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"Un-Aulasy": Familial memory enacted through second-person language

Abstract:

Utilising second-person language is not a new concept in creative non-fiction, however, it remains an unconventional method to convey true stories. *Un-Aulasy* is a term I have devised for the use of second-person language in conjunction with vivid imagery and historical context in writing non-fictitious narratives. The combination of these elements allows for a deeper engagement with the text to occur, thereby placing the reader more accurately in memory. This terminology has been developed from my own examples and work but is visible in other works of a similar nature – *Patterns of Childhood* (Christa Wolf, 1976), *Report from the Interior* (Paul Auster, 2013) and *A Man* (Oriana Fallaci, 1981) as a few prime examples. This article's purpose is not to proclaim a new method of writing but rather re-contextualise the use of second-person language in non-fiction writing, particularly so in family-based stories of memory, and when utilised in short bursts amidst an otherwise first-person perspective narrative.

Biographical note:

Indyana Horobin is a PhD candidate currently studying at Griffith University, with his research interests in creative writing and family history. He has published creatively within *Journals of Love and Literature*, *SWAMP Writing*, *APWT,* Nirala Publications, *Family History ACT* and Griffith's *Talent Implied*. Indyana has also been shortlisted in *Sunspot Lit, The Letter* Review and *Peter Cowan 600*. His current PhD project focuses on creative non-fiction, family, war and what it takes to survive in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Keywords:

Creative non-fiction, second-person, familial, memory, un-Aulasy

Aulasy (n): The sadness that there is no way to convey a powerful memory to people who weren't there at the time.
– John Koenig, 2022

Introduction

In John Koenig's (2021) *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, he curates a list of contextualised English words for common phenomena that were not previously expressed in a singular form. Within this assemblage of words, *Aulasy* exists as a portmanteau of the Scottish folk song phrasing "Auld Lang Syne". Aulasy refers to an inability to "convey a powerful memory to people who weren't there at the time" (Koenig, 2022, p. 141). This phenomenon of failure to share memory is evident when, for example, attempting to tell stories of childhood memories, or perhaps identifying a childhood home to a friend, only to have it exist as such, a memory not sharable in its entirety.

I posit that this phenomenon of Aulasy can be lessened in the space of creative non-fiction. Through utilising second-person language entrenched in vivid imagery and historical context, a sort of un-Aulasy can be achieved; this methodology creates a portal to either the author's or the subject's memory. In other words, an experience can be shared in a substantial way with those who were not there at the time. The techniques titrated were experimentally employed in my recent creative work, *Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing*. Other key works of non-fiction that employ second-person language are Oriana Fallaci's *A Man* (1981), Christa Wolf's *Patterns of Childhood* (1976) and Paul Auster's *Report from the Interior* (2013). In this article, they will be analysed for how they engage moments of un-Aulasy. These texts, while relevant to un-Aulasy, do feature an important distinction – they aim to share the writer's memory; my own work, instead, aims to share that of a family member. As such, they offer a slightly adjusted lens through which un-Aulasy takes effect.

A critical footnote to this methodology is that it only exists thus far within the scope of creative non-fiction. Creative non-fiction has been the overarching terminology for *Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing*, due to its experimental nature – setting it apart from strictly memoir, biography, or autobiography. While each form certainly has distinctions, these boundaries have blurred over time. As Susan Currie and Donna Lee Brien note "the term 'life writing' has emerged to describe the field as a whole" (2008). Creative non-fiction has further emerged as a term for work with an increased focus on literary and narrative techniques. While un-Aulasy may be applicable in each of the aforementioned forms, the focus in this essay is on the category of non-fiction, as that pertains most to *Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing* as a case study. Another important note is that fictionists tend to engage second-person more than non-fiction writers, as such readers are no stranger to this method of voice in fictional forms. Brian Richardson, in *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*, highlights that second-person language within fiction may even be categorised into three types of second-person voice – "standard", "hypothetical" and "autotelic" (2006, p. 18). Richardson's "standard" distinction provides a direct switch of first or third person pronouns to the pronoun "you", hypothetical refers to the act of writing in a guidebook manner, and autotelic speaks

