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„POSSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS" AND THE „POSSIBLE ADDRESSEE" IN LYRICAL POETRY

The article deals with the place of the addressee in the poetics of the lyrical text through the lens of the theory of communication, history of poetry and poetics. As the addressee represented in contemporary poetry is unlikely to reflect any specific model of personality, or a homogeneous cultural type, I have articulated the conceptions of the "possible addressee" and "possible communication" of the literary text. Accordingly, our speaking to "You" does not necessitate a description of his/her image (by analogy to lyrical hero) but the contact as such, i.e. the relation itself. It is then in the wake of this relation that specific poetical aspirations toward the personality of "You" are born. We would not want to read "You" evoked in a poem, even if this is performed as an instance of semantic fulfilment, as a theme. We would rather perceive "You" through the prism of relations through which he/she approaches us, or which lead us to him/her. We wish to apprehend the "content" of the personal relationship in the text as a "place of perpetuating contacts" (Opacki 1995: 172). What is poetical according to the contemporary formula of the addressee-oriented poetry is transposed from "communiqué" to "contact" (the content of the intricate formula "toward You").

Keywords: possible addressee, possible communication, addressee-oriented poetry

1. Who are You?

Who are You? The question might be most conveniently answered in Hans Georg Gadamer's words "You is the one addressed by speech "(Gadamer 1993). In this self-evident, as it seems, answer, it is somehow impossible not to notice the disappearance of the "speaking I person" However, we take it for granted that what actually determines the status of language as means of communication, is the presence of two speakers. In the classical addresser/addressee approach to a speech act, which, according to Roman Jakobson, falls into six constitutive factors, everything starts with the addresser who speaks to the addressee (Jakobson 1960). On the level of a particular text one may even speak of a presupposed superiority of "I": "neither *you* nor *he* are there in their own right but are created in the speech act of the subject." It is the attitude of "I" that is responsible for a "semantic fulfillment of particular personal forms appearing in a given articulation." (Okopień-Sławińska 1998 : 68).

Assuming therefore that "You is the one addressed to by speech" (the addresee of speech), we are looking for some legitimation for avoiding the authority of the "speaker I" which assigns the place for things in the poem's structure and places itself in the midst of the created world. To recognise the allocutionary character of language, it is necessary to take note of the world around "you".

2. The addressee as an aspect of the communicative theory of the literary work

2.1. Addressee – receiver – reader

Posing the question of You present in a literary work should begin with a terminological explanation. The reflection concerning "the communicative dimension of the morphology of the literary work" is usually undertaken as part of a wider research of the reception and the receiver of the literary text. The interchangeable key concepts relevant to the problem of reception are "addressee", "receiver" and "reader" whose stricter meaning is determined by appropriate adjectives the application of which hinges on the level of communication the three concepts appear in. The extra-textual roles of "receptive instances" are branded by the standard names "addressee" or "reader", the latter may also figure as "real" or "concrete" reader. One should also take notice of the problem of terminological excess which is connected with the surplus of "infra-textual instances". These deploy both the term "receiver" ("potential", "immanent", "virtual", "implicated", "assumed") and "reader" ("ideal", "intended", implicated", "model"). Finally, there is the "addressee" which also lacks terminological homogeneity and adapts epithets from the former two categories.

The three concepts applied in the context of You function within a symmetrical system of "personal relations", creating a hierarchical set of pairs with appropriate names for "I". The whole disciplines the "order of reversed symmetry", which implies that "the addressing structure of a literary work finds its analogon in the receptive one" (Okopień-Sławińska 1998 : 113). One owes the exactness with which this symmetry was treated to the linguistic theory of Emil Benveniste who claimed that "I" and "you" are "mutually interchangeable forms": "I" defines as "you" the one who signifies himself as "I" (Benveniste 1966 : 230–231). As a result, combining "the names for I" with the formerly-evoked "names for you", we are left with the so-called "scheme of role distribution in literary communication", which reflects the subtle differentiation of stratification of the particular transmissive-receptive figures. In practice, all this "geology" serves to indicate separate levels of interpretation and study of a literary work.

