I Bet You Think This Paper is About *You*: Participant Roles and *you*
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Linguists generally classify *you* as an indexical, thereby assuming that it indexes the addressee, which must be an integral part of the sentence context (cf. Kaplan 1989, Wettstein 1991).[1] Under Kaplan's (1991) Logic of Demonstratives, just as every context contains an agent, time, and position to which tokens of *I*, *now*, and *here* refer respectively, we can presume that every context contains an addressee to which a token of *you* refers. This is how well-behaved indexicals operate. However, indexicals often misbehave (cf. Clark and Carlson 1991, Eggert 1998, Levinson 2000, McCawley 1984, Nunberg 1993). In this paper, I consider cases in which tokens of *you* misbehave, where the referents are not fully determined by the physical contexts of the utterances, as in (1-4).

(1) Some of you know the news; I'm not talking to you; I'm talking to the rest of you.
(Levinson 2000: 178)

(2) Let this be a warning from someone who learned the hard way. The disabled community is different from other minority groups in one major way: You never know when you will join us.
(Zabarsky, M. Our right, your convenience. *Boston Globe.* 1/17/1996, cited in Kleinedler 2000:225)

(3) Unattended vehicles on the drive-through will be impounded. Return to your car immediately.
(Announcement at Sea-Tac Airport, February, 2000)

(4) Asian? Why God made you... This quarter with Asian American students for Christ 7 p.m. Fridays, Ida Noyes W. Lounge.
(Posting, University of Chicago Campus, 1999)

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Levinson (2000) argues that the narrowing of 'you' in the second and third instances in (1) are examples of generalized implicatures. Kleinedler (2000) expands this analysis arguing that the narrowing in (2) involves a particularized implicature. In this paper, I approach such examples not as a neo-Gricean, but as a neo-Goffmanian. I will argue that the addressee is not an entity, but a participant role. A recipient may inhabit the addressee role, but, as I will show, an inhabitant of the role is not automatically the referent of "you". I will then suggest a revised version of Nunberg's (1993) model for indexicality.

Goffman (1976; 1981) suggested that the traditional notions of speaker and addressee are based on a canonical speech situation. In a canonical speech situation, a speech event has exactly two participants who are close to each other both in time and space. At any given moment, one of the participants is speaking, hence is the speaker, and the other is hearing, hence is the addressee. The two participants take turns so that each has the opportunity to be the speaker, and each has the opportunity to be the addressee. However, much—perhaps most—of the time we use language in a situation that is non-canonical. Therefore, Goffman separated speaker and hearer into different roles (though some are not properly participant roles, e.g., the non-ratified recipients).[2]

(5) Sender :
- Animator: 'the individual who produces the words'
- Author: 'the individual who chooses the words and ideas expressed'
- Principal: 'the individual who is responsible for any beliefs expressed, any positions established, and any commitments created by the words'

Recipient:
- Ratified recipient: 'individual who is officially part of the discourse'
  - Addressed recipient: 'individual to whom an utterance is addressed'
  - Non-addressed recipient
- Non-ratified recipient:
  - Eavesdropper: 'individual who intentionally receives a message they are not ratified to receive'
  - Overhearer or bystander: 'individual who accidentally receives a message they are not ratified to receive'

Levinson (1988) extends this list to 17 different roles, 11 of which are participant roles. However, in separating these different roles, we're left with an awkward question: Why is it that cross-linguistically languages only distinguish between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons?

[2] In order to expand the range of speech events to include non-spoken language, I have replaced Goffman's terms *speaker* and *hearer* with *sender* and *recipient*.

> If the traditional roles of Speaker and Addressee are so patently oversimplified, why is it that natural languages develop correspondingly simple pronominal systems, instead of more "accurate" ones in which *I* and *you* would be split into a dozen or so distinct forms for the distinct role relations they may signal?
> (Hanks 1996:165)

Hanks (1996) and Irvine (1996) both argue that we only need to posit two participant roles, as long as we properly use another of Goffman's concepts: embedding (cf. Goffman 1974, 1981). Speech events can be embedded inside of other speech events; previous, future, and hypothetical speech events can be indexed by the current speech event. As Hanks and Irvine demonstrate, a given utterance may be connected to more than one speaker because it can embed multiple speech events. Thus, we only need one role for sender. Of course, an utterance may also be connected to more than one addressee, which can help us to reduce to one Levinson's (1988) four recipient participant roles (interlocutor, indirect target, intermediary, and audience). We needn't concern ourselves with any of the other roles, which are not participant roles.

Now, I return to the question of *you*: Who is 'you'? 'You' is evidently associated with the addressee, just as 'I' is associated with the speaker. Thus the question becomes: Who is the addressee? This question is rarely asked in the literature. Yet it seems crucial to understanding how conversations work. In other words, how do we know when we are 'you'?

