

JOANNA JEZIORSKA-HAŁADYJ
Institute of Polish Literature,
University of Warsaw

SECOND-PERSON NARRATIVES IN NON-FICTION*

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Taking into account second-person narratives in non-fiction prose,¹ or even considering non-fiction from a narratological point of view, requires several preliminary methodological assumptions. The first has already been made in the very act of formulating the question, namely in assuming the validity of juxtaposing fiction and non-fiction instead of replacing the divide with a broad category of the narrative seen as a universal pattern of understanding experience. Although I believe that referential narratives differ substantially from fictional narratives, I am interested mainly in the intratextual implications of that distinction, the question regarding the status of typically novelistic narrative forms in non-fiction. I believe that second-person narration (just as interior monologue or free indirect speech) functions differently in narratives recounting real thoughts and words than in narratives where thoughts were created solely in the writer's imagination.²

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¹ I understand non-fiction to be reportage, autobiographical texts, and essays. See Małgorzata Czermińska, "Badania nad prozą niefikcyjną – sukcesy, pułapki, osobliwości" ["Research on Non-Fiction Prose: Successes, Traps, Peculiarities"], in *Wiedza o literaturze i edukacja: księga referatów Zjazdu Polonistów [Literary Studies and Education]*, ed. Teresa Michałowska, Zbigniew Goliński, Zbigniew Jarosiński (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Literackie im. Adama Mickiewicza, Instytut Badań Literackich, 1996).

² See Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Joanna Jeziorska-Haładyj, *Tekstowe wykładniki fikcji. Na przykładzie reportażu i powieści autobiograficznej [Textual Signposts of Fictionality in Reportage and Autobiographical Novel]* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2013).

1. Tools of poetics for non-fiction

Making referential narratives a separate case in narratology inevitably leads to a fundamental question: Does analysing non-fiction require specific, distinctive tools? In Polish literary studies it was Michał Głowiński who gave an unequivocal answer to this question by claiming that the instruments of poetics, tested and perfected on the analysis of the most complicated literary texts, are capable of dealing with any type of discourse.³ Similar were the conclusions of Gérard Genette,⁴ who in 1991 expressed his regret that so far narratology had been rather helpless with regard to non-fiction. This assumption does not seem fully accurate insofar as Polish literary theory is concerned. For many reasons, research on non-fiction in Poland developed quite dynamically⁵ – it would be suffice to mention the pre-war concept of applied literature as elaborated by Stefania Skwarczyńska,⁶ Konstanty Troczyński's⁷ theory of reportage, or Głowiński's⁸ articles on documentary literature.

The tools of poetics seem to be appropriate for another important reason: in the last few decades a process of novelisation (Głowiński's term⁹) of non-fiction can be observed. The precursors of this tendency – the American New Journalists in the 1970s – borrowed narrative techniques from 19th-century realist novelists (most often from Dickens), whereas their successors have imitated nearly all of the narrative eccentricisms (or, as Brian Richardson would put it, extremisms¹⁰) of the postmodern novel. Simultaneism, time, and space montage, various techniques of presenting consciousness, forking paths of stories – all of these phenomena have already been used in both reportages and personal documents in different ways and versions. Paradoxically, non-fiction took over these devices when they lost their significance in the realm of the novel, thus losing their experimental potential or migrating to the popular novel.

³ Michał Głowiński, "Document as Novel," trans. Uliana F. Gabara, *New Literary History*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1987), 385–401; Michał Głowiński, "Poetyka wobec tekstów nieliterackich" ["Poetics Towards Non-Literary Texts"], in *Poetyka i okolice [Poetics and Its Surroundings]* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992).

⁴ Gérard Genette, *Fiction et diction* (Paris: Seuil, 1991).

⁵ More on this in Jeziorska-Haładyj, "Polish Narratology on Non-Fiction," *Przegląd Filozoficzno-Literacki*, no. 2 (2017).

⁶ Stefania Skwarczyńska, "O pojęcie literatury stosowanej," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, no. 4 (1931).

⁷ Konstanty Troczyński, "Estetyka reportażu literackiego," in *Od formizmu do moralizmu. Szkice literackie* (Poznań: Jan Jachowski Księgarnia Uniwersytecka, 1935).

