

CONSTRUCTIONS OF PERSON MARKING AND POETIC STRUCTURES IN SELF-ADDRESSING POEMS

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Abstract

The paper attempts to approach and interpret the category of self-addressing poems from new perspectives. It chiefly focuses on the constructions of person marking and the poetic structures resulting from their various realizations, relying on the implicit assumptions and recent results of literary theory, cognitive poetics and stylistics. In the analyses, poems by Vörösmarty, Arany and Babits figure prominently but other texts are also touched upon. From the various results it is worth highlighting that several concepts and issues that are essential for the model of self-addressing poems, such as the relationship between the addressee and the addresser, the exhortation, the personal crisis (a contrast between role and personality), are given new interpretations. The analyses demonstrate that, contrary to the apparent ‘simplicity’ and homogeneity of the self-addressing poetic pattern, this kind of poem occurs in extremely varied poetic structures in the history of lyrical poetry.

Keywords: self-addressing poem, person marking, poetic structure, apostrophe, apostrophic discourse

1. Introduction

The significance of self-addressing poems, a category which was first coined, described and analysed in detail by Béla Németh G. (1966) in Hungarian criticism, is enormous in the history of poetry. This statement is corroborated, among other things, by the fact that in the recent period, too, a considerable amount of attention has been paid to this poem type in studies on poetics, exploiting the possibilities offered by the productivity of the basic model with new and relevant insights (cf. for example, Kulcsár Szabó 2000, 2018; Kulcsár-Szabó 1997, 2007: 93–104; Tolcsvai Nagy 2011; Tverdota 2013, Horváth 2017: 202–204 et passim, Balogh 2017, Laczházi 2020). But, apart from the “qualitative” indicator, one can refer to quantitative data as well. These include the statistics set up by Elemér Hankiss (1968: 17), which, although not complete, can still be considered representative to a certain extent, and classifies 9% of Arany’s poems and 8% of Attila József’s poems as belonging to the class of self-addressing poems.

In order to set the scene for the ensuing discussion, it is necessary to mention here that despite the adjective *self-addressing*, poems classified as such tend to allow for an interpretation not only as an address to the self but also offer other possibilities such as that of interpreting the subject

as having generic reference.¹ On the other hand, we must also take into account that self-addressing can only be interpreted as such in the context of apostrophic “fiction,” since poetic texts, by their very nature, address the reader and, at the same time, “give voice to” him or her. The poetic text “does not come into being by merely being made audible, but only by being given voice with understanding [...] Now, if these hermeneutical considerations can be appreciated, Heinz Schlaffer’s statement that ‘the poetic structure of a poem does not derive its character from its author, but from its reader, its reciter, whose ‘I’ is thus nothing other than the ‘I’ as intended by the ‘I’ of the poem’, does not sound astonishing either. But this can only be realised if [...] the grammatical subject of the poem is given an identity by the reader’s speech (the ‘saying after’), that is, if the reader lends the poem his or her own voice. Even in cases where lyrical apostrophe is a form of ‘self-addressing’ or in the figure of speaking without a subject” (Kulcsár Szabó 1997: 263; cf. Schlaffer 1995).²

As for the aims of the study of self-addressing poems here, two directions should be mentioned. Using recent developments, namely the basic assumptions and methodological principles of cognitive poetics (cf. e.g. Stockwell 2002, Simon 2016, Domonkosi–Simon eds. 2018) as a background, focusing on the constructions of person marking and their role in meaning-making, we aim to arrive at generalizable poetic, and mainly methodological and typological, results by examining, or more precisely, re-examining, canonical self-addressing poems that can still be considered as typical in some respects (although the aim of the study is not to define the “prototypical” self-addressing poem). Besides, we would like to contribute (to a greater or lesser extent) to the stylistic description of the poetic works analysed.

It is also necessary to point out here that, although it may already seem obvious from the large number of poems belonging to the self-addressing type and the extremely rich variety of realisations, this study does not aim at completeness either in terms of generalisations or in the presentation of the development of temporal variations, even for the purpose of a sketchy overview. Rather, it can only offer a discussion of certain poetic texts, poetic structures considered to be characteristic and important from various points of view and the conclusions that can be drawn from them.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, a brief overview will be given on the original model of self-addressing poems, i.e., the model created by Béla Németh G., and on the approaches of literary and linguistic studies that partially carry it forward and reinterpret it (2). This is followed by an examination of poems by Vörösmarty, Arany and Babits (3), and finally a brief summary of the generalisable conclusions and some further aspects (4).

2. The basic model of the self-addressing poem and some new approaches

To approach the concept of self-addressing poems and to prepare the analysis of the poems to be examined below, it is first necessary to give a brief review of some of the conceptual components, poetic characteristics and issues of particular importance for the characterisation of the type of poem in question which are related to Béla Németh G.’s (1966) original model. In the context of this, special attention is paid to the questions that can be considered open to a certain extent, which serve as a starting point for the problems raised and the results discussed in the present paper. In this review, we will mainly draw on the most recent insights in the literature, which have given rise to new approaches.

In the original model of self-addressing poems, **the crisis of the lyric self** is given a prominent, “foundational” role. Béla Németh G. (1966: 547) concludes that in all the poems he analyses, the crisis is “the generating situation, the experience.” He interprets the concept of crisis as follows:

The crisis [...] arises out of an intuition, or awareness, one might say in simple terms, of the fact that role and personality, or social need, that is to say, possibility and role, have become contradictory: the role

¹ It is arguably for this reason that the adjective in the term often appears between quotation marks.

² Passages from the Hungarian specialised literature are quoted in English translation produced by the authors of the present paper.

offered by society no longer coincides with personality, or the role that expresses personality is no longer necessary or possible for society. It is a variant of the extreme cases of Akakiy Akakievich or Don Quixote. The role hinders or distorts the personality; one's future becomes hopeless, and as a consequence, one's past acquires dubious value, and one's present becomes intolerable. The crisis becomes complete (Németh G. 1966: 549).