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directly to the reader. Other theorists such as Gerard Genette and Brian McHale denote that second-person language is often a stand-in for third person, however theorist Franz Stanzel posits that the reader will consolidate "you" to "I", thereby switching the voice to the first person (Richardson, 2006, p. 21). Regardless, in fiction, many theorists believe that the reader will inherently switch the voice from second-person into either of the more common modes, first or third person. In non-fiction, however, this is yet to be determined.

Un-Aulasy is my attempt to curate a replicable strategy devised of common but specific techniques. As previously mentioned, one of Koenig's descriptors provided a definition for a phenomenon that occurs in non-fiction writing. Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing was the creative vehicle I utilised to rework this experience. The key piece of my writing that will be discussed in this article is featured below:

> Jutta tells me what her mum said the Second World War sounded like. A storm. You're on the edge of it, before it rolls in, the thunder and chaos and unrelenting rain. The land stretches out before you, your town – stationary boats, a flotilla of green and yellow and brown roof tiles. These tiny colours built on a hull of brown brick, aged and worn. Rain whitewashes the windows, pattering on the roofs, running to the gutters and sleeting off the sides in larger spurts. The storm festers beyond the horizon, it's going to come in, you know it will, it has to, it always has to. Clouds are thick with lightning, ballooning from the centres outward. The dark mass illuminated from the ground up, fires caused by lightning strikes. White, yellow, blue flashes in the puffs of monstrous cloud. You hear it, the crashing. Humming in the air, electrified static, larger strikes jumping from the smaller ones. And the raging fire. This is what Bremen sounded like in 1940. Raging fires over the hills, illuminating the smoke. Buzzing warplanes, flak cannons pounding the sky, stamping the planes out of the air. The sound reverberates through the flotilla, shaking tiles loose and vibrating windows. The bomb sirens start, and you have to get to the bunker before the lightning hits. You count the seconds between when you see the light and hear the sound – every second is one kilometre away. Your feet fumble and slip along the cobbled streets. The bunker is green, blending in with the grass, you shuffle in with your mother and father. Shoulder to shoulder to shoulder. The thuds start quiet, the same noise as the thunder over the hills, the storm is getting louder, pounding the road into town, gnashing between metal teeth and dragon's breath. The storm is a hammer, your bunker the anvil, and your town – your town is the thing in-between. Dust trickles from the ceiling, this is when you should get out, you're about to be caved in. But you don't leave the bunker, no one ever leaves the bunker. No matter how cold the stale air is, no fires in a sealed room. No matter how freezing you all are, no one ever leaves the bunker with the storm outside. And it's this. Rumble and crash, silence. Rumble and crash, silence. Tinnitus and ringing, and hoping to God – even though at this stage you're pretty sure there isn't one, that it stops soon. And why is there no God? Because no God allows women with children to be eviscerated by two and a half thousand degrees of thermite. Because no God allows some conceited notion of racial superiority to engulf a country. You see it's not God, it's the Bishop. (Horobin, 2025, pp. 14–15)

This passage is an expression of un-Aulasy, an example of the elements taken into a space in which the memory within the non-fictitious writing can thrive. By combining all three key

techniques – second-person language, imagery and historical context, a writer can create a literary biosphere in which a written memory may be meaningfully actualised. This can be referred to as an "un-Aulasy-sphere". A typical representation of non-fiction might posit that a reader absorbs information presented on the page. Perhaps, with the exception of those with aphantasia, the reader envisions what they are reading, picturing bits and pieces of scenes. As Jeremy D. Popkin highlights in his work that examines family memoir, "authors take readers with them as they pursue the details of the lives of their parents and other relatives" ("Family Memoir and Self-Discovery", 2015, p. 127). Naturally, the reader's mind may wander and the images may change. Un-Aulasy acts as a form of familial non-fiction storytelling – non-fiction based on family accounts/interviews – that places the reader in the experiencer's mind. The effect is similar to taking part in a play. The setting, plot, dialogue and characters already exist, one needs only to follow the script. Un-Aulasy allows the reader to read about themselves on the page, yet within the writer's family memory.

