What can *you* do for the reader?

The literary effects of the
second person narrative voice

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Summary: About this research project

This PhD thesis seeks to isolate and exploit the unique literary effects that can be achieved with the sustained second person narrative voice in fiction. Second person, particularly in its sustained form, is a fascinating but rarely used mode among novelists, and has been given comparatively little attention by the academy. The project involved a thorough review of current research, a reading of every sustained second person novel that could be identified, and a testing of what was learned by experimentation, ie, by the writing of original second person fiction. The thesis brings together this creative component, comprising a complete short story/novella called "The Flight", and extracts from a proposed novel entitled *Your Story*, plus an exegesis concentrating on two Australian works of sustained second person fiction: Peter Kocan's *The Treatment* and *The Cure* duology and Eddie Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*. Together, the creative and exegetical sections seek to answer the same research questions:

- What is a second person narrative and what are the literary effects that can be generated in this mode that are unique to the form?
- What are the restrictions and how have authors attempted to overcome them?
- How can style and subject matter be best matched with the second person narrative mode in a work of fiction?

The theoretical and creative strands are brought together throughout the work, and the thesis ends with a ten point list itemising the conditions under which a second person narrative can display the fullest range of its unique effects.

Candidate statement: Anthony Llewellyn Davis

This work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. It was researched solely by the candidate, using written, audio and visual sources. No Ethics Committee approval was required.

Signed

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 # Chapter one:

Creative component: "The Flight"

The plane is moving backwards. Slowly. You have to stare at the ground to confirm it. Yes, the luggage vans and fuel trucks are edging right-to-left across your porthole.

Surely that's it. They can't re-open the doors now. Not after all those false starts. Not after all those apologies from the captain. Not after all those delays. God, so many gin and tonics in the lounge, your head tingling, your spare hand resting on your knees to stop them shaking. Sculling that first glass of champagne while sitting in window seat 12A, waiting to move.

Recklessly, stupidly, asking for another. Despite the knowledge that you should stay alert. Despite the certainty you should make as little contact with others as possible. Draw as little attention.

You look to your right. Outside. Away from the cabin staff, away from the man in the seat beside you, the latecomer who is no more than a dark shape in the corner of your eye. And must remain that.

The summer-hot tarmac stretches everywhere, blurring into the distant grey traffic, and the fog of trees and buildings hovering above the equally colourless horizon.

Small white vehicles – their contrast heightened – follow lines in the dusk. Your fists are pulled so tight your arms are shaking. You wonder how you held the champagne flute without crushing it.

The hostess or purser, or whoever is now talking over the cabin loudspeakers, has a thick Singaporean accent. You have to concentrate, adjust. You take in just enough to know that it's all routine. She is not announcing your worst fears: that the take-off is being aborted, that security is on its way, that a certain passenger needs to be removed and spirited back where he belongs.

Now the safety video. Stow any luggage under the seat in front of you. Click on your seat-belt. *Turn off your portable electronic devices.* Do as you are told. Do it now.

Gently rolling backwards, still. Stuttering every so often. Never exceeding walking pace. The loudest sound is the ventilation. You are strapped into place, to be observed at will. Already the plane is a tubular prison. A panopticon. A coffin with portholes. And this is Sydney. There are so many hours to go, so many possibilities for grief.

Someone you have crossed paths with may twig. The security man at the scanning machines, who insisted on talking to you, who drew out from you a stream of nervous, galloping babble. Maybe even a joke about what might be in your bag, dangerous words that you heard for the first time as they left your lips, words borne of nervous stupidity. Or were those words all in your head?

The man's demeanour seemed to change. Your senses were heightened but haywire. Like you'd just stepped directly into the path of a car. And believed the car wasn't the greatest or most immediate danger.

"Careful, sir," was the man's final, ambiguous response.

Nobody else said a word more than they needed to. Not at the airline counter, not at the customs desk, not at the entry to the Business Class lounge. It was so easy to believe they were toying with you. Contriving to delay the climax. To increase

the impact. Waiting for the press to arrive, perhaps. That way their success, and your humiliation, would be raised to the maximum.

Authorities – The Apparatus – could still be doing exactly that. Playing a longer game. Hell, the plane has stopped! Stopped dead. What did you expect? Zurich via Singapore, taxiing backwards the whole way?

Look down at the two yellow lines next to you. The heart races. Double yellow lines. *Do not cross*. The message of the hour, of the day, of this very, very turbulent month. *Do not cross the lines*.

You are still stationary. Still. Still, still.

There are planes in the distance, people luckier than you, already in the air, already beyond this nervous moment. A patch of blue sky appears in the cloudy twilight. A renewed roar of ventilation. A white noise. The perfect soundtrack for unobtrusive, procedural intervention.

Why are we stopped? Why are we parked in the middle of nowhere? Has the captain been ordered to hit the brakes … are people unseen, a black car full of them perhaps, rushing across the fields of bitumen? The sweat flows freely; dripping from your armpits, lining the insides of your shoes and making your toes slide around. You reuse the hot towel, enjoying its new coolness on your face. A woman comes to take it and your glass.

She is staring at you, without doubt. Lingering longer than need be. Noting your age, your build, your ethnicity, guessing your height and weight, matching it all against the bulletins that must be circulating already.

More instructions. The locations of emergency exits. The ludicrous illustration of passengers – passengers who have *removed their shoes and left all baggage and*

personal possessions behind – sliding down inflatable chutes into the water. You fight to distract yourself. To imagine the damp relief of the sea.

Better still, the relief of Siobhan. You and Siobhan, in a small apartment in the anonymity of Zurich. Her warm soft body. Her dark hair that smells of pine forests and raisin bread. Her fighting spirit.

Victory always seems so much more likely with Siobhan on the team.

There is movement. Real movement. The leaving is gentle. And the direction forward. Siobhan recedes. And with her, the fantastical, distant sensation of lying in that warm double bed as the flakes of snow flutter across the bay windows.

Forward! Thank god. Though only at walking pace. And there's no proof where it is headed. No order to the white and yellow lines that snake all over the tarmac, or to the captain's decision to steer this cigar tube left, and then right, and then left.

More instructions. Pull on the red tag for the life raft. Observe the position of the flashlight and whistle. Yeah, sure, survivors of jet crashes are pulled out of rubber dinghies every day. Saved by their penlight torches and junior soccer club referee whistles.

The man next to you is too close, much too close. Worryingly so. The advice was that in Business you'd be largely out of sight, in your own pod or capsule. Not in this plane, despite the ludicrous extra cost. That's money you and yours could have done with in Europe.

Your dyed scalp itches. Gave up on the sunglasses halfway up the boarding ramp. Too much of a headache. Literally. And way too obvious.

Bury your head in the newspaper. Like the dark shape in the adjacent seat seems to be doing. Like any normal passenger. It's *The Straits Times*. Today's. A story

about how the government is printing vouchers that employers can give as a present to their workers, vouchers that can be used at dating agencies for those overly hard working people in their twenties who are not doing enough to propagate Singapore's next generation.

There's no mention of you. Still, this paper would have been printed last night. Too early. The words are just dancing in front of you. Can't concentrate. The gin, the champagne, the nerves. *The Straits Times* is an uncomfortable reminder of the machine behind the shopping malls. They still birch people there. They still hang them. And in eight or nine hours that corrupt, officious, collaborating machine will be processing you and your passport. Your passport! That brand new small blue book that looked just a little too shiny as you passed it across to the young woman in the glass box in Sydney.

The plane has turned left with what seems like finality. It is next to a runway at last. Just have to hope to hell the pilot is going to straighten it up and gun the damn engine. *Come on you bastard. Hit the gas.* Sometime before tomorrow. For crissakes.

It is twenty to eight. Thirty minutes after you should have left, every one of those minutes a cause of sweat and stomach cramping pain. Why isn't the pilot blasting down the runway? What is wrong? Doesn't Singapore Airways want to get this damn thing off the ground?

The shape in the corner of your left eye is talking. *Pretend you can't hear. Pretend you are otherwise engaged.* You can't risk conversation. Or eye contact. Or anything else.

You stare at a small Aerolineas Argentinas jet to the right. Argentina: the traditional home of fugitives. Though fugitives of the wrong type. There is a brace of small Qantas planes to the right too. Would that have been a better choice? Hiding in plain site.

The dark shape beside you is still talking. Or repeating whatever he said about the delay. The grey city in the distance is still visible above the line of dark trees. The plane is moving again but only just. Three more minutes have passed. It is seventeen to eight.

Once you are in the air, there'll be nearly twenty-four hours to go. And some big decisions to make. Yes, twenty-four hours to think.

Your mind returns to the press. Sanctimonious! That was one of the adjectives that kept appearing. *Holier-than-thou. Egomaniacal. Self-centred.* The project wasn't about the greater good, they began saying in unison, as if given some secret cue. It was *all about you*.

As soon as each word or phrase had been used by one outlet, it was automatically added to the list of standard adjectives and take-downs adopted by the others. By journalists that, in most cases, had never met you. Never really understood what you were trying to accomplish. Or were jealous of what you had already done. Pissed off by your very use of the word journalist.

The Argentinean plane is moving down the runway. *It was never about ego.* Another plane is coming up from behind. *It was always genuinely about the truth.* Does that plane get to jump the queue too?

Nine minutes to eight. *Nine minutes to fucking eight.* Your plane is at least lined up with the runway, staring down a strip of dark, shiny tarmac that disappears into the distance. You look back at the passenger terminal. The grass is grey, the sky too. The only contrast is provided by a few bright wingtips on aeroplanes, all the more vibrant in the gloom.

Knees shaking again. Arms too. Cold coursing through your body. Think distant thoughts. Think them now.

With Siobhan. That first time. In a borrowed room in Carlton a full year ago. Before the arrest. Before the charges. Soon after she had sailed towards you on a tide of support and admiration. Before she had shown just how smart and tough and tactical she could be. Now you see all of her. The skin is white china. Her small breasts rise and fall with her panting invitations. You kiss her neck. Surround yourself with her Irish mane. Whisper in her left ear.

The recollection is going south already. It is not lust you are whispering in this version. It is doubt. Doubt in your mission. Doubt in yourself.

You tell her everything that you have kept from everyone. It pours from your entire being. Like a dam, busted. You can hear the theme music, see her expression changing. She is no longer undressed. She is no longer lying down. You try to pull yourself back from this brink. To recall the words, to block this unauthorised leak.

Everything in the story is splintered, compressed, jagged. There is a violent bashing at the front door. The whole apartment is shaking with its force. They have come to get you.

What's that? A greater noise than fists on hardwood. An engine. Things are moving. At last! Jets are screaming. You are being thrown back in your seat. The tension flees your arms and stomach. You roll your head back and stare at the vents and lights above. The first smile emerges. The first smile since who can remember when. Then you panic. Again. Drop your gaze and stare out to make sure it is really happening. Yes, the noise level is continuing to rise. The grey buildings and coloured wingtips are racing past. Going too fast now to stop.

The plane is bouncing around. *Lift wheels, lift!* It feels like the nose is still on the ground, even after all this accelerating. As long as the wheels are on the ground, there are no chickens to count. The plane pitches and bounces over a few long-

phase bumps and then at last, at *long fucking last*, the ground falls away. Dark water appears below. You are in the air.

The engine noise suddenly changes pitch. "Don't stop the thing here," you mumble to yourself. You hope it is to yourself. The words just appear from nowhere, half ironically, their utterer still fearing some cruel trick.

The engines again change their growl as the pilot plays with the throttle. It settles into a loud continuous whoosh. You look down on the city, the city that has betrayed you. The parks, the buildings. The cars too, now with headlights on. The waterways. The ashen beaches and water and clumps of trees. Everything is the colour of deceit and treachery.

Your anger rises almost in step with the plane. It is eight o'clock and you are up among the grey billowing clouds. And then you are above them. You concentrate on the cotton wool that stretches as far as you can see. Different layers all being left behind at different speeds. You slow your breathing, tighten and loosen your fists, try to send waves of calm out to your nerve endings.

Above the clouds, a thin red line. Above that, a clear blue sky that extends upwards forever. The left portholes are lit by sunset like red hot iron. You are floating between fire and cool blue. You and this overwhelming hum.

Close your eyes and lean back. You are now a citizen of the air. Above any state, any law, any timezone. Your enemies are thousands of metres below. As far as you can tell. So why can't you calm down?

Open your eyes. The seatbelt lights are off. You need a drink. You deserve a drink. You have escaped from Australia; the first hurdle has been overcome. Hit the buzzer. Ask for a beer. The hostess confounds you with choice. "Whatever you recommend," you say, shielding your eyes as if the lights behind her are too bright.

A short while later the woman brings you a Tiger. Again you cover your eyes. Obvious. Too obvious.

"Excellent choice," says the dark shape in the seat next to you. You tense up again. You take the beer can and glass. You can't but help see his wide, dark face. It's like he's grinning at you through a fish bowl. "Tiger beer. Ah, Tiger beer!" he adds.

You risk a quick smile in return, willing it sufficient to end any further interaction. The man asks the hostess for water. Plain water, no ice, no lemon. You refrain from saying "Shit choice." He is from Singapore too, you suppose. Would either of them recognise you? An anonymous dark-haired Euro?

Hard, dull land extends below. Trees and fenced paddocks. The green fields only hinted at. The red haze on the horizon is thicker, the blue above is darkening with every minute. Your Tiger is finished.

"Another," you say, when the hostess brings a small tray of nuts. You hope a second serving will soften the uncomfortable edginess that refuses to leave your system. You have managed to place your order with little more than a wave of the can. It saved asking questions.

"Tiger Beer. Ah, Tiger Beer!" you repeat to yourself, trying to capture the nondescript inanity with which your neighbour voiced the phrase. You convince yourself the alcohol content is low, so your *excellent choice* won't cost your alertness. You are kidding yourself. You're good at it. And know it.

Your neighbour is now wearing headphones and typing away. You are glad.

More nuts arrive. A blue bag with socks and eyeshades. A menu. The small print on the beer can reveals the truth: 5.0 per cent alcohol. That second Tiger sneaks

into the gap left by your extinguished anger. It fills your head, backed by a chorus of earlier drinks. It is telling you – a slightly unsteady you – that they can *all get fucked*. That you are too smart, too strong for them, that an army of netizens from every pocket of the world can't be beaten. Documents can never be safe. Truth will out.

If this army's field marshal has overstepped the mark – just a little, just occasionally – then so be it. The world needs people with a burning passion. You *are* still The Visionary. More passionate about everything than they are about everything. Just like those early, entirely positive, media stories said.

In the short term, there's the necessity to rid yourself of all that gin, champagne and beer. The fishbowl man is intensely pounding his keyboard but you shade your face with a strategically placed hand as you step over his legs. It is still only 8.45 according to your watch. You have drunk too much too quickly, and have eaten too many salty, sugary nuts. You feel bloated.

There will be walks around Lake Zurich to regain your fitness, you remind yourself as you retake your seat. And Siobhan. After all those months of house arrest, locked down in that lonely, fuck-free set of rooms, there will be Siobhan. Close your eyes, try to imagine her nakedness, her heat. Properly this time.

Again. It happens again. Fear and distorted recall overwhelm.

Outside, a dark, dark blue. The clouds are a long way below. They still have traces of a red glow. And still this hum, this endless hum.

The hostess has returned. She leans slightly over your neighbour to ask which main course you would prefer. You grab the menu from the seat pocket and partially shield your face as you read it for the first time. "The beef," because it is top of the list.

The flush of Tiger-fuelled bravado has decamped as quickly as it arrived. What if they're right? You *are* a show pony … a capeless crusader who has allowed those early successes to go straight to his head. No, Siobhan would have told you. The others too. The ones who haven't earned their fifty pieces of limelight for renouncing you, your plans for the operation and, most of all, your supposed planet-sized ego.

It's time to go nuclear. To access and publish the mother lode. Some things are never digitised, for obvious reasons. But they can be photographed, burned to disc, reprinted. They can be placed in a Zurich safe deposit box that only one person can sign for.

It's time to bring out the prime documents.

To put presidents in jail.

Provoke new revolutions.

To prove beyond all doubt … well, just wait until they know!

The plane is shaking now. The seatbelt light is on. The hostesses have disappeared. The captain announces there is *a little bit of turbulence*. He'd like everyone to return to their seats. It will last ten or fifteen minutes. Then cabin service will resume. Apologies.

You imagine the documents, the videos, those sound recordings sitting benignly in the safe deposit. You try to feel their unreleased power, waiting for detonation as the airframe shudders, drops and bungies back up.

Genus homo-fishbowl-faceous is exhaling loudly and gripping the centre armrest so tightly that the skin along his knuckles has lost all colour. You could almost laugh at that white hand clutching the tan leather. Imagine mere turbulence being

your biggest concern. A throwback to the days when the dangers of flying related to the aircraft and not the people.

This man's worst nightmare doesn't scare you at all. Not in your current state. Seems almost a relief. You feel it all. Right now. The plane falls away like The Big Dipper after cresting its highest peak. The screaming is all around, but there's no catching of the roller coaster wagons and stomachs as the track bottoms out. It's down, down, down this time, the passengers brought to the point of blacking out as the speed snowballs, pressing on the sound barrier. The release is almost pornographic. It's not just in your head but in your viscera. Down, down, down. The leading surfaces of the wings are burning red, the controls are useless, the only possible destination is the side of that mountain, there.

Impact! Brains flung against skulls, and then against oblivion itself, as four hundred tonnes of metal and biology slams into the rocky slope.

You feel nothing but thankfulness at this coming together, as the work of the world's cleverest aeronautical engineers shatters into a billion shards in your mind's eye, as if made entirely of glass. You are both a witness and a participant: collision, immolation, extinction. You can smile, even bring forward the sound of the Singaporean purser making one last heavily accented announcement: "We are now travelling at 1285 km/h into the side of a mountain, where the current temperature is 8 degrees Celsius and the local time is 9.00 pm. Thank you for choosing to die with Singapore Airlines."

The plane is still shaking. He of the panicked grip is looking at you. Your peripheral vision confirms it. Keep the headphones on, buster. Don't let your fear of air pockets become an excuse for conversation. *Keep it to yourself*, *keep it to yourself*.

Phrases tumble through your head as the turbulence peters out. You surreptitiously rub, bend and rough up your passport. *Booting the messenger,*

shooting the messenger. Doing everything to *root the messenger.* Your mood has switched away from self-reflection and all that embracing of violent termination. It's back to anger.

You can almost imagine *them* holding each end of the plane, trying to shake you out. Not happy until they've thrashed the life out of your reputation, your future, your freedom. If they lose a planeload of others in the process, so be it. Merely collateral damage.

Yes, it's time to go nuclear, even if it means firing your last shots. Even if it means constantly re-dyeing your hair and sleeping in safe houses forever. Or do you go for Plan B? So much easier. So much more appealing right now.

The meal arrives. At first you play with the food as much as eat it. The hostess has the right idea. She keeps refilling your tiny wine glass with the Bordeaux. The *Bordeaux from France* as she puts it. So much better than Bordeaux from Uganda. You keep the thought to yourself, lower your head each time she appears, mumble a *thanks*.

Begin eating. You need your strength. Need to soak up the intoxicating liquid. You slide the slab of meat precisely to the centre of the plate and begin to cut it with near OCD precision. Meticulously observe the grain, the gradations of colour from the dark crust to the slightly-too-perfect pink centre.

From above, you can be seen making neat patterns. Covering each forkful with the exact same combination of vegetables. None of the flavours or textures make any impression. It is all about the process, about distraction, about killing time. What was the meat supposed to be … beef?

You watch the reflection of the meal, and of your arms and chest, in the unlit screen. The idea of watching a movie has appeal, yet putting on headphones and

losing yourself in someone else's story would make you feel so much more vulnerable.

You finish your mains and carve a chocolate gateau with the same fastidiousness as you carved the meat. There is no real change in taste from one course to the next. Only the wine is different. Now cold, white, sweet.

You let her take away the tray, then close your eyes. You need sleep, it can't be avoided. Reopen your eyes and toy with the idea of wearing eyeshades. No.

The lights go off. No-one can easily make out your facial features. You can risk some shut-eye. The seat turns into a bed, but not quite. You flatten it as much as you can. You concentrate on the weight of your body, which seems extreme. Every care in the world is pushing down your arms, your legs, your torso.

The sandman fails to arrive. You think of Siobhan. She can't be summoned. She is only an abstract, an idea. And so far away. She can't help you sleep. Or kill time. Or soften the rage. The best you can achieve is a slight phantosmia, an olfactory hallucination. It's a faint, fleeting trace of her perfumed hair. Even here, in this thin, treated air that makes everything smell like reheated food and yesterday's newspapers.

The plane is rocking from side to side, like a boat. You imagine yourself in a hammock chair, hanging from a shady tree, the dappled sun on your face. It turns almost immediately into a pillory seat. Missiles are being launched from all around. You try to place yourself back on your feet. Beside a lonely river, skimming smooth stones on its surface. That fantasy dissolves in moments.

You are back under interrogation. It's a European voice – Swiss perhaps – asking the questions. But the men on each side keep handing your cross-examiner pieces of paper. You just know they are Americans. The charges themselves are only lightly touched on. They are not the issue. An expedient, that's all.

It's much later. You are still awake. You concentrate on the hum: an amalgam, you decide, of the roar of wind and air-conditioning and the simultaneous sucking and spitting of the jet engines. You focus intently. Detect two registers. It is almost music: a low bass, a higher register swirling above it, piccolo-like. Try to follow this upper register, as it rises and falls. Invite the noise to consume you completely. It chooses to resist.

How can you fail to collapse into a deep sleep when you are so thoroughly exhausted? After all that wine? You angle your seat back up. Check your watch. It has scarcely moved. Not a moment of true rest.

Plan B: Return, fight those feeble charges. Hold on to the prime docs for insurance and negotiating clout. Leave it to those sympathetic, pro bono silks to find the greyness in those laws, to legitimise the business. Stop running, finally. It has so much appeal. You are just so tired.

It is still six hours to Singapore. Have to try to sleep again. Lower the seat and lower your eyelids. Listen to the distant sound of cutlery and crockery being stacked away. The clinking is enough to cut through the roar. Again you try to bring Siobhan back to the fore, unsuccessfully. You remain in that half asleep, half awake space, while the great endless unknown roars outside.

The man beside you has gone. The hostess has lowered herself into his seat. Her black hair is no longer short or straight. She looks different. She removes a hairband and shakes her head. The black locks uncoil, the scent is everywhere. This time so much stronger. She is wearing a loose cotton shirt and jeans. She smiles, loosens her top button, as if to say her work is done. She's here with you now.

You must be sleeping. However briefly. However badly. It has to be so, because it is only in a dream that Siobhan could be here. Or that you could feel so light, so

free. It is only in a dream that you could experience those black coils now rubbing against your left cheek.

Still, go with it. The seat is empty again but you don't panic. The plane has gone straight to Zurich and landed hours ahead of schedule. She's there on the tarmac with her small hatchback. Right next to the steps. The apartment is no further than the end of the runway. It's bigger than expected. With a lake view from the large double bed.

The room is familiar. Like one from a safe house in Albert Park all those months ago. But the light is softer, kinder. And snowflakes are drifting past the bay windows, just as they should be.

"There was no reason to be so scared," says the toughest woman you know. "We planned it all so carefully. I was always here, waiting." You walk around the room and run your hands over every object, feel every surface. Safe at last. You hold a vase with both palms, savouring its stability, its realness, its groundedness. And then the door is kicked in and the room is filled with men in helmets and camouflage. A gun barrel is under your chin, pushing hard up against your tongue. There is a click.

Awake! Startled! Your clothes clinging to your body. A clamminess around your groin. Your puffy, moist feet are pushing at the seams of your shoes. It takes a moment to regain your bearings. To realise no-one is about to unload a magazine into your brain. You are under a blanket, on an aircraft. Safe. Ish.

Feel your chin. Push its soft underside with your index finger. Is that a bruise? The cold, rounded barrel was so real. So too the sensation that hit you just as the dream was dissolving: Siobhan had done it. She had called in the uniforms. Had betrayed from within. Yet another Judas.

Your pulse finally stops raging. Your lower back is numb. The seat-as-a-not-quite-bed seems to place all the weight on your arse. Your legs have pins and needles too. They are swollen. You realise your hands are shaking. You place them under your thighs. You put the seat halfway back up and stare at the No Smoking and Seatbelt On lights above. At the vents and cupboards.

No, not Siobhan. She wouldn't. A nightmare, that's all. Not Siobhan. No, not Siobhan.

You notice for the first time that the airline has hung up some mistletoe, or the like, above every fourth or fifth porthole. Up there in the soft tan light. They look more like wreathes than signs of good cheer. Happy fucking festive season.

The fishbowl face man is working away on his laptop, earphones on. His movie screen is alight, even though he's not watching it. It silently spools through a promo for something called *Magic Mike*, which looks to be about male strippers.

The alcohol has worn off. It is a quarter to one by your watch. And dark. Your mouth is a desert. You quickly turn on the reading light and look around. They have left a bottle of water for you. You flick off the light and guzzle. Lean forward. Can't quite get comfortable. Over your shoulder you can see a light flashing somewhere out on the wing.

God you wish something would resolve itself. You wish you could claw ahead the hours and arrive. You wish you could definitively resolve to go nuclear; you wish your ever-extending list of concerns didn't now include Siobhan.

Another hot towel arrives. Time is passing slowly, yet erratically. It's a few minutes after three in the morning – you haven't changed your watch. Don't need to. There's no real time until Zurich. Where she'll be waiting. She promised she would.

She promised. She did.

The lights are on. You are being warned about severe drug penalties. Why just drugs? They have a war on free speech in Singapore too, and that doesn't rate a mention. Those Singaporean colluders would love an arrest. Better still a hanging. But what was the alternative stop-over? Dubai … Abu Dhabi … Seoul? There wasn't enough time to wait around for a different flight, anyway.

It's only when all the lights are back on inside the cabin, and all the shades lifted, that you have trouble keeping your eyes open. How ridiculous. There are lights on the dark surfaces a long way below the plane, peering out of black shapes. Strange, almost Christmassy, music blurts through the speakers. You pass over some boats and then suddenly a road. The plane is very low. Bouncing around a lot. The nose is pointing up. You wait for the confirmation that comes with the chirp of the tyres. And there it is.

Your eyeballs and stomach are thrown forward with the deceleration. You look at the lights, the fire engines and the big open spaces around you. And you wonder what comes next. A trip off to a basement somewhere, to be dealt with, extra-judiciously?

Walk off the plane with five senses working overtime. *Welcome to the Garden City.* You don't feel welcome. Past a couple of people in uniform. No-one seems to notice you, or where you are headed. Again, it could be part of the theatre. Lulling you into dropping your guard. Allowing them to wind up the drama.

"Where are you going?" a woman asks. You feel your heart leap backwards. Here, so far out of your domain, away from your tribe, you are feeble. Look at the ground. Reply "Zurich."

The woman – you haven't taken in her face – points to a hand-written sign on an easel. It is at this point that you start to view everything, including yourself, as if

through a monitor. The footage is black and white, jerky. There is a time banner along the bottom, counting out the hundredths of a second.

You are looking at the chalk marks on the easel. They are hard to take in, even though they make up a list of just four words under a sign that says "Already boarding." The names of cities dance before you. You can just make out that one of them is Zurich.

"You'll have to hurry," she says. "Gate B4. To the end of the corridor, sir." Hurrying suits you fine. You march as quickly as you can, glancing over your shoulder, scanning the people in front. It's a nearly endless airport corridor, fading in to the distance, into the grey of the surveillance tape. It could be anywhere. Sydney or London, or LA. Even Zurich. You still recoil at the sight of any person in uniform. And, here in Singapore, they seem to be everywhere. It still isn't clear where gate B4 is and you aren't going to ask.

The time banner along the bottom of the monitor could be counting up or down. All that is clear is that it is moving rapidly. And the footage is exactly like that shown to juries.

You stride towards a big screen in the distance, as if every set of hands behind you is reaching out to grab you. The view is now from above. You are a small spec, hurriedly checking the display. Letters, numbers and destinations shimmy, merging in and out of one another. *Focus you fool!* There it is: B4. That's in Terminal 3. You have to catch a Skytrain. Jesus … how hard are they trying to make this?

A middle-aged couple you saw alighting from your plane also stare at the screen. "Zurich," she says to her white-bearded husband. They are heading for the Skytrain too. You tag onto the back of them. They are speaking German. That's good.

Inside the carriage. Look at the floor as the doors shut, almost hold your breath through the short, crowded journey. Hope to hell the plane hasn't left.

Skytrain doors open. You stride towards the sign saying Gate B4. It is on the other side of another security checkpoint. The sign confirms "Zurich" and "Now Boarding." There is a long queue waiting, so it can't have left. You realise you are breathing frantically. The numbers at the bottom of your vision are spinning madly.

Make it to security in a daze, tumble your things into a plastic tray. No laptop, fortunately. Just the unused pre-paid phone. You should have turned it on to check, but it's all been so rushed. The walk-through scanner makes no noise. Is that a trick too? They must be working on smarter scanners, particularly in a place like this. Scanners that can tell what is going on inside your head.

The bloke with the electronic wand looks as if he knows already. He says nothing. No-one at security does. The big queue is for Economy. There are only a few punters waiting in the Business Class line. Thank God … the final door to the walkway is just metres away. *Boarding pass and passport out* says the announcement.

Shuffle to the queue and immediately draw a long, frightening stare from a short woman in grey security garb. She is roving up and down the line. She demands your paperwork then checks it closely. Too closely. She places the passport photo right up against your face to make sure they match.

Your face must be drained of all colour by the time she hands back the documents. She nods. Grimly. You can go. Too scared to look back. The next woman, in an airline uniform, offers a broad and almost sincere smile, but you don't engage. Let her scan the barcode on your boarding pass. Charge onto the plane.

Collapse into your seat. Look forward. You will the other people to quickly come aboard, so the doors can be shut. At least this is more like it: a nearly self-contained capsule next to a window. You are on the left side of the plane. There is no one directly beside you.

A couple with a baby follow a few moments later. They set up on the other side of the aisle. In a South African accent, the pilot lists places the plane will be passing over before "heading towards the Straits of Malacca."

If you wish to follow the progress of the flight you may do so on the Flightpath Channel. No, you don't need reminding that Zurich is still such a long, long way away.

You'll be in the air for more than thirteen hours. So much time for any people at the other end to organise your reception.

The air-conditioning doesn't work. There are problems with a generator, a voice announces apologetically. No cool air until they close the doors, and they can't do that until everyone is aboard. The baby is screaming.

The staff is pretending not to notice you. They are bringing orange juice and champagne as if you are just another traveller. Not that you have much stomach for that. It's now 4.15 in the morning, your time. The pilot adds that it is *bitterly cold* in Zurich. *Minus seven Celsius with snow storms expected*. It's hard to imagine any such thing as you sweat in the thirtysomething degree heat of this metal tube.

A large movie screen in front. Shelves around. There is soft leather and polished wood. But your world is still framed on a black and white monitor, the numbers are still rolling at the bottom of the screen.

It's now twenty-three to five, by your wristwatch. The baby is still screaming. *Business class!* What business is a newborn involved in … the annoying everyone else business? You try to supress such uncharitable thoughts – calm down, *calm down* – but the plane should have left at twenty-five past. They made you rush. All the usual anxieties rise and grip your throat. It's no consolation when a small puff of cool air reaches your pod at last, suggesting the doors are closed. The plane still isn't moving. The plane *still isn't friggenwell moving*.

At fourteen minutes to five a couple of electric motors fire up noisily and the plane gently rocks from side to side. But it doesn't leave its moorings. Sweat runs even more copiously than before. The delay has to be *all about you*. Sanctimonious and self-centred or not, it's only logical. It has to be. They'll be coming to get you at any moment.

It is twelve minutes to, down to the second. The plane slowly starts moving forward. The ride across the tarmac is bumpy. The woman opposite is calming her baby in a broad Australian accent, switching effortlessly to German to talk to the man you assume is the baby's father. You don't risk looking at them. You swing your head to the left, and realise it is raining heavily.

Rows of Singapore Airlines jets are parked on the puddle-strewn tarmac. It's five o'clock, and you are still wilting in the heat. But it looks like you are finally taking off. The blast down the runway seems slow and turbulent. But as the wheels leave the ground, you sigh with relief. It is only then that the time ticker stops, that the picture turns to widescreen and colour. It is only then you can enjoy, briefly, the *surely they can't stop us now* sensation.

That's it for the city of gardens. And imprisoned opposition leaders. Now for the home stretch to the land of chocolates, multipurpose pocket knives and looted Nazi gold. No, not that last one! Must give them the benefit of the doubt. At least until they take you in.

The fog of rain swarms around the spotlights that are arranged in rows around the wide dark airport. Water rushes along the outside of the porthole glass in small rivulets, making crazy quicksilver patterns. It distracts you for a minute, but you doubt it can do so for thirteen-and-a-half hours.

The plane is up to cruising altitude. You are back in the non-place that is the air, away from laws and borders and judgement. Propelled by raging fire. The hostess asks, "Do you want to have supper before you go to sleep?" You habitually hold your arm up to shield your eyes. "Yes." You are pretty sure you won't be able to sleep, so you may as well eat. And drink. That urge has returned too. Just to calm things down.

How long will the food take? Straight to the bathroom to slay some of those "twenty to thirty minutes". The bathroom is surprisingly large. Rows of Hollywood lights on each side of the mirror, and along the top. You wash your face with water that is *Non-potable. Not for drinking*. Check your hair. There are blonde roots growing out already. Is that possible?

You surprise yourself with how alert you are. Even questioning why they'd write a sign saying "Non-potable" when they already had the dummy's version "Not for drinking". But there's still a trembling otherworldliness to everything. Staring into your own eyes, tracing their numerous lines and their gunk-filled corners, you try to decide if they are betraying to everyone your heightened worries and suspicions.

You are drifting back to Plan A. Easier to be brave twelve-and-a-half hours from anywhere. It won't be revenge, you tell yourself. Just continuing to do what you do, what was always planned. Doing what annoys them the most: throwing back the covers on their grubby secrets. But this time, nuclear. The whole world will know. You can almost sense the shock wave.

Back in your seat. Steal a glance at the doll-like hostess as she sets up your table. Could have walked straight off the brochure.

"Are you going home?" she asks. You realise that she has heard no more than a few grunts from you. Has assumed you are Swiss.

"No," you reply. You hesitate. You aren't really sure how to finish the sentence. The correct answer, you'd like to believe, is "yes I'm going to a place that will become my home, at least for a week or two. Then I'm going to set civilisation ablaze." All you offer is an abrupt "no".

"So, a long way," she replies. You haven't a clue what this means. Just a hope that she'll leave it at that.

You eat. You drink, a lot. Enough to wipe you out, you hope. It must be safe to go off duty for a little while on such a long leg.

The hostess lays out your bed; there's some weird and complex manoeuvre that has to be done with the backrest to make it lie down fully flat. You try to sleep on your side, knees together. Like the letter zed.

You drift off every so often. And wake with a start each time. There are people in uniforms next to the bed. Or an announcement comes that the plane is being redirected, for reasons that can't be revealed. Or you dream that your arm and leg have been shackled to the seat frame.

Eyes: dry, crackly at each end. Chest: still beating hard. No, *thumping*. A weapons-grade headache starts behind your eyes and seems to bend forward. You lie there, holding your head in your hands softly, as if it were an overripe fruit, about to burst its skin. In that still suspended state, you remain. Half asleep, half awake. Shaking.

Eventually you stand up, bladder throbbing. Shake your hands and ankles to wake yourself. To confirm there are no cuffs. The alcohol is still very much in evidence, slurping inside your swirling head. You stumble through the half-light of the darkened plane. Past people sleeping, snoring, watching movies. The floor threatens to rise and plant one on your chin.

You make it to the toilet, just. You sway a little – it's the movement of the plane you tell yourself – as you stare at your completely bloodshot, frightened eyes. Your pale face is again lit by those far-too-bright movie star lights.

The realisation comes that it is the face that half the world would like to stamp on. Or are you having yourself on … deluding your *egomaniacal* self? This train of thinking brings confusion and anger. It goes some small way to sobering you up. But your eyes still throb. You need to lie back down. Soon.

Fold yourself back into bed, this time lying on your other side. Then on your back. You can still smell the supper – roast chicken and vegetables in a pretentiously named sauce – circulating in the air-conditioning swill. You have your *sources* too, you mumble to yourself, half enjoying a pun you know wouldn't work in print. You have *sources* around the world. And there's nothing they can do about that.

You suddenly reel in your cascading thoughts. It's no punning matter. Some of these people have been arrested. Beaten. Extradited.

You cough. Sip some bottled water for your dry throat. Lean back, down. A few rows of lights gently phase in and out above you. The baby is snoring loudly.

Try again to sleep. To summon forth Siobhan – the good, loyal Siobhan – and that special drifting magic where her car can be driven home from the bottom of the aircraft stairs. Where there is instant transmission to a better place.

Nothing goes right this time. The car is wheel-clamped, the apartment is on the other side of the city, the streets all look the same and neither of you have a clue. You realise you are embarrassed in her company too. You said too much, too quickly last time. To someone who has always held the line, even more resolutely than you. Who will brook no compromise, no talk of being tired, no talk of needing a pause.

You wrecked everything. Or was that in another dream?

You are awake again. Staring at the ceiling. Siobhan seems an illusion, a cruel trick, as impossible to grab as those lights out past the wingtips, winking malevolently from the ether. Is she a quisling … is that what these dreams are telling you?

It's ten past something. That's as much as you can make out in the half light. That and the fact you are bored. Can't sleep. Can't watch anything, or listen to anything. Too jumpy to read. No idea how long you've been awake. You reach for the light switch. The downpour of white is almost blinding. Your wristwatch tells you it is ten past eleven. Some simple maths. You've been on the move for sixteen hours.

Sixteen hours. Two-thirds of an entire day. That's how long since you sneaked out. That laundry window. That folding ladder. Help from inside and out.

A hostie shuffles down the aisle. Her long tight dress forces her to move like she has bound feet. It's the brochure girl, the doll-like creature. You once would have put in some work: pulled out the crooked smile, the deliberate misunderstandings, the vulnerable laugh. Just to see if it was possible.

Often it was. A half-remembered scene: the fringe benefits of being a maverick, a straight talker. As seen on TV. An aircraft bathroom not nearly as big as the one on this plane. A blonde with green eyes, freckles and – this stands out just as

clearly – pimples on her forehead and breath that is unpleasantly acidic. Her silver-blue skirt is pulled up over her belt, her airline issue stockings are around her ankles. Your own legs are awkwardly tangled, hurting your hip. But you persist. Because. Well, because.

Bottles of aftershave and face cream, plastic toothbrushes and combs, all rattle rhythmically in their racks. Finally, from you, a climactic kick-out. Your boot connects with the fold-in door forcefully enough to terrify anyone who is standing outside, waiting to obey a less enjoyable call of nature.

Today, at best, you are an anonymous businessman with hair that doesn't sit properly. With nerves of squeal.

You must have fallen back to sleep. Despite everything. Memories of another leg-over situation. Less enjoyable at the time, and painful afterwards. The Italian redhead. The locked conference room. The split loyalties and, later, lies. Headlines a mix of *Gotcha!* joy and outrage. Then the charges. The arrest. The proof we are still prudes at heart.

Siobhan could forgive you on that one – honey entrapment – but the state was never going to do likewise. Clever, you have to give them that. It was the arrest they wanted, and it put you on trial. Not them. Not what has been revealed in these past few months.

If you can get them asking the wrong questions, *you don't have to worry about the answers*. Pynchon, you think. But true, whoever said it.

Open your eyes again to view your surroundings, to take in this time-free capsule suspended above the real world. Enjoy for a brief moment a gentle train-like jiggling from side to side as a minor pocket of air assails its flanks. Try to lose yourself again in the cumulative hum of the wind and jets and air-conditioning.

Someone has turned on the lights. You lie there exhausted, yet with mind racing. *Bugger it*, you have to kill a decent chunk of time. You have to watch something. You select *Truly, Madly, Deeply* from the Classics menu. Only colour films are classics, apparently.

Movie comfort food. You lose yourself only slightly. You remember most of it anyway. Jamie, the ghost of Nina's dead, cello-playing, boyfriend has returned. He is encouraging Nina to move on. To expunge her too-perfect memories of him. To re-engage with life. You can't stop from watering up. Use the serviette as a wipe. Tell yourself it's the tiredness and pressurised air that makes your eyes constantly well.

The hostess patters back down the aisle. You place your hand at the side of your face, blocking any possible view of the shininess around your eyes. You are aware at that moment of how much you have staked on Siobhan and Europe, neither of which you now fully trust. How fragile it all is. Truly. Madly. And the liquid keeps flowing. Deeply.

You don't risk another film. You don't need one. Something has been purged. Sheer exhaustion – physical and emotional – is dropping you into a timeless cocoon. Close to complete sensory deprivation. If there is any turbulence, or even the slightest shift in the noise level, you don't notice it. You drift off again. Incredibly, you dream of nothing.

The noise of breakfast. Zurich is waiting. About an hour and a half to go. That will make it twenty-four hours in all. The longest day. Splinters of light seep through the porthole screen. You slide it up momentarily to reveal the soft-blue glow of pre-dawn. The glimpse brings a frisson. A glimpse of something illicit.

The breakfast comes and goes and leaves no impression. You complete everything as mechanically as possible. You become a waiting machine.

At last, the pilot advises: *we have begun our descent*. You twist and turn the phrase in your mind. You commenced your dissent a long time earlier. If only we would all *commence our dissent.* Then real changes could be made.

You pull up the porthole screen definitively and see alps jutting through clouds. Frozen lakes separate them. A dazzling polarisation has painted everything black or silver. Looking at this scene, you could almost believe in beauty.

More alps, more lakes, more clouds, more mountains. A thin line of red above it all, the hint of an imminent sun. Colours slowly seeping into the monochrome below.

Dawn. Switzerland. Technicolor. Hope.

You must return to your seat, secure your tray table. Make sure your laptop computer and other electronic devices are turned off. *It is a safety requirement that* ... like you could give a shit about any of that stuff. And on a day like today. All you know is you are on the cusp of Zurich. You have made it this far. You wish you could fast forward that little bit and arrive at the credits. But it's all on tape, and the tape is running at the wrong speed. Time itself slows and deepens. The whiteness below moves up to swallow the plane. But in no hurry. No hurry at all.

Rocky outcrops jut through the cotton wool. In the new glare everything returns to silver and black. A gelatin print. The progress glacial.

Sudden vibration. The plane leans. The clouds have cleared. The leading edge of the wing is pointing down at a village, a village dropped carelessly among what look like black hills. Vortices of cold air swirl around the ailerons – if that's what they are called – giving hints as to the true speed. Yet nothing is happening quickly enough.

The lower ground is white with snow. Anything vaguely flat is sectioned off into blocks. Farms, whatever. Hurry up.

More vibrations. Lift music is playing through the speakers. The bottom of the plane might have just fallen out. You realise it is the wheels clunking down. Clunking like a jail door.

At that moment you realise it. Anything less than a nuclear response would be cowardice, would be letting down all those who have gone before, all those doing time. Cities must burn. The Big Revelation must happen.

The ground – with all its possibilities – is in clear site. Maybe a kilometre below. That's it – where it will happen. The place where you will make your mark in a matter of days. Turn things on their head.

Then it's all cloud beneath you again. The jets suck up low-lying clouds. There is nothing but white through your porthole.

Suddenly terra firma is right below you. You are seconds from landing. It is snowing heavily. You have never landed in snow. The plane hits the ground hard. You expect it to start sliding. The headline flashes: FUGITIVE'S BODY FOUND IN SWISS PLANE WRECK.

The plane squirms as grip levels on each side are equalised. But it does not slide or crash. It pulls up quickly and tidily. "A magnificent landing," you find yourself uttering.

The runway is surrounded by trees, the occasional building. It doesn't feel like a big city. So this is Zurich. The end of the line. The last hurrah. Siobhan seems real again. You have to trust her and her resolve. There is no viable alternative. Maybe even let her make the big decisions about timing and everything else; you seem so overburdened.

She could be only a few hundred metres away. And she's the last person who'd object to the nuclear option.

The local time is 7.55 am. Your clock says five to six. Neither seems like a real time, neither seems to bear any relationship to the here and now. Nor the view outside. A frozen world. It is minus 6 degrees Celsius out there, the captain announces. You will remain seated *until the seatbelt light is turned off*.

Every detail stands out. Everything is now important. A nearby plane has EDELWEISS written on its side. Machines with elongated arms are spraying the wings of icy planes; great clouds of mist envelope fuselages. Your heartbeat scutters in every direction.

The passenger terminal appears in the distance. It is enormous. The frustrating crawl across the tarmac progresses. Certain bits of the ground have been cleared, others are completely covered in white. You continue to take it all in. It's not your new home – it's your new operations centre.

The plane taxis and taxis and taxis. *Give it the berries, Mister.* No response. You languidly pass rows of planes with Swiss crosses on their tails, like so many army knives or hospitals.

Still taxiing twelve minutes later. You've nervously ticked every one of those minutes off. And the terminal looks only a tiny bit closer.

You thought tiredness might win out. Induce a state where you were too tired to care. But everything in your system is sixteen beats to the bar. The passion, that deadline fever, is back. Your temples are flaring. There's a rock n' roll drummer inside your chest. It's a line from a song you think, but exactly what it feels like. So, so close!

The plane docks gently, at quarter past. The seats jerk forward and back, like a train pulling up at a station. You remain seated. The cabin crew *prepare to disarm the doors*. "Passengers, you may now turn on your mobile phones," says the South African captain. You join the scramble to do so.

At some unuttered signal, everyone stands. You join them. You wait for your chance to walk out, your foot tapping madly on the ground. Your phone beeps. Eight, nine times. You aren't game to look at it. Not yet. Not here.

The baby is crying. Every malign possibility, every potential grim outcome, circles your fiery cranium to the soundtrack of those young tonsils. Ten minutes pass. Ten whole minutes. You realise you haven't pulled down your bag or coat. You lift the overhead locker. Slide out the bag. Struggle with the coat, threatening to clout the people around you as you pull the sleeves up your arms. More unwanted attention.

You silently shout for the doors to open. Yet as long as they are shut, no-one unwanted will come in to look for *a man who can help them with their inquiries*. Sorry, *a man who can help them with their conclusions*.

As long as those doors are shut, there is a chance for your heart to slow down. If it ever will.

Eventually the way is clear. You stare through the aperture, into the light. No-one waits to pounce. You spill out with the throng to the sound of an announcement: Belt 27 is where the luggage will be delivered.

The freezing air tingles against exposed skin. You must walk along the glass-sided walkway between plane and the terminal. You must expose yourself to the world for the walkway's entire length. And it's long, with a dog-leg in the middle. You follow a man carrying a large yellow plastic bag saying Duty Free. You stare at the bag as you step step step mechanically.

There are people shouting. There are people in uniform. They are up ahead, where the walkway meets the terminal. You slow right down and feel the last drop of moisture leave your throat.

The shouting is about someone else. Or something else. Jesus, such a relief. You catch back up with the Duty Free bag, reconnect your gaze. Reach a sign that says *Exit Zurich* on top and *Transit, Turn Right* below.

She could be within shouting distance, almost pushing against the other side of the Customs barrier. There are no words in your armoury to express how badly you long for the moment of contact.

The temperature warms as you enter the main terminal. Everything is as clean and ordered and antiseptic as you always expected. A poster on a wall says "Switzerland: get natural". If just a few more things go right, it could say "Switzerland: I love you." You repeat that phrase several times for good measure.

You follow people and signs towards Passport Control and Baggage Retrieval. You'll check the phone messages there. Nobody seems to notice that every muscle in your body is pulled tight. Not even the security guards, or police, if that's what they are. They could be army; you're not game to look closely at any of their badges or insignia.

Is it too much to hope that the people in uniform are in the state most passengers are in: the hazy, timeless world of travel … awake on two feet … not really taking in what is happening all around?

Corridors extend forever. You jump onto the moving walkway, looking way down into the distance at the signs for gates A, B and E. You keep striding, watching those on the other side of the handrail slide backwards in your peripheral vision.

Onwards still, towards passport control and the baggage carousel. Toward Siobhan. You can't feel your legs. They are independent agents. Charged with purpose. Down a huge escalator, towards another of those ghastly airport terminal shuttles. Another glass-sided Skytrain, another unnecessary degree of difficulty. All you want is to walk in the sun. So to speak.

In those WW2 movies, Switzerland was the only place worth escaping to. But it was merely a case of clambering across the border, a few steps ahead of the Nasties. You certainly didn't have to do all the shit you have to do nowadays. And there is still passport and customs control to come.

Everyone pushes up tight as the carriage doors shut. They are looking at you, aren't they? *Make no eye contact.* No eye contact! Out again a few moments later. Far more security personnel in this new building, or new part of the old building. Or this city. It could be a city. A city with no obvious shape. A city that is all rules and barriers and checkpoints.

Within hours, or perhaps days, you'll blow its cohesion apart. Nothing will be the same once you've emptied that safe deposit box.

You make your way almost blindly towards the passport line. The time banner is at the bottom of the screen again. Spinning like a flywheel. Around you is a blur of faces. Yours in the centre of the screen. You keep each face deliberately indistinct. Each one, you imagine, is staring at you. Taking a new interest in your height, your ethnicity, the shape of your face, the unconvincing darkness of your hair.

Could that be him, they may well be asking. Him? Here? It doesn't seem likely, but we'd better alert someone.

Before you know it, you are at a counter. The woman behind it says something. Hands everything back. Motions you through the corridor.

The baggage carousel at last. The long U-shaped belt starts moving just as you arrive. The languages that surround are German, French, a smattering of accented English. The screens above Belt 27 flash flight times, advertisements for watches and cars. Is Siobhan behind the tinted glass? Watching? Waiting? Hoping?

Look at the screen of your phone. Terror. Texts from Telstra about international roaming. Voicemails from a number you don't recognise. A text: "Take care. Love S."

How could you have doubted, you idiot? Then again, what else is she going to say? You've already walked into one trap. That's why you are fleeing. And "take care" … hang on … that is sounding more ominous with each passing moment.

Your bag is slow to appear. As usual. Everyone around you is a spy. Surely. That's the standard narrative arc. The escapee endures the pain of the voyage, only to fall at the final hurdle. Or the final baggage carousel.

It always happens a few minutes and a few metres from the promised land. Still, this isn't Hollywood. European films are different. Less obvious. A whole lot fucking slower. And you have made it this far without a hitch. Haven't you?

There's every reason to believe – isn't there? – that they've had more than enough chances to seize their quarry. That in mere moments you'll have Siobhan's warm, yielding body pressed against yours, your nose squeezed behind her ear, breathing in her scent. Inhaling freedom through jet black hair.

And then, straight back to work.

Red, blue, square, soft … every type of bag stutters around the belt except your dark green Samsonite. The Tower of Babel continues around you. French, German, Spanish. Now Chinese or Korean.

Get on with it! *Get on with it you slack-arsed Swiss baggage handlers.* Hang on, this one looks promising… yes, that's it.

Plan A, now so close.

You touch the handle of your suitcase. Pat the side like a friend. "Hey, Jeremy!" a man yells. He is behind you, somewhere near the far end of the carousel.

You recognise it immediately as an Australian voice. You turn around. Like an idiot.

Jeremy! That's not the name you are travelling under. That's not what it says in the now frayed passport wedged into your jacket pocket.

But you have turned around. You have stared. You have acknowledged. And now they are coming at you from all sides.

Chapter two:
Introduction to the sustained second person narrative

You are a busy academic surrounded by piles of paper. You have just read a 10,930 word piece of fiction set entirely on an aeroplane – and in second person, no less. And now this: the apparently related exegetical component. It deals with some small (and little known) Australian novels from as far back as 1980. You are filled with doubt even as you start reading. You scratch the back of your neck and sigh. You try to second-guess whether the thesis, that you are now seven sentences into, could be a productive use of your limited time. You look longingly at that stack of novels you promised yourself you would have read long before now. You weigh up your choices, then you realise you are, already, almost at the end of the first paragraph. You will continue a little further.

Enough for the moment. The second person narrative mode – demonstrated above in a slightly flippant example – is confronting to read and tricky to write convincingly. If a narrative mode's worth or utility is measured by how often it is used, the second person or "you" narrative (also more conveniently known as an SPN)[1] is very much the poor relation of other modes. It is scorned by most writers, perhaps partly for fear it will be scorned by most readers. Those readers are perceived to prefer either third person (the authoritative detached narrator of the Gospels, the Old Testament and "unbiased" history), first person (the warmer, more direct and more intimate voice of conversation and the diarist), or a combination of the two – a common mix in the postmodern novel. Against the obvious binaries of the commonly used first and third person modes, second person is the centre that most avoid, a mode rarely used in a sustained manner

[1] SPN is an abbreviation of Second Person Narrative for which I thank Uri Margolin (1990).

throughout a full-length novel. But there are good reasons for further research into the mode, and further literary experimentation when using it in fiction. Consider this famous exchange from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), in which the lawyer Atticus Finch explains the nature of empathy to his daughter, Scout.

> 'You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view –'
> 'Sir?'
> '– until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.' (p. 33)

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001, English novelist Ian McEwan (2001) described empathy as the ability "to think oneself into the minds of others":

> If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality. (¶16)

Although these words by Lee and McEwan were purportedly describing empathy, both writers might have been just as easily explaining one of the great quests of literature: getting into someone else's skin and walking around in it, imagining yourself into their thoughts and feelings, and thereby allowing the reader to experience what it is like to be someone else. The subject of this PhD thesis, the sustained second person narrative mode in novels, has that potential. It will be shown in this research project that second person can contain within itself both the inside and outside view of a character. It can allow the reader to not only walk inside a character's skin, but to walk next to him at the same time, or hover above him, or move rapidly between such divergent points. When used to its full effectiveness, it can be likened to walking around a sculpture and seeing it from

all sides, and also from inside. In doing so, it can arguably create a more rounded portrait than is achievable using solely the first or third person narrative mode; indeed, the postmodern trick of narration that toggles between first and third person[2] could be seen as an attempt to replicate this effect without having to resort to the more difficult and more polarising second person. Free indirect discourse third person can achieve some of the same effects as an SPN but the reader is rarely as "inside" the character as can be achieved with second person. Furthermore, it will be shown that free indirect discourse can also be used in second person narrative to create its own distinct effects.

Second person offers a specificity – on one level it is restricted to the exact character in the novel – and also a universality, partly because of the way "you" is employed in proverbs (e.g. "You can't take it with you"). This was well illustrated by an exchange that took place when James Meek was interviewing students in the troubled Ukraine in early 2014. He speaks to a 22-year-old, Inozemtsev, who begins: "You're 12 years old when the Orange Revolution comes. Your parents take you specially to the square, to show you what the spirit of freedom is. Later you understand the politicians deceived you…" (¶36) Meek suggests: "I had the strange feeling that he was speaking in the second person, as if he felt that I, and everyone reading this, could equally well have lived through his experience" (¶37). Yet despite these varied advantages, and a powerful ability to capture the sensations of mental instability and disassociation, the sustained second person has been employed in only a tiny proportion of published novels.

The first that came to the attention of this researcher, in such a way as to convince him the mode was not simply a gimmick, was *The Treatment* by Peter Kocan. Although, at little more than 100 pages, *The Treatment* (which first appeared in 1980) could be better called a novella, its sequel, published three years later, is written in the same style and is slightly longer in extent. Entitled *The Cure,* it provides an almost seamless continuation of the story. Today the two books are

[2] Of course the technique goes back to Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) and perhaps even further, but has become much more common in complex multi-strand modern novels.

commonly published together in one volume, sometimes with a joined title (*The Treatment and The Cure*), and they hold up cohesively as a single narrative.

Kocan's two books – which will be considered together in this thesis – are centred on the fictional Len Tarbutt, but the events are known to mirror those in the writer's own life. At 19, Kocan was sentenced to life imprisonment after shooting Australian federal opposition leader Arthur Calwell. Kocan was declared criminally insane and transferred to a mental hospital. During his incarceration he became an acclaimed poet, which may have contributed to his release after about a decade.

Another novel that impressed this researcher with its use of the sustained second person mode was *Alec: How to be an Artist* by Queensland-based Scotsman Eddie Campbell. Like Kocan's work, it is strongly autobiographical in nature, and it also deals with an artist's journey. Those points aside, it would be hard to imagine a more different approach. For a start, it is a graphic novel. Using a variety of innovative techniques, including future tense narration, it details the highs and lows of Alec MacGarry, a "small press" comic book artist who rises from working in a sheet metal factory to international, if precarious, fame.

So what is second person and what can it deliver that the more common first and second person narrative forms cannot? These are not easy questions; the second person narrative voice remains a somewhat shadowy entity. Brian Richardson (2006) has written that "Narrative theory, despite its emphasis on narration and narrators, has not yet systematically examined the impressive range of unusual postmodern and other avant garde strategies of narration" (p. *ix*). Into this category, he notes, falls sustained second person narration. It is undoubtedly the least employed "person" among the three mode of narrations (first, second and third) and, perhaps as a consequence, the least explored academically.