⁸ Michał Głowiński, *Gry powieściowe: szkice z teorii i historii form narracyjnych [Novel Games: from the Theory and History of Narrative Forms]* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1973); Głowiński, "Document as Novel."

⁹ Głowiński, "Document as Novel."

¹⁰ Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006).

In the last few decades a certain feeling of overabundance of formal devices could be observed, resulting in a withdrawal from experiments and an evident return to 'transparent' ways of storytelling. American neorealism as represented by Jonathan Franzen or Jeffrey Eugenides and the so-called New Sincerity are good examples of this tendency.

Second-person narration seems to be the last truly extravagant narrative choice – it is unusual, perhaps even irritating to the reader of both fiction and non-fiction. The recent reception of Szczepan Twardoch's *Morfina* [*Morphine*] can serve as proof of this, as numerous critical and academic commentaries have concentrated on the second-person passages of the novel where the mysterious goddess addresses the protagonist in a strange but familiar way.

It seems particularly interesting to observe how second-person narration, a form that has undoubtedly originated from literature, functions in non-fiction. It is useful to distinguish between narratives in the second person and second-person narratives. The former would cover all kinds of addressing the recipient within the narrative, regardless of his or her status (intra- or extratextual). Addressing the actual reader (for instance 'Ladies and Gentlemen') is a form that is commonly used in a reportage. The latter refers to a situation when the main protagonist of the (actual) story is in fact its addressee; however, it must be underscored that even within this narrow understanding of second-person narration there exists a number of permutations resulting from the complexity of communicational roles. These often change in the course of the narrative. One useful tool is Monika Fludernik's typology.¹¹ It combines Stanzel's opposition of the teller/reflector mode with Genette's homo- and heterodiegesis; of course, even the most useful typology cannot replace a case study analysis.

2. Naturalising the second person

In everyday communication, in real life, it is unnatural to tell other people their own story (apart from specific pragmatic situations such as presenting the suspect in a criminal case with a hypothetical version of the events that took place or giving a child an account of its activities¹²). Among the many theoretical questions that are raised by second-person narratives, one appears to be crucial: How does it fit into the realist paradigm? Unlike the first-person narrative,

¹¹ Monika Fludernik, "Second-Person Narrative as a Test Case for Narratology," *Style*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1994). The entire volume of *Style* is devoted to second-person narratives.

¹² Michel Butor stresses this point in his famous essay: "Hence it is necessary that, for one reason or another, the character in question be unable to tell his own story, that language be forbidden him; and then, that this prohibition be lifted and he be led to language" (Butor, "The Second Case. Use of Personal Pronouns in the Novel," *New Left Review*, no. 1/34 (1965), 64.

the second-person narrative is not founded upon formal mimeticism,¹³ or, at least, it radicalises the laws of common communication. Fludernik claims that second-person narratives are a test case for narratology – one of the reasons for this is that they “undermine realist narrative parameters and frames.”¹⁴ The question arises then whether second-person narratives can be ‘naturalised,’ to use Fludernik’s term again, or are they always ‘fantastic’ in the sense of the term as used by Dostoyevsky in his preface to *The Gentle Spirit*. The fundamental issue here is the relation between the narrator and the addressee. If both belong to the fictional universe, know each other, and have shared experiences, the relation between them resembles the first-person narrative situation and by means of a certain extrapolation of novelistic conventions we may agree that there is ‘naturalisation’ – although it is still somehow artificial to speak ‘to you about you’ (in writing). Indeed, there are many ways of legitimising this unnatural situation. Loss of memory, investigation, or persecution are some of the excuses that are typically used in popular or fantastic novels.

If the narrative ‘I’ is not a part of the fictional universe but it still has the capacity to read the addressee’s mind and has access to his or her hidden feelings and thoughts, it resembles the third-person omniscient narrator who has insight into the character’s consciousness and quotes his or her internal monologue. This situation also does not go beyond the conventions we are used to as readers as long as we remain in the realm of fiction where everything is possible: first-person narratives of the last moments in one’s life, quoting dialogues that took place in the past, entering other people’s minds and discovering their secret thoughts. From this point of view, telling other people their story does not seem surprising at all.