I posit that in an "un-Aulasy-sphere", the reader is not just an observer but exists within the family. A literary transference, a kind of meta-representation of the reader occurs, thereby shifting the rules of the perceived contract between reader and writer. A writer utilising an "un-Aulasy-sphere" may be able to more aptly involve the reader in their non-fictitious story, creating a kind of bridge between the reader and the memory originator themselves.

In this article I will explore the concept of un-Aulasy and by extension the "un-Aulasy-sphere". I will look at each of the three key techniques, breaking down their presence within this non-fiction construction by engaging with a host of referential material on the topics of imagery, historical context, and second-person language. I will also engage my provided creative extract and examples of Fallaci, Wolf, and Auster's pieces. These foci will be examined with the overall tenet of non-fiction as the driving force.

Literature review

Second-person voice is imperative in generating reader engagement with use of un-Aulasy. Non-fiction texts that utilise second-person in significant portions are scarce – Fallaci, Wolf and Auster, as mentioned above, are exceptions to this scarcity. Fallaci's *A Man* invites readers to examine the history of Alexandros Panagoulis and his fight against military dictatorship. The work itself is entwined with themes of individualism, moral integrity and how love can form resistance; the second-person perspective, however, works to create a kinship between Fallaci and Panagoulis. The reader may act as both her figure of reverence, toward Panagoulis, and yet feel as though they are an intruder among sacred thoughts. *Patterns of Childhood* (Wolf, 1976) forms a semi-autobiographical narrative as Wolf delivers a story of guilt from a young girl who was raised in Nazi Germany. The work provides a strong commentary on how official histories often brush over complex minutiae of the everyday individual experience. This piece, unlike Fallaci's, aims to place the reader in the head of Christa herself – or at least an auto-fictional version of Christa. The difference between these two works, one using second-person language from their own perspective, the other using it to capture an external person's

perspective, demonstrates how second-person language in non-fiction can be mastered in vastly different ways. Auster's work, however, utilizes second-person language in sections. The four main components of the book, "Report from the Interior", "Two Blows to the Head", "Time Capsule" and "Album (Photos)", provide a number of experimental and deeply reflective techniques. The first component, "Report from the Interior", for which the book is named, is written in second-person and largely explores Auster's childhood experiences, often analysing what cultural experiences remain in his memory. "Time Capsule" also utilises second-person language, though in this example, it takes on the form of a letter to Auster's wife – the "you" is his wife, rather than himself. This striking contrast allows for various moments of un-Aulasy to be seen in strikingly different circumstances. Joanna Jeziorska-Hałady and Magdalena Rembowska-Pluciennik in "Second Person in Different Genres and Cultural Practices" refer to a list of authors who utilise second-person language in non-fiction longform narratives, while making commentary on the social aspects of second-person language in media and "its impact on [the] reader's immersion and identification processes" (2024, p. 7). They also focus on print, digital literature and games as they drill down specifically into narrative role-playing games, interactive text games, game books and paragraph games/books.

Jarmila Mildorf in *Life Storying in Oral History: Fictional Contamination and Literary Complexity*, makes note that when employing second-person in non-fiction, the writer is "telling someone his or her own story" and that this "presupposes intimate knowledge between interlocutors and a degree of shared experience" (2023, p. 106). Within my own work, the element of shared experience is somewhat stretched. The sections where second-person language is engaged presupposes that the reader has experienced some form of trauma, some form of violence. The work, as a result, is less focused on sharing common knowledge and more concerned with telling the story as if the reader were experiencing it themselves. Mildorf also cites Alessandro Portelli's work on memory, "but what is really important is that memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings" (Portelli, 1998, as cited in Mildorf, 2023, p. 17). In addition, Monika Fludernik engages placement of the self, although with an ancillary focus on non-fiction in "Second Person Fiction: Narrative You as Addressee and/or Protagonist". Fludernik highlights that "there are now a great number of very different second-person texts available" and that "previous research has … focussed on the use of the second-person pronoun in reference to a fictional protagonist" (pp. 217–218).