2.2. The "represented addressee" or the "possible addressee"?

It seems indispensable to separate the "represented addressee" in the text from the "virtual receiver" and the "reader". For strictly speaking, all immediate

invocations of You in the poem can by no means refer to the "virtual receiver" or the "reader". This is this very much the case, even if immediate language signals should prompt us to assert the contrary. The "presented addressee", potentially also the "presented reader", does not stand in for the immanent "receiver", as nowhere in the structure of the work are they identical with each other. The former remains, if one recalls Bakhtin, "a conventional image of the addressee", emerging from the "arbitrary utterances addressed to the reader, the listener, or the descendants, etc." (Bakhtin 1986 : 400–401) Paradoxically, the falsity of such an identification of the addressee, the receiver and the reader is clearly suggested by those texts which do not address a "reader" but represent a generalised addressee or a common man, the non-concretised **other** who can be recognised in the extra-temporal "everyman" – (Bakhtin 1986 : 396). The role of such lyrical You, theoretically at least, could be assumed by any reader – "the universal man". Naturally, the "extra-temporality" of this "everyman" disappears as the addressee gets involved in his socio-historical context as a "literary form" which must respect the principles of the "movement of convention." "The universal addressee" therefore remains forever a utopian project which expresses a historically determined way of understanding the common and the universal.

The concept of "represented addressee" which has been widely popularised in literary theory ceases to be adequate in identifying the phenomenon it wants to signify. One should rather look on the appearance of You in a poem as, first and foremost, a relation which is not identical with thematisation, that is to say, thematisation as speaking about an addressee who often remains an "unspeakable being". One should apply more convenient terms like the "convoked addressee" or the "invoked addressee", which leads us to the conception of the "possible addressee".

The "mutual reversibility" of the forms "I" and "you" cannot concern "the level of literary representation" of the work. The linguistic communicative facsimile ceases to be valid on this level first and foremost because of the position of the addressee. From the point of view of a pragmatic interpretation of the work, the difference between linguistic and literary communication is revealed exactly through the impossibility of "swapping the roles" of the speaking subject and the addressee, which is the case in a common linguistic contact. In other words, the position and especially the constitution of the addressee in literature is not at all connected with an actual communicative task. In this sense, structurally speaking, we are dealing with an "asymmetrical dialogue", which is particularly conspicuous in poems, that use the convention of approaching an addressee who is not a person.

3. The functioning of a speech act in poetical communication.

3.1. Intertextuality
The cases of the "categorically irreversible communication" inevitably lead us to the question of intertextuality and, consequently, to fictionalisation of the use of

language in literature, an important quandary in the theory of speech acts.[1] What is at stake in fictionalisation is the imitation of the actual language practices in literature. It is, according to Maria Renata Mayenowa, "the portrayal of real sections of communication" (Mayenowa 1987 : 21). Awareness of the mimetic character of poetical sentences reminds us of the necessity of taking them in inverted commas. "The level of literary representation" considered in the perspective of language mimesis reveals therefore the illusory character of the communicative situation presented in a poetical work. It would seem appropriate to cite Richard Ohmann, who posits that "the illocutionary act which operates within one reality does not exist in another" (Ohmann 1973).

For this reason, or rather, because of the illusory character of the "communicative intention" within the smallest sentence base of the "literary representation", which results in the absence of an internal "communicative task", a simple analogy between speech and the literary work cannot yield a satisfactory description of the relation I – You.

The case in point here is not analogy but a differentiation which distinguishes between utterance as such and utterance-as-a-literary-work which "feigns a speech act", as we would put it in terms of a mimesis-orientated discourse. This differentiation can be also likened to the opposition between "meaning" and "sense", which can be clarified by Paul Valéry's notion of "normal" illocution: "I am talking to you, and if you have understood my words, these words have lost their being" (Valéry 1971 : 106).

The grammatical You evoked on the level of a particular sentence (single speech act) conveys the "meaning" of this form, which includes for instance interchangeability between you and "I" which is simultaneously realised as an irreversible disappearance of the words of the speaking subject (the words replaced by a replica or provoked by the action of the addressee). This process is described by the famous metaphor of communication as a "trite coin" (Valéry 1971 : 106). If (all) this happens within a literary imitation of a speech act, the convoking of a person nevertheless does not convert him or her into "some I". The subject's sentence does not disappear although it has ceased to "serve its communicative purpose", I quote Paul Valéry, "for I want to go on living, but to live a completely different life" (Valéry 1971 : 106). Likewise You, constituted by each expression directed to it, persists and imbues the totality of the literary address with its sense and can be understood independently of the subject's "egocentrism".

Let's recall at this point Bakhtin's philosophical ventures into dialogical relations:

The whole utterance is no more a unit of language (it is not a unit of a "stream" or a "chain of speech"), but it is a unit of linguistic communication, not imbued

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[1] I refer to J.L. Austin's speech acts theory as discussed by J. R.Searle, R. Ohmann, and M.C. Beardsley.

with **meaning** but **sense**, that is, the so-called total sense referring to value – truth, beauty etc. – which requires the understanding of the opinion-making respondent. The co-responding understanding of the totality of speech always has a dialogical character" (Bakhtin 1986 : 435).