Once one starts entering into the difficult world of second person, one discovers that agreement on exactly what constitutes the mode is hard to find. Terms such as

"Protean shape-shifter" (Bonheim 1983, p. 79) and "devious" (Richardson 2006, p. 14) have been applied to the way the pronoun "you" can change its form or meaning in a second person narrative, often from paragraph to paragraph, even within a single sentence. As if to highlight the dramatic contrast in views about second person narrative, others have passed it off as merely a sly way of writing first person (Beach, p. 281; Passias via Schofield 1998a, Section 1 ¶10, among others). In this scenario we, the readers, are seeing the word "you" but simply substituting "I". Narratologist Mieke Bal (1993), when writing about the pioneering second person novel *La Modification*, contests:

> The narrative nature of this novel seems to be dependent on the fact that the second person cannot be sustained; without much effort, the reader 'translates' it into first-person format, which enables her to read on and process the text into a story. The 'you' cannot be subsumed by the reader's position, nor can it be construed as the addressee of apostrophe … The 'you' is simply an 'I' in disguise, a 'first-person' narrator talking to himself; the novel is a 'first-person' narrative with a formal twist to it that does not engage the entire narrative situation, as one would expect it should. (p. 181)

Drawing on French linguist Emile Benveniste's theories of deixis, Bal argues that there is an almost automatic easing-back into the traditional narrative from which the author sought to estrange his readers. She cites a typical passage and says it "has all the appearance of a so-called interior monologue, that equally artificial mode of narration in the first person that seeks to eliminate reference to the first-person voice in favour of a silent first-person focalizer". It has been argued with equal force that second person is often displaced third person (McHale 1987, p. 224; Ryan 2001, p. 138, among others). The "you" is read as a "he" or "she" depending on the gender of the protagonist. Fludernik (1994a) calls second person one of the most "non-natural" types of narrative (p. 290).

Richardson (2006), however, maintains that second person is a new and exciting development in literature, perhaps the most important since the introduction of the stream of consciousness (p. 35). Kacandes (1994) has noted that the second person pronoun has a built-in power to move readers, "causing them to feel themselves addressed and to experience the force of an unusual relationship created between the narrator and narratee".[3] Marie-Laure Ryan argues (2001) for the uniqueness and complexity of the SPN. She says that, depending on the text, the second person voice can be anything from "a boundary-crossing address from the narrator in the textual world to the reader in the real world" to a broad range of other possibilities (pp. 137-138).

Along with considerable disagreement about its worth and effectiveness, there has been conjecture about when it is being employed. Some writers and critics have argued that apostrophe,[4] or alternatively the practice of addressing a homodiegetic or heterodiegetic narratee (such as the famous opening line of *The Catcher in the Rye*), [5] constitutes second person, while others have claimed that some texts widely accepted as second person are not that at all because they don't exhibit dual time (Hopkins and Perkins 1981, p. 122) or multiple subjectivity (Hantzis 1988, p. 33). Matt DelConte (2003) says any comparison with first person and third person narration doesn't make sense because second person narration isn't defined by who is speaking but by who is listening (p. 204).

Reviewers have often complained about the difficulty of reading second person

[3] Jill Walker (2000) aptly explains part of the power:

> The word "you" is ready to be filled by anyone. It is empty: it doesn't refer outside of the situation in which it is uttered. There's a word for this emptiness: deixis. Deictic words … have no meaning except in relation to other words and to a context. Their power lies in this emptiness. Filling the empty space of a "you" can be "wonderfully stirring" (Quintilian 1953, 38–39; bk. 9, ch. 22) for a reader, as writers and rhetoricians have known since ancient times. (p. 37)

[4] As defined by Mirriam-Webster online dictionary (mirriam-webster.com): "the addressing of a usually absent person or a usually personified thing rhetorically <Carlyle's "O Liberty, what things are done in thy name!" is an example of *apostrophe*>"

[5] The line, which may be addressed to the reader or, as others have speculated, to those in the hospital where protagonist Holden Caulfield has been sent to recover, reads: "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth."

novels. Certainly producing long-form fiction in the second person is adventurous, ambitious and risky. Herman (2002) talks about the "oftentimes disorienting, sometimes uncanny experience of reading second-person fictions" which try to put the reader in the text and abolish the boundary between the textual and extra textual, the fictive and the real, the virtual and the actual (p. 345). This can be discomforting; Kimberly Nance (1994) is one of many to remark on this unsettling effect; she says for some people reading a second person narrative is like "reading someone else's mail" (¶10). Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) calls second person a "short-lived effect" (p. 138), while many reviewers have seen it as little more than a gimmick.[6] Stephanie Girard (1996) says it has been called a clever party trick, credited with giving the narrator "some distance from his own nonsense", and held up as annoying: "all the you's pile up into a jangled heap of grammatical contortions" (p. 170).

In addressing whether it is merely a gimmick, one must also attempt to answer the flipside: if second person is a useful mode for the novelist, why don't more writers take advantage of it? It will be acknowledged herein that second person *can* be a gimmick and a particularly irritating one, and also a mode that can repel readers by its inaccessibility, its claustrophobic nature, or by the way it attempts to make readers complicit in acts or thoughts they find repulsive. It also repels writers, perhaps, because it is very difficult to sustain (as this writer found working on the creative component of this thesis), and may give writers the feeling they are chasing away readers sentence by sentence. However, it will be argued that the second person narrative mode is far more likely to turn readers away when it is the wrong choice for the material or is executed poorly. For certain works it can be precisely the right option, and its perceived limitations can be turned into advantages. If used skilfully it can fulfil Morrissette's 1965 description of "producing effects in the fictional field that are unobtainable by other modes or persons" (p. 2), and provide authors with what Darlene Hantzis

[6] Book reviews to this effect are cited in Morrissette and others. By way of modern confirmation – googling "bright lights big city", "second person" and "gimmick" together, but as discrete terms, produces 1290 results. Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) is the title of the best known second person novel.

(1988) calls a "distinct device [that] produces distinct effects and constructs a unique textual world" (p. 1).

By way of example, extensive movement of the author's "camera lens", and an unsettling ambiguity, can both be achieved in an SPN. The writer, protagonist and reader can engage in an ontological shuffle that approximates Walt Whitman's line about being "both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it".[7] Jay McInerney's narrator in his second person novel *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984), offered something similar. He talked "of watching yourself in the world even as you were being in the world" (pp. 166-67). The SPN form works especially well in the English language, Alice Bell and Astrid Ensslin (2011) remark, because: "one grammatical form homonymically references male and female, singular and plural addressees, but can also be used as a generalized pronoun replacing 'one,' the textual 'you' has inspired a diversity of aesthetic uses" (p. 314). In summary, the aims of this creative practice research project encompass the:

- Creative: the production of an original work of second person fiction that exploits lessons learned during the research and endeavours to use the SPN voice not as a gimmick but to realise literary effects relating to the specific story and character(s) that would be unavailable with the more usual choice of first or second person.
- Metacritical: To assess the wildly contradictory definitions and explanations of second person narrative that have been advanced by theorists, novelists and critics thus far, and attempt to distil what has been learned along the way about the literary effects of second person in fiction, particularly sustained second person fiction in novels and novellas.
- Analytic: To examine the Kocan and Campbell works to isolate how they have made use of second person narration, and how they have exploited its properties and negated or mitigated the perceived disadvantages. At the

[7] Kimberly Nance identified this quote in a 1994 paper and related it to the second person technique. It is line 79 from Whitman's *Song of Myself* (1855).

same time it is hoped to cast a little more light on other attributes of these works, as they are (in the view of this researcher) worthy of more critical attention. The thesis will also discuss other novels written in the second person and draw parallels with Kocan and Campbell's work.

- Structural: To examine critically the reasons for choosing the subject matter, characters, style and extent of the creative work to be produced for this thesis. Equally, the reasons for rejecting other proposed subjects are to be examined. In the process light will be cast on when second person best matches characters, subject matter and structural parameters in fiction.
- Methodological: To propose a list of rules or conditions under which sustained second person fiction can remain accessible to an engaged reader while still exploiting the unique effects isolated in this thesis.

Along the way, it is hoped the thesis will cast more light on a mode that retains much unrealised promise for writers of fiction, as well as many pitfalls. In this vein, the next chapter looks at the varied and often unexpected challenges of shaping "The Flight".

Chapter three:
Creative practice in practice: From *Your Story* to "The Flight"

This PhD project was planned as an experiment in literature, backed up by the theory behind it. The original intention was to write a sustained piece of second person narrative (SPN) in a relatively naïve state. It would be my first extended fiction in that mode and would come after reading the three novels that I was aware of that used the form throughout (the Kocan and Campbell works and Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*). I would follow the writing of a complete first draft with extensive research into theory about the literary effects of second person, and by finding and reading as many sustained SPN texts as possible. The plan was to then revisit my SPN creative work to see where the strengths and failures of the original instinctive approach might lie, and rework it accordingly. This should have allowed me to combine the best aspects that can come from a naïve approach (including freshness and originality), and the benefits of later learning. I knew the work had to help answer my research questions; equally it had to be a success in its own right and push the boundaries of creative practice in this field.

So where to start? Between 2009 and early 2013 I worked sporadically on a "tween" novel (ie, one broadly aimed at 8-13 year olds) known as *The Big Dry*. It had been scheduled to be released in March 2011 but was delayed by disagreements between author and commissioning editor over the style and content, a publishing company buy-out, two dishonoured contracts, and general financial cautiousness across the publishing world. This is a frustrating though hardly unique sequence of events in an industry undergoing great change and uncertainty in the face of, among other things, the e-book revolution and massive changes in the retailing environment. On one level, there are reasons to be grateful

the book was eventually published at all (it was released by HarperCollins under its revived Angus & Robertson imprint in July 2013).[8]

Importantly, what this long and troubled gestation afforded me was plenty of thinking time. I arrived at the idea of rewriting *The Big Dry* as a "parallel sequel" and, in the process, demonstrating the use of sustained second person in fiction. The structure was to work like this: in *The Big Dry* one of the two main characters, a mysterious and apparently homeless teenager named Emily, regularly arrives in the lives of the main characters without warning and, just as regularly, disappears without explanation. As a consequence, she is absent during half of the original book. The main protagonist is a 13-year-old boy named George who is newly orphaned – it seems – and has to protect his younger brother, Beeper, in a threatening world. He, and by proxy the reader, is never sure where Emily goes in *The Big Dry*, but this new novel would reveal her story via a second person, present tense narrative, or SPN, centred around Emily. Hence it would show the reader what she was doing whenever absent from the original text. It would also replay the scenes in *The Big Dry* where she was present, though these would be seen by the reader from her perspective rather than that of George. In other words, the dialogue and blocking[9] would be the same, but everything else would be different.

Among the advantages of using this structure and subject matter, I believed, was that by dealing with a familiar character the second person would be less confrontational and less likely to exclude (as a sequel, it could be assumed people had read the first book). In this regard it would be more akin to an attribute of Kocan or Campbell's works – it would be adding depth to a story the reader almost certainly knew on a superficial level. As a consequence, it would be like somebody with authority born of experience guiding the reader through a difficult and/or dangerous world that they understood and the reader didn't.

[8] *The Big Dry* was eventually shortlisted for an Aurealis Award for speculative fiction, and shortlisted in the children's section of the 2014 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, though alas won in neither case.
[9] "Blocking" is used in the theatrical sense, ie, the position of each character in a scene.

In *The Big Dry*, the text was third person, past tense, and firmly centring on George. Early in the text, particularly, it gave little insight into what Emily was thinking. The new second person text, however, contained such lines as "You don't need to feel guilty about treating him like that. You have no real choices, no real inexperience in such matters …", mimicking the so-called temporal telegram[10] from the older version of a character to the younger version of that same character that is a strong part of some SPN texts (of the three I was familiar with, Campbell's was the one that exhibited this the most strongly). However, like Campbell's text, *Your Story* need not be restricted to such a "telegram". It would be possible to shift around so that every nuance and colouring of the SPN voice could be exploited. Another advantage of writing an SPN in which the "you" was Emily was that the reader could be introduced to her distinct internal voice. This was shown to be quite different from that suggested by her dialogue, which she shaped to give away as little as possible. Here is an excerpt from *The Big Dry* where Emily announces a *fait accompli*, that she is going to stay in the house with the boys, whether they like it or not.

> The girl breezed back into the house as if nothing had happened.
> "So, we're agreed," she said, peering through Beeper's bedroom doorway. "I'll be sleeping in this room. No mattress on the bed, but I'm used to that." (Davis 2013, p. 79)

In this and most other early scenes, Emily is seen through George's perspective as ruthless, manipulative and without emotion. By way of contrast, in the parallel *Your Story*, Emily finds time soon after the occurrence of the above scene to muse on her situation:

> Later, in the discarded bedroom. There's a mirror on the far wall. You see your face for the first time in a long time. A single tear washes a channel

[10] This useful term is borrowed from Vollmar (2001, ¶14).

> down its left side. Or is it the right? Everything is back to front. Everything is upside down too. Nobody has asked you how you feel. No-one in months. Or is it years? No-one but little Beeper. You wish you could tell that little boy. Really tell him. You wish you could hug him to sleep. You wish … (extract from Chapter 12)

Some of the same effect could be achieved by first person, of course, but the shortening and lengthening of the SPN view in different scenes seemed to work well, creating an inside and outside view, while the dystopian environment and Emily's position as the outsider seemed to also make second person efficacious. Although a fascinating research project, in a straight publishing sense, the "parallel sequel" was difficult because it took on the perspective of an older character, Emily, pushing the book into a different age band than *The Big Dry*. That made it a troublesome sequel, because children were unlikely to read two books aimed at different age groups sequentially, and boy readers (including my three sons) have been shown to be reluctant to read a book centred on a female character. The greater difficulty, perhaps, was in using such a difficult and potentially repelling narrative mode when addressing young readers who might have short attention spans. A significant percentage of readers might simply turn off after the first few sentences, unwilling to deal with the difficulties of the SPN.

Nonetheless, in the scenes where I recast confrontations between the major protagonists from Emily's standpoint, especially, I believed I was demonstrating a use of sustained second person that was intriguing, and was serving to illuminate the story and characters. But writing second person also proved exceedingly difficult. It is not a "natural" mode even for an experienced writer. It involves a lot of slow, hard work trying to position the "camera" in the correct position, sentence by sentence. What follows are two of the short chapters from *The Big Dry* with their corresponding scenes in *Your Story*:

The Big Dry **(extract from Chapter Seven, pp. 44-49)**

It was a girl. The dirtiest girl George had ever seen. Her face was caked with so much dust, she was like a ghost. Her long wiry hair, her face, her dress, her long thin arms were all the same ashen colour.

George couldn't tell who she was, or even how old she was. He hesitated, trying to work out what to do. Then he ran forward. He planned to barrel her out and kick the door shut, but she swivelled on one foot and stepped sideways around Beeper. George found himself next to the open door, with the girl already halfway down the hall.

"Who are you?" George yelled. "What do you want?"

The girl looked at George and Beeper. Calmly. "I'm not one for answering questions."

"Get out of our house." George slammed his hand on the front door. "Get out or …"

"Or?" She smiled, and glided down the hall like she was in her own home.

"Or … or … our dad will chase you out."

"I'm not seeing him anywhere."

"He's out. At the supermarket. He'll be back soon."

Beeper scooted behind George. "Yes," he added. "Soon."

The girl smiled again, then ambled towards the kitchen. George ran after her and lunged at her shoulders. She weaved sideways into his bedroom, leaving George

to stumble and fall on his knees in the hall. He scrambled back to his feet and stood in the doorway, blocking her exit.

She was still smiling. “Hold your horses, kiddo. I’m not going to hurt you.”

“No, because I’m going to throw you out. Right now.”

The girl was taller than George, but thinner. He now guessed she was maybe fourteen or fifteen. He could knock her off her feet if he had to. He rushed at her again. She stepped sideways: smoothly, quickly and without losing her carefree grin. George lost his footing on Beeper’s mattress. By the time he steadied himself, the girl was in the kitchen.

“Get out!” George yelled again.

“I’m seeing you’ve traded most things,” she said, opening the cupboards one after the other. “A couple of saucepans left … I’m liking this one, nice and big. A few tins of food, a small collection of water jars. Not very much, is it?”

George grabbed Beeper and held him close. “Get out of our house!” he shouted at her.

“Yes, you keep saying that,” she replied. “It’s Sunday morning, by the way.”

“So what?”

The girl put her filthy hand around one of the white mugs George had filled a few moments earlier. She used her other hand to slap some of the water onto her face. “If there’s one time for being sure no supermarket is open, it’s Sunday morning.”

The water made streaks of mud run down her neck and onto her grimy dress. Under the dirt, her wet skin glowed dark brown. She had a small silver stud in the

side of her nose. “If I had to guess, I’d say it’s two little boys telling one big lie. Your father hasn’t just slipped down to the supermarket. You’re all on your lonesome ownsome.”

George let go of Beeper. He stepped towards her. “That’s our water. Leave it.”

“Who’s being Mr Meany?” The girl picked up the second mug and took a large gulp. “A young lady goes strolling into the wrong house by accident when she’s trying to visit a friend, and you deny her a freshen up and a tiny sip of water.”

“You didn’t stroll in by accident. The door was locked,” said George.

“With the bar across it,” added Beeper, poking his head out from behind George. “Only we know how to open it. Dad made it like that in case one of us was ever locked out.”

“Ssh!” George hissed, turning around.

“I like you, littl’un,” she said. “What’s your name?”

“Don’t tell her anything, Beeper.”

There was silence. George blushed. How could he be so stupid?

The girl laughed softly. “Is Beeper really a name?”

“It’s my name!” said Beeper. He stepped out a little from behind George. “Sort of.”

“Cute,” she said. She eyed every corner of the room. “And what’s your big bro’s name?”

Beeper tightened his lips and shook his head.

"Hmm," the girl said with a tiny lift of her eyebrows. "Loyalty. You don't see much of that these days." She cruised back into the hall and looked into their father's bedroom. "How long's he been gone, your dad?"

Beeper shook his head again but his cheeks started to redden. "Two nights," he whispered.

"Quiet!" yelled George.

"We're going out to find him," added Beeper.

"Beeper! I told you!" George growled.

The girl was now inside their father's bedroom. George watched her open the chest of drawers, swing out the wardrobe doors, stand right beside where the sword was hidden.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"As I said, kiddo, I'm not one for answering questions."

George walked into the room and ran around the other side, keeping his eyes on her, and not where he was going. He knocked over the red chair and bruised his knee. "If I give you something, will you go? Some tins of food. Some more water?"

"Don't need a thing in the world," she said. "As it happens, I'm leaving anyway. Lots to do. But I might come back and visit some other time."

"Don't you dare!"

"I'll be doing as I like." The girl grinned. "Bye, little Beeper. You too, Mr Whatever-Your-Name-Is."

She stepped past the boys, sauntered down the hallway, through the open door and out of the house. George followed, a couple of steps behind, to the end of the hall. He slammed the front door, waited for his heartbeat to slow, then squinted through the peephole.

The yard was empty, apart from a scrawny grey bird sitting on the letterbox. The girl was already gone.

George reset the metal bar then turned to Beeper, who was right behind him. "I told you not to tell anyone anything!"

Beeper slumped onto the floor and put his head on his knees.
"Nobody can know we're on our own, Beeper! Say you're sorry. Say you won't do it again."

Beeper tightened his arms and legs further. He said nothing.
George slapped his open hands against the wall. "You said you'd come home quickly, Dad," he yelled. He hit the wall again. "And you didn't."

***Your Story* (corresponding SPN extract from Chapter Seven)**

Two boys stare at you. The one who was standing on the wall, and another. A little brother, by the look of him. Maybe five or six. Nuggety. With dimples. The boys have every expression on their faces. Surprise, disappointment. Building anger.

You have to be The Fox. To stare them down coldly.

The older boy clenches his fists and runs. You step from one foot to the other. It's second nature, escaping from a fist, a kick. Even a knife.

The boy shakes his head. Wonders how it happened. How he ended up next to the door, with you safely down the hallway. He's never dealt with a fox before.

"Who are you?" he yells. "What do you want?"

You look at him. And at the other one. "I'm not one for answering questions," you say. Your heart sprints but your voice sounds calm. Smooth too, even though there's a dryness raging inside your throat.

"Get out of our house," the boy growls, slamming his hand on the front door, trying to look menacing. "Get out or …"

"Or?" You smile. He doesn't know menacing.

"Or …," the boy stutters, "or … our dad will chase you out."

"I'm not seeing him anywhere." You have a right to be here, to take what you want. You have to believe it.

"He's out. At the supermarket. He'll be back soon."

The little one is now hiding behind his big brother. "Yes," he adds in a tiny voice. "Soon."

You smile again and move down the hall. You need to find the kitchen, to slake your thirst. The boy is running after you. You can sense him over your shoulder. You push off your left foot, through a doorway. Into a bedroom.

You hear the boy fall over in the hallway. Seconds later he's back on his feet,

blocking the doorway. Determined. Got to give him that.

You smile again. “Hold your horses, kiddo. I’m not going to hurt you.”

“No, because I’m going to throw you out. Right now.” He rushes forward, but he’s not quick enough. Tough enough. Hungry enough. Never had to survive on the street. A quick step sideways from you and he loses his footing on the edge of a mattress. You make it to the kitchen.

“Get out!” he shrieks, closely behind.

Rifle through the cupboards, look as calm as you can. There are jars of water on the bench. They look cloudy but drink from them if there’s no better choice.

“I’m seeing you’ve traded most things,” you say, opening the cupboard doors quickly, one after the other, filling the room with dust. “A couple of saucepans left … I’m liking this one, nice and big. A few tins of food, a small collection of water jars. Not very much, is it?”

The big boy holds the little one closely. “Get out of our house!” he shouts.

“Yes, you keep saying that.” You eye every corner of the room, looking for any advantage. Any useful knowledge. Anything that might help a fox survive. “It’s Sunday morning, by the way.”

“So what?”

There are white mugs on the table, filled with water. Your insides are cracking with dryness. But you can’t look too desperate. Pride perhaps. Yet important.

You put your hand around one of the mugs, and stick your other hand inside. You slap the water across your face. Sigh with the coolness. “If there’s one time for

being sure no supermarket is open, it's Sunday morning."

The water runs down your neck, cooling the top of your dress. "If I had to guess, I'd say it's two little boys telling one big lie. Your father hasn't just slipped down to the supermarket. You're all on your lonesome ownsome."

The older boy steps forward. "That's our water. Leave it."

"Who's being Mr Meany?" You pick up the second mug and take a large gulp. It's life, flowing back into you. You pause and let it soak in. "A young lady goes strolling into the wrong house by accident when she's trying to visit a friend, and you deny her a freshen up and a tiny sip of water."

"You didn't stroll in by accident," says the older boy. "The door was locked."

"With the bar across it," adds the little brother. "Only we know how to open it. Dad made it like that in case one of us was ever locked out."

"I like you, littl'un," you say. "What's your name?"

"Don't tell her anything, Beeper."

Beeper, eh. The big boy fell for that one. He's blushing something fierce. You force a small laugh. "Is Beeper really a name?"

"It's my name!" the little one says, peering out from behind his brother. "Sort of."

"Cute." You can't help but notice he's about the same height as Laurissa. The same age too. But foxes aren't soft. They can't be sentimental. "And what's your big bro's name?"

The Beeper boy shakes his head.

"Hmm," you say. Your mind is elsewhere. The first bedroom was bare. It's only a small house, but there must be others. "Loyalty," you sigh to no-one in particular. "You don't see much of that these days."

You walk back into the hall, towards the front door, look to the right. "How long's he been gone, your Dad?"

Beeper shakes his head again. His cheeks redden. "Two nights," he whispers.

"Quiet!" yells his brother.

"We're going out to find him."

"Beeper!" the big boy growls. "I told you!"

You're inside another bedroom. There's a double bed, a wardrobe. Work your way through the drawers, not sure what you are looking for. Maybe you should have simply grabbed the food and gone. Maybe the father really will come back at any moment.

"Who are you?" The older boy demands. "What do you want?" He watches from the door. But he's not about to rush forward this time.

"As I said, kiddo, I'm not one for answering questions."

He walks into the room, around the other side of the bed. He's looking at the bottom of the wardrobe. Something of value must be there. He knocks over a red chair. "If I give you something, will you go?" he says. "Some tins of food. Some more water?"

"Don't need a thing in the world," you lie. Your mind is racing. There could be

more to gain at this house than just food. Later. Instinct says now is the time to go.

"As it turns out," you announce, "I'm leaving anyway. Lots to do. But I might come back visiting some other time."

"Don't you dare!"

You grin. "I'll be doing as I like. Bye, little Beeper. You too, Mr Whatever-Your-Name-Is."

You step past the boys, saunter down the hallway, through the open door and out of the house. The older boy follows closely. He slams the front door behind you.

Through the empty yard you walk, shoulders back, head held up high. And ready to cry. (Davis 2011-2012)

The Big Dry **(extract from Chapter Eleven pp. 74-78)**

George slammed the front door and charged down the hall.

"You!" he growled. There was no fear now, just anger. "How did you get in again?"

The girl was sitting at the kitchen servery. She didn't look at George. Or at Beeper, who followed closely behind. She took a slow sip of water from one of their jars, then scooped a mouthful of food from one of their tins. A red, blue and green tin. The Special Tin.

There was something else wrong. The girl was wearing a different dress. A much cleaner dress.

"Those clothes …" George spluttered. "Where did they come from?"

She glanced up at him. “I’m still not the type to be answering questions, kiddo. But I have something to talk to you about.”

“They’re Mum’s clothes! You took them.”

“No-one was using them.” She took another mouthful of salmon. “When times are tough, you can’t be too sentimental.”

Beeper held up his fists and rushed at the girl. She slid from the chair, and was somehow in the kitchen before he could make contact.

“Where is your mum?” the girl asked.

“None of your business!” George put his arm around Beeper’s shoulders.

“Is she living somewhere else?”

“What?” George followed the girl into the kitchen, with Beeper in tow. His tiredness had been replaced by anger. He tore open the cupboard doors to check if she’d taken anything else.

The girl sashayed past them and sat back at the servery. She began eating the salmon again. “Just asking if she ran away when everything got too hard … that’s what people do these days.”

“Not in this family they don’t,” George said.

Beeper leaned over the servery and shouted in her face. “My mum disappeared in a blaster.”

The girl didn’t flinch. “Maybe, littl’un. But, truth is, most people look out for

number one. Those who don't are fools."

"You're certainly taking care of yourself," said George.

"And you're not, kiddo?" She smiled and scooped up more salmon.

"I'm not the one who's stealing things."

"I'll be replacing stuff. Maybe. But I can't go anywhere tonight. Won't make it to where I'm heading, before dark."

"It's mid-afternoon!" George stomped around the servery and stood beside her.

"The curfew's been extended. Haven't you heard? I've got a long way to go and nobody's meant to be walking out on the street from dusk. Our beloved General says it's for our own good."

George wanted to hit her, to drag her outside. "You should have thought about that earlier."

The girl leaned towards Beeper. "So," she said in a softer tone, "you didn't find your father."

"Like we'd tell you," said George.

"We didn't go to the new hospital," whimpered Beeper. "George said we couldn't."

"Ssh!"

"But he said he'd worked out a better way to find him."

"Ssh!"

"Maybe your dad's done a bolt too, kiddo."

"Our parents aren't like that," George yelled. His face was right next to hers. "They'd never leave us behind."

"Parents are a thing of the past, boys. Like rain. It's everyone for themselves." The girl scraped the last morsel of salmon from the tin, put down the spoon and looked at George. "Anyway, I've been admiring the nice room at the front of the house. No-one's using it. So I'll just stop there for the night and be going in the morning. When I've beaten the dust out of my own clothes."

George thrust out his right hand so quickly she didn't have time to move. He grabbed a fistful of her hair.

Keeping one hand tightly clenched against her scalp, he seized a fistful of her sleeve with the other. He twisted her head sideways and pulled it down against her shoulder. She winced with pain but didn't make a sound. George yanked her head down even further, putting the weight of his body into it. He dragged the girl off the stool and marched her down the hall. "Open the front door, Beeper," he yelled.

"George!" Beeper shrieked. But he did what he was told.

George shoved the girl through the open door and swung it shut behind her. For once he'd taken control. Something had at last gone his way.

"This is our house, and our food," George shouted, as he jammed the security bar into its brackets. "You're not welcome."

"Who you going to complain to?" the girl yelled through the door. "Hey … *George*? Beeper's a little boy with no parents. I could get a reward for reporting

him. Big reward. But I'd rather we were friends."

George rested his forehead against the back of the door. His temples were burning.

"That's not all, kiddo," the girl added. "I could be coming back any time I feel like it. They haven't made a door yet that I can't get through."

George slid to the floor and leaned against the wall. It was all true. Somehow, she knew how to open their door. And she could report them whenever she wanted.

George was beaten. Again. He climbed back to his feet. His shoulders, his arms, his whole body seemed to weigh a hundred tonnes as he opened the door.

***Your Story* (corresponding SPN extract from Chapter Eleven)**

The older boy, the one who wouldn't give up his name, is first into the room. "You!" he shouts. "How did you get in again?"

You stay where you are, slyly checking there's no one else. Listening mainly. Making sure there are no other footsteps. No father, no police.

It's solely the boys. You sigh to yourself then take a slow sip of water from the jars.

The moment you realise you are safe, your exhaustion resurfaces, as do those images from last night that you haven't been able to cast from your mind. That man's eyes. The big ugly fist he swung at you, so close to connecting you could feel the air it moved. The threats. The evil language. The chase.

You scoop another mouthful of salmon without looking up.

"Those clothes …" the boy splutters. "Where did they come from?"

You glance at him. "I'm still not the type to be answering questions, kiddo. But I have something to talk to you about."

"They're Mum's clothes! You took them."

You eat more from the tin. "No-one was using them," you reply after a while. "When times are tough, you can't be too sentimental."

Beeper holds up his fists and rushes forward. You slide from the chair, easily move around the servery before he can connect.

"Where is your Mum?" you ask from the kitchen.

"None of your business!" The older boy says, putting his arm around Beeper's shoulders.

"Is she living somewhere else?"

"What?" The older one barges into the kitchen, with Beeper behind. You don't move out of his way and he hesitates, stepping around to make sure he doesn't bump into you. He flings open the cupboard doors and looks inside.

You glide past the boys and sit back at the servery. For once you hold the power. You begin spooning salmon into your mouth again. And in a way that makes it clear who is calling the shots. "Just asking if she ran away when everything got too hard … that's what people do these days."

"Not in this family, they don't!"

Beeper waits until his brother finishes. Then he leans over the servery and insists.

"My mum went missing in a blaster."

You don't flinch. He's all noise. "Maybe, littl'un. But, truth is, most people look out for number one. Those who aren't taking care of themselves first are fools."

"You're certainly taking care of yourself," the older boy says.

"And you're not, kiddo?" You smile and scoop up another mouthful of salmon.

"I'm not the one who's stealing things."

"I'll be replacing stuff. Maybe. But I can't go anywhere tonight. Won't make it to where I'm heading before dark. The curfew's been extended. Haven't you heard? Nobody's meant to be walking out on the street from dusk."

"It's mid-afternoon!" The older boy stomps around the servery and stand beside you. He looked too tired to be dangerous earlier. Now he is more sure of himself. More menacing. "Anyway, you should have thought about that earlier."

You are certain you have the big boy's measure. You lean towards Beeper. "So," you say in the voice you would once use with Laurissa, whenever she was upset, "you didn't find your father."

"That's none of your business," the brother snaps.

"We didn't go to the hospital," Beeper says in a tiny voice. "George said we couldn't."

"Ssh!"

"Maybe he's done a bolt too, kiddo."

"Our parents aren't like that," the older boys yells. You know his name now. That's yet more information to store up and use when necessary. But right now his face is next to yours. His bloodshot, dirt-grazed eyes are drilling into you. "They'd never leave us behind," he growls.

You could calm things down. Maybe even apologise. "Parents are a thing of the past, boys. Like rain," you say instead. "It's everyone for themselves."

You scrape the last morsel of salmon from the tin, put down the spoon and look at George. "Anyway, I've been looking at a nice room at the front of the house. No-one's using it. So I'll just stop there for the night and be going in the morning. When I've beaten the dust out of my own clothes."

George's hand suddenly thrusts out towards your head. You move, but too calmly, too casually. He's quicker than you imagined. He has a fistful of your hair. He squeezes and it pulls tightly on your scalp.

You fear he is about to punch you with his spare hand. Instead he grabs your sleeve then pulls down hard on your hair, twisting your head.

The only thing you can see is the ceiling. He's pushing you along the hall as fast as he can. You're not going to make a sound, no matter how much it hurts. You still hold the advantage. You have to believe it.

He yanks your hair even harder and it's difficult to walk. "Open the front door, Beeper," he yells.

You hear Beeper shriek out the word "George!" with shock and surprise. Then you hear the door being opened. The grip is relaxed. You can move your head at last but you're out on the porch and the door is being slammed behind you.

"This is our house, and our food," George shouts, above the noise of the steel bar

being jammed into position. “You’re not welcome.”

You stand up straight and rub your scalp where the skin has been pulled. You can still hear George breathing heavily on the other side of the door.

“Who you going to complain to?” you demand as you wipe your eyes and stretch out your neck. “Hey … *George*? Beeper’s a little boy with no parents. I could get a reward for reporting him. Big reward. But I’d rather we were friends.”

George goes silent, but you know he’s still there. “That’s not all, kiddo,” you shout. “I could be coming come back any time I feel like it. They haven’t made a door yet that I can’t get through.”

There’s a thud, as if George has slumped against the door. You wait. Eventually, the bar is lifted and the lock is turned. The door opens. You’ve won. This time. (Davis 2011-2012)

Technical problems apparent

Irrespective of the success of individual scenes in the incipient *Your Story*, the bigger picture made me aware of the huge difference between writing short passages of effective SPN and writing sustained works. The view that second person works best in small doses is supported, perhaps, by the fact that in practice most writers use it only in small doses; second person in fiction mostly lasts a sentence, a paragraph or a chapter within larger works. Alternatively, it might be a short story of 3000 or 4000 words (Tim Winton’s “Long, Clear View” in *The Turning* from 2005, could be taken as a typical example). Despite this, I had examples of at least three novels that proved longer works were possible. I was convinced *Your Story*, with an extent of approximately 40,000 words, could work. However, even with this naïve approach I could sense major difficulties emerging, even if I lacked the technical knowledge to articulate them at that stage.

Your Story had to fully exploit the best features of those few sustained second person novels I had read up until then. However, the more the novel progressed, and the more it was discussed with one of my supervisors, Peter Doyle,[11] the more I began to doubt this was possible. There was the growing acceptance that the story I had chosen was not right for an SPN; perhaps I was too much influenced by the cleverness and intricacy of writing a "parallel sequel" and was trying to force the wrong narratorial mode onto the material.

The major problem was the growing disparity between the nature of the voice – restricted, self-questioning, insecure – and the character I had chosen to make the centre of the SPN. Emily, as revealed in *The Big Dry*, was not restricted, self-questioning or insecure. She was self-assured, too much an agent of her own fate, too much in control for the second person mode to produce the unsettling, disorienting and often disassociative effects achieved by Kocan, Campbell and McInerney. Emily's free-spiritedness and her ability to move around – albeit within a very bleak environment – made her (and her proxy, the reader) an unwilling candidate to be hemmed in by the claustrophobia of second person. Therefore, despite her personality and characteristics being already largely fixed in *The Big Dry*, I found myself adapting and modifying them to suit the strengths of the SPN. She became more anxious, unsure, fearful. She came to believe she was far more restricted in her options.

There was also the problem of sustaining an SPN over a longer text. Various strategies would allow me to break up the constant barrage of "you". These included interpolating letters or documents (I tried a first person diary but it seemed forced and was dropped), or extended dialogue (which I used to an extent), but the "you" voice still came across in parts as dense and almost bullying. That introduced further problems in a book aimed at children. Furthermore, I struggled with the logic behind the relationship behind narrator and narratee. Emily wasn't paranoid, anxious, hallucinating, addicted, intoxicated or

[11] Doyle is an award-winning novelist.

struggling for some sort of subconscious reinterpretation of events, all attributes I sensed in certain parts of Kocan, Campbell and McInerney. The story was very much of the now (or even near future), so the temporal telegram from older to younger Emily, which had been appealing to write at the start, increasingly seemed of little purpose for this particular story. She was spontaneous, not analytical, and we didn't even know she would survive much beyond her current age to gain the necessary wisdom. As the work continued I began to acknowledge what I had been denying: that the narrative mode needed to serve the needs of the story and characterisation, not the other way around.

It was clear from all of the above that *Your Story* – in that form at least – would have to be discarded. Although frustrating, this provided further proof of something important: you have to labour on the books that don't work in order to discover what does. Not only did I learn a lot when writing *Your Story*, but the change demonstrated the benefits of genuine creative practice research, with the two components of the project informing, and at times dramatically altering, each other to eventually – one hopes – produce a fully unified thesis.

The final decision to make the change from *Your Story* to what would become known as "The Flight" came in December 2012 when I flew from Sydney to Zurich. I had already suspected that an international flight might be a good backdrop for a second person short story or perhaps novella, so I closely observed the progression from airport lounge to plane, to airport lounge to customs at Zurich. The experience of flying is something I have always found slightly surreal, and the quirks are all the more evident if you choose to examine them closely and take notes as you go. Business Class or First Class travel could further heighten certain paradoxes: all the time the modern traveller is being plied with food and alcohol as if royalty, yet being checked, monitored and identified as if a criminal. Modern jet travel is an experience of passing over time zones and countries (and borders and sovereignty), never quite seeing a proper day or night, of being fêted by people who are determined to demonstrate you are a premium-paying passenger and therefore "special", yet who also leave you almost

completely without agency and for much of the time deny you your usual electronic props (telephone, email and Internet).

The progression from Sydney to Zurich (or any other long-haul international trip) is one where for much of the time the traveller is literally belted into place, within an alternative world floating above the real one, where altitude and alcohol and sleeplessness can blur everything, where small frustrations and worries can fester without release inside a metal box speeding through the firmament. It is also a place (or perhaps a non-place to use the term coined by Marc Augé in 1995) ruled by the tension of being effectively guilty until you can demonstrate yourself innocent; at every point you are called to prove that you are who you claim to be, and that the person that you claim to be has a right to be in that precise seat, plane, lounge or zone of a particular terminal. You must regularly demonstrate that you are not a threat.

Airports and planes are filled entirely with people who want to be somewhere else (ground staff and aircrew aside perhaps). As Pico Iyer (2000) put it, "no one knows where anyone is coming from … and no one really knows where anyone is at" (p. 51). Iyer calls the airport a place where time plays tricks, where people play out major emotion moments in plain view (shouting, sobbing, passionately kissing), where people's lives are changed irreversibly, yet all against a backdrop which is "an anthology of generic spaces – the shopping mall, the food court, the hotel lobby – which bears the same relation to life, perhaps, that Muzak does to music" (p. 43). Marc Augé (1995) in *Non-places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*[12] wrote: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (p. 63). These non-places are "spaces which are not themselves anthropological places" and surrendered to "solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral" (p. 63). Transport routes are within this world; through the use of

[12] The sub-title was shortened to *An Introduction to Supermodernity* for the 2008 edition.

tickets, passports and so on, "the user of the non-place is always required to prove his innocence" (p. 82).

Augé added: "Since non-places are there to be passed through, they are measured in units of time" while physical things such as cities below become merely denoted by signs, pilot announcements or points on a screen in front of the passenger (pp. 83-84). Similarly, in *Aviopolis – A Book about Airports* (2004), Gillian Fuller and Ross Harley point out that flights are generally explained in hours not miles. "Distance is a temporal rather than a spatial issue." (p. 39)

It is significant that Michel Foucault, in his 1967 lecture paper on heterotopias, or other spaces, cited the boat or ship ("a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea" ¶28) as the heterotopia par excellence. I came to believe that the modern jetliner achieves all that a ship does in this regard and further disorients with speed and the blurring of borders and time zones. This could create what Foucault calls a heterochrony, or slice of time that is often linked to a heterotopy and can intensify it; Foucault argues that "The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time." (¶21)

A heterotopia is an in-between place, as second person is an in-between narrative mode. And in heterotopias and non-places there can be a disconnectedness and a certain disorientation that can be effectively captured with the SPN voice. To give but two examples, which I would soon discover: Neville Jackson's SPN *No End to the Way* (1965) set in the secretive, dangerous gay scene of Perth in the 1960s, and Deb Kandelaars' SPN *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel* (2011), set in an abusive relationship, unseen by the outside world.

Foucault says a heterotopia can be sacred or forbidden or, it seems, mundane. However, it is slightly outside the norm and is a place where changes occur (other

examples are the boarding school and prison).[13] When Peter Kocan was "transferred from Long Bay Gaol to the Ward for the Criminally Insane in Morisset Mental Hospital" (Heseltine 1988, p. 56), this could be described as going straight from one heterotopia to another. Foucault (1967) identifies several different types of heterotopia, including one "of deviation" such as a prison or asylum, and a "crisis heterotopia" where activities such as a coming of age occur out of sight (¶15). Clearly both could apply, the latter to Kocan's transformation into a poet/artist while locked away from the "normal" world.

Although I wasn't going to experience a prison or asylum (I hoped), the disjointed, "time-free" events and sensations I observed on my trip increasingly confirmed that the modern international jetliner could provide a similarly strong setting for a second person story. It was an ideal liminal space, a continuum of an "other space" experience stretching across continents and locking the protagonist in its prism for a full twenty-four hours, a situation where the reader could truly feel he or she was "both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it."[14] Others, I soon learned, had written about these very eerie jet age sensations, if not their suitability for a second person narrative. Fuller and Harley (2004) call the airport an "other space", a "real space that is linked to numerous other types of spaces, contradicting and inverting the sites which it connects" (p. 105). They also: "Airports signify the rise in a new type of urban form – 'metastable forms', which are constantly changing, yet appear stable." (p. 5)[15]

This instability (while appearing constant) mimics the metastable "you" pronoun in an SPN, a pronoun which appears fixed yet is always shifting its intent (certainly to a much greater extent than the *he* or *she* in a conventional third person book, or the average *I* in a first person text). Fuller and Harley note that airport terminals are filled with nervous energy, are in constant preparation for

[13] The non-place can be thought of as a type of heterotopia, aligning to the third category of Foucault's taxonomy (1967), the collective heterotopia; ie, those that juxtapose "in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (¶20).
[14] This is the Walt Whitman line quoted in the introduction to this exegesis.
[15] *Aviopolis* p. 152 (glossary) explains: "Airports are metastable, which is to say that they are stable in their constant instability."

emergency. The authors also write of the ontological transformation that occurs during the process of jet travel:

> The airport not only transforms a body on the ground into a body in the air, but it also involves the incorporeal transformation of the travelling body into a series of processing categories, like citizen, passenger, baggage allowance, threat (code red) or innocent. (p. 44)

During the "motionless motion and placeless place of jet aviation", the authors argue, one is constantly "othered" as pax, citizen, consumer, security risk, traveller or anonymous free spirit (p. 44). It seemed to me that this ontological slippage was a good match for that which the reader can experience in an SPN (a slippage discussed in detail in other parts of this thesis). In his essay "Bardo Flight", Erik Davis (2010) says "the grueling [sic], mind-altering reality of twenty-first-century commercial air travel" can at times equate to a rehearsal for what Tibetans call the bardo: "the insubstantial in-between state said to confront the soul after death, when the contents of mind return to seduce and terrify the ego's disoriented after-image as it reverberates into rebirth" (p. 348). One almost leaves the real world when entering the commercial air travel process, he argues (p. 348). This submission starts with the loss of your body ("or at least its relative autonomy and comfort"), being lined up, patted down and processed.

> The terminal is the gateway to an interzone of nowheres, a network of liminality, of thresholds and passageways and vehicles designed by the principalities of the air to move and distribute large populations of souls to their destinies – or at least their destinations. *Terminal.* What other journey, you might ask, begins at the end? (p. 348)

Similarly Iyer (2000) describes experiencing the "peculiar state of mind – or no-mind – that belongs to the no-time, no-place of the airport, that out-of-body state in which one's not quite there, but certainly not elsewhere" (p. 59). Again, I could see echoes in the experience of reading certain second person texts. Erik Davis

talks of the arbitrariness of the "archons who rule these transit zones" and implies that justice is suspended along with much else (p. 349). Many have discovered this to be the case: in 2012 Macquarie University's Noel King, an Australian in the process of travelling home from a US research trip, was grabbed by three Federal Marshals at the check-in counter at Seattle-Tacoma airport. He was handcuffed and accused of stealing three-quarters of a million dollars in Canadian gold bullion "among various other acts of theft and fraud" (King and Winestock 2013, p. 59).

From the airport King was transported to a Federal Detention Centre facility and spent the next six days in the Secure Holding Unit, underground with no natural light. In the end he was released with an apology; it was a mistaken identity, a coincidence drawn from the masses of information that are routinely gathered in the very process of travel (which in the US now includes finger-printing). Erik Davis (2010) describes an unpleasant travel experience of his own (he was dragged off a plane and questioned because an Eri*c* Davis was of interest to authorities) and says: "Suffice it to say that the only redemption lay in seeing it all as the bardo, whose deepest teaching seems to be that our uncontrolled fears, desires, and hatreds boomerang back tenfold." (p. 350)

By his own account King (2013) – incommunicado, underground, behind locked steel doors and suspended in legal limbo – soon battled anxiety and found himself at times talking or singing to himself, and sobbing (p. 61). What is pertinent here to "The Flight" is that the experience of a "normal" person being nabbed and taken away for questioning at a suburban bank counter or while going about their everyday business is almost unthinkable in most Western countries. Yet it seems always possible at almost any point while moving within the air travel system, even when innocent. Any tendency in a traveller towards paranoia – and paranoia is something an SPN can accentuate, as the chapter concerning the Kocan duology will show – could so easily be exacerbated.

Having made the possible link between non-places/heterotopias and effective second person, and having settled on the extreme "other space" of jet travel as my subject, how best to turn it into a work of fiction? The first aim was to create a work that was highly readable; proving that second person could be accessible was more important than eking out every single shade of the mode and potentially repelling readers. As shown in other parts of this thesis, second person and autobiography (or semi-autobiographical fiction) go well together, particularly when it involves a story about which the reader has some relevant knowledge (allowing the writer to under-describe certain aspects of the character and story). Since I could not bring a well-known back story with me, I had to appropriate one. I realised a fugitive provided an apposite character, and not merely because it gave the title "The Flight" a secondary meaning. The considerable press attention given to whistleblowers and most specifically Julian Assange, who had fled to the Ecuadorian Embassy in London a few months earlier and was apparently trying to leave the UK, gave me the archetype of the driven, passionate, righteous and potentially paranoid man on the run. The text, I decided, should begin with simple observations, pulling the reader slowly into the protagonist's situation and not specifically drawing attention to the second person, which can be excluding:

> The plane is moving backwards. Slowly. You have to stare at the ground to confirm it. Yes, the luggage vans and fuel trucks are edging right-to-left across your porthole.
>
> Surely that's it. They can't re-open the doors now. Not after all those false starts. Not after all those apologies from the captain. Not after all those delays. God, so many gin and tonics in the lounge, your head tingling, your spare hand resting on your knees to stop them shaking. Sculling that first glass of champagne while sitting in window seat 12A, waiting to move. (*The Flight* – Chapter One of this thesis)

If my unnamed protagonist were a Julian Assange-type character, and the text contains hints that it is, it gave several advantages. Firstly, it meant that readers

would likely know something about him or his type, or feel they do. It allowed the presentation of a character who is an outsider (and with less agency at that time than Emily in *Your Story*) and also one perceived to be self-centred and perhaps verging on paranoid. It also afforded a highly articulate voice to work with. This is not to say there was any attempt to take on Assange's actual voice; merely that with an intelligent, articulate proselytiser as the protagonist, it was possible to strive for a literary and even poetic voice within the text, without it becoming unconvincing if the second person segues in and out of a quasi stream of consciousness (or if indeed the reader supposes at times that the character is addressing himself or self-narrating the action). The narrative voice works best when its tone is identifiable with the character, again as argued elsewhere in this thesis.

> Sanctimonious! That was one of the adjectives that kept appearing. *Holier-than-thou. Egomaniacal. Self-centred.* The project wasn't about the greater good, they began saying in unison, as if given some secret cue. It was *all about you*.
>
> As soon as each word or phrase had been used by one outlet, it was automatically added to the list of standard adjectives and take-downs adopted by the others. By journalists that, in most cases, had never met you. Never really understood what you were trying to accomplish. Or were jealous of what you had already done. Pissed off by your very use of the word journalist. (*The Flight* – Chapter One of this thesis)

The aim was to use second person to gain a first person intimacy but a third person remove. The reader, ideally, would never be quite sure how in control of himself or reality the protagonist was. Nor would the positioning of the "you" ever be quite fixed, causing an ontological instability as the reader varies the degree of association, in other words, the degree of accepting the "you" role. This instability was exacerbated by the occasional use of free indirect discourse, putting the reader inside the head of the protagonist in some passages ("The baby

is still screaming. *Business class!* What business is a newborn involved in … the annoying everyone else business?") and well outside in others ("From above, you can be seen making neat patterns. Covering each forkful with the exact same combination of vegetables.") A decision was made to stick to the single pronoun "you", not to shift to other pronouns as other writers have done. This was partly because, although the above stream of consciousness provides but one example of my unnamed character's narcissism, paranoia and perhaps mental illness, he never feels the sense of belonging, or collegiate purpose, that occasionally affects, for example, Kocan's protagonist.

The text suggests the character is involved in some sort of electronic project to "bring truth", or at least truth as he perceives it. There was another potential SPN advantage in centring on a technology-focussed individual in "The Flight": it could ramp up the terror. Such a person is likely to be far more out of sorts when unable to "log in"; likewise, a man who is running an organisation under siege, such as Wikileaks, is likely to be suffering far more turmoil and doubt if isolated and without "his people" on call (the accusatory "you" could be very effective here too; it can carry a tone of judgement, a censoriousness that may be emanating from within, or perhaps from outside the character). Of course the character's name is never really given; it is suppressed until the end, when the reader is offered a name (via dialogue). Even then, it is unclear whether this is merely one of many pseudonyms used by the character. Humour was also occasionally used to break up the oppressive tone – for example when the protagonist imagines, with some relief, that the plane is about to crash.

> You can smile, even bring forward the sound of the Singaporean purser making one last heavily accented announcement: "We are now travelling at 1285 km/h into the side of a mountain, where the current temperature is 8 degrees Celsius and the local time is 9.00 pm. Thank you for choosing to die with Singapore Airlines." (*The Flight* – Chapter One of this thesis)

Flashbacks were also used – for example, imagining more peaceful times and, in a dream, reliving the arrest – though these were kept minimal (as the work had a shortish extent, it required less mitigation of the undesirable SPN attributes). As already noted, air travel provides a liminal space that can help second person exploit its strengths. To further these effects, and ideally heighten them, the egocentric fugitive of "The Flight" can add a mind in flux[16] (further blurred with alcohol) plus a fear of betrayal and capture. There is also lust, longing, fantasy, doubt, frustration, memories (real and distorted), claustrophobia, powerlessness and the tyranny of time and distance. I was aware all of these attributes could be useful in an SPN, as long as I incorporated some humour and flights of fantasy to slightly alleviate the SPN "assault".

Conclusion

The switch from *Your Story* to a much more restricted environment – the extreme non-place/heterotopia of an aeroplane – and to an ultra-anxious, indeed slightly paranoid, fugitive as the protagonist, was a productive one, yielding a better match of mode and subject matter. Matching mode and subject matter (albeit on the second attempt) was the single most important achievement, as it allowed two of the perceived disadvantages of the SPN mode – claustrophobia and the sensation that the reader is being dragged along – to be utilised as potential advantages. In their new context, these two "disadvantages" could reinforce the themes of the story and help the reader feel the anxiousness and lack of agency that the character was feeling. The SPN also generated the sensation of surveillance, ie, a voice reporting on everything "you" are doing. Yet, almost paradoxically, it did this while also giving something close to first person intimacy and allowing a slightly broader picture of what was happening, a feature more akin to third person.

With the heterotopia of modern jet travel and second person, a man could be shown out of time, out of body, out of routine (and away from the network that

[16] Richardson (2006) noted the SPN's capacity for "revealing a mind in flux" (p. 35).

brought him safety) and, at times, out of his mind. The instability of the "you" that is almost inherent to the SPN could underline the instability of the character and his situation, heightening tension and going some way towards making the reader feel as out-of-sorts as the protagonist. By taking a known story/character I could under-describe the situation, reducing the clutter and back-story that would have increased the length and made it hard to mitigate the repelling nature of the relentless "you". In "The Flight", which runs for nearly 11,000 words, I have created a work longer than the average second person short story, but considerably shorter than the full-length novel I had originally set out to produce. That's the way it worked out; when the writing of "The Flight" began, there was no planned limit on its extent. This was decided by the material. I deemed the final length to be the right length, which is the only appropriate length for any work. However, the technical challenges encountered along the way made it easy to understand why most writers choose to keep their SPN work short or, possibly, abandon along the way any attempt to create a full-length novel entirely in that mode. I do intend to attempt a full-length second person novel soon, unrelated to a specific academic project. However, I now appreciate that even more sophisticated techniques will be needed to make that longer work accessible and engaging throughout.

The short extracts from *Your Story* and the full text of "The Flight" demonstrate the dramatic change of approach, while the thesis as a whole reinforces the reasons for it, learned during three and a half years of research. What separated the two creative endeavours was an extensive examining of the body of academic research on second person narrative – a dialogue that had progressed for about half a century. A summary of this research is presented in the literary review that makes up the next chapter, along with an explanation about how this research would influence my final style and technique when using the SPN during this project.

Chapter four:
Literature review: second person narrative

Analysis of literary techniques used in the novel began with Percy Lubbock[17] and others early in the 20th century. These writers didn't look at second person in any detail (if they even mentioned it), partly because examples of literature written in that mode were then sparse. That's not to say the "you" address was unknown; Trollope and others commonly made a direct reader address in the early days of the novel (the so-called "Dear Reader" approach) but this is not true second person, merely an address to a heterodiegetic narrate.[18] Most major academic and popular texts on the techniques of novel writing continued to largely or entirely avoid the subject, from E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) through to James Wood's highly acclaimed *How Fiction Works* (2008), in which Wood merely says successful examples of second person novels "are rare indeed" (p. 5). Discussion of the SPN has taken place mainly in academic journals and books, primarily among narrative theorists from the 1960s.

Critical discussion of second person narrative voice started after the appearance of Michel Butor's "new novel" *La Modification* (1957 in French, 1958 in English). The early defining work was by Bruce Morrissette (1965), which proposed that the SPN was a serious advancement in fictional technique (p. 1). What followed were at least 30 academic papers, books and dissertations looking at the subject from a variety of positions. This chapter provides a literature review of this material, particularly in regards to what have been proposed as the unique literary

[17] See *The Craft of Fiction* by Percy Lubbock (1921).
[18] One of the most famous examples is found in the final chapter of *Jane Eyre* (CHAPTER XXXVIII-CONCLUSION), which begins with the sentence: "Reader, I married him."

properties of the SPN, and theories on how these can be (or have been) exploited by authors.[19]

Early research

Despite its prominent attention from critics, Butor's *La Modification* didn't immediately inspire specific research on second person. A good example of the modest interest is provided by the landmark 1961 book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* by Wayne C. Booth. It introduced many concepts, or at least gave rise to lasting names for them. These include the "implied author", "authorial privilege", "author neutrality" and "author effacement" or lack thereof.[20] However the SPN rates no more than a single footnote in the book's 552 page extent, in which Booth declares that attempts to use it have never been very successful. He says in *La Modification* the mode is distracting at first, but "it is surprising how quickly one is absorbed into the illusory 'present' of the story, identifying one's vision with the 'vous' almost as fully as with the 'I' and 'he' in other stories" (p. 150). Even when Booth returned to *The Rhetoric of Fiction* in 1983 and wrote an extensive afterword, he did not revisit the subject of second person, despite a larger body of texts in that mode existing by then.

Laurent Le Sage, in *The French New Novel* (1962) briefly considered the unusual narrative mode of *La Modification*, citing the English language Simon and Schuster edition known as *A Change of Heart* (translated by Jean Stewart). He refers to "…the substitution of the second person for the usual third or first person as the narrative agent. This gives the startling impression that the hero is addressing himself or that the author is making the reader the hero of his novel." (p. 72) There has since built up a body of work arguing about the identify of the "you" in *La Modification*; suffice to say, the SPN's inherent ambiguities have

[19] Although the focus here is on the specific literary effects, there are many, many other potentially equally fascinating areas awaiting research. Schofield (1998b), for example, briefly introduces the notion that "readers within a culture – including a regional or sub-culture – that is strongly individualist are likely to be more effected by Protean-'you' discourse than readers within a culture that is strongly collectivist" (p. 227).