However, more recent literature has questioned not only the significance of the concept of crisis but also its applicability. This is, for example, the starting point of a strong critique by György Tverdota (2013). In Tverdota's view, the model of self-addressing poems was "born with a serious genetic defect", and this defect "has caused one-sidedness and distortions from the very beginning in analyses where research has applied the concept of the self-addressing poem in its original or improved form, and has extended it to analyses of other poets without subjecting the foundations of the concept to a stress test" (Tverdota 2013: 5). He considers this as a consequence of the fact that Németh G. highlighted Attila József's poem "Tudod, hogy nincs bocsánat" ("You Know That There is No Forgiveness") as an "exemplary poem" of the self-addressing type, "and he specified the characteristic features of this type of poem on the basis of this work." It was on this basis that he identified the "homogenizing common denominator", which is therefore none other than "the crisis" (ibid.). However, "only in certain developments of the self-addressing poem does it become an expression of crisis and a way of reaction in the service of eliminating it" (Tverdota 2013: 5–7). What is also remarkable is that this critique points to the uncertainty of the very notion of crisis (in general): "crisis is one of the most uncertain and difficult states to define. Very few human beings and situations in life can be confidently said to be free of any crisis, and the ubiquity of imbalance and failures weakens the explanatory power of the concept" (ibid.).

While not denying the importance of the role of crisis in self-addressing poetry in particular and in late modern poetry in general, since "the first decades of the 20th century appear as the culmination of a process" of what can be termed as the crisis of personality (Kulcsár-Szabó 2005: 65), it does seem necessary to consider broader possibilities of interpreting the concept of crisis. Let us cite one convincing example demonstrating that, in the interpretation of self-addressing poems, the "crisis situation" is not always, or at least not directly, attributable to the opposition between role and personality, but to much more complex relations. In his study on Gottfried Benn's poem "Immer schweigender," Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó (2007) plausibly argues that the poem allows for two opposing readings: the *du* in the poem can not only be a person marker of direct self-address but it can also be identified with the text of the poem itself, thus allowing the poem to be read as a 'poetry of poetry,' according to which the poem would be a report on the possibilities of itself" (Kulcsár-Szabó 2007: 96–97).

Closely linked to the issue of crisis, a fundamental question is the relationship between **the addresser and the addressee**. The essence of this relationship is often most evidently and accessibly apparent to the recipient's interpretation in the speech act of **imperatives**. Starting from this grammatical-poetic specificity, Béla Németh G. (1966: 550) describes the self-addressing poems he analyses by stating that they are "not only about address, but also about the imperative. In fact, the true characteristic of the genre is **self-imperative**; if it is not present from the beginning, at a decisive point in the poem the self-address does turn into self-imperative, and the experience, the poem's final resonance, its meaning is gained by this very transformation" (emphasis in the original). Despite the seemingly very categorical, definitive and thus even possibly misleading linkage, it is possible, even necessary, to "loosen" the relationship in question in several ways. Such an "opening," a conceptual transformation is carried out in Lóránt Kabdebó (1996: 11), albeit in "harmony" with the original concept of Béla Németh G., when he (1996: 11) uses the category of "ethical command," which he considers to be more open in every respect, instead of the imperative, which is very strongly bound in its linguistic formulation, i.e., also grammatically. As he puts it, "self-address contains, and its dialogicity is always determined by, some ethical command, which also embodies the dissolution of the accumulating tragedy and the predominance of the elegiac voice." If we approach the question of imperative strictly from a typological point of view, we must take into account a caveat in one of the footnotes of the original text by Béla Németh G. (1966: 550) (the footnote being

a text type which is very important but not always prominent in all reading conventions): “There are, of course, other, non-self-**imperative** varieties of this poem type. Here we are talking about **one** of its main, and certainly the most important, varieties in the 20th century” (emphasis in the original).

The implicit suggestion to interpret and describe the concept of self-addressing poems in a way that goes beyond the “limits” of the imperative, i.e., in an expansive way, does not seem to have been taken into account much in later criticism. In fact, in some recent approaches, the character of the imperative, which is thus only characteristic of one of the varieties of the self-addressing poem, seems to have become an exclusive, definitive element, or at least is overemphasized. According to Horváth, “[Béla Németh G.] defines the basic linguistic-grammatical criterion of the verse type, the addressing, as self-imperative” (Horváth 2017: 145); and in Tverdota’s formulation, “self-addressing gets filled with content when we move from vocative to imperative. We do not simply address but call upon, or call upon ourselves to perform some action, to demonstrate some behaviour” (Tverdota 2013: 7). In fact, however, the “non-self-imperative genres” mentioned by Béla Németh G. cannot be ignored in any case when the aim is to offer a more complete characterisation of self-addressing poems, or to demonstrate the productivity offered by the category through more complete poetic descriptions of certain lyrical texts of a self-addressing nature.

Furthermore, in connection with the imperative character of the self-addressing poem, it seems worthwhile to refer here, making use of the point of view of functional cognitive pragmatics and poetics, to an “imperative” in a broader sense. This imperative is “based” on apostrophic discourse. However, it is not directed at the addressee of this discourse but at that of the actual discourse (i.e., the lyrical speech situation) in the most general sense, which is by its very nature very open, i.e., carrying different modifications of meaning. For here too, the characteristic feature of poetry in general seems valid that “the speaker of apostrophic discourse, in the context of intersubjective channelling of attention [...], expresses not only his/her emotions but also his/her presumptions, in order to influence the presumptions of the addressee of the apostrophe and, by transposing the fiction, of the addressee of the actual discourse (i.e., the lyric speech situation) which frames the apostrophe.” On the one hand, this “influence” can appear in a dimension of cognition, i.e., the actual recipient (also) realizes something he or she already knew, or acquires knowledge about himself or herself and the world that he or she did not have before. On the other hand, the power of apostrophe can also be manifested, apart from sharing experiences, in a more “obvious” and concrete way, in the encouragement to act. In other words, in the sense that the actual recipient should himself or herself “initiate some kind of change in the world around him or her: do something he or she has not done before, or not do what he or she has done before, or, simply, admit the impossibility of action” (Simon–Tátrai 2017: 171).