The issue becomes significant in non-fiction genres (or at least those that are traditionally considered to be non-fiction) and in borderline cases. That is why I consider it essential to discuss the problem of realist motivation in second-person narratives within the frame of fiction/non-fiction dualism. The second person acts differently in referential texts. Similarly to interior monologue and free indirect speech, it can be considered a literary or even a fictional technique – if we agree that ‘fictional’ can also apply to the level of discourse, not only to the story. This ‘formal’ understanding of fiction was once proposed by Barbara Herrnstein Smith;¹⁵ in Polish literary studies it was mentioned by Głowiński,¹⁶

¹³ Michał Głowiński, “On the First-Person Novel,” *New Literary History*, vol. 9 (1977), 103–114.

¹⁴ Fludernik, “Second-Person Narrative...,” 445.

¹⁵ Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse. The Relations of Literature to Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

¹⁶ Michał Głowiński, “Narracja historyczna – narracja w powieści historycznej” [“Historical Narrative – Narration in Historical Novel”], in *Monolog wewnętrzny Telimena i inne szkice [Telimena’s Interior Monologue and Other Works]* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2007), 117–119.

who introduced the notion of ‘fiction of language’ or ‘fiction of utterance’ and provided examples of quotations without reference in documentary texts.

In non-fiction, second-person narratives, the narrator most often discloses his or her identity and thematises the act of writing. He or she describes in detail what he or she has learned (either directly or indirectly) about the addressee. These measures are taken to prove his or her reliability – a similar device is used in first-person reportages when the reporter reveals his or her name, circumstances of field work, and sources of information. In non-fiction it is practically impossible to create a narrative situation in which the narrator is an abstract, indeterminate voice of unknown origin. The choice of such an unobvious form results from the need to prove the right to speak in a special, intimate manner as implied by the second person. Below is an example from the ‘reportage collage’ *Sezon w czyśćcu* [*A Season in Purgatory*] by Jerzy Lovell, a book about the poet Rafał Wojaczek:

Wait a moment, something isn't right, I know you, I know a lot of things about you, and you know nothing about me. Let me introduce myself, Rafał: a reporter at your service. Also convicted but to reality, not poetry. A seismograph, a chronicler, a modest accountant of home accounts, an archivist of family scandals – with full names and details.¹⁷

I shall now focus on two non-fiction texts addressed to real persons, protagonists and addressees at once. Both are written by outstanding reporters, Oriana Fallaci and Hanna Krall, who decided to employ the rare and demanding second-person narration in their books. I will try to answer several questions that are important for my point to be made: What is the motivation for using the second person in these texts? What is the relation between the narrator and the protagonist? What are the sources of the narrator's knowledge about the protagonist? Why does she share this knowledge with the addressee? How coherent, in terms of cognition and composition, is this construct? Can it be described as an empathetic narrative?

3. You – Alekos Panagoulis: between narrative loyalty and distance

Even in fiction, the second person predominates in short narratives – its extensive use enhances the impression of artificiality. Oriana Fallaci's *A Man*,¹⁸ a book comprising more than 650 pages and the founding text of second-person non-fiction, is outstanding even in terms of scale only. It is a story about Alexandros Panagoulis, a Greek fighter for freedom and a poet who, during the

¹⁷ Jerzy Lovell, *Sezon w czyśćcu* [*A Season in Purgatory*] (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1982). The translation is mine – JJH.

¹⁸ Oriana Fallaci, *A Man*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Pocket Books, 1981).

Regime of the Colonels, attempted an unsuccessful bomb attack aimed at the dictator Georgios Papadopoulos. Panagoulis, captured shortly after the attack, was imprisoned and tortured in the most atrocious ways; in the course of the persecution he did not denounce any of his companions. In a show trial he was sentenced to death, but the execution was postponed under the pressure of international public opinion; eventually, he was released under amnesty. After the fall of the *junta* he became a member of the Greek parliament. Two years later he died in a car crash, most probably provoked by the secret service.