[20] Booth (1961): "we must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear" (p. 20).

ensured that not all agree with either of Le Sage's conclusions (self-address or reader-as-hero). By way of illustration, Irene Kacandes (1994) surveyed the reader responses to *La Modification*:

> Some readers passionately testified to their sense of being themselves addressed … Others insisted that the *vous* could only refer to the protagonist … yet other readers just as intensely asserted that the pronoun ambiguously addresses both protagonist and reader … even highly sophisticated readers like Michel Leiris and Roland Barthes conflated narrative levels that theorists normally keep distinct. … Leiris sees the novelist as addressing his readers, and Barthes conceptualizes the novelist as addressing the protagonist. (section 2 ¶2)

Morrissette's "Narrative 'You' in Contemporary Literature" (1965) hails second person as an important evolution in literary narrative mode, albeit one so rare, he says, that it is widely regarded as "L'innovation de Butor" (p. 1). Morrissette traces the origins of second person, notwithstanding its additional complexities in French, where there are two forms of the "you" address (the familiar *tu* and the formal *vous*) and a related impersonal form, *on,* which broadly equates to the English "one" (as in "one must be careful in such circumstances"). Morrissette cites the early use of second person by lyric poets (p. 4), and says "you" is also a substitute for "one" in a variety of English language proverbs (p. 6). [21] He points out that the second person form is used primarily in guide books and the like, where it "invites the reader to place himself in the position of the writer, with the clear implication that anyone who so places himself will witness the identical scene or perform the same action" (p. 2).[22] Of most importance here, though, Morrissette was possibly the first to identify (in print at least) that the narrative "you" in novels:

[21] He gives the example: "You don't have to be a chicken to recognize a bad egg." It should be added here that the widespread use of "you" in proverbs reinforces the point made in the introduction that the textual or spoken "you" can provide both a specificity and a universality.
[22] He says "writer" here, not protagonist or narratee, despite these alternative words seeming more in keeping with Morrissette's overall argument.

> …although of comparatively late development, appears as a mode of curiously varied psychological resonances, capable, in the proper hands, of producing effects in the fictional field that are unobtainable by other modes or persons. Narrative "you" generates a complex series of perspectives whose multiple angles deserve to be explored. (p. 2)

Morrissette points out that the preferred verb tense for second person texts is the present, "thus further generalizing the action into something which the reader not only might have done, but might conceivably do" (p. 3). He distinguishes between sporadic use (by the likes of Faulkner and Hemingway for a variety of transitory effects) and systematic use by the likes of Butor (p. 7). Morrissette cites Rex Stout's novel *How like a God* (1929) as an early SPN – perhaps the first long form example (p. 12). It wasn't readily accepted; Morrissette states that in 1929 the second person mode was found by most reviewers to be a poor choice, with at least one reviewer suggesting the book should be recast solely in third person to remove its "sensational aspect" (p. 12). Many reviewers assumed the main character in *La Modification* was telling his story to himself. The argument about "who is the *you*?" constantly re-emerges as a theme in the academic research and can never really be resolved because, in much literary second person, the "you" seems to be a shifting entity. Butor himself (quoted by Morrissette) seems to confirm this. Butor argued in an article about narrative pronouns, written four years after *La Modification*, that the chosen pronouns were more akin to addressing an accused man or witness:

> Strikingly (though he does not mention *La Modification* in the article), Butor also explains why there should be present, in a *vous* narration, some first-person passages, as in his own novel. The *vous* narrator may be lying, hiding something, or simply unaware (this is the case in *La Modification*) of the true pattern or import of the elements of his narration. … 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. (Morrissette, 1965, p. 15)

Oppenheim's interpretation of Butor's views on this matter (which Butor expressed in French), has the *vous* also simultaneously manifesting the protagonist's interior voice (see below). Importantly, the ambiguity pointed out by these parties is something that can be exploited by the writer. He concludes that it is uncertain whether second person will undergo further evolution "but it seems safe to state that it is already a mode that future rhetoricians of fiction must take into account" (p. 21).

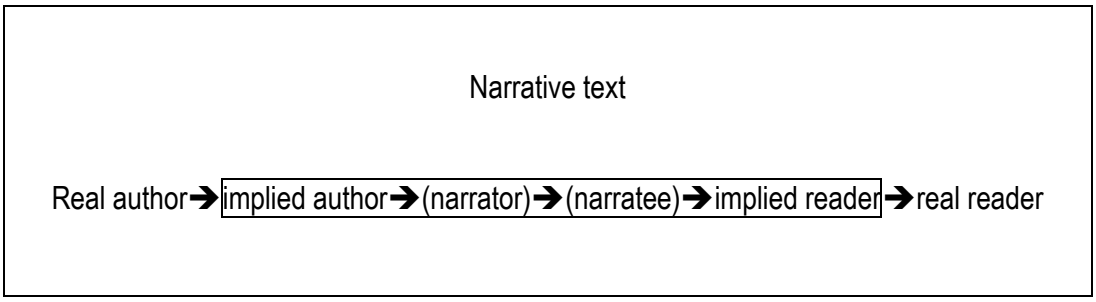
Perhaps the thoroughness of Morrissette's account, and a surprisingly low number of major second person novels in the years directly afterward, were the causes of the big gap that occurred before more academic papers appeared discussing second person narration. The work of Seymour Chatman, though not directly concerned with the mode, highlights much about the mechanics behind narration, which is useful in unpacking the literary power of the SPN. In *Story and Discourse – Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978), Chatman writes that narrators occupy a spectrum from those who are least audible to those who are most so. To the least, he attaches the name "nonnarrated" with the proviso that "minimally narrated" is equally valid (p. 147).[23] Chatman's model for the narration spectrum ranges from a teller telling you something to an apparent direct witnessing of the action, albeit with the proviso that "pure mimesis is an illusion" (p. 147). In Chatman's work we can see the implied author (a term he attributes to Wayne Booth 1961, p. 148) as a type of narrator, yet also another voice brought to bear on a text, even if it is one that is already multilayered (such as those by Campbell and Kocan). The obvious complication in an SPN is the overlap between implied author and protagonist/narratee. Chatman provides a discussion

[23] Nicholson Baker's *Vox* (1992) is a so-called narrator-free novel, made up almost exclusively of a phone conversation between a man and a woman. Dennis Schofield (1998b) notes someone still must have transcribed and punctuated the conversation, and must intrude minimally to "utter verbs of speech, such as 'he said,' to observe pauses and noises, as 'There was a click,' and finally to announce the end of the novel: 'They hung up.'" (p. 141)

of the implied reader, always there as well (he defines these as parties immanent to the narrative rather than real readers, who are extrinsic and accidental to the narrative), and says that:

> … just as there may or may not be a narrator, there may or may not be a *narratee* … The narratee-character is only one device by which the implied author informs the real reader how to perform as implied reader, which *Weltanschauung* to adopt.
>
> …the real reader may refuse his projected role at some ultimate level … But such refusal does not contradict the imaginative or "as if" acceptance of implied readership necessary to the elementary comprehension of the narrative.
>
> And just as the narrator may or may not ally himself with the implied author, the implied reader furnished by the real reader may or may not ally himself with a narratee. (p. 150)

Taking Chatman's theory it is easy to see that, just as there is an overlap between the implied author and the "you" in an SPN, there is an overlap with the implied reader too (who will at times be the "you", as will sometimes the real reader). An additional complexity comes to play when the real author is writing autobiographically and is potentially the protagonist and/or recipient of the narrative as well, as could be interpreted from the Kocan and Campbell texts. Like the narrator, Chatman says, the narratee ranges from the fully characterised to "no one" (p. 151). This is Chatman's diagram of the narrative transmission:



(p. 151)

The brackets suggest the narrator and narratee are optional, the real author and reader are "outside the narrative transaction as such, though, of course, indispensable to it in an ultimate practical sense" (p. 151). In second person texts, however, these categories become blurry, as Richardson (2006) has pointed out (p. 126).

Second person is commonly called a point of view. Chatman makes a much more sophisticated distinction between point of view and narrative voice than found in many early books about the novel (such as those by Percy Lubbock and E.M. Forster) and demonstrates why calling second person a point of view is a mislabelling. He says to explain the narrator's voice we must distinguish it from point of view, which is "one of the most troublesome of critical terms. Its plurisignification must give pause to anyone who wishes to use it in precise discussion." (p. 151) Despite announcing the difficulties inherent in any attempt to categorise point of view, he offers three cases, which I summarise here:

(a) literal: through someone's eyes ... or *perceptual* point of view, eg, From John's point-of-view, the trees or mountains were breathtakingly beautiful.
(b) figurative: through world view (ideology, conceptual system, *Weltanschauung*, etc), eg "John said, from his point of view, Nixon's position had..." His *conceptual* point of view.
(c) transferred: from someone's interest-vantage. The example he gives is: "Though he didn't realise it at the time, the divorce was a disaster from John's point of view. (Chatman pp. 151-152, paraphrased)

In the third "there is no reference to John's mind at all, either to perceptual or conceptual powers. … Let us call this his *interest* point of view" (p. 152). Chatman says this shows point of view may refer to an action (perceiving or conceiving) or to a passive state. He says any kind of text or conversation may be entirely one or any combination of these senses:

> When we turn to narrative texts, we find an even more complicated situation, since … there is no longer a single presence, as in expository essays, sermons, political speeches, and so on, but two – character and narrator – not to speak of the implied author. Each of these may manifest one or more kinds of point of view. (pp. 152-153)

When one considers second person through Chatman's manifold approach to point of view, one sees how hard it is to define second person as a point of view. It can perhaps be part of a point of view, or used as an instrument in conveying a point of view, but can hardly be considered a discrete point of view. Chatman says the "camera eye" names a convention, an "illusion of mimesis", that the events just happened in front of a "neutral recorder" (p. 154). This is often called "limited third person" but that only specifies the point of view and not the narrative voice, which can be covert or overt. "Perception, conception and interest points of view are quite independent of the manner in which they are expressed. …point of view is *in* the story (when it is the character's), but voice is always outside, in the discourse." (p. 154)

The complexity of who is doing the telling in an SPN, and the identity of the "you" is further complicated by Chatman's observation that when a character's perception is reported, there is necessarily presupposed another act of "seeing" from a different point of view, by the narrator: "the character is literally perceiving something within the world of the work … But what the narrator reports from his perspective is almost always outside the story (heterodiegetic), even if only retrospective, that is, temporally distant" (p. 155).

Into the 1980s

In *Narrative Discourse* (1980), Gérard Genette looks at the *Recherche* of Marcel Proust and what he calls the "paradoxical – and to some people shameful – situation of a 'first-person' narrating that is nevertheless occasionally omniscient" (p. 252). He says it attacks the best-established convention of novelistic narrating by attacking its traditional forms and "the very logic of its discourse" and argues:

> The novelist's choice, unlike the narrator's, is not between two grammatical forms, but between two narrative postures (whose grammatical forms are simply an automatic consequence): to have the story told by one of its "characters" … or to have it told by a narrator outside the story. (p. 244)

Genette says regarding the narrator: "Absence is absolute, but presence has degrees" (p. 245). He says the narrator's relationship to the story "is in principle invariable." (p. 245) He provides a complex taxonomy of narrational positions (p. 248)[24] and says: "The extradiegetic narrator … can aim only at an extradiegetic narratee, who merges with the implied reader and with whom each real reader can identify" (p. 260). We may agree and consider Marcel Proust's occasionally omniscient first person voice an author "lapse" (Graham Greene was more blunt, saying Proust "cheated"),[25] but the situation is quite different with Kocan and

[24] He suggests we define the narrator's status both by its narrative level (extra- or intradiegetic) and by its relationship to the story (hetero- or homodiegetic), and offers four basic types:

- Extradiegetic-heterodiegetic – example: Homer, a narrator in the first degree, who tells a story he is absent from.
- Extradiegetic-homodiegetic – example: Gil Blas, a narrator in the first degree, who tells his own story.
- Intradiegetic-heterodiegetic – example: Scheherazade, a narrator in the second degree, who tells stories she is mainly absent from.
- Intradiegetic-homodiegetic – example: *Ulysses* in Books IX-XIII, a narrator in the second degree who tells his own story.

[25] Greene's words were: "Proust cheated. He chose to present his books in the first person, but his 'I' described scenes and conversation which he could not have witnessed. It's a great failing in Proust – on a grand Proustian scale – for the narrative occasionally lacks credibility. Only God and the author are omniscient, not the one who says 'I'." (cited in Marie-Françoise Allain, 1983:131).

Campbell. Genette's very formal structures are those that books like *The Treatment* and *Alec: How to be an Artist* can thwart without breaking their own "rules". They each present a story that seems to come to the reader via one or several of its characters, but also by narrators outside the story. Lois Oppenheim, in "*Intentionality and Intersubjectivity*: A Phenomenological Study of Butor's *La Modification*" (1980), seemed to concur, noting that the shifting nature of the second person seemed to "eliminate the analytical explanations that were the framework for the novel in the early part of this century" (p. 31), frameworks that presumably included those such as Genette's. As Dennis Schofield (1998b) neatly summarised:

> [Oppenheim's] central thesis is that "second-person" narrative complexly provokes the reader's participation in the novel in an ambiguous reader-narrator-character relationship in which the reader oscillates in identifying with the implied reader (thereby experiencing the "you" in terms of direct mesofictional address), the "you"-character, and the voice speaking the "you" (Oppenheim, 1980: 33). … That the reader might identify with the voice saying "you" seems a startling claim, though in fact it is not. Butor himself, writes Oppenheim, argues that the "vous" simultaneously manifests the protagonist's interior voice (as a displaced "je" ["I"]), and the exterior voice of an author. (p. 131)

In 1981 Mary Frances Hopkins and Leon Perkins published a defence of a narrative mode they believed was often summarily dismissed as "experiments for the sake of experiment" (p. 121). Their article "Second Person Point of View" provides a strong summation of the literary capabilities of the SPN. It says second person allows irony, indirect discourse, interior monologues, various kinds of distance, and fluctuations of distance between narrator and protagonist (p. 131). They say it also allows "bouncing", defined in Hopkins and Perkins's text as E.M. Forster's term for "that shift from the view of one character to that of another" (p. 121), though it would seem to be far less capable than third person in this regard. Their list includes flexible handling of time and space. "Experimentation is

possible but not inevitable. The only major narrative effect denied this mode is the 'absent narrator.' Narration sufficient to establish the 'you' establishes a consciousness that generates the you-utterance." (p. 131)

All of the attributes cited here by Hopkins and Perkins are obviously available in other modes (if not all at once), so what does the SPN offer that is different for, say, a work like "The Flight"? The writers say "the most obvious distinction is the ambiguity" (p. 131). They note this ambiguity is to an extent unavoidable, but it is actively exploited within works, taking advantage of the fact that "you" is the most ambiguous of personal pronouns in English. The authors list another advantage: "It offers the intimacy with the character enabled by the first-person mode without the presumptuous quality of the I-narrator." (pp. 131-132) This very real advantage – or capability – is pertinent to Kocan and Campbell; it will be shown how the former's tone could seem trite or pretentious in some sections when transposed into the first person, while much of *Alec: How to be an Artist* which would carry an arrogant, rather than a ludic, tone if burdened with that I-narrator.

Hopkins and Perkins characterise the narrative "you" as "an actant by definition" and therefore "internal to the story" and note "the relationships of this 'you' to the external reader may vary within the text, providing a source of complexity in the texture of the story" (p. 121). They insist that in the case of the narrative "you", "The you-utterance is neither command nor accusation, nor yet generalization, but report. This reporting of action endows all narrative with a dual time, however close these two 'tracts' may approach each other: the event or happening time and the time of the telling" (p. 122). This is certainly not a requirement Morrissette insisted on for a true SPN, but can be an important attribute.

Even the future tense doesn't violate this dual time, say Hopkins and Perkins (p. 123), but they distinguish between reported action ("Jane will marry Ralph and they will have two boys") and predictions; eg, "You will weep and know why" from Gerald Manley Hopkins' "Spring and Fall", which they say, is not within

any kind of fictional time (p. 123). If it is reported action, it possesses the dual time that "is a key to distinguishing second-person narratives from other kinds of 'you-utterances' even when the you-addressee is an actant" (p. 123). An example of such reporting in Kocan could be: "You start unwrapping it so that Eddie can see the contents. All letters and parcels have to be opened in front of a screw." (p. 58) However, if we accept the conceit of automatic narration, as suggested by the present tense, then these two tracts of time (that of the happening and the telling) must be almost simultaneous. In other places in Kocan the narration definitely reads like accusation (and in Campbell like prediction), highlighting another example of the extreme challenge of being definitive when discussing second person. Nonetheless, to this researcher this dual time proved easiest to experience in past tense or future tense narrations, such as O'Brien's *A Pagan Place* and Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*, both of which give us the very definite sense of an older presence looking at events with greater wisdom.

Hopkins and Perkins examine various second person texts, most of them short in length. They note the prevailing use of present tense, and categorise various types of focalisation, such as "second-person, limited omniscience", "second-person-personal", and in the case of Butor's *La Modification* "second person impersonal center of consciousness" (p. 128). Although these distinctions are interesting, it is doubtful that they are useful for most longer works, as the focalisation often shifts greatly. Where there is no distance between the narrator and the character – either in a section or a whole text – Hopkins and Perkins argue the second person voice becomes the character's alone, functioning like interior speech (p. 126).[26]

Chronologically, the next major work concentrating on the SPN was by German narratologist Helmut Bonheim. His paper "Narration in the Second Person" (1983) is largely concerned with Canadian fiction, and he draws its examples

[26] Hopkins and Perkins (1981) argue that in *La Modification* the narrative voice is more knowing than the character's (p. 127), while in *How Like a God*: "The narrator, although often judgemental, never seems more knowledgeable, more sophisticated, or more articulate than the protagonist, who is, after all, a writer himself, and a published one at that. … this narrative seems to be a 'second-person other self.'" (p.128)

mainly from short stories (while also noting that second person is so common in pop songs that "probably one hardly notices the oddity of the convention", p. 79).[27] Bonheim evaluates the "strength" of the "you" narration, giving literary examples where the "you" is incidental and/or could be replaced by the impersonal "one" (p. 70). In Margaret Atwood's "Rape Fantasies" (from the 1977 short story collection *Dancing Girls*) he finds the "you" is shifting around from the impersonal "to an addressee of a particular time and place", if not yet participating in the action (p. 70). This would seem to confirm this work as a monologue to an imaginary homodiegetic audience, rather than an SPN. In further stories he finds a "you" that is the central figure of the story and, in Hugh Hood's "Three Halves of a House" he cites a "you" as protagonist (p. 73). In Mavis Gallant's story "With a Capital T", the "you" becomes a "character in his own right" (p. 74).

Bonheim notes that the use of the present tense with the "you" form gives more immediacy and "suggests a more general, perhaps repeatable experience than does the usual narrative preterite" (p. 74). Curiously, perhaps, he doesn't go on to make the connection with cookbooks or "How To" manuals, the style of which of course telegraphs this repeatability. His reservation is that "the present tense makes it hard to believe in the narrative situation" (p. 74), ie, the mimetic (or non-mimetic) quality of simultaneous narration, or telling a story as it is acted out. Bonheim cites linguistic terms such as "sloppy identity" (p. 76) and "referential slither" (p. 76) being appropriate to the ambiguity of second person, and he stresses the "special difficulty" of the form, namely "if one tells a story to a particular person who was on the scene of action himself, the reader will naturally ask why the 'you' needs to be told what he must already know" (p. 76). With specific reference to an Alice Munro story ("Tell Me Yes or No") in which a wife recounts a series of shared events to her husband, Bonheim elaborates on this point by saying: "it is difficult to find a believable motive for supplying him with

[27] Bob Dylan plays with this very idea in his 1965 song *Positively 4th Street*: "I wish that for just one time you could stand inside my shoes/And just for that one moment, I could be you/Yes, I wish that for just one time, you could stand inside my shoes/You'd know what a drag it is to see you."

information which would be familiar to him" (p. 77).

This major SPN conundrum raised by Bonheim – why tell someone something they should know? – will be considered carefully with reference to the texts selected for this thesis. It is worth considering though that it was addressed early by Butor himself in his chapter "L'usage des pronoms personnels dans le roman" in *Essais sur le roman* (1969). As this book does not seem to be available in translation, I will defer to an interpretation of Butor's words by Jill Walker. She reports that Butor considered second person narration:

> … a didactic or interrogatory situation in which a character is told her own story by someone else, because she is either unable or unwilling to tell it herself. She may lack the language, the self-awareness or the memories; or she may refuse to tell, perhaps because her story would incriminate her or because she doesn't trust the person who wants to hear it. Butor uses the example of a detective interrogating a suspect to illustrate a case where the protagonist "you" refuses to speak herself, and he connects this to force. This narrative is forced upon the "you". (Walker 2000, p. 45)

From Bonheim's paper, it is clear he believes the monologue addressed to a particular fictive "you" – in other words, the apostrophe – is a far more effective technique. Indeed this conceit, which he describes as slightly different to the conventional second person narrative as the "you" is not predominant, has "yielded some of the most successful and well-known short stories of the twentieth century" (p. 78).[28] He believes in many works the "you" is merely a dramatization of "I", or "a special case of the monologue. … The oddity about stories which rely on the second person is that the 'you' is a Protean shape-shifter, sometimes a neutral 'one', sometimes an addressee, within the fictive world or outside it" (p. 79). For Bonheim, the SPN seems to be mainly a contrived and experimental form, a technique in a "fluid, unsettled state" (p. 79). He claimed

[28] Examples Bonheim gives include Ring Lardner's "Hair Cut" and James Thurber's "You Could Look it Up".

that it was too early to say if the Protean "you" would establish itself in the mainstream (p. 80).

Brian McHale in "Love and Death in the Postmodernist Novel" (1987) offers a book chapter lying somewhere between a defence of postmodernism, and an attack on the deriders of postmodernism (these deriders are people McHale sees as overly attached to Victorian realism). McHale's view is that everything in today's culture "tends to deny reality and promote unreality, in the interests of maintaining high levels of consumption" (p. 219). Therefore postmodernist fiction, which acquiesces in this, and even celebrates it, "for all its anti-realism, actually continues to be mimetic" (p. 219).

McHale calls postmodernist fiction an "illusion-breaking art" that "systematically disturbs the air of reality by foregrounding the ontological structure of texts and of fictional worlds" (p. 221) and argues that postmodernist writing exploits "the relational potential" of the second person pronoun (p. 224). "The postmodernist second-person functions as an invitation to the reader to project himself or herself into the gap opened in the discourse by the presence of *you*." (p. 224) It should be noted that McHale doesn't offer a definition that greatly distinguishes between different types of second person, or that excludes the apostrophic. He says that "you" technically is a "shifter" in Jakobson's sense, an "empty" linguistic sign whose reference changes with every change of speaker in a discourse situation (p. 223). Therefore, he argues, every reader is potentially "you", the addressee of the novelistic discourse:

> The second-person pronoun does occur in modernist and late-modernist contexts, but in such a way as to lose its function of direct address. Sometimes the second person substitutes for the first person pronoun, indicating that a character is "talking to himself," addressing himself or some interiorized alter ego in a kind of interior dialogue; this is the case, for instance, in the "Camera Eye" of Dos Passos's U.S.A. trilogy (1930, 1932, 1936), and in many parts of Carlos Fuentes's *La Muerte de Artemio*

> *Cruz* (1962). Elsewhere, you stands in for the third-person pronoun of the fictional character, functioning in a kind of displaced free indirect discourse, as in Michel Butor's *La Modification* (1957), Fuentes's "Aura," (1962) or the opening chapter of John Hawkes's *The Lime Twig* (1962). (p. 223)

McHale says in none of the above works is the reader directly implicated in the reference of the second person pronoun (a fact many have disagreed about, particularly with *La Modification*). "Nevertheless, even in displaced forms *you* retains a connotation of the vocative, of direct appeal to the reader." (p. 223). Germane to the longer sustained second person texts discussed in this thesis, McHale writes that if a "metaleptic relation is to be sustained with the reader by means of the second-person pronoun" in a long text, various contextual strategies will have to be used:

> … the inherent "shiftiness" of *you* will have to be exploited to its utmost. This strategic shiftiness produces a kind of "hovering" or "floating" *you*, one in which equivocation is kept alive and in the foreground to the end of the text, and the reader continues to be able to project himself or herself into the discourse-situation. (p. 225)

In her dissertation "'You are about to begin reading.' The Nature and Function of Second Person Point of View.", Darlene Hantzis (1988) asserts that second person functions as a distinct category of point of view (p. iv), thereby entering into that dangerous territory of trying to define (or find agreement) on exactly what point of view encompasses. By way of qualification, she says that works in which the "you" describes only the reader, or only the actant in a text, or is a substitution for first or third person, do not constitute second person point of view as this "denies the multiple subjectivity possible in second person point of view" (p. 33). This seems a logical summation; the first category usually being apostrophe, the second a text in which a simple substitution for another narrative mode (first or third) would make little or no difference to the reading experience.

An example of the latter is remarked on in Mieke Bal's highly technical paper "First Person, Second Person, Same Person: Narrative as Epistemology" (1993). In discussing an influential art history book, Hubert Damisch's *L'origine de la perspective* (1987), Bal ventures that its second person voice fails to capture any true second person advantages by conflating the two voices:

> … if the split between first and second person can be thought to signify the different functions of narrator and focalizer/expert witness, at other moments these two functions are conflated so as to evacuate the point of the linguistic game … In the end, it seems "you" and "I" overlap completely: they have not only the same identity – the same person in the psychosocial sense – but also the same function, the same linguistic person. What, then, is the point of the game, one may well ask? (p. 313)

Hantzis goes on to link second person narrative with feminist theory and the role of "otherness" and says second person point of view 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.'" (p. *v*) Hantzis explores the ambiguous reader-character-narrator relationship and argues that second person rejects traditional concepts of narrative subjectivity and authority. As Dennis Schofield (1998b) usefully summarises:

> [Hantzis] retheorises Lois Oppenheim's (1980) suggestion that the "you" voice oscillates between self-address and omniscient commentary, ceaselessly moving the engaged reader between an internal and an external subject position. Oppenheim and Hantzis regard this oscillation

> as constituting an "intersubjectivity" that is always in process, always in the act of becoming. (p. 41)[29]

The identity of the speaker and of the person spoken to is always shifting and changing, says Hantzis, leaving the reader unable to decide about the origin and recipient, about who says "you" and to whom. She writes that it might be argued that "you" implies several "I"s in the way that "I" implies at least one "you" (p. 75).

> However, no "I" exists outside the "you" 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 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 individual identity, the participants moment by moment function as subject guarantors for each other. (p. 75)

Hantzis builds on this by saying that 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." (pp. 138-139) This accords, she argues, with the postmodern denial of absolute truth and the deconstructive rejection of the traditional binary system of organizing experience. She concludes that true second person point of view exists when the narrator, character, narratee, and, consequently, the reader and author are simultaneously constituted in the pronoun "you" (p. 79). Notwithstanding that there are times when all these elements cited by Hantzis come together in the one "you", other evidence

[29] Intersubjectivity, in a literary sense, was summed up by George Butte (2004) as "the way stories portray consciousness of consciousness" (p. viii). Butte traces it back to Jane Austen, citing a scene from *Persuasion* "about the observation of observations" (p. 4) and noting the importance to his study of the phenomenon of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "intricate reflections on the interfolding of (and gaps within) perceptions and discourses" (p. 4).

suggests it is a rare thing; second person is too shifty a thing to be tied down so precisely.

Although writing his paper a quarter of a century after Bruce Morrissette, Uri Margolin argued in "Narrative 'You' Revisited" (1990) that Morrissette's distinctions, categories and definitions still held true and that Morrissette's article should be considered a classic on the subject (p. 425). Despite this, Margolin saw need to add more in view of the advent of postmodernist narrative and "the intense elaboration or narratology and of linguistics of the enunciation" (p. 425). Margolin approached the subject through complex narratalogical theory, concerned with categorising and analysing variations in the SPN form in a way not strictly relevant to this research. However, he raised the question he said pertains especially to postmodernist narrative, that of "interlevel communication and the ontological havoc caused when such communication proceeds against the grain, as for example when real authors talk to invented characters or when narrative agents talk back to their narrators" (page 429). Margolin made an early attempt to define the second person mode in detail, listing the characteristics that he describes as necessary in defining "second-person narrative as a distinct variety of narrative discourse" (p. 430). They are:

- The presence of a single global narrator on the highest level of textual embedding, such that the whole (fictional) discourse originates with him or her;
- The presence of numerous instances of "you" in his or her discourse, oral or written;
- The majority of these "you" instances refer to a narrated rather than communicative "you;"
- The speech acts of the narrator concerning the "you" thus go beyond apostrophes, questions, orders, etc. (Bühler's *Appellfunktion*) and tend toward the constative or representative, that is, reporting (Bühler's *Darstellungsfunktion*);

> • The narrated you is a central agent in the sequence of events being recounted;
> • The events/actions/states involving this "you" are specific and individual as regards their time and space, as opposed to the purely typical or recurrent (generic you, "you" as equivalent to "one" or "everyone"). (p. 430)

On the last point, Margolin neatly defined the generic or impersonal "you", as in the saying "you can't take it with you" (p. 427). This "you" is obviously not specific, "involving everyone or anyone, singular or plural: any reader or hearer of the message, or others" (p. 427-428). As with Hantzis, Margolin was being ambitious in trying to pin down a precise definition. Schofield (1998b) would later argue that not all six of Margolin's features are incontestable, citing works where second person narrative was included "within narratives that do not unequivocally identify a single global narrator, as shown by Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1975) and Daniel Gunn's *Almost You* (1994)" (p. 14). Although some of Margolin's other points could be argued too, even when lined up against a postmodern graphic novel such as *Alec: How to be an Artist*, his list seems relatively clear, reasonable and inclusive, and does not place boundaries as strict and unyielding as those of Hantzis.

Margolin suggests that, rather than fully assuming the role of "you", the reader will recognise that there is an intended audience and deictically relocate themselves into that role, even if only partially (p. 438). He suggests that "The actual and the fictional are blended … by the incorporation of the actual reader into the feigned domain, thereby fictionalizing or turning him or her into a quasi-literary figure" (p. 438). Margolin says we therefore can be in the presence of a speaker cast in the role of prosecutor or judge when dealing with past events, or prophet when dealing with the future (p. 445). The first would seem to align with parts of Kocan's work, the second with parts of Campbell's. Margolin also provides plausible answers to the conundrum raised by Bonheim: why have a voice telling a character what he already must know?

> This voice without and above the character, superior in awareness and articulatory capability, may range from an adult telling a child of events of his very early life that the child cannot recall, to an attempt to reawaken memories in someone who has forgotten, thereby affecting an integration and reappropriation of past phases of this self, to the discourse addressed to an amnesiac who must literally be told who he is and was, to the role of the psychoanalyst telling the "you" of those events and experiences the "you" cannot or will not recall (the repressed or subconscious) and interpreting their significance for the "you's" current state and activities. (pp. 444-445)

Monika Fludernik's journal article "Second person fiction: narrative you as addressee and/or protagonist" (1993) deals with figurative versus reflective modes among other things. Of relevance to this research is her insistence there must be an "I" narrator: "If there is address, there must be an *addressor*, an *I* (implicit or explicit), and hence a narrator, and this narrator can be a mere enunciator or also a protagonist sharing the *you*'s fictional existence on the story level." (p. 219) She writes that in first person narrative, the addressee is a mere addendum "added to motivate the narrator's urge to tell her (own) story", but in an SPN it is the speaker function that can be such an appendix, notwithstanding that is crucial to the narrative set-up (p. 223). The address function requires an addressor, or narrative *I* (whether or not that *I* is involved on the story plane). She says that having the narrator tell the addressee's story is a patently absurd situation under normal circumstances, yet further naturalizations come into play (p. 221). Examples Fludernik gives include: telling the addressee what she did because she has suffered a stroke of amnesia (or may have forgotten); trying to resuscitate the events in the addressee's mind; addressing an absent or dead person or "giving way to the narrator's rhetorical urge to relive events (and thus relieve herself of them); to mentally resurrect the co-experiencer in the addressee function" (p. 221). She says "such naturalizations already surreptitiously undermine the story/discourse dichotomy because they consist in a reevaluation of the story as,

not the prior discourse function of the narrative, but as a subsidiary aid for the narrator/narratee level which comes to absorb all narrative interest." (p. 221)[30]

According to Fludernik (1993), there are only rare instances of literary models for second person fiction in its non-address function, and all these constitute applications of generalised *you* or self-address *you* (p. 235). These include, she says, the "Guide Book *you*", the "How to *you*" and the "courthouse *you*" (p. 236). This last one is the rendering of the defendant's (or witness's) actions and thoughts in a reconstructive narration addressed to the defendant/witness in the witness box, perhaps to elicit a confession (eg, "and then you killed her"), or simply to recapitulate previously elicited material. Fludernik argues that book-length SPNs, where they aren't able to hold the reader's attention level at maximum for an entire novel, content themselves for the most part with "pure" reflector narrative[31] which can easily be recuperated realistically once the figural perspective has been sorted out by the reader (p. 243). By contrast, she claims that the Joyce Carol Oates's story "You" (published 1970) demonstrates "that second person fiction has arrived at full literary maturity, no longer a simple experimental trick without particular narrative quality" (p. 243).

Ironically, despite Fludernik citing this story as proof of the SPN reaching full literary maturity, by some other definitions it is not a second person story at all (indeed if it were novel length, I would preclude it from my master list of sustained second person works in Chapter Five). There is an identified "I" narrator (admittedly hidden until the fifth page of the story) announced with the sentence (Oates, 1970): "Yet there is a strange look to you – I noticed it at once, when you were going in a restaurant – a look of strain, of craziness, as if your lovely blue eyes were about to cross, out of anger." (p. 366) The story reveals, slowly that the second person sections consist of an "I" narrator, an aggrieved daughter, reimagining her mother's thoughts and actions, primarily it seems to

[30] The story/discourse dichotomy relates to the formalist idea of *histoire* (story) and *discours* (discourse), respectively what happens, and the way it is communicated.
[31] Which is to say a reflective or reflector character's voice; we as reader are seeing the story world through a character's eyes, with that character processing and interpreting things for us.

show them in a bad light. Richardson (2006, p. 11) calls it a "pseudo-second person narrative", and I would agree.

In "Are You In the Text?: The 'Literary Performative' In Postmodernist Fiction." (1993), Irene Kacandes talks about the "irresistible invitation" of the second person pronoun and points out how when someone yells "hey, you!" in a crowded place, everyone turns around (p. 139). Her principle argument concerns actualisation by the reader, "Based upon Austin's foundational concept of the performative, speech acts in which to say is to do, the concept 'literary performative' describes statements in second person fiction which are actualized when read by any reader." (p. 139)

In reading a literary performative, she argues, readers involuntarily actualise what the words say. She cites Italo Calvino's opening to *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979 in Italian, 1981 in English): "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel…" To her, this is very different from more standard apostrophic forms, which draw the reader's attention without triggering the performance of a metafictional act. If for example the reader were "to peruse the words: 'you are reading this story,' or 'you are proceeding through this sentence nicely,' the narrator would be delivering a message that is applicable in fact to the current reader of these words, as well as to the narratee or whatever encoded reader one posits" (p. 140). The act of reading these words is an involuntary performative because, Kacandes argues, "One can't help doing what one is told, as long as one keeps reading. … affirmative 'answers' are generated, in a sense, as soon as the questions are read by someone – by anyone!" (p. 142)

Parts of the introduction to Chapter Two of this thesis could also count as a performative ("*You are filled with doubt even as you start reading. … You try to second-guess whether the thesis, that you are now seven sentences into, could be a productive use of your limited time.*"). Kacandes asks the question (p. 139): "Can you really be in the text the way you are 'in' a conversation?" and discusses French linguist Emile Benveniste's description of "I" and "you" as "empty

signifiers" which can be picked up by any user of the language (p. 140). Kacandes notes that a sentence such as "you are dead," would be "an infelicitous literary performative unless it were interpreted metaphorically; perhaps a particular reader feels that she is deadened or dead-tired and thus reads herself in this statement" (p. 141). In fact, the protagonist does literally die in an SPN in Peter Bowman's *Beach Red* and also in the solitary SPN chapter of Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (published in 2010, well after Kacandes's paper), though the death by drowning in Egan's book is not confirmed for the reader until a later, non-second person, chapter. It could be argued that, right up until the moment of death – the struggling to swim then the initial drawing in of water to the lungs – could be captured in second person, though it wouldn't count as one of Kacandes's "performatives" unless the person concerned was reading the text while sinking. Neither would most of Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*, probably the most widely known second person novel of all. Regarding the opening line of that book ("You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning."), Kacandes writes:

> The deictics ("a place like *this*"; "*this* time in the morning") help remind us that though we are receiving this discourse, its addressee is obviously someone else because they don't fit us – or at least they only fit those of us who do our reading in New York bars in the early morning hours. Such second person narratives – and postmodernism has produced quite a few – do not offer statements which will be actualized by being read by any reader. … Thus while there may still be an identificatory effect caused by the irresistible invitation of the second person pronoun, it is categorically different from that of literary performatives which enact procedures of reading. (p. 142)

Although the literary performative is at best a rare case, the discussion by Kacandes throws light on related issues. The above quote, for example, picks up on an aspect of reader identification raised by Oppenheim, Hantzis and others: a shortening and distancing effect that is constantly in play. When statements don't

apply to the actual reader, Kacandes says, readers lapse back into positing a character-reader for whom they do apply: "The further I read, the clearer it becomes that Calvino's novel is not about me, a real reader, but rather about a reader-character who reads a lot of fragments of books." (p. 143)

Kacandes suggests that the more the inscribed reader is characterised (in Calvino), the less the actual reader can identify with that inscribed reader (p. 145). That's why the narrator does not give his narratee a name. "For a name would dramatically restrict who could read a literary performative felicitously to only those who are also so named." (p. 145) As the love story plot develops in Calvino, she writes that the actual female reader is either totally alienated or is playing the text's game with "the kind of hyperconsciousness that feminist critics have long argued is necessary whenever women read patriarchal texts" (p. 148). In other words, she says, any identifying with the "you", requires a woman to read as a man, so "actual women readers of this text will do 'additional mental processing to transform the initial literal interpretation into one that includes them' (Crawford and Chaffin 16)." (Kacandes 1993, p. 148)

However, Kacandes says the "ideal reader" of Calvino and other postmodernist texts can be a woman or a man as long as she or he adopts "the duplicitous stance which being 'in' and 'not in' the text simultaneously requires" (p. 148). As the SPN is often used as the voice for those on the margins – the impoverished artist (*Alec: How to be an Artist*), the mental patient (*The Treatment* and *The Cure*), the covert homosexual (*No End to the Way*) – and asks the reader to take on that role, a difficult shift or "duplicitous stance" is commonly required, and this is an area that will be discussed within the context of the individual novels. Kacandes concludes that: "… even when the literary text really is 'talking' to me (those rare moments when I execute a pure literary performative), I'm aware I'm not the only reader. In trying to efface the boundary between life and fiction, literary performatives, like postmodernism, only make us more aware of it." (p. 149)

From *Style* onwards

In 1994 Northern Illinois University English Department's influential *Style* journal produced what was known as the "second person issue", notwithstanding that some of the articles were concerned with other issues relating to experimental writing. This issue – Fall 1994, 28(3) – was the first extensive work on the SPN and, along with various publications appearing in the following years, it brought a more nuanced view of second person writing, highlighting the greater recognition of diversity within the form, and an increased understanding of the SPN's suitability for depicting inner turmoil caused by drugs, mental illness and addiction. More than anything, there was an increased optimism about the possibilities of using second person either intermittently or in a sustained fashion to achieve specific literary effects. Monica Fludernik's "Introduction: Second-person narrative and related issues." (1994a) was the opening to this "second person" issue. In it, she notes that neither Gerard Genette' s *Narrative Discourse Revisited* nor Prince's own *Narratology* devote "any reasonable space" to second person fiction (p. 285). However, she praises the work of Helmut Bonheim:

> Bonheim uses the term "referential slither" ("Narration" 76) to denote the "you's" inherent capacity for addressing both the actual reader and a narratee as well as denoting a fictional protagonist and – as Bonheim, I think mistakenly, argues – "the narrator" into the bargain (74-75; cf. Richardson 311). Bonheim's second term, "conative solicitude," used in the title of his 1982 paper … manages to pinpoint one of the more prominent emotional effects of second-person narration: namely, its decidedly involving quality, which provokes much greater initial empathy with second-person protagonists than with first- or third-person characters… (p. 286)

Fludernik's dismissal of the suggestion that the "you" can denote the narrator – at least in some circumstances – is difficult to accept in light of Nance's examination of Jose Emilio Pacheco's "Tarde de agosto" in the same edition of *Style*, where it is hard to identify any narrator more likely than the "you" (see below). Fludernik

notes examples of second person texts that have neither a narrator nor a narratee (ie, current addressee of the discourse), which she sees as "unequivocal instances of reflector-mode narrative (Stanzel, Theory of Narrative 141-84)" where "the protagonist's experience is narrated from her own perspective and the pronoun *you* consistently refers to the protagonist. There is no traceable narrator's *I* or narrative 'voice' (no evaluations, predictions, etc.), nor is there an intrafictional (though extradiegetic) *you* in the here and now of the act of narration: that is, a listener to whom the story is being told." (p. 287) Fludernik says, in such instances, readers may be tempted to identify at first, but only so long as their situation overlaps with the protagonist's (citing Richardson 1991, p. 312). When the protagonist becomes too specific a personality, which is to say a fictional character, Fludernik asserts "the quality of the presumed address to an extradiegetic reader in such texts evaporates." (p. 287) Despite this assertion, the reading of the Kocan duology in Chapter Six of this thesis does, I believe, show it is possible to closely identify with a second person protagonist even with vastly different circumstances and traits to the reader. Fludernik proposes a preliminary definition of second person narrative as:

> … narrative whose (main) protagonist is referred to by means of an address pronoun (usually *you*) and add[s] that second-person texts frequently also have an explicit communicative level on which a narrator (speaker) tells the story of the "you" to (sometimes) the "you" protagonist's present-day absent or dead, wiser, self. In such contexts the narratee acquires a fictional past through the narrative in progress. The narrative projects an addressee by means of the second-person pronoun, and that speech act of address evolves into a narration of the "you's" past experiences. Conversely, the narrator very frequently emerges not only as a present-day speaker or teller of the tale. "He" has personally known the "you" in the past (how else would "he" have learned the story "he" is telling?) and very often shared the "you's" experiences, participating in the events recounted in the story. (p. 288)

Under this definition of second person, it would be possible for the teller of Kocan's story to "emerge". In that case, it might be a friend or fellow traveller, though one might wonder how that friend or fellow traveller would be aware of what he did or thought or felt alone in his cell, or could remember and match up Len Tarbutt's past and present feelings; eg, "You feel the way you did when you were a little kid lost in Woolworths big store and you just stood there crying…" (Kocan 1984, p. 13). Unless of course, it were pure speculation by the narrator. Fludernik adds that one might even call this second type of narrative an "I" and "you" narrative, while some authors also use the pronoun "we" in intermittent fashion throughout. She says this definition implies second person texts are "open" in several respects. They can accommodate a variety of "you"s and a variety of "I"s, and a combination of these. She says that second person fiction is "open" on the scale between narration and interior monologue – the text's address function can frequently be read as an instance of self-address. "As with the dramatic monologue, the distinction between interior monologue and second-person fiction can prove to be entirely arbitrary." (p. 289) Second person narrative flies in the face of any "realistic" conceptions of fictional story telling, Fludernik says, calling it one of the most "nonnatural" or contrived types of narrative since "real-world speakers" would not usually narrate to the current addressee their own experiences in the present or in the past (p. 290). She says the major three types of second person story, viewed from the perspective of their relation to a realist reading of the text, are:

> (a) "I" and "you" narratives (in which the narrator shares a fictional past with the narratee and can therefore be "in the know" about it); (b) the entirely nonrealistic case of a pure rendering of a second person's consciousness; and (c) the playful metafictional case of a deliberate manipulation of the irreality and ambiguity factors of the second-person pronoun. Although, obviously, many texts will shift among these modes… (p. 290)

Fludernik cites Oriana Fallaci's *Un uomo* (1979) as a good example of the first type "the narrator has learned the protagonist's story from his own mouth and by way of poetic license is allowed to recreate it in semiomniscient fashion, addressing the 'you' who must obviously be on her mind even though he is dead". (p. 290) This novel, however, identifies a distinct "I" and "you", so to some would count as a first person novel despite the "I" narrator engaging in some second person retelling. This shows the broad – perhaps irreconcilable – scope of opinions on the subject and underlines the flexibility and slipperiness of the SPN itself.

Fludernik says McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* shows the second of her three proposed modes, with "no naturalizations of any realistic story-telling situation except to the extent that one wants to argue that the protagonist is telling the story to himself" (p. 291). It is therefore reasonable to assume Fludernik would put *The Treatment* and *The Cure* into the same "entirely nonrealistic" category. She says the third type of second person text openly plays with the reality status of the story, eg Beckett's novella *Company*. "Typical examples of the third type of second-person story radically undermine realistic readings of the text, usually at first proposing a situation that appears to be readable in realistic terms." (p. 291) It is harder to work out where *Alec: How to be an Artist* might fit into this taxonomy though Fludernik, like many others, allows for slippage and hybridity in matching her second person criteria.

The *Style* issue also included Irene Kacandes's 1994 paper "Narrative Apostrophe: Reading, Rhetoric, Resistance in Michel Butor's *La Modification* and *Julio*",[32] with a proposition that the phrase "narrative apostrophe" be adopted to describe anomalous communicative circuits in second person narrative fiction at the levels of the story and of the reception of the story (section 1 ¶1).[33] Kacandes

[32] My copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.

[33] Kacandes (199) says the ancients attributed special powers to apostrophe to move the audience:

> …apostrophe is "short-circuited" communication … the apostrophe bears two "addresses." Overtly, a speaker sends a message to someone or something as if that being or thing could respond but will not. Covertly, an apostrophe is meant to provoke response

argues that, despite one's conscious knowledge that the address is to another when listening to the utterance of an apostrophe, "merely hearing vocative forms may cause one to respond oneself" (section 1 ¶6). The linguistic properties of the second person pronoun are such, she contends, as to "invite the hypothesis that one also reacts strongly to apostrophe because one can so easily become the 'you' and thus feel oneself called into the relationship it creates" (section 1 ¶6).

Just as there is third person in first person fiction, an SPN can contain other modes. Kacandes explains how readers are trained to ignore the relational imperative of the second person under such circumstances as when *you* is within a statement enclosed in quotation marks (section 1 ¶8). On these occasions, readers identify what appears within the quotation marks as discourse belonging to a prior speech act rather than to the act of reading in which the reader is currently participating. In contrast, she writes, the case of reader address in both modern and more traditional forms operates more like direct address: "if one matches the characteristics of the inscribed 'you,' one may feel oneself directly referenced" (section 1 ¶8). In slight contradiction of her earlier position on the characterised "you" in Calvino (or perhaps as a development thereof), Kacandes argues that even when the "you" bears a name or a specific identity throughout a story, flesh and blood readers often cannot help feeling that they themselves are being addressed at the same time that they acknowledge the "you" as a character in the fiction.

> Reader response to *La modification* suggests that even when that "you" has a name (like Butor's protagonist, Leon Delmont) and a specific story (a train trip from Paris to Rome and back again), the second-person pronoun still wields power to move readers to some extent, evidently causing them to feel themselves addressed and to experience the force of

through its reception in a second(ary) communicative circuit, received by the readers of a poem in the case of lyric or the audience in the case of oratory. That is to say, the convention of apostrophe is to differentiate between explicit addressee and receiver-audience, between the referent of the "you" and the "listener." To put it yet another way, apostrophes are messages uttered with two addressees simultaneously in mind… (section 1 ¶4)

> an unusual relationship created between the narrator and narratee. (section 2 ¶19)

This question of identification with the inscribed "you" was also discussed in James Phelan's tortuously named paper "Self-Help for Narratee and Narrative Audience: How 'I' – and 'You' – Read 'How'.", also published in the 1994 *Style* issue.[34] It starts with a humorous second person introduction regarding Lorrie Moore's "How" (section 1 ¶1), a short story discussed further in the *Alec: How to be an Artist* section of this research. Phelan suggests that we, the reader, move between addressee and observer depending on how well described the "you" is. In such a reading, the question of who is the "you", or who are the "you"s, depends on a clear and stable distinction between an intrinsic, textual "you" (which is to say a narratee-protagonist) and an extrinsic, extratextual "you" (by which Phelan means a flesh-and-blood reader) (section 2 ¶1).[35] He says both texts – Moore's short story and his own second person introduction – undermine the clarity and stability of the distinction.

> When we read "You are unsure of how to react" [a phrase in Phelan's second person text] and recognize that the "you" who is narratee-protagonist need not coincide with "you" the actual reader, another audience position becomes prominent: the observer role familiar to us in reading homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration, the position from which we watch characters think, move, talk, act. In fact, what happens as we read "You are unsure of how to react" is frequently an important dimension of reading second-person narration: when the second-person address to a narratee-protagonist both overlaps with and differentiates itself from an address to actual readers, those readers will simultaneously occupy the positions of addressee and observer. (section 2 ¶2)

[34] My copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.
[35] Phelan (1994) usefully summarises: "Let us return to the basic definitions: a narratee is 'someone whom the narrator addresses' (Prince, 'Introduction' 7). A narrative audience is 'the imaginary audience for which the narrator is writing' (Rabinowitz, 'Truth' 127). An ideal narrative audience is 'the audience for which the narrator wishes he were writing' (Rabinowitz, 'Truth' 134)." (section 3 ¶15)

Phelan argues that the fuller the characterization of the "you", the more aware actual readers will be of their differences from that "you", the more fully they will move into the observer role, and the less likely this role will overlap with the addressee's position (section 2 ¶2). This aligns with the argument by Scott McCloud (1994) regarding comics/graphic novels: the more a character is defined in a drawing, the harder it is for the reader to insert himself therein (pp. 36-37). Phelan revisits structuralist narratologist Gerald Prince and his "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee" (1973) and notes that Prince argues that the logic of differentiating among authors, implied authors, and narrators applies as well to readers (or receivers), implied readers (or addressees), and narratees (or enunciatees). "Prince shows that a narrator's discourse frequently reveals evidence about the narratee's identity even in narratives where there is no explicit address to the narratee." (section 3 ¶2) Phelan says Lorrie Moore's "How" is more inclusive than some may credit, notwithstanding that it is an SPN where the "you" is well-described:[36]

> "How" identifies the narratee as female, but the second-person address blurs the separation of narratee and narrative audience frequently enough for the observer of either sex to be pulled into the narrative's subject position: you fall in love, become part of a couple, meet your partner's family, feel uneasy about the relationship, try – unsuccessfully – to find a good time to leave, try being with someone else, have your partner need you because of illness (or weakness), feel a renewed tenderness, discover that it is not enough, slowly resolve to leave, feel very guilty, finally muster the courage to say goodbye, survive the partner's anger but find that you are unable to escape the sadness of the whole experience. (section 4 ¶4)

[36] On lines of sexual identification, though, things might be different. Phelan says the story is working against the standard "happily ever after" heterosexual romance narrative and suggests: "Whether gay and lesbian readers will be able to move easily into the enunciatee position is, I think, highly debatable."

At the end of "How", he says: "narratee, ideal narrative audience, and narrative audience all nod their heads in understanding here" (section 4 ¶19). In "The Flight" it is hoped a similar inclusiveness is achieved. The protagonist may not be as sympathetic a character, but is beset with recognisable challenges that allow the reader to imagine themselves into the story and be pulled into the narrative's subject position.

Marcel Cornis-Pope's 1994 *Style* paper "From Cultural Provocation to Narrative Cooperation: Innovative Uses of the Second Person In Raymond Federman's Fiction"[37] examines the shifting nature of the narrating person and the reader's response to this. It also helps explain why second person is so often used for the voice of the outsider. Cornis-Pope, concentrating largely on the French-American author Federman and the Holocaust, argues that Federman's uses of the second person illustrate the subtle connections between narratology and cultural theory, poetics and pragmatics:

> Narratologically, postmodernism raises a number of interesting questions concerning the status of "voice" and "agency" in historical fiction. As a rule, the "narrating persona" (Fleischman 61-63) can shift, adopting the perspective of a "historian" (diegetic-retrospective), "painter" (pictorial-reconstructive), "memorialist" (autobiographic), or "performer" (mimetic-testimonial). … Postmodern historical fiction, however, often breaches and intermingles these terms: the narrative voice can be simultaneously retrospective-authorial, dealing with verifiable "facts" and "sure anticipations" (Genette 81), and self-implicated, revisionistic, acknowledging that these narrative reconstructions are neither privileged nor complete. (¶4)

In Kocan, for example, it is easy to find examples of the "narrating persona" shifting from historian to painter (or in this case, poet) to memorialist and

[37] The copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.

performer, as well as breaching and intermingling these categories. Cornis-Pope says instead of the authoritative voices of traditional historiography, postmodern fiction prefers more ambiguous, dialogic voices (such as the second person) that include the implied reader in their referential field (¶5). This permanently places the onus on the actual reader to define himself or herself in relation to the text and its enunciator. Cornis-Pope supports Fludernik's emphasis on the "subversive potential" of the second person both in undermining the "realistic" expectation of utterance or narration, and in unsettling the communicative level by "involving the actual reader of fiction, not only in the tale, but additionally in the world of fiction itself" (¶8). He says the latter technique "helps readers overcome their self-defenses, encouraging them to share customarily marginalized stances (e.g., of minority or gay protagonists) or uncomfortable historical experiences" (¶8).

In the same "second person" issue of *Style*, Brian Richardson published "I etcetera: On the poetics and ideology of multipersoned narratives" containing ideas about the SPN mode that he refined and expanded on in his book *Unnatural Voices* (2006). Another *Style* paper was Kimberly Nance's "Self-consuming second-person fiction: Jose Emilio Pacheco's 'Tarde de agosto' ('August Afternoon')".[38] Nance raised the second person "why tell someone something they already know" conundrum and varied it by saying that even in "an experiential model that offers a fairly straightforward reason why one might need to hear (a new version of) a well-remembered story of one's own experience, a key question remains to be answered: who is doing the telling?" (¶11). In Pacheco's Spanish language coming-of-age short story "Tarde de agosto" it eventually becomes obvious to the reader, Nance says, that the narrator is the protagonist as well. This causes a "complex fusion of narrative elements":

> When narrator and protagonist become one, the consequence is hardly unusual: the result is first-person fiction. But in conventional first-person fiction the narrator is not also the narratee. Since the protagonist here has

[38] The copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.

> already been identified with the narratee, a commutative logical process (narrator equals protagonist, but protagonist already equals narratee, so narrator equals narratee) would leave the narrator telling himself about himself. (¶1)

The opening of the Pacheco story associates the narratee and protagonist; with the gradual realisation that the narrator is the protagonist as well, Nance says the reader may also make the shift from "the narratee-protagonist, embarrassed by failure, to that of the narrator-protagonist, who recalls what turns out to be his own past with compassion and comprehension" (¶14). This still leaves the question: why tell someone's own story to them? Butor (quoted in Morrissette and Walker), along with Margolin and Fludernik, have given us several reasons; within the text of this story Nance finds a motivation that those others only lightly allude to: that the present you (or in this case "tu") is receiving news of a past "you" but "the news is in the reinterpretation of a story and not in its particulars. The incident has neither been forgotten nor repressed…" (¶10) This reinterpretation is a capability of second person utilised effectively in Campbell's work; things now known to be of significance can be highlighted by a wiser, more experienced presence, whether that be the older Campbell, Butor's invisible but powerfully present "persona" or something else again. The main character in "Tarde de agosto" can see things in a new light, as Nance explains:

> Rather than the failure of epic proportions that the August afternoon represented in the eyes of the protagonist at the time … it is transformed into a comprehensible and in retrospect somewhat amusing moment in the life of a lonely and imaginative child. The retelling of the unforgettable episode thus serves to rehabilitate and integrate it for the narratee, who may now remember the same afternoon with a gentler judgment of his former self. (¶10)

Nance notes that the utilisation of the "you" form may be indicative of an inner split, self-alienation, or the like (¶12). With the unique properties of second

person, the narrator has knowledge of the protagonist and narratee but "can stand apart from both and, in effect, introduce one to the other" (¶13). She describes "Tarde de agosto" as simultaneously homodiegetic, heterodiegetic, and autodiegetic[39] and says the protagonist-narrator connection is "anything but a simple simultaneity":

> … there has occurred not only a split but a triplication of the self into a protagonist (the adolescent of the events narrated who existed "then"), a narratee "you" (the "you" who never forgot the afternoon and who exists "now"), and an implied "I" who can reinterpret one for the other. (¶13)

In 1998 Dennis Schofield published "Beyond the brain of Katherine Mansfield: the radical potentials and recuperations of second-person narrative" (1998a).[40] It dealt with a short "novel" written by Bill Manhire ten years earlier, a text that followed the "choose your own adventure" format and gave the reader various alternative plots, depending on the choices they made. Manhire's *The Brain of Katherine Mansfield* was written in second person and began:

> You are just an ordinary New Zealander. One day, with nothing better to do, you enter a bookshop; your eye is caught by a book in a large display case. Interesting title: *The Brain of Katherine Mansfield.* And it's attractively designed and illustrated, too.
> You leaf casually through the pages. Well, this really does look interesting. …(n.d)[41]

Schofield questions whether this opening could be the utterances of an involved but self-effacing narrator (a disguised "I"), or some more or less omniscient entity telling a tale about others, or either of these two addressing some form of reader (section 2 ¶5). He further ponders why readers might experience some of the

[39] This last term, autodiegetic, pertains to a narrator who is also the protagonist.
[40] The copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.
[41] This is from the text of the Hyperlink Version. See bibliography.

second person's instances as both forcefully compelling and (in complete contrast) alienating. Closely linked, he asks why second person should be described as a discrete point of view.