It is clear from the above that the relation between the addresser and the addressed, as constituted, on the one hand, by a duality of the apostrophic and of the actual discourse, and on the other hand, in many cases, by other semantic factors, can only be interpreted and described in a much more complex network that goes beyond the “simple dialogue” (as in the Benn poem mentioned above). In keeping with the framework of this paper, we will refer here to just one more example that demonstrates this in a very transparent way, “Horace” by Dániel Berzsenyi:

Horace

Storming now Boreas there high above the hills,
Clouds of dark and severe furies cover the sun
Look at the hilltop enveloped in the snowstorm
All is set for wintery rest.

Listen to the song of Flaccus’s golden lute
Pour wine in your glass and stoke the fire of the hearth
Let the magical balsam shine upon your head
It was boiled in the heat of Bengal.

Horác

Zúg immár Boreas a Kemenes fölött,
Zordon förgetegek rejtik el a napot,
Nézd, a Ság tetejét hófuvatok fedik,
S minden bús telelésre dőlt.

Halljad, Flaccus arany lantja mit énekel:
Gerjeszd a szenelót, tölts poharadba bort,
Villogjon fejedben balzsamomos kenet,
Mellyet Bengala napja főz.

Use your days and whatever the present can give
Embrace with a burning heart but don't exclude
Love's tame emotions while the happy star of youth
Will shine on your horizon.

Don't dwell on tomorrow, do not dream of the far
Be merry, have enjoyment while you can,
While we talk time flies away suddenly
Like the arrow and the roaring stream.

Kabdebó Tamás

Használd a napokat, s ami jelen vagyon,
Forró szívvel öleld, s a szerelem szelíd
Érzésit ki ne zárd, míg fiatal korod
Boldog csillaga tündököl.

Holnappal ne törődj, messze ne álmodozz,
Légy víg, légy te okos, míg lehet, élj s örülj.
Míg szólunk, az idő hirtelen elrepül,
Mint a nyíl s zuhogó patak.

In one of the possible readings, we are dealing here with a self-addressing poem. But at the same time, we can consider other possibilities when determining the addressee of the apostrophic discourse. What is even more important from our point of view is what Ágnes Bécsy (1985) also presents in detail in her analysis, i.e., that the speaker, the "addresser of the second person", is itself double, and that the two addressers are associated with different types of communicative elements and different types of imperatives. The "addressers" are the linguistically unmarked, "theoretical" "I" and the marked, quoted "golden lute of Flaccus":

The direct call from the self is *to look* and *to listen*. And the one from Flaccus is *to stoke, to pour, to let [the balsam] shine, to use, not to dwell, not to dream, to be merry, to have enjoyment [...]*. The imperatives coming from the 'I' are all injunctions directed to an external object, the ones coming from Flaccus only to a lesser extent. At the same time, what the 'I' calls on the second person to do is only a meditative, passive 'action,' a purely visual attitude towards something: *look* at how all is set for a wintry rest, *listen* to the song of Flaccus's golden lute. What Flaccus's lute calls you to do, on the other hand, is an active, practical wish: *do this, don't do that, be this and that*. [New par.] However linguistically unmarked it may be, the poem has its origo in the original addressee, and the self 'evokes' the exhortative Flaccusian dictum as well (Bécsy 1985: 40–41).

If we want to approach the relationship between the addresser and the addressed in terms of the correspondence between the "I" and the "you," we can mostly rely on Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó (2007: 97–99), who draws attention (while in fact, questioning the concept of literal **self**-addressing) to the "kinds of resistance" that the correlation between the "I" and the "you" may encounter. This can ensue, among other things, because "the voice lent to the 'I' cannot be easily attributed to the 'face' of the 'you,' and vice versa, identification with the 'you' will not be able to fully transfer to the 'I' behind the utterance."

It should also be taken into account that in some poetic structures, the fact that the addressee (the addressee of the apostrophe) can be "doubly imagined" may be considered as a salient, dominant textual feature. As, for example, in Dezső Kosztolányi's poem "Ha negyvenéves..." ("Once you're past forty")³:

Once you're past forty

Once you're past forty, one night
you wake up and afterwards
you cannot go back to sleep. You look at your room
there in the dark. You slowly ponder
this and that. You lie, eyes open,
as you will in the grave. This is the point
at which your life takes a turn.

Ha negyvenéves...

Ha negyvenéves elmúltál, egy éjjel,
egyszer fölébredsz és aztán sokáig
nem bírsz aludni. Nézed a szobádat
ott a sötétben. Lassan eltűnődöl
ezen-azon. Fekszel, nyitott szemekkel,
mint majd a sírban. Ez a forduló az,
mikor az életed új útra tér.

³ https://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/Kosztol%C3%A1nyi_Dezs%C5%91-1885/Ha_negyven%C3%A9ves%E2%80%A6/en (Accessed: 21 September 2022).

You wonder about having lived between
the earth and the stars. Some trivial thing comes to mind.
You fiddle with it. Tire of it and drop it.
Every so often you hear a noise from the street.
You know what every noise means.
You are not even sad. Just sober and attentive.
Almost serene. Then suddenly you sigh.
You turn to the wall. You fall asleep again.

(1929; Kery, Leslie A.)

Csodálkozol, hogy föld és csillagok közt
éltél. Eszedbe jut egy semmiség is.
Babrálsz vele. Megúnod és elejted.
Olykor egy-egy zajt hallasz künn az utcán.
Minden zajról tudod, hogy mit jelent.
Még bús se vagy. Csak józan és figyelmes.
Majdnem nyugodt. Egyszerre fölsóhajtasz.
A fal felé fordulsz. Megint elalszol.

