtue of its status as a pronoun, still compels the reader into a process of identification, no multiple subjectivity is constructed. There is a narrator, who speaks in the third person italicized passages, there is a voice that speaks from the character's mind in the non-italicized passages.

As argued earlier concerning the point of view in "The House of Ecstasy," if the "two texts" of How Like A God were

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[15] HopKins and Perkins, p. 19.

[16] Morrissette, 12.

separated, a second person point of view would construct the text made up of the "you" passages. Indeed, the length of Stout's novel and of the individual "you" passages, invites the reader to forget the third person point of view of the text when reading the second person passages. Thus, the experience of a second person point of view exists within this third person point of view text.

Although it contains no juxtaposition of points of view, Strangefruit provides a similar example of the appearance of second person point of view within a third person text. Morrissette quotes the following comments from one of Smith's critics: "'omniscience . . . mingled occasionally with a second person angle'."[17] As noted, Smith's novel allows a second person point of view into its third person structure only occasionally. The movement is often complex, as in the following example:

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[17] Morrissette, 22.

> Eddie watched the meeting. Night after night he came and watched the meeting. As you'd see the boys around town and watch the screened box at Rainey's market, where sometimes there'd be a captured coon, or a rattler coiled in the corner, or some rabbits. You'd stand there and watch the animal, maybe feed it something. Maybe just watch. Not thinking much. Not feeling much.
> And sometimes Ed didn't feel, didn't think, then sometimes he felt what he believed the white folks were feeling. Or most of them. Something you felt against your mind. Against all you knew. Against all you believed. Yet, there it was.
> White girls from College Street seemed to feel it too. You watched them to see. They made you curious. You'd always wanted to know a white girl. You knew their brothers, you'd played with them as kids. . . . But you never knew a white girl.
> In the middle of the congregation, close to the aisle, sat Tracy Deen. They said he had joined the church. That he joined Sunday.
> Ed suddenly felt hungry.[18]

In this passage, the you appears at first to initiate a relationship in which the narrator shares familiar information with a general "you." This "you" knows Rainey's market and that kids watch at the screened box there. As the passage continues, the "you" becomes increasingly ambiguous. It may be spoken to Ed from the narrator, from Ed to himself, from a narrator voice to an internal narratee or a general reader.

Describing the function of the "you" as a way to disclose the character's thoughts fails to account for this use of the "you." In fact, during the course of the novel, traditional indirect discourse appears more frequently than

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[18] Smith, p. 153.

the "you" discourse to accomplish this function. For example, in a passage just prior to the one recounted above, the unspoken thoughts of Dessie while she attempts to persuade Miss Belle to repair a Sunday dress, are in free indirect discourse:

> "I couldn't fix it for less than three dollars," Miss Belle said slowly, staring hard at Dessie. Three dollars! That was two weeks' pay, and she had her insurance and room rent to pay--
> Miss Belle's fingers crawled over the dress--white and soft and pudgy like big old worms crawling in wood. Suddenly she wanted to poke out her lips at hateful Miss Belle and flutter em at her hard, but ef she did she knowed Miss Belle'd slap her windin. She dassn't give her no sass. . .[19]

The indirect discourse in this section, to a large extent, preserves Dessie's dialect. No overt dialect characterizes the "you" discourse about Eddie; it may or may not be "in his voice." Although the "you" passages in Strangefruit, are brief, they slip easily into the larger text. Again, if this kind of "you" discourse constituted the entire text, a second person point of view arguably would exist in Strangefruit.

Although manipulations of the texts discussed above would construct a second person point of view, the necessity for manipulations is significant. A third person text may "switch" from a third person perspective to a first person perspective (or vice versa) and disorient the reader, who

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[19] Smith, p. 153.

recovers by relocating the voice that speaks the text. However, the tension of identification and displacement inherent in second person point of view renders switching problematic. Readers resist and join the "you" in second person texts. The process of identification and displacement accounts for the joining and most of the resistance. However, the "you" is also resisted as a function of its nontraditionality. Therefore, if another understanding of the narrative situation is available--if a second person text switches to a first or third person point of view--the ambiguity of the multiple second person pronoun is clarified, resistance is strengthened, and the experience of second person point of view is lost.

The particular relational structure of second person point of view creates a fragility not characteristic of first or third person point of view. Switching from first or third person point of view into or out of second person point of view individuates the character, narrator, reader, and narratee. Although second person point of view requires the tension of simultaneous movements toward individuation--generating displacement--and identification, any individuated of the subjects shatters multiple subjectivity. As will be discussed, even the location of the "you" in dialogue that involves an "I" reference momentarily disrupts the second person point of view. The examination of second person texts requires an account of the movement toward

individuation.

Individuation occurs in the specificity of the character of the "you." A degree of specification is unavoidable after an initial use of the pronoun. The first, unspecified, second person pronoun generates an initial identification. As Costello notes, "It is difficult, when reading an unspecified second person pronoun, not to take it personally first, however else we might go on to take it. . . ."[20] The specifications that follow the initial appearance of the "you," as Costello hints, add displacement to the identification process. Costello fails to observe that the repetition of the you prohibits the withdrawal of the initial identification. Rather than "going on to take the you" differently, a play develops between the inevitable identification with the "you" and the displacement caused by specification. This play, which is peculiar to second person point of view texts, provides insight into the nature of identification and differentiation.

A consideration of the relationship between individuation and subjectivity will assist an exploration of these insights. Individual characteristics both affirm and participate in the perception of the presence of a subject. Individual characteristics, then, operate as signs of subjectivity.

Experience functions as a primary source of

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[20] Costello, 495.

individuation. The experience of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, education, action and other traditionally defined identity screens may accomplish individuation when reported in a text. However, as literary theorists acknowledge, a difference in any or all of these experiences does not prohibit identification; the act of reading allows individuals to "experience" the experience in a text. Oppenheim asserts that second person, in particular, enacts a phenomenological dimension in which to read <u>really</u> is to experience.[21] Here, Oppenheim alludes to the intersubjectivity of second person texts in which the experiences are simultaneously attributed to all of the individuals housed in the multiple subject "you."

The process of identification and displacement engaged by second person point of view compels two significant responses: self knowledge is challenged and difference is incorporated. The differentiation that allows displacement requires self knowledge. One differentiates oneself from another through an investigation of self knowledge. Thus, second person texts involve the reader in a continuous, intimate, intrapersonal relationship. Second person point of view further enacts an incorporation of difference. The "you," which houses multiple subjects, houses difference. Further, because differentiation never completes, but

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[21] Oppenheim, <u>Intentionality and Intersubjectivity</u>, p. 32.

coincides with identification, the reader incorporates difference in her/himself. The following discussion of three second person texts clarifies these effects of intersubjectivity.

Rumer Godden, "You Need to Go Upstairs"; Natalie Petesch, "Main Street Morning"; and, Frederick Barthelme, "Moon Deluxe" each construct a second person point of view text.[22] These texts have an additional similarity to be considered before discussing the texts individually.