> Stories that continually refer to a "you" can seem quite baffling, even unnatural. So, in order to make these outlandish narratives understandable – knowable and stable – we bring to bear on them in our habits of reading whatever hermeneutic frames, whatever interpretive keys, come to hand. (section 1 ¶1)

Because we are familiar with the form of *The Brain of Katherine Mansfield* (via childhood reading of "choose your own adventure" books) and recognise it as a game, its ludic quality, he reasons, means "we are less resistant to any work being done by the pronoun" (section 1 ¶4). In other words, we apply different standards to the second person when it involves humour or playfulness. We are more forgiving of its intrusive and perhaps arrogant nature. Schofield reviews the debate about whether second person narrative modalities are merely unnatural and stylistic affectations of first person or third person narrative (section 1 ¶10), citing how Katherine Passias concludes that in *La Modification*, Butor's "surface" pronouns don't alter the underlying relationship between author, reader and text at all (section 1 ¶10). The reader, she says, can react to Butor's "you" only as an observer, visually recording "you," but logically perceiving "I". Schofield sees a flaw in this, in that it assumes "the inviolability of a given dyadic structure of narrative person":

> Narrative person, of course, is quite distinct from grammatical person – albeit the narrative form predicates itself precisely on the grammatical. Grammatical person, on the one hand, operates at the level of the discrete utterance and refers to the linguistic distinction between the utterance's three possible participants: the necessary first person (who speaks) and second person (who is spoken to), and the optional third person (who may be spoken about). Narrative person, on the other hand, operates at the level

> of narrative structure, and, as Gerard Genette has pointed out, it is not properly determined by the identity of the narrator, but by the person the narrator speaks about – the first-person narrator doing nothing so much as speaking about him – or herself. (section 1 ¶10)

Schofield remarks how the "fluidity and undecidability" is central to the value of second person modality for much feminist and other oppositional and alternative writing: "The second person has a Protean, shape-shifting quality that can defeat our willful [sic] attempts to specify and identify, as a hermeneutic imperative, the necessary 'I' who says 'you' (and to whom?)." (section 2 ¶1) Like Kacandes, he believes the second person mode can produce an intersubjectivity, as he puts it: "an ephemeral and fluid subject-in-process" (section 2 ¶11). Certainly creating confusion about origin and recipient was an important part in shaping an SPN voice for the creative part of this thesis. Without this ambiguity, it could otherwise be taken merely as first person or third person in disguise.

Dennis Schofield's PhD thesis, published in the same year, was entitled "The Second Person: A Point of View? The Function of the Second-Person Pronoun in Narrative Prose Fiction." (1998b). Schofield offers a very clear explanation of second person's unique and unsettling nature and the way it leaves a reader "in a place of doubt and uncertainty" (p. vii), calling it a mode in which it is unclear whether the "you" is a character, the narrator, a reader/narratee, no-one in particular – or a combination of these (p. 5). He calls its utterances at once familiar and deeply strange, "its engaged readers at one and the same time identifying with and repudiating a seeming direct, even intimate, address." (p. 5) Later he argues that readers might easily resist the strangeness of Protean-"you" narrative for a number of reasons beyond withholding engagement because of the second person's unconventionality. Other reasons offered included those coincidental to the second person, "such as the deployment of discourses antithetical to the reader (racism, sexism, and so on)" (p. 225). He notes Uri Margolin's observation that "whenever the identity of the textual speaker is unclear or shifting, the domain of reference of his [or her] speech will

automatically be destabilised, as an ambiguity is thereby created concerning the persons and times being referred to" (Margolin 1986-87, p. 187, quoted in Schofield 1998b, p.6).

Schofield comments that "having undermined its own status as 'centre' and constituted for itself an unstable domain of reference, an unstable text-world, it is not only the Protean narrator's epistemological authority that is brought into question" (p. 6). He says the narration also "loses its ontological authority, authority to posit anything at all – itself as well as the text-world – as being, let alone posit what might or might not be known about being" (p. 6). A fully engaged reader of second person can be "in a condition of epistemological and ontological havoc" (p. 12) and Schofield proposes that the "Protean shape-shifter" (to use Bonheim's term) "eludes narrative closure by refusing a final fixing of its referent" (p. 16). He says the "you" may point back to the narrating voice as self-address; it may point to a particular and particularised character dramatised within the narrative; it may point to the reader/narratee; alternatively, it may point to no "person" at all (p. 16). Schofield points out that second person fiction seems to involve an initial, immediate appeal or call to the reader above and beyond that manifested in the discourse of conventional fiction. "This immediate or surface interpellative gesture is most clearly evident at moments in which the reader is addressed – or more properly, moments at which the reader recognises him or herself in, identifies with, the (implied) reader constituted by the address." (p. 37) He concludes that what is achieved by radical second person narrative textuality "is the loss – the death, to use the polemical parlance of the '70s – of the privatised self that is coherent, stable and knowable and that provides a centre for truth." (p. 225)

Jill Walker in "Do You Think You're Part of This? Digital Texts and the Second Person Address." (2000) was among the first to examine in detail the connection

between the digital world and the SPN.[42] Walker stresses that there may be a clear narratee in a conventional text, as when the story is told to a "you", but this narratee doesn't have to coincide with the implied reader (p. 41). In the epistolary novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, for instance, the narratees (and narrators) of most letters, she says, are much more cynical than the implied reader, who is expected to see through the narrators' and narratees' cruelty (p. 41). The analogy in computer games is that the character you play may do things that "the implied reader is not supposed to approve of" (p. 41). When considering Walker's words, it occurs that most computer gamers can very easily slip into mowing down the multitudes with a machine gun. Although such considerations lie well outside my research project, this might suggest that there is a much bigger disconnect when playing a computer game than when reading a novel (where it would be very risky for a writer to place the main focus on a character who is an indiscriminate killer and expect the general reader to find a strong enough point of empathy to stay with the story for a few hundred pages); it might be that in computer games we more readily accept the fictional nature and lack of consequences. It may help that the characters being mown down are not developed, nor to any great extent is the character the gamer may assume.

Walker claims the literary performative proposed by Kacandes is rare, and limited to statements of the reader's activity in reading, as in John Barth's "You've read me this far then? Even this far?", from the 1968 collection *Lost in the Funhouse* (Walker 2000, p. 43). However, the literary performative has a lot in common with the function of "you" in electronic texts. She concludes that "When you play a game, or enact the involuntary performatives of responding to a link in a hypertext, you are more than a voyeur. You enjoy that feeling of being part of the text, part of the machine." (p. 48) To apply this notion to the texts being considered in this thesis, the same could be argued for a well-executed second

[42] Walker (2000) says that although computer games or hypertext fictions probably aren't narratives as such, there is definitely narration within them (p. 37). She points out that in these fictions the electronic "you" is expected to answer, unlike in non-electronic counterparts (p. 38), and that: "The role of the narrator is yours to fill as well as that of the narratee. You're still within a clear framework of a fictional world with limitations and expectations, but you have a voice of your own, albeit for limited periods." (p. 40)

person novel, perhaps even more strongly when it has a visual element such as Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*. The reader can enjoy the game of inserting themselves in and out of the text.

Whenever people are asked to name a second person novel, this researcher has found the example they most readily come up with is a generic: the "choose your own adventure" book. Gary Westfahl in "Giving Horatio Alger Goosebumps, Or, From Hardy Boys to Hapless Boys: The Changing Ethos of Juvenile Series Fiction" (2000) says that although young readers are actively involved in the process of story-telling, making key decisions and driving the plot in certain directions in a "choose your own adventure" book, these same readers are not truly assertive, "only *reactive*; they are 'empowered' only at moments chosen for their temporary empowerment by the authority controlling the story" (p. 41).

It should be noted here that in almost all second person fiction, such as "The Flight", the reader is completely locked into following a pre-established plot, as with a novel (or novella) written in any other mode. The agency suggested by the "you" and the present tense is an apparition, though it could be argued that in a graphic novel the reader has a little more power, in that he or she can move around the frame and chose which elements to give most weight to. Margolin (1990) refers to the "separate metatextual" component, such as the instructions in the choose-your-own adventure books, as being things that destroy "both readers' imaginary membership in the world they help to create and the immediacy of the relevant alternate experience" (p. 444). In other words, the author and authorship becomes completely visible (or audible to use Chatman's term).

Ruth Nestvold (2001) writes about a Renaissance of the "you" form among experimental writers "attempting to stretch the limits of language" (¶1) in her paper "'Do you want to hear about it?' The Use of the Second Person in Electronic Fiction."[43] The use of the SPN is more widespread in electronic

[43] The copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.

fictional forms than on paper, she notes, and it is worth reflecting now that her paper was written before the e-book and tablet revolution; she is dealing with interactive computer fiction, of which the first example (she says) was entitled simply *Adventure* and created at MIT in the mid-1970s.[44]

Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) argues in her book *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* that the reference of the second person pronoun in fiction can be interpreted in many ways, and can shift in the course of reading (p. 137):

> Depending on the text, "you" can be used as a boundary-crossing address from the narrator in the textual world to the reader in the real world … as an intra-textual-world address from the narrator to an anonymous narratee … as an address from the narrator to a specific individual (= character) in the textual world … as a self-address by the narrator … even [as in postmodern metafiction] as an address from an authorial figure to a real-world reader interrupting the textual-world speech act of the narrator… (pp. 137-138)

Ryan says despite their different reference, all of these uses play on the reader's instinctive reaction to think *me* when we hear *you*, and "to feel personally concerned by the textual utterance" (p. 138). She says reading a second person novel is a bit like going to the psychoanalyst and "wondering what he is going to tell you about yourself that you do not already know" (p. 138). This is a comment that fits in well with the Butor theory (cited in Morrissette and Walker) of having

[44] Ruth Nestvold (2001) says that since *Adventure* was created at MIT in the mid-1970s, second person has been the predominant form in the genre:

> Even in other, later forms of electronic fiction such as literary hypertext narrative or hyperfiction … the second person continues to be more common than in conventional fiction, indicating a line of descent from the less than serious genre of the text adventure, although in hyperfiction the external addressee "you" is more common than the protagonist "you." This of course is the most basic distinction between narratees in fiction, whether the "you" designates a character or a hypothetical reader. … The narratee "you" of hyperfiction, however, is more than a rhetorical device creating an illusion of involvement with the text, because the reader has the power of choice in the story. (¶5)

a character's story told by someone else because that character is unable or unwilling to tell it to himself or herself. Despite the widespread argument that the more defined the character becomes, the harder it is to identify with him/her, Ryan says even with a well-individuated character in the textual world, "the pronoun *you* retains the power to hook the attention of the reader and to force at least a temporary identification with the implied referent. Through this identification, the reader is figuratively pulled into the textual world and embodied on the narrative scene…" (p. 138)

Ryan does claim however that the immersive power of second person is often short-lived. Once the shock of that initial identification wears off, she says second person fiction tends to be read like third person: "the reader gradually detaches herself from the pronominal referent, and *you* becomes the identifying label, almost the proper name, of a regular character. … As an immersive device, second-person address is the most efficient in small doses…" (p. 138) The strategies for negating this short-lived effect in longer texts – and thereby harnessing the advantages of second person while avoiding its traps – form a major component of the discussion of *The Treatment* and *The Cure* and Eddie Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*. One solution noted by Ryan lies in varying the distance in narration "just as a sophisticated movie will vary the focal length of the camera lens" (p. 139). She says (2005) interactive fiction is one of the rare narrative forms where the use of "you" enters into a "truly dialogical rather than merely rhetorical relation with an Other, and where 'present' denotes narrow coincidence between the time of the narrated events and the time of the narration." (p. 519).

David Herman's massively detailed 2002 book *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* uses as its prime SPN example Edna O'Brien's *A Pagan Place* (1970), one of a few SPN novels to be written substantially in the past tense (Rex Stout's *How Like a God* is another). Herman argues that the pronoun "you" can be used to simultaneously refer to a fictional and a real addressee, producing what he terms "double-deixis" (p. 363). He writes that in some cases the narrative

"you" produces an ontological hesitation between what is actual and what is virtual within the story-world:

> More precisely, *you* can induce hesitation between reference to entities, situations, and events internal to the storyworld and reference to entities, situations, and events external to the storyworld. As a result, narrative understanding unfurls within the emergent spatiotemporal parameters of competing mental models of the narrated domain. (p. 338)

Herman refers to a certain "fuzzy" or indeterminate function "making it impossible to decide exactly where those tokens of "you" fall on the continuum that stretches between reference to storyworld participants and address to reader" (p. 338). The reader, it seems, is involved in a superimposition of deictic roles (p. 361). Although framed in far more technical terms than in many other works, what Herman is referring to is, ultimately, the same ambiguity carried by the pronoun "you" that has been discussed since the early days of the research into the SPN.

Matt DelConte in "Why You Can't Speak: Second-Person Narration, Voice, and a New Model for Understanding Narrative." (2003) argues that second person is not a category of narration that is parallel to first person or third person because "Second-person narration … is defined not by who is speaking but by who is listening (the narratee)…" (p. 204). He says that there is an inevitable overlap of second person with either first or third person because second person is always also either first or third person:

> This overlap occurs because these modes are defined along different axes: whereas first- and third-person narrations (as well as Genette's categories of homo- and heterodiegesis) are defined along the axis of narrator, second-person narration is defined along the axis of narratee – more precisely, by the coincidence of narratee and protagonist. However,

> second-person narration deserves its own place in typologies of narration because of its particular rhetorical effects. (p. 204)

DelConte's point that second person cannot be directly compared with first and third person is certainly correct. However, when comparing the SPN's "particular rhetorical effects" it is hard to identify and explain them without doing so in relation to the two other far more common narrative modes. Similarly, the fact that there is an overlap between second person and the other two modes doesn't stop us recognising a second person text and fully experiencing its rhetorical effects. DelConte's attempt at a comprehensive definition becomes very complex and, in doing so, continues to reveal what a slippery form it is. "[S]econd-person narration," DelConte says, "is a narrative mode in which a narrator tells a story to a (sometimes undefined, shifting, and/or hypothetical) narratee – delineated by *you* – who is also the (sometimes undefined, shifting, and/or hypothetical) principal actant in that story" (pp. 207-208). He suggests that it could be argued that:

> all second-person narration is actually homodiegesis considering that a narrator must be on the same diegetic plane as his/her narratee-protagonist (and thus must be on the plane of the story world) in order to communicate directly with that narratee-protagonist. But even this rule has an exception in choose-your-own-adventure stories such as Manhire's "The Brain of Katherine Mansfield," in which the address of the narrator oscillates between an intradiegetic narratee and an extradiegetic implied reader. (p. 210)

DelConte presents a complex narrative model which differs from Genette's influential taxonomy of homo- and heterodiegesis "because it foregrounds narrative functions and diegetic planes rather than ontological worlds" (pp. 211-212). In brief, it divides narration into: 1. Non-Coincident Narration; 2. Completely-Coincident Narration; 3. Partially-Coincident Narration (of

Narrator/Protagonist); 4. Partially-Coincident Narration (of Narrator/Narrative); 5. Partially-Coincident Narration (of Narrator/Protagonist).[45]

Eric Hyman Staels's paper "The Indefinite You" (2004) has some interesting detail on the general use of pronouns,[46] saying the use of the indefinite "you" (ie, the generic one) is "omnipresent, everywhere – you might even say *youbiquitous*" (p. 164). Justin Beplate in "Who speaks? Grammar, Memory, and Identity in Beckett's *Company*"[47] (2005) highlights, among other things, how the second person can be used to create conundrums. He says in Samuel Beckett's *Company*, which mixes third and second person narration, "it is never clear whether or not 'he' of whom the third person narrator speaks is the same as the hearer, and still less whether the hearer is the 'you' being spoken to by the voice" (¶24).

Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction by Brian Richardson (2006)[48] synthesises Richardson's earlier papers on experimental writing and says that with virtually all earlier fiction having been

[45] Here is the taxonomy in expanded form (DelConte, p. 211-212). Although illustrations are referred to, they don't add much to these prose descriptions:

> Figure 1 depicts a narrative in which the narrator, narratee, and protagonist functions are all discrete; I term this type *non-coincident narration*. I include examples of homodiegesis as well as heterodiegesis because although the narrator and the protagonist of non-coincident narration might be the same individual (e.g., the autodiegesis of *Invisible Man* or *Lolita*), the narrator and protagonist exist on different diegetic planes and, thus, have distinct functions. On the other end of the spectrum is narration represented by figure 2, which depicts self-address autodiegesis: narrator, protagonist, and narratee are all the same and exist on the same diegetic plane; I term this *completely-coincident narration*. The other three figures represent different forms of *partially-coincident narration*. Figure 3 depicts a coincidence of narrator and protagonist functions but a distinct narratee; in these narratives, most commonly simultaneous present-tense, a narrator speaks about him/herself to someone else. Figure 4 depicts narratives in which the narrator and narratee are the same but distinct from the protagonist: a narrator narrates to him/herself the story of someone else. And figure 5 depicts narratives in which we encounter a coincidence of narratee and protagonist but a distinct narrator: a narrator speaks to an external narratee who is also the main actor.

[46] Hyman Staels (2004) notes an instance of Margaret Thatcher using three different pronouns to refer to herself in the sentence "When I got [to Oxford] I think the first thing I learned was that for the first time in my life you were total divorced from your background. You go as an individual. So what did we learn?" (p. 161)

[47] The copy of this paper was in HTML format, hence paragraph numbers are offered.

[48] The "unnatural voices" of Richardson's book title are those of postmodern fiction and include stories narrated by corpses, "impossibly eloquent" children, animals, ghosts, legendary creatures, disembodied voices, cybernetic devices, machines (including a television and a storytelling machine), and people of ambiguous or shifting gender (pp. 3-4).

written in either the first or third person, "how could experimental writers fail to move on to the 'we' form that combines them, or the 'you' that confuses them…" (p. 2). In response to Gérard Genette's dictate that the novelist must choose between two narrative postures, ie "to have the story told by one of its 'characters,' or to have it told by a narrator outside the story" (Genette 1980, p. 244), Richardson says this is precisely the choice rejected by so many contemporary authors and adds that second person prose is perhaps exemplary in this respect: "the 'you' invoked will at different points seem to be one of the characters; at others a narrator outside the story; it may furthermore seem to refer to a narratee or the actual reader who holds the book" (pp. 5-6). He argues that much recent fiction – he was writing in 2006 – has rejected a mimetic model (p. 6), although it should be noted that Brian McHale (1987) had already neatly twisted this by saying that, in the postmodern age, fiction could be antirealist but still mimetic in its anti-realism (p. 219). Richardson calls the "you" and the "we" forms "unnerving" and "protean", with "you" being particularly devious. "Authors using this form regularly play on this ambiguity as well as on its multiple possible meanings." (p. 14)

Chapter Two of *Unnatural Voices* specifically concentrates on the second person. It is entitled "At First You Feel a Bit Lost", picking up a line from Italo Calvino's narrator in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*. Richardson provides a division of second person fiction into three types, a division sufficiently useful to cover here in detail. He also identifies forms (as did Fludernik and others) that frequently employ the second person pronoun within their narration but are not second person. These are: (1) Those that address a heterodigetic narratee, eg "gentle reader"; (2) The monologue addressed to a real or imaginary homodiegetic audience (such as Camus's *La Chute*) and (3) The apostrophe, ie usually addressed to an absent third party (p. 18).

In contrast to these non-second person styles he says: "We may define second person narrative as any narration other than an apostrophe that designates its protagonist by a second person pronoun. This protagonist will usually be the sole

focalizer, and is often (but not always) the work's principal narratee as well." (p. 19) [49] This definition, which is elegant in its simplicity, accords with Fludernik, says Richardson, but differs from Gerald Prince and Matt DelConte, for whom the "you" simultaneously designates both the protagonist and narratee (p. 19). In defining anything to do with the second person, however, Richardson says he is identifying tendencies rather than invariable conditions because of the mode's extremely protean form, whereby "its very essence is to eschew a fixed essence" (p. 19).

Richardson's three categories of "true" second person are useful for illustrating different ways the second person can be exploited. The first is "The Standard Form". This is the type used by McInerney in *Bright Lights, Big City*, Richardson says. "In it, a story is told, usually in the present tense, about a single protagonist who is referred to in the second person; the 'you' often designates the narrator and the narratee as well, though … there is considerable slippage in this unusual triumvirate." (p. 20) He suggests sentences in *Bright Lights, Big City* could be written in the first person, in the third person with a single focaliser, or in free indirect speech. The choice of the second person, however, gives a type of narration that "approximates but cannot be reduced to any of these other perspectives" (p. 20). There is ambiguity over the identity and status of the "you" in The Standard Form. It "threatens the ontological stability of the fictional world insofar as it seems it could be addressing the reader as well as the central character" (p. 20). "The Flight" could fit neatly into that category, providing an oscillation between reader identification and distance.

Richardson argues the SPN can't be easily subsumed into first or third person, despite various theorists trying. He calls it "a playful form, original, transgressive, and illuminating, that is always conscious of its unusual own status and often

[49] Further to which: Richardson (2006) points out that standard books on narration say that "what is meant by first or third person narration is not the pronoun being used, but the position of the narrator" (p. 15). The examples cited are autobiographies written in the third person but nonetheless narrated from a first person standpoint. Likewise, he says, "one may address oneself in the second person without transcending the normal boundaries of the position of the first person" (p. 15). To illustrate this he uses examples from Henry James and Rimbaud.

disguises itself, playing on the boundaries of other narrative voices" (p. 23). Returning to the example of *Bright Lights, Big City*, he says that although most sentences in it could be seamlessly transferred into the first person, particularly as they contain no information that the protagonist doesn't know, nor syntactic patterns outside his customary discursive range, the "you" brings instability and could be "a psychomachia between self and soul, a dialogue between id and superego, a character employing the voice of another to interrogate himself, a realist dramatization of the disorienting effect of cocaine" (p. 23). Richardson suggests second person renders all these possibilities valid but none definitive. Therefore, the SPN "simultaneously opens up new possibilities for representing consciousness and provides a site for the contestation of constricting discursive practices" (p. 28).

Richardson's second category is "The Hypothetical Form", which is to say a text written in the style of the user's manual or self-help guide. Richardson says this could also be called subjunctive, hypothetical or recipe form. He considers Lorrie Moore's story "How" a good example and isolates three main features: (a) Consistent use of the imperative; (b) Frequent employment of the future tense; (c) Unambiguous distinction between the narrator and the narratee (p. 29). It is worth noting that although *The Treatment* and *The Cure* (which Richardson doesn't cite in his book) may fit into Richardson's Standard Form, *Alec: How to be an Artist* complies with the first two of his "main features" for the Hypothetical Form, but not the third, highlighting the malleability of SPN and reiterating Richardson's assertion that its essence is to eschew a fixed essence. Richardson notes the "you" in the Hypothetical Form is just as protean, "which can occasion some ontological slippage." He adds this "you" is one "that can embrace almost all of us" (p. 30).

The third form is "The Autotelic Form", defined as "the direct address to a 'you' that is at times the actual reader of the text and whose story is juxtaposed to and

can merge with the characters of the fiction" (p. 30). He says the autotelic[50] form is a "narrativization of a form of address" and appears in pure instances only in extremely short texts (p. 30). In longer works it is alternated with third or first person. This form primarily uses the present tense (p. 31); as in the hypothetical form, there is a distinction between narrator and narratee. The most compelling feature, he says, is "the ever-shifting referent of the 'you' that is continuously addressed" (p. 31). The obvious example of this category is Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveller*, about which Richardson remarks: "Throughout the text the 'you' continues to move, shift, double back, and change again, addressing alternately the real reader and narratee …" (p. 32).

Richardson concludes that one of the reasons for narrative theory resisting conceptualising second person for so long is "the habit of thinking in terms of binary oppositions" (p. 35). Another reason is that first and third person have corollaries in nonfiction (autobiography and biography), while second person is a "distinctively literary phenomenon" with no precise nonfiction equivalent. In what seems particularly pertinent to *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, and "The Flight", he says that the SPN is a new and effective way of "revealing a mind in flux" (p. 35) and "helps dramatize the mental battles of a [sic] individual struggling against the internalized discourse of an oppressive authority … it is admirably suited to express the unstable nature and intersubjective constitution of the self" (p. 36).

Threasa Meads's Queensland University of Technology Honours thesis included *Nobody (An Autobiographical Fiction*), a violent and unsettling second person novella (2007b).[51] Like *The Brain of Katherine Mansfield*, it appropriated the "choose your own adventure" structure, however in the hands of Meads it was more of a *Choose Your Own Traumatic Outcome*. The exegetical portion of Meads's thesis spoke of how the second person creates the impression that the

[50] The word autotelic is defined by the Mirriam-Webster online dictionary as "having a purpose in and not apart from itself".
[51] Meads also produced a longer version of *Nobody*, which was shortlisted in The Australian/Vogel's Literary Award for 2008.

you-reader is in control, while in fact the opposite is true (2007a, p. 26-27).[52] In "Creating disconcerting uncertainty through sustained second person narrative voice: Second person narrative voice in the fiction of G.M Glaskin and Peter Kocan" (2008), Jeremy Fisher touches on how the difficulty of writing second person can often lead to difficulties for the reader too. He writes:

> …even though rarely used and hard to sustain, second person narrative voice may blur the writer's conceit of who is addressing whom, which, while that can become a strength of its narrative impact, can lead some of the very few writers who attempt to use it to neglect a fundamental aspect of their writing and lose sight of their readers. (p. 1)

This ties in closely with comments by John Updike and others that second person can draw attention to its own cleverness, to the detriment of serving the needs of the story.[53]

Alice Bell and Astrid Ensslin (2011) further examined the links between the digital world and the SPN in their paper "I know what it was. You know what it was: Second-Person Narration in Hypertext Fiction". They noted that the textual "you" almost certainly features more widely across digital, Interactive Fiction (IF) texts than other texts and "Since the reader is integrally involved in the construction of the narrative, 'you' is a particularly pertinent and compelling feature of digital fiction" (p. 327).[54] Although much of their argument was outside

[52] This point was reinforced with Meads's unlikely but effective comparison between her novella and a well-known dance (2007a, p. 27): "I am facilitating a figurative Hokey-Pokey dance, where everyone shifts in and out of inhabiting 'you' while at other times, perhaps, nobody does." Meads argued that the Hokey Pokey helps children familiarise themselves with their physical presence in the world, helping them to learn control of their own bodies and affirm their sense of agency. However, it is highly structured so the dance equally denies them agency "all within the context of enjoying themselves" (2007a, p. 28).

[53] John Updike (1984) wrote of Calvino's intricate, partly second person *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*: "… there is little that sticks in the mind as involuntarily real, as having been other than intellectually achieved" (p. 472).

[54] Bell and Ensslin's definition of this genre (2011) is more comprehensive than any given in earlier papers by Walker and Nestvold. It is as follows:

> Digital fiction is fiction, written for and read on a computer screen, that pursues its verbal, discursive, and/or conceptual complexity through the digital medium and would

the domain of this project it (and other digital fiction papers) provided a fascinating look at an area where second person is close to the norm, rather than a rare exception.

Conclusion

This examination of the major research papers and book chapters on the SPN was undertaken to cast light on the mechanics of the mode, specifically when used in fiction in a sustained manner, and to identify the literary advantages and disadvantages isolated by researchers. It was important that these noted effects could be assessed in relation to my chosen texts (those by Kocan and Campbell), and could be tested in an original SPN narrative. Looking at the short history of SPN research, we can see it moved from Booth's 1961 dismissal in a footnote ("Efforts … have never been very successful", p. 150) to full journal articles claiming for the mode a range of unique literary properties. These included the ability to provide:

- A compelling empty linguistic sign awaiting fulfilment – in whole or part – by the reader
- Ambiguity and ontological instability that can be exploited by the author
- A shortening and distancing effect of the author's "camera lens"
- Dual or even triple temporality
- A tone of judgement
- The intimacy of first person without bragging or pompousness
- A broader picture than can be achieved in first person, conveying to the reader more than the character can see
- A reawakening in a character of memories that have been diminished or distorted by time.

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lose something of its aesthetic and semiotic function if it were removed from that medium (Bell et al.). Hypertext fiction is a specific form of digital fiction in which fragments of electronic text, known as lexias, are connected by hyperlinks. When reading a hypertext, the reader can click the "Enter" key on her keyboard to follow a default path through the text. (p. 311)

With Morrissette (1965), second person was first treated seriously within the academy; its systematic – rather than fleeting – use was hailed as an important literary mode that could produce unique and psychologically complex fictional effects. Morrissette and later researchers also raised and then attempted to address some of the quandaries that still cause debate, and which I faced in dealing with my research questions and in shaping the creative work:

- What exactly is second person narration?
- Who is doing the talking and who is doing the listening?
- What is the logical reason for a story being told in second person? (Why tell someone something they already know?)
- Can a reader really fill the space of the deictic word "you"?

It was seen, particularly when looking at the work on narratology by Chatman, that the complex relations between the real author, implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader and real reader is germane to second person – and is also complicated by second person. This is particularly the case in what could be seen as semi-autobiographic SPN novels, such as those by Kocan and Campbell, where the writer/narrator and the recipient of the story could be seen to be the one person. If "The Flight" had been truly written by a fleeing whistleblower the same conundrum would arise, however even as the work stands, there is considerable fuzziness surrounding the categories discussed by Chatman. Exactly who does the disembodied narrating voice belong to? Who is saying what to whom, the reader might wonder, as he or she watches the character, sometimes plays the role of the character, and falls in and out of identification, empathy and agreement. Hantzis et al noted this intersubjectivity, as well as the SPN's capacity to present multiple voices that simultaneously construct the experience in the text. In "The Flight" there are many voices. Filtered through the "you" (if the reader interprets the story as being auto-narrated), or the one who says "you" (if the reader does not), are voices running through the protagonist's head, his enunciated speech, his sub-vocal speed, the words of others (heard and misheard), plus his fantasies and

attempts to talk himself through, or talk up, his situation ("No, not Siobhan. She wouldn't. A nightmare, that's all. Not Siobhan. No, not Siobhan.")

In "The Flight" there is also the shortening and distancing effect identified by researchers. This moving of the "camera lens" sometimes takes you well within the character ("Shake your hands and ankles to wake yourself. To confirm there are no cuffs. The alcohol is still very much in evidence, slurping inside your swirling head. You stumble through the half-light of the darkened plane."), at other times brings the narration closer to third person and/or creates the sensation of being watched ("From above, you can be seen making neat patterns. Covering each forkful with the exact same combination of vegetables.").

Second person's compatibility with the present tense was noted and this tense was exploited in both of the creative works produced for this project, adding an immediacy, suggesting a lack of mediation by author or narrator, and superficially reducing the conundrum raised by Bonheim and others (why tell someone something they already know?) by giving the impression that the information is arriving at the time the events are taking place. Some researchers argue that the more a "you" is described, the more the reader will be an observer rather than a participant. However, it was suggested by others, that this can be subverted by clever writing. Kocan's protagonist, Len Tarbutt, was under-described physically. Almost no attempt at all was made to describe the protagonist in "The Flight", indeed we knew he had dyed his hair and held his hand up in front of face during conversations, as if blocking the light, whenever possible. There was no advantage in a detailed description (it is "you" after all), and it may have produced that effect of rendering the reader more an observer rather than a participant.

Over time, researchers explored some of the most powerful literary properties of the SPN, an example being its ability to depict the mental turmoil of psychosis, to heighten the angst and disassociation of the outsider, and to depict claustrophobia

and a lack of agency. These were the properties so effectively exploited by Kocan and worked into "The Flight" in paragraphs such as …

> The woman – you haven't taken in her face – points to a hand-written sign on an easel. It is at this point that you start to view everything, including yourself, as if through a monitor. The footage is black and white, jerky. There is a time banner along the bottom, counting out the hundredths of a second.
>
> […] The time banner along the bottom of the monitor could be counting up or down. All that is clear is that it is moving rapidly. And the footage is exactly like that shown to juries.
>
> You stride towards a big screen in the distance, as if every set of hands behind you is reaching out to grab you. The view is now from above. You are a small spec, hurriedly checking the display. Letters, numbers and destinations shimmy, merging in and out of one another. *Focus you fool!* There it is: B4. That's in Terminal 3. You have to catch a Skytrain. Jesus … how hard are they trying to make this?

In noting the unsettling nature of the SPN, Cornis-Pope argued that it encouraged readers to share marginalised stances. Both my attempts at writing SPNs involved "outsiders" – the mode seemed a natural fit. Similarly Richardson (2006) highlighted the SPN's ability to depict the effects of oppressive authority; Fludernik (1993) had already talked of the "courthouse *you*", which is to say the "you" that might be spoken to a witness or the accused, perhaps to elicit a confession. The voice saying "you" in "The Flight" is designed to remind us of authority, to invoke an extra level of oppression and inescapability for a character on the run.

As fiction increasingly becomes available digitally and, as seems likely, new narrative forms with increasing interactivity are created, it is reasonable to assume

that second person could become a much more widely used mode. Whether the process is accelerated by technology or not, Richardson (2006) makes the prediction that second person "may even turn out to be one of the most important technical advances in fictional narration since the introduction of the stream of consciousness" (p. 35). This might be an overly optimistic prediction, particularly if one compares the modest increase in the use of the mode since Richardson wrote those words, against the continuing strength of the stream of consciousness. However, he and others have shown the ability of second person to produce certain literary effects that simply can't be achieved by other means. The creative work (first with *Your Story* and then, with more experience and knowledge, "The Flight") sets out to interact with the research so as to exploit the advantages isolated (distance and intimacy, ontological instability, multiple subjectivity, the ability to show a mind in turmoil, an invitation to take the role of the outsider, etc) and to avoid the pitfalls (primarily repelling readers who are unwilling to take the part of the "you"). Many of these unique literary effects are identified in the range of texts discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter five:
Literary review: sustained second person novels

Before and after the publication of the Kocan duology and Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*, at least a dozen other novels using the sustained SPN were published in English in traditional pbook[55] form. This chapter takes a brief look at the more significant of these works, from 1929 to the end of 2013, plus examples of periodic SPN use in novels or short stories, where relevant. In surveying these examples, the intention is to discuss the variations in approach, highlight the conjecture about what makes a true sustained SPN novel and, most of all, draw attention to the literary effects these authors have achieved by using the second person mode. There are clearly many ways of managing the SPN; this chapter discusses how they informed my research and conclusions, and how they inspired my own work.

Prose novels using second person throughout remain remarkably rare and, in many cases, they could be more fairly defined as novellas rather than novels. Equally, there is scope with many such books to argue whether the author has truly sustained a pure second voice from first page to last. Often books claimed as second person will be broken up by extracts from letters or diaries, or alternated with chapters or sections in first or third person.[56] Nonetheless, the following

[55] Publishers now distinguish between print books, or "pbooks", and electronic "ebooks". The latter category is now so vast and growing so quickly, that no effective survey could be undertaken to determine the likely number of SPNs.

[56] On this point though, it should be noted that few texts are purely first, second or third person. H. Porter Abbott (2008) makes the point that "first-person narration … almost invariably includes third-person narration" (p. 71). Porter Abbott's example (to paraphrase: "I woke up, the phone rang, it was George, he said …" etc) stands true for second person. Almost all second person contains much third person in description and, in dialogue, much first person.

novels and novellas published up to mid-2013 could be fairly described as exhibiting a sustained second person narrative voice:

- *How Like a God* (1929) by Rex Stout
- *La Modification* (1957) by Michel Butor; known in English language as *A Change of Heart* (Simon and Schuster, US, 1958) and *Second Thoughts* (Faber & Faber, UK, 1958) respectively
- *No End to the Way* (1965) by Neville Jackson (a pen name of G.M. Glaskin)
- *Un homme qui dort* (1967) by Georges Perec (finally published in English in 1990 as *A Man Asleep*)
- *A Pagan Place* (1970) by Edna O'Brien
- *The Treatment* (1980) by Peter Kocan
- *The Cure* (1983) by Peter Kocan
- *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) by Jay McInerney
- *The Sound of My Voice* (1987) by Ron Butlin
- *Winter Birds* (1994) by Jim Grimsley
- *Alec: How to be an Artist* (graphic novel, 2001) by Eddie Campbell
- *You* (2010) by Charles Benoit
- *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel* (2011) by Deb Kandelaars
- *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) by Mohsin Hamid

Perhaps the most dramatic thing about the above list of sustained second person novels is just how limited it is. There may be some that have not come to the attention of this researcher (or to the attention of other researchers whose work he has studied), and one could assume in today's explosion of self-published books (more than 300,000 unique titles in 2011 alone according to the *New York Times*)[57] there must be more SPNs than ever before. Nonetheless, by any normal

[57] On August 25, 2012, the *New York Times* reported: "In 2006, before Amazon supercharged electronic publishing with the Kindle, 51,237 self-published titles appeared as physical books, according to the data company Bowker. Last year, Bowker estimates that more than 300,000 self-published titles were issued in either print or digital form."

measure, mainstream fiction using sustained second person can be fairly considered exceedingly uncommon. There are other places in publishing where it is more widely used, however. Jeremy Fisher (2008) points out that second person is utilised in:

> popular and non- or quasi-fictional written genres such as guide books, self-help books, interactive fiction, role-playing games and Do It Yourself-manuals simply because it allows the writer to tell the reader what to do in an instructional manner… The voice may also be used in advertisements as a means of achieving a sense of empathy with the receiver of the advertising message… (p. 2)

Much of what is popularly described as second person, by virtue of regular use of the pronoun "you", is in reality apostrophe or addressed to a homodiegetic audience. This is to say it is an address to an abstraction or person, absent or present, homodiegetic or heterodiegetic. By way of example, Canadian writer Margaret Atwood's "Rape Fantasies" presents a monologue spoken by a woman to a male stranger across a bar table. In the Booker Prize shortlisted novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, the main character also speaks to "you" across a table. This is a typical quote from Hamid's monologue address to an imaginary homodiegetic audience:

> The lights have gone. But why do you leap to your feet? Do not be alarmed, sir; as I mentioned before, fluctuations and blackouts are common in Pakistan. Really, you are overreacting; it is not yet so dark. (p. 69)

The non-second person forms of the "you" narrative can also involve the person holding the actual book, as in the Dear Reader tradition of early novels, or in radical and slightly alarming interjections, such as when a Nick Hornby character telling her story in the first person "jumps out of the page" and starts abusing the

reader,[58] or when Martin Amis's first person narrator desperately appeals to the reader to sympathise with him even though he – and the textual "you" – both know the narrator is doing appalling things.[59] As Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) says of Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*: "The narrator's ability to read the reader's mind creates an ontological paradox, not so much because it transgresses ontological boundaries – after all, authors have access to the minds of their characters – but because it transgresses them in the wrong direction: characters are not supposed to be aware of readers." (p. 169)

There are other candidates for genuine sustained SPN novels. Monika Fludernik (1993) cites Jean Muno's *Le Joker* (1971), which I was unable to source in English for this research, and perhaps "the early and extremely original *Beach Red* (Bowman 1945), a war novel" (1993, pp. 217-218). *Beach Red* is a short and fascinating work by American Peter Bowman. It did prove to be available and did prove to be in second person throughout (a first edition cloth-bound hardback in good condition cost a desultory $3.97 on amazon.com); Fludernik's questioning refers almost certainly to ambiguity about whether it is a novel. It is short – made up of 60 two-page chapters – and written in free-form verse. It follows a soldier through the storming of a Japanese held beach in World War Two and includes many anecdotes related by various soldiers in dialogue, possibly to break up the "you" claustrophobia. However, when claustrophobia, lack of agency, paranoia and other potential SPN attributes are required, Bowman's writing harnesses them effectively: "You wonder if you have/been seen, if some sniper is waiting for you to/emerge into the open, if your movements are being watched." (p. 79)

[58] In Nick Hornby's *A Long Way Down* (2005), various characters tell their story in first person. One of them, Jess, suddenly announces: "I don't know you. The only thing I know about you is, you're reading this." It takes a second to realise that the chapter's narrator is suddenly directly addressing the actual reader of the book rather than the unnamed/undefined narratee who has been the implied recipient until this point. Not just that, but she is doing it in increasingly aggressive terms as she considers what type of reader "you" might be, before deciding that the answer to this quandary is a "smug old git". This unsettling passage illustrates a rather radical update on the "gentle reader" trope, with Jess eventually telling the reader that he or she can't empathise with her predicament they should "fucking shut up" and "Stick your smile up your saggy old arse." (p. 34)

[59] In Martin Amis's *Money* (1984), the narrator, John Self, is constantly bringing the implied reader into his text. After revealing he has done something appalling (p.211), for example, he writes to the apparent reader: "I didn't dare tell you earlier in case you stopped liking me, in case I lost your sympathy altogether – and I do need it, your sympathy."

The protagonist is unnamed, simply "you". Each short chapter ends with a punch line, eg, "You want to be brave. You also want to be." (p. 94) The "you" is injured and the text moves into a stream of consciousness about the striving of every soldier to stay alive (among many other things). On page 53 there is the dreamy: "All that noise. All that Goddam noise." By page 111, the "you" is observing his injured body "with vague disinterest" and darkness is settling. The end finally arrives, it seems on the last typed page, taking the reader beyond the life of the second person protagonist. "You do not hear the continuing noise of battle from the beach…" (p. 122) Nor does the "you" hear Private Whitney cautiously approach, look at your wounds, feel for a pulse, then declare "Lieutenant … there is nothing moving but his watch" (p. 122). The overall effect is unsettling and often powerful but it is hard to know whether such a use of second person narrative could have been convincing in a novel-length format, or even in a short story/novella such as "The Flight".

Morrissette (1965) includes John Ashmead's WW2 novel *The Mountain and the Feather* (1961) on his list of SPNs. It is certainly a prose novel (this paperback was an equally desultory $4.00 on Amazon), and certainly uses second person, but reads mostly like third person. Written in past tense and apparently based on Ashmead's real experiences, it follows the WW2 adventures of naval intelligence officer Ensign Montgomery Classen. He arrives at Pearl Harbor after the December 1941 attack to translate Japanese documents and interrogate prisoners. He eventually follows the US troops to various hotspots, including the Philippines and Iwo Jima. Dialogue and unattributed observations are at the forefront, and the "you" is sparsely used; it's as if the camera is shifting around the room and occasionally the reader is reminded that "you" are included in the scene too.

> "No work is too humble," he had said, looking sternly at the passenger officers. You and the other new ensigns had looked away. But the warrants, retreads, most of them, from the First World War, had laughed scornfully. He tried to explain about "dignity" … (p. 9)

The text reads like conventional third person for paragraphs and even pages at a time; between pages 195 and 199 inclusive, there are no mentions of "you" at all. If such sections – and there are many – were read in isolation there would be no indication this was anything other than an entirely conventional novel. The narration always returns to "you" but the emphasis is often elsewhere; in short, it is mostly a soft, distant second person with a less confronting, less accusatory use of the "you", in keeping perhaps with the "low strength" SPN short stories identified by Bonheim (1983, p. 70). Furthermore, the text is broken up with snatches of songs, poems, excerpts from war reports and other documents, increasingly so as the text goes on.

Although this distant second person voice will often go for pages describing things with little or no mention of the "you" (ie, Ensign Classen), in the battle scenes the narration is at times close to Classen and the SPN voice appears to heighten the claustrophobia and anxiousness of being in battle. The following quote gives a sense of that unique second person attribute of being slightly removed from the action while also participating in it: "…dispassionately, you hit the ground by instinct, watching yourself take cover, and watching the mucky red burst of the mortar shell engulf and dissolve the soldier…" (p. 139). It is a long novel – 358 tightly packed pages – and despite its racy cover, a slow moving one. The one review I could source called it "Utterly convincing, if not entirely engaging" and didn't mention the second person narration.[60]

Many lists purporting to identify second person books include Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979 in Italian, 1981 in English) though, after its arresting and much quoted second person opening,[61] it alternates between second and third person modes. The conceit is that a book lover – you – purchases Calvino's latest novel but it has been misprinted with a repeated section. When you take it back and receive a new copy, it is clear that the chapter you had been

[60] Unbylined review on Kirkus, www.kirkusreviews.com, n.d.
[61] "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel…"

enjoying wasn't Calvino's but that of a Polish writer's, accidentally interpolated into the Calvino novel. You take home that book by the Polish writer but there are more problems. Your attempts to rectify them put the textual "you", and to some extent the real "you", into a literary labyrinth, where it is impossible to tell what's real and what is not, and who you are really reading. It is easy for a reader to admire its intricate, witty and thought provoking aspects, but it can't be included here as a sustained SPN.

Others cite Thomas Keneally's *A Dutiful Daughter* (1971). Certainly after a third person opening, much of it is written in second person, but some of the second person is what could be called distant third person (analogous to the distant or "low strength" second person found in Ashmead's *The Mountain and The Feather*). The initial chapter, which is unnumbered, tells of Barbara Glover waiting for her brother to return home, the second chapter begins dramatically and unsettlingly: "You are Barbara's brother Damian..." (p. 4). It then describes a scene in second person, present tense, solely from the point of view of "you", or Damian. The voice quickly turns to past tense and even in places where the "you" address continues, the voice moves away from Damian. The "distance" of some of the second person narration is highlighted by the chapter that runs from pages 67 to 70. It is rendered entirely through the consciousness of Barbara with only one mention of "you" (eg, p. 69: "She knew that you and she both had spiritual features that could be dressed to dazzle."); therefore the "you" does not generally appear to be an invitation to play a role in the narrative. The next chapter has nearly seven pages of transcript of an essay "written" by Barbara; such external material is a popular way of breaking up the relentless "you" of the SPN.

The dust jacket flap blurb of *A Dutiful Daughter* goes some way to explaining the narrative mode by saying "the brother … tells much of the story as if to an incredulous self". There is a clear separation between narrator and the "you" character for much of the book, the narrator for example has an entry into the consciousness of the characters other than Damian, and is present at scenes where Damian is not. Some later chapters are not in second person at all, close or distant

(The chapter that begins chapter 107, starts out inside the head of the Glover patriarch, who has transformed into a half cow-half man). In short, it is a book that would not fall into the definition of sustained second person but it achieves some of the effects of a conventional second person book, including a disorienting, disassociative and, at times, accusatory feel. The use of SPN also perhaps helps overcome the fantastic and potentially ridiculous plot device – Barbara's parents turning into semi-bovine creatures – and helps mitigate the confusion and oppression that has crept into Barbara's life as a result.

Others include *The Bride Stripped Bare* (2003), by Nikki Gemmel, though it is made up of a series of short SPN "lessons" (which are somewhere between faux diary entries and essays) that, to this reader, failed to either sustain interest individually or cumulatively, nor did they create a true novelistic arc.[62]

Early works in detail

A very early example of sustained second person voice in a novel is found in mystery-story writer Rex Stout's early "serious" work, *How Like a God* (1929). This very unusual work, claimed by many as the first second person novel, isn't quite what it seems. Each of the sixteen second person chapters is separated by a shorter italicised section written in third person. These interludes, which start and finish the narrative, are numbered from A through to Q and range in length from a couple of short paragraphs to two pages. They at first seem to be the text from an unrelated thriller, telling the story of a "Mr Lewis" as he ascends a staircase with his hand on a revolver, intent on murder, perhaps, or suicide. The second person sections, which are full-length chapters (and also written in the past tense), sequentially detail the life of writer-turned-corporate treasurer William Barton Sidney: only in the second half of the book do the two narratives come together. The style of the second person sections is captured in such quotes as:

[62] Reviewer Helen Brown (2003) suggested the occasionally beautiful language was "cast adrift among currents of glutinous purple prose in a plot that could have been lifted straight out of *Cosmopolitan*."

> You felt that something profound and inescapable was happening to you, and you could understand neither the thing itself nor the deep discomfort of your feeling about it. (p. 186)
>
> And you found the revolver and sat on the edge of the bed for an hour, holding it in your hand and looking at it, as if that was going to put muscles in your guts. (p. 246)

The text follows Sidney from childhood through love affairs and his open marriage to a rich wife, through to his increasing obsession with his mistress Millicent. The SPN moves around, but most often sounds like the character talking things through in his head. Often there is an accusatory tone to the voice, though this still could be drawn from the character's consciousness; for example: "What are you doing, making another gesture in a last effort to impress yourself?" (p. 20) The book rarely exploits those advantages of second person that came to be recognised later. For example, when Stout writes "You stood a little off, alone, furious with yourself for your soberness and detachment. This was fun; this was real fun; what was wrong with you?" (p. 48). There is a censoriousness but Stout seems to be working directly against the later idea that the SPN could best depict the mind that was going awry rather than the straight and sober one. Likewise, there is a distance in such scenes as "You felt so but you never thought so, because on those occasions there was such a boiling turmoil of sensations within you, the blood rushed so hotly to your head and your finger tips, that thought was out of the question." (p. 180). Later SPN writers such as Peter Kocan used the present tense to put the protagonist/reader right in the centre of that turmoil.

The sensation of creeping madness, alluded to in the various blurbs on the cover and inner pages, is never really caught in the SPN sections. Indeed, the most psychologically intense moments – and the killing that ends the book – are in the third person sections. In 1929 the book's subject matter, which includes decadence and an open marriage, would have carried much shock value. Today, the book seems merely a well written but slow moving and unremarkable

thriller/psychological drama, perhaps given the second person treatment to add novelty or a more literary sheen (Stout would later find his voice and earn great commercial success as a detective novelist). Perhaps the "gimmick" accusations levelled at *How Like a God* were not entirely misplaced. And, as if to illustrate how repelling second person is perceived to be for a general audience, the quotes apparently drawn out of the *How Like a God* text and displayed as a teaser on page one of my low cost 1961 paperback have been reworked and recast into conventional third person. "At the first touch of her hand you felt yourself tremble all over" (p. 185) becomes "At the first touch of her he felt himself tremble all over". Stout's use of second person was badly received according to Morrissette (1965, p. 12), but Morrissette saw much of interest in it:

> ... *How like a God* applies rigorously a pre-determined pattern of narrative "you," in which the pronoun, while retaining its moralizing tonality in a rhetoric of self-judgment (or judgment by an outside "voice" which must nevertheless be audible to the narrator of [sic] hero), is used to recount individual, specific, past actions devoid of any general or typical implications.
>
> This is precisely the mixture of modes found in Michel Butor's *La Modification*, though the French novel contains additional complexities. The *récit* is structured on many chronological levels, involving flashbacks in associative rather than linear order, dream sequences, and imaginary passages in the future tense. (p. 13)

It is *La Modification* (1957) by Michel Butor that is clearly the defining work, even though *How Like a God* was earlier. It is this French "new novel" that inspired the first serious analysis of the second person narrative mode. It is set on a train between Paris and Rome, where one Leon Delmont is considering leaving his wife for his mistress, and undergoing a "change of heart" (hence one of the two English language titles). Coming nearly thirty years after *How Like a God*, it

gained many positive reviews as well as negative. In the Jean Stewart translation *A Change of Heart* (1958), it began:

> Standing with your left foot on the grooved brass sill, you try in vain with your right shoulder to push the sliding door a little wider open.
>
> You edge your way in through the narrow opening, then you lift up your suitcase of bottle-green grained leather, the smallish suitcase of a man used to making long journeys, grasping the sticky handle with fingers that are hot from having carried even so light a weight so far, and you feel the muscles and tendons tense not only in your finger-joints, the palm of your hand, your wrist and your arm, but in your shoulder too, all down one side of your back along your vertebrae from neck to loins. (p. 1)

Although it has been heavily discussed elsewhere in this thesis, and much written about elsewhere, it is worth noting that, as it is in translation, Anglophone readers are experiencing *La Modification* once removed, and under a different set of rules ("you" is more ambiguous in English). Keren Levy (2013) wrote in *The Guardian* that "it is the original French which captures most closely the emotional, gradual transition played out between the Gare de Lyon and the Stazioni Termini" (¶2). Irrespective of that, it still brings the English reader many things we closely associate with second person (and which were listed among the affects "The Flight" hoped to capture). These include a dreamy tone, a restricted setting, a claustrophobic mood (not just the train carriage but the deep introspection), liminality, an unsettling reading experience, and a very real confusion about who is speaking and who is listening. This last point is particularly exacerbated when the protagonist decides within the text to put his experience in a book – called *La Modification*. Morrissette (1965) disputes the interpretation by Paul Delbouille (an interpretation hardly unique to Delbouille) that the protagonist of this novel is simply and solely speaking to himself in a type of interior monologue (p. 18). Morrissette argues "the appearance of first-person passages at certain key moments, as well as the expressed views of Butor himself, all tend to exclude this

interpretation" (p. 18). He points out that Butor's argument is that the *vous* (the formal "you" in French) can reveal to the character something which he "does not know, at least at the level of language" (p. 16).

The earliest Australian sustained SPN is likely *No End to the Way* by Neville Jackson (1965). Like Kocan's duology, it is a second person, present tense tale of an outsider in a difficult and hostile environment. The protagonist moves between the straight and open world, where he works in advertising and is vulnerable to be exposed at any moment, and the closed and hidden gay world where he is likely to be bashed, robbed or arrested. Luridly packaged in a bright yellow cover with a blonde man in swimming trunks looking out from the front cover, this Australian novel (set in Perth) is described in the blurb as being "of unusual interest. It portrays with complete honesty the homosexual way of life and explores frankly the society in which they move". With approximately 230 pages of tightly packed text, it is among the longest sustained second person narratives.

That the packaging suggests a book closer to pulp fiction than literature was probably a necessity given the subject matter in the mid 1960s. However, *No End to the Way* is far more elegantly written than the average work of pulp, and fails to realise any of the graphic sex scenes that may be implied by the come-hither stare of the man on the cover. The plot revolves around Ray Wharton, who lives with his parents and keeps his "*gay* lifestyle" secret from all but other homosexuals. Ray is "perfectly adjusted to his maladjustment", as he apparently tells himself (p. 21), but on the evidence of the text, his life brings him few joys and several times he expresses a wish he could escape the lifestyle. He can't, as alluded to by the title of the novel. He meets a Dutch man, Cor van Gelder, with whom he falls deeply in love. It turns out that Cor has both a pregnant wife and an older male "keeper", who supplies him with money in return for favours. Cor breaks with his keeper, Rob Hamilton, to be faithful to Ray (his wife will apparently tolerate Cor having affairs with men, but not with any other woman). Blackmail, perhaps inevitably, plays a part. If Ray persists with Cor, the spurned Hamilton will put the word out in professional circles about Ray's sexual orientation and "you'll

find some of your big accounts going somewhere else. There are *some* people in the world, you know, who don't like dealing with *queers*…" (p. 95)

The use of an author pseudonym, and the lack of even a faked author biography accompanying the text, is in keeping with the time; homosexuality was still against the law in Australia. However, it puts the novel at odds with the two main works being researched in this thesis, as the reader has no paratext/real life biography to draw comparisons with. That said, many might read it as conventional memoir, assuming that Neville Jackson was the Ray of the story and that within these pages is all that you need to know. In fact, Neville Jackson is a *nom de plume* of G.M. Glaskin, a Perth novelist who won the 1955 Commonwealth Prize and wrote a broad range of works for adults and children. Research by Jeremy Fisher (2010a, p. 5) shows Glaskin had a male lover in Perth, Dutchman Leo van de Pas. *No End to the Way* opens with:

> YOU know all too well that you just have to go in, that it will be impossible for you not to go in, because it's Saturday night and, as the song goes, Saturday night is the loneliest night of the week. (p. 11)

It is not as witty an opening, perhaps, as that of the much later *Bright Lights, Big City*, but it presents a voice with the same immediate, direct quality. Fisher (2008), himself openly homosexual, said that "the second person narrative voice seemed to speak directly to me, even from the very first sentence" (p. 6). In the same article Fisher says Glaskin "manipulates the second person narrative voice so that the reader identifies with, and distances from, but ultimately must accept, a 'gay' (his term) narrative point of view. By avoiding the first person, Glaskin allows his readers to place themselves in Ray Wharton's place…" (p. 7). The novel's SPN voice is very limited; there is no sight of anything the character can't see, for example, and the claustrophobic feel provides a certain reinforcing of the secretive life led by a homosexual such as Ray (and very likely Gaskin) at that time. This enhances the feeling of fear and lack of control. There is by necessity a large amount of exposition about gay lifestyle within the text, along with

explanations of the complexities of keeping one's sexual orientation hidden from the heterosexual world. Perhaps less of this overt exposition was needed by say, Kocan, because his story was better known, and the prison/mental hospital world itself was also generally better known to the average person through films and literature. In 1965, the specifics of the gay scene were a mystery to most, so the second person narrator has to background things that wouldn't likely be fully articulated in the moment within the consciousness of the protagonist, for example:

> Yet, even if he isn't for 'rent', that's not the end of your worries. Maybe he's the beating-up kind. Get you to some place and then not only beat you up but make off with your wallet, your watch, and anything else of value. And what the hell can you do about it? Go to the police and say you picked up a *man* in a pub and then got robbed? (p. 23)

Much of the text reads like stream of consciousness but there is also the ever-shifting referent. For example: "Hand of the lover so long desired, through all the ages. Take it, and hold it. [Be] grateful for it – and forget all those ridiculous fears of yours. After all, this *is* what you came for. Well, isn't it?" (p. 31) Ray reflects how in "novels about your kind of life" the characters are sort of noble, "seldom if ever get to even *touch* each other or anything, and then one of them always gets killed at the end…" (p. 231). One can almost sense Glaskin's determination that this will not be the fate of his characters.[63] Fludernik (1993) notes that second

[63] It wasn't just coincidence that such things happened to the characters. As Fisher (2008) writes:

> At that time, it must be remembered, books that were open about homosexuality were restricted in the United Kingdom and practically totally forbidden in Australia. Homosexuality was still a criminal offence in both countries. *No end to the way* was one of the first books published in the United Kingdom that portrayed a (relatively) happy homosexual. Before 1965, to be registered for publication in the United Kingdom, books featuring homosexual unions were required by the Home Office to have ignominious or tragic endings. A book could not be published suggesting that two men could have a happy, yet illegal, sexual relationship. … male homosexuality was still illegal in Australia in 1965 when *No end to the way* was first published, and this situation remained in some states for more than 20 years thereafter (NSW did not repeal laws against homosexual acts until 1984). (p. 5)

person can be used to gain empathy for a protagonist who is later revealed to be gay:

> …it then proves difficult to withdraw [empathy] when that character's sexual orientation is finally revealed. The technique forces the reader to either accept this orientation on its own terms (erasing her or his customary marginalizing stance), or to withdraw empathy, but at the cost of awareness of one's own unwitting implication in the frame of mind from which one now shies away. (p. 238)

Although Wharton's sexual orientation is revealed very early in the text (and is made obvious in the book's packaging), and despite *No End to the Way* being published in a time that was comparatively homophobic, the second person voice nonetheless encourages an empathetic reading of Wharton's plight. An alternative tactic was employed in the slightly later *The Naked Civil Servant* (1968), a first person autobiography in which memoirist Quentin Crisp used humour to entice readers to immerse themselves in the potentially unpopular subject of homosexuality.