In his analysis of the poem, Ernő Kulcsár Szabó points out that the apostrophic speech of the self-addressing poem

does not make the grammatical subject of the poem conceivable as both the speaker and the addressed person, only because it would give them a distinctive image. [...] The simultaneity of the double conceivability is rather present because the lyrical figure of the apostrophe does not force the rhetorical subject of the poem to play the role of self-address exclusively, despite the fixity of the grammatical relations between the speaker and the addressed. In other words, it does not require the speech that gives voice to the text to limit or refer back the grammatical other or the addressed second person to the subject from which the address derives, neither in an assertive nor in a semantic way (Kulcsár Szabó 2018: 22).

Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy (2011) also distinguishes between several aspects of the relation between the addresser (speaker) and the addressee in self-addressing poems as one of the most specific realizations of subject construction from a cognitive linguistic point of view. He makes a distinction between a direct relation between speaker and addressee and an “open” relation towards the addressee, thus considering the recipient of the poem as a potential addressee. In his argument,

the syntactical subject or the element bearing a possessive person marker is second person singular, which is anchored both as the direct addressee and the speaker at the same time, as a deictic centre and a deictic reference for itself and for the recipient, and also as part of the speech situation in the abstract space of the textual world [of self-addressing poems]. The identity of the addressee is open, and it is primarily the lyrical speaker (identical with the first person speaker), but may also be the recipient (Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 193).⁴

3. The poetic variations of self-addressing poems

In what follows, we will briefly examine a few poems which have been selected partly on the basis of the relevant criticism (see below for references to the individual poems) and partly according to our own analytical style attributions. These works seem particularly suitable not only as illustrative examples of the questions addressed above, but also as possible answers, sometimes as contributions to the formulation of further questions, i.e., they may contribute to the reasoning in an “argumentative role.” The poems are discussed in chronological order, but not with the assumption or intention of looking for an “arc of development.” The reason for choosing a chronological order in this case is that it incorporates the aspect of historicity, but without any other theoretical pre-suppositions. In other words, this method was also a deliberate attempt to avoid an aprioristic poetic-stylistic typology (established before the analyses).

⁴ „A mondattani alany vagy a birtokos személyjelű elem E/2. személyű, amely egyszerre horgonyzódik le mint közvetlen megszólított és egyúttal mint beszélő, deiktikus középpontként és deiktikus referenciaként saját maga és a befogadó számára, illetve szintén a beszédhelyzet részeként a szövegvilág elvont terében. A megszólított kiléte nyitott, elsősorban a lírai beszélő (azonos az első személyű beszélővel), és lehet a befogadó is” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 193).

3.1. Realisations of the schema of self-addressing poems in Mihály Vörösmarty's poetry⁵

The End

Burn pure, like the flame of the holy altar for your
homeland,
Strive towards the rocky roof of merit;
What remains from you in the flame? The ashes of
your broken heart, and above you
A memory that gratitude and death mock you with.

(1842)

Vég

Égj tisztán, mint a szent oltár lángja hazáért,
Küzdj fel az érdemnek sziklatetője felé;
Még marad a lángból? tört szíved hamva, s fölötted
Tán emlék, mellyel csúfol a hála s halál.

In this lesser-known poem of Vörösmarty's, the forms of person marking that are prototypical for self-addressing poems, such as second person singular imperative verb forms (*burn, strive towards*) and also noun and pronoun forms marked by second person singular possessive endings (*for your homeland, from you, your heart*)⁶, not only allow but also invite a reading of the poem as a self-addressing one. The question arises here, obviously, whether the second person grammatical forms in themselves function as the foundation of this special discursive configuration or rather they only allow for a reading of this kind. It appears that the basic characteristic feature of a self-addressing poem is that it allows apostrophic fiction to emerge through the use of second person singular, without explicitly naming the addressee of the apostrophe. This in turn creates the possibility of identifying the reader as the addressee.

At the same time, a deviation from the prototypical self-addressing poem as defined by Béla Németh G. is obvious in the case above. The key characteristic feature of this deviation is that the speaker is far from being the speaker of the basic model, i.e., he is not someone who reveals a "positive message" or voices an exhortation that enables the self to overcome a crisis. If we start from the notion of crisis, which plays a key role in the basic model, or more precisely from the characterisation of the self-addressing poem by which "the poem type is not an expression of the experience of crisis, but of the will to overcome the crisis, the confidence that it can be overcome" (Németh G. 1966: 550), then we again see a cognitive-emotional movement in the opposite direction, which leads from a hopeful faith, from the will to act to doubt, from the hoped-for result to the mere "ashes" left behind after death and from the deserved, affirmative confirmations to its absence exacerbated by "mock"-ery.

However, what seems even more interesting and important from our point of view is that there are two substantially different readings of the personal relationships in the poem. The first is the "simple," truly characteristic apostrophic position of self-address, where the "I" addresses the "I," which is perceived and/or conceptualized as "you," and which is to be understood, influenced, encouraged, etc. In another, possibly more relevant reading, however, an even more specific fictional scene is being generated here. Namely, in a more complex reading, even **three "characters"** can be identified, if by "character" we mean the different occurrences and linguistic representations of the subject that are shared and are posited as individual "entities", having an "autonomous" consciousness, i.e., experiences and suppositions. In this case, the first "actor" on the "stage" of the apostrophic situation is the speaker uttering the pathetic, romantically rhetoricised exhortation. The second one is the one asking and answering the rhetorical question, which is a response to this exhortation, and the third actor (the addressee of the apostrophe understood as a self-address) is the subject "being taught" by the first speaker, that is, the "encouraged" "you", corresponding to the apostrophic addressee of the prototypical self-addressing poem, from whom the second questioner and teacher character (speaker) wishes to deny the faith and the confidence in the proposed future

⁵ When otherwise not indicated, the translations are the authors' own literal renderings.

⁶ Due to the different morphological structure of the two languages, the person markings, such as the maker for the imperative and the second person possessive suffix in Hungarian will be unmarked in English.

action in the words the first speaker has uttered, with a mocking and threatening vision of being unrequited in the future.