The speech act in poetry, when it becomes a part of the literary address, "takes on a certain value" but it does so "at the cost of **losing its own meaning**" (Valéry 1971: 106). Following the "sense" for that matter means having to distance oneself from "artificial" personal relations, fabricated in a poem by an evoked series of "pretended speech acts", brought in consciously with no hope of obtaining a perfect copy. One should remember that in literature these acts are enacted merely, as Ohmann would have it, through a "mimetic illocutionary force" (Ohmann 1971: 1-19). In poetry the communicative carbon-copy mislays "its meaning", which causes the whole utterance to take on some value and be filled in with **sense.**

In one's observation of the "lyrical you", therefore, what may be far more desirable than following dubious, "feigned" personal interactions is to become more open to intertextual connections. This openness should also be employed from the perspective assumed by Julia Kristeva in her (creative) reading of Bakhtin, in which she refers the features of the language of the novel to her own conception of poetical language (Kristeva 1969: 394-418). According to Kristeva, the "addressee" with whom we are concerned in this essay appears to be involved – within the horizontal dimension of the word (use) – in a relation of intersubjectivity. The intersection of the "horizontal" axis with the "vertical" one on which "a word in the text is oriented toward the anterior or the synchronic literary corpus, releases the relation of "intertextuality". Hence, the word (text) is the intersection of words (texts) in which one can read at least one different word (other text)" (Kristeva 1969: 395-396). The "dialogical structure" takes on a new direction which, writes Kristeva, appears only in the light of the text which constructs itself in relation to another text as ambivalence (Kristeva 1969: 414).

In the process of tracing the senses of "the represented you", using the above mentioned perspective should encourage us to limit the analysis of "you's" interactions to "the center of the deictic system" which is John Lyons' name for the "speaker" (Lyons 1975: 275) In a literary text, this "centre" is deprived of the actual capability of directing one's speech to some "here and now" of a speech act. The "here and now" of the mimetic speech-act founding the meaning in a real dialogical situation is – in the aftermath of what Paul Ricoeur calls "the suspension of an ostensible reference" – estranged from its context. On the other hand, the literary work endows this (act) with a new context free from the "tyranny" of egocentrism which is commonly referred to as the "world of a given work". "Unveiling" of the text's meaning is for Paul Ricoeur the "equivalent of the ostensible reference in spoken language". The "literary you" we are pursuing here is not thereby "given by the discursive situation", but "created", "founded by the work itself". Unveiling requires

one's being familiar with the "possible world of the work indicated through "non-ostensible references of the text" (Ricoeur 1972, Ricoeur 1976).

When undertaking an analysis of the whole literary work from the point of view of the addressee, we should consider how it is possible for the meanings of the individual works to be revealed to us in the context of an intertextual interference of the semantically congruous worlds of You.

3.2. Possible worlds

Venturing into the question of possible worlds, it would seem important to determine more precisely the issues connected with the transition from the elements of semantics (used basically in the studies of narration) to the practice of interpreting poetry. This is necessitated by – just like in prose studies – our awareness of the illusion of poetical language (speech) stimulated by a mimetic defamiliarisation of objects. From a pragmatic point of view, these object-defamiliarising circumstances can be generally defined as: (1) the world that the speaker and the addressee have in common, and (2) the world seen from the perspective of "actors", that is, the place and the moment of speaking (Lalewicz 1975: 28). The literary address, being separated from the actual "pragmatic situation", makes it difficult to see the presented "actors" as related to their "common world", a problem very characteristic of poetical discourse.

To shed further light on the issue, we might refer to Roman Ingarden and his theory of the literary work. Having posited the category of "quasi-judgements", Ingarden questioned literary interpretation as an act corresponding to reality, and therefore made strong advancements toward the semantics of "possible worlds". Quasi-judgements, which cannot be applied to the "actual world", only suggest "intentionally some problems within the represented world (Ingarden 1988 : 245), and, more importantly, "the intentionally created state of things make up their own self-contained world" (Ingarden 1988 : 239). Umberto Eco later defined such "possible textual worlds" as "cultural constructs" (Eco 1994: 190). Paul Ricoeur, in turn, regarded the "proposition of the world" as an interpretive challenge posited by the text. Consequently, to interpret, claims Eco, means "to explicate this kind of being-in-the-world which is unfolded before the text". Poetry, on the other hand, is to open new possibilities for the so called being-in-the-world, a term introduced by Heidegger. (Ricoeur 1975: 241).