"You Need to Go Upstairs," "Main Street Morning," and "Moon Deluxe" each assign a name to the "you." Ally needs to go upstairs, Marie walks main street, and Edward observes the moon. The significance attached to a personal name as a device that individuates renders the presence of a name in a second person text problematic.[23] Traditional concepts of

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[22] Godden, "You Need to Go Upstairs," Gone: A Thread of Stories, (New York: Viking Press, 1968), Petesch, "Main Street Morning," The Best American Short Stories of 1978, eds. Ted Solotaroff and Shannan Ravenel, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978), Barthelme, "Moon Deluxe," The New Yorker 57 (February 15, 1982), pp. 41-4,

[23] Contemporary feminist and literary theory speaks frequently about "the power to name." See, Tony Tanner, City of Words, (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1971) in which Tanner offers this observation in his discussion of Moby Dick "naming is harpooning." See also, Catharine R. Stimpson, "The Power to Name: Some Reflections on the Avant-Garde," The Prism of Sex, eds. Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 55-78, Dale Spender, Man Made Language, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), and Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982).

the relationship between naming and subjectivity argue that a name individuates and thereby indicates subject status. However, the play of identification and displacement in second person texts undermines the authority of naming and issues a challenge to traditional signs of the subject. Naming possesses the same value as any other aspect of experience in "You Need to Go Upstairs," "Main Street Morning," and "Moon Deluxe." The names of the "you's" in these texts certainly generate displacement, but that displacement joins the simultaneous play of displacement and identification and fails to individuate the subject. Thus, second person's play of displacement and identification produces the effect of devaluing the subjective power of names and compels the incorporation of difference in the multiple subject it constitutes.

The precarious status of names matches the fragile nature of subjectivity in second person texts. Not surprisingly, the stories in second person texts tend to embody concerns with subjectivity and authority. Godden's story illustrates this tendency when it constitutes the "you" in blindness. Ally confronts a loss of sight while confronting the need to go upstairs. The loss of authority and subjectivity that accompanies the loss of sight constructs a precarious relationship with the world. Indeed, the "you" in this text relies on a multiplicitous relationship with the world informed by an interdependent

interplay of senses, as indicated in the passage below:

> Now you are in the house. At first it is always curiously still; and then always out of the stillness you find it. This is the hall and in it are the smells and sounds of all the rooms; furniture cream and hot pipes: carpet and dried roses from the drawing-room, tobacco and a little of pickles from the dining-room: mint and hot cake from the kitchen, and down the bathroom--it has a piece of pine-smelling brick in a wire holder on the wall.[24]

The necessary multiplicity of the relationship to the world in "You Need to Go Upstairs" parallels its multiple subjectivity.

HopKins and Perkins, commenting on Godden's text, note:

> The effect is that at that moment there is no distance between the narrator and Ally; the voice is Ally's alone."
> The only significant sense of "other" between Ally and the narrator occurs in passages of encouragement or caution: "You won't fall, the cinder smell has warned you. . . " These passages could certainly be interior to Ally, but they at least signify a dichotomy of self--that voice we establish within ourselves to encourage. . . . (italics mine).[25]

The conclusion that Ally speaks alone at any point denies the multiple nature of second person point of view. The observation HopKins and Perkins make about the absence of distance between Ally and the narrator might more properly be described as the narrator and Ally speaking together. As

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[24] Godden, p. 143.

[25] HopKins and Perkins, p. 14.

Genette suggests about narratees, "Absence is absolute, but presence has degrees."[26] The presence of multiple voices is always indicated in the "you" of second person point of view; the degree of that presence may be indicated by overt expressions of difference or similarity. "You Need to Go Upstairs" functions as a second person point of view because it employs the "you" to construct a narrator, actant, and narratee/reader. The fabric of the world that surrounds this multiple subject, coincidentally, features multiplicity and questions about authority and subjectivity.

Fragile subjectivity pervades the text of "Main Street Morning." Once again the world constructed by the second person point of view reflects the issues featured by second person point of view. Echoing the earlier discussion of the status of names in second person texts, "Main Street Morning" places the authority of names at issue. The "you," called Marie, enacts the process of finding the mother who abandoned Marie at her birth. Of the mother, the text says, "<u>She</u> (Cecilia Roche nee Cecilia Niall)."[27] Later, an overheard conversation indicates that the mother's name is now Sandy, "'But Sandy, he's not at his own wedding!' <u>Sandy!</u> Somehow you'd never thought of that."[28] In addition to precarious names, the premise of the story may be seen to

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[26] Genette, p. 245.

[27] Petesch, p. 163.

[28] Petesch, p. 167.

emerge from a second person consciousness. The text opens:

> You have come all this way to find out the truth about yourself, not the self you have carefully devised for over thirty-one years, but the self which split involuntarily into chromosomes, giving you his dark, curled hair but not her fern-green eyes--those mutual gifts which existed before you did, and which subsequently She gave away as if their love had not existed and therefore you, Marie, did not exist either.[29]

Clearly the identity of this "you," even though provided with a name, is fragile. In this way, "Main Street Morning" challenges the power of names to grant or reflect subjectivity. An image of multiplicity resides in the reference to "mutual gifts" that allow a child to incorporate the differences of two parents in one subject. Another image of multiplicity appears later in the text when Marie prepares to leave a diner: "But you're afraid to get up, afraid your body will reveal how like a shuttlecock it's been tossed between two women, both of them Sandy."[30] About "Main Street Morning," HopKins and Perkins write,

> Unwary readers may not even notice the second-person form. The "you" is unambiguous, the relationship stable between the narratee that is the you-protagonist and the unacknowledged narratee-reader. . . . the voice is sometimes entirely Marie and sometimes an "other" . . .[31]

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[29] Petesch, p. 163.

[30] Petesch, p. 170.

[31] HopKins and Perkins, pp. 19-20.

In these comments, HopKins and Perkins again allude to a play of degrees in the presence of the multiple subjects. However, in the light of the second person subject and what is put at issue in the story, it would be difficult not to perceive the presence of ambiguity and instability. Further, the initial statement inspires wariness as it establishes the precarious nature of reality and identity. "Main Street Morning" operates as a second person point of view text because the "you" indicates multiple subjects. The signs of second person found in the plot and circumstances of the story support the categorization of the story as second person point of view.

"Moon Deluxe" offers a "you" experiencing frustration and ambiguity. This "you" appears to function as an other to the world--sometimes forgotten, sometimes left out, and sometimes used. During the first paragraph of the text, the "you," later called Edward, is stuck in traffic, observes a woman who "looks strikingly like a young man," and is caught in a lane behind a wreck, which all the other cars have successfully avoided. Following these events, "Half an hour later you pull into the parking lot of the K & B Pharmacy." In the store, "you" exhibits interesting shopping behavior,

> You turn and watch. . . you do want something, suddenly, so you go back to the medical supplies and select Curad bandages, because the package is green. On the way to check out, you pick up a red toolbox. You buy these things.[32]

Earlier, the "you" displayed a fascination for the yet another color, blue, "You're stuck in traffic on the way home from work, counting blue cars. . . ."[33] The frustration and ambiguity continues when the status of the "you" is described as an interchangeable fourth at a dinner party. The eventual discovery that the woman Edward escorts home is involved in an intimate relationship with the woman who looks like a man offers a concluding experience of frustrating ambiguity.[34] In "Moon Deluxe," the blurring of distinctions throughout the story matches the blurring of distinctions among subjects in the second person point of view.