Hanks (1993) and Silverstein (1995) suggest that indexicals are simultaneously presuppositional and creative. They presuppose aspects of the discourse context, and they establish aspects of it. In particular, Silverstein (1995: 206) includes second person in the class of relatively creative (or performative) indexes, which "function as the signal for the existence of speech-event features, as in the choice of pronominals, which assign the event roles of speaker, hearer, audience, and referent to certain individuals."

Hanks (1993: 141) describes a situation in which a speaker uses *I* and *you* to describe a fictional, hypothetical conversation. The speaker "postulates a deictic framework identical to the current one in all but the ways that he specifies" and "presupposes the intelligibility of our current shared interactive framework, and uses this as a template from which to generate new ones" (141). He goes on to write:

> The transposability of our current interactive framework into an indefinite number of other hypothetical ones is possible just because speakers have a common sense of the typical ways in which frameworks are the same.
> (Hanks 1993: 142)

This "transposing" of interactive frameworks is essentially what Goffman termed *transformation*. He suggests that transformations are a subcategory of embeddings: "We not only embed utterances, we embed interaction arrangements" (Goffman 1981: 153). A good example is a love song, which is a

transformation of a more prototypical framework, such as that of a love letter. In a typical love letter, there is one sender and one recipient, the 'I' and the 'you' respectively. In a typical love song, there is one sender and multiple recipients. Generally, the singer is taken to be the 'I' of the song, but the 'you' may not even count among the actual hearers. We understand the song, in part, because we understand the more common framework of a love letter.

Consider, for example, the lyrics from Carly Simon's song:

(6) You're so vain. I bet you think this song is about you.

Because we know the typical framework for such utterances, and because we know the meaning of *you*, we assume that "you" in the song refers to a particular person. This is the presuppositional aspect of the indexical. But the creative aspect of this use of *you*, is more indeterminate. Who is the actual referent? At the time the song was released, there were four candidates: Mick Jagger (who, incidentally sang back up), Kris Kristofferson, Cat Stevens, and Warren Beatty, all of whom Simon had previously dated (www. carlysimon.com/vain.vain/htm, accessed May 2003). In fact, Beatty called her shortly after to thank her for writing about him.

Beatty's call brings up an important aspect in how people use *you*: both the sender and the recipient actively create its referent. Self-selection is more important in determining the referent of a token of *you* than is commonly assumed. In elementary school, my schoolmates played a playground game. A kid would yell: "Hey, you loser!" Inevitably, somebody—say Randy—would turn around to see if he had been addressed, at which point all of the other kids would point at him, saying: "Randy turned around; he must be a loser." Thus is the logic of the playground: self-selection makes you 'you'.

However, the playground ignores half of the equation. In normal situations, reference is a cooperative act that requires at least two participants (cf. Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs 1990 for a model of reference as a cooperative act). So when Beatty called Simon to thank her for the song, she could have told him, "I'm sorry, but you are not 'you'."

Now let's turn to another transformation, a transformation from personal notes to public notes. With a personal note, a sender typically leaves a message for a specific recipient in a place where he or she will find it and nobody else will. For example, a wife might leave a note for her husband on the refrigerator. With a public note, the sender leaves a message in a public space; the sender does not know who or how many people will receive the message. (7-9) are examples.

(7) I want your stuff
Moving? Sell me the stuff you aren't taking with you!
(Posting. University of Chicago, 7/98)

(8) Moving? Too many things to take with you? I will buy your TV (and VCR? or Either one?).
(Posting. University of Chicago, 5/99.)

(9) We want to live in your Apartment! Responsible students looking to sublet 2 or 3 bedroom apartment this summer (June- September or October). (Posting. University of Chicago, 4/99.)

Such public notes are common. But consider how a reader might respond. When I read the first line of (7), in my head I responded: "No you don't." After all, my stuff was not worth wanting. But my response, I realized, was a joke, analogous to a person responding to (10) with a simple affirmative.

(10) Do you know what time it is?

My internal response was intentionally uncooperative. I knew quite well that, despite the fact that I was moving, I was not the referent of "you". But imagine I had been so misguided to think that anybody would want my stuff; had I called the sender of the message, they would have undoubtedly told me that they did not want my stuff. In other words, I was not 'you'.

In such public notes there are linguistic and extra-linguistic clues for who could qualify as a candidate for the referent of "you". In (8), for example, the one-word question in the first line tacitly limits the candidates to those who are moving. In (9), candidates are not only limited to those who have an apartment they wish to sublet, but to those who have desirable apartments. The latter aspect is extralinguistic, but is clearly part of the schema we assume when one person rents an apartment to another (i.e., the renter must desire to live in the apartment).

(11-13) further illustrate this last point.

(12) Get paid to see your friends graduate! … If you are interested, please call…
(Posting. University of Chicago, 12/98.)