Vörösmarty's other two famous self-addressing poems, "A vén cigány" ("The Old Gypsy") (1854) and the fragment beginning "Fogytán van a napod" ("Your day is waning"), can only be briefly discussed, so we will touch upon only a few important issues. While in the case of the latter there is unanimous agreement that it is a self-addressing poem, there seems to be uncertainty about the reading of "The Old Gypsy" as such a poem, also confirmed by the fact that its classification as such is usually accompanied by emphatic argumentation, rejection of objections, etc., as in the analysis of Lajos Csetri (1975: 375): "the atmosphere of the ode and of intoxication caused by wine is complicated by the fact, already known to Gyulai, that in the figure of the gypsy, the poet is addressing himself. This formally hidden self-addressing character, already noticed by his contemporaries, links the poem to the form of the modern poetry of crisis." From our point of view, the suggestion of "formal hiddenness" is particularly noteworthy, since the prototypical linguistic elements, the second-person singular imperative verb forms and possessive pronouns are present in large numbers in the poem's text. Thus, if we read *the gypsy* as a metaphorical self-address, the person marking does not render the self-address covert (cf. e.g. Kappanyos 2012: 69).

The self-addressing nature of "Your Day is Waning," (written probably around 1855) as opposed to "The Old Gypsy," is not questionable. In Béla Németh G.'s (1966) seminal study, it is one of the examples of the "half-formed" version of the self-addressing poem, alongside several other examples that already show the traits of the verse type. This, in many ways extraordinary, poem is also cited as an example of self-address in Gábor Nagy Tolcsvai's (2012) study on the history of the development of the subject in literature. It is significant, but not typical, from the point of view of the marking of personal relationships that in this poem Vörösmarty "partially resolves the ambiguity of the second person with the third person subject of the poor Hungarian poet" (Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 193). However, as highlighted by Tolcsvai Nagy, this does not necessarily and exclusively refer to a single person, the "you" in the poem, but to Hungarian poets in general. Thus, the poem maintains or reconstitutes the familiar configuration of standard apostrophe.

"Your Day is Waning" (excerpt)

Your day is waning,
Your luck is waning,
Even if you had some, wherefore?
You couldn't use it in any way.
Your blood has thickened,
Your brain has dried,
On your tired shoulders
Your old cloak is all tattered.
Your purse is low,
You are running out of wine,
Poor Hungarian poet,
What are you waking up to?
[...]

(Fogytán van a napod. . .)

Fogytán van a napod,
Fogytán van szerencséd,
Ha volna is, minek?
Nincs ahova tennéd.
Véred megsűrűdött,
Agyvelőd kiapadt,
Fáradt vállaidról
Vén gunyád leszakadt.
Fogytán van erszényed,
Fogytán van a borod,
Szegény magyar költő,
Mire virradsz te még?

Also, a more far-reaching and productive aspect in the modelling of self-addressing poems is the specificity of the poem (and also the insight of this study) that

in the text of the poem, some of the formal subjects are not the addressee but his/her grammatical "possessions" ("your day", "your luck", "your blood", "your brain"). These nouns, [...] as reference point structures, indicate the factors of the mode of being of the addressee (and thus of the speaker) as semantic targets, starting from the reference point of the addressee, foregrounding the concepts they denote. The concepts evoked in this way are clearly factors of Dasein (existence, being-there), which are

categorised starting from the Dasein itself and then are reattached in the subject's understanding of being (Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 193–194).⁷

3.2. The synecdochic-metaphoric constructions of self-address: Arany János's "Mindvégig" ("Until the End")

As Béla Németh G. (1966) also notes, the self-addressing poem type and the "experience and attitude" associated with it became common from the time of János Arany (G. Németh 1966: 547; cf. the statistics of Hankiss [1968] cited above). It is therefore not surprising that this type of verse appears in Arany's oeuvre in different poetic forms, relatively often and with great importance. It is not possible here to give an overview of these works, so we shall only discuss one poem that is, in many respects, outstanding and relevant, the poem "Mindvégig" ("Until the End") (1877), and we shall only deal with the most important of the possible approaches to it from our point of view.

Until the End	Mindvégig
<p>The lute, the lute Hold close to your bosom When death comes; Until your fingers may play on it, It may be a comfort to you A sorrowful mind will find.</p> <p>Though love and wine In your veins boil not: Put it not down; Have you no joy, have You no sorrow allotted to you By the hand of ill fate?...</p> <p>For this life is beautiful Until the end if you spare What is left; Only at the turn of autumn, When your leaves fall Do not wish for summer.</p> <p>Though your hopes go up in smoke, - And on your sky The sun is not half up: That which is sunny, enjoy, And make its cloudiness go: Be you merrier.</p> <p>And believe not that the power Of the lute is faltering: It is but its range of note that is different; If you are content with that, You can expect enough times more A song of merriment.</p>	<p>A lantot, a lantot Szorítsd kebeledhez Ha jó a halál; Ujjod valamíg azt Pengetheti: vigaszt Bús elme talál.</p> <p>Bár a szerelem s bor Ereidben nem forr: Ne tedd le azért; Hát nincs örömed, hát Nincs bánat, amit rád Balsors keze mért?...</p> <p>Hisz szép ez az élet Fogytig, ha kíméled Azt ami maradt; Csak az ősz fordultán, Leveleid hulltán Ne kívánj nyarat.</p> <p>Bár füstbe reményid, - S egeden felényit Sincs már fel a nap: Ami derüs, élvezd, Boruját meg széleszd: Légy te vitorabb.</p> <p>S ne hidd, hogy a lantnak Ereje meglankadt: Csak hangköre más; Ezzel ha elégszel, Még várhat elégszer Dalban vidulás.</p>

⁷ „a vers szövegében a formális alanyok egy része nem a megszólított, hanem annak valamely grammatikai »birtoka« (*napod, szerencséd, véred, agyvelőd*). Ezek a főnevek [...] referenciapont-szerkezetként a megszólított (és ekképp a beszélő) létezőmódjának tényezőit jelölik szemantikai célként a megszólított referenciapontjából kiindulva, előtérbe helyezve az általuk jelölt fogalmakat. Az így előhívott fogalmak egyértelműen a jelenvalólét létezésének tényezői, amelyek magából a jelenvalólétből kiindulva kategorizálódnak, majd csatlóznak vissza a szubjektum létmegértésében” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 193–194).