"You Need To Go Upstairs," "Main Street Morning," and "Moon Deluxe" each construct a second person point of view. Indeed, these texts offer clearly identifiable and fairly simple examples of second person point of view. Two recent texts, Lorrie Moore's Self-Help Stories and Jay McInerney's Bright Lights, Big City, present more problematic examples

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[32] Barthelme, 41.

[33] Barthelme, 41.

[34] Barthelme, 44.

of second person point of view.[35]

Seven of the nine texts in Moore's Self-Help Stories function as second person texts. The texts imitate advice columns for help in very particular situations, as expressed in the following titles, "The Kid's Guide to Divorce," "How to Talk to Your Mother (Notes)," and "Amahl and the Night Visitors: A Guide to the Tenor of Love." One text in particular, "How," contains difficult and insightful elements.

"How" is written in the future tense as illustrated by its opening:

> 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. He will be a good dancer. He will have perfectly cut hair. He will laugh at your jokes. A week, a month, a year. Feel discovered, comforted, needed, loved, and start sometimes, somehow, to feel bored. When sad or confused, walk uptown to the movies. Buy popcorn. These things come and go. A week, a month, a year.[36]

The future tense echoes the epigram borrowed from Murphey, "So all things limp together for the only possible." This focus on the possible future constitutes the text as a potential text offering a potential experience. The situation of this experience within a second person point of

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[35] Moore, Self-Help Stories, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), McInerney, Bright Lights, Big City, (New York: Random House, 1984).

[36] Moore, "How," p. 55.

view illuminates the potential nature of the subjectivity housed in the "you." Elements of ambiguity and uncertainty throughout the text enhance the potential subject status.

The opening paragraph specifically details the dancing ability, hair, and sense of humor of the potential "he." Yet the location and occupation are constructed as options. Qualities of the "you" are similarly unspecified as in, "Say you're an aspiring architect. Playwright. Painter."[37] The situation, too, participates with images of possibility:

> Make attempts at a less restrictive arrangement. Watch them sputter and deflate like balloons. He will ask you to move in. Do so hesitantly, with ambivalence. Clarify: rents are high, nothing long-range, love and all that, hon, but it's footloose. Lay out the rules with much elocution. Stress openness, non-exclusivity. Make room in his closet, but don't rearrange the furniture.[38]

Experience at the level of possibility acts as a kind of pre-text. Yet, the text is not experienced conditionally. When the opening scene moves from a class to a bar to a rummage sale, each scene is experienced before it is left behind. The revision of experience performed by "How" parallels the process of identification and displacement in second person point of view.

Bright Lights, Big City offers additional insights into second person point of view. The final two thirds of the

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[37] Moore, p. 56.

[38] Moore, p. 55.

text incorporate scenes in which the "you" enters dialogue speaking in the first person. This use of the first person pronoun, as previously mentioned, startles in the context of second person point of view. To a certain degree, the integrity of second person point of view is threatened by these uses of the first person. As discussed later, the potential threat yields further understanding of the nature of second person point of view. However, prior to the first appearance of the "I," the first third of the text constructs an interesting play of identification and displacement.[39]

Bright Lights, Big City opens with the following negative sentence, "You are not the kind of guy who would be in a place like this at this time of the morning" (italics mine).[40] Response to this sentence involves the frustration that characterizes response to the ambiguity and uncertainty of second person point of view. For example, the female reader joins the subjectivity by identifying with the initial "You." She displaces from the gender specification in the remainder of the sentence and thereby agrees with the sentence. She is not that kind of guy. The next phrase in the text, "But here you are," both affirms identification (with the reference to the "you") and jars the agreement achieved in the first sentence with irony--You

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[39] McInerney, p. 21.

[40] McInerney, p. 1.

are not the kind of guy who would, but you are.

Bright Lights, Big City employs commentary that displays a consciousness of the significance of point of view in the text. At one point, walking to the editor's office, contemplating being fired, "you" comments, "You remember how you felt when you passed this way for your first interview. . . . You thought of all the names that had been made here. You thought of yourself in the third person. . . " (italics mine)[41] Later, the you observes, "'Omniscience must be a terrible burden. . .'"[42] The reflexive nature of such commentary emphasizes the particular point of view choice made in the text. Bright Lights, Big City similarly comments about the nature of texts. Considering the publishing firm for which the "you" works, the "you" comments, "In fact, you don't want to be in Fact. You'd much rather be in Fiction. . . . but there hasn't been an opening in Fiction in years."[43] Faced with this observation, the critical and ironic conception of second person point of view as an "opening in fiction" may be offered. Another comment locates the text in the contemporary textual criticism that questions traditional guarantees of authority. Weighing possibilities for the night's entertainment, the "you" notes, "Moreover, the

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[41] McInerney, p. 34.

[42] McInerney, p. 158.

[43] McInerney, p. 22.

Deconstructionists are playing the Ritz."[44]

The eventual use of the first person pronoun in reference to the "you" suggests that the text is "really" a first person text disguised in second person intrapersonal discourse. The presence of the "I" strengthens the inherent resistance to multiple subjectivity and denied individuation. Different uses of the first person pronoun generate different responses. When the text reads, "You want to say: It's my job--I don't like it either," the first person functions at the level of the unattainable. The "you" is not able to speak the first person admission, but wants to. Such tension reflects the second person of view of the text. The following dialogue raises other questions:

> "I'm okay, really,' you say"
> "Need any help with the French piece? I'm not real busy just now."
> "I think I can manage. Thanks."[45] (p. 24)

This use of the "I" would seem, at least momentarily, to separate the character from the multiple subject "you." However, the tag line "you say" returns the character to the you that also houses the narrator, reader, and narratee. At one level, this momentary separation compromises the integrity of the second person point of view in the text.

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[44] McInerney, p. 32.

[45] McInerney, p. 24.

That is, if the character is capable of speaking himself as subject--"I"--then how (and why) would he be constituted in the multiple subject "you"? And yet, in this text, it is the "I" that lacks credibility. The inability of the main character in Bright Lights, Big City to find his way speaks more strongly of his subject status than the first person references affected to accommodate the presence of scene. Still, the surprise that greets the appearance of the first person pronoun suggests its ability to dismantle the intersubjectivity of second person point of view.

Gibson's "Leaving," which employs no scene, also provides an opportunity to consider second person point of view within a feminist framework. The potential relationship between second person point of view and feminist writing appears in their parallel issues. The particular challenges issued to traditional concepts of subjectivity and authority in second person texts echo the challenges issued in feminist writing. The precarious status of the female subject matches the precarious status of second person subjectivity. As indicated earlier, Gardiner notes that feminist writers may employ second person point as a device that expresses their concerns with authority.[46] A consideration of the questions about subjectivity and authority foregrounded in feminist writing will enrich the examination of the second person point of

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[46] Gardiner, 357.

view in "Leaving."

Gardiner observes that the loss of identity is a specifically human danger and the maintenance of identity is a specifically human danger.[47] To these comments, it might be added that the achievement of identity is a danger specific to women. Contemporary feminist concerns with subjectivity speak to traditional conceptions of woman as absence and lack or negative subject. Xavier Gauthier acknowledges "the problematic 'I'." Gauthier conceives woman as a subject in the making, a subject on trial, not fully constituted.[48] In "Postmod Sex: Phallogocentrisim and its Discontents," Scott Malcomson locates contemporary feminist practice in the postmodern political culture. Malcomson observes that "The desire to disrupt the social/symbolic order, whether from a sexual or 'class process' point of view is remarkably persistent among all the [political postmodern] theorists."[49] Malcomson cites Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's characterization of feminist disruption:

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[47] Gardiner, 350.