Assuming that the role of the addressee is that of the "orientation centre" in individual literary works, we might have to enquire about the access code to its world.

The level of "literary representation" of a particular poetical work is an exceptionally concentrated index to a "possible world". Actually, this is a "possibility" for a given "communicative situation" to come to being. The assumption nourished by the semantics of the possible world seeks its philosophical motivation in Karl Popper and his famous Three Worlds, the three domains of human conscious activity: physical

and psychical, and "World Three" – the world of objective creations of the human mind. Roman Ingarden would rather write of "superadded reality" which means "being among many objects which are inherently different than objects and situations occurring in the so-called nature" (Ingarden 1987 [1972] : 35–37).[2] For Popper it is obvious that "World Three is not fiction – it *does* exist", which is testified to in how it influences other orders of being. (Popper 1984). Bearing this in mind, the question of whether things are "real" or "unreal" in the case of the lyrical address seems to be of lesser importance. Acknowledging this, we are also questioning the plausibility of the post-Austinian consideration of literary discourse as abuse, however uniform and pragmatic it may seem. According to this view, literary expression is a by-product of the so-called normal linguistic behaviour or, generally speaking, a "pragmatically deviated utterance". (Bogusławski 1982: 131–164). Once this is mentioned, it would also be relevant to verify the common view – at least as far as lyrical poetry is concerned – that the literary text feigns some communicative situation.

Dissembling, imitating, feigning etc. are the activities taking place within the auspices of a single speech act. The poetical address, on the other hand, treated as a whole does not feign anything, even if it is rendered as a series of sentences which are mimetic in character. Poetry should be considered therefore, to cite Jakobson again, as self-referential by nature. The illusoriness of the communicative situation on the level of "literary representation" – in fact weakening the bond between the "speaking I" and the "represented you" – opens new links and addresses enacted by the work, although their being brought about is not the effect of copying speech acts. The properties inherent to this specific opening, somewhat implied by the whole of the work, are what might be called "possible communications". As one co-participates in these communicative events one determines their character considerably in the very act of reading and interpreting – hence, it is relevant to mark the significance of the receptive behaviour here. Paraphrasing the introductory definitions concerning "possible worlds" by Eco, we can say that we are after communications which "are not directed presently to anybody, but they are possible and they depend on the propositional attitudes of somebody who confirms them" (Eco 1994: 188–189).

"Possible communications" proceeding in different directions eventually lead us to the *superaddressee* who, according to Bakhtin, "being treated to an ideally faithful perception/response in various epochs, assuming receptive circumstances are different in each case, is exposed to diverse ideological concretisations (God, absolute truth, the judgement of impartial human conscience, nation, the verdict of history, science, etc.)" (Bakhtin 1986: 436).

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[2] He means, in other words, quasi-reality, i.e. "domains of arts, science, law and technology", "historical reality", "and that what we call value: the good, the beautiful, truthfulness, justice, etc."

The historically inconstant concretisations of various participants of the particular "possible communications" are approachable for study in the form of conventions. And so, in our case, the given convention of the "represented addressee", is the sum of instances of his being confirmed by his "partners" within a specific integration network. This includes poems, periodicals, volumes and other works which are motivated by some semantic integration of the whole together with the critical literature referring to it. One may say that the sense generated by the whole in a way "transcends" the particular elements constituting it, for it refers to figures represented in other texts. Playing an important part in this process of forming the historico-literary convention of the "lyrical you" are all sorts of ways of imitating feigning the chosen modalities, "acts" or, to use Bakhtin's term, "kinds of speech" Bakhtin 1986 : 348–402).

4. Possible communications

Imitating a speech act, or, as Bakhtin would have it, literary "playing" with speech genres, performs the function of "borrowing" of the property of the "*real* world" (Eco 1994: 192). The mimetic address to You – being simultaneously a personification device – presupposes, as it were, the obviousness of their having to be partners of "possible communications", including those most implausible from the point of view of the textual empiricalness, e.g. talking to stones, or "relating to the deceased, dead people". These communications become a kind of spiritual actuality which tries to break free from the confines of the "third world" of ideas.

We can repeat a question posed by Michel Beaujour's at this point: "is it possible to choose between hieropoetics and sociopoetics? (Beaujour 1980: 17–18). And it would be hard to get a univocal answer.

On the level of literary representation this *de facto* implies, that there are two principal kinds of addressee: non-human – the "you of hieropoetics" (God, animation through "magical *residuum*": a tree, a stone, etc.), and personal – the "*you* of sociopoetics".