Fallaci met Panagoulis two days after his release from prison, during an interview. They spent three years together, until the end of his life. She started writing *A Man* in 1974, directly after the tragic accident, in a Tuscan apartment they had shared. The Italian original, *Un uomo*, has a subtitle, *romanzo*. This surprising genre classification has not been used in most of its nineteen translations. Conversely, a prevailing number of editions reinforced the referential interpretation: the covers featured photos of Panagoulis and Fallaci, biographical notes, and facts about contemporary Greek history. At the story level *A Man* is obviously a biographical reportage. So why is it classified by its author as a novel? Undoubtedly, the intention was not to suggest that it was a piece of fiction in the traditional sense of the term. The book is supposed to be a testimony of an extraordinary life, an homage, a *requiem* to a tragic love, thus alternating biographical or historical facts or inventing events would have destroyed its premises. The book opens with a scene of Panagoulis' funeral which became a massive political manifestation. The narrator recalls the crowd shouting: 'Write! Tell it! Write!' At that dramatic moment a moral commitment is made – the author finds it imperative to relate the events as meticulously as possible. Certainly, there are blank pages to be filled with reconstructed events or circumstances, but it never goes beyond a reporter's commonly accepted prerogatives. Even the style is restrained, apart from the 'literary' prologue governed by the metaphor of the crowd as a growling octopus with monstrous tentacles.

The 'novelisation' of *A Man* lies not in the realisation of the genre pattern, it requires rather, as Stanisław Balbus puts it, "moving from the paradigmatic aspect of the literary forms to their hermeneutics,"¹⁹ that is reading the book according to authorial instructions, in the hermeneutic context of the novel genre. The reader needs to actualise certain novelistic conventions, for instance the convention of the first-person narrator's perfect memory, as described long ago by A.A. Mendilow.²⁰ I believe that second-person narration, as unnatural as it is and incompatible with everyday experience, leads to that area of genre references, and its novelistic dimension lies in its special literary form.

¹⁹ Stanisław Balbus, "Zagłada gatunków" ["The Extinction of Genres"], *Teksty Drugie*, no. 6 (1999).

²⁰ Adam Abraham Mendilow, *Time and the Novel* (London: Nevill, 1952).

Paradoxically, in this long, ‘dense’ text the second person seems to be a neutral, obvious, almost transparent choice. How is that possible? Fallaci dedicates the book to Panagoulis with the words: *Για σενα* (meaning ‘for you’ in Greek) and calls him her “only possible interlocutor.”²¹ However, all of the dialogues between them have already taken place. This declaration sounds like a promise of absolute loyalty that confirms their exceptional spiritual understanding. Second-person narration is a kind of guarantee for ‘him,’ that his point of view will be respected and his rights defended. Although Fallaci took part in some of the events and was a public person (she mentions, for example, her diplomatic interventions), she concentrates almost exclusively on the protagonist and the hero of the story, Panagoulis. She reveals her emotions only accidentally, the ‘I’ is hidden, which is most striking in the scene where she loses her unborn baby, described from Panagoulis’ point of view.

The story is told on his behalf and to him, even though it naturally presupposes a ‘listening’ receiver from a higher narrative level. This double address resembles the communicative complexity of a theatre play: the character addresses another character but at the same time he or she provides the audience with necessary information. In *A Man*, essential details (that are obvious to the protagonist) are given very subtly. In Michel Butor’s *The Modification*, the narrator informs a character sitting in a railway compartment as to how old he is, what he looks like, and what his suitcase is made from. Fallaci finds a way to describe Panagoulis’ appearance without being ridiculous: moments before the attack she makes him imagine how his physical characteristics would be depicted in a newspaper article if he drowned while escaping the soldiers.