[48] Gauthier, "Interview," New French Feminisms, p. 167.

[49] Malcomson, "Postmod Sex: Phallogocentrism and Its Discontents," The Village Voice, December 1987, p. 20.

> The issue is not one of elaborating a new theory of which woman would be the subject or the object, but of jamming the theoretical machinery itself, of suspending its pretension to the production of a truth and of a meaning that are excessively univocal repeating/interpreting the way in which, within discourse, the feminine finds itself defined as lack, deficiency, or as imitation and negative image of the subject, they should signify that with respect to this logic a disruptive excess is possible. . . .[50]

Many disruptive responses appear in feminist writing. Jean Elshtain identifies the attempt to create a new language as one feminist disruption of the traditional symbolic order that denies subject status to women. Commenting on the work of Mary Daly, Elshtain observes, "[Daly] sees herself as creating a new language, the old being so male-dominated that it cannot be used since it breaks and alienates every female 'I' who must speak and write."[51] Constructing another disruption, Julia Kristeva argues for the absence of a fixed authority claiming subject status or language in women's texts.[52] Theorist Craig Owens asserts that feminist disruption constructs a "discourse of others," which acknowledges and incorporates

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[50] Spivak, In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics, (New York: Methuen, 1987), quoted in Malcomson, p. 19.

[51] Elshtain, "Feminist Discourse and Its Discontents: Language, Power, and Meaning," Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology, eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 135.

[52] Jones, p. 363.

difference and constructs a plural reality to replace the authoritative univocity in traditional texts.[53]

The concepts of polyvocity and excess articulate the disruptive function of second person point of view. While challenging traditional constructions of subject, both polyvocity and excess also compel the acceptance of difference. Indeed, Malcomson employs heterogeneity as a synonym for excess and argues, "The peculiar accomplishment of much 'advanced' theory is that heterogeneity is construed as a virtue."[54] Owens' notion of "others in discourse" invokes the incorporation of difference. As discussed earlier, second person text point of view constructs a multiple discourse that incorporates difference, indicated by the term "intersubjectivity." Second person point of view may be said to constitute an excess of subjectivity.

An examination of "Leaving" reveals the interworking of elements that participate in the disruption constructed by its second person point of view. For example, the story appears in an anthology that identifies itself as feminist and is published by a feminist press.[55] The term "leaving"

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[53] Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," The Anti-Aesthetic, ed. Hal Foster, (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 57-82. See also, Judith Hamera, "Postmodern Performance, Postmodern Criticism," Literature in Performance 7 (1987): 16.

[54] Malcomson, p. 21.

[55] Lanser, The Narrative Act, see especially Chapter 3, pp. 108-48. Lanser's discussion of "extrafictional structures," argues that the title of a work, any preface,

signifies disruption in several ways. "Leaving," as opposed to "left," is an action in process, necessarily incomplete, not fully constituted. Also, "leaving" looks backward, indicating the turning away from, the disruption of, something. In particular, Gibson's "Leaving" examines the experience of the process of departure from an adulterous affair.

"Leaving" deconstructs the traditional female social role of "other woman." The story told in the text indicates a feminist agenda, as described in Jones' argument that, "Only through an analysis of the power relationships between men and women, and practices based on that analysis, will we put an end to our oppression."[56] "Leaving" also expresses the female struggle for voice, often a synonym for subjectivity. At first the text states, ". . . you are unwilling to admit that you are the one who leaves." Later, the unwillingness is characterized as inability, "You wish you could say something."[57] In this struggle, the relationship of the second person point of view in the text to the feminism of the text echoes Butor's comment about the function of second person, "Thus, each time we wish to

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dedications, or epigraphs, etc., contribute to the sense of the ideology of the text and can not be separated completely from the experience of the text. Lanser also argues that extrafictional structures may affect the narrator's perceived status.

[56] Jones, p. 369.

[57] Gibson, "Leaving," p. 90, p. 94, respectively.

describe a real progress of consciousness, the very birth of language, or of speech, the second person will be the most effective means to do so."[58] Although the leaving never completes in Gibson's text, a progress of consciousness exists in the continual replay of the process of leaving and, finally, in the birth of a new awareness, "But at precisely that moment you begin to hate him; at precisely that moment you know that it is hatred you will have to struggle with . . . ."[59]

The inextricable relationship of the second person point of view in the text and the feminism of the text determines the significance of the particular voice of the text. By giving an intersubjective multiple voice to the "other woman," the second person point of view of "Leaving" accomplishes the feminist aim of giving a voice to Otherness and constructs a "discourse of others." The text does not give voice to an individual other woman--the discourse of an other--as a first or third person text would. Rather, "Leaving" speaks with the voice of the potential/actual other woman, the symbolic other woman. This difference allows the text to deconstruct the role as it operates within a male-centered symbol system. The otherness embodied in "Leaving" alludes to the other status of all women who are defined in relationship to man. The lover is

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[58] Butor, p. 5.

[59] Gibson, "Leaving," p. 94.

the "other woman" to the wife who is an "other woman" to the lover. More complexity is introduced when the quotient is multiplied. That is, the figure of the mother or the daughter as "other woman" may enter a particular schema. While the otherness of the "other woman" results from being defined in relationship to man, the otherness exists in relationships with other women. Thus, the voice of otherness resides in a multiple voice of the other woman.

The multiple voice in "Leaving" constructs a multiple reality. The text continually, and in a variety of ways, multiplies the available descriptions of moments. This multiplicity appears as amplification, alteration, opposition, complication, and repetition. For example, the story opens:

> In the fantasy of the man returning, the man always returns, and there is pleasure. There is no recrimination or indifference, no struggle. There is laughter. There is trust. There is generosity. In the fantasy of the man returning, you open the door of your apartment and there he is. He doesn't have a bouquet of roses, but sooner than you think, afterwards in bed, you realize you are the rose. Or you are in the kitchen. . . and in the fantasy of the man returning, he comes quietly out of the icebox or the broom closet. . . and without your hearing a footstep or his breathing, he is behind you, around you, his hands on your breasts.[60]

In this section, the initial moment is amplified by the repetition of the opening statement followed by a more

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[60] Gibson, "Leaving," p. 90. Other citations appear in text.

specific description. The initial moment is altered in the section that follows the "Or." A similar example appears in the following:

> In the fantasy of perfect communication, the two of you sit quietly in a room of sunlight and green plants. Each of you is thinking silently. Neither of you touches the other. You turn to him and begin to speak. Without needing explanation, he understands, responds. You also understand his thoughts without his speaking them. This is what it means to be transparent. But the fantasy of perfect communication always ends with a hesitation in the voice, yours, followed by a sound so faint and distant it could be the sound of glass just before it breaks, that strain, that warning (pp. 90-1).

The "But" amplifies the moment seemingly completed with "This is what it means to be transparent." An example of opposition appears in the following:

> You turn the key and the door opens easily because it is in fact unlocked. That means he will have come early and will have made himself a Bloody Mary. He will be sitting on the blue sofa, faintly annoyed. But he is in the kitchen leaning on the sink, eating a cup of yogurt (p. 90).