There is a subject out there and in yourself -
 And emotion, there is enough
 While the heart beats;
 And a new idea, when it sparkles;
 Be not reluctant, lazily
 When the lute calls.

Have you a listener? Have you none?
 Speak on, as God has given you
 The gift to speak,
 Even if on a bare land
 - Like that of the cricket in summer -
 Your song is lost.

Tárgy künn, s temagadban -
 És érzelem, az van,
 Míg dobban a szív;
 S új eszme ha pezsdül;
 Ne vonakodj restül
 Mikor a lant hív.

Van hallgatód? nincsen?
 Te mondd, ahogy isten
 Adta mondanod,
 Bár puszta kopáron
 - Mint tücsöké nyáron -
 Vész is ki dalod.

Among the second person singular self-addressing linguistic elements, synecdochic-metaphorical constructions play a prominent role in the poem: *to your bosom; your fingers; in your veins; When your leaves fall / Do not wish for summer; And on your sky / The sun is not half up*. As a consequence, in this poem of Arany's, as elsewhere, the distance between the subject represented as the "you" in the poem and the speaking "I" increases, and the inherently subjective relationship becomes more "objective" (cf. Simon–Tátrai 2017: 181).

For a more complete and precise analysis, however, we must also take into account the linguistic elements and constructions that are not in second person singular, which, although only indirectly, clearly refer to the person addressed, based on the context of the text (the co-text). Examples include *mind* and *heart*, which are also synecdochic. Let us now first examine in this respect the place of *mind* in the text a little more closely. The *mind* occurs in the semantic structure of following sentence: *The lute, the lute / Hold close to your bosom / When death comes; / Until your fingers may play on it, / It may be a comfort to you / A sorrowful mind will find*. Here, the addressee is anchored by the second person singular verb and noun forms, like *hold, to your bosom, your fingers*, and as a result, *mind* can mostly be coherently interpreted by the recipient as 'your mind', though not excluding a reference to general wisdom about the effects of playing an instrument.

Even more significant is the textual role of *the lute*, which is also in the third person. The noun, which has a metaphorical meaning, foregrounded in various ways such as by placing it in the opening position and by word repetition, and by the fact that "the lute" refers to poetry itself, can also be linked to the addressee, or more precisely, **has to be linked**, since it can only be understood in the sense of 'your lute'. It is obvious that it is not a matter of attachment to poetry in general, but of attachment to one's own poetry, to the creative activity of the self that is at issue here.

Similar is the case for the nominal *the heart*. In the complete sentence (*There is a subject out there and in yourself - / And emotion, there is enough / While the heart beats; / And a new idea, when it sparkles; / Be not reluctant, lazily / When the lute calls*.) the following elements are decisive for the person marking of the person addressed: *in yourself, be not reluctant*. On this basis, *the heart* is also incorporated into the meaning of the sentence as "your heart" (though, obviously, not excluding the possibility of a reference to a general assumption about human nature, according to which "heart" provides the basis for poetry).

Distancing, i.e., the linguistic construction of a distance between the addressed self (subject), represented as the "you" in the poem, and the speaking self, is thus realised on several planes and in different constructions. The basic poetic procedures of this work together to create the poem's unique poetic structure. As we have seen, the main components include direct, second person singular forms of address (*hold close, speak*, etc.) which divide the lyric self into "I" and "you," second person singular possessive constructions (*to your bosom, your fingers*, etc.), the use of the lyric self as a self and you, and the use of the lyric self as a self. Added to these are synecdochic and metaphorical conceptualisations that are even more distancing, i.e., creating even more salient degrees of separation, and linguistic elements seemingly (i.e., grammatically) in third person singular which nevertheless function as second person in the meaning structure of the sentence.

3.3. The constructions of elaborating the lyric “I” and the addressee in the self-addressing poems of Mihály Babits

In Babits’s oeuvre, self-addressing poems are also frequent, and these types of poems “becoming less frequent from time to time” have a more characteristic role in marking out a certain period within the oeuvre than their “proliferation” (Németh G. 1966: 555). Let us now take a closer look at the particular poetic structure of some of these poems, focusing on the construction of person marking.

“Ecetdal” (“Vinegar Song”), written in 1914, is of interest in this respect because it begins with a self-addressing question⁸ (*Did you ever think, once, in your strength and outdoors, / running through thorns as one blinded by the sun, / that you would be stung, and it would hurt, that you would be afraid in the evening / and how good it would feel to love someone?*) and, for the most part, the poem goes on with these poetic constructions. Following the schema of self-addressing poems, the second person singular subject and the second person singular possessive personal markers are anchored simultaneously in the text as both speaker and direct addressee (cf. Tolcsvai Nagy 2011: 192): *You will not love, you thought, you did not appreciate, you would reclaim, you would recall your dropped moments, in you, your tears*, etc. But in the concluding part, he departs from this pattern, first with the first person singular verb form:

But even mild liquid can quickly boil into a burn,
no emotion can remain in your tub without spirits;
And so your light tears become corrosive and poisonous,
and *you swallow* its drops with a hiss, you poor...
I swallow...

De benned enyhe nedv is hamar forr égetővé,
szesztelen nem maradhat kádadban érzélem;
igy válik könnyü könnyed maróvá; étetővé
és cseppjeit sziszegve *nyeled* szegény... *nyelem...*

The sequel, however, then develops a new apostrophic fiction, starting with the address “*Poor*” and “*my weak poem*,” in a complex poetic structure in which figurative elements such as personification, synecdoche and possessive structures, whose initial point of reference (which still foregrounds the speaking subject) is the first person singular speaker, receives a prominent role:

Poor now, my weak poem, go, little orphan weeper,
yet a poem of my blood, and to me a dear poem,
who confesses to the world that in my veins
the strange old beat is running, and dare to weep for me.