(13) 3 out of 4 med students who took a commercial MCAT prep course took Kaplan. Shouldn't you?
(Posting. University of Chicago, 5/99.)

(14) Don't let Organic Chemistry keep you from getting into med school.
(Posting. University of Chicago, 5/99.)

In (11), there are a number of criteria to qualify as a referent of "you": 'you' must have friends who are graduating from the U of C; 'you' must not be graduating from the U of C; 'you' must not have a ticket to attend graduation; 'you' must wish to attend graduation. Likewise, there are criteria for (12) and (13). In the two cases, 'you' must plan on attending medical school, must not have applied, and must be worried about taking the MCAT or Organic Chemistry, respectively.

Such criteria for referential candidacy are not unique to *you*. Nunberg (forthcoming) refers to this as the 'granularization of the context'. When we evaluate the potential referents of a referring expression, "we restrict the domain

appropriately" (Nunberg forthcoming; also cf. Eggert 1998 for examples with *I, here,* and *now*).

To better understand how *you* is used in public notes, we should consider cases in which 'you' is purely fictional. In Hanks' (1993) research, he asked speakers to explain the meaning of certain deictic terms in Yucatec Mayan. To do so, his consultants invented hypothetical conversations which involved hypothetical 'I's and hypothetical 'you's.

> Although V, DB, and DP animated this speech, its principals are fictional characters, an imaginary 'you' and 'I'. By using first and second person pronouns to create the scene, speakers chose to project themselves and me, their addressee, into the role of interlocutors in the hypothetical framework.
> (Hanks 1993: 136).

We find similar transpositions in novels. First person novels are generally transformations on personal narratives. In personal narratives, speakers narrate events that happened to them to an audience of acquaintances. In first person novels, writers narrate fictional events to an audience of unknowns. Yet embedded within that frame is another frame, in which a fictional narrator is addressing the events to a fictional audience. (Ong (1987) argues that fiction always involves a fictional audience; I argue below that fictional audiences proliferate beyond fiction.) As readers, we are skilled at perceiving the narrative with the eyes of the fictional audience.

In his novella, *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky adds yet another layer of complexity. Rather than transforming a personal narration, he transforms a journal. Journals are an unnatural genre insofar as their authors do not always expect them to be read.

(14) Then - it is still you who are saying this - new economic relations will be established, relations all ready for use and calculated with mathematical exactitude... Of course, it is quite impossible to guarantee (it is I who am speaking now) that even then people will not be bored to tears...
(Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*)

Within this fictional journal, the fictional 'I' creates a doubly fictional 'you'. The fictional 'I' explains why:

(15) I, however, am writing for myself, and I should like to make it clear once and for all that if I address myself in my writings to a reader, I'm doing it simply as a matter of form, because I find it much easier to write like that. It is only a form, an empty show, for I know that I shall never have any readers. I have already intimated as much...
(Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*)

But what role do we, the actual readers, play in such a (multiply embedded)

fiction? At one level we are eavesdroppers, non-ratified recipients of this private journal, but as he creates this doubly fictional audience, Dostoevsky encourages us to inhabit this deeper level addressee role.

(16) Now, of course I might, for instance be taken at my word and asked if I really do not count on any readers, why do I now put down all sorts of conditions, and on paper, too, such as not to pay any attention to order or system, to write down what I remember, etc., etc. Why all these explanations? Why all these apologies? "Ah," I reply, "now you're asking!"
(Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*)

Indeed, we are asking. We are asking because we have skillfully traversed the embedded frames and have occupied a fictional addressee role.

We can analyze public notes in a similar fashion. (17) and (18) are successful because the reader cooperates with the writer to create a fictional referent for "you".

(17) Silence is golden.... But without you it's killing us! Strong vocalist wanted for 5-piece alt. rock band We lost our voice in Tennessee Looking for one in SLC
(Posting, Student Union, University of Utah, 11/02)

(18) Stand next to your best friend and read this. One of you could get pregnant before you're ready.
(Advertisement, OSH, University of Utah, 11/02)

In (17), the 'you' the band lacks has certain characteristics that we can infer, characteristics that are absent in the majority of the message's readers. For example, 'you' must have musical talent and aspirations compatible with a five piece alt. rock band. On the other hand, the reader can fill in other details, e.g., the gender and age of 'you'. I expect that most readers create fictional individuals who resemble themselves in all but the pertinent details. Thus I imagined a thirty-something man. Somebody else might imagine a 19 year old woman. (18) is more explicit in the details. Clearly, I am not a good candidate for 'you', since it is physically impossible for me or my best friend to become pregnant before we're ready. Yet I understood the message quite well. The addressee I created is an unattached, heterosexual female undergraduate at the University of Utah, as is her best friend. From her point of view, I then interpreted the rest of the message (which gave advice with respect to birth control etc.). We understand such messages because we inhabit the addressee roles.