The version of the moment, which follows "But," functions as a corrective to the initial construction.

The most frequent appearance of multiple reality in "Leaving" is complication. This device operates subtly, usually in a phrase or sentence, for example, when considering the effect of the fantasy of the terrible accident, "In the fantasy of the terrible accident, there is not enough choice. But choice is fearful too" (p. 92). The

simplicity of the awareness of limited choice is complicated by the admission of the inherent fear in unlimited choice. Similarly, we read, "You do not let him see your face because you're relieved that he won't be leaving, afraid he'll stay" (p. 91). Again, the simple emotion of relief is complicated by a coincidental fear. Other examples include, "In the fantasy that you love best what you must leave, you construct conclusions which permit you to stay" (p. 92); "Because it is brief, it is long" (p. 93); and, "You want him to leave quickly. You want him never to leave" (p. 93). The contemplation of the similarity of the lovers includes, "He says, 'We're cut out of the same cloth.' And you agree, wondering if that means he too will feel objective and steady when the time comes, if he too will be lost and shaken, if he too will have confused his strengths with his weaknesses" (p. 92). This moment employs two complications that also oppose one another. According to the narrative voice, the moment of leaving causes one to feel objective and steady and lost and shaken. Also, strengths are perceived as weaknesses.

The final form of multiple reality is repetition. Two sections of the story repeat their beginnings. For example, "You're there on time and when his key turns the lock. . . " begins a three paragraph description of a moment in the relationship. The third paragraph ends, "So you go to the kitchen and, leaning against the sink, you begin to eat his

roastbeef on rye as his key turns in the door and it opens" (italics mine, p. 92). "Leaving" employs repetition in its ending as well. The final section of the story begins, "You feel his side of the bed lighten, the mattress shift" (p. 93). This passage precedes a description of the final moment in the story. The sixth paragraph of the description begins, "You feel his side of the bed lighten, the mattress eased of his weight" (italics mine, p. 94). Repetition pervades the experience of the text in its commentary as well as its structure.

In consideration of the summer of love, the text reports, "That summer the repetition, the schedule of your affair is precious to you. You tap out its basso continuo on your fingertips, delighting in the pattern of recurrence and return" (italics mine, p. 91). Later, a similar contemplation reads, "Because the spots of time you have are recurrent. . . love takes longer to conclude" (italics mine, p. 93).

The presence of a multiple reality indicates the multiple voice of the text. Indeed, the presence of a multiple reality is contingent on the sound of a multiple voice. The first or third person narrator would inevitably suggest a preferred reality. Or, reality would be suspect, but at the level of the first or third person narrator, reality would remain authorized. In either case, multiplicity would be denied. The multiplicity of

experience moment by moment conveys a sense of discourse among others--a discourse of others. The instances of amplification, alteration, opposition, complication, and repetition stymie the text and the reader, creating a tension similar to that created by the pattern of identification and displacement. Thus, the tension inherent in intersubjectivity intensifies and is intensified by the tension generated by a multiple reality.

The multiple reality that emerges from the second person point of view also intensifies the incorporation of difference performed by intersubjectivity and the challenge to authority issued by intersubjectivity. As indicated in the examples considered in the above discussion, multiple responses coexist even when they oppose or contradict each other. The different feelings expressed by "Because it is brief, it is long" and "You want him to leave quickly. You want him never to leave" (p. 93) do not replace each other. Rather, difference is incorporated in multiplicity.

The multiple reality of "Leaving" also intensifies the challenge to concepts of authority issued by intersubjectivity. The words "fantasy" and "opposition" characterize many of the "versions" in the text. Therefore, a quick interpretation might view the text as privileging reality through a corrective juxtaposition of reality with fantasy. However, the continual presence of multiple responses and the difficulty in establishing the meaning of

"fantasy," and when or if fantasy ends and "reality" begins, prohibit such an interpretation. The text privileges no single reality. In "Leaving," reality is fantasy; reality is multiple and not equivalent with the univocal Truth.

As stated above, the particular accomplishments of "Leaving" reside in the second person point of view that constructs the experience in the text. The "you" in this text constitutes the voice of feminism in a contemporary struggle for subjectivity, voice, and a denial of traditional legitimation of experience.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that the use of the second person pronoun in narrative does not by itself constitute a second person point of view text, illustrates the difficulty of switching from second person point of view to other points of view in a text, and explores a variety second person point of view texts.

Farley's "The House of Ecstasy" provides an example of extensive use of the second person pronoun by a first person point of view narrator. The second person pronoun in this text refers to an actant and appeals to the reader, but does not house the narrator and thus is not a second person point of view use.

Texts that contain second person passages, Stout's How Like a God and Smith's Strangefruit, offer examples of

second person point of view inserted into primarily third person point of view texts. Although the individual second person passages, read independently of the text that frames them, function as second person point of view narrative, they can not be separated from the larger text. The texts remain third person point of view and emphasize the tenuous nature of second person point of view. Switching from second person to first or third person point of view dismantles the multiple subjectivity constructed by a continual process of identification and displacement and destroys the experience of second person point of view.

"You Need to Go Upstairs," "Main Street Morning," "Moon Deluxe," Self-Help Stories, Bright Lights, Big City, and "Leaving" all constitute second person point of view texts. These texts employ the second person pronoun to refer to narrator, actant, narratee(s). Further, these texts illustrate the many ways in which a second person point of view constructs a world that reflects concerns with subjectivity and authority. "Leaving," in particular, reveals that second person point of view addresses prominent concerns in feminist theory and practice.

Other texts offer possibilities for additional examinations of the significance of second person point of view. HopKins and Perkins review several texts not mentioned in this study, including, "Yes," by Robert Harvey, Beach Red by Peter Bowman, Aura and Change of Skin by Carlos

Fuentes.[61] Continued exploration of the uses of the pronoun and of second person texts is clearly merited. In addition to these texts, Butor's La Modification remains a significant example of second person point of view. Italo Calvino's second person point of view text, If On A Winter's Night A Traveler, constitutes a more recent second person construction. The discussion of these major works requires a scope beyond the present study. However, the number of texts and the continual appearance of second person texts testifies to the need for further attention to this narrative device.

The final chapter of this discussion reviews the functions of second person point of view and suggests some of the implications it offers for literary theory and criticism.

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[61] HopKins and Perkins, pp. 21-5.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Morrissette concludes his consideration of second person narrative by noting:

> It appears evident, then, that contemporary literature has developed both consciously and unconsciously a narrative mode based on second person forms. . . . containing subtle and far-reaching implications and conveying a unique tonality.[1]

The discussion developed in this study agrees with Morrissette and extends his comment by identifying the "unique tonality" of second person texts as a special intersubjectivity of narrative elements constituted by a particular use of the second person pronoun.

The use of the "you" in narrative does not originate with second person point of view texts. Often the "you" is used to refer to the reader (or audience) of a narrative text or as a substitute for the general "one." However, the identity of the "you" in second person point of view texts distinguishes their use of the pronoun from other uses.