Szegény most, gyenge versem, menj árva kis pityergő,
véremnek verse mégis és nekem drága vers,
ki vallod a világnak, hogy még erembe csergő
a régi furcsa taktus s helyettem sirni mersz.

Thus, the constructions of personification in the poem, together with the self-address, elaborate three different types of representation of the lyric self, thus breaking the text down into three distinct units of poetic organization. Nevertheless, they are connected and mutually interpretative by the fact that the “I” (as speaker, addressee, and initial point of reference), together with the lyrical position and the “state of being” of the self (understood as referential scene) are directly foregrounded in each of them.

In his analysis of Babits’s poem “The Farmer Fences His House,” written in 1925, György Rába (1983: 215) suggests that in this work the poet “occasionally enlivens the message of allegory with self-address, with sighs, sometimes enriching it with associations that spill over into visions in the visual floodplain of similes.” In our reading of the undoubtedly very complex apostrophic network of the poem, the self-address does not appear “occasionally.” It is only at the end of the poem that the person marking allows for a reading as self-address, and even there – and this is a decisive poetic peculiarity – only offering a metaphorical reading.

At the beginning of the poem, there is no linguistically marked apostrophic addressee, and it is not made clear whom the lyric self is addressing:

⁸ This non-specific characteristic feature may open the possibility of a self-addressing reading, although we are aware that other kinds of reading are also possible in this case. (For instance, the questions may at first seem to refer to an unspecified “you”, an unknown addressee.)

My picket-soldiers are lined up, my tiny plot is marked out of the ground, as light, upright lancers standing as guards, mighty in their justice; they are the law, they are the right, they are my strength, my labour, my rest and my reward, and a sign that I am; the thorns of my hedgehog life are they in this broken existence, excluding all strangers, but letting through what is left in common between brothers and sisters: the magic of the landscape [...]

Léckatonáim sorban állnak már, kicsi földem a földből kikerítve, könnyű szál dzsidások módján állnak őrt, hatalmasan igazságukban; ők a törvény, ők a jog, erőm, munkám, nyugalmam és jutalmam ők, s jel hogy vagyok; sün-életem tüskéi e szakadt létben, kizárva minden idegent, de átbozsátva ami még közös maradt a testvérek közt: táj varázsát [...]

The following unit, in which the personal pronoun “we” marks out the group of the addressed, though very vaguely, does not contain self-addressing either:

[...] Oh we, trained already for younger brothers with sharper claws, we, elder brothers, arriving from a richer last year: what, to flat-ter to the modern winds? [...]

[...] Óh *mi* edzve karmosabb öcsökhöz már, kincses tavalyból érkezett bátyák mi magunk: mit, hízelegni a modern szeleknek? [...]

It should also be noted that the first clause of the quote above can be interpreted as a strongly elliptical structure constructed for emotional reasons in which the “we” does not have a function of address: *Oh we [are] trained already / for younger brothers [...], what [sense therefore would it make for us] to flatter to the modern / winds?*

The first clearly apostrophic addressee is the garden:

[...] *My garden, protect* the seed that remained from the grass of the richer last year and do not mind the barbarous winds!

[...] *kertem, ódd* a magvat ami megmaradt kincses tavaly, fűvéből és barbár szelekkel *ne törődj!*

The passage beginning here with “*my garden*” allows for two readings. One, according to the first level of textual processing, and also on the basis of the textual antecedents, is a direct, “naturally” suggested reading, where the garden is the addressee. The second reading, however, is that the second person singular is a marker of **self-addressing**:

[...] *you* should just remain last year’s keeper! and if the newcomer says, looking down, “I am the New!”, *answer*: “The Old was better” – Behind *your* heroic *pickets* Like a medieval monk used to, from rugged, helmeted hoards, mongrel nomads, iconoclasts With whips, hide a few old books, so should you *Hide your seeds* till, spring coming, a living lilac In the place of *your* fallen *picket-soldiers* Calls with fragrance the bees of the future.

[...] *te* csak maradj a tavaly őre! s ha a jövevény lenézve így szól: „Én vagyok az Új!” – *feleld*: „A Régi jobb volt” – Hősi *léceid* mögött mint középkori szerzetes dugott a zord sisakos hordák, korcs nomádok, ostoros képégetők elől pár régi könyvet: úgy *dugd magvaid*, míg, tavasz jöve, elesett *léckatonáid* helyén élő orgona hívja illattal a jövendő méheit.

However, the two readings outlined above are not mutually exclusive. It is still advisable to distinguish between them in order to better model the semantic-stylistic-poetic structure of the text. Thus, we are talking about two isotopic planes (cf. Kemény 2002: 37), and connecting them is not only possible but also necessary, since, in a metaphorical sense, the garden and the lyrical “I” become identical (*you*). It is on this metaphorical plane that both the second person singular verb forms (*protect, answer, hide*), which call for actions that can only be performed by human actors, and the second person singular possessive noun structures (*your pickets, your seeds, your picket-soldiers*), which can even be directly linked to the garden on the first isotopic plane, acquire their poetic meaning.