Another sustained SPN novel from the 1960s (although not published in English until much later) is Georges Perec's *Un homme qui dort* (1967). Translated from the French as *A Man Asleep* by Andrew Leak (and published in 1990 by Harvill with *Things – A Story of the Sixties*). It was a self-consciously radical book from a member of Oulipo, a group of writers and mathematicians who sought to create "potential literature," largely by techniques of constrained writing. Perec also wrote a lipogrammatic novel making no use of the most common vowel, e, and *Life – A User's Manual* (2003, in English translation) with a famously complex structure interweaving characters, rooms, lists, numbers and chess moves (specifically the knight's tour) within a Paris apartment block in what was revealed to be a single moment of time. As a piece of constrained writing, *A Man Asleep* is clever. As a novel, it is hardly engaging. It is largely devoid of a traditional plot and concerns a student who, bit by bit, disengages himself from

the world. If a major criticism of second person is that the reader resists being moved around by the novelist, Perec does the opposite, leaving the character to do almost nothing, to resist any calls to action.

The opening is: "AS SOON AS YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, the adventure of sleep begins" (p. 133). The entire first chapter lives up to the novel's title, describing in great detail the descent into slumber. As the text progresses, the protagonist seems to analyse the causes for his lack of engagement, though a reader might question whether someone who has lost all interest in everything is really likely to muse about such a thing. Much of the text suggests interior monologue: "It is not that you hate men, why would you hate them?" (p. 154), and later we find the line "Stop talking like a man in a dream" (p. 221). Yet other factors (including narrational compression) appear to demonstrate it can't be interior monologue. For example, for any realistic reading, some other identity needs to be telling the protagonist things such as "You forget that you learnt how to forget, that, one day, you forced yourself to forget." (p. 163)[64] According to Patrick Parrinder (1991), Perec himself subverted the idea of internal monologue in the movie version:

> In *A Man Asleep* we take the full weight of the student's self-pitying view of himself as a "missing piece in the human jigsaw", a motif that anticipates Perec's majestic obsession with games and puzzles. Yet the novel is also a monologue (spoken, in the film version that Perec directed,

[64] A longer example – from the same novel – of what appears to be very much a heterodiegetic narrating voice:

> As the hours, the days, the weeks, the seasons slip by, you withdraw your affections, you detach yourself from everything. You discover, with something that sometimes almost resembles exhilaration, that you are free, that nothing is weighing you down, nothing pleases or displeases you. You find, in this life exempt from wear and tear and with no thrill in it other than these suspended moments that you can procure through the playing cards, or certain noises, certain sights, an almost perfect, fascinating happiness … You no longer exist: across the passing hours, the succession of days, the procession of the seasons, the flow of time, you survive, without joy and without sadness, without a future and without a past, just like that: simply, self evidently, like a drop of water forming on a drinking tap on a landing... (Perec 1990, p. 177)

> by means of a female voice-over) in which every sentence is cast in the second person singular. (¶8)

Towards the end, the narration takes on a very judgemental tone: "Indifference is futile. It really does not matter whether you wish or you do not wish. … your refusal is futile. Your neutrality is meaningless." (p. 219) Perec has perhaps taken the SPN dreamy tone to its limits, but has produced a book that reads more like a clever writing exercise than an entertainment. For some, the second person will be just another barrier to immersion, and it was hard as a writer to take too many useful lessons from it. Still, Richardson (2006, pp. 20-21) uses a quote from the book to usefully demonstrate the oscillation of identification that can come with an SPN. It is "You are twenty-five years old and have twenty-nine teeth…", a quote in which a long list of attributes is given to the "you." Richardson says the address is directly to the reader in a deictic sense (you likely have, for example, "some books you no longer read."), but no reader will share all the attributes detailed in the passage, so: "A continuous dialectic of identification and distancing ensues, as the reader is alternately drawn closer to and further away from the protagonist" (p. 21). The you, he argues, is inherently unstable, "constantly threatening to merge with the narratee, a character, the reader, or even with another grammatical person" (p. 21).

Edna O'Brien used second person, past tense in *A Pagan Place* (1970), which depicts an Irish nun who is living in Brussels and looking back at her younger years in minute detail. The early chapters read rather like someone explaining the events and feelings she missed in her infant years due to her inability to remember or process what happened when she was so young. Denis Donoghue (1970) in a contemporaneous *New York Times* review called the book "one of Miss O'Brien's minor pieces" (¶4) and decided the second person is a case of "the nun commun[ing] with herself" (¶3). O'Brien (1984) provided her own explanation in *The Paris Review*:

> INTERVIEWER: Another interesting aspect of that novel is that it is written in the second-person singular, like a soliloquy. It is somewhat reminiscent of Molly Bloom's soliloquy in *Ulysses*; were you conscious of the influence?
> O'BRIEN: I didn't take Molly's as a model. The reason was psychological. As a child you are both your secret self and the "you" that your parents think you are. So the use of the second person was a way of combining the two identities. But I tend not to examine these things too closely—they just happen. (¶50-51)

Addiction and trauma

Bright Lights, Big City (1984), a short novel by Jay McInerney set largely in the drug-fuelled 1980s New York club scene, was published the year after Kocan wrapped up his duology. It is the only SPN other than *La Modification* to receive widespread attention from the academy. In it, the main protagonist, who is never named (not even in dialogue) has a fashion model for a wife, an envied job at a prestigious magazine, and a seemingly never-ending life of drugs, restaurants and parties. Like Kocan's and Campbell's books, it is very likely important that it was generally known that the life of the main character in the novel had much in common with the writer. McInerney revealed while he was promoting the book's release that he'd been married to a model and had been a fact-checker at the *New Yorker*; the book in many ways mirrored the life of the writer (whose fast living was tracked by the tabloids through much of the 1980s). In other words, McInerney had the authority to lead us through the maze with the particularly confronting and potentially arrogant second person mode.

McInerney writes in the present tense, and in a way that is strict and formal. He never, for example, drifts from the "you" pronoun, nor from the limited point of view that comes with it. There is little to break up the potentially claustrophobic viewpoint. It is no doubt important that the book is very short and contains humour. The light, jaunty tone is demonstrated from the first line "You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here

you are…" (p. 1) and its later follow-up "For some reason you think you are going to meet the kind of girl who is not the kind of girl who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning." (p. 3). It is reasonable to believe that lines like this, aside from being entertaining in their own right, have been included to engender sympathy or empathy of a sort; it may help overcome some of the repulsion a reader may feel in becoming the "you" and thereby taking on the amoral life of the character (including humour in an SPN text was a lesson I took from McInerney, Kocan and Campbell, in particular when shaping "The Flight"; it was largely absent from *Your Story*). The story is told very much in the moment, though occasionally the narrator moves to past tense to fill in detail: "You met her in Kansas City, where you had gone to work as a reporter after college." (p. 69).[65] Often the author is toying with the reader, using the SPN conceit for a little metalingual fun, as shown in the passage that is perhaps the most quoted by those studying *Bright Lights, Big City*:

> They're trying to imagine themselves in your shoes, but it would be a tough thing to do. … [Vicky] said that certain facts are accessible only from one point of view – the point of view of the creature who experiences them. You think she meant that the only shoes we can ever wear are our own. Meg can't imagine what it's like for you to be you, she can only imagine herself being you. (p. 101)

Richardson (2006) discusses the above quote and notes how cleverly it "discusses incommensurable viewpoints even as it plays with point of view" (p. 24). Richardson points out that the same paragraph in first person would sound rather ordinary; in second person it "introjects a ludic element of self-consciousness that makes the theme less bland" (p. 25). The power of the SPN to suggest a lack of agency has been discussed in this thesis. So how does the story of a relatively cashed-up New York party boy fit into this? DelConte (2003) points out the effect of the form here is to show that in the 1980s free choice was illusory: "Second-

[65] Indeed, the chapter "Les Jeux Sont Faits", from which this quote comes, is largely back story.

person narration exemplifies this cultural climate, for it manifests in narrative technique the notion that someone or something outside of yourself dictates your thoughts and actions." (p. 205) Certainly in *Bright Lights, Big City* the impression is always that the protagonist is swept along by fashion, prestige and his addictions, rather than being a free agent. Stephanie Girard (1996) has pointed out the liminal and split subjectivity qualities of *Bright Lights, Big City*, stating that the narrator (her term, suggesting an acceptance that the story is auto-narrated) is no longer an adolescent, although he acts like one, and not quite a stable, middle-class adult. He is:

> "between" life's accepted/expected stages. Through an internal monologue in the second person, he is both parent and child, lecturing himself and wondering at his own actions … That the narrator speaks of himself in the second person is evidence of his split consciousness, of his inability or unwillingness to locate himself within an identity. (p. 169)

Another example of McInerney having fun with the form but also reflecting this liminality is shown in the flashback to a conversation at his mother's deathbed: "You tried to tell her, as well as you could, what it was like being you. You described the feeling you'd always had of being misplaced, of always standing to one side of yourself, of watching yourself in the world even as you were being in the world…" (pp. 166-67). Girard says this sense of watching himself is both the explanation for the formal device of the second person narrator and for the posture of "betweenness." (p. 178). It is probably no more than a coincidence, but like Kocan, McInerney turns to the future tense at the end of his tale. The voice warns, as the protagonist almost gags on fresh bread: "You will have to go slowly. You will have to learn everything all over again." (p. 182).

Ron Butlin's *The Sound of My Voice* (1987) is possibly an example of a narrator explaining to a character the character's own actions because he was not able to relay and interpret them himself. In this case, the reason is because the main character (Morris Magellan) is an alcoholic who regularly drinks himself into

oblivion. In a joint review of Ron Butlin's *The Sound of My Voice* and a book of second person sketches (Patrick deWitt's *Ablutions: Notes for a Novel*), Ari Messer (2010) asks the compelling question "Why is the second person such a natural and addictive tense – perhaps the only honest one – when writing about drug abuse and a foggy recovery?" (¶1). Messer, alas, never definitively answers this question but concludes: "The use of the second person becomes a way to keep reality and dream life separate but equal. Speaking to this disorienting democracy is again the voice of death, a constant reminder that even before blood and alcohol were drawn together in religious rites, imbibing was a way to push consciousness toward its own disappearance, or at least a chance to pretend, for an evening, for an hour, that you are doing the pushing." (¶12) In a *Village Voice Literary Supplement* review (reprinted with the re-issued *The Sound of My Voice*) Irvine Welsh calls Butlin's book a "stylistic triumph" and points out how the second person:

> … allows Morris's inner voice to maintain a clarity as his life increasingly disintegrates. … By adopting this device Butlin forces us to empathize with Morris, insinuating the reader into the core of his life, yet simultaneously, and strangely, producing a sense of distance. It's as if the reader becomes the central character, yet has no control over his actions. This control, of course, rests with the drug. (p. viii)

The novel gives us a narrator explaining things to the "you" protagonist, who has often been too drunk to remember them. It allows us to see what has happened and the character's understanding of what has happened, the latter often very different. At times the narration scrolls back to fill in the blanks missed during another drunken binge. It even questions how much the main character is taking in (eg, p. 27: "Were you aware of how much it disturbed you to watch her putting the finishing touches to her make-up?"). *The Sound of My Voice* is written in the past tense. The title alludes to an "I" voice that comes in ten pages from the end of the book, an "I" that is inside Morris's head instructing him to change his life. At the very end (spoiler alert) we discover Magellan crying "Your tears – and mine."

Exactly who that "I" voice belongs to is a matter of interpretation. It could be divine intervention, the mother who coddled him, the father who terrified him. But it may not be an outside voice at all. It might be his own consciousness rising up to meet the challenge of staying sober, making it quite different to, say, Oates's "You" (where the "I" is unambiguously the daughter). John Corbett (1997) in *Language and Scottish Literature*, says of *The Sound of My Voice*:

> … the ambiguity of the deictic pronoun 'you' is utilised for a range of effects. …Morris Magellan, seems to be talking to himself: he is simultaneously acting and providing a commentary on his actions, and the reader is put in the position of eavesdropper on this private commentary. At this level, the focalisation is internal: we are privy to the internal dialogue of a man experiencing alcoholism and a mental breakdown. (p. 162)

We are, however, doing more than eavesdropping on this private commentary because we, the readers, see things the protagonist doesn't – or doesn't remember. Corbett says Butlin's narrative choice is an extreme example of constructing a specific implied reader, which might be resisted by real readers who don't match all of Magellan's criteria (p. 163). Conversely, it might be reasonable to assume that if readers did match his attributes, including his drinking habits, they almost certainly would resist taking on his role. However, Corbett argues that "part of the novel's unsettling power lies in its insistence that the events described in the narrative are happening to the reader, an effect that probably only the 'double reference' achieved by an effective second-person narrative voice can accomplish." (p. 163). Butlin's later novel *Night Visits* (1997) alternates between close third person, following the story of a middle aged woman, with second person to tell the story of her nephew, who is scared, hemmed in by the adults around him and living partly in a fantasy world after the death of his father. The second person reinforces both the nephew's lack of agency and the "otherness" of moving between the real world and the fantasy world.

In *Under the Volcano* (1947), one of the most acclaimed texts about addiction and disassociation, the author Malcolm Lowry changes focalisation, chapter by chapter, to present an image of the alcoholic Geoffrey Firman (aka "the Consul") from within and without. Although the text is not an SPN, when taking the point of view of Firman, Lowry wrote at one point:

> …the Consul thought distantly, seemed to be reviewed and interpreted by a person walking at his side suffering for him and saying: "Regard: see how strange, how sad, familiar things may be. Touch this tree, once your friend: alas, that which you have known in the blood should ever seem so strange!" (p. 62)

We can see how Lowry has introduced a second character – existing in the imagination of Firman – who talks in the second person imperative voice. Although it is in dialogue, it creates the disassociation of the SPN; it also creates a character "standing to one side of yourself" mentioned by McInerney and captured between the lines in many SPNs that deal with troubled mental states. Elsewhere in *Under the Volcano*, one of the internal voices that talks to the drunken Consul, takes on an almost classic second person voice:

> You are one born to walk in the light. Plunging your head out of the white sky you flounder in an alien element. You think you are lost, but it is not so, for the spirits of light will help you and beat you up in spite of yourself and beyond all opposition you may offer. (p. 357)

Winter Birds by Jim Grimsley (1994) starts out as a conventional second person novel, and holds that for much of its length. This Southern gothic-style text starts in the present tense, with a very close narrative, using free indirect discourse to replicate the childish talk of the young son, Danny, who is the "you" character. An example: "This is what you came here for, to lie here like this, to watch the clouds for a while and then to count: one two three, shut things away: shut away the house and the flat fields, shut away Mama Papa Amy Kay Allen Duck Grove

shut them away!" (p. 9) Although this part of the text suggests auto-narration, the text later relays incidents in the past tense, some of them as related to "you", usually by the mother. Indeed some of the writing suggests the mother may be the narrator, filling in the son's early years: "In those days, Danny, you slept in the same room with your brothers and Amy Kay…" (p. 18). Later on, long third person anecdotes are told (eg, p. 71); the anecdote related from pages 72 to 86 is relayed in conventional third person and contains information that could only be known to the mother and not to the "you". For example, here is a distancing of the narrative away from the "you" towards the mother's consciousness: "The conversation left Mama wondering about Delia more than ever" (p. 106). There are scenes of the parents in their bedroom while Danny is not present (eg, p. 194). Perhaps the "you" is imagining it, but they are not the imaginings of an eight-year-old boy. Perhaps it is a reimagining, or reconstruction in the mind of the older "you", bolstered perhaps by later information supplied by the mother. Either way, on many occasions during the conventional SPN sections the reader is drifting between various perspectives, giving us the classic ontological instability of the SPN. Quoted in a book chapter by Richard Canning (2003), Grimsley suggested the narrator is the older Danny. He says of his chosen mode of narration:

> It allows me to cheat really: to know all kinds of things that the boy doesn't know, that I can claim to have found out later from the mother, or that can be inferred to have been known later through memory or through visualizing the scene from that later point. It was a very freeing way to write. (p. 125)

Like many trauma novels, *Winter Birds* is very harsh, harrowing and often difficult to read. It is easy to accept that the second person mode exacerbates those harsh and harrowing qualities. Likewise, in *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel* (Deb Kandelaars, 2011). The scenario here is an abusive relationship, unknown to all but those within it (yet another heterotopia). This is a fairly conventional second person text. Like *No End to the Way* or "The Flight", and unlike *Winter*

Birds, it has a relatively stable narrational position. The text mostly reads as a temporal telegram from older self to younger, because from the opening line the text indicates knowledge of what is to happen next, despite being primarily written in present tense: "The week before you meet him, you race into the disco full of excitement …" (p. 5). Later we learn "Twenty years later you sit in a psychologist's office and she taps on your knees…" (p. 83). The text uses the SPN's power to convey claustrophobia, disassociation and liminality; on page 57 there is a quote which seems to sum up the second person reading experience, and is possibly one reason Kandelaars chose the mode to tell this difficult story: "He was driving fast, and you seemed to exist in a weird intoxicated in-between world, floating ever-so-slightly above everything else."

You, a teen novel written by American Charles Benoit (2010) and set in a high school, tells the story of fifteen-year-old Kyle Chase in what is announced, early on, as the last year of his (or "your") life. To me, this strange foreshadowing felt contrived and unconvincing, with Benoit occasionally using the SPN mode to effectively increase claustrophobia and a lack of agency, but far more often exhibiting the limiting and repelling aspects of the mode. There was always the feeling of being very consciously manipulated by the author into doing things we may not want to do and going places we may not want to go. Why might a reader refuse to be led along while reading *You*? One possibility is to do with perceived authenticity. Putting the reader in the "you" role demands a lot of the reader. As worked through in the Kocan and Campbell sections of this thesis, aiding mimesis in such a circumstance is an author's strong connection with the subject matter, an authority to put "you" in the shoes of the author. However, with Benoit's *You* an extra level of artifice is immediately apparent when one realises the writer isn't a 15-year-old schoolboy. This is someone clearly not writing about dramatic events in his own life (the protagonist dies at 15, for a start); obviously he is outside the demographic of the protagonist (although there is no photo on the wraparound dust jacket, the text describes Benoit as "a former high school teacher and the Edgar Award-nominated author of three adult mystery novels"), and he is

introducing a character we don't know, unlike say Campbell, who has introduced his character in real life and in fiction many years earlier.

Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) could be considered a copybook "How To" formula SPN, right down to the title. It fits into Richardson's so-called Hypothetical Form (2006), with its consistent use of the imperative, frequent employment of the future tense and unambiguous distinction between the narrator and the narratee (p. 29). *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* also occasions some ontological slippage (another characteristic Richardson ascribes to the "how to" form; p. 30), though this is less common than in many other second person books, including Campbell's. Hamid's novel is written in the present tense, but with no pretence of auto-narration. From the start there is a clearly identifiable external narrator, a self-declared writer/instructor determined to help the self, ie, "you". Allied to this is the stated conceit that the narrator is smarter and better informed than the reader. Yet at the same time this "how to" book is having metafictional fun, playing with the genre from the start, with the narrator declaring: "…A self-help book is an oxymoron. You read a self-help book so someone who isn't yourself can help you, that someone being the author." (p. 3)

Hamid's writer/instructor is close to omnipresent, seeing the things "you" do not (even things happening simultaneously in other parts of the world), knowing important things "you" do not, and advising "you" – at least in a superficial or sardonic way. This first point means quite a bit of it is in the third person ("He thought this … she imagined that"), though all the text is generally tied back to how it relates to "you". The text occasionally enters the consciousness of other characters, for example a military procurer is guessing what "you" must be thinking during negotiations: "We get permissions no one else can get. Red tape dissolves effortlessly for us." (p. 165) The narrator occasionally diverges broadly from "your" concerns, suddenly explaining, for example, how a chain coffee shop chooses its furniture to look quaint and mismatched and applies this exact same formula to all branches (p. 209). At times the narrating voice looks at things from

the vantage point of a satellite, or surveillance equipment, or uses other devices to vary the narration. As with the Booker Prize-winning *White Tiger* (Aravind Adiga, 2008), which is written in epistolary first person, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* uses humour and gritty detail to follow the rise of an amoral character from the gutter to wealth on the Sub-Continent. Both books are satirical; Hamid's "how to" format is merely a frame for the story of one life – the particular – to illustrate the general. The same could be said of Campbell's novel up to a point, but it also has the sheen of autobiography/memoir and is more determined to put the reader in the writer/protagonist's shoes.

If, in Hamid's novel there is never a strong intention to make the reader feel like the "you", there is even less intention to provide a genuinely usable guide. In showing how to become "filthy rich", Hamid is primarily highlighting such things as the impediments to becoming so in a poor and corrupt ex-colonial nation, the odds stacked against the average citizen who aspires to good health and even modest comfort, and the moral conundrum these facts present for those trying to move ahead. Still, the "you" pronoun goes some way towards personalising these moral conundrums and suggesting their inevitability (unless you wish to go back to the gutter). You are told matter-of-fact that "you" have taken dark decisions, as if there was never really any choice in such a corrupt and troubled setting.

Most of the novels listed above would fall within Richardson's "Standard Form" in which "a story is told, usually in the present tense, about a single protagonist who is referred to in the second person; the 'you' often designates the narrator and the narratee as well, though … there is considerable slippage in this unusual triumvirate" (p. 20). There is no obvious candidate among works of sustained SPN for Richardson's third taxonomy, the "Autotelic Form", where there is a "direct address to a 'you' that is at times the actual reader of the text and whose story is juxtaposed to and can merge with the characters of the fiction" (p. 30). Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* plays that trick in the second person sections, but relays other parts of the story in third person.

Among the books listed, only Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*, Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, and Gemmel's *The Bride Stripped Bare* could be called commercial hits. Each benefitted from heavy promotion, however. With *Bright Lights, Big City*, public attention was focussed on the apparent amorality of the novel's pleasure-seeking characters, and by the youth of its author, who had commenced writing the book during an MLA course. Gemmel's book was boosted by a mystery around its authorship, which was originally given as "Anonymous", and by controversy over its explicit sexual content. Hamid's novel was widely reviewed, as it came after the big international success of his second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* made the *NY Times* bestseller lists but did not enjoy the success of its predecessor,[66] though there is no way of telling whether this related to use of the second person narrative mode.

Experimentation outside the sustained SPN

There was much literary experimentation in Australia during the 1970s and early 1980s, not least because of increased Federal support given to writers and publishers from the time of the Whitlam Labor government (1972-1975). Peter Carey's surreal short stories were first gathered in book form in 1974 in *The Fat Man in History*, two years later David Ireland's *The Glass Canoe* presented a brutal view of Australia – or a particular Australia – entirely through the lives of drinkers at a downmarket pub. *The Glass Canoe* (1976), written primarily in the past tense, made liberal use of the second person in colloquial manner, for example: "After you have a fair bit to drink of an afternoon the future is sort of blank: the present is all there is." (p. 3) It could also be noted that the dialogue from the male drinkers frequenting the "Southern Cross" sounded remarkably similar to that of Kocan's characters in the home for the criminally insane. *The Glass Canoe* uses the plural first person to capture the collegiate feel of the drinkers in the pub: "We don't get fireflies down the back of the Southern Cross"

[66] *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* reached number four on the *NY Times* bestseller lists, the follow-up reached only 22nd in a much shorter stay on the list, according to lists published on the *NY Times* website.

(p. 1); "We drink to erase everything" (p. 19). It eventually becomes obvious the main character is writing the book you are reading "about the Southern Cross and our life here" (p. 17).

Gerald Murnane, whose novel *The Plains* was released in 1982, in between *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, was experimenting with magic realism in a fable-like, almost dialogue-free description of a mythical breed of "Plainsmen" with elevated tastes and complex traditions (eg, p. 47: "No great house could have done without its resident advisers on emblematic art.") The period also produced examples of Australian short stories using second person. "Back Past That Statue Standing White in the Darkness" by Damien White was published in the journal *Southerly* (Number Four) in 1980, the year *The Treatment* appeared. White writes in the past tense, alternating second person with first person. This is an example of the latter:

> You took peanuts and crisps, and bottles of beer and soft drink, just two or three bottles of each. You knew that if the Brother Director and the Brothers in charge of the storeroom were careful in their accounting they would notice the loss, but you hoped that if you didn't take too much and didn't do it too often then nothing would be said. (p. 452)

White's motivation for periodically switching to an SPN voice is hard to divine, beyond (possibly) a wish to display literary pyrotechnics. Even more extreme: the same author, in the "title track" of his collection of short stories *Packaging at its apostrophe best* (1978), rotates person and tense throughout a 20 page story: "You will gradually make up more of the ashtrays … He ripped up a number of … They will assemble the artwork … I decided to write an account … You wrote the story … We will perform the distribution process…" In a metafictional section, the apparent author (or implied author in Chatman's 1978 model of narrative transmission) explains how he "drew up a table of the nine possibilities obtained by combining each of the first, second and third persons with past, present and future tenses", then used random statistics to determine in which mode he would write each of the planned 16 sections. The narrator explains that the second

person, past tense section was dropped "on the reactions of various people to the work". This development is explained in second person, past tense. Stylistically, where White's text is in that second person, past tense mode (particularly in the longer sections in "Back Past That Statue Standing White in the Darkness"), it presents a suggestion of the flatness and lack of immediacy that Kocan may have battled with as he experimented with different ways of presenting his story (Kocan eventually opted for present tense, though one of his alternative approaches is shown in Chapter six).

Much later, the multi-award winning Australian novelist Tim Winton's collection *The Turning* (2005) included a shortish second person piece called "Long, Clear View". It is the eleventh of seventeen loosely interlocked stories set in small-town WA. It is very tight (just 16 pages long), richly detailed, and is written in an unmistakeably Winton style, despite its unique (for Winton, to date) use of sustained second person narration. A typical sample:

> At school there are new boundaries you can't even see, lines between farmkids and townies, blackfellas and whites, boys and girls, gestures you just don't get. And they're all looking at you, the new copper's kid, as if you already know too much. (page 189)

At the start, the story reads like a stream of consciousness, as a teenager considers his position in a new town, and gees himself up to face the challenges. The action slowly accumulates. The story is written in the present tense, but with some stretching to move time forward (eg, p. 190: "It doesn't happen often but there are times when you have the house to yourself. That's when…"). The story is claustrophobic; things happen outside "your" control, more is happening than "you" are being told, and the ominous pressure is building. It is all in the context of being new in town, in those difficult teenage years – seemingly a good match for an SPN. Exactly who is telling the story is never really clear. At one point we hear that "The autumn air is cool and salty, spiced with the tang of peppermint trees…" (p. 193). This isn't a boy's voice (certainly not that of the boy depicted in

the story), and there are many similar examples (eg, p. 194: "Somehow the old man seems mollified."). Perhaps it is intended to fit into the convention of the well-spoken narrator, in which the author affords the voice telling a character's story more insight, knowledge and vocabulary than the actual character would have.[67]

In *A Visit to the Goon Squad* (2010), author Jennifer Egan produces a post-postmodern work (that was the term applied to the book by Julie Steinberg, 2011, in the *Wall Street Journal*). One chapter is presented as a Powerpoint presentation, another a second person narrative taking the reader right up to the point of death, though not beyond.[68] Tellingly, perhaps, the second person, present tense chapter is called "Out of Body" (pp. 191-214), an expression recalling the very effect that many feel when reading second person. The following text from that chapter reinforces that split subjectivity:

> …you're not completely there – a part of you is a few feet away, or above, thinking, Good, they'll forgive you, they won't desert you, and the question is, which one is really 'you', the one saying and doing whatever it is, or the one watching? (p. 197)

In the drowning scene – spoiler alert, oops too late – that ends this chapter, this remove is again very much part of the scene, the second person being employed to show the character moving in and out of his body. The final sentence makes a dramatic shift to first person: "… until the water pressing my shoulders and chest crushes me awake and I hear Sasha screaming into my face: *Fight! Fight! Fight!*" (p. 214). Only in later (non-second person) chapters do we learn definitively that

[67] In a preface to his novel *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James explained his reason for adopting this conceit: "Small children have many more perceptions than they have terms to translate them; their vision is at any moment much richer, their apprehension even constantly stronger, than their prompt, their at all producible, vocabulary." (1908).

[68] Other chapters in *A Visit to the Goon Squad* (Egan, 2010), make huge temporal leaps, for example, an anecdote about a tribal warrior ends with the news that "35 years from now" he will be caught up in tribal violence and die in a fire (p. 64). This dramatic flash forward technique is used elsewhere; it can be chilling and disconcerting to brusquely learn, for example, that a curious young boy will eventually shoot himself dead in his father's house.

the character has died; in this chapter the author avoids the logical problem of writing "you are dead".[69] That Egan can start with a similar disconnect to Charles Benoit and make it work (she is writing about a young male in her second person chapter) is undoubtedly helped by brevity and by her more accomplished writing style.

The second person mode has been used in film, whether fleetingly and/or subtly (Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, 1946, opens with the image of the town-limits signpost: "You are in Bedford Falls.") or more extensively in Lars von Trier's 1991 film *Europa* (known as *Zentropa* in Australia and the US). Morrissette (1965) points out that the SPN has been used in films such as Jules Dassin's *Naked City*, positing that, like the "you" mode described by Butor, this "hinges on something not known by the person to whom it is ostensibly addressed" (p. 20). *Europa* (1991) opens with a voice proclaiming:

> You will now listen to my voice. My voice will help you and guide you still deeper into Europa. Every time you hear my voice, with every word and every number, you will enter into a still deeper layer, open, relaxed and receptive. I shall now count from one to ten. On the count of ten, you will be in Europa. I say: one. And as your focus and attention are entirely on my voice, you will slowly begin to relax. Two, your hands and your fingers are getting warmer and heavier… (From screenplay by Lars von Trier and Niels Vørsel, n.d.)[70]

One could argue that to place the camera in the "eye" of one of the characters – as is occasionally done – could constitute cinematic second person. But the *Europa* approach, by way of a narrating voice, is more closely linked to literature. Similarly, Spike Lee's 2002 feature film, *25th Hour*, plays out the entire final scene to the accompaniment of a very long subjunctive second person monologue

[69] Thomas M. Disch wrote "you are dead" as one of the possible results for his interactive fiction work *Amnesia* (1986). However he completed the sentence with "but that isn't the end of your problems. Because it turns out that there is an afterlife – and you are there."
[70] Transcribed by this researcher.

apparently describing what would happen next for the protagonist, Monty Brogan (played by Edward Norton). With this continuing monologue and the accompanying pictures, we follow Monty right into old age. Nominally it is the voice of his father, but equally plausibly the voice exists only in the imagination of Monty, the "you":

> You'll get a job somewhere, a job that pays cash, a boss who doesn't ask questions, and you make a new life and you never come back. Monty, people like you, it's a gift, you'll make friends wherever you go. You're going to work hard, you're going to keep your head down and your mouth shut. You're going to make yourself a new home out there. … You'll miss your friends, you'll miss your dog, but you're strong… (screenplay by David Benioff, n.d.)[71]

Second person's greatest future role though may well be in the digital world, in some sort of interactive fiction. An early, influential and highly literary foray into this field was by American Thomas M. Disch, best known for his conventional novels, which were mainly science fiction. In 1986 he published a text-based computer adventure game that he described as "my U-Done-It".[72] It was entitled *Amnesia* and begins with "you" waking up with no memories, no clothes and, in time, a growing realisation you are a murder suspect. "…it dawns on you that you have absolutely no idea where you are. A hotel room, by the look of it. But with the curtains drawn, you don't know in what city, or even what country." (p. 1) It was a "Choose Your Own Adventure" for adults, using computer memory to give a much larger number of possible outcomes.[73] Writer Tobias Carroll (2013) said: "In my re-playings … my character was chased by the police; squatted in a tenement just south of Times Square; canvassed an abandoned storefront church; and quarreled with a celestial ferryman in the afterlife. He rode the subway, and wandered the streets of a surprisingly detailed Manhattan. He learned that he was

[71] Transcribed by this researcher.
[72] Hand-written note by the author on the title page of the manuscript, n.d.
[73] Tobias Carroll (2013) described it as "less a game written as a novel than a novel written as a game" (¶1)

named John Cameron III – or was it Xavier Hollings? As the game's text appeared – sometimes witty, sometimes terrifying – I found myself hooked." (¶4) *Amnesia* was text-based; it and similar games received a lot of attention when launched but found very little commercial success. However, on a much larger scale, second person is the norm for modern visually-based (and acted out) computer and console games; with the controller in your hand, the protagonist is very much "you". Fascinating research in this field is emerging but is outside the scope of this thesis.

Conclusion

Second person narration in literary fiction is rare; sustained second person narration throughout novels is exceedingly so. In the fourteen sustained SPN novels in the list presented earlier there is a variety of approaches and varied subject matter but similarities emerge – particularly in the way the novels tend toward brevity, intense emotions and traumatic situations. At their best, they show that the SPN is a "distinct device [that] produces distinct effects and constructs a unique textual world" (Hantzis 1988, p. 1). My close reading of these texts imparted many lessons about the effects, good and bad, that can be generated. Butor's *La Modification* (1957) set the benchmark in many ways (and influenced the setting of "The Flight"), using as its framework a restricted environment (in Butor's case, a train) and a period of intense introspection (Leon Delmont's decision about whether to stay with a wife or move in with a lover). It presented a view that seemed to be at times within the character and at times outside, alternating between first person intimacy and third person distance. Although both WW2 novels discussed here have their virtues, it is hard to take much from either, one being such distant third person that it reads like third person, the other unusually short and set in verse. Stout's *How Like a God* appeared in 1929 but blended second and third person (admittedly with only brief uses of the latter) and exploited very few of the SPN advantages isolated later. It provided a good historical background to the development of the form, but imparted little of use for the modern SPN writer.

It could be reasonably argued that it is with Jackson's *No End to the Way* (1965) that the truly sustained SPN appears from an English language writer. Despite its sensationalised pulp fiction packaging, it demonstrated high quality writing and a confident SPN voice, and it provided a strong model for certain aspects of "The Flight". These included coaxing the reader to take a marginised role and feel what it is like to be that outsider, increasing the fear factor, reducing any sense of being in control and, with its present tense voice, offering immediacy and a sense that anything could happen next. The SPN voice provided ontological instability as the "you" ranged from the protagonist and implied author to the implied reader and actual reader, yet at other times seemed to be an accusatory voice aimed at all of the above. Written in an era of widespread homophobia, it used the writer's considerable skills to make readers imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the "other" (to paraphrase Ian McEwan, 2001), to enter a character's mind and, in doing so, find it harder to be cruel. Many of the same things are true about Kocan's duology, examined in the next chapter, and hopefully there are echoes of this successful aspect in "The Flight" too.

The next major step was in *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) which, like Kocan's duology, showed the advantages of using humour. Its presentation of a "mind in flux" (an SPN advantage noted by Richardson in 2006) was also influential in my project, partly because it was not a mind specifically blighted with mental illness. The "How to" books discussed also used humour to great effect. Other writers demonstrated the particular suitability of the SPN for a story of trauma, particularly where the subject has trouble remembering, accepting or processing the facts and needs to be told them, or needs to have those facts interpreted for him or her. *The Sound of My Voice*, *Winter Birds*, and *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel* all fall into that category, as does the unpublished *Nobody (An Autobiographical Fiction*) from Threasa Meads. In each, the fear and feeling of powerless is enhanced by the way the reader is dragged along, often to places they would never want to go, by the unyielding "you" narration. That these books don't repel the way they might is partly because they feel like they were largely drawn from the writer's experience. Knowledge about the authors' real

experiences enhance a sense of mimesis; Jackson's *No End to the Way*, reads almost as a memoir of living in the covert and dangerous homosexual community of Perth in the 1960s. Meads's *Nobody* and Kandelaars' *Memoirs* also have their roots in personal experience of an abusive home life. In "The Flight" I had to appropriate a well-known story/situation to create a similar effect where I could under-describe the character and background, and let the reader bring some of their own knowledge and opinions with them. The aim was to capture the affect realised in Jackson, Kocan, Meads et al where someone with inside knowledge seems to be personally escorting "you", the reader/protagonist, through a secretive world where "you" will experience exactly what they experience, and that whatever happens to "you" is the only thing that can happen.

Having studied the various alternative approaches, and my own options in terms of setting, I produced in "The Flight" a creative work that is closer to *La Modification*, in which a man wrestles with a major decision while travelling between two cities, than a trauma story. However, there is obviously extreme stress involved and the heterotopia of the moving plane became in some ways a stand-in for a more extreme/violent heterotopia such as a prison, with the trapped-in protagonist feeling the pain and anxiety of being constantly observed. "The Flight" is in various ways inspired by the unique strengths identified in all the works discussed above.

Finally with such a broad range of works available, why choose to concentrate most heavily on Kocan and Campbell as my chosen texts? All art is subjective. My choice of the Kocan duology as the first SPN text to research for this thesis was made partly because of the way the writing style and subject matter drew me in, partly because it is a work that has been given scant academic attention (particularly compared with *La Modification* or *Bright Lights, Big City*), and partly because of its technique. Kocan moved the author's "camera lens" in and out to vary the narration, and to give a broader picture of the situation than allowed in, say, *No End to the Way* and other earlier titles. He used the SPN not just to capture the troubled psyche (as in Butor or McInerney), but at times the

seriously disturbed mind, and he did it with a freshness and virtuosity that I wanted to emulate in my own work. It is also true that the literary skilfulness brought to bear in *Alec: How to be an Artist* appealed to me as a writer, and that this text was also little studied. Its structure may have provided little influence on my project, but its vibrant voice, wit, and deft handling of split subjectivity certainly did. The biggest advantage of opting for Campbell's work, as the next two chapters will show, is that no other novel in the list provided as dramatic a contrast in approach to Kocan's. These two works would, therefore, enable the thesis to capture the broadest possible look at second person techniques, and allow the creative work to benefit from the broadest influences.

Chapter six:
On Peter Kocan's *The Treatment* and *The Cure* duology

Kocan's two earliest novels – which will be considered together in this chapter – were written in the sustained second person mode. They centre on the character Len Tarbutt and incidents that take place during his ten years of incarceration in an unnamed mental hospital/prison. The text begins with Tarbutt, at nineteen years of age, being transferred from jail to the mental hospital. Tarbutt had committed a serious crime to earn his sentence, though its nature is never explained in the text. *The Treatment* and *The Cure* are fascinating works in their own right, as well as making pioneering use of second person. Only a handful of sustained SPN novels precede them. *No End to the Way* by Neville Jackson, first published in 1965, is the only earlier Australian example that could be located for this research. Kocan could put claim to being the first writer to use the disorienting and unsettling aspects of the sustained SPN to effectively depict mental illness and the oppressive nature of incarceration. He achieved many other things too, and his texts provided this writer with a long list of effects and techniques that he would attempt to capture in "The Flight". In this chapter, an attempt is made to isolate how Kocan used the SPN to produce, in Morrissette's words, "effects in the fictional field that are unobtainable by other modes or persons" (1965, p. 2). It will be demonstrated that the SPN brings a series of advantages to the novels that could not be achieved by either first or third person, or perhaps even by a combination of the two. Firstly, however, this chapter includes a brief outline of Peter Kocan's life and a short summary of the texts to be examined. The page references relate to the 1984 edition that brought the two volumes together.

About Peter Kocan

The short online biography provided by the publisher alongside the cover of Peter Kocan's 2010 novel, *The Fable of All our Lives*, stated:

> Peter Kocan was born in Newcastle NSW in 1947. He left school at fourteen and worked on country properties and in factory jobs in the city. He served a decade in custody for a shooting offence and it was then that he began to write. He has also published five collections of verse. His novel FRESH FIELDS won the 2004 FAW Christina Stead Award for Fiction, was short-listed for both the NSW and Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, and was named one of the Best Books of the Year by the TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT. He has recently gained a doctorate in Creative Arts. (HarperCollins, n.d.)

What is euphemistically described here as a "shooting offence" was an attempted political assassination. In 1966 Kocan, a mentally ill 19-year-old drifter, shot Australian politician Arthur Calwell, who was then the head of the Labor Party and leader of the Federal Opposition. Calwell was only slightly injured; Kocan was sentenced to life imprisonment, but later declared criminally insane and transferred to Morisset Hospital on Lake Macquarie, NSW. The crime and subsequent punishment dominated Kocan's prose writing as subject matter, and readers are unlikely to have approached his major novels without knowledge that the events within the text mirror those in Kocan's life. The reader will find it everywhere in the paratext (the dust jacket of the original 1980 edition of *The Treatment*, for example, said "After drifting through adolescence, Kocan was given a life sentence at the age of 19 for the attempted assassination of a Federal politician"). Harry Heseltine (1988) wrote "All the psychiatric evidence at the trial pointed to psychological instability rather than political ideology as the underlying cause of Kocan's appalling action" (p. 54) and that, as Kocan moved through his teenage years:

> … the dreams offered by the celluloid world of film were increasingly mingled with fantasies of personal power, contempt for the rest of mankind, and the hope of finding lasting fame by killing some figure of public celebrity. His fantasies included identification with Hitler and after November 1963 were frequently linked to the fate of Lee Harvey Oswald – the destroyer of John F. Kennedy who was himself destroyed. Not uncommonly Kocan's inner scenarios culminated in his own death as he was shot down in a running gun battle with the police. (p. 55)[74]

Kocan was held at Morisset Hospital for about a decade, and during that time discovered first the joys of reading poetry and then those of writing it. Kocan's poems were included in prestigious journals and he received awards while still incarcerated. He also had two books of his collected poems published while at Morisset. This became the subject of considerable media coverage, as did his eventual release with a literary grant. We may never know the exact link between Kocan's literary success and his early release from incarceration (from a 1976 report by journalist-turned-author Robert Drewe we know he was otherwise a model prisoner)[75] but the story superficially is similar to that of author Janet Frame, incarcerated in New Zealand's Seacliff Lunatic Asylum in the 1950s. As explained in a *New York Times* obituary by Douglas Martin (2004), Frame "was about to have a lobotomy when a hospital official read that she had won a literary prize. She was released."[76] Elizabeth Webby (2002) has pointed out: "literary

[74] Contemporary news reports, such as Joe Glascott's two part *Sydney Morning Herald* feature "The private world of Peter Kocan" (1966), dealt with Kocan's fascination with films and the John F. Kennedy assassination.

[75] In 1976 Drewe received permission to interview Kocan at Morriset for *The Bulletin*. Kocan was still "serving an indeterminate sentence" (p. 68); Drewe reported that Kocan had been described as a model patient:

> Kocan's daily schedule is this: he gets up at 6.30 am, cleans his tiny room, makes his bed, washes and shaves. Then he has breakfast and is at work at his sewing machine making vinyl bags in a big shed known as the Industrial Rehabilitation Department until 12.30. After lunch he works from 1.45 until 4. After each meal he works in the pantry washing dishes. (p. 66).

[76] Some have suggested Frame was not as close to having a lobotomy as she suggested in her autobiographic trilogy. However, in *Wrestling with the Angel, A Life of Janet Frame*, the acclaimed biography from 2000, author Michael King confirms the operation was cancelled only a few days before it was scheduled to take place, upon the news Frame had won New Zealand's most prestigious prose writing prize.

success provides the real cure [for Kocan], establishing his right to be treated as a person, rather than a thing" (p. 63).

Heseltine (1988) speculates that Kocan's final weeks in Morisset were not characterised by quite as neat a fall of events he sets out in his fictional narrative (p. 69).[77] Nevertheless "…in 1976 and while still in hospital, he was awarded second prize in a poetry competition organised by the Commonwealth Institute in London" (p. 56) and "in August 1976 he was released on licence from Morisset, nearly ten years after he first entered its gates" (p. 69). Kocan continued to publish poetry after his release, as well as plays, and later undertook academic research to attain a doctorate of creative arts. In terms of novels, he followed his incarceration duology with the science fiction (or speculative fiction) *Flies of a Summer* (1988), then *Fresh Fields* (2004), effectively a prequel to the duology. The next novel was *The Fable of All Our Lives* (2010), which appeared to take up the story of Tarbutt – this time named Tait – after his release from a mental institution. In 2010 Peter Kocan was awarded the Australia Council's "Writer's Emeritus Award". In its announcement, the Australia Council for the Arts said Dr Kocan would receive $50,000 "for his exceptional contribution to Australian writing". It quoted Professor Dennis Haskell, Chair of the Australia Council Literature Board, as saying:

> Four powerful novels, five collections of poetry, literary awards and much critical acclaim later, Dr Kocan is still associated with the his [sic] criminal past – a past that has arguably fuelled his literary endeavours. His work offers us a glimpse into not only our prison and mental health systems, but the subsequent alienation felt by people in society after their release.
>
> To honour Peter through this prestigious award is to acknowledge his contribution and impact on Australian literature, and to communicate to

[77] For Tarbutt, the rules suddenly change when a letter arrives: "You have won the National Poetry Prize." (p. 243)

> the rest of the world the pride Australians have for his personal achievements… (2010, ¶4-5)

Kocan's SPN Technique

As we have seen, the SPN is a form that can be confronting, imprecise, unstable and remarkably complex. How effective is Kocan's use of the technique? The media reception is potentially one measure. Despite its unusual narrative mode, *The Treatment* was generally well reviewed. In *The Sun-Herald*, Tony Stephens (1980) called it "a little gem of a novel, touched with humour and pathos and understanding … There's love and compassion, low-key love and compassion. Peter Kocan has found beauty in despair." (p. 13) Perhaps with the first book preparing the way for greater acceptance of the style, it was the follow-up, *The Cure*, that won the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction in the 1983 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards. A typical example of Kocan's style, and equally of his distinctive and powerful writing skills, is shown in sentences such as: "You are sitting with him on the verandah in the bright morning sun, feeling the cramp of the cell being warmed out of you." (p. 64)

Exactly who the "you" represents is perhaps the biggest quandary; in the case of the work considered in this chapter, does it refer to Tarbutt, or Kocan himself, or the person reading the book and asked to stand in for the protagonist, or perhaps a narratee (ideal or otherwise), or some other entity, forever shifting? As the literature review shows, views of researchers are diverse on almost any aspect of the SPN; in Kocan's work the "you" appears at various times to be the real author, the protagonist and the reader, and occasionally various combinations thereof, simultaneously. Richardson (2006) says authors regularly play on the ambiguity of second person (p. 14). Such ambiguity can be exploited outside literature too, as Jacqueline Maley (2012) suggested in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Melbourne *Age*. She was referring to Australian politician Craig Thomson's one-hour speech in Federal Parliament on 21 May 2012, where he denied he had misused members' funds when a union official.

> There was extreme umbrage, mostly against the media … There were grand claims.
>
> "What you have done is not just damage an individual or a family, but you have damaged democracy," he told the House of Representatives.
>
> He never defined who he meant by "you". The media, the opposition, his former colleagues, the public? Probably, it was all of the above. (¶12-14)[78]

Kocan certainly plays with the ambiguity of second person. He extends it by sometimes using collective pronouns too. In at least one section Kocan makes use of a very conversational "you": eg, he writes "It makes you wonder about medication nowadays…" (p. 66). "It makes you wonder" is an example of "you" being used in a way that replicates normal Australian vernacular speech. Two children setting the rules for a running race might say, for example: "You run until you reach the fence, then you turn around and run back again". In this, you stands for "one". In French they have the impersonal pronoun "on". However, Kocan only occasionally uses "you" in this vernacular way. At times the narration becomes very close to third person (eg, pp. 159-160). On those pages there is just one use of "you" (it's in the fourth last line of page 160). At other times the "you" seems to be solely the character, or his stand-in, the reader. The reality is that the "you" in second person fiction rarely stays at a fixed point. It can shift even within a paragraph. Meads (2007a) noted that readers of her second person novella *Nobody (An Autobiographical Fiction*), are "in a state of constant ontological flux", p. 21). These readers, she says, are:

> shifting unpredictably in and out of identification and immersion on both the intradiegetic and extradiegetic planes of the fictional world – and considering that the protagonist also inhabits 'you' – a further question still remains. This narrative is based on my childhood memories. Regardless of the degree of identification a reader may have with the

[78] Whoever the "you" was, the court didn't accept this interpretation of events. Thomson was found guilty of fraud in February 2014.

> narrative, I can't help but identify with it. I lived it. I already feel immersed in the narrative world. Don't I inhabit 'you', too? (2007a, p. 21)

In this quote Meads has identified at least three possible iterations of "you", none of them stable. It is reasonable to see at least as many in Kocan's work. Fisher (2008) argues that one challenge with the second person voice is that it "directly addresses the reader, making the reader complicit with the narrative voice" (p. 3). This can be an obstacle to reader acceptance in, say, *No End to the Way* (a gay novel) or in *Bright Lights, Big City* in which "you" are consuming copious amounts of drugs and taking reckless shortcuts in your day job. Even in circumstances potentially less confronting (to some), people generally don't like to be told what to think or do or say. For these reasons it is a difficult mode to write in and, often, to read.

When journalist Tom Krause interviewed Kocan for the *Weekend Australian* in 1983 in the wake of the launch of *The Cure*, the author told him he was "consistently out of sympathy with contemporary writing" (p. 12). Despite such statements, we can see he had written a novel that some may see as postmodern, notwithstanding Kocan's almost certain disdain for the word and the mode.[79] His two novellas are written primarily in the present tense, which is rare in novels generally but common when writing in the second person. The opening sentence of *The Treatment*, begins conventionally but, with its final two words, jars the reader and immediately announces that this is not a conventional narration: "Down a long road, all sun and shadowy with trees overhead and a slow look from cows across a fence and *you're there*." (p. 3)[80] With the narration continuing in the second person, the reader is given an overall view of the correctional facility, observed from the position of "you", a passenger in the car that is arriving. The exposition works gently and effectively: in the second paragraph, the sight of the nurse attracts *your* attention "After the months at the gaol" (p. 3).

[79] In *The Fable of All our Lives*, Kocan's ex-prisoner-poet stand-in, Tait, builds his value system around things that are "QO", standing for "quaint and outmoded" (p.3). QO became his "key term of approval."
[80] The Italics have been added for emphasis.

To highlight the effectiveness of second person and present tense (the tense in which most of the book is written), it is instructive to consider the introduction rendered in two more common forms: third person past tense and first person past tense. Kocan's complete opening paragraph reads:

> Down a long road, all sun and shadowy with trees overhead and a slow look from cows across a fence and you're there. You see buildings with barred windows and a few people in old grey clothes. There's the Main Kitchen. There are trucks outside being loaded with steel dixies for the wards and a reek tells you that today must be stew or cabbage. Then you see a nurse in a blue dress leading a little flock of inmates beside the road. They're all small, like little boys or shrivelled old men, and are shambling and dribbling after her in a single file strung out for fifty yards. She turns and shouts for them to mind the car. One of them is right on the road. You see his face, all red and crumpled like a monkey's, coming closer through the windscreen. He's grinning. He likes the car, as though it's a big friendly animal coming to sniff him. Your driver toots, then stops. (p. 3)

It is a compelling opening, in turn gentle, naïve, involving, confronting and almost angry. If it were written in the most conventional style for a novel – which is to say in third person, past tense, with an omniscient narrator – it might read:

> Down a long road, all sun and shadowy with trees overhead and a slow look from cows across a fence, and the new prisoner was there. He saw buildings with barred windows and a few people in old grey clothes. There was the Main Kitchen. There were trucks outside being loaded with steel dixies for the wards and a reek told him that today must be stew or cabbage. Then he saw a nurse in a blue dress leading a little flock of inmates beside the road. They were all small, like little boys or shrivelled old men, and were shambling and dribbling after

> her in a single file strung out for fifty yards. She turned and shouted for them to mind the car. One of them was right on the road. The man in the car saw the face of the man on the road, all red and crumpled like a monkey's, coming closer through the windscreen. He was grinning. He liked the car, as though it was a big friendly animal coming to sniff him. The driver tooted, then stopped.

Although this is obviously a procedural line-by-line recasting for purposes of demonstration, we can see the tendency for the story to lose its immediacy in the change to past tense. When compounded with the third person narration, the new text renders the reader a distant observer, rather than an integral part of the action. There is something flat about it. What might happen if the story were in first person? In this case, a fascinating document exists that casts light on how such a change might have altered the character of *The Treatment* and *The Cure*. In 1977, only a short time after the would-be assassin was released, the journal *Quadrant* published "After I Shot Arthur Calwell" by Kocan (1977a). It described the piece in a footnote as two chapters from his forthcoming book*, The Wire and the Wall* (p. 13). The book has never appeared, but those two apparently extracted chapters deal with some of the incidents covered in *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, in addition to the events during and immediately after the shooting (the actual shooting incident was the most striking omission from not only Kocan's incarceration novels but also from *Fresh Fields*, the "prequel" novel published much later that covered the build up to a shooting). More importantly in regards to this research, the *Quadrant* extracts relate the events in first person, past tense. From these chapters, it is reasonable to assume Kocan had originally intended to relate his experiences in a very different non-fiction work, written in a more conversational tone, and closer to a conventional memoir. It begins:

> I arrived at Lakeside Mental Hospital on the first day of 1967, accompanied by four guards, and after a two-hour drive from the goal. My guards did not seem awed by the knowledge that they were all that stood between society and a dangerous psychopath. On the contrary, we had

> stopped on the outskirts of Sydney so that three of them could window-shop for new cars. I was left to sit with the fourth who, presumably, was not a car fancier.
>
> The maximum security section of the hospital, to which I was being delivered, stood in thick bushland… (Kocan 1977, p.13)

Compared with *The Treatment* or *The Cure*, this first person account relays a more worldly, reflective and cynical voice ("My guards did not seem awed by the knowledge that they were all that stood between society and a dangerous psychopath"), and the tension about what might happen is lessoned by the fact that the action is not unfolding in "real time" but is apparently being relayed years after the event by a writer who seems in good control of the narrative. Whereas the change from first person to second person does not alone make the work more literary, the published novels have nuances and complexities that were not apparent in the extracts from Kocan's more straightforward 1977 account. Not only is the final approach a more adventurous one, Kocan's own prose writing skills – on the evidence provided by the two chapters in *Quadrant* – would seem have greatly improved in the intervening three years. That said, we can't determine how much editing was applied in each case, or whether it was the second person voice that prompted a more poetic tone, rather than an improvement in skills. Sometimes a writer just needs to find the correct voice.

But is Kocan's second person really what it seems? Writing about *The Treatment*, Patrick Bryson (2009) theorises that a second person narrative (when it works) appears to be a default first person voice, one he claims "is handy when the subject in question has little or no real self-knowledge, and almost needs to be told how he or she feels" such as with Tarbutt (p. 257). Alternatively, says Bryson, they need to be told because they are severely traumatised, as with McInerney's protagonist in *Bright Lights, Big City*.