Second person point of view texts use the "you" to refer to the narrator, actant, and narratee(s) of a text simultaneously. The simultaneous constitution of the narrative subjects in the "you" constructs an

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[1] Morrissette, 21.

intersubjectivity of narrative personnel. This conception of the use of the second person pronoun in second person point of view agrees with critics, like Morrissette and HopKins and Perkins, who assert that a second person point of view "you" must refer to an actant in a text, rather than only a reader or a general "one." However, the definition proposed herein posits that in addition to referring to an actant, the "you" in second person texts also indicates the presence of a second person consciousness, a second person narrator. Similarly, the narratee, whether internal or external to the text, also resides in the second person point of view "you." As discussed in this study, by referring to the narratee(s), the "you" implicates the reader. Readers tend to identify with narratee(s) in a text. The use of "you" in second person point of view texts intensifies reader identification by constituting reader subjectivity simultaneously with the subjectivity of the narrator, actant, and narratee. The narrative elements are mutually co-existent and mutually dependent.

This study posits that second person point of view offers an equally distinct choice that produces distinct effects in the textual world, as do the more common first and third person points of view. Intersubjectivity creates a distinct relationship among narrative elements that creates a distinct narrative discourse. The absence of the "I" narrator who is implicit in third person point of view

and explicit in first person point of view has distinct implications for traditional concepts of narrative authority and subjectivity. Traditional concepts of narrative authority vest authority in the speaking subject. The multiple subjectivity of second person texts restricts the impulse to locate a single, authorized, textual voice. Traditional concepts of narrative subjectivity posit the first person pronoun as the sign of a speaking subject. Second person texts generate a polyvocal text in which no authoritative "I" signifies subject status. Rather, the several entities that comprise the multiple "you" simultaneously and mutually constitute their subjectivity.

The definition of second person point of view proposed in this study counters the near consensus of critical discussions that discount second person point of view. Critics dismiss second person point of view by ignoring it and/or by labeling it mere experiment. These critics argue implicitly, by ignoring second person point of view, and explicitly, by labeling second person point of view mere experiment, that second person point of view produces no distinct effects in the textual world. Other critics fail to discern the distinct effects of second person point of view by treating it as if it were something else.

These critics discount second person point of view by identifying the "you" as a way to address only the reader of a text or as a disguised first or third person point of

view.

Certainly not all uses of the second person pronoun in narrative construct second person point of view. As indicated earlier, the use of the "you" to address the reader alone, as in the previously cited example of Jane Eyre's famous revelation, "Reader, I married him," does not construct a second person point of view. Similarly, texts that use the "you" to refer only to an actant are not second person point of view texts.

For example, "The House of Ecstasy" does not constitute a second person point of view text even though the majority of its address is in the second person because the "you" in the texts is spoken by an identified first person narrator who uses the "you" to refer to an actant/narratee. The "you" functions in a similar way in Oates' "You." Although she uses second person for the majority of the discourse, Marion Randall is the first person speaker of "You." The "I" that identifies her appears near the end of the text and reveals that Marion employs the "you" as a way of speaking to her mother, Madeline, an actant in the text. Although both "You" and "The House of Ecstasy" employ the second person pronoun, neither text constructs a second person point of view. The "you" in both texts is limited to a reference to an actant in the text and does not create intersubjectivity.

Other uses of the second person pronoun, which do not

construct a second person point of view, nevertheless suggest some of the complexity of second person point of view. Stout's How Like a God and Smith's Strangefruit are examples of third person point of view narratives that appear to contain second person point of view passages. The "switching" of point of view in these texts illuminates an aspect of the nature of second person point of view. While first and third person point of view texts may be sustained even when they switch from one point of view to the other, the intersubjectivity of second person point of view is dismantled by the presence of another point of view.

Second person point of view relies on a continual process of identification and displacement to construct intersubjectivity. The reader of a second person text places her/himself in and displaces her/himself from the "you" while simultaneously placing and displacing others in and from the "you." The process of drawing inward and pushing outward at the same time generates a tension that signals the appeal of and resistance to intersubjectivity in second person point of view. If a textual experience is able to be accessed through alternate means--as when a second person text reveals a first or third person narrator--the fragile nature of intersubjectivity is disrupted and second person point of view is lost.

This study examines several texts that construct and sustain second person point of view. "You Need to go

Upstairs," "Main Street Morning," "Moon Deluxe," Self-Help Stories, Bright Lights, Big City, and "Leaving" are examples of second person point of view in narrative. These stories employ the second person pronoun to constitute the narrator, actant, and narratee(s) simultaneously. No first or third person narrator takes over the narration from the second person narrator. These stories also demonstrate that the world constructed by a second person consciousness reflects the nature of subjectivity and authority that characterizes second person point of view. Specifically, subjectivity and authority are rendered suspect and multiple in a variety of ways in these second person point of view texts.

Godden's "You Need to Go Upstairs" constitutes its "you" in blindness. The loss of sight confronts the need to go upstairs and the confrontation produces a tension between subject and world. Blindness demands the construction of a multiplicitous relationship among the other senses and the various stimuli that perform as signs for those senses. For the blind subject of "You Need to Go Upstairs," living in the world involves a loss of authority and identity and necessitates the development of and alternate authority, based in a recognition of multiple identity.

A play of changing names indicates the fragile nature of subjectivity in "Main Street Morning." The problematic naming in the text underscores the search for self in the story. The subject in "Main Street Morning" searches for

her mother in order to find her self. The notion of the source of self being located in an other indicates an aspect of the multiplicity of second person subjectivity.

In "Moon Deluxe," the subject functions as an other to the world. Sometimes forgotten, sometimes left out, and sometimes exploited, this subject's authority is continually denied. Other subjects, images, and thoughts in "Moon Deluxe" take on a protean quality. Distinctions are blurred by women who look like men and by the interchangeable nature of the subjects. The "otherness" of the subject in "Moon Deluxe" reflects the absent "I" in second person point of view. The challenge to reality offered by protean elements indicates that authority is suspicious in "Moon Deluxe."

Moore's seven second person texts in Self-Help Stories reflect the potential nature of subjectivity housed in the second person pronoun by locating the stories in the future--possible texts. The future tense combines with a continual revision of the story to indicate the suspicious nature of authority in these second person point of view texts.

Bright Lights, Big City employs the second person pronoun to create a blurred subject. The images of the city at night, with a plethora of lights and drugs that blur the subject's vision enhance the elusive nature of subjectivity in the text.

The feminist short story "Leaving" indicates a possible relationship between feminist writing and second person

point of view that offers insights into second person that are discussed further later in this chapter. Because attainment and maintenance of traditional subjectivity are special problems for women, the issues of subjectivity and authority are often foregrounded in feminist writing. Second person point of view participates in this foregrounding in "Leaving." The "you" in "Leaving" functions as an "other woman" who engages in the process of departure from an adulterous affair. The use of the multiple "you" enhances the deconstruction of the experience of the "other" woman by featuring an other form of subjectivity.

The recognition of parallel concerns with subjectivity and authority in second person point of view and feminist writing indicates the larger association of second person point of view with what Morrissette calls contemporary practice. The movement of second person point of view away from traditional forms of subjectivity and authority and toward multiplicity and heterogeneity locates second person point of view in the postmodern culture.