On the basis of the issue that is fundamental to second-person narratives, that is the relation between ‘you’ and ‘I,’ *A Man* can be divided into two parts. The main storyline, beginning after the prologue, is arranged in chronological order and introduced *in medias res*: “The night before you had had that dream.”²² The day after is the day of the attack attempt, “the beginning of your legend, the beginning of your tragedy, the beginning of everything.”²³ The deictics refer to Panagoulis, his perspective is the only one. The heroic period in the protagonist’s life is never called into question. His endurance in the face of torture, in acts of resistance requiring almost superhuman powers, and the extraordinary charisma which enabled him to win over the prison guard with promises of asking Sophia Loren to support his acting career or amusing the entire prison with a satirical bulletin shouted from behind the bars... Such anecdotes are spectacular, almost beyond belief, like the story of the prison

²¹ Fallaci, *A Man*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 13.

commandant's absurd investigation who took Fermat's last theorem written on a scrap of paper for a secret code message. The narrator's loyalty is unswerving, although her main source is Alekos and his words. After Panagoulis' death she travels to places where he had been held and had suffered. This pilgrimage only confirms his heroic legend. She visits the Boyati prison and photographs ('for you') the cell designed to resemble a tomb. Panagoulis spent two years there, and Fallaci finds it unbearable to stay in that claustrophobic place for more than a few minutes: "It really was a tomb, you hadn't been exaggerating. It had a tomb's colour, proportions, appearance."²⁴

One of the aspects of this melting of perspectives is the way Fallaci treats the protagonist's spirituality, which is so different from her own. She writes down Panagoulis' prophetic dreams and assumes that they do come true – like the one the book opens up with. Alekos dreamed of a seagull that brought light to a city plunged in darkness. When the triumphant bird dives into the sea, it is attacked and killed by the fish. The dream is an obvious parable of Panagoulis' fate. Saints from his mother's icons help him obtain a passport and his intuition never betrays him – that worldview is never doubted in Fallaci's narrative.

Even within such a fusion of points of view the following question can be asked: Who is the author of the general observations, associations, remarks, and comparisons? Should they be attributed to the textual 'you?' This is a fundamental matter for second-person narratives, thus let us consider a passage describing the moment Panagoulis finally leaves prison:

In the sepulcher you had forgotten what space was, open space. It was a terrible thing, because it was like a thing it wasn't there. There was no wall to limit it, no ceiling to cover it, no door to close it out, no lock, no bars!

It gaped before you and around you like a mysterious, insidious ocean, and the only reference point was the earth that stretched down through the valley and up over the hills, barely interrupted by clumps of grass or by trees: ghastly, nightmarish. But the worst thing was the sky. Inside the sepulcher you had also forgotten what the sky is. It was a void above the void, a dizziness above the dizziness, so blue, no, yellow, no, white. So evil.²⁵

Are those Panagoulis' thoughts, related in later conversations and transformed into free indirect speech, or the narrator's own idea of how a person released from prison can actually feel? The passage is carefully composed, it has its rhythm and numerous repetitions at various levels – devices not necessarily associated with emotions of fear and stupefaction. The language adds to the confusion. Fallaci and Panagoulis communicated in Italian, which he had learned in prison, so he could not express his thoughts to her in his mother tongue. Fallaci seems to understand this well, resorting to Greek to utter crucial words.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 159–160.

The moment Fallaci and Panagoulis meet constitutes an evident line of division (although not marked explicitly in the text), as from now on she is a witness of the events. The narration type apparently does not change, but the relation between ‘you’ and ‘I’ changes significantly. There is no more eulogy, and the narrator’s point of view becomes more explicit. She expresses certain doubts, thus the distance between the person telling and the person ‘told’ becomes distinct. Together with the protagonist’s courage, wit, and charm, the narrator emphasises his megalomania and acts of bravado. Parallel scenes showing Panagoulis giving public speeches illustrate this very well. In the first part his court speech is depicted as a rhetorical masterpiece, although at the time he was completely exhausted by the persecution. Fallaci did not attend the trial, she only saw the photographs and read the court files, a record of all his words and a later source of quotations. The scene is powerful as it illustrates the moral, intellectual, and rhetorical superiority of the victim. Two years later, Fallaci took part in rallies during Panagoulis’ election campaign. She watched him speak in public and commented that he “spoke humbly, stammering, monotonous, then suddenly reared up to shout madness.”²⁶ This discrepancy shows the change of point of view: the second person is no longer a sign of empathy, there is an evident rupture to be observed. ‘My’ perspective and ‘your’ perspective do not melt anymore, they crash. This phenomenon is typical of second-person narratives, but the dualism of *A Man* displays this truly distinctively.²⁷