Vivid imagery

Vivid imagery is the first focal point in creating an "un-Aulasy-sphere". Taking care to create complex visuals is key to scaffolding the work, thereby crafting a detailed stage on which the memory can perform. Specific descriptions may act as props and sets with which characters can interact.

Returning to the provided extract from *Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing* (pp. 14–15), a metaphoric storm is conjured to represent a bombing in Bremen, 1940. Descriptions of "thunder and chaos and unrelenting rain" and "white, yellow, blue flashes in the puffs of

monstrous clouds" provide readers with the magnitude of the experience – storms being an easily comparable meteorological event. The image is then shifted toward direct war reference, "buzzing warplanes, flak cannons pounding the sky, stamping planes out of the air". Within these war and storm descriptions, we read set-pieces that are created for the character to interact with, "tiny colours built on a hull of brown brick, aged and worn", "the bunker is green, blending in with the grass". Both descriptions provide literal items that Erna, the character, can physically engage – she lives within the brown brick houses, she runs to the green bunker seeking refuge inside.

David McCooey in "The Limits of Life Writing" examines the interrelation between "literary and factual writing; between narrative as a literary device and narrative as lived experience; and between autobiography and fiction" (2019, p. 277). This interconnectedness between conceptual work of expressing lived experience and conveyance to a reader through fictional elements is precisely where the "un-Aulasy-sphere" excels. By utilising imagery representative of typical fiction world-building, the world of past-experience can be envisioned. Literary researcher Jo Langdon expresses, "writing is true to the 'felt' experience of trauma – which trauma theorists largely characterise according to intensity, non-linearity and confusion" (2017, p. 341). Within this realm of war-narrative "un-Aulasial" writing acts as a tool, crafted from specific elements, to further the element of writing that is "true". In the provided example, imagery jumps from a clear hurricane-based allegory to literal depictions of war. This is then combined with other lines drawn from fictitious elements, "metal teeth and dragon's breath". These are images the reader may relate to, without ever having experienced war. For example, readers may be familiar with the idea of "dragon's breath" from popular media – books, television, film. Thus, merging this imagery with non-fiction life narrative, allows the writer to explore the "unspeakable nature of traumatic events and experiences, the referentiality of history and, more specifically, first-hand accounts of traumatic historical events" (Langdon, 2017, pp. 341–342). Auster evokes strong images within his writing. For example: "as you lie on your back in the grass, you look up at the drifting clouds and watch them turn into faces, into birds and animals, into states and countries and imaginary kingdoms" (2013, p. 11). This line, among many others, provides strong imagery in which to ground the second-person narrative, thereby preparing the stage.

I do recognise that engaging in fictionalised imagery is not a new concept to non-fiction writing. In fact, many writers engage with imagery that operates outside the ordinary. Sarah Krasnostein in *The Trauma Cleaner* uses gorgeous descriptive sentences such as "a silent woman whose home was unfit for her many rabbits and whose skin was so swollen that I thought at any moment it would burst like a water balloon" (p. 4). Similarly, Lisa Taddeo in *Three Women* draws on radical imagery with lines like: "You get ready that morning like someone preparing for war. Your war paint is makeup. A neutral, smoky eye" (p. 1). Even Wolf brings about a solid fantastical, although depressive, image, "the dozens of faces across from you, in the train, on the bus, are sterile from lack of mystery" (1976, p. 47). As such, these images draw the reader's attention to the surroundings presented from the subject's memory. Creating the stage in this "un-Aulasy-sphere" is the first step in gripping the reader's attention,