Looking for this "spiritual relationship to other people" in poetry, we venture toward a personalised You which is determined by various epithets: universal, transposed, individual. It could be the You of the departed person, for example, a "detached you"[3], or an imaginary person, a "phantasm", which brings us to sociopoetics, in which the poetical text is considered as an actualisation of speech acts and rhetorical functions.

In my conviction, the represented addressee of contemporary poetry is unlikely to reflect any personality model of an epoch or an ideal cultural type. Accordingly, our speaking to You does not necessitate a description of his/her image, but the contact as such, i.e. the relation itself. It is then in the wake of a relation that specific poetical aspirations toward the personality of You are born.

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[3] A term used by J. Lewin term when he discusses Pasternak: *I Live with your Photograph*. (Lewin 1988 : 264).

For this reason, we do not perceive the addressee here, as identical with the lyrical hero, for instance, which, generally speaking, is possible in different approaches. We would not want to read You evoked in a poem, even if this is performed as an instance of semantic fullfilment, as a theme. We would rather perceive You through the prism of relations through which he/she approaches us, or which lead us to him/her. Nearly always these relations, that is, the deployment of second-person forms "not only lay down the condition under which the text is comprehensible but constitute the content of the text itself" (Mayenowa 1987: 22). We wish to understand the "content" as a "place of perpetuating contacts" (Opacki 1995: 172). What is poetical according to the contemporary formula of addressee-oriented poetry is transposed from "communiqué" to "contact" (the content of the intricate formula "toward You"). What triumphs here is the phatic function, "the only one attributable to both people and birds", as Jakobson remarks, "the first function successfully performed by children" (Jakobson 1960). The dominance of this widely understood "phaticity" in the event of almost every poem, is confirmed by the question posed in *Meridian* by Paul Celan, a poet known for his persistent clinging to apostrophic structures: "But in just this way doesn't the poem stand right here, in an encounter – *in the mystery of an encounter*?"

"The poem wants to reach an Other, it needs this Other, it needs a *vis-a-vis*. It seeks it out, speaks toward it" (Celan 1998: 335).

Each evocation of the Lyrical You testifys the need for such a contact with the other person – it implies adjusting oneself to "some reality which could be *spoken toward*". *Speaking toward* implies a mere "talking to" but it equally entails a perpetuation of a desirable contact. A poem speaks of an encounter, it is a possibility of an encounter which it determines.

In the case of a "real discourse" (face to face), the other person, as Emmanuel Levinas claims, "breaks free from any possession", he is "by no means an object" (Levinas 1993). "He who says You does not have anything for his object", wrote Martin Buber many years earlier (Buber 1992: 40). In his view, "being there, encounter, relation" denote "the real present" in which: You comes to being" (Buber 1992: 45). Although it may be said that literature as such is unlikely to meet this condition, this "presence" is attempted in poetry which is formulated in the second person singular; what may be possible to achieve here is the state of "radical topicality" (Ingarden 1988 : 304). We could also conceive of this actuality in the categories of "possible communications", possible "at all times and in every moment" or, as Gadamer would have it, "in an imagined place and gnomic presence" (Gadamer 1970: 96).

In a lyrical address the problem of the "pastness" of things (when and where they happened) is actually resolved. In the event of poetical speech, some You or

"Thou" comes to being in every moment, because "the poem itself has only this one, unique, momentary present.[4]

Considered from the position of the subject, the "You of discourse" becomes first and foremost its experience, it determines and helps some I to constitute itself. The You invoked in poetry, however, "refuses to be possessed" by I, and, once it is invoked, it is remained in language. So if he – "the main character" – is the object of poetical speech (the theme), and I – "the subject" – is the lyrical "persona", that is, the outwardly-presented mask, then the "addressee" emerges here as a projection, wanting, dreaming of or desiring a given You. The poetry of the second person gives us the possibility of a renewal or coming to being of his world. What is contained in these communicative proposals registered in poems which "attempt at (a) presence", is a rhetorical reflex as well as a socio-historical mediation by live speech and tradition. These communications, which identify themselves against the reference to literary conventions and genre pursuits, create a new network of social relations made accessible by poetry, constructed around the invoked addressee of the "incomplete dialogues", who might also be called the "possible you" or the "desirable you".

Posing the question "who are You", we may claim that "the very question of You is all we know of him" (Rosenzweig 1976), and be nevertheless apt to answer: "the whole world."

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[4] *Punktuelle Gegenwart.*

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