In his discussion of the "Anti-Aesthetic," Foster identifies part of the postmodern agenda as follows:

> one postmodernist strategy becomes clear: to deconstruct modernism not in order to seal it in its own image but in order to open it, to rewrite it, to open its closed systems to the "heterogeneity of texts," to rewrite its universal techniques in terms of "synthetic contradictions"--in short, to challenge its master narratives with one "discourse of others."[2]

Hutcheon adds concerns about subjectivity to the agenda of contemporary practice, which "has seriously challenged today the very notion of the self as a subject that serves as source and authentication of meaning."[3] The postmodern challenge to the "very notion of the self" echoes in contemporary feminist theory and practice as well. Indeed, issues of subjectivity, which are universally problematic in a postmodern culture, are especially problematic for women. Catharine MacKinnon delineates this problem:

> For women, there is no distinction between objectification and alienation because women have not authored objectifications, we have been them. Women have been the nature, the matter, the acted upon, to be subdued by the acting subject seeking to embody himself in the social world. Reification is not just an illusion to the reified; it is also their reality. The alienated who can only grasp self as other is no different from the object who can only grasp self as thing. To be man's other <u>is</u> to be his thing. Similarly, the problem of how <u>the</u> object can know herself as such is the same as how the alienated can know its own alienation.[4]

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[2] Foster, pp. x-xi.

[3] Hutcheon, 38.

[4] MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory," <u>Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology</u>, eds. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and

Situating second person point of view in a postmodern, possibly feminist, practice reveals a significant grounding for this "peculiar" device. However, as will be discussed, second person point of view extends and clarifies contemporary theory and practice by challenging the "I" directly.

Postmodern challenges to the concept of narrative manifest themselves as challenges to the concepts of narrative subjectivity and authority. Narrative authority is inevitably linked with narrative subjectivity. Traditionally, narrative authority is housed in the voice that speaks the text--the narrator. The authoritative narrator declares or assumes her/his own subjectivity and confers subjectivity on actant, narratee/reader.

Contemporary theory participates conceptually in the postmodern challenge to the narrative subjectivity and authority by revising the notion that the narrator is a single "person" or "persona" from which textual elements generate. Lanser and other contemporary critics clarify the narrator's relationship with textual elements. These writers posit that the narrator is not approachable as an individual entity, but functions inextricably from the entire "textual milieu." The theoretical move from a linear relationship that invests authority in the

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Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, 1982) pp. 27-8.

subjectivity of the narrator to a network of relationships that locates authority in the relationship among textual elements obviously alters the authority of the narrator. Coincidentally, this move involves a shift from an "I--you" relationship to a "I--you/you--I" relationship. Where the narrator once conferred the subjectivity of the actant and narratee(s), a reciprocity is introduced that indicates the narrator's dependence on the existence of the narrated for her/his own subject status. This revision, however, retains the "I" and therefore a dimension of privilege adheres to the narrator.

Contemporary practice employs a variety of means to challenge narrative subjectivity and authority. The demise of the author represents one means of challenge. For example, the inscription of the author in a text makes the author a fictional construct and challenges the authority of the narrator. Direct challenges to the narrator also characterize postmodern practice. The construction of incredible narrators, who don't know the story they tell, can't finish the story they tell, contradict themselves in the telling of the story, compete with others to tell the story, or who are not human, challenges the authority of the narrator by undermining her/his validity.[5] These treatments render authority and subjectivity suspect. Credible narrators who produce authorized subjects are

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[5] see Chapter Two, pp. 57-63.

replaced in postmodern practice by incredible narrators who produce suspicious subjects, including themselves. However, this revision in practice retains a dimension of privilege in the narrator as does the revision in theory.

The particular challenge to narrative authority and subjectivity issued by second person point of view clarifies the dimension of privilege retained by much postmodern theory and practice. Second person point of view texts directly challenge the concept of subjectivity, the "I," that underwrites first and third person point of view narrators. A significant aspect of the challenge issued by second person point of view is the proposition of an alternative.

Second person point of view rejects the "I" that implicitly or explicitly constitutes the subjectivity of first and third person point of view texts. However, along with the rejection, intersubjectivity suggests the possibility of a heterogeneous "discourse of others" in which subjectivity does not reside in the individual "I," but is a product of the relationship of multiple subjects housed in the "you." The presence of the "you" and the absence of the "I" is the particular accomplishment of second person texts. Hirsch articulates this contribution when she states that reading second person texts involves "a radical reorientation of ourselves and of our place in the world: the reading process reveals a new vision of that

world even while recognizing our dependence on old habits."[6] Most postmodern texts examine the "old habit" of subjectivity, located in the "I." Postmodern narrators cite a loss of subjectivity as the source of their failure. These narrators believe that if they were more certain of their subjectivity, if they could say "I," all would be well.[7] Second person texts, however, do not mourn the loss of the "I."

The combined action of second person point of view, rejecting the "I" and constructing an alternative "you," compels a new awareness of the nature and function of "I." Butor comments that in second person texts, "'It is not only the self that changes but it is also the conception we have of the self, the conception of what it means to say I."[8] The construction of a multiple subjectivity that generates a discourse of others and incorporates heterogeneity carries implications for concepts of narrative subjectivity and authority, which ultimately challenge the concept of narrative itself.

The focus in criticism on the absent "I" in second person texts, as opposed to the present "you," illustrates

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[6] Hirsch, "Decentralized Vision," 348.

[7] See for example the opening of Beckett's Malloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable, ""Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving" (p. 291). See also Beckett, Not I in Ends and Odds: Eight New Dramatic Pieces (New York: Grove Press, 1967), pp. 11-23.

[8] Hirsch, "Interview," p. 271.

the dependence on the "I" in conceptions of point of view. To remedy the absent "I," critics often declare second person to be disguised first person. Passias participates in this remedy when she concludes, "The underlying form of the narrative pronoun is the first person."[9]

Edouard Dujardin's estimation of second person point of view reveals the full extent of this dependence, "'la seconde et la troisieme personne, en realite, ne sont la qu'une premiere personne deguisee'."[10] Passias and Dujardin reflect the pervasive belief that the "I" is the only sign of subjectivity and the related belief in the authoritative "I-narrator."

Benveniste's description of second person point of view as the "personne non-je" acknowledges the possibility of a subject not designated by "I," but his reliance on the "I" in his term for "you" indicates the difficulty of moving beyond the belief that "I" constitutes subjectivity. Postmodern challenges to the concept of narrative subjectivity and authority that retain the "I" may undermine the narrator, but ultimately leave the concepts of subjectivity and authority intact. Second person texts undermine the concepts of subjectivity and authority directly by rejecting the "I" and constructing an alternate

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[9] Passias, "Deep and Surface Structure," 201.

[10] "In reality, second and third person are disguised first person," quoted in Morrissette, 7.

subjectivity in the multiple "you." The alternate offered by second person point of view does not replace one authoritative narrator with another. As discussed, the polyvocal "you" represents a discourse of others who retain their heterogeneity and mutually constitute their subjectivity.[11]

Feminist theory identifies the precarious role of the "other" when the "I" is understood to confer subjectivity. Jones articulates the authority of the "I" over the concept of the self as subject. She writes, "One says 'I' as language allows or forces one to say it, according to a fiction of selfhood built into the first person singular and the rules of syntax."[12] The "first person singular fiction of selfhood" denies a subject role to the "other." The denial of subjectivity to the "other" emerges as a particular issue in feminist writing. The traditional relegation of women to the role of "other" invokes feminist

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[11] Dwight Conguergood's discussion of contemporary performance of literature ("Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance," Literature in Performance 5 (1985): 1-13) describes an agenda for performance that seeks to achieve the discourse of others accomplished by second person point of view. Conguergood proposes dialogical performance, which "celebrates the paradox of 'how the deeply different can be deeply known without becoming any less different'" (10). Conguergood's comments indicate the need for further research in the area of performance of second person point of view texts.