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as Thomas S. Kane highlights in *The New Oxford Guide to Writing*: "don't … suppose that it's the reader's job to follow you. It's your job to guide them, to make their task as easy as the subject allows" (1994, pp. 5–6). This relates back to a crucial feature driven by "un-Aulasial" writing – the writer–reader relationship. This relationship functions on the promise that a writer will deliver a successful image, or series of images to their reader, conceptual underpinnings flourishing as visual layers are crafted. The image comes first and then the hidden, more complex theories subsist within. The stage, the props, and then the examination – why should the reader care? Where is this story leading? The description of imagery is the "what" and "who" within the tale – what is happening and who is it happening to?

A specific representation of visual features is required in creating these images – a kind of accurate speculation. While the originator of the story is the interviewed subject (or in the case of Wolf and Auster, the self), the images themselves are drawn from speculative zones, evidence-based, but speculation, nonetheless. Crafting these images relies on the Chekhovian adage of good writing, "show, don't tell", however, non-fiction writers must pay particular attention to historical accuracy, or else risk appropriation or misrepresentation of their own family memory. I did not know the specific contents of my great-grandmother's house, however, in reply to this missing information, the images formed around more known elements. Typical representations of Germanic towns were utilised, stemming from knowledge that German roads in the 1930s–40s functioned as civilian and military thoroughfares – featuring both armoured and un-armoured vehicles, and that a bombing did occur in Bremen. Cobblestone footpaths were taken from my direct research trip to Bremen, during which, in discussion with distant family, it was shared with me that the footpaths have been the same since the 1940s. These footpaths would have been patched and replaced with matching materials. The "green bunker" was an image conjured by both interviewing and online research while my grandmother passed on the stories of the air-raid bunker: how it was during winter, how there were no fires allowed in the bunker, how cold-sweating led her mother to exhaustion. The green colouring of the bunker was found in visual searches, simple Google images of Bremen mid-1900s air-raid bunkers. A basic leap in general logic explained that the bunker's green presentation was a method of camouflage for incoming bombers. Auster brings about similar speculation while revising childhood memory, "no doubt influenced by the cartoons you loved to watch, you thought there was a pole jutting out from the North pole" (2013, p. 6). Here, Auster attempts educated speculation on his own childhood, relying on the logical assumption that cartoons played an inspirational role in the forming of his thought processes. These images, speculative and factual, work together to create the stage on which, in my own writing, my great-grandmother's memory played. Houses like boats, firebombs like dragon's breath, and for Auster – the North Pole to look like a barber pole.

Finding key displays within the original source material is a necessity to representing the "un-Aulasial" stage. These displays, sometimes speculative, at other times blending fictitious imagery, allow such a stage to exist – creating a literary *mise-en-scène*. Furthermore, the infusion of historical context is necessary to aid overall descriptors of place. This is my following point, the utilisation of historical context.

Historical context

Utilising historical context is the second area of focus within "un-Aulasial" writing. This is the element that applies timeframe within reference to the imagery already set in place. While vivid description may be considered the *mise-en-scène* of non-fiction, applying historical context is the specification that ensures these images are correct. It is, in a sense, the fact-checking element of imagery. Many elements need to be considered within this function of historiographic writing – researching, data collection and most importantly, personalisation. An object, for example, must be plausible within the historical context. The object must have been utilised by the people/person from a geographical standpoint and then it must also have an individual reason for its existence on the page.