Béla Németh G. (1966) gives a detailed analysis of Babits's poem "Csak posta voltál" ("You Were Just a Go-Between"),⁹ (1932) primarily focusing on the "experience of thought" of the poem, which is mainly related to Husserl, concluding that in this poem "it is not the [Heideggerian] word *Sorge* that performs the imperative, and it is not the rejection of sociality, but the assumption of that which constitutes for the poet 'seine eigenste Existenzmöglichkeit' ['his very own existential possibility]" (Németh G. 1966: 555–557). The poem's aesthetic quality is undoubtedly significantly influenced by the self-address, the specific organization of the I-You relation. In this respect, Béla Németh G. emphasizes the "questioning attitude" (1966: 556), which also appears in a complex way, since, in the greater part of the poem, "the attitude of questioning and answering is explicitly assigned to the subject addressed in a quasi-dialogue, by establishing and authorizing the self's speech beyond him ('you answered the barbarian peaks with no, / because your homeland answered through you.')" (Lőrincz 2008: 535). The last stanza, however, is different:

<p>Your life is a feeble yarn woven by Landscapes and the past throws a loop to the future: What you have brought is yours inasmuch as The dust left by your foot on the carpet. You do not leave a trace: you yourself are Composed of traces left by the steps of the dead.</p>	<p>Életed gyenge szál amellyel szőnek a tájak s mult dob hurkot a jövőnek: amit hoztál, csak annyira tied mint a por mit lábad a szőnyegen hagy. Nem magad nyomát vetted: csupa nyom vagy magad is, kit a holtak lépte vet.</p>
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In the last stanza, as Csongor Lőrincz (2008: 535) puts it, a "superimposed response" from an "apostrophic instance" (transcendental instance) appears, and with it, dialogicity is "closed and is not interrupted in the openness of the undecidable outcome of the lyrical questioning."

4. Conclusions

We have attempted above to approach and interpret, from a new perspective, the category of the self-addressing poem, focusing primarily on the constructions of person marking and the poetic structures resulting from their various realisations. Drawing on the background assumptions and findings of cognitive poetics and stylistics, understood as part of literary studies and functional cognitive linguistics, we analysed both canonical poems and ones which are not in the forefront of related criticism.

The first, theoretical part, which reviews the basic model of Béla Németh G. and related approaches within literary criticism, reveals that several concepts and issues closely related to the model of the self-addressing poem, such as the relationship between the addressee and the addressed, personal crisis, imperative, etc., need further elaboration and clarification – partly on the basis of the unelaborated but clearly indicated guidelines of Béla Németh G. himself (1966). This can of course be done by maintaining a unity between theory and practice, i.e., on the basis of further textual analysis.

In the second part of the paper, we examined some typical self-addressing poems in more detail. Analyses focusing on the forms of person marking, the ensuing poetic structures and variations lent support to the theoretical part, showing that in the poems of Vörösmarty, Arany and Babits, there are highly varied forms of self-addressing, which at the same time contribute decisively to the textual meaning. The analyses thus demonstrate that the self-referential poem – in contrast to the apparent simplicity and uniformity of the basic model – can occur in extremely diverse poetic structures, with a rich variety of aesthetic qualities and textual meanings.

⁹ Throughout the poem, the two meanings, or more precisely conceptual domains, associated with the Hungarian word *posta* prevail simultaneously: that of "message" and "messenger." The relationship between the two meanings would require a separate study, and the translation cannot render the two meanings simultaneously. Thus, in the title, the translation "go-between," which seems more appropriate here, is given as "a person who transmits or conveys a message".

Consequently, it can be stated that the modelling and further description of the specific poetic structures of the sub-types and of their realisations may have important implications for both literary studies and cognitive poetics and stylistics.

Finally, the general conclusion can be drawn from the above interpretations that self-address is possible only when the second person addressee is not evoked properly, i.e., if there is no explicitly named addressee in the poem (or if there is, it can be considered a synecdochic variation of the lyrical “I”, e.g., its “heart” or “mind”). When there is an explicit addressee, such as the “garden” in Babits’s poem, or the poem itself in the same text, or the “poor Hungarian poet” in the case of Vörösmarty, self-address is only partial, and an allegoric interpretation seems to be much more readily available. Therefore, the discursive situation of a prototypical self-addressing poem includes the speaker (lyric “I”) and at least one second person singular addressee without any specification of the latter. When the poem maintains this kind of configuration, a self-addressing reading can prove to be authentic and/or intensive. But when the specification of a second person singular character unfolds somewhere in the text, there is no strict boundary between self-address, cataphoric reference, and allegory.

Based on the above, a redefinition of self-addressing poems seems necessary. Poetic self-address is (i) a schema of the lyrical discourse, the instantiation of which is a matter of degree; and (ii) a specific process of reading poetry, during which the reader elaborates and maintains two different but tightly connected mental vantage points (or subjects of consciousness). Regarding the first aspect, it can be emphasised that a given poem does not always instantiate the whole schema as a prototype. Regarding the second aspect, it needs to be admitted that a self-addressing reading competes with other alternatives for construing the discourse world. The analyses provided by the paper demonstrate both the scalar variability of schema and instantiation and the dynamic unfoldment of a self-addressing reading.

As a further reflection on the above, and as a sort of “outlook,” it is necessary to emphasise the aspect of historicity here, which would here mean specifically examining the specific poetic characteristics of the figure of self-addressing in different periods (cf. Németh G. 1966, Laczházi 2020).

Another issue that requires further investigation is the question raised above but not elaborated in detail, but which is of paramount importance in the context of person marking, namely, that “in many cases there is essentially no way of distinguishing between self-addressing and addressing, between the addressed ‘I’ and the addressed ‘other’ [...], i.e., the delineation of the ‘I’ in relation to the outside world or the other at any given time is far from clear at the level of utterance” (Kulcsár-Szabó 2005: 70; cf. see also Kulcsár Szabó 2015: 187–8).

The exploration of how the different realisations of style relate to the generalisation that the “poem type [...] is characterized by extreme *structural closure*, *rigour* and *clarity*, *dramatic atmosphere*, a tone of voice imbued with *pathos*, a style of delivery with elevated *rhetorical style*, and *sententious syntax*” (Németh G. 1966: 551; emphasis in the original) could also be an exciting field of inquiry directly aimed at the field of style. The poems examined above also suggest, although it was not possible to develop this in detail within the framework of the present paper, that within the schema of the self-addressing poem, due to the nature of literariness, an essentially infinite number of individual variations of style can be created.

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