> With a second person narrative, the first person exists as a narrator, but

> without recognition, and talks only about the second person – the 'you' always being mentioned … generally the reader will identify the 'you' as being the narrator, talking to himself – implying a split subjectivity … but this is never made clear for us as readers; it is something we assume to be the case. It gives the added benefit, however, of leaving room for the … narratee … to insert themselves into the text as a participant, something that otherwise can only happen with the first person plural voice. (p. 257)

Despite divergent views, and despite the fact that someone reading *The Treatment* is likely to read the "you" at times as "I", in Kocan's hands the SPN pronoun is a more elusive object than researchers such as Bal suggest with regard to *La Modification* (1993, p. 181) or Bryson here with *Bright Lights, Big City*. At times the Kocan reader is hovering almost completely outside the main character and observing his misinterpretation of events from a more distant perspective. Sometimes the reader seems to be almost completely inside his skin, with him as one. At others the reader is lost in what is clearly "his" (and not "your") internal monologue, making the voice the character's alone and functioning like interior speech (as noted by Hopkins and Perkins, 1981, p. 126). When writing about *Bright Lights, Big City*, Stephanie Girard (1996) argues that: "On the level of form, [SPN] is the mirror image of free-indirect discourse; rather than creating identification within a detached mode of narration, it creates detachment within a mode of identification. In so doing, it enacts 'betweenness': the narrator is simultaneously outside and inside himself; he is both the seeing subject and the object seen." (p. 170) The same effect is found throughout *The Treatment*, for example in the scene depicting Tarbutt remembering standing in front of the mirror, with his gun: "It was a new self you saw: the set of the shoulder, the curve of the cheekbone, the elbow cradling the gun, all seemed suddenly significant. You felt a kind of hum coming from inside yourself, like the hum of a live bomb." (p. 32) Fisher (2008) recognises that:

> …the simplicity of this language and point of view is far more disturbing in second person, with the reader part of the voice, than it is in first person:

> "I felt a kind of hum coming from inside myself, like the hum of a live bomb" is trite and absurd … second person introduces a paranoid menace, a sense of cold calculation, and something not quite right. (pp. 9-10)

The reader's second person view of the protagonist looking back at his younger, wilder self matches Morrissette's "complex series of perspectives" and "multiple angles" (1965: p. 2) with more than a hint of what Morrissette describes as second person's "moralizing tonality in a rhetoric of self-judgement" (p. 13). Still discussing his pre-shooting state of mind, Tarbutt explains how he spent most of his money on tickets to films. "In a cinema you could float out of yourself into the bodyless world of feeling on the screen. To stop being yourself was lovely, it was happiness." (p. 35) Here is another potential clue as to Kocan's reason for choosing the second person – to intensify this very unsettling, frustrating feeling of being trapped within the "you" (as evidenced by his wish to escape: "To stop being yourself was lovely."). Tarbutt had seen *Dr Zhivago* for the seventh time and "…you'd gladly have died right there in the seat rather than return to yourself and face the street outside with its squalor of traffic and people" (p. 36). Fisher (2008) says the combination of Len having seen *Dr Zhivago* seven times and the phrase "return to yourself" powerfully demonstrates his madness and dissociation. "It is almost palpable to the reader in second person. The reader is walking with Len on the precipice of insanity." (p. 10) This astute analogy – "walking with Len on the precipice of insanity" – demonstrates how difficult it would be to make a simple replacement with either first person or third person and achieve the same effect. Those critics who have argued that when we read "you" we merely substitute "I" or "he/she" may be correct with some texts, and even in some parts of Kocan, but it is hard to argue such a case for the duology as a whole.

In my creative work, "The Flight", I strove to use second person to achieve this feeling of disassociation (and to a lesser extent the madness), this sense of walking with the protagonist and seeing slightly more than he sees, but also of being the protagonist and experiencing the limited, skewed view from his point of view. For the reader to see more than the protagonist, the reader must be distanced

from the protagonist at times. This lengthening and shortening of distance and identification can't be readily done in first person and, although it can be easily achieved in third person, it is at the cost of the intimacy and directness that comes with first and second person (of course, free indirect discourse can bridge that gap a little, but in this researcher's experience, the reader rarely feels as fully inside the character as with an SPN; furthermore, free indirect discourse can be applied in second person too, adding that technique's advantages to the complex SPN mix). Kocan's text encourages the reader to inhabit a split role, feeling the sensations with Tarbutt but at the same time wanting to grab him and shake him and explain to him that he is interpreting everything in the wrong way. Despite the very specific characterisation and circumstances of Kocan's protagonist, which might exclude us from identification,[81] we stick with him. To use Margolin's reasoning we recognise an intended audience and may choose to deictically relocate into the slot (1990, p. 438).

Very little has been written about Peter Kocan's duology from a literary point of view. In Heseltine's "'How Do You Feel Within Yourself?' The Case of Peter Kocan" (1988), the areas of interest are the "immediate and vivid account of the psychiatric system" (p. 57), Kocan's own rehabilitation, and other issues relating to crime and mental health. Heseltine addresses the use of the second person mode in a single paragraph:

> The technique is of a seamlessly projected piece of documentary film in which the author's perspective is the camera's lens. The effect is of the simultaneous involvement of the artist and the (apparent) objectification of his experience. No less than the opening of *The Treatment* the ending of *The Cure* creates a dynamic interplay between protagonist and setting, author and reader… (p. 57)

[81] As claimed for example by Fludernik (1994a). She argues that, when the protagonist becomes too specific, "the quality of the presumed address to an extradiegetic reader in such text evaporates" (p. 287).

It should be noted that Heseltine takes it for granted that the subject matter is the "artist" and "his experience". Yet, the narrative transmission in a book written in the second person is difficult to discuss. With *The Treatment*, do we attribute dialogue and the telling of the story to Len Tarbutt (who is named as the main character), or "you". Or perhaps to Kocan, the author, who is perhaps the one addressing the "you" in the text. And where is the line between you, the protagonist, and you, the reader? These are among the issues to be considered here and in the chapter "On Eddie Campbell's Alec: How to be an Artist". Based on the theories quoted in the previous chapters, there are several types of second person narratives, and several possible narrative transmissions on the homodiegetic and heterodiegetic planes. These transmissions could include (though are hardly restricted to):

> (1) An external narrator is explaining things to a "you" (either within or outside the text), filling you in on details because of your limited self-knowledge or trauma.
> (2) The "you" is involved in an internal monologue or talking aloud to himself or herself.[82]
> (3) The older "you" is re-explaining past events to the younger "you" with the benefit of later experience and broader knowledge.
> (4) An external agent – perhaps fate or some other divine puppeteer – is relating the inevitable, unchangeable path of the character's thoughts and actions.
> (5) The "you" is merely a disguised "I" or "he".

Each of these elements is plausible in different parts of Kocan's duology, giving the most plausible sixth explanation: the "you" is not a fixed entity at all, but one that is constantly shifting. After Tarbutt's first glimpses, the car goes further – "Your stomach is watery with fear" – towards a "low sprawling building with barred windows" and a door "with an iron grid on the front" (p. 4). In this second

[82] In present tense works, the "you" could be narrating the action as it happens, a so-called "automatic narration".

person delivery the tone is oppressive and claustrophobic, the narratee's lack of agency is brought to the forefront. The final paragraph on this page reflects an ambiguity that seeps into the narrator's voice every so often via the use of the collective pronoun: "The talk has nothing to do with you. They seem to have forgotten you. We all step inside." This could be designed to further cloud exactly who is telling the story or perhaps, as speculated by Bryson (2009), designed to depict the duality of the mentally disturbed mind (p. 256).

The name Len Tarbutt is introduced for the main character (p. 5). He refers to his hair colour as blond (p. 6), but the context makes it obvious the hair is brown. Here, the audience sees more than the protagonist, a potentially harder trick to pull off if second person was only disguised first person. The reference to hair colour provides an oblique clue to Tarbutt's state of mind, perhaps, as do the lines on page 32: "You weren't a glowering maniac, but a young instrument of fate. A blond death bringer." We can glean more from Kocan's much later semi-autobiographic novel *Fresh Fields* (2004). This explains that, in the lead up to a shooting offence, the main character (who is unnamed) suffered a mental illness that saw him identify with a character in a war movie, a blond-haired German soldier named Diestl.[83] Here, in *The Treatment*, he appears to still be clinging to the notion that he is at one with Diestl. Even without further knowledge, we sense a strangeness, an otherness to Tarbutt's behaviour here, exacerbated by the manner of telling. In these scenes Kocan has also achieved something akin to first person intimacy without, to quote Hopkins and Perkins (1981), "the presumptuous quality of the I-narrator" (pp. 131-132).

In *The Cure* Tarbutt enthuses about a book called *The Survivor*.[84] It is "about a person called David Allison who has an unhappy childhood, then goes to the

[83] From this name and other information, the movie would appear to be *The Young Lions* from 1958, starring Marlon Brando as Lt Christian Diestl.

[84] Although the poems and poets cited in *The Treatment*, for example, are real, later on Kocan will fictionalise the titles of works: *The Treatment/The Cure* becomes *Ground Leave* in *The Fable of All Our Lives*. This writer could find no outside reference to the character David Allison in a book called *The Survivor*. It is likely an invention or amalgam of various sources, though Patrick Bryson

trenches in Flanders, and afterwards tries to become a writer so as to tell the truth of the war for the sake of the dead men" (p. 124). *The Survivor* and Tarbutt's anthology of poetry (given to him by his mother) were "probably the only two books you'll ever need in your life" (p. 124).[85] Later in the text, Tarbutt reveals a growing obsession with David Allison, "Your only friend" (p. 128). Bryson (2008) cites the change of mentor from Diestl to Allison, which is also from one side to the other (Axis to Allied), as the making of Tarbutt. "Diestl is a friend who tries to help the youth become someone that he is not, a man of action, David Allison helps Tarbutt by showing him a way of coping as a thinking man, as himself" (p. 6). Certainly his new role model is a more positive one than the "blond death bringer" of *The Treatment and The Cure* (1984, p. 32).

On page 7 of *The Treatment*, Tarbutt is standing with other inmates on the balcony, which is closed in with mesh. There is the contrast of the beautiful bush and lake in view. He – or indeed "you" – are unsure whether to meet anyone's gaze. "Men at the gaol had warned you about these madhouse inmates." In scenes like these, filled with intimate details, there is only one logical narrator – Tarbutt himself. A comparable issue was raised by Nance (1994) when examining the second person short story "Tarde de agosto" ("August Afternoon"): "The level of physical and emotional detail (down to the pine resin on the protagonist's hands as he climbs) rules out as potential narrators even the most intimate of others … Excluding the possibility of omniscience, only the protagonist could plausibly tell this tale." (¶11) This could be held as true for parts of Kocan, but that doesn't render it displaced first person. Indeed, as Nance says, "in conventional first-person fiction the narrator is not also the narratee" (¶1). As readers we are not, I

(2008) says Allison is "clearly 'George Sherston' from Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*" (p. 8).

[85] It seems Kocan himself did not rely on two books. Heseltine (1988) says: "External records suggest that … he was a voracious reader while in Morisset, and *The Survivor* … I take it to be Kocan's fictional version of *The Golden Virgin*, the first of the First World War volumes in Henry Williamson's long novel sequence, 'The Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight'" (p62). Anecdotal support for *The Survivor* being modelled on *The Golden Virgin* rather than *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* is provided by journalist Tom Krause's article (1983) which states *The Golden Virgin* was sent to Kocan by the poet Michael Dransfield while Kocan was in Morisset. Kocan's poetry collection *The Other Side of the Fence* (published in 1975, when he was still in Morisset) is dedicated to Williamson.

contend, simply or routinely substituting "I" for "you" – we are in turn close and distant to the protagonist, perhaps disoriented, certainly substituting "you" at times for "I", but at other times for "he" and sometimes taking the role on ourselves. This peculiar capability of second person has been pointed out by Richardson, Fisher and others. Butor has said the "vous" in his novel *La Modification* "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" (quoted by Morrissette 1965, p. 15).

Kocan's second person voice changes subtly when fellow inmate Zurka is preparing for his move to the open section after 11 years (p. 85). In the first two pages of this chapter, it reads more like free indirect discourse (also known as third person subjective narration, and other terms); despite the use of the "you" pronoun, the narrative voice is closer to Zurka than to Tarbutt: "Zurka can't take everything in properly, except that the screws are being very nice and want him to make a go of it." (p. 86) This is possibly Tarbutt/you empathising with Zurka, or the writer (or "real author") attempting to deal with structural issues, including the highly restricted physical view that characters can have in second person narration (a restriction it can share with first person). This is perhaps demonstrated by the scene where Zurka's fate is announced behind a closed door inside an office. "You're watching through the glass partition…" (p. 86). Here, the glass partition becomes a device to allow something closer to omnipresent third person, ie, to show to Tarbutt, and thereby the reader, what happens inside the office where Zurka is led. The scene fulsomely demonstrates a major restriction of second person, and one that can require writerly, and slightly strained, techniques to overcome, such as people covertly staring through windows.

On page 128, Tarbutt struggles with indecision: "You're always like this. That's partly how you know you aren't the same as most people." This direct reference to a major character trait may make it difficult for the reader to accept being the "you" at this point of the book, perhaps the reader who doesn't share that trait will be automatically substituting a first or third person pronoun for "you" in such

incidences, while more fully assuming the role in parts where it is easier to identify (such as when being threatened by another inmate and experiencing a closer to universal choice between fight and flight). Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) has noted the strange oscillation that can take place in an SPN:

> The variability of the distance between the reader's implicit position and the narrated events suggests that narrative phenomenology involves not just one but two acts of recentering, one logical and the other imaginative … The first… sends the reader from the real world to the nonactual possible word created by the text; the second, an option available in principle to both fiction and nonfiction, though vastly more developed in the former, relocates the reader from the periphery to the heart of the story-world and from the time of narration to the time of the narrated. This experience of being transported onto the narrative scene is so intense and demanding on the imagination that it cannot be sustained for a very long time; an important aspect of narrative art consists, therefore, of varying the distance. (p. 139)

In Kocan, we can see the varying of distance is achieved from the "camera lens" being deep within the protagonist's thoughts through to a much broader view – and even what appears to be focalisation via another character (as in the Zurka incident cited in Chapter Five of *The Treatment*). The reader moves at times from addressee to participant and back, in keeping with the suggestions by Phelan (section 2 ¶1).

Writing in the second person (particularly, perhaps, in the past tense) introduces the conundrum referred to by Bonheim and others: why relay a series of events to "you", and what purpose would this retelling serve? Various answers to these difficult questions have been proposed. In Kocan's case it could relate to the pain of recalling events. John Wright (2012) has suggested a narrator might plausibly relay to you something that you've already experienced to give a fresh perspective, or to reorder things (like members of a family, each with his or her

own version of the truth), or to sort out what really happened in a traumatic time. Wright also suggests second person can add dignity to the retelling of an uncomfortable tale, perhaps excusing the "you" because the events seem to be ordained by fate, or perhaps sharing the pain or shame equally with the reader who is assuming the "you" role (Wright, J., personal communication, June 19, 2012).[86]

How is second person affected by gender? Perhaps the most polarising example is when Tarbutt and Julie have sex (p. 193). Elsewhere in this thesis Irene Kacandes (1993) is quoted as saying that in Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveller*, a female reader is alienated or must play the text's game with hyperconsciousness (p. 148). Here, the same could be argued. However, Kacandes says the "ideal reader" of a text can be of either gender as long as she or he adopts "the duplicitous stance which being 'in' and 'not in' the text simultaneously requires" (p. 148). Other potential gaps between real reader and ideal reader are to be found in second person texts: the reader of *No End to the Way* may be homosexual but not male, for example. Kocan's "ideal reader" is unlikely to have a comparable mental illness or to have committed a similar crime, irrespective of gender. All require a "duplicitous stance" if the reader is to be subsumed into the character, but so does much art. Assuming the role of protagonist in an SPN need not, for the most part, be more difficult than believing – just for two hours – that a group of professional actors under a proscenium arch really are in the battlefields of France, circa 1415, and that one of them is King Henry V of England. However, a sex scene in which the reader is effectively invited to play a role – such as the one in *The Cure* or one man falling in love with another in *No End to the Way* – is at

[86] In another Antipodean incarceration novel, *Inside Out, An Autobiography* (2004) by Robert Adamson, a completely different technique is used to put some separation between the one who did the time and the one who wrote the book. For the most part Adamson's is a very conventional third person past tense narrative and, while *The Treatment* and *The Cure* are both set solely within the restrictive world of the institution, Adamson is in and out of jail through the narrative (as the title perhaps suggests). He leaves institutional life behind him as he succeeds in the world of poetry. Unlike Kocan, Adamson is prepared to label his book an autobiography though he happily subverts the accepted meaning of the term when, in the second last paragraph in the book, the text quotes the author's mother in conversation with the artist Brett Whiteley: "'I don't know what Robert's told people,' she said. 'But I'd take it with a grain of salt if I were you. He's very loose with the truth.'" (p. 325)

the difficult end of the spectrum. This is where the SPN's "close and distant" properties come into play, allowing readers to pull back at some parts and be more fully immersed in inhabiting the character at others. In Kocan's case the writer/narrator also pulls back at certain moments. Although Tarbutt's building romance with Julie is shown to the reader in its various stages, the initial consummation is, like many things in the duology, off stage. The mood is set a page before with a passage showing the insecurity and disassociation experienced by the protagonist – and intensified by the SPN mode.

> Half your mind is terribly clear and you are like a bystander watching yourself with this girl, as though you need a witness to tell you it's truly happening; the other half is like a gibbering idiot who wants to kiss her and fuck her and cry on her shoulder all at the same time. (p. 192)

And then:

> And now you are seeing the sun's orange blaze through closed eyelids. The sun is on your body and on the long grass flattened around you. You could float out of your body now, except your body feels too good to leave. Your nipple tickles and you open an eye. Julie is sitting naked beside you, playing with a grass stem. She leans to kiss you.
>
> "You're so beautiful," you tell her. "It makes me want to die."
>
> "Don't die."
>
> "This was my first time," you confess. (p. 193)

A later sex act is briefly described ("Then she takes your rising prick in her mouth./We are kissing in the shadows outside your ward." p. 193). Perhaps the reader could be more immersed in the Tarbutt role if his or her gender and sexual orientation matched the protagonist's; there need be less substitution, mechanically or psychically, but there would still be an element of the "duplicitous stance". We are always aware that the events are happening neither to "you", nor in the present tense; these incidents happened somewhere else, at a

different time, to other people (if at all). Kandelaars' *Memoirs of a suburban girl: A Novel* (2011) presents a female protagonist and her repulsive boyfriend who, aside from other major faults, regularly bashes her. Yet, as with any suspension of disbelief, it was not difficult to quickly empathise with the female "you" within the frame of the novel (even for this male reader), to dodge the blows with her, to think of strategies to mitigate the pain and escape the destructive relationship. Similarly with the female "you" of Meads's *Nobody*, the themes of fear, uncertainty and wanting to belong can be universal enough to drag in most readers.

More on the effectiveness and concision of Kocan's SPN voice can be gained by comparison with another Australian incarceration memoir, *Just Us* (1984) by Gabrielle Carey. *Just Us* differs from Kocan's work (and Robert Adamson's incarceration memoir), in that it is not written by someone who has been to prison. Categorised by the publisher as "Autobiography", it is primarily told from the point of view of Carey, a young writer who falls in love with and marries Terence Haley, a man the back cover blurb calls a "notorious long-term inmate of Parramatta Gaol". However, the narration slips regularly into long sections presented in the voice of Haley. This is not dialogue but first person narration, presented in Italics as if spoken or written by the prisoner. Haley receives no co-credit as writer so the words could be assumed to be either "as quoted by Carey" or perhaps even "as imagined by Carey". The effect though is to put the reader very much "in the head" of Haley. The voice is conversational and slang filled, as if Haley is telling his story to Carey during one of her prison visits: "*We moved into Port Adelaide migrant hostel and after that it was pretty much the same story. Boring to you I know, but I liked it. I'd truant school and hang around the docks*…" (p. 51). Some of it details Haley's background story, some of it describes his personality or inner thoughts (eg, p. 136: "*I can handle screws having goes at me. I can handle it for days and years and then once in a while I can't*."). Interspersed with this, is Carey as observer and commentator:

> I realized that if Terry was knocked back he just wouldn't be able to continue doing his time peacefully, as much as he or anyone else wanted him to. … And although it is a Catch 22 situation, when with such an attitude he may never see the outside of a prison wall, at least he will know that he hasn't betrayed anyone. (p. 126)

What is interesting here is that much of the mood and coverage of the two voices shown here (Haley talking about himself and Carey talking about Haley) is contracted into the one narrative voice in Kocan's second person, along with other SPN complexities. As Hantzis (1988) says, multiple voices simultaneously construct the experience in the SPN text (p. 138-139).

The Present Tense

Tarbutt's story in the incarceration novels is told not in retrospect (as in *The Wire and the Wall*), but in in the present, offering the conceit that the action is unfolding at the same time for the reader, the protagonist and even the writer. There are of course many ways to play with temporality in a novel. The opening paragraph of *Tirra Lirra By The River* (1978) by Jessica Anderson is also in present tense but differs markedly in that it alludes to something that suggests post-knowledge.

> I arrive at the house wearing a suit – greyish, it doesn't matter. It is wool because even in these sub-tropical places spring afternoons can be cold. I am wearing a plain felt hat with a brim, and my bi-focal spectacles with the chain attached. I am not wearing the gloves Fred gave me because I have left them behind in the car, but I don't know that yet. (p. 1)

Justine (1957) by Lawrence Durrell has a first person, unnamed narrator resolving to retell a series of facts "not in the order in which they took place – for that is history – but in the order in which they first became significant for me" (p. 15). In *Clean Straw for Nothing* (1969), the middle book in George Johnston's *roman a clef* trilogy, the action is related in the first person by "David Meredith" in a series

of incidents that have been apparently cut and pasted in a random order. Each is headed with a place and year: "London, 1954" (p. 143) jumps to "Greece, 1959" (p. 157), "Sydney, 1966" (p. 162) then to "Athens, 1964" (p. 169). Some sections are in present tense, some in past. These switches and jumps are disconcerting, but almost certainly not random. They add up to a whole that suggests they are carefully orchestrated. They also increase what Chatman (1978) calls "authorial audibility" (p. 225).

Novels written entirely in the present tense remain rare. Examples include Nick Hornby's *How to Be Good* (2001), Craig Silvey's *Jasper Jones* (2009) and, perhaps most famously, John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960). Updike has expounded on what led him to the present tense for *Rabbit, Run*, the first of his books about the character Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom. Updike (2006) called it a "happy discovery", one that has fitfully appeared in English-language fiction, and which he first encountered in Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*, fifteen or so years after its 1939 publication:

> In a later edition of that ground-breaking portrait of a West African entrapped by colonialism, Cary wrote of the present tense that it "can give to a reader that sudden feeling of insecurity (as if the very ground were made only of a deeper kind of darkness) which comes to a traveller who is bushed in unmapped country, when he feels all at once that not only has he utterly lost his way, but also his own identity." … the present tense, to me as I began to write in it, felt not so much ominous as exhilaratingly speedy and free – free of the grammatical bonds of the traditional past tense and of the subtly dead, muffling hand it lays upon every action. (¶7)

Earlier, Updike (1968) had explained that the present tense enabled him to move between minds, between thoughts and objects, and between events more easily than in the past tense. "I'm not sure it's as clear to the reader as it is to the person writing, but there are kinds of poetry, kinds of music you can strike off in the present tense". (¶98) Updike (2006) compared the technique to the way motion

pictures "occur before us, immersingly…" (¶7), adding that in the present tense "thought and act exist on one shimmering plane; the writer and reader move in a purged space, on the travelling edge of the future, without vantage for reflection or regret or a seeking of proportion" (¶7). Narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) points out that in conversational story telling and medieval epics, the "so-called historical present is used in alternation with the past to channel the attention of the audience toward certain events and create a profile of mounting and declining tension … as the tense of presence, the present is inherently more immersive than the past" (p. 136). She says that as it creates the simulacrum of a real-time "life" (rather than speech) situation, "the shift from past to present pulls the reader from the *now* of the storytelling act to the *now* of the story-world and completes the deictic shift toward the narrative window …truth, it tries to tell us, lies in the immediacy of experience, not in the artificial form imposed on one's life by narrative activity" (p. 137). In other words, the present tense can be a powerful tool in reader involvement (even though Ryan argues it should be used sparingly). When present tense (or any other tense) is maintained, it reduces that authorial audibility.

Past tense, however, is the accepted mode for story telling, and according to David Lodge (2002) it neither implies a gap between the time of the action and the time of the narration, nor raises questions about the character of the narrator. When discussing Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*, a third person text, Lodge says:

> We do not ask who is the narrator, how did he acquire all this information, how can he reproduce it in such detail? We do not think of a writer at his desk, penning these words. The method places us in the room, there, then, with Kate [Croy]. But when the pronoun is changed to the first person, we are immediately conscious of the actual process of recall. (p. 35)

In keeping with Lodge's proposal, when reading the past tense but first person chapters from *The Wire and The Wall*, this reader couldn't help but consider the

"gap between the time of the action and the time of the narration". The perception was that it had been written from the point of view of someone who had survived, whereas a second or third person narrative voice (biography rather than autobiography) could have hidden that information, even in past tense. So what happens in the present tense? The person who relays a first person tale in the present tense must also have also survived to write it, yet the effect is different. The past tense can carry with it a very definite implication that the events have already happened, and the narrator is relaying them not just within the conventions of story telling but with all the biases and self-serving editing that could be involved. In contrast, with the present tense, an author such as Kocan is creating the illusion that the protagonist is experiencing everything at the same time as the reader (and indeed the implied author). Second person, present tense, is also effective in helping avoid what Lodge describes as the reader's immediate consciousness of "the actual process of recall".

When a story is told "looking back", the reader is subtly aware that the writer/narrator must be in possession of all the facts at the start. In the present tense the range of things that could happen next appears greater. Tension is created by the reader's perception that the narrator is not sitting somewhere, safe and warm, relaying an incident in the distant past. The story is *now*. The same conceit suggests there is not time to put a "spin" on the events, they are too immediate. Writing in the present tense brings technical issues, including how one moves time forward and backwards, which is usually very necessary in novels. Chatman (1978) reminds, summarising time reinforces a narrator's presence (p. 222).[87] An example of Kocan's technique is "You've been here a few weeks now" (p. 31). With this sentence, Kocan moves time forward, while staying in the present tense. Elsewhere, slabs of time are dispensed with when narration (in present tense) makes presupposition about events that have now passed but were

[87] Chatman says (p. 219) "set description" is the weakest mark of the overt narrator. These occur even in non-narrated stories, but "they must seem to arise from characters' actions alone." Overt presence is marked by "explicit description, direct communications to a narratee about the setting that he needs to know."

never relayed to the reader in the text as they "happened", eg: "Mario has already attacked Dick with a billiard cue…" (p. 75)

There are other temporal shifts in Kocan, such as the occasional use of the future or subjective future: "Tomorrow morning when you refuse calisthenics the Snowball will begin to roll in earnest and within a few weeks it will have crushed you." (p. 242). This turns out to be conditional. It is really Tarbutt/you predicting what will most likely happen, rather than "the future". There is some recalling in past tense: "You were in the garden, digging, and during your breathers you were reciting some verses softly to yourself." (p. 80) Halfway down page 81 we read: "We're playing soccer at weekends, if the weather isn't too bad." There are other examples of this odd conditional tense/continuous present tense. Similarly, "The screws push and shove us." (p. 81)

Memory is also used as a catalyst for what is present tense recall, but in reality, necessary back story and, occasionally, overt exposition. For example the claustrophobia of Tarbutt's cell (in which "you" are locked for long hours) brings to mind another small room, "when you were preparing to do the thing that you got the Life Sentence for" (p. 31). Tarbutt relives sawing the barrel from a .22 rifle (p. 32). There are strong hints of madness. "You imagined it displayed one day in a glass case with a printed card describing what it had done." In these scenes we also enter directly into the character's mind. Chatman (1978) also reminds that: "Access to a character's consciousness is the standard entree to his point of view, the usual and quickest means by which we come to identify with him. Learning his thoughts insures an intimate connection." (p. 157) This is the technique Kocan is using here – or certainly the effect he is achieving – to help overcome the repelling nature of second person and the acts in question.

Many of the present tense advantages described by Updike (and Joyce Cary: eg, that "sudden feeling of insecurity", as quoted in Updike 2006, ¶7) have been harnessed by Kocan, notwithstanding – and arguably contradicting – Ryan's 2001 contention that the present tense's extra immersive capability becomes

"considerably duller when the present invades the whole text and becomes the standard narrative tense" (p. 137). The similarity between present tense and film may be no coincidence either as Tarbutt is revealed in the text to have been obsessive about watching films (as indeed was Kocan, according to reports after his arrest.)[88]

Dennis Schofield (1998b) uses the term "automatic narration" (which he elsewhere attributes to Genette, 1980: 217) for "…the narrator simultaneously 'acting' in and narrating the scene with no gesture toward the verisimilitude of establishing how the narration is being 'told' or transcribed" (pp. 147-148). Fludernik (1993) uses the label "simultaneous narration" for events being "narrated (or – really – reflected) simultaneously with their occurrence" (p. 242). Schofield (1998b) calls this automatic narration an "impossible" narrating situation (p. 148),[89] while Bonheim (1983) had earlier noted "the present tense makes it hard to believe in the narrative situation" (p. 74). Further, Schofield (1998b) says the use of this present tense "in the phenomenological present of the 'you'-protagonist" is not enough to prove a heterodiegetic narrator. As he puts it, "The narrator and character may yet … be identical" (p. 148). Schofield (1998b) is insistent that, because Kocan's "diptych" follows the particulars of Tarbutt's story:

> Strict focalisation through the "you" protagonist means that the narrator's knowledge and use of language is no greater than the "you"-protagonist's, strongly inviting the reader to conclude that the "second person" narrative pronoun marks an otherwise unremarkable autodiegetic narrator, a narrator telling his own story but masking himself through a straightforward commutation of "I" into "you." At the very least, the narrator is to be understood as referring to himself self-consciously in the "second person,"

[88] See Glascott (1966).

[89] Schofield (1998b) says in simultaneous narration, the reader will expect no marked difference or divergence between the identity of the "you"-protagonist (as revealed explicitly by characterisation) and the identity of the narrator (as revealed implicitly by narrative discourse – as the beliefs, value systems, temperament and so on to be ascribed to the narrator in specifying point of view). (p. 163)

> the pronominal mask carrying a specifiable rhetoric of (self-)judgement, analytical objectification, and so on, but constituting a disguise for the dissembling "I" nonetheless. (p. 147)

The situation is the same, Schofield says, for *Bright Lights, Big City*, at least up until the "wry, self-deprecating irony of the final paragraph" (p. 148).[90] To address Schofield's first point (the impossible narration), there are many narrating situations that are either impossible or highly implausible. Consider, for example, what many might consider the most mimetic form: a person telling their own story in a conversational tone. This in fact suggests the unlikely scenario of somebody talking to an audience for several hours without a break, carefully managing plot-lines and narrative arcs as they go, and never stumbling, repeating themselves or mixing up names or dates. Alternatively, if we the audience are to believe the first person document was written rather than spoken, it is unlikely to possess the qualities of good long-form narrative unless the putative narrator were an experienced novelist (rather than the supposed scheming sportsman, vindictive salesman or adulterous sculptor).[91] A faux diary is another popular pretence at a direct and honest narration, yet invariably includes background details and exposition needed by the reader for context. These are usually things that few personal diaries would record, simply because they would be so well known to the writer. All of which is to say, automatic narration is not unique in its requirement for a certain suspension of disbelief. On any question of mimesis in fiction we must allow a certain suspension of disbelief; the mere fact that thoughts and actions that had no obvious significance at the time they happened, but became important later, were selectively recorded and mechanically reproduced ensures that.[92] Or to use the words of American novelist Richard Yates: "All fiction is

[90] The last paragraph reads: "You get down on your knees and tear open the bag. The smell of warm dough envelops you. The first bite sticks in your throat and you almost gag. You will have to go slowly. You will have to learn everything all over again." (1984, p. 182)

[91] It strains this credibility even further when the story is told, say, through the consciousness of a five-year-old, such as in Emma Donoghue's *Room*, notwithstanding the immense power and artistry of that particular Man Booker Prize shortlisted novel.

[92] See "Hiding the craft of fiction: managing narrative voice and dialogue in the novel." M.Phil thesis by Anthony Davis (2010). Regarding the whole question of mimesis versus perceived mimesis, one could reflect on a reputed conversation between composers Richard Rodgers and

filled with technique. It's ridiculous to suggest one technique is any more realistic than any other." (Bradfield 1992, ¶11)

Schofield's second point that "The narrator and character may yet … be identical", which is to say the novel is merely disguised first person, also needs addressing. If this were true, a simple "search and replace" and a few other tweaks would turn it into a first person novel. However, this would rob it of other identified SPN properties, including the "lens" moving between distance and intimacy, the reader having a broader view than the character himself (particularly during periods of apparent psychosis) and ontological instability, including doubt about exactly who is the "you", who is the storyteller and, further, from which vantage point is the story being told. Is the narrator, for example, the older and wiser Kocan/Tarbutt? Or is the narrator the contemporaneous consciousness of the prisoner, or some other identity (such as, in parts, the voice of authority keeping Tarbutt in line). And does the "you" survive the ordeal? That is a question that rarely needs to be asked in a first person narrative.

The combination Kocan chose to tell his story – second person with present tense – has myriad effects. During the stream of consciousness sections we see Tarbutt as he apparently sees himself. As the second person "lens" moves further away, we have a clearer picture of Tarbutt as he is attempting to present himself to others. The present tense also gives the impression that the author (and his stand-ins, Tarbutt and, most importantly, "you") is not in control of the retelling, that the action presented to the reader is in no way modified by the narrator. In Kocan's duology, second person and present tense create a broader and more nuanced canvas than first person might in either past or present tense. That is why the same second person, present tense, combination was used in "The Flight".

Lionel Bart (reported in the Caroline and David Stafford biography of Bart, 2011) about one of Bart's songs in which a prostitute sings a lullaby to her sleeping lover:
Rodgers: "It works … but there are impure rhymes."
Bart: "That's because she's not a very good lyric writer."

Mimesis and further effects

The Wire and the Wall extract by Kocan (1977a) caused controversy and, in a defensive letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Kocan (1977b) argued that it did not sensationalise or glorify his "shameful act" but instead provided a "sober and truthful account" (p. 7). He referred to it as "a recently completed book about my 10-year experience in custody", a statement that affirms he set out to publish his incarceration experience as memoir/autobiography, at least at this stage. He also claimed the only remotely sensationalist aspect was the headline ("After I Shot Arthur Calwell"), and argued that this was chosen by the *Quadrant* editors without his consultation. For whatever reason, no more of that book was ever published, but we can perhaps be thankful it gave way to *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, two different works covering the same period.

The Treatment and *The Cure* combined volume begins with a conundrum. The indents page, which is unnumbered, declares: "All characters in this book are entirely fictitious, and no reference is intended to any living person." We know this to be a falsehood; indeed part of the book's appeal and authority is the fact that characters are *not* entirely fictitious and that the references *are* to living people. Most specifically, the main reference in this novel is to the then-highly controversial Kocan himself. Certainly, the work still needs to be read as something other than pure history, if only because the autobiographic chain is a long one, even when dealt with in simple prose narration. Describing her book *In My Skin – A Memoir*, Australian author Kate Holden (2011) perceptively wrote:

> There's the person, me, who had the experiences being described. There's the I who wrote it down at the time in a diary, or bears the story in my memory. Then there is the writer, the memoirist, who puts it on the page; her successor, the critical writer who looks at that page and shapes the text to be read by others. The book is published, then I become the author, who does interviews and talks. (p. 77)

We don't strictly know how closely *The Treatment* or *The Cure* follows actual events, irrespective of the author's intentions on the matter. It goes well into the protagonist's psyche, but we don't know if any notes were taken at the time, or if it is instead an imaginative retelling. Similarly, it relays conversations and incidents that almost certainly were not recorded contemporaneously in detail, if at all, and have likely been recreated years later. It is presented as fiction, with all the additional licence that gives the author. To cite Terry Eagleton (2002) on the matter: "One might define fiction as the kind of writing in which it is impossible to tell the truth and very hard to make a mistake. If authors insist that what they are assaying is actually true, we would take this as a fictional pronouncement." (¶3).

And yet it is still important that the events in these two books at least approximately mirror those in the author's life to help us more readily accept the difficult and confronting second person voice that is used within. For example, a questioning internal monologue begins, recalling Tarbutt's state of mind before the shooting of the politician (p. 31). We know it is the shooting of a politician although he never states it within his text (the writer's notoriety is difficult to suppress; almost every review of these two books, and indeed almost every mention of Kocan in the media makes reference to the Calwell assassination attempt, as do the short biographical details included with every edition of the books seen by this researcher). There is the famous assertion by Derrida (1976) that "there is nothing outside the text", and in this case it is certain that the things on the outside as well as the inside of the covers of Kocan's book guide our reading. Some readers will have read about the "Diestl obsession", for example, in *Fresh Fields* (2004), and perhaps will then go back and find these books that, chronologically, continue the action. Others (perhaps) will have been familiar with court transcripts, newspaper reports or later retrospective feature stories regarding Kocan's trial, before encountering the story in *The Treatment*. Readers bring with them stories of Kocan from a variety of sources – if only from the *About the Author* attached to the book (in the edition used for this research, it says

"At the age of nineteen, Kocan was given a life sentence for the attempted assassination of a Federal politician.")

Kocan's history is indeed important to the overall reading and it enables him in a sense to under-describe things we might need to know, simply because we are likely to be already aware of them. The most obvious example is the crime itself, which is constantly alluded to – something that would be immensely frustrating if we had no way of finding out exactly what it was. In under-reporting the story, the author reduces the clutter of back story, which might otherwise slow the story down and increase the repelling nature of the SPN by sheer weight of words.

Roland Barthes (1977b) notes the difficulties that can arise with the admiration of the author via the bylined text, a construct of the modern notion of the "prestige of the individual" (p. 143).[93] However it would be problematic to fairly assess a work such as *The Treatment* without looking for the greater story of the man behind it – as inscribed by the byline. With *The Treatment*, Kocan's personal suffering is important, because it is a story of transformation. Out of madness and ugliness has come something of worth, in real life as well as on the page. Even if an identical work could have been knocked out by a cynical hack or a software program, the reader reception would undoubtedly have been different. We bring with us a certain expectation, a certain awareness of the background. Kocan is building on history/his story and creating something bigger than either the novel or his own life. Although Kocan is telling only some of the story in these novellas; his authority would be weakened if we did not have an inkling of the things he does not say within the text, but we know to be true, ie that the story is rooted in fact: the author is a would-be assassin and spent years in an institution similar to the one described in the book, and lived closely with people like those described,

[93] Barthes (1977b) writes that: "The image of literature to be found in contemporary culture is tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his history, his tastes, his passions … the explanation of the work is always sought in the man who has produced it." (p. 143). He also suggests: "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing." (p. 147)

and that he has a very strong lived understanding of certain traits and consequences of mental illness.

Booth (1961/1983) cites three types of literary interest (and distance). The first and most relevant here is "(1) Intellectual or cognitive: We have, or can be made to have, strong intellectual curiosity about 'the facts,' the true interpretation, the true reasons, the true origins, the true motives, of the truth about life itself. … We always want to find out the facts of the case." (p. 125) In an entirely or largely fictional novel, it can sometimes be that there are few salient facts outside the text. However, with an autobiographical novel we are not fully suspending our disbelief, we are always liable to head to the web (or library, back in the day when the Kocan books appeared) to check the facts, either after or during the reading experience.

So does the book count as autobiography and does it matter? [94] Philippe Lejeune (1989) suggests that: "For an autobiographical pact to exist between reader and author, the name of the author on the front cover must match the name of the protagonist in the text." (p. 14) Obviously the protagonist in *The Treatment* is Len Tarbutt, obviously the disclaimer says "no reference is intended to any living person", yet it can be read as autobiography of a sort, without breaking the pretence that the reader, not Kocan, is the protagonist. In Meads's novella *Nobody* (2007b), the author's name is on the frontispiece but not within the text. The use of "you" enabled her to avoid any proper noun attached to the protagonist. Similarly, Alec MacGarry is the protagonist in *Alec: How to be an Artist* (2001), yet he is obviously Campbell's stand-in. The name Tarbutt provides no obvious connection with the name Peter Kocan, whereas Alec MacGarry might be more easily perceived to be Eddie Campbell (if only by dint of the obviously Scottish name; Kocan is a Slovak name inherited from a step-father). Yet it is hard not to read any of these texts as autobiography, and to suspect that the cloak of fiction

[94] Narratologist Phillipe Lejeune (1989) has defined autobiography as: "Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality." (p. 4)

may assist each of the authors in rendering a more truthful recitation of the experience and emotions concerned, than might be possible with a so-called factual retelling.

Meads (2007a) unambiguously explains her story is mined from her memory. Even if one had never heard Campbell say much the same thing in an interview or presentation (or the book's foreword), and he has, the evidence is all around. Kocan (1977) said *The Wire and the Wall* was a "sober and truthful account" (p. 7). Although he appeared more reticent to make such a comparison with real life concerning those books he described as novels, *The Treatment* and *The Cure* were obviously mined from the same raw material as *The Wire and the Wall*. Yet as second person, present tense fiction they may well give a much stronger suggestion of what it was actually like to be there at the time, in the midst of mental illness and fear of violence and "treatment". This is partly because Kocan's second person text allows us to feel some of this illness and oppression, namely to have it imposed upon us as the "you" of the novel, rather than merely explained to the reader by the "I".

Hazel Smith (2005) wrote that one of the virtues of the second person is that it "… can be used very effectively, on occasion, to imply a split subjectivity, so that one part of the self seems to be looking to see what the other half is doing, so that the self is both acting and acted upon…." (p. 92). This split subjectivity is expressed in various ways: the reader (the "you") seems to alternate between inhabiting the character and observing the character from a distance. The sensation of being both inside and out is shown in Kocan in many places, and it applies to both the reader and the character. An example of the former is shown in a long passage of internal dialogue in *The Treatment* ("You imagine what they might be saying", pp. 22-24), a second person stream of consciousness in which Tarbutt tries to explain to the guards why he ("you") is not insane. It is a Catch 22-style exchange in which every answer he gives is the wrong one. Although at times this dialogue is on one level comic, it displays obvious paranoia on Tarbutt's part, which readers see but he, apparently, doesn't.

In terms of the latter, Pacheco's "Tarde de agosto" ("August Afternoon")[95] begins with the line "You will never forget that August afternoon" (p. 65) and concludes with "you never forgot that August afternoon" (p. 71). In this story Kimberly Nance (1994) detects a "triplication of the self". This is "the protagonist (the adolescent of the events narrated who existed 'then'), a narratee 'you' (the 'you' who never forgot the afternoon and who exists 'now'), and an implied 'I' who can reinterpret one for the other." (¶13) The following extract from the English version of the story (Pacheco, 1987) shows this effect:

> You were afraid of falling and dying and failing in front of Julia, and losing face in front of her because the ranger was going to arrest you,
>
> wounded and arrested and defeated in front of Julia,
>
> nevertheless the ranger did not leave, and the squirrel teased you from just a half a yard away and scurried down and ran across the grass and disappeared into the jungle,
>
> while Julia cried, far from the ranger and the squirrel, but further still from you and impossible.
>
> …the end of your adventure and painful innocence. (p. 70)

In parts of Kocan we can find much the same homodiegetic, heterodiegetic and autodiegetic qualities captured in the one text. At one stage, when Tarbutt is cleaning the swimming pool, everything is going extremely well and "You think you should be happy … with the summer weather and the nice pressure of the vacuum pole against you and you being the pool man and the trusted one." (p. 102). At this point, nobody is giving "you" a hard time; "you" could keep things like this and it would get easier and easier. These ruminations on Tarbutt's good fortune (p. 103) end with: "Yes, you could have it easy if you play your cards right and a bit of luck is with you." So here, to line this passage up with Nance's trio, we have firstly the protagonist, ie, the young Tarbutt, enacting the story in

[95] An SPN written in Spanish and translated for an English edition in 1987. Discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

"real time" (ie, present tense). Secondly we have the narratee, the implied person telling the story, who could be an older Tarbutt or, if we accept the temporality implied by the present tense, a different and more observant aspect of the same character. Either way, from the reporting of such intimate things as the feel of the vacuum pole, we can conclude that in this scene there could be no other narrator but Tarbutt. The last sentence, with its sudden switch to the future conditional, changes the tone to a prescriptive one and seems to add a third voice to the mix: a harsh, judgemental, disembodied voice from above. This is potentially Nance's third category, the "implied 'I' who can reinterpret one for the other."

Kocan's ontological complexity reaches a highpoint in the second novel, *The Cure*, with sentences such as "You are like a bystander watching yourself with this girl" (p. 192). Kocan's writing displays more confidence and adventurousness, and there is an interesting tone emerging in the narration: "She thinks it's just her against the whole world. Of course, she's right." (p. 171) Again there is ambiguity about who this observation belongs to. On page 177 the narrative voice (rather than the reported dialogue) takes on the manner of the German doctor: "Zat is not so healthy, eh?". This is an example of free indirect discourse being applied to second person. Is this Tarbutt bending the narration (to paraphrase James Wood's 2008 description of free indirect discourse, p. 29) towards the character and her habits of speech, or towards Tarbutt's sarcasm? Or is the author or narrator expressing it like that? Or you, as protagonist? It is reasonable to assume that Kocan's growing literary experience is the reason for a more confident voice emerging in *The Cure*, not withstanding that Kocan has clearly decided to keep it in the same basic style and narrative mode as its predecessor. Kocan himself was working in amateur theatre around the time he wrote these books and some of the on-stage/off-stage techniques may well have crossed over. Indeed in 1981, between the publication of *The Treatment* and *The*

Cure, the Wyong Drama Group, of which Kocan was a member, presented *The Card Players* and *Who Do You Think You Are?*, a pair of one-act plays.[96]

Parts of this theatrical experience are shown, arguably, by the techniques in the books. When Tarbutt meets Julie, the line "You tell her what you did to get the Life sentence" (p. 187) provides a good example of the big events being "off stage". What Tarbutt did to get the Life sentence is not explained to the reader, perhaps at least partly playing with the notion that the reader should know the story (it is "your" story after all), but also keeping the reader in a much tighter, more internal SPN present tense world. By contrast, when another prisoner, Zurka, has his release blocked for political reasons (p. 87), Tarbutt takes tea and biscuits to console him. He selects "three nice biscuits from the tin. Scotch Fingers". In a chillingly restrained paragraph, Tarbutt attempts to deliver the tea and biscuits: "You can see he's dead. He's hanging very still by a strip of blanket tied to the top of the window. His tongue and eyes are bulging out. Nobody looks like that unless they're dead." (p. 88) This scene has all the more impact because Kocan has carefully excised most other violence (including the attempted assassination attempt) from the narrative, and also because of the slightly disorienting nature of second person.

If second person gives us split subjectivity, Kocan complicates it further. In what is undoubtedly primarily an SPN, he makes sporadic use of the collective pronoun, further confusing the exact position, status or identity of the narrator:

[96] According to a description on that group's website, both were one-act plays penned by Kocan and presented at Wyong on the 8th and 9th May 1981, directed by Bonnie Bryant. When entered in the Newcastle Drama Festival, Kocan won the Adjudicator's Special Award as author of both plays. In the Central Coast Eisteddfod (19 June 1981), *Who Do You Think You Are?* won first prize in the One Act Play category and *The Card Players* was second. The website described *The Card Players* as "an adult drama of inmates in a psychiatric ward who struggle to find their own humanity amid the squalor of their ruined lives. Peter Kocan (in a former life) spent a long time at Morisset Psychiatric Hospital from the late 60s to the late 70s." The unnamed author of this summary fills in some biographical details, and said Kocan had written many plays, and was a "solid actor" for the group in dozens of plays from the late 1970s to the late 1990s. However, he had not licensed further performances of *The Card Players* "probably because it is emotionally a little too close to home for him. This is unfortunate as it is a real cracker of a piece with the potential to win any drama festival it is entered into." (www.wyongdramagroup.com.au/who_do_card.htm, n.d., retrieved 29/4/2012)

"The grey-haired man leads us…" (p. 5); "We all lie on the grass around the urn … we stay drinking tea." (p. 19); "At ten o'clock we are herded upstairs." (p. 116); and, perhaps most perplexing of all, "Julie leads you over and introduces you to one or two, then we sit at the end of their row… we are relaxed enough to touch like this … Afterwards we stand in the shadows outside your ward" (p. 191). Who is the "we" and, even more intriguingly, the "your" in this last sentence? The confusion could be because Tarbutt is at this stage of the story in love, or mad, or potentially something else again.[97] Although the phrases are strange and seemingly illogical, it is reasonable to consider that such jarring changes – and the confusion they cause – are deliberate. Perhaps something is being revealed to the character that he does not know "at least at the level of language" (Butor via Morrissette 1965, p.16).

When the inmates are fixing broken children's toys, a man from the children's charity comes to thank them (p. 67). This Mr Fleming is obviously terrified, holding a framed certificate of thanks "out in the empty air while seven silent madmen stare at him. The screws are enjoying it too." (p. 68) The last sentence is amusing and interesting, as it seems to show a feeling of inclusion in a larger group, one beyond the "we" referenced earlier. The narrative voice declares "…what a decent bunch of chaps we are" (p. 69). The scene also demonstrates a use of humour by Kocan the writer, and by the prisoners. As Heseltine (1988) opines, the "only defence against complete desensitisation available to most of the inmates is the exercise of their own covert, subversive brand of humour" (p. 60). As we have seen earlier, humour can also mitigate the oppressive nature of second person narrative.

On page 90 Kocan presents more rumination centred around "us". "We're thinking what a bastard Ray Hoad is, making it bad for us, even though we're

[97] With lines such as "David Allison is with you. He's always with you, it's just that you forget sometimes." (163), one could speculate that Tarbutt and this extra character who is "always with you" makes up the "we" that Kocan continues to use sporadically. However, the collective pronoun appeared long before this obsession became apparent. It could have been the Diestl character on earlier occasions, but a careful reading suggests this is unlikely.

very excited and want him to get away." We have duality of voice as well as thought. After this, there is a return to the strict "you" narration for a time. But if that split or multiple subjectivity can be achieved by the second person singular alone, and Kocan certainly achieves this, why extend it to the plural first person? Perhaps we find the answer in Richardson (2006), who says second person is an effective way of "revealing a mind in flux" (p. 35). Second person helps, he says, dramatise the mental battles of an individual battling the internalized discourse of an oppressive authority (p. 35). Butor too breaks up his narrative with other pronouns, in his case "je" and "moi"; Morrissette (1965) does not consider such lapses or variances as mistakes. He says they are:

> directly related to the author's conception of the function of narrative *vous* … They permit us to arrive at a consistent, logical answer to the question *"Qui parle dans La Modification?"* … that the explanation of Butor's narrative *vous* as the voice of the protagonist addressing himself in an interior monologue (as would seem to be the case in Stout's novel) is in error. In fact, the first of the passages in question actually attributes first-person pronouns to the inner voice of the protagonist … And the paragraph which follows immediately has the sound of a reply to this voice… (p. 14)

In Kocan, too, periodically slipping in pronouns other than "you" is less likely a lapse than a deliberate choice to add further nuance to the disrupting and unsettling nature of second person. To this reader, it gives the sense Tarbutt at times feels part of the group, while at different times he is a loner among the hostile "other". A similar conclusion was reached by Bryson (2009) who also says Kocan's slightly odd switching to the first person plural voice "seems to approximate the mental life of his protagonist… This gives the impression of more than one subject being involved in the narrative at a time, when readers are expecting only one" (p. 256). Such changes of pronoun can achieve varied effects. When comical, cruel banter is directed by some inmates at Dave Lamming, who has been given regular electrical shocks. Tarbutt does not join in, but soon: "…we

see Dave waving his hands and talking. We feel the joke's gone too far." (p. 37). There are other ways one might write it to include the group censoriousness, while avoiding the "we": for example, "you all see Dave … the group feels the joke's gone too far". Arguably this second approach has less warmth and inclusiveness than the way Kocan has written it. Perhaps again it is the split perspective of the disturbed protagonist, as suggested by Bryson, perhaps the reason is one of technique: the writer is pulling back for fear the reader wouldn't tolerate carrying the "you" that far. When Tarbutt is moved to an open ward in *The Cure*, the narrative voice initially includes little of the collegiate "we"; the "retards" are certainly "them". Soon, however, the collective pronouns seep back in: "…a file of screws and nurses wants to grab the worst of us and shove us … after the evening meal we go…" (p. 170), and later: "You think how grotesque we must look!" (p. 213). Whatever the reason for these shifting pronouns, we have to assume it is deliberate. Kocan is too exact a writer for it to be accidental. To again quote Terry Eagleton (2002): "Novels come complete with a number of invisible instructions, one of which reads: 'Take everything here as intentional.'" (¶3)

The shifting pronoun can also further round out a portrait for narrative purposes. It allows the reader to step out even further than pure second person may allow, and take a different view, if only (in Kocan's case) for brief moments. The novel *Soul Mountain* (1990 in Chinese, 2000 in English) by 2000 Nobel Prize for Literature recipient Gao Xingjian begins in the second person: "The old bus is a city reject. After shaking in it for twelve hours on the potholed highway since early morning, you arrive in this mountain county town in the South." (p. 9) The narrative then moves through first and third person (as well as continuing with intermittent use of second). Mabel Lee (2000) suggests a reason for these switches in the foreword to her translation of the book: "A rigorous and critical analysis of the self of one man is achieved by dissecting the authorial self into the singular pronouns, 'I', 'you', 'she' and 'he', who together constitute the composite protagonist." (p. 9)

Worth noting is that Kocan writes simply, Gao Xingjian does not (though in the latter case, this is a more removed impression, as the Anglophone reader is

jumping languages and cultures). Overt literariness has the ability to separate readers from the emotional centre of the story, particularly if it is laid on top of another "difficult" aspect, such as second person. That is potentially the reason for Calvino's highly playful approach in *If on a winter's night a traveller*: to endear and smooth the way for acceptance of the otherwise difficult book. Kocan's book too, as we have seen, has humour to lighten the load – and that humour comes with its own internal complexities. When the inmates play cricket (p. 38), there is a page of amusing dialogue with no use of the narrator's "you" or "we" or "our." It is almost conventional third person until the end of the chapter, a respite from the claustrophobia of second person (perhaps fittingly, as it describes lighter, more enjoyable moments). The character Clarrie is bowled out and another person explains with a straight face that it was because the bat was made of English willow instead of the normal material, cement (p. 40). The chapter ends with the information that Clarrie "doesn't feel so bad now because everyone knows it's the bat's fault" (p. 40). Whose glib observation is this final sentence? It might be Kocan's or Tarbutt's, or Clarrie's, or yours. No other narrative mode gives so many possibilities.

DelConte champions Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) for using second person "to emphasize an existence dictated from the outside" (p. 205), a point that could be made even more forcefully perhaps with Kocan's *The Treatment* and *The Cure* (which DelConte does not consider in his research). Despite Schofield's dismissal of *Bright Lights, Big City*, DelConte points out that it and some other works would lose their principal rhetorical effects if they had instead been written in either first person or third person narration (p. 206). This is true of Kocan's work. The SPN seems particularly suited to the incarceration narrative. Peter Doyle (2012) has speculated that reasons for this include the second person's register of command, instruction, compulsion, and dictation. It is the judicial voice: "you will be taken from this place… etc" (Doyle, P., personal

communication, October 6, 2012).[98] It is hard to disagree; it is the voice where apparent control is taken away from the reader, where the reader is being apparently led along, restricted in his or her movements and actions. It is noteworthy that Morrissette (1965) argued when writing about Michel Butor's novel *La Modification* that for many the "narrative *vous* holds a strong implication of judgment, of moral or didactic address" (p. 16).