The narrative ‘you’ plays at least two more important roles in the book. The second person is one of the ways to maintain the balance between the story’s individual and universal dimensions. The ‘you’ does not allow the reader to forget that the story concerns a particular human being and enables Fallaci to assign a broader meaning to his fate. The title itself suggests her intentions, as there are numerous passages referring to the legends of heroes:

The legend of the hero does not conclude with the great exploit that reveals him to the world. Both in myths and in real life the great exploit represents only the beginning of the adventure, the start of his mission. This is followed by the period of great tests, then the return to the village or to normality, then the final challenge, which conceals the snare of death, which has always been eluded before.²⁸

Moreover, the second person is always engaging and has an appellative power, forcing the reader to participate in the story. In the case of *The Man* it is almost impossible to deny such participation.

²⁶ Ibid., 356.

²⁷ Fludernik, who mentions Fallaci in her study (Fludernik, “Second-Person Narratives...,” 451), labels the narrator as ‘peripheral,’ stressing that she represents “common sense and normality” and distances herself from Panagoulis’ point of view. In my interpretation this would apply only (and partly) to the second part of the book.

²⁸ Ibid., 76.

4. You – André Tchaikovsky: A life interpreted

My second example will be Hanna Krall's *Hamlet*²⁹ (sometimes compared to Fallaci's work) which also tells the story of an exceptional man – the composer André Tchaikovsky. It is an epic miniature consisting of 25 fragments: the first one being an encyclopaedic entry giving biographical facts, the last one is a quoted poem. Tchaikovsky died in 1982, and the reportage was published 13 years later. It is not typical of Krall, as she admits that she had never met Tchaikovsky; she saw him once, in a concert hall. In spite of this she decides to tell him his own story because he “liked stories about himself.” The narrative concentrates on his family, private life, professional career, and his posthumous adventures: he bequeathed his skull to an English Shakespearian theatre. Krall cites Tchaikovsky's personal documents: his diary, letters, last will. The relation between the reporter and the protagonist changes in the course of the text, sometimes the composer can ‘hear’ about events no one else apart from him could have known about (so the address is not naturalised, in Fludernik's terms). In some parts of the reportage, Krall describes events that were beyond his knowledge or occurred after his death (such as a conversation with Tchaikovsky's lover who depicts their relationship from his own point of view).

In this second-person narrative, Krall finds a place for her own story. She does not use the first person, which is natural for autobiographical accounts, but chooses the ‘you’ narrative to recount her own traumatic war experience: as a girl she survived the Holocaust, hiding in a closet in a flat outside the Warsaw Ghetto. Her testimony seems to be only given as a side note, on the occasion of relating a similar experience of the young Tchaikovsky (“Now I will tell you about something”). Both children were the same age, they had black eyes and their hair dyed with hydrogen peroxide. “I used to know that little girl quite well, so I know what the Aryan side was,” writes Krall. She hides behind the second person in a text about someone else. It is significant to note that she will return to her past only once more, also in the second-person narrative, in *Biała Maria* [*White Mary*], which was published in 2011 and addressed Krzysztof Kieślowski, whose film *Decalogue VIII* tells the story of that little girl.

In *Hamlet*, the shared experience gives Krall the right to interpret Tchaikovsky's life. “You won't fool me,” she claims. She justifies his arrogance and constant irritation with his childhood trauma, treating it as a key to understanding all of his decisions. Her diagnosis is unequivocal, her tone almost moralising – the effect is further strengthened by Krall's style of writing: the rhythm, the simplicity of syntax, the verse-like delimitation. The protagonist, the apparent

²⁹ Hanna Krall, *The Woman from Hamburg and Other True Stories*, trans. Madeline G. Levine (New York: Other Press, 2005).

