

**How does *you* matter to you?
Le pronom de 2^e personne comme
vecteur d'attention**

Sandrine SORLIN

Séminaire transversal *What Matters*

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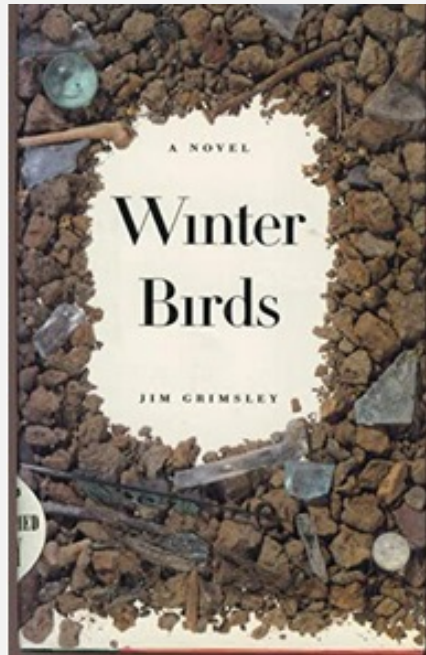


The Stylistics of 'You'

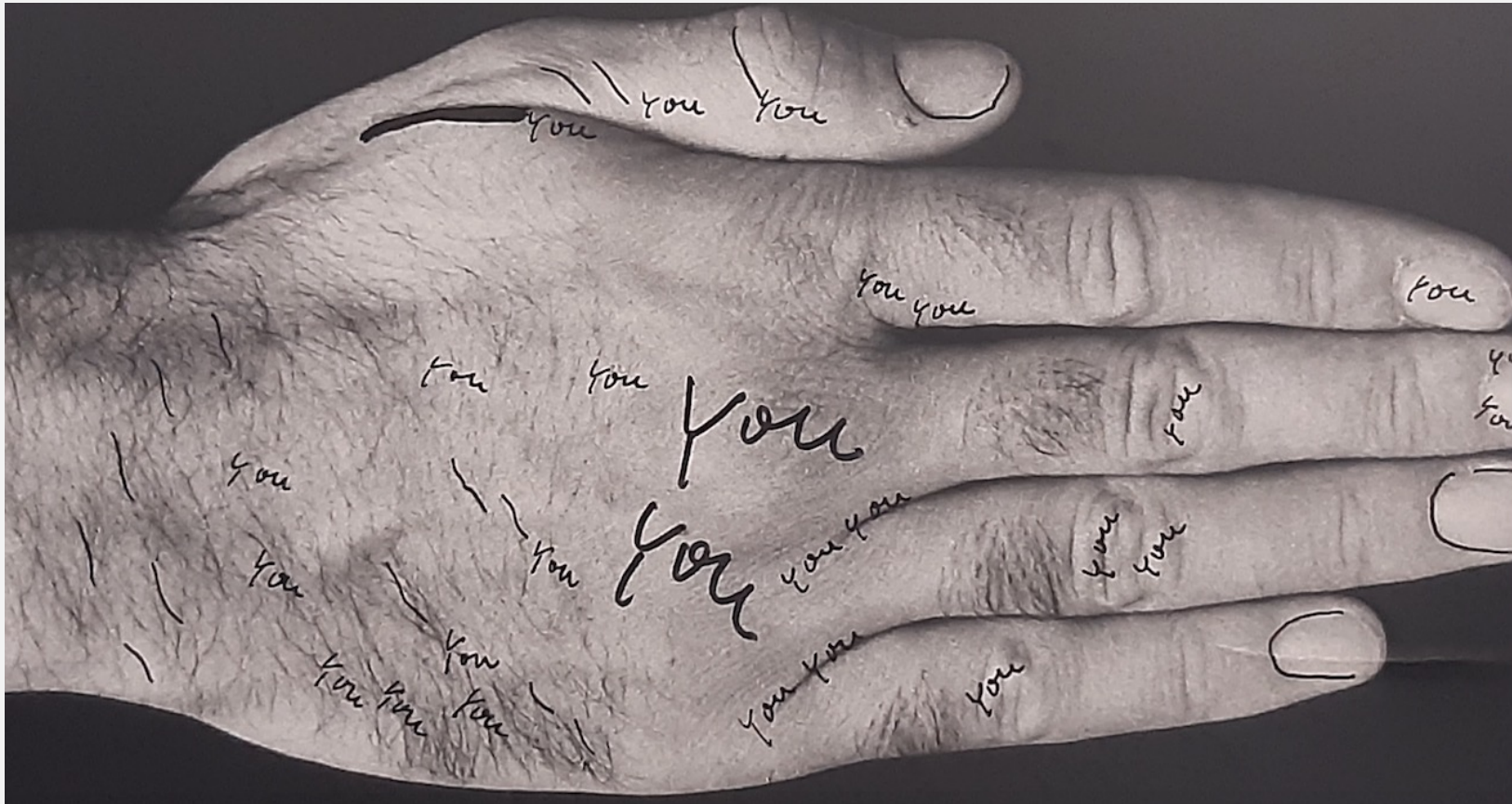
Second-Person Pronoun
and its Pragmatic Effects