It is through this inhabitation that we arrive at a referent for "you". Sometimes, we need do minimal work to arrive at the referent. For example, the vocative in (19) would normally narrow the range of candidates to one.

(19) Abigail, you ate my donut.

I imagine that in many cases we may simply short-circuit the process of inhabiting the addressee role.[3] Nevertheless, the process is an integral part of moving from the sign to its referent.

In other words, I am suggesting a two-stage model for determining the reference of 'you'. This is similar to Nunberg's theory of indexical reference, which involves deferred reference. Nunberg (forthcoming) describes this process as follows:

> We first identify the index of a term—that is, either the demonstratum of a demonstrative or the contextual element that an indexical picks out in virtue of its linguistic meaning—and then proceed to identify the referent of the term, which is something that stands in a salient functional relation to the index.[4]

In trivial cases, "the salient functional relation to the index" is being the index itself. Thus, "you" indexes the person it is addressed to and then may refer to that person. On the other hand, *you* may be used to refer to individuals in a functional relation to the person addressed. Nunberg (1993: 21) gives the following example:

(20) *Chess teacher giving an introductory lesson to a student who has just played 4. N × P...*: According to all the textbooks, you often get in trouble with that move.

In this case, the index is the student, but the referent is chess players in general.

I agree with Nunberg to a point. He is correct that *you* involves deferred reference. However, I suggest that the index is not an entity, but rather a role. In order to determine the referent of a token of *you*, we inhabit the role of the addressee, imagining the characteristics necessary to fit the role. We then evaluate which candidate best fits those characteristics in order to determine the referent.

As I've shown, the actual referent may be purely fictional. In such cases, we compare our real persona to that of the fictional referent we have helped create, evaluating how well they match. If in (16) we were not asking the questions posed by the doubly fictional 'you', then Dostoevsky's fiction would fail. In (7), if we were not moving, we would have no reason to call the author. This becomes even clearer when we consider personal ads.

(21) SUPPOSE YOU'RE MY fantasy? Slender green-eyed blonde headturner who can make you laugh and loves to cuddle seeking best friend, lover, compadre. You're over 5'10", in great shape, a DWM 45-55 who loves his

[3] The term "short-circuit" comes from speech act literature, specifically Morgan (1991).

[4] Nunberg actually goes on to argue that this is not the best way to look at it. Personally, I find the deferred reference model more satisfying than what he replaces it with. Thus in this paper I will continue to use the terminology he employs in Nunberg 1993.

job, the lake, music, movies, theatre, travel. Is this you? Then call this sassy nontraditional attorney.
(Chicago Reader. November 13, 1998. Section 2, p. 46)

In this case, the writer changes footing several times. With the first token of *you*, the referent probably matches most readers. But with the next two tokens the writer increasingly narrows the range of candidates. Finally, she returns to the initial footing, where she asks the 'you' to evaluate his real self with the individual he created for the last token of *you*.

Interestingly, you and I are poor candidates for any of these tokens of *you* because we read the message for scientific, not romantic, reasons. But even when we read scientific writing, we create fictional referents for "you".

(22) Two botanists in conversation would have to establish which lexicon they were drawing on [with respect to fruit]. You and I would be forced to stay with common parlance.
(Clark 1996: 108)

Clark assumes that his readers lack botanical expertise, a reasonable assumption, but not a necessary one. Botanist/linguists or botanist/psychologists could still understand his point, even if they could not be 'you'. Likewise, Dennis Rodman could understand Cecil Adams' point because Rodman can imagine what it would be like not to be Rodman; he can inhabit an addressee role whose referent does not match his identity.

(23) I can accept the idea that you and I made it through [the Millenium/Armegeddon]. But Dennis Rodman?
(Cecil Adams. The Straight Dope. The Chicago Reader, July 3, 1998.)

We need two stages for determining the reference of a token of *you* because the addressee is not a given aspect of the context. All that we can safely presuppose when using *you* is that there is a recipient.[5] The reference is a creative act negotiated by both the sender and the recipient. If it were not creative, we could not misconstrue it; yet (24) and (25) are ubiquitous in our lives.

(24) Are you talking to me?
(25) I wasn't talking to you.

In conclusion, the addressee is a role, not a person. A token of *you* does not refer in itself. Rather, the recipient of a message cooperates in creating a referent. In many cases the referent is the recipient. In other cases, the recipient may deduce that the referent is somebody else (usually another recipient). In examples I've discussed here, the referent is fictional, in which case the recipient must

[5] When "you" falls in a forest and nobody's there, does it have a referent?

evaluate how well their own persona matches that of the fictional referent. We should not regard these fictional uses of *you* as being unusual, though. They are natural extensions of how we always process tokens of the term. To arrive at a referent for "you", a recipient must inhabit the addressee role.

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