[12] Jones, "Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine," Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, eds. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 83.

concern about the non-subjective status of the "other."

Furman articulates a feminist response to the fiction of selfhood: "Seeing oneself as other determines an everlasting frustration and vain attempts at making one's 'I' and one's imago coincide, as well as a desire for oneself (sameness) under the guise of otherness."[13] Given this situation, Jones asserts:

> [Americans] need to examine the words, the syntax, the genres, the archaic and elitest attitudes toward language and representation that have limited women's self-knowledge and expression during the long centuries of patriarchy.[14]

Women are assigned the role of the "other" and hence denied the voice with which to speak the "I" that confers subjectivity. One response to this structure is to allow subjectivity to inhere in "otherness."

Second person point of view constructs an intersubjective discourse of others that constitutes subjectivity in otherness and thus counters the embedded cultural fiction of a first person singular selfhood. The full participation of the "other" in second person subjectivity revises the concept of the subject and exposes the tenuousness of "fiction of first person singular

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[13] Furman, "The Politics Of Language: Beyond the Gender Principle?," Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, eds. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 70.

[14] Jones, "Writing the Body," p. 375.

selfhood" in two ways. First, second person point of view exposes the "fiction of the 'I'" by offering an alternative. The fragile nature of second person point of view also exposes the fiction of the "I." The tenuousness of second person point of view results from the embedded belief in the "fiction of the I" that second person texts counter. Second person texts reveal the "I" to be a rule of syntax, invested by belief with the authority of subjectivity.

Butor's claim that second person point of view presents the "real progress of consciousness" posits that second person point of view as a reflection of lived experience, not a mere syntactical structure. Second person point of view articulates the "real" experience of "self in other." Perhaps the empowering of otherness functions as the impetus for Barthes' comment that second person point of view is "essentielle de reconciliation entre l'homme et l'univers."[15] The particular redefinition of subject in second person texts generates implications for further research toward a redefinition of the nature of narrative.

Central to this discussion is the concept of narrative authority. Second person point of view exposes and counters the investment of authority in first person singular subject status. Authority is multiple in second person texts because multiple voices simultaneously construct the experience in the text. Implicit in this conception of

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[15] Quoted in Morrissette, 16.

authority is the postmodern denial of absolute truth and the deconstructive rejection of the traditional binary system of organizing experience.

The challenges to narrative authority and subjectivity in second person point of view texts imply a challenge to the concept of narrative progression as well. Intersubjectivity revises the "I-you" linear progression of communication (and subjectivity). The relational, non-linear, structure created by second person point of view echoes in postmodern discussions of non-linear progressions of story in what are termed "non-narratives." Judith Hamera discusses this phenomenon in her analysis of contemporary performance art.[16] Artist and critic Gary Indiana also notes the emergence of non-linear progression in performance art. Indiana specifically relates this development to the problematic concept of subjectivity when he cites, "the decentered 'I' and mobile 'You' of Barbara Kruger's photomontages, the psychic wiretaps of subvocal speech in Jenny Holzer's posters and electronic signs, the shredded first-person narratives of Kathy Acker."[17] Joanna Russ' concept of associative progression participates in the movement away from linearity as well. Russ posits that

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[16] Hamera, 16-17.

[17] Indiana, "Read My Lips (Without You I'm Nothing," The Village Voice (April 19, 1988), p. 99. In his review of Sandra Bernhard's current one woman performance, Indiana notes that "one narrative. . . unfolds in the second person."

associative progression indicates something the discrete story elements "add up to" rather than "lead up to."[18]

As indicated by the movement of second person point of view from the linear "I-you" progression, the concept of narrative dialogue is implicated in the movement toward nonlinearity. Bal defines narrative dialogue as follows:

> narrative dialogue requires at least two speakers who are diegetical actos. . . . The speakers must recognize each other as partners in conversation, and that they do so must be indicated in the text. . . . [recognition] is specified by the first speaker when he demands a reaction or by the second[19] when he reacts to the previous diad (sic).

Bal's definition of narrative dialogue echoes Benveniste's articulation of the traditional I to You progression:

> Consciousness of self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use I when I am speaking to someone who will be you in my address. . . . reciprocally I becomes you in the address of the one who in his turn designates himself as I.[20]

Clearly, the polyvocal second person text constructs a narrative dialogue that differs from the definition proposed by these theorists. Second person point of view thus

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[18] quoted in Bruce Kawin, "Feminism and the Dis-covery of Self," The Mind of the Novel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 311.

[19] Bal, "Notes on Narrative Embedding," Poetics Today 2 (1981): 51.

[20] quoted in Furman, p. 71.

reveals the need for narrative theory that accounts for the reverberations from revisions of the concept of the subject.

In addition to the construction of theoretical understandings of the effects of second person point of view on narrative, further research in second person texts is needed. Future discussion of point of view would profit from a cataloging of second person texts that addresses additional French texts as well as Spanish and other language texts along with an updating of American second person texts. Individual studies of longer second person texts, such as those mentioned at the end of Chapter Three of this study, will similarly inform the understanding of the function of second person point of view in narrative. Additional research might examine the possible differences in nature and function of second person point of view in novels and short stories. Finally, usages of second person point of view in ordinary language narratives need to be more fully examined and their relationship to fictional texts explored.

Regardless of the direction of future research in narrative theory, explorations must account for second person point of view. Morrissette's 1965 study laments that "in general, Anglo Saxon comment on such technical novelties [as second person point of view] tends to be superficial and summary."[21] The present discussion addresses Morrissette's

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[21] Morrissette, 21.

complaint and demonstrates that second person point of view is not mere experimentation or anomaly. The postmodern impulse of second person point of view and its implications for feminist practice indicate its legitimation. Future studies might construct a thorough, systematic articulation of the theoretical climate from which second person point of view texts emerge.

Perhaps the greatest significance of second person point of view for further research resides in its indication of the future of contemporary narrative practice. Much contemporary practice exposes the ills of traditional narrative concepts, but proposes no remedy--constructs no new vision of selfhood. Second person point of view moves beyond the exposure of the ills and constructs an alternative to the traditional concept of subjectivity. By so doing, second person texts participate fully in Foster's vision of contemporary practice as rewriting traditional concepts through the creation of alternatives. The presence of fully articulated alternatives signifies the potential of contemporary theory and practice. Without texts that are able to challenge failed concepts by envisioning a different construct, significant development of understanding is impossible. Second person point of view contributes to the understanding of what it means to be human as it compels a reconsideration of the "fiction of selfhood" that grounds the structure of society and human experience.

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Vita

Darlene Marie Hantzis is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, where she completed her public school education. Darlene received her Bachelor or Science in Speech Communication and English from Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana in 1981 and earned her Master of Arts degree (with thesis) in Speech Communication from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, in 1983. Her teaching career includes one year as an Instructor for Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis and one year as an Instructor for Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at St. Lawrence University.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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Major Field: Speech

Title of Dissertation: "You are about to begin reading": The Nature and Function of Second Person Point of View in Narrative

Approved:

Mary Frances Hopkins
Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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Date of Examination:

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