Sandrine Sorlin

Reconnaissances



Ketty La Rocca
Rencontres photographiques d'Arles 2022



Les raisons d'une attention particulière

- Raisons linguistiques
- You have thought so much about poverty—it is the thing you have feared all your life, the thing you know would happen to you sooner or later; and it is all so utterly and prosaically different. You thought it would be quite simple; it is extraordinarily complicated. You thought it would be terrible; it is merely squalid and boring. **It is the peculiar lowness of poverty that you discover first;** (16-7)
- 'It is altogether curious, your first contact with poverty' (17)
- 'It is altogether curious, *my first contact with poverty' (17)

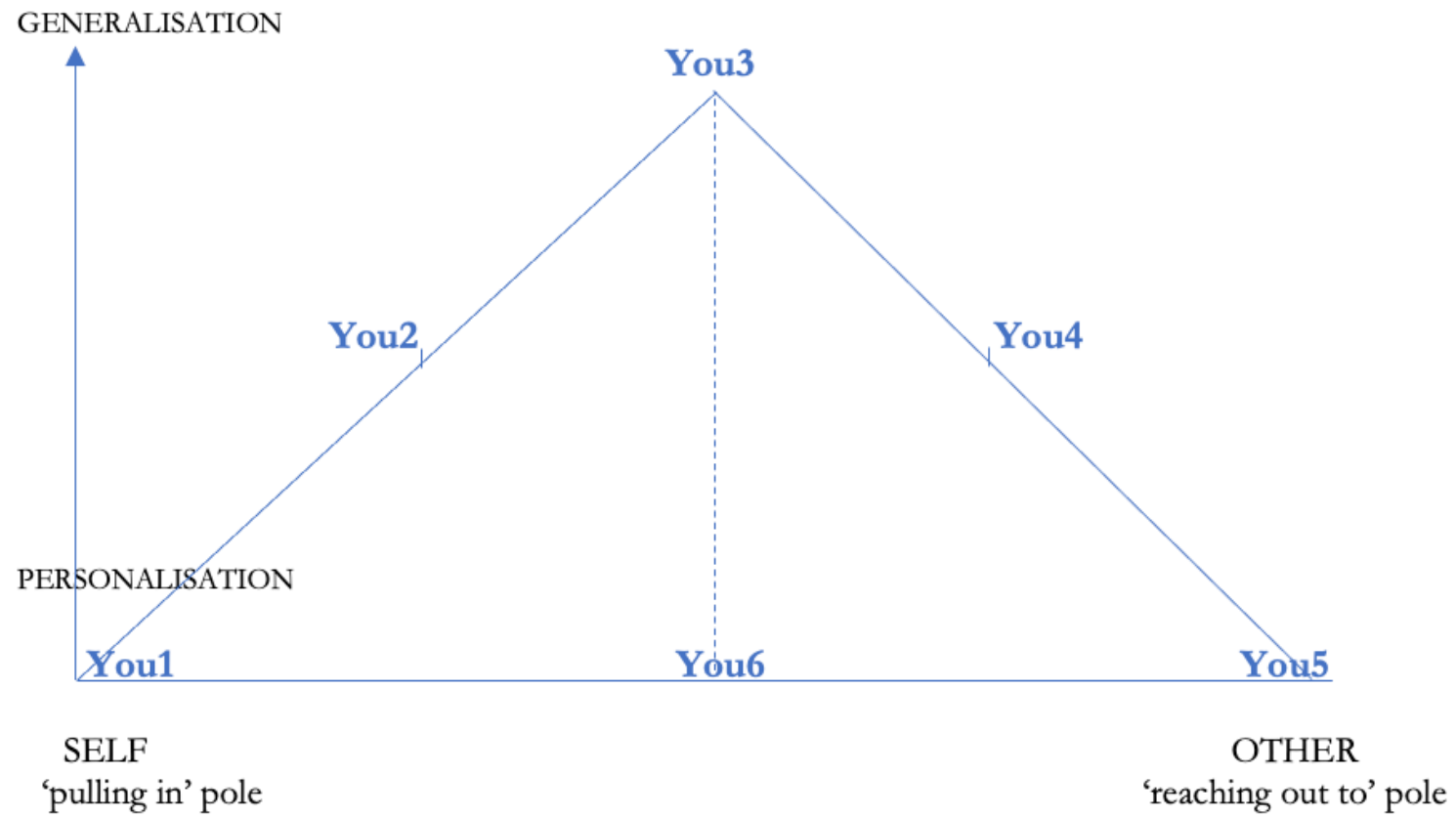


Figure 1. The six points of reference for 'you' in written narratives

Perspective et perception

- 'you' s'immiscant entre les oppositions binaires
- We versus they
- It is curious how people take it for granted that they have a right to preach at you and pray over you as soon as your income falls below a certain level. (181)
- Black vs White
- Effet d'implication singulier en raison
 - de la variable générique
 - du positionnement (*alignment*) que 'you' engendre