In a June 2012 paper published in *Antipodes – A North American journal of Australian and New Zealand literature*, Jean-Francois Vernay provided a postcolonial reading of *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, arguing that "these two second-person semi-fictions can also be interpreted as a national allegory of Australian penal settlement, which explicates the ruler-ruled relationship through the establishment of a panoptic repressive system" (p. 62). Vernay's paper was not concerned with specifics of the narrative voice but concentrated heavily on the paternalistic overseeing that occurs in what he called "total institution" life (p. 61). He correlates this to colonisation, saying "one of the most powerful strategies of imperial dominance is that of surveillance, or observation" (p. 63). He also draws the parallel with the Panopticon, a type of prison proposed in the late 18th century and designed so the prisoner can be viewed at any time, without the prisoner ever knowing whether or not such surveillance is taking place. The Panopticon was described by Foucault (1977) as a "machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (p. 202). Foucault argued it was an important mechanism for automatising and disindividualising power. Vernay sees in Kocan's novellas "…mute tyranny under which life is ritualized, well organized and closely controlled, forcing inmates into becoming overcautious and extremely regimented" (p. 64). He writes:

[98] Doyle himself used second person in certain passages of his book *Crooks Like Us* (2009), amplifying the role of authority and the confused state of the arrested and the drug-addled. An example: "The copper thinks you're shaking your head just to spoil his photograph, and he's getting cross with you. But the truth is you couldn't keep still even if you wanted to. You had your last sniff over ten hours ago, and now you're halfway to the horrors." (p. 12)

> In a Foucauldian sense, it is not the certainty of being spied upon that impacts on human behavior, but rather the uncertainty of whether one is or is not being watched that forces the prisoner into steady discipline. Illustrating Foucault's theory in *Discipline and Punish*, the inmates [in Kocan's books] are disempowered and thereby reassure their masters of their harmlessness." (p. 63)

Although Vernay doesn't examine the second person voice, it would seem that it is a perfect match for the disempowerment he observes within the novellas. Vernay describes both novellas as being, deep down, "stories of anxiety-provoking confinement and hopeless entrapment" (p. 64). Certainly with the "you" voice there is a sensation someone is not only watching you, but describing everything you do. The one who says "you" is there at all times, observing each intimate moment and commenting on it, often unfavourably. The still-incarcerated Kocan told journalist-turned-author Robert Drewe (1976):

> They're pretty much encouraging to my writing at Morriset but it's funny – any sign of eccentric behaviour is frowned on in a place like this … It's very hard to work out the lines and stanzas in your head. If they see your lips moving it makes them very nervous. It can have unpleasant results for the person concerned. It has been quite a problem for me. (p. 67)

When Tarbutt, likewise, is careful to make sure others don't see his lips move, the panopticon is doing its work. Foucault (1977) made clear that in designing the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham believed power should be visible and unverifiable: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power… he becomes the principle of his own subjection." (pp. 202-203) Tarbutt was indeed modifying his behaviour throughout in the belief he is being watched, as indeed "you" are being watched in Kocan's text. The threat of punishment seems as powerful as the punishment itself. For example, the concept of electric shock therapy, as an alternative to beatings, is introduced early in *The Treatment*, (p. 8). It becomes obvious that this

"treatment" that most likely gives the book its name is even more frightening than violence, because it is not "wrong", and can be ordered in plain sight without any official ever being called to account; it is "to help you", after all (p. 9). The second person and the self-subjection alluded to by Bentham seem to go hand in hand. Even by the end of the duology, following more tragedy – a fellow inmate has recently killed himself – Tarbutt concludes: "No, you can't hate this place." (p. 245)

Kocan's related works

Kocan had expressed an admiration for the work of novelists as early as the 1976 Robert Drewe interview.[99] Four years later he published *The Treatment*, three years after that, *The Cure*. Kocan followed with *Flies of a Summer* (1988), in which humans are enslaved by "the Margai", then the highly acclaimed *Fresh Fields* (published 2004; winner of the FAW Christina Stead award, short-listed for both the NSW and Queensland Premier's Literary Awards and named a "Book of the Year" by the *Times Literary Supplement*).

Fresh Fields is a prequel of sorts to the duology, though published more than two decades later. It tells the story of a troubled young man ("the youth") who is fleeing a violent home, along with his mother and younger brother. As the unnamed young man's fear, frustration and inability to fit in with those around him turns to apparent madness, he identifies with a movie character, a stranded German soldier who finds himself alone "limping like a wolf or an outlaw along the roads of a ruined and hostile world" (p. 16). The youth moves through several farm and factory jobs and changes lodgings; eventually he hears voices, buys a gun and plans "a certain dark thing" (p. 287). The novel is written in a very

[99] Kocan stated to Drewe (1976) he considered himself not a poet but "a writer of verse." In the same interview, he had announced his interest in long form prose:

> "[Poetry] is open to self-indulgence and charlatanism. A poet can't be defrocked or debarred, there's no mechanism to measure its value. Anyone can daub three or four lines on paper and call himself a poet. To write a novel, though, you have to work for several months at least. You have to be serious about it; the sheer expenditure of energy tends to cut out the charlatans and mediocrities. I really respect novelists. They fuse a combination of the ability to labor [sic] and the ability to retain a spark of poetry." (p. 67)

different style to the earlier novels, the most notable differences being a more mature and lyrical style, and the use of close (or subjective) third person, past tense narration. As early as page fifteen the reader finds mention of the Diestl character, who appears to loom large in the overall story but is mentioned only obtusely in *The Treatment* (eg, in the comments about hair colour, p. 6). In *Fresh Fields* Diestl is announced as "a character in a war movie he'd seen. … Diestl knows very well that the war is hopeless, but he will never surrender. It isn't Nazi beliefs that keep him going. He has no beliefs anymore. … Diestl has had every feeling burnt out of him except for a sort of grim pride that will make him determined and dangerous until the moment he goes down." (p. 15-16) So in *Fresh Fields*, the protagonist has the same trait as in *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, in that he becomes absorbed in a stand-in character (it is David Allison in the latter). *Fresh Fields* concludes with the build-up but not the execution of the final act (p. 287). Although it is never spelled out that it is an attempted political assassination, the writer's story is too well known for us not to realise it; indeed with the edition cited here, Kocan's crime is noted in the author biography on the rear inside flap.

If *Fresh Fields* was the prequel to *The Treatment* and *The Cure*, then Kocan's 2010 novel *The Fable of All Our Lives* was the sequel. It again uses the techniques of fiction to tell the story (these include fictitious names, taut and purposeful dialogue and, most likely, invented incidents and blended characters). Released from a mental institution after ten years with a grant to write poetry, the 30-year-old protagonist of this novel – named simply as "Tait" – moves to Bidgerie, a fictitious town similar to many on NSW's Central Coast (Kocan himself lived on the shores of Tuggerah Lake after his release).[100] He struggles to fit in, but eventually finds a place in the local theatre group and becomes involved in a love affair, albeit a complex and unsatisfying one. Faced with what he sees as a "Regime" set to take "ever more draconian action in law and order" (p. 471), Tait

[100] In *The Fable of All Our Lives* there are many cross-overs with the duology, though names have been changed again. Tait writes a prose book *Ground Leave* about his time in institutions. He alludes to the press reaction to his poetry success: "Maniac Wins Prize." (p. 6).

drifts into support for an alternative political party (Beth Hendon's Nation First Party, a thinly veiled Pauline Hanson's One Nation), taking on its cause with huge enthusiasm. By the end of it, Tait sounds like the political fanatic the young Kocan was erroneously taken to be when, back in June 1966, the news came through that a Labor politician had been shot.

Although the protagonist has a different name, circumstances make *The Fable of All Our Lives* a natural third instalment of Kocan's story: pre-incarceration, incarceration, post-incarceration. At 577 pages, it is greater in extent than the three previous "autobiographical" novels combined. As with *Fresh Fields* (itself more extensive than the combined duology) the voice is third person, past tense. Perhaps because *Fresh Fields* and *The Fable of All Our Lives* are both much larger works, it would have been too restricting to use second person. Perhaps too, it was because in these two novels the character was on the other side of the prison walls, not controlled – directly, at least – by "The Apparatus". The restrictive, claustrophobic power of second person was, perhaps, no longer needed.

Conclusion

Sam Tanenhaus (2009), in a review of the novel *How It Ended* by Jay McInerney, returned to the subject of McInerney's earlier *Bright Lights, Big City*. He wrote that the second person mode particularly suited the narcissism of the main character. The book's voice succeeded:

> …through the inspiration of the present-tense, second-person voice, the vehicle of false insinuating intimacy twinned with coolly ironic deflation. "You have this desire to prove that you can have as good a time as anyone, that you can be one of the crowd," the narrator intones in weary condescension, like a therapist bored by his patient. "You will learn to compound happiness out of small increments of mindless pleasure." What seems a coming-of-age story becomes instead a case study of acute narcissism, the universal condition of young male literary aspirants. The

> second-person narration flowed so easily because McInerney was lampooning all those other self-conscious, self-absorbed young novelists whose every "he" was really an "I". (¶11)

Hantzis (1988) writes of another way in which *Bright Lights, Big City* exploits the second person pronoun: it creates 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 natures of subjectivity in the text." (p. 128) If these are reasons why the second person works with McInerney – and all of the above seem entirely plausible – then what are the special attributes the mode brings to Kocan's work? His text certainly doesn't provide a reinforcement of narcissism, indeed his self-esteem would seem to be low (particularly early in the story), nor is the text obviously setting out to lampoon others or present bored, detached irony. It does present a mind blurred, though mainly by illness not drugs. However, the second person is a versatile mode and is used by Kocan to achieve much else. Richardson (2006) did not cite – nor was perhaps aware of – the Kocan books but argued germanely to the situation in *The Treatment* and *The Cure* that second person can help dramatise the mental battles of an individual "struggling against the internalized discourse of an oppressive authority" (p. 35). Fisher (2008) has written that second person works well in "developing a sense of alienation and separation, a sense of being watched and observed…" (p. 9). He says that the reader and narrator are seeing through the same "untrusting and somewhat bewildered eyes" (pp. 8-9), heightening the sense of alienation and fear. He concludes that in *The Treatment* and in Jacksons's *No End to the Way*:

> … the sustained second person narrative voice provides both distance and intimacy, connecting the reader with the narrator through the constant use of "you", but repelling as well since the reader is asked to accept confronting narrative aspects as if they were the reader's own experience through the implicit complicity in "you" being both the reader and the narrator. (p. 10)

Booth (1961/1983) comments that in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*, the narration tends to "move irregularly in and out of characters' minds, with corrective or supporting commentary freely provided by the reliable, privileged narrator" (p. 191). Many other fine books, including Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road* (1961), which was written in third person, exploit such shifting in a highly effective manner. In the case of *Revolutionary Road*, it often serves to provide relief from the bleakness of the characters or situations. Second person, present tense restricts a writer from "bouncing" in this manner, but that is a limitation that can be itself exploited. Kocan doesn't necessarily want to provide much relief from the restrictive world his character inhabits; he wants "you" to feel the constraints of institutional life, and the pain of mental illness. He wants "you" to feel the need to escape the "you".

Nonetheless, it has been demonstrated that there are further factors at work to make sure this claustrophobia doesn't overwhelm the reader of the duology. There is humour. There is brevity (the work is short, even if you count the two books together), there is dialogue, there are sections of almost conventional stream of consciousness where the "you" comes close to disappearing. Throughout, the distance and intimacy is powerfully managed to also provide the reader at least some relief from being told what to do. If *La Modification* influenced the setting of "The Flight", Kocan's duology most strongly influenced the technique, including the brevity, the humour and claustrophobia. Schofield (1998b) argues *The Treatment* (as well as *Bright Lights, Big City* and some other so-called SPN works) are not true second person, and contrasts these novels unfavourably with two obscure short stories:

> The engaged reader of Gibson's "Leaving" (1978) and Donald Barthelme's "Moon Deluxe" (1983), on the other hand, will engage in a liberating experience of multiple subjectivity in which he or she is subject to no controlling authority and to no dominating, singular identity – the engaged reader is drawn into the point of view as a participant in the experience of others, in the experience of difference: is alternately

> character, narrator, diegetic narratee, even him or herself directly addressed, but never any of these absolutely. (p. 160)

By way of rebuttal, it has been demonstrated how varied the definitions of second person are and none can satisfactorily cover every example of the form. Equally it has been shown that the reader of Kocan is experiencing split (and arguably multiple) subjectivity. A simple substitution of "I" or "he" in Kocan's work would make for a different – and less rich – reading experience. If this multiple subjectivity is less extreme than in the much shorter works cited by Schofield, it is hardly important; the extent of this multiple subjectivity is well matched to the subject matter, and the potentially more conservative approach doesn't deny the work many of the distinct SPN properties, including ontological instability. The SPN's ontological dance (or "constant ontological flux" to use a phrase from Meads 2007a, p. 21), is something Kocan manages very powerfully, particularly in the sections where Len Tarbutt's mind is working its way through the real and imagined dangers. We are inside his head but also definitely outside as well, observing him, and in possession of a bigger picture, or at least a broader awareness of circumstances than the author grants the character, while all the time moving forward and back in terms of identification with the character. In Kocan we have the multiple subjectivity of the SPN noted by Hantzis (1988, p. 33) and others; in parts (particularly where the character looks at his past) we have something akin to the "triplication of the self" cited by Nance (1994, ¶13).

Although second person is hardly the only way of allowing the reader to view a character from within and without, in Kocan's hands it works succinctly and seamlessly (compared with, say, Carey's *Just Us*) and allows for the creation of a very rounded portrait of both what is happening inside Len Tarbutt's head and how he might be seen by others. It also creates a potential picture – or challenge to consider – of how you, the reader, might behave if put in exactly the same circumstances. For this last point, the autobiographic element is very important. One suspects the exotic world Jay McInerney took his readers to in *Bright Lights, Big City* really was his world, that the drugs he was detailing and their effects

were being reported directly from experience, and that the people we were meeting on the page were people the author really knew. In the same vein, Neville Jackson's *No End to the Way* reads like the almost diary-like authentic memoir of a gay character who is an outsider because of public opinion in Perth of the 1960s, and under stress because of the dangers surrounding him (arrest, robbery, humiliation and ostracism).

We are more likely to tolerate a writer putting us in their shoes via the potentially repelling medium of second person, if we know they really are their shoes. If a person really has been through difficulties well outside our experience, if they have been to the depths and lived to tell the tale, we are more likely to let them take us there as well, partly mitigating the repelling and excluding nature of second person, and the audacity of the author dropping us into his or her shoes. After all, Kocan, McInerney and Jackson carry with them the authority from the start; they in a sense don't need to earn it. As with McInerney's novel, Kocan's two books engage the reader, and keep the reader engaged throughout the story, partly because the reader brings with them at least some of the background; it is Kocan's own life (if known only via the short summary on the dust-jacket) that gives him permission to tell Len Tarbutt's story in such an intimate and confronting way. The story is similar with Kandelaars' *Memoirs of a suburban girl: A Novel* (2011). This notion is supported by the back cover quote, in which Peter Bishop from Varuna Writers' House says the author "takes the reader safely into a place where she herself was never safe".

Kocan's text is more arresting and immediate as a direct result of the choice of second person, present tense, and achieves effects unavailable with strict first or third person narration. The claustrophobic nature of the SPN intensifies the feeling of incarceration, and the restricted agency that comes with being locked up and closely observed. Second person is unsettling, a perfect accompaniment to being taken inside strange and potentially dangerous places (the various wards of the mental institution). It enhances the feeling of alienation and disconnectedness from "your" surroundings.

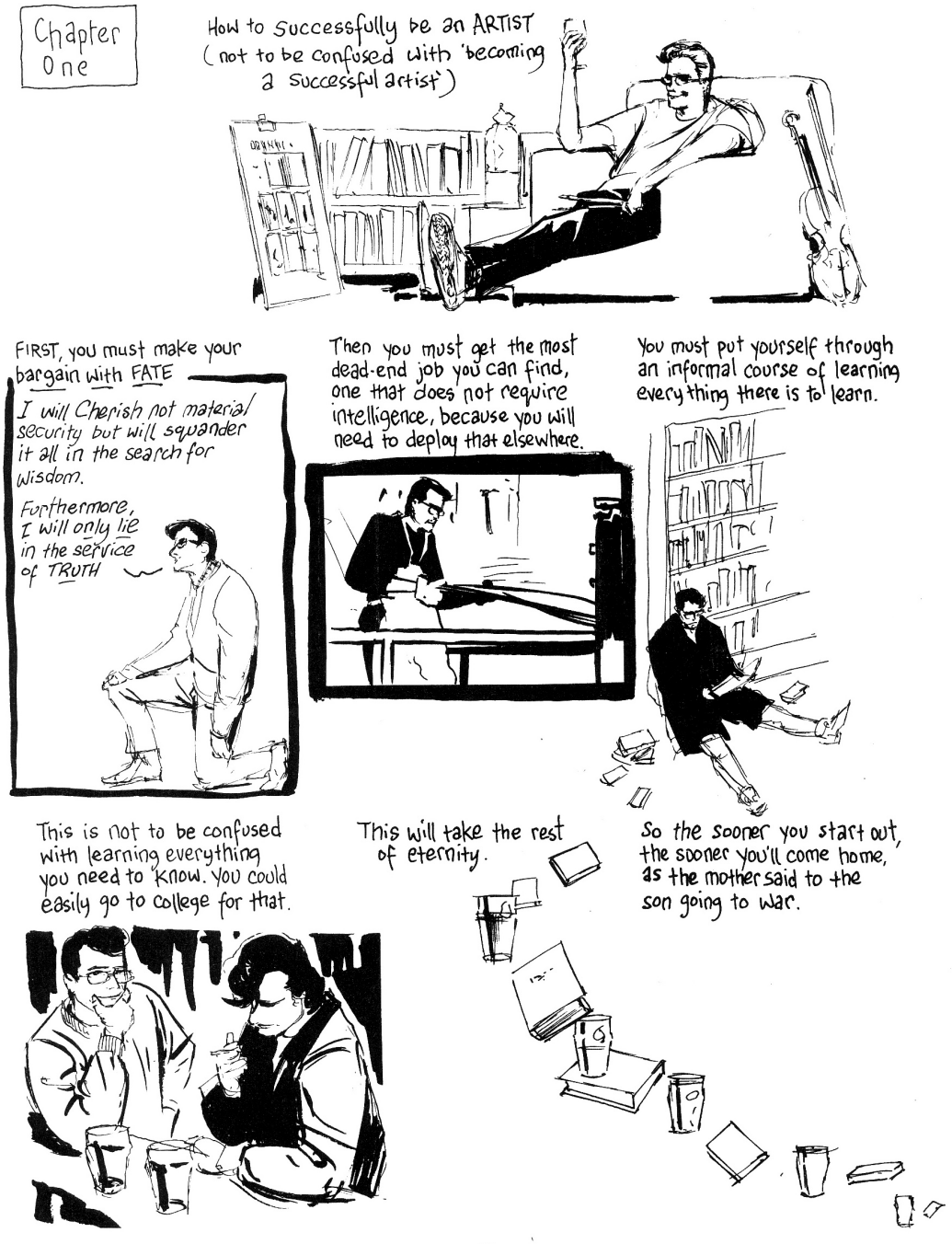
Second person novels such as *The Treatment* or *The Cure* could be seen as artefacts of their time, one of great literary experimentation. However, in Kocan's case the use of this unusual mode went well beyond a gimmick or experiment. Part of the proof is that he tried a different approach (*The Wire and the Wall*, in first person, past tense) and abandoned it for a narrative technique that he believed offered more. The use of sustained second person is not a viable approach for every work of fiction, but for Kocan it proves an ideal way to tell a short, intense story about a lone and frightened man dealing with extreme mental problems and the threat of violence and debilitating medical "cures" as he slowly finds his place in the world through the practice of art. Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*, covered in the next chapter, is also an SPN text dealing with the challenge of finding a place in the world through the practice of art, but the similarities end there.

Chapter seven:
On Eddie Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*

Eddie Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist* is a sustained second person graphic novel/comic book set in Europe and Australia from the early 1980s through to the late 1990s. It is written primarily in the future and future perfect tenses. It intertwines autobiography and memoir with a highly subjective and idiosyncratic history of the graphic novel. Like the Kocan duology, it describes an artist's journey in innovative ways. This chapter will argue that even more dramatically than Kocan's *The Treatment* and *The Cure,* Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist* subverts what structuralist Gérard Genette (1980) calls the most fundamental rule of novel writing: that the author must decide to narrate from inside the story via one of the characters (a homodiegetic narration), or from outside (heterodiegetically) (p. 244). It does this through a variety of techniques, most notably the use of sustained second person narration. It will be argued that within the textual component of his innovative work, Eddie Campbell in an array of forms (author, implied author, commentator and character), is inside and outside this story. He is at times narrator, protagonist and narratee, and at others appears to be a removed (and somewhat bemused) observer, or a powerless puppet of fate. At various points the reader is observer, protagonist or narratee, or a combination thereof, thanks to the shape-shifting and unsettling nature of the second person mode.

This chapter aims to show how, using second person narrative and pictures, Campbell draws "you" in to the story – both figuratively and literally. His SPN technique is intensified by the way he combines unattributed narration, dialogue and illustrative interplay to engage the reader in unusual and unsettling ways, providing Morrissette's "complex series of perspectives" (1965, p. 2), while the

use of future tense increases tension by adding an ominous and portentous tone (albeit, at times, a slightly mock portentousness), and also adds an extra temporal complexity. It is not the aim of this chapter to line the narrative voice in Campbell's work against all the conflicting definitions of second person (as outlined in Chapter four), nor is it the intention to closely examine the equally



fascinating pictorial side of this graphic novel. The major aim is to look at the way the sustained SPN has been managed within the text in light of the overarching research questions of this project: What are the literary effects that can be generated in this mode that are unique to the form?; What are the restrictions, and how have authors attempted to overcome them?; What are the lessons that can be used for the creative component of this thesis?

About Eddie Campbell

Eddie Campbell is a Queensland-based writer and illustrator who has won multiple awards for his comics/graphic novels.[101] Born in 1955 in Glasgow, he began self-publishing his own work as part of London's "small press scene" in the early 1980s. His story is much as described through the prism of the semi-autobiographical Alec MacGarry protagonist in *Alec: How to be an Artist.* Critical success arrived early, commercial success was more elusive but eventually came as the illustrator of *From Hell* (written by Alan Moore and the basis of a Hollywood movie). Campbell and the coterie of artists with whom he mingled during the days of that "small press" scene – including Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman and Glenn Dakin – have been widely cited as influential forces in shaping the modern "graphic novel". Campbell's publisher as of 2014, Top Shelf Productions, summarises his career like this:

> Eddie Campbell is best known for his collaboration with Alan Moore on the epic graphic novel *From Hell*. He's also known for creating the irreverent and wine-soaked series *Bacchus*, which revives the Greek gods in a sprawling, unpredictable, and enormously entertaining thousand-page epic; and the award-winning autobiographical series *Alec*, which has earned him the reputation as one of the great raconteurs in the medium of comics. His other collaborations include *The Birth Caul* and *Snakes & Ladders* (also with Alan Moore), two moving and personal poems adapted into the comics form, and *The Playwright* (with Daren White), a dark

[101] The author biography with Campbell's *The Fate of the Artist* (2006) says: "…his work has earned nearly every honour in the field, including the Eisner, Ignatz, and Harvey awards."

> comedy about the sex life of a celibate middle-aged man. Married and a father of three, Eddie writes and draws from his home in a quiet suburb of Queensland, Australia. (Topshelf, n.d.)

The novel being considered here is part of a long series of semi-autobiographical Alec stories stretching back to 1981. Campbell originally published the material that would become *Alec: How to be an Artist* in serial form between 1997 and 2000 (in *Dee Vee* and *The Staros Report 1997*), then brought it together in expanded and partly revised form as the single volume considered here in March 2001. Some minor revisions were made for its inclusion in the compendium that collects most of the "Alec" stories, *Alec "The Years Have Pants" [A Life-sized Omnibus]*, and a new final chapter to *Alec: How to be an Artist* was added. However, it is the 2001 stand-alone volume being addressed in this thesis and all page references concerning the book refer to that edition.

Narration on the edge

Alec: How to be an Artist (to be referred to hereon as *HTBAA*) uses words and drawings to braid two narratives: Alec MacGarry's development as an artist (and the personal circumstances in which it happens, first in the UK and then in Australia), and the development of the graphic novel itself. Throughout its fourteen chapters are interludes on the history of art and humour, and allusions to the way chaos theory permeates everyday life in matters big and small.[102] At one stage extensive quotes are offered from R.G. Collingwood about the artist's life from *Speculum Mentis*, *or The Map of Knowledge*[103] from 1924 (p. 106). The

[102] The chaos reference on one level relates to Alan Moore's ambitious *Big Numbers* book, which was never completed, as explained by Campbell to Leonard Pierce (2009):

> Life is all pattern. In fact, one of the major themes in *How To Be An Artist* is chaos theory, with Alan Moore pictured rearranging the broken tiles and fragments of his fireplace. Alan was doing the *Big Numbers* book, which encompassed ideas about chaos theory. He never finished the book, for a bunch of unbelievable reasons, and I've rather cheekily told the story of that debacle while using his own grand metaphor.

[103] Campbell (to Wivel, 2011) has explained this slightly odd interpolation: "When I knew I was going to end with the *Big Numbers* fiasco [*Big Numbers* was Alan Moore's never completed opus], and I knew from the start, I started working in allusions to chaos theory, and then I stumbled upon that great paragraph from R.G. Collingwood *'The same instability which affects the*

selected text is about how schools of art burst out and achieve a time of perfection then fall apart: "the equilibrium of the aesthetic life is permanently unstable." So too is the text of *HTBAA*; towards the end any traditional narrative arc is largely lost, perhaps because that's how real life tends to progress (a theme of Campbell's).[104] And then, as if to bring us back to the start, a young boy is shown on the final page (p. 127) venting his disappointment that it hasn't been a standard "how to" text book. "Bugger all that hocus pocus!" he says, "Just tell me what brush to use".

HTBAA is described on the back cover as a "graphic novel", a controversial term usually applied to comic books aimed at adults, and implying a more literary approach. The term goes back at least as far as the 1978 comic collection entitled *A Contract with God and other Tenement Stories – a Graphic Novel* by Will Eisner and, arguably, reached the mainstream in the late 1980s when Art Spiegelman's holocaust story *Maus* began to be gathered in book form. In 1992 the complete *Maus* became the first comic/graphic novel to win the Pulitzer Prize. The "graphic novel" label is used loosely and, within the text of *Alec: How to be an Artist*, it is suggested that the label is often applied in an attempt to give gravitas to slight works (particularly in the wake of *Maus*). Campbell's text even suggests the term "graphic novel" has been "hijacked by the moneyspiders and the bullshitters … so that we'd just as soon go back to calling the real McCoy just 'comics'." (p. 76) Campbell's graphic novel, or comic, traces a career that mirrors the author's own: he starts working in a sheet metal factory while producing short runs of photocopied comics as part of the "small press movement", and eventually ends up as one of an exclusive coterie of internationally renown graphic novelists, with acclaimed books, and invitations to speak at conventions around the world. Reviews were generally positive, with Andrew D. Arnold (2001) writing in *Time*:

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life of the individual artist reappears in the history of art taken as a whole…' He glimpsed the fractal idea way back in 1924. I had to put the whole quote in there." (¶12).

[104] Campbell has said (to Wivel, 2011): "What attracted me to real life events in the first place was that they always happened in ways that didn't fit my preconceived notions of narrative logic" (¶16). That is perhaps why *HTBAA*'s plotting is ramshackle and fails to build and round itself off in the expected way in the final chapters. Life doesn't always have a three-act story line.

> Campbell dives into and returns from extended caveats on subjects like the history of the industry during the '80s 'boom-years,' the difference between craft and art, and the challenges of remaining an Artist in such an historically disposable medium. Thus it bounces from essay, to history, to criticism, to autobiography in a way I haven't seen comix try before… (¶4)

Rob Vollmar (2001), at Comic Book Galaxy, praised the book and called Campbell "one of the most literate and sophisticated comics creators alive today" (¶1). There are many striking things about *Alec: How to be an Artist*, not least the apparent frankness of its portrayals of the trials, tribulations, failings and vanities of "Alec MacGarry". It adeptly mixes incidents large and trivial to create a sense of realism and enhance the impression of authorial honesty, notwithstanding the assertion by Chatman (1978) that "pure mimesis is an illusion" (p. 147), or the more brutal rendition of a similar theme by Carl Wilson (2007): "All art is fake. What matters is to be a convincing fake, a lie that feels true" (p. 123). Campbell's lies feel true; the author himself has explained to Wivel (2011) the process thus:

> In the contract of fiction a storyteller says "let's make believe" to his audience. Let's make believe there's a person named Alec MacGarry. If the outline of this character's life largely resembles my own, that's interesting, but it doesn't mean we're no longer "making believe." And just to remind you where we are, let's make believe he makes a bargain with the deity Fate, who allows him three wishes. The *"I will only lie in the service of truth"* is just a variant on "Every word I tell you will be true. It happened long ago…" It's just opening the door. (¶4)

From the point of view of this research, however, of most interest is not the book's veracity in relation to the matters dealt with, but its innovative use of the second person narrative mode. Kacandes (1993) talks about the "irresistible invitation" of the "you" pronoun (p. 139). This appealing quality is likely a reason it is most often used in self-help books and advertising (as well as owner's

manuals and guide books), and it is perhaps significant that Campbell's title and some of the text mimics the instruction manual. Much has been made in these pages of how second person narration can provide "both distance and intimacy." (Fisher 2008, p. 10), and how it can put readers "in a place of doubt and uncertainty" (Schofield, 1998b, p. vii), as well as providing other potential advantages for a novelist. Equally, the difficulties of comprehensively defining second person and all its variations have been demonstrated. Campbell has attempted to explain (to Vollmar, 2001) where the readers fit into his use of the form, arguing that if a writer believes a story is unique, "then the best way to fashion it will also have a uniqueness":

> In my own case, I came up with the notion of presenting the whole book as a prophecy (in high terms) or as a 'how to' manual (in low terms). Right up to the last minute I still had people trying to talk me out of the 'how to' title, but try as I would, the material itself just wouldn't let it go. The whole book is formulated around this conceit, that I'm telling the reader how to be an artist. Thus, I'm telling them in the future tense, addressed to the second person, 'you', nominally Alec MacGarry, but also by inference the person reading the book, who is asked to be Alec for the duration. (¶13)

The reality though is that the question of who is represented by the "you" is more complex than Campbell suggests, and in constant flux. Richardson's use of the terms "unnerving" and "protean" (2006, p. 14) are more than justified here. Campbell's narrative voice goes beyond merely a fixed address from one vantage point. It displays aspects (and exploits advantages) of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrative, parts of the story apparently being told by a narrator who is one of the characters, part of it being told from outside, and parts of it more ambiguous again, as if (perhaps) Fate is directly addressing both Alec and the reader. As a quasi-autobiography, there is also ambiguity about who is talking and being talked to; in short, the narrator and the "you" are shifting entities that are not

restricted merely to Alec, the implied reader, or the actual person holding the book.

Campbell's reasons for choosing the second person narrative mode (or SPN) were explained somewhat disingenuously in the foreword of the 2001 volume of *HTBAA*. He wrote that it was chosen as an attempt to take one's own experiences "distilling them into a recognisable formulae ('If you do *a* then *b* will follow.' Oh, the daring literary conceit!)." (p. 5) In the foreword to the *HTBAA* section of *"The Years Have Pants"*, Campbell (2009) is even more offhand, writing: "I took a notion to try writing the next book in the second person singular, future perfect tense, and see how far I could get before screwing up. I think I made it all the way through." (p. 200) Campbell's *Alec* may be a Smart Alec, but its voice is not merely a display of literary pyrotechnics, even if the author said it was. The unusual choice of SPN is a highly effective one.[105] Even among second person novels, *HTBAA* is a rare thing, being cast primarily in the future perfect tense. The striking tone is established from the very first words:

> How to successfully be an ARTIST (not to be confused with 'becoming a successful artist').
>
> FIRST, you must make your bargain with FATE [the following within frame, presented as the character talking] *I will Cherish not material security but will squander it all in the search for wisdom. Furthermore I will only lie in the service of TRUTH.*
>
> Then you must get the most dead-end job you can find, one that does not require intelligence, because you will need to deploy that elsewhere.

[105] Terry Eagleton (2008) has noted: "Authors can say the silliest things about their own stuff … *The Waste Land* is not just a piece of rhythmical grousing, even though T.S. Eliot said it was." (¶3)

> You must put yourself through an informal course of learning everything there is to learn.
>
> This is not to be confused with learning everything you need to know. You could easily go to college for that. (p. 7)

Immediately we see how the comic book format can comfortably mix narrative modes. We have the "bargain with FATE" being delivered in first person and in the present tense (dialogue and illustrations are, by nature, of the moment, even when the context suggests they were spoken in the past or future) within a future tense, textual framework. As with the Kocan work, we can learn a lot about one approach by considering an alternative; ie by supposing that Campbell had instead chosen the conventional first person, past tense, throughout to tell this story. In such as case, the opening may have read like this:

> How I successfully became an ARTIST (not to be confused with 'became a successful artist').
>
> FIRST, I made a bargain with FATE. *I will Cherish not material security but will squander it all in the search for wisdom. Furthermore I will only lie in the service of TRUTH.*
>
> Then I got the most dead-end job I could find, one that did not require intelligence, because I needed to deploy that elsewhere.
>
> I put myself through an informal course of learning everything there is to learn.
>
> This is not to be confused with learning everything I needed to know. I could easily have gone to college for that.

The difference is dramatic. In the first (and original) passage Campbell cleverly

exploits the second person virtue pointed out by Mary Frances Hopkins and Leon Perkins (1981), namely: "It offers the intimacy with the character enabled by the first-person mode without the presumptuous quality of the I-narrator." (p. 131-132) By putting space between the claims and the character, it alleviates what would otherwise seem boastful and self-centred. The original introduction also carries an ominous and portentous tone (mock or not) and, with it, an element of presupposition. Such presupposition, Chatman (1978) points out, is an effective device for a narrator staying covert (p. 210). It also achieves the SPN's "conative solicitude" cited by Bonheim (1982, quoted in Fludernik 1994a, p. 286). In the second take on the intro, notwithstanding it is a simple line by line re-rendering, the narrator is more exposed and the suprahortative mood – that sense of avid urging and encouragement – is lost. The grandiose (and yet still gently comically ironic) SPN approach chosen by Campbell immediately suggests a universality of the tale while, by comparison, the first person approach reads as flat, very much rooted in the past and applying solely to one person.

The second person has been criticised as being restrictive, excluding, repelling and claustrophobic. Jack Hodgins (1993) argues that the second person fails "if it seems that the reader is intended to be the protagonist but refuses to cooperate." (pp. 183-184). Clearly, readers are not always happy to be told what to do, or indeed what they are doing. However, by introducing many voices, and supporting them with what is at times almost a separate visual narrative, *HTBAA* is not as tightly locked into a potentially claustrophobic second person world as it might be. Richardson (2006) says "Much subjunctive second person narration could be rewritten using 'one' instead of 'you' with little change in meaning." (p. 146-147) He is referring to a specific set of instructions – "to get there you follow/one follows Highway 58" – the very style Campbell appears to have adopted (Notwithstanding the fact Campbell is likely to avoid the use of the word "one" if for no other reason than it sounds highly affected in conversational English). Of course, there are many differences between Campbell's work and the typical subjunctive. His text is designed to operate on several levels, whereas route instructions, for example, are ideally designed to prevent more than one

meaning. More importantly, Campbell is merely playing with what Richardson dubs the subjunctive second person; it is a starting place from which he begins a tale seen from many vantage points.

It is also worth restating that, upon dividing second person narratives into the three classes (Standard, Hypothetical and Autotelic), Richardson (2006) noted he was identifying tendencies rather than invariable conditions (p. 19). We can see when considering Richardson's three definitions that, as well as thwarting Gérard Genette's 1980 dictate about narratorial stance, *HTBAA* evades exact compliance with any of Richardson's three types of second person, straddling at least the first and second categories. Lorrie Moore's short story "How" (1995b) also adopts the guidebook style without ever pretending to provide genuine self-help (to further that irony, the collection from which it is taken is called *Self-Help*). It begins with:

> Begin by meeting him in a class, 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. (p. 55)

Phelan (1994) discusses Moore and concludes that by taking on the language of the "self-help" genre, "How" establishes a separation between the narrator and the narratee (section 4 ¶10). Phelan argues that "unlike the case of Jay Mclnerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*, where the protagonist uses second person to narrate his own story, Moore uses an external narrator to address her narratee-protagonist" (section 4 ¶10). Whereas it is far from universally agreed that McInerney's protagonist is the narrator, it is obvious that, like "How" and Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, *HTBAA* provides more separation between the narrator and narratee than is found in McInerney's novel. Phelan also says that the apparent imperatives ("Begin by meeting him," "walk uptown," "buy popcorn") are also the willing actions of a narratee who is desirous of love.

> At the same time, the imperative tone and the consistency of the second-person address make it clear that the narratee and the ideal narrative audience will coincide in this story: the narratee is always doing the bidding of the narrator. … this dual-directed quality of the verbs is continued by the frequent but not ubiquitous use of the future tense, a technique that allows the narrator simultaneously to predict and to report the events of the story. Thus, on the one hand, the story appears to remain within the confines of a self-help book: rather than being the account of one person's actual experience, it is a primer of how one might behave in a relationship. On the other hand, the story appears very much to be an account of one person's experience as it unfolds. Through these techniques and effects, Moore invites us to attend both to the satiric and to the mimetic elements of the story. (section 4 ¶10)

Much of this is true of *HTBAA* too (at least the positive parts where MacGarry willingly pursues his art and/or love); the morphing of Campbell's text into what Phelan calls (above) an "account of one person's experience as it unfolds" demonstrates how no simple substituting of a subjunctive "one" could achieve the same effect. Phelan uses Moore's "How" to demonstrate another property of second person that isn't as concisely achievable with any other narrative mode:

> While the clear distinction between the narratee and the narrative audience allows us to infer so much about the narratee's behavior and situation, the "you" address also invites us to project ourselves – as narrative audience, authorial audience, and actual readers – into the narratee's subject position. Consequently, the inferences we make as we occupy the narrative-audience position lead us to a complicated vision that mingles narratee and self in the narratee's position. We both occupy the position and know what the position is like in a way that the narratee herself does not. In this way, we feel addressed by the narrator but not fully coincident with the narratee. (section 4 ¶10)

Nestvold (2001), when investigating the SPN in digital and text forms, points out that some stories in Lorrie Moore's *Self-Help* begin with a generalized "everyreader" form of address (this is also true of Campbell's introduction). Her main example is "How to Become a Writer" (Moore, 1995a), which begins with:

> First, try to be something, anything, else. A movie star/astronaut. A movie star/missionary. A movie star/kindergarten teacher. President of the World. Fail miserably. It is best if you fail at an early age – say, fourteen. Early, critical disillusionment is necessary so that at fifteen you can write long haiku sequences about thwarted desire. (p. 117)

Nestvold says that if we assume most readers of this story are already older than fifteen, at the mention of this age they will probably no longer be inclined to assume that the "you" of the text is applicable to them. "Distance is established and the reader becomes an observer. The reader/player's responsibility for the progress of the plot in a text adventure, however, precludes this kind of distance." (¶17)[106] However, as argued in the Kocan chapter, particularly, the SPN is an invitation to be involved, in other words to be more than a simple observer. Moore (2001) told the Paris Review that *Self-Help* was very interested in "how the voice and point of view – both the mock imperative of the second person and the idiosyncratic voice of the first – might be used to tell particular stories. It attempted to satirize formally the idea of advice and a culture of advice, at the same time borrowing from a poetic tradition an intimate second-person address." (¶32) Phelan (1994) argues that Moore's complicated positioning will provoke different responses from flesh-and-blood readers, some empathising more fully with the narratee, others perhaps impatient or indifferent or condemnatory, while "others may turn away from this involvement and refocus on the story's mockery of its own triteness and of the self-help genre." (section 4 ¶14) Phelan says if

[106] Nesvold (2001) quotes Roger Giner-Sorolla's observation that "in a narrative that is at the same time a fiction and a game, the protagonist's identity fractures ... into three distinct persons." These, Giner-Sorolla says, are the reader/player, the generalised "game protagonist", and the more specific "story protagonist". Nestvold writes that "All three are contained in the 'you' of the text, the actual reader, the 'you' playing a role in the fiction, and the character in the story." (¶17)

Moore had employed a standard homodiegetic or heterodiegetic narration, she could have achieved some of the same effects, but "it is difficult to see how she could have also retained the effects resulting from this complicated mingling and separation of narratee and narrative audience." (section 4 ¶14) Campbell's work holds an even more complicated positioning, as it includes illustrations that can also provoke a set of responses, perhaps even in complete contradiction of the text. An example of this ironic play between narration, picture and dialogue from *HTBAA*: at one stage the narrator has become sarcastic, declaring "You rebel, you." The accompanying picture shows husband and wife placidly sitting together: "More tea, darl?" "Certainly, dear." (p. 47)

Richardson (2006) quite specifically excluded both apostrophe and addresses to real or imaginary homodiegetic audiences from his definition of second person (p. 19). This seems entirely logical. Yet Campbell (and indeed Moore) often appear at times to be engaging in both, with Campbell arguably addressing a construction made up of his former self, at times his current self, the implied reader and other elements. So why should *HTBAA* be considered a true second person narrative? That comes down to the ambiguity, multiple subjectivity, multiple temporality, and the constant varying of the "camera lens" that is achieved with Campbell's use of the second person future tense. In a typical apostrophe – say "Where, my death, is thy sting? Where, O death, thy victory?"[107] – there is no scope for such ambiguity or layered meaning. Even in a book-length "I" and "you" narrative, or apostrophe, such as Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), there is never a question about who is talking and who is being talked to: the narrator is the Pakistani "reluctant fundamentalist", while the "you" is solely the American man across the table, and both are depicted solely within the timeframe and story-world of the novel. Nor is there any invitation to fill another's shoes. The "you" is the passive listener, not the proposed protagonist. There is no glimpsing inside the consciousness of the "you" (beyond supposition expressed by the character opposite), any more than there is an insight into the feelings of death itself in the

[107] 1 Corinthians 15:55, Saint Paul of Tarsus.

Biblical quote cited above. By contrast, we see into the young Alec MacGarry's consciousness as events take place in *HTBAA* (p. 101: "You're broke and you've exiled yourself, you idiot."), and have suggestions of the same character's consciousness looking back from a different stage of life (p. 98: "Alec MacGarry, don't go saying yes to the emotional demands of a woman in the afterwash of childbirth. No! Don't!").

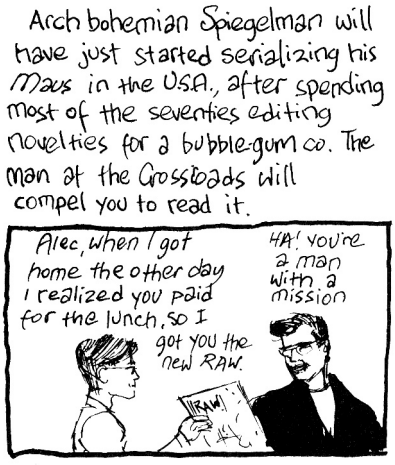
Although at times the narrator of *HTBAA* appears to be apostrophising to his younger self, and at one stage is actually depicted apostrophising to a photo of his younger self,[108] that is almost certainly not the only narratorial transmission taking place within the work. We have already seen how the replacement of "I' or even "one" for "you" could restrict the complex interplay between different voices in an SPN. Similarly, to assume that the *HTBAA* contains solely the older Campbell (or MacGarry) apostrophising would again constrain a much more complex narrative. It will be shown how the relationship between the *HTBAA* narrator and narratee is dynamic and constantly shifting; that other voices (sometimes unidentified) are intrinsic to the story-telling, and that the use of the future perfect tense can give triple temporality (past, future and present), while the illustrations can provide a separate, less mediated third person narrative.

As foreshadowed in Campbell's introduction, the language of *HTBAA* is laden with fate, a suggestion that the events will be dictated by greater forces. This mood is exacerbated by the regular use of the second person singular, future perfect tense, though fate itself also carries with it a suggestion of the future tense, a future laid out. Other devices in *HTBAA* continue to build up the idea of fate, including a letter from "The Man at the Crossroads", a seeming and potentially ominous reference to the legend of the artist (blues musician Robert Johnson in

[108] The message apparently delivered from an older to a younger self is a staple of the cautionary tale, or the folk-style message song such as Leon Payne's 1948 song "Lost Highway" ("Now boys don't start, your ramblin' round/on the road of sin, or you're sorrow bound" etc). Alec looks at a photo of his younger self on page 120; "Pedants may demand a literal reading of the words." says the older Alec's thought/speech bubble, "Stay away from them, Alec MacGarry." This apparent dialogue between older and younger selves continues for a few frames (though the words are only sometimes shown as the older Alec's speech bubble).

most renditions) going to the crossroads at midnight to meet Satan and exchange his soul for an unearthly talent. "FATE has already assigned him a title … Like yourself he has been freed up for his purpose." (p. 8) On page 20 you will "append your contract with Fate". A later, interesting interplay between words and pictures shows "The Man at the Crossroads" literally standing at a crossroads (p. 48). It includes road signs to "Hither" and "Yon" and shows the words "Influence" and "Information" (of which only "Info" is visible) literally crossing. The name apparently has a different meaning to the one first surmised. [109] The future tense, however, continues to carry the laden-with-fate tone.

Campbell's use of the second person singular, future perfect tense in *HTBAA* is shown in sentences such as: "The factory will close down. From that moment you may confidently describe yourself as an ARTIST." (p. 8) It is a curious tense, suggesting a point in the future where the action indicated has already been completed. As such, it encompasses both future and past and, in one sense eliminates the now. Writing about Philippe Sollers' innovative novel *Nombres* (1968) in "The Double Bottom of the Plupresent" section of *Dissemination*, Jacques Derrida (1981) argues the plupresent (which seems to be a term he has created) contorts time: "Such a future perfect, always making one text circulate inside another, excludes any and all eschatology merely by dint of being the future perfect of an innumerable imperfect, an indefinite past that will never have been



[109] The character is based on the real life comic world identity Paul Gravett.

present." (p. 309)[110] When we look at a future tense graphic novel, however, we have the present tense of the illustrations. Caroline Small (2011) has written in detail about the handling of time in *HTBAA*. Despite the temporal shifting, she finds "the perspective of this book incredibly sane" and says the unusual choice of tense allows a narrative vantage point that is "of all possible times at the same time" (preface, ¶9). She says the strength lies in the future perfect tense's active assertion of inevitability, as well as its blurring of passive and active:

> … in Campbell's hands here, it refers to actions that have already been completed in the past … The result is a doubling of the vantage point and of the time of the narrative: the future perfect tense conveys the author's narrative awareness of history while leaving intact the position of the character who has not yet experienced that history.
>
> There is the time of the "you" – asserting and anticipating the future events. There is the time of the author, who knows what those events will be because he is already in the future that they point to. In other words, there is the time of the main character of the prose, and the time of the authorial voice. (section 1 ¶4-5)

Small points out that the illustrations and dialogue are generally set in the literary present. This intensifies a situation where both image and prose are fully active, fully explored, with the "full range of temporality from images, the full range of temporality from prose. That allows the time experienced by the narrative subject to be not just doubled but tripled: past, future, and present, all together, all represented simultaneously and equally." (section 1 ¶7) Small argues that this "all at once" approach is "so much more ontologically fascinating and narratively flexible than the more mechanistic

[110] Further explaining the use of the term "double bottom", Derrida (1981) writes "The imperfect is … not another present, a has-been present; it is another thing entirely than the present; it has no essence." That is why it "*provides the motion and the unreachable double bottom*. ... it is a presentless time, the total account depriving the square of its ground, leaving it suspended in the air." (p. 308)

notion of sequential panels representing time as space." (section 1 ¶8) Campbell's temporal approach (including the illustrations) helps manage time shifts more smoothly than in the more typical second person present tense narrative. For example, Deb Kandelaars' often powerful and moving *Memoirs of a suburban girl: A Novel*, is set in the present tense. There is nonetheless the very "audible" narratorial device of having the protagonist remember things at convenient moments, which often feels like slightly clunky exposition. For example, when one thing happens "it reminds you of when you were little", when another thing happens "you stare out the window at a paddock and you think about a road trip you went on to country New South Wales…" (Kandelaars 2011, p. 112). Although Campbell suggests his text is in future perfect tense throughout, it is regular future tense much of the time.[111] As Small (2011) points out: "The use of the future perfect in the places he does use it, though, is sufficient to establish the bizarre temporality that that tense suggests, and that bizarre temporality saturates the rest of the section." (section 1 ¶1)

In *HTBAA*, "You're playing house husband till the breakthrough comes" (p. 13) presents a slightly odd lapse into present tense and is an example of the temporal shifting that constantly takes place. Campbell is such a careful stylist, however, it is reasonable to believe these changes are deliberate. Laurent Le Sage (1962) presents a theory on temporality that may apply. Writing of various "new novels", including Butor's *A Change of Heart* (*La Modification*), Le Sage says: "If external time – clock time – serves to establish the boundaries of a new novel, it is subjective time – duration – which operates within the novel and constitutes a factor in its internal structure. The mind lengthens or shortens episodes, jumbles past, present, and future, and since the business of this novel is to record consciousness, its inner course resembles that of the mind-stream." (p. 26) That is so often how it appears in *HTBAA*.

[111] An example of the first drawn from the *HTBAA* text: "Arch bohemian Spiegelman will have just started serializing his *Maus*…" (p. 18); an example of the second, also drawn from the text: "…one day a letter will arrive in the mail" (p. 8).

Fuentes's *La Muerta de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*), published in 1962 in Spanish and 1988 in English, has been identified by Richardson (2006, p. 144) and others as the "only" text to use the future tense for standard second person narration (though Butor, for example, has some imaginary passages in the future tense). If Richardson seems to be highlighting a similarity between *Artemio Cruz* and *HTBAA*, it is extremely superficial. Like many prose novels, *La Muerta de Artemio Cruz* uses the second person for dramatic effect, but doesn't sustain it for the length of the novel. In the translation by Sam Hileman (1988), it doesn't always sustain it for the full length of a sentence. A very different proposition to *HTBAA* (which I suspect *is* the only novel to use the future tense for sustained second person narration), *Cruz* is written in a dreamlike state as a former soldier-politician is consumed by a sickness, and the narration is therefore less concerned with the logical practicalities, hence such extreme mashing of tenses as: "Yes: yesterday you will fly home from Hermosillo … The stewardess will offer you chewing gum wrapped in cellophane…" (p. 8). On the same page we learn "no-one will have noticed that only you, an old man of seventy-one years, that only you maintained composure." This "seeing the unseen" (the Cruz character logically can't know that no-one has noted his composure) is something Chatman (1978) cites as a major marker of narrator audibility (p. 225)[112] and as such it serves to lift this reader momentarily out of the story-world and into contemplating the writer and his writing. There are few incidents of reporting what other characters did not think or say or see in *HTBAA*, reinforcing the focalization on the central character (that said, additional knowledge of other character's reactions could have come to the older Alec by other routes later on).[113]

[112] Richardson (2006) gives a similarly convoluted example from Carlos Fuentes' *Aura* where the second person gives us both the protagonist's subvocal speech and describes an incident the protagonist doesn't see. Richardson notes his "irreducible oscillation between first and third person narration … is typical of second person texts, texts that simultaneously invite and preclude identification with the other pronominal voices" (p. 20).

[113] By contrast, in a present tense anecdote in *After the Snooter* Campbell (2009, *The Years Have Pants*) has a narrator who uses first person but is omnipresent, reporting a conversation that occurred after the "I" narrator had left (p. 530).

Campbell does use foreshadowing. When Alec holds, with some disappointment, his printed book, "your first proper book", the narrator says: "…it would be at least another thirteen years before you'd make a penny out of the material in that book…" (p. 34) or when he throws in his day job: "You won't know it then, of course, but it's the last one you'll ever have" (p. 79). Foreshadowing can be grating but there is a logic here. A comparison can be mounted with Charles Benoit's *You* (2010), which makes regular use of foreshadowing to explain what will happen further on in the story. An example: "It's not like somebody died. That's still weeks away." (p. 24) The immediacy of the text's present tense is arguably undermined by this foreshadowing, while the reader is left to wonder who could plausibly be providing this foreshadowing, or why the well-known SPN conundrum – why tell someone something they know? – should be extended to telling someone their own story after they are dead. The narrative of *You* also explains the unseen – Benoit's text says on page 124: "[it's] to mask the smell. It doesn't, but you don't know that". Sometimes the book uses both devices at once, telling us what the character can't plausibly see, hear or know – and in the future, and after his death: "Later, much will be made about the clothes you're wearing…" (p. 202) This, among other things, confuses the reader as to who is driving the story. The character himself, Kyle, clearly can't know what will happen next, unlike Campbell, particularly if *HTBAA* is to be considered at least partly a dialogue between Eddie/Alec's younger and older selves (as suggested by Vollmar 2001, ¶14). The lesson to be drawn here is that, although the rules in second person may be highly flexible, they still need a certain amount of internal logic to carry the reader along.

Illustrations

Although the primary interest here is the text, with such a complex dynamic between text and image, it is pertinent to consider some of the illustrative properties, particularly where they work well with second person narration. Perhaps most significantly, illustrations have a capability similar to SPN text in

capturing intimacy and distance. Charles Hatfield (2005) backs this up when he says of autobiographical comics in particular:

> [t]he cartoon self-image … seems to offer a unique way for the artist to recognize and externalize his or her subjectivity. … Yet, at the same time, the placement of this self-image among other figures within a visual narrative confers an illusion of objectivity. *Seeing* the protagonist or narrator, in the context of other characters and objects evoked in the drawings, objectifies him or her. Thus the cartoonist projects and objectifies his or her inward sense of self, achieving at once a sense of intimacy and a critical distance. (p. 115)

Scott McCloud (1994) writes that the comic form "offers range and versatility with all the potential imagery of film and painting plus the intimacy of the written word" (p. 212). Certainly in Campbell there is much good writing, but the illustrations also provide a separate, substantially third person, narration which therefore helps break the potential claustrophobia of second person text and reduces the potential for the reader to feel pushed around by the second person narrator – or even bullied. I have used the term "substantially third person" for the pictorial narration, because Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006) point out that "demand" pictures, which is to say those in which the participant(s) are looking directly at the reader, are in fact "realizing a visual 'you'" (p. 122). Campbell doesn't use this technique often (rare examples are found on pages 16, 110 and 120 where a character looks at the "camera" and delivers an aside, Shakespearian style, directly to the audience), perhaps because with a second person text, as well as what are effectively second person – or apostrophising – illustrations, it would be too overwhelming. Most of Campbell's illustrations fall into what would be categorised as "Offer". In these, "the viewer is not object, but subject of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the viewer's dispassionate scrutiny. No contact is made. The viewer's role is that of an invisible onlooker." (Kress and van Leeuwen, p. 119) Such a transmission is complicated in *HTBAA* however when, say, in one frame "The Man at the

Crossroads" speaks half to Alec and half to the audience, explaining that "we're on the verge of something important" (p. 14).

It is also worth considering the illustrations in terms of Roland Barthes's classifications of anchorage and relay, as presented in *Rhetoric of the Image* (1977a). There is occasional anchorage in *HTBAA* where "…the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image [and] remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance." (p. 40) These include identification of cartoons that have been appropriated, and date and time markers tied to various frames within Campbell's story. However, the vast majority of the illustrations fall into "relay": the accompanying text amplifies and complements the pictures, rather than constrains them. Barthes (1977a) says relay is very important in film but less common with fixed images. However:

> … it can be seen particularly in cartoons and comic strips. Here text (most often a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis… (p. 41)

The orthodoxy is that images are dominant, text or captions secondary; certainly Barthes (1977a) argues "it is the image which is read first" (p. 40, footnote). I

would put forward that the quality of Campbell's writing allows it to stand on its own, and it can pull the reader, and certainly the traditional novel reader, in as readily as the illustrations. Consider the scene where friends visit Alec. The last frame declares: "Everybody will be full of unfulfillable promise in the cheery winesodden Friday afternoon of your life when you feel an unbearable nostalgia for events less than a day after they happen. You just see if I'm not wrong, Alec MacGarry." (p. 66) We can speculate on the identity of the "I", but we can also delight in the prose itself.

It is worth mentioning here that, by comparison with *HTBAA*, the writing in the earlier Alec stories (some dating from almost 20 years prior to *HTBAA*) is often disjointed, and amateurish. It consists mainly of dialogue, the narration is usually in past tense, mainly third person and first person, but it occasionally strays into second, such as "That sounds overdramatic, but that's the way it sometimes comes at you when you've had a snoutful" (Campbell 2009, p. 44, as collected in *The Years Have Pants*).[114] Note however that this constitutes a common colloquial use of second person rather than a formal literary usage. Similarly, "When you tell

[114] Originally rendered in capitals but reduced to lower case here for legibility.

and retell a story, you tend to streamline it…" (Campbell 2009, p. 58). This is not to say the early books lack quirky innovation in words and pictures. An example of the former: when Alec's obsession with Penny Moore is revealed in *The King Canute Crowd*, the narrator declares: "I only mention this in case you are in some far flung illiterate future where my poor little book is the text in your English lit. graduation exam. I should want you to have all the information at your disposal." Eddie/Alec then offers interpretations of Alec's state of mind for such students (Campbell 2009, p. 128).

One of the visual innovations in *HTBAA* is that, as Alec's story is told (from p.10), there is a regular reprinting of panels from other cartoonists throughout, providing dialogic humour (with other works and other writer-illustrators) and more. These illustrations were carefully selected, Campbell told Vollmar (2001) "to comment on the ongoing narrative in sly and ironic ways" (¶11). They also constitute yet more voices in the narrative, breaking up the potential for second person claustrophobia.