interlocutor, remains silent, subordinated, 'listening' to his story told in a way he would probably not think of. His own words are embedded in the narration, never quoted *in extenso*, which results in them melting into the dominant point of view. The reporter also quotes other people's opinions about Tchaikovsky (often critical, full of resentment), thus drawing conclusions from them and attributing to the composer certain thoughts, emotions, and motivations. The perspective of the narrator and the points of view of Tchaikovsky's acquaintances paint a controversial portrait of him. It has a visible dominant, depicting the composer as a Holocaust survivor who could not establish close relations with others because of his ongoing mourning for his mother. This concept is further strengthened by references to *Hamlet* (the last words of the reportage are '*Hamlet* after Treblinka'). The roles played by the characters are clear: Ophelia becomes Tchaikovsky's girlfriend who he never marries and Gertrude is his mother who decided to stay in the ghetto with another man (not his father). The final passage of the reportage is Tchaikovsky's poem-letter to his late mother, composed when he was 10 years old as homework given on the occasion of Mother's Day; it was full of vulgar insults.

All of this evidence give a coherent, perhaps too coherent, account of Tchaikovsky's personality. However, Krall herself claims elsewhere that coherent stories are often unreliable. It is interesting to compare the reportage with the composer's autobiographical texts, which have been published only recently. They shed a different light on his story, allowing to counterbalance the second-person narrative with the first-person accounts. Tchaikovsky returns to the unfortunate letter many times, expressing his shame and regret:

It is one of those early actions that spread a slimy trail of shame and self-disgust over the rest of my life, and for which I had never been able to forgive myself. (Perhaps I shall now, having made a public confession of it). Not to have missed a murdered mother may be callous enough, but children are callous and need to be, in sheer self-protection. So far I am excusable. But to write glib tearjerkers about her loss, to order, for other mothers, alive and well-fed, to sniff sentimentally into their fancy handkerchiefs! How little real grief I must have felt to make this tart's performance possible!³⁰

It is not only about simplifying or drawing unauthorised conclusions. Perhaps Hanna Krall, more than anyone else, has the right to construct her own portrait of her protagonist. Krall always looks at events and people through the lenses of Tchaikovsky's own mind, but a narrative form that allows for pretended empathy and the characteristic telegraphic manner of Krall's writing juxtaposed with the composer's own point of view results in a particular dissonance (a musical term seems appropriate here). The second-person narrative emphasises the act

³⁰ André Tchaikovsky, *A Musician Divided: André Tchaikovsky in His Own Words*, ed. Anastasia Belina-Johnson (London: Toccata Press, 2013), 120.

of subjugating the protagonist, forcing him into a fixed, definite interpretation of his life. The dialogue is incomplete, the interlocutor cannot speak, his point of view, apparently taken into account, is in fact neglected. The change of narrative roles, which is the most important feature of second-person narration, does not occur, the narrator dominates the addressee. It is his point of view that inevitably prevails. In fiction, when we are dealing with invented persons, it does not truly matter, but in non-fiction it might be a question of difficult ethical choices as it concerns the real lives of real people.

Summary

The aim of the article is to analyse the particularity of second-person narratives in non-fiction. Their special status results from the fact that telling another person his or her own story is a convention in fiction but occurs rarely in everyday communication. In non-fiction narratives, the problem of different perspectives (of the narrator and the addressee) is particularly valid, i.e. often the point of view of the narrative “you” is only a disguised point of view of the “I.” The analysis of *A Man* by Oriana Fallaci shows the shift from the melting of perspectives to an evident distance. In Hanna Krall’s *Hamlet*, the “I” presents the “you” with an ultimate interpretation of his life.

NARRACJA DRUGOOSOBOWA W NIEFIKCJI

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza szczególnego przypadku narracji drugoosobowej, czyli jej odmiany niefikcyjnej. Opowiadanie adresatowi jego własnej historii, zrozumiałe w ramach konwencji powieściowej, ale nienaturalne w codziennej komunikacji, stawia z mocą problem ścierających się punktów widzenia narracyjnego „ja” i „ty”. Pozornie narracja drugoosobowa oddaje głos bohaterowi, adresatowi narracji; często jednak dominuje w niej ukryty punkt widzenia narratora. Analiza *Człowieka* Oriany Fallaci pokazuje przejście od całkowitej zbieżności perspektyw do ich rozdzielania; „ja” stopniowo zwiększa dystans do „ty”. Z kolei w reportażu Hanny Krall *Hamlet* „ja” narzuca „ty” ostateczną interpretację jego losów.