Plausibility within the historical context is a chief concern. Crafting an "un-Aulasial" scene must fit within the timeframe being shared. An example could be the placement of a car within an "un-Aulasy-sphere". If we've decided our focused area is 1940s Germany, it would not be plausible to place a Lamborghini – of course, this is basic image creation within all forms of creative writing. A car manufactured within Germany might be a Maybach. Now, while this Maybach might be an easily researched car of German manufacture, it may not necessarily fit the suburban streets of Bremen in 1940. A Goliath might possibly fit better, or an Isabella – a much more stock-standard functional family car for what would have been presented within 1940s German culture. It is vital, however, that the entirety of the image be considered. If the writer wishes to truly capture the memory in their "un-Aulasy-sphere", it might be more accurate to speculate that none, or very few, standard cars would exist on the 1940s streets of Bremen, other than military vehicles. Bicycles instead would be the go-to method of transportation. Wolf similarly engages this historical context: "what lingers is the smell of her father's grey overcoat, in which Nelly is wrapped, mixed with the smell of Whiskers Grandma's lap … sleep now, you just go to sleep" (1976, p. 33). Although Wolf somewhat exits the second-person perspective and enters into a third-person trance as the view shifts briefly to her "Whiskers Grandma", we delve back into placement of the "you". It is as though we ourselves have smelt this grey overcoat and a grandmother's lap in their family car. This is, however, just an example of a particular item within a plausible historical context. This is where "un-Aulasial" writing begins to engage with informed estimations. While family history and personal interview can provide intricate details, to grasp a larger sense of the world built on the page it is necessary to engage in embellishment, in informed speculation. Kiera Lindsey, in her piece "Deliberate Freedom: Using Speculation and Imagination in Historical Fiction", discusses how the esteemed literary critic Leon Edel insisted that there was "a real art to writing a biography, something that may, at times, appear even a little mystical" (2018, p. 2). While Lindsey's article predominantly engages speculative fiction, elements do cross over into the methods of writing non-fiction work. Crafting literary spaces can indeed appear mystical, as is the case with most forms of world building, non-fiction or not. Though writing mystical images to craft an engaging "un-Aulasy-sphere" may begin along the lines of researched speculation,

the following components allow for the speculation to reduce and for subjective history to emerge.

The data collection I refer to above is the method of collecting the story from recorded interviews, such as the methods I utilised when gaining the information for my work. It should be noted, however, that data can be found and collated in a variety of ways – sometimes heaved up like fishing trawlers catching schools of memory, other times "bower-birded" by the writer, collecting tiny fragments of detail while sorting through numerous histories. Jane Hughes in her work on life writing and bereavement, states that "we are meaning-making animals: this useful characteristic of the human mind has spurred us to investigate, learn, understand and develop as a species" (2020, p. 125). This component of autoethnographic data collection grasps the story and places it within time. As Nigel Hamilton says in *How to Do Biography: A Primer*, "research may be optional for other disciplines … [but] it is the core of biography" (2008, p. 63). This collection of stories is indeed the core of biography, non-fiction, and the core of "un-Aulasial" writing. The memory existing beyond the page, before being written, is vital. In a sense, this is the starting point for the writing, while researching plausible imagery is the beginning of crafting an "un-Aulasy-sphere". The creation of the memory is where the original information acts as a form of fact-checking, of removing speculation from the story and engaging as close as possible in subjective truth.

The final element of utilising historical context lies in personalisation. This personalisation occurs from combining the two previous components and crafting a deeply personal, resonating narrative element. I found that the information for these sections of personalisation usually occurs last. While there may be one or two objects within the "un-Aulasy-sphere" that are connected to memory, returning to the same memory in contemplation or interview allows the information to be fleshed out. This weaving of personal experience creates a verification of the "un-Aulasy-sphere" itself – as Batcho highlights, "memoir is concerned to a greater extent with documenting personal experience and meaning" (2023, p. 3). Interweaving personalisation into an "un-Aulasy-sphere" takes the applied historical context and casts yet another historical accuracy over the presented objects, placing symbolic meaning on simple interactions. Langdon says that "writing is true to the 'felt' experience of trauma – which trauma theorists largely characterise according to intensity, non-linearity and confusion" (2017, p. 341). The same can be said upon crafting individuality into an "un-Aulasy-sphere". An example would be the details of Bremen. I could not find how my great-grandmother's town looked exactly within the 1930s–40s. I did, however, understand the typical items that may have been present in a 1930s–40s town within Germany. I knew from historical research present in many aged photographs, many conversations about minor details and many historical texts, such as Max Arthur's *Forgotten Voices of the Great War* (2002). Minute details exist within these materials that document key cultural items and settings within 1940s German culture. For example, it would be typical to find a Nazi flag within many German homes during the 1940s; however, my own family's home would not have contained one, due to my great-great-grandfather's visceral hatred of the Nazi party. This personalisation within the history becomes a continually

used motif throughout, highlighting the characterisation of anti-Fascism present within my grandmother and her parents.