There is much clever interplay between pictures and words in *HTBAA*: a thought bubble attributed to Alan Moore, a rising star in the field says: "Just for an instant I have the sense of panel borders looming on the periphery of my vision" (p. 19). The next panel (frame 6) morphs into a very traditional comic book frame. It is clear these characters live and breathe comics, and see the world through them. In another example, the story of the domestic minutiae of Alec and Annie's life, becomes a mock piece of formal art: "You run through Epping Forest in the nude (after Annie)." This mimicking of an artistic tribute "(after Annie)" is followed in the next frame by the unsure line, "You're an artist, after all." (p. 14) The idea of varied illustrations adding to Campbell's multi-voiced narrative can be shown by the visual comparison offered between Roy Lichtenstein's "art" with D.C. Comics "non art" (which contains remarkably similar words and illustrations). The narrator then muses in the present tense. "It's all bloody art as far as you're concerned, Alec MacGarry." (p. 15). Chapter five ends with two frames "quoting" a two-page postcard to "Alec" from Glenn Dakin: (p. 47). This constitutes yet

another voice on a page that already uses a narrator's voice, alongside dialogue from Alec and Annie, and reproductions of the work of two other artists (Charlie Trumper and Cooper). This multiplicity of voices inside a relatively accessible whole is something Campbell does well.[115]

In this spirit, *The Fate of the Artist* (2006) is the most ambitious of all the "Alec" books.[116] Published after *HTBAA*, it starts with present tense third person, telling the story of how the artist has gone missing. This is done via first person prose, conversations, varied comic strips, "reconstructions," and interviews with "witnesses". There is an "unpublished interview" with Hayley Campbell, daughter of the artist, and scenes in which it is declared that the role of Eddie Campbell has been played by an actor. There is an additional and even more curious voice: that of the lay-out artist. The plot blames "Evans", the layout artist/book designer, for the artist's murder (p. 79). Campbell later stated in an interview (to Wivel, 2011) that "the designer, who was the last to handle the digital files, wreaked his own vengeance by salting away a secret message in the small print … which wasn't discovered till after the book was printed." (¶94). For the record, the message, hidden in the small point dummy type, is "The artist is a fukn cunt" (p. 46). One could speculate that the incidences of such unexpected and/or unauthorised voices being introduced into works will only grow with technology.

In the discussion of the future tense, we looked at the complex temporality. The illustrations also bring into play the temporality of reception. Chatman (1978) quotes Jean Ricardou's argument that the film camera cannot be said "to describe" in any meaningful sense. "The number and variety of objects

[115] A panel in Campbell's *After the Snooter* shows how at least four separate voices can be squeezed into one panel. Outside the frame, a narrator explains that "you can't go to Raffles without having a Singapore sling", even though one will cost $18. Within the frame a second voice (presumably the author's) says, "Pretend you're with Somerset Maugham and Noel Coward". We then have dialogue from those two English writers ("…who is this insufferable man?"), referring to Campbell/MacGarry, who has been drawn sitting next to them (Campbell 2009, p. 524, as collected in *The Years Have Pants*).

[116] Even though the name Alec has been dropped in this book in favour of using "Eddie Campbell", the author said (2011) that he still considers it part of the Alec set. The comment was made by Campbell during Q&A session at "Graphic" conference attended by this researcher, Sydney Opera House, August 21.

filmed is virtually limitless, restrained only by the frame and their distance from the camera." (p. 220) If not limitless, the number of objects provided by a drawing are certainly numerous – providing myriad entry points for the audience (as opposed to text, which is generally read left to right, starting at the top). Furthermore, illustrations are not mediated by the creator in the same way textual descriptions are. In his arguments about why even attempted mimesis in narration is flawed, Chatman (1978) points out that in a theatre play a character sits by the act of sitting, in a narration it must pass through a narrator, no matter how covertly (p. 168). In an illustration in a comic, people "sit by sitting" too, but not when the act is instead described rather than depicted in the same comic. Images make the action less ambiguous, less open to interpretation than words but, like the future perfect tense text, they create a certain inevitability. Also, objects described verbally, Chatman argues, "pass into the reader's consciousness in a slower way. We cannot grasp all their properties at once." (p. 221) As stated, this thesis is not specifically examining the illustrations of *HTBAA*, but it provides no harm to address the added layers (including multiple temporality) that they can afford the text as a whole. It should be noted too that Fischer and Hatfield (2011) argue that Campbell's drawings carry with them their own "tense" and reinforce this dialogue between then and now:

> Aspectuality may also have a temporal dimension, whereby a memoirist like Campbell can draw the events of his past in two registers: as a chronicle of what happened, but in a range of styles (comically, or in chiaroscuro, or as a sketchy afterthought) that convey his older narrating self's opinion about his activities as a younger man. At times the images may seem to match young Alec's self-estimation, or to enact his confusion or anger; at other times, the images insinuate commentary, from a distanced, more experienced view. Graphic variations serve as implicit self-irony, sometimes self-criticism, just as variations in vocabulary, register, syntax, and point of view may in a purely prose narrative. (pp. 77-78)

An example of this is found on page 78 of *HTBAA*. The drawings become rougher and less detailed as a scene peters out and Annie and Alec are each left in despair. As we have seen, a writer using neutral terms – and a "neutral" style of writing – can attempt to imply no narrator mediation, but it is always there to some degree. Campbell exploits his ability to offer a visual representation of what happens and a textual one, and they may tell different stories.

To adapt Richardson's and Chatman's arguments to *HTBAA*, Campbell finds no need to restrict himself to one mode or voice or narrative position; scenes can be delivered solely in dialogue and pictures, giving the impression of overhearing, right through to highly mediated; the reader or "second person protagonist" can be told directly something prescriptive, such as "Immortality isn't forever" (*HTBAA*, p. 99) or the suggestion that an idea might be a "bunch of sour grapes" (*HTBAA*, p. 97), or may be given an extended "lecture" on the history of humour or the nature of art. Equally, a person can be named by the narrator and summed up with an editorial comment in words or pictures or both, rather than by using the more subtle technique – typical in prose – of introducing a character slowly through their actions and interactions. Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) argues that for an SPN to retain its intensity, it needs "a contrast of narrative modes, a constantly renegotiated distance from the narrative scene, a profile made of peaks and valleys" (p. 137). This use of original and appropriated images is one of the many techniques Campbell uses to constantly renegotiate the distance, and provide a profile of peaks and valleys.

Triplication and questions of memoir

Second person allows for far more possibilities than the simple exchange or narrative transmission between an older and younger self. There is the possibility of the "triplication of the self" in an SPN, as noted by Kimberly Nance (1994),

meaning the text can be homodiegetic, heterodiegetic, and autodiegetic.[117] It has been shown how all three identities can be found in parts of Kocan's work. In the simple narrative of Alec's early struggles (in *HTBAA*) we can see the protagonist, narratee and implied "I" too. There are additional complexities of ontology and subjectivity worth exploring, including the way ideas and commentary are apportioned to the multiple voices that exist in the text. For example, on Alec's return to London the narrator declares: "The most interesting place is where you are" (p. 31). The optimism is interesting and it can be asked who "owns" this optimism, just as we might ask who "owns" the feelings, the thoughts and even the jokes in the text of *HTBAA*. Is it the author, the narrator, the protagonist (the younger Alec or the older, wiser more philosophical Alec). Or is it "you", the reader, the stand-in, the recipient of this knowledge born of experience? The same question can be legitimately asked of other second person texts.

McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984) is sprinkled with humour: "You are a republic of voices tonight. Unfortunately, that republic is Italy." (p. 6) On page 10 the main character is "All messed up and no place to go." Jokes delivered in dialogue can reasonably be assumed to have been said by the characters they are attributed to and merely "reported" in the novel, but jokes in the narration are more problematic. Does the reader "own" that line about Italy or being all messed up? After all, *you* are the one apparently calling the shots in this book, and therefore the one who devised the joke. But clearly the joke was delivered to you. Does this mean the joke is the main character's, even though it is effectively addressed to him? Or is it the author's, or that of the implied author described by Chatman (178) as "not the narrator, but rather the principle that invented the narrator, along with everything else in the narrative… in these words or images" (p. 148). Is the protagonist telling jokes to himself, perhaps laughing at his own cleverness when he says "…that republic is Italy"?

[117] To recap, Nance (1994) cites three identities in the SPN short story she examined, Emilio Pacheco's "Tarde de agosto"/"August Afternoon". They are the protagonist (an adolescent; the person of the events narrated who existed "then"), the narratee "you" (who never forgot those events and who exists "now"), and an implied "I" who can reinterpret one for the other (¶13).

Ultimately the protean nature of second person ensures there are no clear answers to any of these questions. Beyond this ontological instability is the question of dialogue, which could reasonably be considered outside the narration. In terms of the dialogue attributed to the protagonist, did "you" really even say it? Could the "you" (or the unidentified one who says "you") be embellishing the dialogue in the text to make a character look good (or, if it serves the needs of the novel, bad)? Are the words of others an accurate portrayal of what was said, or filtered through the "you"? This conundrum regarding dialogue is alleviated to some extent by the use of the present tense (by McInerney and Kocan), giving the impression things are happening as they are being reported and read (the so-called "automatic narration" of Genette, or "simultaneous narration" of Fludernik).

At one point Campbell's *HTBAA* narration delivers the intriguing sentence: "You and I would just go in the bar, Alec MacGarry, but factionalism will have already taken its hold." (p. 26) With this sentence, Campbell has briefly but emphatically moved outside any of Richardson's definitions of second person narrative, despite the use of the "you" pronoun. That said, as Fludernik (1993) argues, the address function requires an addressor, or narrative "I", irrespective of whether that "I" is involved on the story level (p. 219). On this occasion, the "I" seems to have come out of hiding, and a similar thing happens in other places too. In a discussion about comic creator Rian Hughes, we are hit with a sudden first person: "His best work for my money is an unpublished page called 18 HOLES." (p. 43). Who is this person putting up "my money"? Perhaps the same person who had a drink with MacGarry on page 26. Does such metalepsis,[118] when for example a character (or narrator or, indeed, anyone else) jumps out of the narrative to issue commentary, diminish either the cohesiveness of the narrative or any claim to sustained second person? I would suggest not. Obviously the comic book more readily allows interjections from a variety of voices; there are clearly fewer

[118] H. Porter Abbott (2008) defines metalepsis:

> A violation of narrative levels, usually in which the diegesis, or storyworld, is invaded by an entity or entities from another narrative level or even from outside the narrative altogether, as for example when an extradiegetic narrator enters the action, or a "spectator" leaps on stage and becomes part of the action, or the "author" appears and starts quarrelling with one of the characters. (p. 237)

"rules" and conventions than with, say, the modern prose novel, which has been developed over centuries. The concept of a literary "comic book" aimed solely at adults is so new that there is very little agreement about what it should be. This is the reason perhaps why such obvious breaking of the fourth wall (to use the screen term) would jar more in, say *The Treatment* or in "The Flight" (where I deliberately avoided any such violations of the self-contained story-world). The graphic novel form and ludic nature of *HTBAA* more easily accommodates such intrusions.

This "fourth wall" can be more permeable in an SPN and postmodern fiction generally. There is a popular impression that once the fiction starts, the implied author and narrator take over and the actual author is no longer allowed to speak. It is one that Richardson (2006) finds palpably false. He argues the point, using Fielding as the example: "The same words written in a preface or afterword would be called the discourse of the author; why must we deny this as a theoretical possibility just because the words appear with the part of the book designated as fiction? If not, we are forced into the very odd position of having to say that the narrator is impersonating the historical author." (p. 125) Richardson also applies the name "transparent voices phenomenon" for a situation "in which the most unreliable internal narrator can readily (and, more importantly, incontrovertibly) articulate the ideas of the author (p. 128). In such cases, the narrator may be temporarily "emptied" and his character dispensed with as the author speaks directly and sometimes incongruously through that character's mouth (p. 128-129). Examples cited by Richardson (p. 129) include Nabokov's views on mass culture, American philistinism and more in *Lolita*, expressed in a language more akin to the real author's nonfiction prose than other utterings by protagonist-narrator Humbert Humbert. Richardson says the "transparent narrator" is a favourite technique of postmodern authors, who "regularly use it to transgress the carefully maintained ontological boundaries observed by realist and modernist writers" (p. 129). In keeping with this, at times we can find Campbell's voice and opinions partly or perhaps fully expressed within the part of the text designated as "novel", as well has his voice unambiguously outside in his introduction(s), where

he plainly describes his creative techniques and even insecurities concerning the work.

The narration in *HTBAA* can be all over the place, sometimes admonishing, abusing, lecturing or warning (eg, p. 70: "I'm telling you this, Alec MacGarry, so you won't muff it when it happens."). Sometimes in *HTBAA* the narrator adopts a voice closer to free indirect discourse, for example when taking the voice of a professional artist, known as Status Quo, to critique "ye young upstarts" (p. 16). To further complicate, Status Quo is visually cast as Darth Vader. At other times the narrator's voice is one of grand prophesy: "You won't even be aware at the time of the importance of this friendship you'll have struck up. Live well and toast the gods, Alec MacGarry. Fate is minding the wheel." (p. 72) The narrator is often consoling and cajoling the Alec character: "Do not be deterred" (p. 8). The narrator may be taking the role of Fate, or as Vollmar (2001) suggests, much of *HTBAA* seems to be "a temporal telegram from Campbell the Elder to Alec the younger to keep his head about him and have faith in the choices that he's making" (¶14). Such a device could be likened to that delivered by the older Pip to the younger in Dickens's first person *Great Expectations* (1861), but of course the two works are vastly different in form.[119]

Peter Doyle says "temporal telegraphing" is a powerful trick: "Part of the dynamic is the speaker laments his or her own younger self, but covertly addresses us, or other nameless youngsters. Underneath he's identifying/blurring his own younger self and an unknown auditor. It is a sort of courtesy to the reader and also an ennobling of the reader: you get it, you're smart enough to benefit from these tips born of my hard-earned experience." (Doyle, P., personal communication, November 18, 2013) This brings us to the question of how much the narrator knows, what Booth (1961/1983) calls "privilege". Booth says "Complete privilege is what we usually call omniscience. But there are many kinds of privilege, and very few 'omniscient' narrators are allowed to know or show as much as their

[119] And, it should be added, Campbell does without the condescension of Dickens's first person narrator towards his younger self.

authors know." (p. 160) Campbell's privilege is a cake-and-eat-it affair. The future tense suggests the events are yet to happen, the "temporal telegram" suggests everything is known to the narrator, as does the occasional knowing tone to the audience (eg, p. 105: "Take your seats, ladies and gentlemen, for the final act."). By contrast, in *The Treatment* duology, Peter Kocan generally allows his narrator very little privilege, except near the end with such ambiguous lines as "You'll be seeing these ducks for years yet" (p. 245). However, this might not be the narrator informing the character, but a reporting of the character surmising or guessing something independently.

When Alec worries about the money being spent by conference organisers in *HTBAA*, the text says "Maybe you should get out more often, Alec MacGarry" (p. 80), suggesting either a censorial narrator, the young Alec admonishing himself, or the older Alec reflecting. Or all of the above. Consider: "Alas, foolish novelties will be the order of the day. Or is that just a bunch of sour grapes, Alec MacGarry?" (p. 97) Once again, an overt and judgemental narrator has jumped out from the shadows. "Alec MacGarry: a man of destiny, no less." (p. 41) and "One day the world will rush to borrow ten quid to have a drink with you" (p. 41) reads like knowing wishful thinking rather than hindsight. On page 99 our narrator becomes sympathetic ("Don't worry. The world will forget."), despite clearly opposing the direction of Alec's course. Chatman (1978) discusses what happens in such a conflict, when a narrator's attitudes are different to those of a character's. The narrator, he says, tends to override the character (except when an unreliable narrator). A conflict between them doesn't need "ironic opposition". The narrator may "verbalize neutrally or even sympathetically what (for reasons of youth, lack of education or intelligence, and so on), the character cannot articulate…" (p. 156). That's the principle behind Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* and, to a great extent, *HTBAA*.

Over a couple of pages, the narrator in *HTBAA* tells the history of humour, ending with "the fart in the public library" (pp. 60-61). This provides a good example of the high and low register spoken of by Campbell (to Vollmar, 2001). It helps

mitigate the danger cited by Updike (1984) of the SPN drawing attention to its own cleverness (p. 472), while the history of humour itself (and other diversions) shows Campbell is displaying close to the full gamut of postmodern historical fiction devices cited by Cornis-Pope (1994); he "breaches and intermingles: standard structures and uses ambiguous dialogic voices that includes the implied reader in their referential field" (¶5). A clever segue is offered from *HTBAA*'s almost textbook-like history section: "While some guy's jabbering about ART, you'll be moving house, Alec MacGarry" (p. 62). It raises however the question of who this "guy" is. It also illustrates how much we as readers are buying in on

the conceit of having no fixed narrator, and bending with it to accommodate it. Why would we do this, suspending not only our disbelief but ontological consistency? Booth (1961/1983) writes of the lure of a really good author (p. 213), citing how in *The Catcher in the Rye*, the protagonist Holden explains that a good book is one in which you "wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could just call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it". Booth writes "…there are times when we do surrender ourselves to the great authors and allow our judgement to merge perfectly with theirs" (p. 213). This, I would argue, is the case here. Indeed an almost mirror quote to Holden's appeared in an *HTBAA* review by Vollmar (2001): "The more of Eddie Campbell's work that one reads, the more you feel as if you know him personally." (¶1) The phrase used by Vollmar is quite correctly "you feel" because we are reading the implied

author, or authorial second self, rather than getting to know Campbell himself. Still, a good writer, via a trustworthy implied author, can take people places they don't want to go. This feat is harder though in second person because there is less remove. The person going to those places and doing those things is "you". Booth (1961/1983) opines:

> Regardless of my real beliefs and practices, I must subordinate my mind and heart to the book if I am to enjoy it to the full. The author creates, in short, an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement. (p. 138)

Booth maintains, however, that there is not a complete divorce between an ordinary self and the selves a reader is willing to become as he or she reads. He quotes Walker Gibson (1950) from the essay "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers" (College English, XI, February, 1950, pp. 265-69) as saying we often reject a book as bad simply because the "mock reader" is "a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play". Irrespective of this, a writer who has our trust, via a character who has our empathy, will likely take us further into this subordination process. As alluded to earlier, in Campbell, subjectivity is not just split, but splintered. The reader truly is, to use words from Schofield (1998b), "alternately character, narrator, diegetic narratee, even him or herself directly addressed, but never any of these absolutely" (p. 160).

An author relating his own life experiences (matters he or she can be assumed to know better than anyone else) helps build trust with the reader, particularly if that author appears to be talking frankly and with few inhibitions. *HTBAA* appears to be brutally honest, sometimes cringingly so. We see Alec with all his insecurities (eg, p.100: "mailing off your comic-book falsities"), errors of judgement (going to Australia while on the cusp of success, spending money earmarked for a book

project) and vanities, such as deliberating creating chaos "in order to be a genius like big hairy Alan Moore" (p. 20). Brutal honesty is only an illusion, of course. The things in the novel are the things Campbell wants us to know. When he writes: "One day you'll absent-mindedly make a correction with liquid white-out on the screen. The gap between you and technology will only get bigger." (p. 63), one can only speculate whether such things are strictly true or are designed to indicate a theme or trend, or to manipulate the reader's response to the work and/or character. Campbell's dilemma is the same as any memoirist: even an honest attempt to record the truth will be distorted in the telling, by the medium used, by tricks of memory; even if every fact is true, the overall effect will be altered by selection – and that is before the fictional cloak of "Alec" is applied.

Even so, as we have seen with Kocan (who also uses a fictional cloak), the SPN can lend itself well to memoir, giving the impression that someone is taking your hand and leading you through a difficult terrain that they understand and you don't. Yet second person memoir introduces additional ontological nuances. In Campbell's work the blurred and ever-changing separation between the external narrator and the narratee cited by, for example, Phelan (1994) in relation to Lorrie Moore's second person short stories, is far more complex because of the memoir angle (the apparent telling of his own story) and the textual and visual depiction of a protagonist who looks much like the known author. Meads described her work *Nobody* (2007a) as a "second person narrated trauma narrative situated within an ambiguous autobiographical space" (p. IV) and reflected on the question of "ownership" (2007a): "My initial thoughts on second person were that it provided a site for reader immersion. But if readers were immersed, would they be the storyteller? Did readers then own my story? Surely as this narrative was mined from my memories, I had claim over it. Or was this claim denied by my use of second person? And further, what if the narrative content became a barrier to reader immersion? Who then would actually be immersed in the story?" (p. 8) Though the struggle with ontological multiplicity was not something Meads could conclusively resolve, she decided: "Through writing in second person and researching readers' relationships to my text, I have somehow felt a reader's

presence every step of the way, as though they were dancing with me. And finally, in learning to celebrate fragmentation, oscillation, and flux, I have learnt that it is all right to be me, or you." (2007a, p. 28) Equally, it can be all right to be Alec, Eddie or you.

The future tense carries with it a certain presupposition, partly masking the role of the narrator in putting necessary information before the reader; in doing so, helping keep him or her less audible. Monroe Beardsley (1958) and others have cautioned against confusing author and narrator "unless the author has provided a pragmatic context, or even a claim of one, that connects the speaker with himself" (from *Aesthetics*, quoted in Chatman 1978, P. 147). Even then, says Chatman (1978), "the speaker is not the author, but the 'author' … or better the 'author'-narrator … In addition, there is demonstrable third party … the 'implied author'" (p. 148). So what picture do we get of the implied author in *HTBAA*? We see a self-effacing, witty, thoughtful, patient and conflicted artist. These are the shoes we fill when we take on the role of "you" in the book. Is the real author like this? We don't really know, even though in the modern world there is now a much bigger overlap between real author and implied author in that we can regularly hear an author's spoken voice and ideas outside his or her works in a way few would be able to do in the days of Dickens or Tolstoy. The "real" Campbell, for example, describes *HTBAA* to Vollmar (2001) as "a very complex book that could withstand a great deal of study without fully giving up its secrets" (¶11). This and other comments delivered in interviews are a great deal less self-deprecating than the text of *HTBAA* itself, in which for example Alec's work is described as "your autobiographical nonsense" (p. 37). A discrepancy between real and implied authors is nothing new. With the accessibility of the modern world, it can be harder to separate the two. Interested readers are likely to encounter favourite authors via radio, podcast, television, or at literary festivals. In Campbell's case, these readers will note that the Alec in *HTBAA* has the humour and phraseology of

the author, the same tendency to intellectualise and then tell a fart joke (his favoured mix of high and low).[120]

By contrast, readers of Ernest Hemingway take on a flickering newsreel image of an iconic man of action. Is that reasonable? If one considers Hemingway's posthumously published "memoir", *A Moveable Feast* (1964), the implied author was desperately poor, a keen but not excessive drinker, a loyal friend, a faithful husband and loving father. The real Hemingway, during the time depicted in the text, was comparatively well-off (mainly due to his wife's trust fund and the generosity of wealthy friends) and, by most estimates, untrustworthy in business and friendships, an increasingly heavy drinker and a less doting husband and father than the one portrayed.[121] This didn't matter to the reader; the author who guided us through the story was the idealised Hemingway and, as such, earned trust and exhibited constancy through the book. The real author in *HTBAA* may well be closer to the implied author than Hemingway is in *A Moveable Feast*, though is certainly not identical.

One more aspect of Booth's implied author is worth briefly discussing here. Booth (1961/1983) writes that the term "style" is "sometimes broadly used to cover whatever it is that gives us a sense, from word to word and line to line, that the author sees more deeply and judges more profoundly than his presented characters" (p. 74). Booth didn't delve into how this works when the implied author is writing about the real author, a situation where you might expect the levels of profundity to be equal. However, in *HTBAA* the interplay between the implied Eddie Campbell, who could be considered close to the older Alec, and the younger Alec allows this same model to hold here; our implied author is wiser than his Alec, even when he seems to be one and the same person. This makes it quite different to another fictional "How to" SPN, Hamid's *How to Get Filthy*

[120] As shown by the punchline on page 61 of *HTBAA* as well as Campbell's own comments to Vollmar (2001), and comments he made at "Graphic" conference (2011).
[121] This is consistent across many biographies and documentaries, including the acclaimed *Hemingway: The Paris Years*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, by Michael Reynolds, and Reynolds' subsequent *Hemingway: The Homecoming*.

Rich in Rising Asia (2013), where the roles of the narrator and the protagonist/narratee are quite separate, and the narrator is considerably more knowing, if not wiser, than the "you" in the story. The narrator there also maintains a much less restricted view than the one in *HTBAA*.

Above all, *HTBAA* is about art and the struggle of the artist in the general sense and the particular. Alec idealises the perfect situation: "To be given enough time to create a significant work … To create the stories that are the dialogue the world has with itself … To cultivate a separate life from the one happening in front of you. There's a thing to pursue." (p. 103) Small (2011) has commented specifically on this section of the novel, which she calls a reference to the "potentiality of being" specific to the artistic mindset. It describes "an ecstasy of art" she says:

> … part of the brilliance of this book is the recognition of how you find that ecstatic potential in the mundane life story. But the wisdom of that temporal panopticon is the point that being a successful artist requires saturating the life story with that ecstasy, so that the experience of the present is constantly imbued with the past and future, the "Picture in your head of the road you will follow when awake." That ecstasy is something Campbell does extraordinarily well. (section 1 ¶18)

Finally, on the question of memoir, we could ask at what point MacGarry's artistic ambition was set. Could Alec see the "thing to pursue" from the start, or only while looking back? Or is it another voice altogether imparting that information, a voice that sees more than the character and/or is instructing him about what he should pursue? With an SPN and the future perfect, there is no clear answer, but the ambiguity itself is fascinating.

How to be an artist, concluded

There is no easy way to be an artist, nor any easy way to explain how to be one. Campbell's method of applying chaos theory – and often actual chaos – to a text is original and for the most part highly engaging. The constant unsettling of the

reader, using a variety of techniques but most notably second person narration, adds greatly to the immersive nature of the text, and enables the tale to be told on several levels, from several points of view, and with double and even triple temporality. It allows us to know Eddie Campbell perhaps as much as one ever can through a fictional mirror. Of course in casting "you" as MacGarry/Campbell, by way of second person, the author is not saying you will go on to have his career or marry his wife, he is putting you in his shoes in the hope he can go some way towards making you know what it is like to be another, to experience the highs and lows of a potentially very different life to your own. As demonstrated in this chapter, Campbell goes well beyond a simple "you" as "me" substitution. He is playing with all the tools in his literary and illustrative armoury in order to deliver a very particular type of ontological havoc. The reader is at times spoken to by what seems to be the real author crashing in on the implied author. Sometimes we have the younger Alec in the dialogue, the older Alec in the narration. We have fate too, speaking to us, as in a biblical-style prophesy, mixed in with detached "un-bylined" guidebook or *how-to* voice; somewhere in between we have the genial guy at the bar summarising the big picture. We have other layers as well: characters such as the Man at the Crossroads speaking half to the audience, half to Alec. There is the mysterious person who would like to have a drink with "you", the censorial disembodied voice from above that criticises Alec's choices, the comforting one who consoles him even when the choice is plainly wrong (a voice which, it seems, may sometimes be the older Alec, sometimes not). There is the unattributed voice that issues often unheeded warnings such as, for example, not to give in to the emotional demands of a woman in the "afterwash of childbirth". And finally we have another voice: your voice, as reader/protagonist in the second person. You are with Eddie and Alec at every step of the way, at times closely and at times further away, in accordance with Richardson's description of a "continuous dialectic of identification and distancing". It is you who becomes the artist by the mere act of subordinating yourself to this radical narration.

Writing in 1961, Booth remarked that earlier readers identified authors literally with their narrators. "But many of us are now in exactly the opposite condition: we can't accept a straight and simple statement when we read one." (p. 367) What was true then surely must hold even more firmly today. After decades of postmodernism, today's readers are more inclined to look for irony and tricks. Equally, modern readers are well used to multi-media and other forms offering almost limitless points of entry, so are likely more comfortable with most tricks, and more likely to be accepting of radical approaches to storytelling. By experiencing the struggles, disappointments and occasional triumphs of Eddie/Alec, by placing ourselves in the hands of the author and then walking in his shoes, we can empathise with the man and his quest. No matter that Alec is different to you, when we make his mission our mission then, as Booth (1961/1983) idealised: "the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement" (p. 138). That's why, for example, a women with no creative ambitions or impulses might accept the role of "you" in *HTBAA* when logically it can't be a book about her. Much more research could be applied to the question of whether one can call a comic book truly second person, or even first person, as the visual elements make the reader build their own third person narration (particularly if Chatman and Barthes are correct and we take in the two elements at different speeds). There are many other areas relating purely to the text that are worthy of consideration, and not all have been covered here. However, it is hoped this chapter may go some way to show that sustained second person is an effective authorial tool in Campbell's hands, providing the distance and intimacy spoken of by Fisher and others, incorporating the humour/playfulness that Schofield and others have suggested helps breaks down our resistance to the incessant "you", and providing a variety of strategies for the creator to avoid locking himself or herself into the limitations of a first or third person narratorial position.

Richardson (2006) rejects models that insist on, among other things, binary oppositions, fixed hierarchies, or impermeable categories and argues that "numerous important narratives elude, problematize, or collapse these oppositions" (p. 139). If one were looking for a prime example of an

unconventional narrative voice that eluded, problematised and collapsed such foundational oppositions, *Alec: How to be an Artist* would be an excellent starting place. Aside from that, *Alec: How to be an Artist* does more than provide a rare example of sustained second person future tense narration in literature. It stands up as a narrative that is cleverly crafted and, at varying times, humorous, illuminating, educational and moving.

Although *HTBAA* is by nature a very different work to the purely prose form of "The Flight", at least some of the same effects could be obtained. These include a certain amount of ontological havoc and, one hopes, a similar capitalising on the immersive quality of the SPN. The concluding chapter looks at, among other things, the specific attributes of the chosen texts that could be captured in "The Flight".

Chapter eight:
Conclusion: The special qualities of the second person

The aims of this thesis have included surveying the research thus far into the Second Person Narrative, or SPN, looking at the way the mode has been used in a sustained manner in extended fiction, explaining why in sustained form it is one of the rarest things in novels, identifying what unique properties it might offer the modern writer of fiction, and putting these unique properties into practice in an original work. The advantages and disadvantages of the SPN mode were examined during a comprehensive literature review and by closely looking at novels by Peter Kocan and Eddie Campbell (and examining, to a lesser extent, other major SPN narratives). The writing of the creative component happened in two stages, firstly with work on the YA ("young adult") novel *Your Story*, which was abandoned during the process (though not before the exercise had imparted many lessons), and finally with the complete short story/novella "The Flight", aimed at an adult audience.

The use of the SPN in a sustained manner is indeed rare in fiction. Only slightly more than a dozen novels written in such a way and printed in English could be identified, and there was shown to be huge variety among them. Nonetheless some traits were observed: the novels tended toward brevity, intense emotions and traumatic situations. Research into second person narrative has been comparatively slight so far, no doubt reflecting that its employment by writers of fiction has been so rare. Nonetheless, a body of work has built up, and it shows considerable disagreement about most aspects of the mode, including exactly what constitutes second person narration and, in specific texts, who is doing the talking and who is doing the listening. The very nature of the SPN novel, with its instability and constantly shifting referent (in most texts) suggests these issues

will not be resolved any time soon. Indeed as many have pointed out, writers regularly play with these ambiguities. In the process this thesis has shown that no single, precise, all-encompassing definition can cover the range of sustained second person fiction manuscripts. The important thing in this conclusion is not to concentrate on disagreement among researchers (though it must be noted, as it is illuminating), but to concentrate on the areas where researchers have convincingly identified literary advantages, which is to say effects that cannot be achieved as effectively (or at all) using the more common first or third person approaches. The research leading up to the "second person" issue of *Style* (1994) isolated several unique SPN properties that can be exploited by writers. These include the ability to provide:

- An invitation for the reader to place himself in the position of the writer/protagonist and apparently witness the same scenes and perform the same action (Morrissette 1965, p. 2, McHale 1987, p. 224), and to turn the reader into a quasi-literary figure (Margolin 1990, p. 438).
- A complex series of perspectives and "curiously varied psychological resonances" (Morrissette 1965, p. 2).
- A "decidedly involving quality, which provokes much greater initial empathy with second-person protagonists than with first- or third-person characters" (Bonheim, paraphrased in Fludernik 1994a, p. 286).
- An ability to reveal things to a character that the character doesn't know (Butor 1969, quoted in Walker 2000, p. 45); a situation where a "voice without and above the character" can be telling the narrating voice something the character "cannot or will not recall (the repressed or subconscious) and interpreting their significance for the 'you's' current state and activities" (Margolin 1990, pp. 444-445).
- An ambiguous reader-narrator-character relationship in which the reader oscillates in identification (Oppenheim via Schofield 1998b, p. 131).
- "Referential slither" (Bonheim 1983, p. 76), shiftiness (McHale 1987, p. 224; Hantzis 1988, p. 75) and ontological havoc (Margolin 1990, p. 429).

- The intimacy of first person without bragging or pompousness (Hopkins and Perkins 1981, pp. 131-132).
- The capacity for irony, indirect discourse, interior monologues, various kinds of distance, fluctuations of distance between narrator and protagonist, flexible handling of time and space, and ambiguity that can be exploited (Hopkins and Perkins 1981, pp. 131).
- Dual temporality: "the event or happening time and the time of the telling" (Hopkins and Perkins 1981, pp. 122).
- Multiple subjectivity, the ability to create the text from multiple voices (Hantzis 1988, pp. 2, 21, 138-139) and intersubjectivity (Hantzis p. 75).
- A tone of judgement or prophesy (Margolin 1990, p. 445).
- A shortening and distancing effect of the author's "camera lens" (Kacandes 1993, pp. 142-143).

At various points this thesis examined the relationship between the real author, the implied author, the narrator, the narratee, the implied reader and the real reader, and identified that further complexities creep in with memoir-based SPN works, which can present the paradoxical situation of the implied author also being the narratee. It was shown how the second person seems to disrupt some of Genette's work to lay down formal rules on narrative discourse, and it pointed out SPN pitfalls too. These include that such a voice can appear non-mimetic; it is hard to sustain; the inherent ambiguity can repel readers (as can the notion of compelling "you" to participate in things that the reader might consider repulsive); it can be difficult to read and can come across as self-consciously clever, distancing the reader from the emotional centre of the story. It was also shown that second person works well with the present tense (notwithstanding claims by some that auto narration is non-mimetic) and, almost uniquely in the case of Campbell's *HTBAA,* in future perfect. It was in the second wave of research into the SPN (from 1994) that more was gleaned about some of the most powerful literary properties of the SPN, for example it can be used to create:

- A powerful depiction of the outsider, inviting the reader to "share customarily marginalized stances" (Cornis-Pope 1994, ¶8).
- A triplication of self – a work that is simultaneously homodiegetic, heterodiegetic, and autodiegetic (Nance 1994, ¶13).
- A situation where readers "feel themselves addressed and … experience the force of an unusual relationship created between the narrator and narratee." (Kacandes 1994, section 2 ¶19).
- An ability to place a fully engaged reader in a "condition of epistemological and ontological havoc". (Schofield 1998b, p. 12).
- A voice that is "at once familiar and deeply strange" (Schofield 1998b, p. 5).
- Huge flexibility: "Depending on the text, 'you' can be used as a boundary-crossing address from the narrator in the textual world to the reader in the real world … as an intra-textual-world address from the narrator to an anonymous narratee … as an address from the narrator to a specific individual (= character) in the textual world … as a self-address by the narrator … even [as in postmodern metafiction] as an address from an authorial figure to a real-world reader interrupting the textual-world speech act of the narrator…" (Ryan 2001, pp. 137-138).
- An emphasis on an existence dictated by the outside (DelConte 2003, p. 205).
- The depiction of a mind in flux (Richardson 2006, p. 35) and a dramatisation of an individual's struggle against an oppressive authority (Richardson 2006, p. 36).
- Triple temporality when used with the future perfect tense: past, present and future in the one text (Small 2011, section 1 ¶7).
- A situation where a character is told by the narrating voice something about himself or herself that he or she does not already know (Ryan 2001, p. 138).

Many researchers have remarked on the ambiguity that can be played on in an SPN, the ontological instability in the "you" narration, the compelling yet unsettling address of the SPN, the way the narration could convey to the reader more than is in a character's field of view, or reawaken memories within that character that have been diminished or distorted by time, or can act as a tool in a dialogue between an older and younger self (or even a sane and deranged self). It was shown how the SPN did not preclude the use of other literary devices and techniques, including free indirect discourse, compression of time, irony and stream of consciousness. However, it was also shown that, although the "rules" of second person may be highly flexible, a text still needs an internal logic to carry the reader along. Also evident was an ambiguity of ownership – to whom do the humour, observations and cynicism belong? This leads to a sort of collective ownership of the text. John Wright pointed out that it leads to a collective ownership of shame, too, which is to say that by avoiding the "I" in favour of a more general "you", it can be easier for a person to tell a story that is painful and/or shows the teller of the story in a bad light (Wright, J., personal communication, June 19, 2012). The ambiguity that seems to pervade everything about the SPN also intensified the question of narratorial reliability: stripped of the apparent "direct observer" status of first person, or the "objective" voice of third person, there may be more questioning of whether the dialogue and incidents have been recorded as they "happened" or filtered through the biases of "you" and adapted to suit. Such uncertainty can make for a richer, more intriguing text.

Analysis of the Kocan and Campbell works, and to a lesser extent the rest of the sustained SPN canon, aimed to prove that second person can be more than a gimmick and can achieve things not available with the first or third person alone. Peter Kocan's *The Treatment* and *The Cure* supports the contention that second person narration has a special ability to depict a mind in flux, to concentrate the effects of oppressive authority, to unsettle the reader. It can be playful, transgressive, and illuminating (Richardson 2006, p. 35). Kocan's duology was possibly the first extended fiction to use the sustained SPN to effectively present a mind blurred by mental illness (the earlier *How Like a God* dealt with obsession,

but switched to third person for the most intense scene). Kocan achieved much else. He enhanced: the feeling of alienation, disassociation and separation, the sense of being watched and observed, the feeling of powerlessness and of the inevitability of the powers-that-be moving "you" around like a pawn. In other words, he used the SPN to make the reader, the "you", feel the constraints of incarceration. As Peter Doyle put it, the second person voice contains within it a sense of the judicial, a register of command, instruction, compulsion, and dictation (Doyle, P., personal communication, October 6, 1012). Nonetheless, this was alleviated when needed by Kocan's use of techniques including brevity, extended dialogue, humour (Schofield 1998a, section 1 ¶4, pointed out that humour and wit can reduce our resistance to the SPN), and sections of almost conventional stream of consciousness where the "you" comes close to disappearing. Such alleviation is potentially necessary, lest the reader be repelled by the SPN.

Kocan also cleverly managed distance and intimacy to provide some reader relief between the more harrowing scenes – and to give a broader picture than might be "seen" by the troubled protagonist. He set the story in the present tense to create an immediacy and to give the impression anything could happen next, that things were out of the control of the narrator or character. It has been argued by Schofield (1998b) that *The Treatment* is not true second person (p. 160), and that the "you" is merely a "disguise for the dissembling 'I'" (p. 147). The Kocan chapter herein counters that by arguing that the work fits into other researchers' definitions of second person and, equally importantly, that substituting "I" or "he" would make for a very different and less richly layered text.

Kocan's duology is more arresting and immediate as a direct result of the choice of second person, present tense, and achieves effects unavailable with strict first or third person narration (even third person using free indirect discourse). We are inside the protagonist's head but also definitely outside too, observing him and observing him observing himself. We are sometimes but not always in possession of a bigger picture, or at least a broader awareness of circumstances, than the

author grants the character (such a feat is hard to manage in first person, yet with this SPN we maintain an intimacy very similar to first person). We have a sense of claustrophobia, surveillance and lack of agency, and a judgemental voice exacerbating the sensational of prescribed punishment. We also have the sense of an intimate guided tour, through a world that is alien to you, but well known to the narrator. Kocan realises the multiple subjectivity of the SPN noted by Hantzis (1988, p. 33) and others; in parts, such as the flashback scenes particularly, we have something akin to the "triplication of the self" alluded to by Nance (1994, ¶13). We also have specificity in the character Len Tarbutt, and universality in the idea that "you", the reader (indeed any reader), could have had the same experiences if things in your life had gone differently. There is arguably dual time too (as proposed by Hopkins and Perkins 1981, p. 122); however, with Kocan's predominant use of the present tense and near simultaneous "automatic narration", the tracts of time (those of the happening and the telling) are generally not as broadly spaced, nor as a consequence as richly suggestive of further contemplation, as in SPNs using past tense or future perfect. The Kocan chapter concluded that the SPN proved an ideal way to tell a short, intense story about a lone and frightened man dealing with extreme mental problems and the threat of violence and debilitating medical "cures" as he slowly found his place in the world through the practice of art.

Similarly, the second person – specifically a future tense version – proved a potent model to relay Alec MacGarry's story in Eddie Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*, enabling the tale to be told on several levels, from several points of view, and with double and even triple temporality. Like Kocan, a simple substitution of "I" or "he" for "you" would fail to deliver such an intense, multilevel reading experience. Subjectivity here is not just split, but splintered. Campbell's narrator and his reader are in states of ontological havoc. The reader is at times spoken to by what seems to be the real author crashing in on the implied author. We have the younger Alec in the dialogue, the older Alec in the narration. We have fate too, speaking to us, as in a biblical-style prophesy, mixed in with detached "un-bylined" guidebook or "how-to" voice; somewhere in between we have a genial

guy at the bar summarising, and of course we have the "you" with whom we can identify closely or distantly depending on the circumstances. "You" are with Eddie and Alec at every step of the way, at times closely and at times far away, in accordance with the notion of continuous identification and distancing. Yet the visual elements of this graphic novel also allow the reader to build their own third person narration.

It has been shown how second person can contain within itself both the inside and outside view. It can allow the reader to not only walk inside a character's skin, but to walk next to him at the same time, or hover above him, or move rapidly between such divergent points. At its most efficacious, the SPN view could be likened to walking around a sculpture and seeing it from all sides, and also from inside – and I hope those attributes have been demonstrated throughout this work. Richardson's 2006 claim that second person may "turn out to be one of the most important technical advances in fictional narration since the introduction of the stream of consciousness" (p. 35) could be seen as optimistic, particularly considering the slight activity in the field since he wrote those words. However the intention of the statement was almost certainly to shed light on the unrealised potential of this powerful mode, which undoubtedly will find new expressions in the fiction of the future. In that sense, what is yet to come is exciting and may yet be bountiful.

Lessons for "The Flight"

The aim with "The Flight" was to bring together what had been learned and to exploit SPN advantages that have been identified in this thesis. However, this was to be done within the confines of keeping the story accessible to the average engaged reader, while also keeping it true to its character(s) and subject matter. The other aim was to avoid the SPN pitfalls that have been identified. Compared with *Your Story*, set in a large drought-plagued country, it took advantage of a much more restricted environment – the extreme heterotopia of an aeroplane – and introduced an anxious-bordering-on-paranoid fugitive as the main protagonist.

What are some of the SPN effects identified in this thesis that have been captured in "The Flight"? Firstly, "The Flight" presents the "you" as an invitation for the reader to participate. The reality is that "participation" is an illusion, as he or she is still bound by the immutable progression of a pre-determined plot. However, he or she can engage with the text and take on the very specific role suggested by the "you". The reader may take on this role either partly, something close to fully or, more likely, oscillate between identification and distance. The present tense second person narration lets the reader see the same thing as the participant at the same time ("the luggage vans and fuel trucks are edging right-to-left across your porthole"), hopefully creating the immediately involving and immersive qualities that have been identified as SPN advantages. We are with a character who is very much an outsider. There is a strong element of command and instruction in the voice, particularly when the oppressive second person imperative is used. Some of this mixes with a free indirect discourse as the frustrations of the "you" seep into the narration ("Now the safety video. Stow any luggage under the seat in front of you. Click on your seat-belt. *Turn off your portable electronic devices.* Do as you are told. Do it now."). The tone of many sections emphasises this lack of agency, and of an "existence dictated from the outside",[122] for example: "You must walk along the glass-sided walkway between plane and the terminal. You must expose yourself to the world for the walkway's entire length." The protagonist's paranoia and disassociation can be felt in paragraphs which, in first person, might seem silly:

> Feel your chin. Push its soft underside with your index finger. Is that a bruise? The cold, rounded barrel was so real. So too the sensation that hit you just as the dream was dissolving: Siobhan had done it. She had called in the uniforms. Had betrayed from within. Yet another Judas….

[122] In keeping with the phrase used by DelConte (2003, p. 205).

> You keep each face deliberately indistinct. Each one, you imagine, is staring at you. Taking a new interest in your height, your ethnicity, the shape of your face, the unconvincing darkness of your hair.

In the Kocan and Campbell chapters it proved illuminating to transpose examples of their published SPN texts into a more conventional form for comparison. This is a paragraph from the final version of "The Flight":

> You try to supress such uncharitable thoughts – calm down, *calm down* – but the plane should have left at twenty-five past. They made you rush. All the usual anxieties rise and grip your throat. It's no consolation when a small puff of cool air reaches your pod at last, suggesting the doors are closed. The plane still isn't moving. The plane *still isn't friggenwell moving*.

Here, it is recast from the second person original, to first person, maintaining the present tense:

> I try to supress such uncharitable thoughts – I must calm down, *calm down* – but the plane should have left at twenty-five past. They made me rush. All the usual anxieties rise and grip my throat. It's no consolation when a small puff of cool air reaches my pod at last, suggesting the doors are closed. The plane still isn't moving. The plane *still isn't friggenwell moving*.

And here it is recast into third person, present tense:

> He tries to supress such uncharitable thoughts – he needs to calm down, *calm down* – but the plane should have left at twenty-five past. They made him rush. All the usual anxieties rise and grip his throat. It's no consolation when a small puff of cool air reaches his pod at last,

> suggesting the doors are closed. The plane still isn't moving. The plane *still isn't friggenwell moving*.

The version recast into first person has a trite tone, and a whining voice. In third person it works a little better, but there is less intimacy (and, arguably, the free indirect discourse cursing at the end is out of place). The disembodied voice in the original explaining "your" frustration comes across as more convincing for this character's situation, and more unsettling than either the character putting fleeting, banal or juvenile (but plausible) thoughts into his own voice, or having an obviously external narrator trying to summarise them. I believe that, if rendered in either first or third person, "The Flight" would have been a more conventional work and a more transparent one because it would have lost most of its ambiguity and its slightly "other worldly" qualities. There is first person intimacy in parts ("Knees shaking again. Arms too. Cold coursing through your body. Think distant thoughts. Think them now.") but there is also a shortening and distancing effect, a moving of the camera lens to something closer to third person, often to create the sensation of being watched ("From above, you can be seen making neat patterns. Covering each forkful with the exact same combination of vegetables."). Flashbacks are used to handle time ("With Siobhan. That first time. In a borrowed room in Carlton a full year ago. Before the arrest. Before the charges."), though there is not "the triplication of self"; the protagonist is motivated by a certain righteousness and engages in very little reassessment or reinterpretation. To have it otherwise would be inconsistent with the character.

Interior monologue is incorporated, adding an extra layer onto the inherent strangeness of the SPN ("The shape in the corner of your left eye is talking. *Pretend you can't hear. Pretend you are otherwise engaged.* You can't risk conversation. Or eye contact. Or anything else."). Claustrophobia is exacerbated ("You are strapped into place, to be observed at will. … There are so many hours to go, so many possibilities for grief.") and the reader, I hope, will be aware of the referential slither, even if they have no name for it. After all, "you" the reader, will be looking back as "you" at a life that is not yours, and which is potentially

filled with ideas and emotions that are alien or perhaps offensive. However, fear, anxiousness, confusion, the need for sleep, and so on, are near-universal emotions and can promote reader identification with the character. Irrespective of any personal shortcomings, whistleblowers are also thought by many to be heroic characters. This promotes the notion of "reader as literary hero" that can accompany taking on the "you" role. Ideally, however, reader identification should be in constant oscillation. There was a wish to also capture the sensation of watching yourself in the world, while being in that world:

> The woman – you haven't taken in her face – points to a hand-written sign on an easel. It is at this point that you start to view everything, including yourself, as if through a monitor. The footage is black and white, jerky. There is a time banner along the bottom, counting out the hundredths of a second.

All through the text we see the protagonist's mind in flux ("The realisation comes that it is the face that half the world would like to stamp on. Or are you having yourself on … deluding your *egomaniacal* self?"), and we experience multiple subjectivity. Filtered through the "you" (if it is interpreted as being auto-narrated), or the one who says "you" (if it is not), are the voices running through the protagonist's head, his sub-vocal speed, his real speech, his receiving and interpreting of the words of others, plus his fantasies and his not always clearly thought-out attempts to come to grip with the reality of his situation. There is an intersubjectivity built into the question of who is saying what, and to whom, and in the process of the reader watching the character, and sometimes playing the role of the character, while sharing his mental processes, and falling in and out of identification, empathy and agreement. We see his narcissism; the SPN also allows the writer to have some small metalingual fun while also being conscious of the pitfall of being too clever and thereby breaking the tension (or, alternatively, calling too much attention to the SPN mode at the potential expense of the reader's immersion in the story): "Sweat runs even more copiously than before. The delay has to be *all about you*."

What SPN attributes were not exploited? When the question of Siobhan's trustworthiness was raised, there was a plan to give the impression the narrator might be telling the character something he doesn't know. During the writing process this couldn't be made convincing, so the suspicion was instead tied to the character's dream. Generally, there are no "reawakened memories" promoted by the narrating voice. There was no attempt to break the fourth wall in the final version by having the narrator overly intruding on the character, for example, nor by directly addressing the reader. There are hints of a tone of prophesy ("Within hours, or perhaps days, you'll blow its cohesion apart. Nothing will be the same once you've emptied that safe deposit box."), however, this could be interpreted by the reader as merely wishful thinking by the character. Strategies employed to reduce the repelling nature of the SPN included the use of humour, flashbacks, dialogue, dream sequences, streams of consciousness and, of course, simplicity of story and brevity. The single most important aspect of making it work was matching the mode to the right situation and characters, something I had failed to do with the earlier *Your Story*. The best way to illustrate what was learned along the way is to present a set of ten conditions under which I believe sustained second person narration can be an effective tool in long-form fiction. Like almost everything to do with the SPN, however, this list is flexible and highly debatable.

Sustained second person: Ten Conditions

It has been shown that the SPN subverts the normal rules of narration, and that second person is unusually hard to define, let alone pin down by rules. Nonetheless, there are certain conditions under which sustained second person appears to work best, if the aim is to produce a work that can remain accessible to an engaged reader while still exploiting the unique effects isolated in this thesis. Any such list will be entirely subjective, of course, as foreshadowed in the introduction to this thesis. No claim is made for the definitiveness or inviolability of these conditions; that would be arrogant and foolhardy when dealing with such an unstable and contested narrative mode. Any or all of these ten points can be modified or completely cast aside when someone finds a new way of exploiting

this under-utilised SPN form. Nonetheless, this list may serve as a catalyst for contemplation for any writer considering working in the sustained second person mode.

1. Simplicity/Brevity: The sustained SPN works well when the writing style, and ideally the story itself, are simple. The mode is already drawing so much attention to itself by its rarity and confronting nature that overt literariness, or complex plot devices, could present a further, and perhaps insurmountable, barrier to immersion. So could an extended page count. *The Treatment*, at just 101 printed pages, provides a good illustration of brevity, as does "The Flight" with slightly fewer than 11,000 words. As always, there are exceptions, for example, when the plot complexity is directly playing with the SPN form, as in parts of Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*. Equally, though, it should be noted Calvino periodically switched to third person to break things up. In short, the second person is already a difficult form, so additional literary pyrotechnics could chase away even the keenest readers.

2. Restriction of locale: The SPN is particularly suited for a story set in a jail, aeroplane or other heterotopia (such as a violent family or sexual relationship). Again the Kocan and Davis works provide examples as does Kandelaars' *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel*. In each, the SPN voice – the relentless, almost bullying series of "commands" issued to *you* – can heighten the feeling of claustrophobia, surveillance, the oppressiveness of power and the inevitability of "fate".

3. Restriction of character: Just as a restricted, oppressive locale (or situation) seems to work well in an SPN, the ideal character is one that is very much locked-in – either physically (jail, social marginalisation etc) or mentally (paranoia, despondency etc), or both (as in the case of Kocan's Len Tarbutt). Second person mode can reinforce a lack of agency and a sense of anxiety. It carries with it a tone of judgement that can be effective, and this aspect was exploited in "The Flight". Parts of *The Treatment* show how the SPN can emulate mental illness or

instability by giving the impression a character is being directed and controlled by an outside voice and/or is watching his actions from a viewpoint outside his or her body.

4. Correlation of experience: Second person is the mode of the outsider. On the evidence considered here, it works best in autobiography, or at least where a text depicts things known to be close to the writer's real experience (as in, say, Campbell's *Alec: How to be an Artist*). This seems to confer the authority on the writer to be so "arrogant" as to directly put the reader in the shoes of a character. It also allows under-reporting; less exposition is needed because the reader brings some knowledge of the situation with him or her. If the writer is not well known (as in Jackson's *No End to the Way*), it can still work as convincing revelatory memoir if it demonstrates intimate knowledge of an otherwise closed world. In the case of "The Flight", the necessary trick was to appropriate a well-known story/identity/archetype, so the audience would still bring some information to their reading.

5. Correlation of language: At its best, the SPN voice can allow the author to combine the intimacy of first person with the more expansive view of third person, without the clumsy device of toggling between those two other narrative modes. In keeping with the "correlation of experience" mentioned above, the idea that someone with inside information is leading "you" through a difficult world/situation is best realised when the language of the narration broadly matches that of your "tour guide", the protagonist. This was the reason to have an articulate journalist as the protagonist in "The Flight". The language did not need to be restricted to match the character; a poetic turn of phrase was appropriate. Of course there is the convention of the well-spoken narrator (as used by, say, Henry James in *What Maisie Knew*) but in second person such a device could enhance the idea there was solely an external narrator, as appears to be the case in SPN books that strictly follow the "How To" format (such as Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*). Having a separate, identified narrator reduces the

unsettling (but potentially useful) ontological instability experienced by readers when dealing with the "you".

6. Correlation of gender/personal traits: An SPN story works best when the gender of the reader matches the gender of the protagonist, and ideally other attributes match up as well (age, nationality, sexual orientation etc). This aid to identification/empathy with the character, however, is obviously something a writer can rarely control, except perhaps by writing solely for a very small niche audience, or providing almost no specific details of the protagonist. Even when there is an almost complete match-up, the author still has to accept that the level of reader identification will vary through the text. Equally, when there is little in the way of match-up, good writing can still successfully invite the reader to fill an unfamiliar role (as achieved in Jackson's *No End to the Way* and Kandelaars' *Memoirs of a Suburban Girl: A Novel*). After all, a certain amount of "game playing" is involved in the reading of any fictional text.

7. Ambiguity of narrator: Who is doing the talking? In most good SPNs there is considerable ambiguity, often from line to line or paragraph to paragraph. Sometimes the narrator appears to be an older person explaining things to the younger version of his or her own self with the benefit of later wisdom (as in parts of Campbell). However, in the best SPNs the transmission can be far more complex (or at least far more varied) than that. Often the SPN is relating a story that inherently involves ambiguity, such as when a mind is damaged or drugged, or perhaps filled with competing voices, or when there is sufficient turmoil and trauma in a situation to make the facts very hard to define, such as in Butlin's *The Sound of My Voice*. The SPN does ambiguity well.

8. Ambiguity of narratee: Who is doing the listening? The idea that someone is being told their own story – often in "real time" – is to many ridiculous, yet there are good reasons why someone might need to have their own story retold or reinterpreted for them (to make sense of what happened in a traumatic time, to give but one example). Second person is an effective tool in doing that. However,

in a well told SPN there is often considerable slippage, or confusion, about whether the tale is aimed at "you" (the real reader), "you" (the implied reader), "you" the character, or some generalised entity. Generally, the "you" character should be under-described to allow more space for the reader to inhabit the role, but again there are exceptions (Campbell, for example, draws what his Alec looks like, notwithstanding his drawings can tend towards caricature).

9. Immediacy: Present tense works well with the sustained SPN, adding immediacy and brightness, and creating the impression everything is coming to the author, character and reader (and all shades thereof) at the same time. The range of things that could happen next seems greater, especially when the text is awash with that slightly disconnected feeling of powerlessness that an SPN can evoke. "The Flight" tried to capitalise on these advantages by staying almost exclusively "in the moment". Present tense serves to reduce the quandary of second person past tense: why is someone telling a character's own story when it has already been experienced (there are naturalisations that can mitigate this, as discussed in the previous point, but it can still nag the reader). I suspect the future perfect tense – although giving all temporalities at once (past, present and future) in Campbell's graphic novel *Alec: How to be an Artist* – would be very hard to maintain in a purely prose work.

10. Variety: The compounding effect of all of the above can repel readers. The relentless "you" over 200 or 300 pages could potentially push a reader into a corner where he or she feels hectored and unhappy (and perhaps ready to give up on the text). Some relief is necessary. The best second person narratives, including Kocan's and Campbell's, make use of humour and dialogue (dialogue by nature tends to be first person) to provide this relief. They also vary the view, making good use of the capability within an SPN to shorten and lengthen the "lens". Other techniques of providing relief, such as including sections from other non-SPN texts (letters, diaries etc), are also popular but are a far greater indicator of author audibility, and can thereby enhance the feeling that some readers experience with an SPN: that they are being manipulated. Such interruptions can

also be irritating to read, if only because they slow the main story down. For that reason they were avoided in the creative work presented with this thesis.

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