You're slicing the tomato



He's slicing the tomato

- Variable générique
- Positionnement du lecteur au plus près du centre déictique/cognitif/affectif du narrateur
- Effet d'adresse -> de résonance

- But what to do when it is the middle of the night, when you have woken up sometime between two and four in the morning, have stretched out on the sofa in the library, and are unable to go back to sleep? It is too late to read, too late to turn on the television, too late to watch a film, and so you lie in the dark and ruminate, letting your thoughts go wherever they choose to go. Sometimes you get lucky and are able to latch onto a word, or a character, or a scene from the book you are working on, but more often you will discover yourself thinking about the past, and in your experience, whenever your thoughts turn to the past at three o'clock in the morning, those thoughts tend to be dark. (WJ 170)

Jim Grimsley, *Winter Birds* (1992)

The first person version felt false because I was writing as if I were still that age in that family; it put me too far inside the pain of the story. The third person version felt false because it imposed too much distance between the narrative and me. Since I was writing an autobiographical story, I felt I needed the form of the book to acknowledge my personal connection to Danny.

The third version eventually became the published book; I tried the second person and found that it had the right voice, and embodied the true connection between writer and material. I felt as if I were telling the story to myself at the age of eight. (Jim Grimsley)

I'attention d'un autre

- There was no longer an other to which one would say 'Thou' in the hope of being heard, of being recognized as a subject, of being answered. The historical reality of the Holocaust became, thus, a reality which extinguished philosophically the very possibility of address, the possibility of appealing, or of turning to, another. But when one cannot turn to a 'you' one cannot say 'thou' even to oneself. (Laub in Felman & Laub, 1992: 82)

In the bathroom you stop to pee and wash your hands. You take a long time with your hands, rubbing the soap on each finger separately.

Your hands leave wet streaks on the towels, and the toilet, when you pull the handle, makes a roar that shakes the room.

In Mama and Papa's bedroom you stand still. Mama has pulled the curtains and drawn the shades. In the dim cool light the room feels like underwater, the cold air chilling your skin. (*Winter Birds* 90-1)

In the bathroom you stop to **pee** and **wash** your hands. You **take** a long time with your hands, **rubbing** the soap on each finger separately.

Your hands leave wet streaks on the towels, and the toilet, when you **pull** the handle, makes a roar that shakes the room.

In Mama and Papa's bedroom you stand still. Mama has pulled the curtains and drawn the shades. In the dim cool light the room feels like underwater, the cold air chilling your skin. (90-1)

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The meeting of another embodied mind/subject

- ‘the experience of another as an embodied subject of experience like oneself’ (Thompson 2001: 17)
- However, we do not only mentally entertain an ‘objective’ third-person account of what others are, do to us and with us. When relating to others, we also experience them as bodily selves, similar to how we experience ourselves as the owners of our body and the authors of our actions. (Gallese, 2014: 5)

Jacobs (1861), Kincaid (1988), Adichie (2009),
Azumah Nelson (2021)

- Elisabeth Gaskell (*Mary Barton* 1848), Harriet Beecher Stowe's in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
- 'O reader, can you imagine my joy? No, you cannot, unless you have been a slave mother' (*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* 261)
- Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's '**The Thing Around Your Neck**'

Sometimes you felt invisible and tried to walk through your room wall into the hallway, and when you bumped into the wall, it left bruises on your arms. (Adichie 119)

Caleb Azumah Nelson, *Open Water* (2021)



Synchronisation des esprits/corps

- It's a strange turn of phrase, you think, being allowed to breathe (101)
- when you hear music and something, something takes you, closes your eyes, moves your feet, hips, shoulders, bobs your head, reaches inwards, invites you to do the same, leads you if only for a moment, towards something else which has no name, needs no name, do you question it? Or do you dance, even when you don't know the song. (92)

participatory sense-making

- “literary reading, like any form of human exchange, is thus a shared act of participation, moment by moment, in the unfolding action, a process of leading and being led in order to enact an experience” (Popova 2015: 89)
- rhythmic coordination

CONCLUSION

- Constellations différentes suivant l'œuvre et le genre
- Lecture active et incarnée
- Puissant vecteur d'attention

WORKS ALLUDED TO

- Gallese, V. 2014. Bodily selves in relation: Embodied simulation as second-person perspective on intersubjectivity, *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 369(1644), 1–12.
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