This utilisation of historical context within an "un-Aulasy-sphere" is built upon these three components of research, data collection and personalisation. These components in turn allow the vivid descriptions to be presented with a subjective truth behind them. They are *mise-en-scène*, but are accurate to the past – a form of literary creative archaeology. This is, perhaps, what concludes the "un-Aulasy-sphere" section of "un-Aulasial" writing. These two areas allow the sphere to be built and the stage to be presented. What follows is where the reader is situated and how they're engaged as part of the memory.

Second-person language

Engaging second-person language within a non-fiction narrative is the major component in bringing "un-Aulasial" writing to fruition. While the pronoun usage "you" may seem at odds with the straightforward nature of the more restrictive forms of autobiography and biography, creative non-fiction allows such experimentation. While second-person language in non-fiction is not overly prevalent, my work follows in a succession of authors grappling with this exact method of storytelling. Jeziorska-Hałady and Rembowska-Pluciennik discuss authors that utilise second-person language in non-fiction writing in "Second Person in Different Genres and Cultural Practices":

> It can be also found in nonfiction genres (Jeziorska-Haładyj, 2019) – the oldest example being the memoirs of Duke Maximilien de Béthune de Sully (1638), the most acclaimed Christa Wolf 's autobiographical Patterns of Childhood (Kindheitsmuster, 1976) and Oriana Fallaci's biographical A Man (Un uomo, 1979). Paul Auster made second-person a hallmark of his recent nonfiction writing (Winter Journal, 2012; Reports from the Interior, 2013). When in 1994 Monika Fludernik came up with a list of second-person texts in world literature it featured about one hundred and fifty texts; today it would be probably a four-digit number. (2024, p. 9)

However, in my work, second-person language is applied to this specific hybrid form of creative non-fiction. In combination with the other two components of un-Aulasy, imagery and historical context, the function of how the second-person language is shifted from what may be typically seen in other forms of literature. Mildorf explores this concept, noting that "telling someone his or her own story presupposes intimate knowledge between interlocutors and a degree of shared experience of past events" (2023, p. 106). Familial non-fiction provides a situation in which post-memory thrives, and experiences and events are shared freely between family members. Post-memory itself "is a 'generational structure of transmission'" – in other words, post-memory is memory that is passed down through intergenerational stories and not directly experienced (Hirsch, 2008, p. 114). As this post-memory is openly shared, the usage of second person goes beyond the internal narrative of first-person and the external narrative of third-person. Writing with second person and engaging the other elements of "un-Aulasial" writing allows the narrator to invite the reader into the post-memory, to have them join the

family on a level hitherto unseen. Mildorf also comments on the purpose of sharing memory through stories:

> It also requires a very good reason for why that story must be told in the first place – either because the person to whom the story is addressed cannot remember what happened, or because what happened was so extraordinary that it warrants its retelling even to the person who experienced the event. (p. 106)

Familial war non-fiction functions as that reason for Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing, while "un-Aulasial" writing provides the method. The narrative, rather than aiming to retell events to a family member who cannot remember, instead expresses that the events themselves are so extraordinary, the writing requires the usage of the pronoun "you". Although, rather than the retelling being directed at the memory provider as Mildorf notes, it is aimed directly at the reader to allow the memory to live within the page and invite the reader to own this memory for themselves. A perfect example is found in Fallaci's piece, "for an eternal instant nothing happened. Then your eardrums were rent by a sharp, nasty crack, and a tumult of stones exploded, a cloud of grey dust rose" (1981, p. 22). While focused on fiction, Fludernik, in "Second Person Fiction: Narrative You as Addressee and/or Protagonist," does engage the interesting notion imperative to the interaction between the narrator and un-Aulasy – the distinction between heterodiegesis and homodiegesis:

> Homodiegesis consists in the narrator sharing a function both on the narrational and the story planes (with autodiegesis restricting the histoire to the narrator's own experiences). In heterodiegesis, on the other hand, the narrator tells the story of another person and is not an actant on the story level. (1993, p. 220)

In other words, if the writer exists as a character in their own story, the work is homodiegetic. If they do not exist within it, as is typically the case in biography, the work is heterodiegetic. An interesting notion to consider in reference to this separation of narratives is where familial war non-fiction utilising "un-Aulasial" writing sits in relation to those exact heterodiegesis and homodiegesis. Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing is, in fact, a homodiegetic story in relation to the majority of narration. More biographical segments are written as they are directly shared in interviews. Other parts are closer to direct autobiography, often reflecting on current events and comparing them to past ones that have been shared. Sections of un-Aulasy, however, break the consistency of homodiegesis and shift the narrative toward a different, hybridised voice. Auster's (2013) work functions in a similar way, as it flows between second-person narrative, first-person and verse. Creative non-fiction as the overall genre allows this experimentation between voices and shifting between biographical and autobiographical sections, and allows a direct reference to the reader through second-person language:

> Yet many of the second-person texts we've discussed seem to be making an explicit or implicit claim that there is also a dire need for some other kind of fiction [and non-fiction], one that asks us not to run away from these difficulties and struggles but to

> jump headlong, so to speak, into them, and in that way overcome them or, perhaps in the case of the artists themselves, transfigure them. (Chedwick 2022, p. 86)

Chedwick brings an interesting point in his thesis on the function of second-person language and liminality within narratives. His work focuses on fiction as the driving genre in which second-person writing is utilised, however, I believe non-fiction to be of the same relevance. This is especially so within the context of un-Aulasy and the creation of an "un-Aulasy-sphere". "Un-Aulasial" writing does indeed draw on the notion of asking the reader to engage the trauma shared via post-memory. This is no more evident than in *Patterns of Childhood*, as Wolf examines how her grandparents' sick dog would be carried to the vet in a margarine tub, "and will be carried back as a poisoned canine corpse; whereupon Whiskers Grandma will not eat, drink, or sleep for three days" (1976, p. 29). This moment stands as a particular example where we, the reader turned into main character, must experience this trauma. It can then be said that second-person language and, by extension, un-Aulasy is aimed at having the reader live through the trauma of the memory originator. The morality behind this may remain questionable, whether it is right to traumatise a reader and whether the reader can truly hold the same trauma, is an area of further examination not covered in this article.

Conclusion

Second-person language in non-fiction is an unusual and fascinating method of writing lived narratives. Wolf and Fallaci deftly navigate writing their entire works in this perspective, as does Auster in those moments where second person is used. Through the development of my creative work, *Ginger Cake and Lemon Icing*, I have crafted moments of second-person language to enact familial memory. This is utilised in conjunction with imagery and historical context to formulate un-Aulasy and an "un-Aulasy-sphere" – thereby sharing the memory of a family member in a way that is not achievable in first-person or third-person alone. The three writers drawn upon in this article also have moments where un-Aulasy is formed, allowing their works to bridge a gap between the shared experience of a subject and the second-hand reading of the experience. Perhaps, it does not necessarily fill this gap – as no level of writing can literally place the reader where the subject has been. There will likely always be a degree of separation between the memory and the page. Un-Aulasy does, however, allow a writer to get closer than they might have thought. It gives voice to a combination of tools that writers can utilise, thereby extending an invitation for readers to live in the author's written family memory.

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