



Edited by  
Cornelis van der Haven  
and Jürgen Pieters

# Lyric Address in Dutch Literature, 1250-1800

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

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# Table of Contents

Lyric Address: By Way of an Introduction <i>Cornelis van der Haven and Jürgen Pieters</i>	7
1 Staying in Tune with Love Hadewijch, 'Song 31' (thirteenth century) <i>Anikó Daróczy</i>	25
2 O Brittle Infirm Creature Anonymous (Gruuthuse MS), 'Song' (c. 1400) <i>Clara Strijbosch</i>	45
3 Lyric Address in Sixteenth-Century Song Aegied Maes (?), 'Come hear my sad complaint' (before 1544) <i>Dieuwke van der Poel</i>	59
4 An Early Modern Address to the Author Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, 'My love, my love, my love' (1610) <i>Britt Grootes</i>	75
5 Parrhesia and Apostrophe Joost van den Vondel, 'Salutation to the Most Illustrious and Noble Prince Frederick Henry' (1626) <i>Marrigje Paijmans</i>	89
6 Lyrical Correspondence Maria Tesselschade Roemers Visscher, 'To My Lord Hooft on the death of Lady Van Zuilichem' (1637) <i>Marijn van Dijk</i>	105
7 The Apostrophic Interpellation of a Son Jan Six van Chandelier, 'My Father's corpse addressing me' (1657) <i>Jürgen Pieters</i>	121
8 Guilty Pleasure Hubert Korneliszoon Poot, 'Thwarted attempt of the Poet' (1716) <i>Christophe Madelein</i>	137

9	Same-Sex Intimacy in Eighteenth-Century Occasional Poetry	151
	Elizabeth Wolff-Bekker, 'To Miss Agatha Deken' (1777)	
	<i>Maike Meijer</i>	
10	Nature, Poetry and the Address of Friends	167
	Jacobus Bellamy, 'To my Friends' (1785)	
	<i>Cornelis van der Haven</i>	
	Epilogue	179
	Lyrical and Theatrical Apostrophe, from Performing Actor to Textual Self	
	<i>Frans-Willem Korsten</i>	
	List of Poems (Sources)	193
	Index of Names	195

# Lyric Address: By Way of an Introduction

*Cornelis van der Haven and Jürgen Pieters*

Dear reader,

The title of the book whose introduction you have just begun reading can be seen as an example of what in rhetorical theory is usually called pleonasm or tautology. 'Lyric address': the two words can actually be taken to refer to one and the same thing. After all, in the specific meaning in which we will be using the latter term in this book, 'address' is what in many ways constitutes and defines a lyrical poem. To be sure, not all forms of address are poems, but all poems can be seen as instances of address, special instances even. In other words: poems are all about lyric address and lyric address is what poems are all about. The deeper meaning of that quip is perfectly conveyed by the opening paragraph of the entry on 'address' in the fourth edition of the *Princeton Encyclopedia for Poetry and Poetics*. There, we can read the following:

Under the heading of *address* in poetry come not only the listeners a poem invokes or implies and the inanimate things or dead people to whom it may speak, but the entire communicative context that such a work projects. The contextual embeddedness of address includes its reference to a situation of utterance (called *deixis*) but also the ways in which that situation participates in artistic convention; the poem's own history and fate as a text; and social practices governing literary production and circulation. (Waters, 2012a, p. 6)

The category of address, so we take the above definition to suggest, subsumes almost everything that is of importance in the production and reception of poetical texts. Poems evoke the specific communicative situation in which they function, from the perspective of the author as well as that of the reader. When poets write a poem they address their readers, but not necessarily in a direct way. In most cases, the address of the lyric is a matter of implicitness and indirection. As any handbook of poetry will immediately say, we are not supposed to take 'the poem's voice' as the poet's own voice, even though we are not expected to sever that tie in any absolute way either. Neither are we expected simply to take the 'you' to

which the lyrical 'I' addresses itself in the poem for versions of ourselves. More often than not, poems are indirect forms of address, in the sense that the voice that is seen or, rather, heard to utter something in a poem (the something that *is* the poem) does that uttering by addressing someone or something – not so much the 'you' of the actual reader, but an addressee that is part of the communicative situation that the poem installs. As John Stuart Mill famously put it in his 'Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties' (1833), when we are reading a poem we do not really 'hear' what is being said; rather, we 'overhear' that which is being said.<sup>1</sup>

As a consequence of its basic indirectness, the poem manages to address successive generations of readers, the above entry further suggests. After all, their mode of address also relates to the way in which these texts organize and provoke their readings, even by readers whose reception of the text is chronologically very distant from the moment of the poem's production. Moreover, the poem's mode of address is equally related to conventions and mechanisms that govern the social functioning of these texts, including the material means of their mobility and distribution.

What the above paragraph finally implies, in our view, is that in the case of poetry (possibly more so than in the cases of epic and dramatic writing), the genre's theoretical identity and historical development are marked by an impressive amount of overlap. While some things definitely change in the historical development of lyrical writing, the majority of the genre's basic characteristics (especially those that fall under the category of address in the broad meaning of that term) remain the same. Indeed, the past five decades have seen the publication of a number of important books whose contribution is to be situated on the intersection of the theoretical and the historical analysis of poetry: while the authors of these books try to come up with a general definition of what poetry *is* (transhistorically, as it were), they do pay attention to historically different varieties within the genre. Among those books are several that have inspired us in the preparation of this volume. In the chronological order of their publication, we would like to mention Käte Hamburger's *Die Logik der Dichtung* (first published 1957), Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Poetic Closure* (1968) and *On the Margins of Discourse* (1974), Michael Riffaterre's *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978), W.R. Johnson's *The Idea of Lyric* (1982), Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker's *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (1985), Roland Greene's *Post-Petrarchism* (1991), William Waters' *Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* (2003), Heinz Schlaffer's *Geistersprache* (2012) and, last but not least, Jonathan

1 Quoted in Culler, 1981, p. 137 and Culler, 2015, p. 186; the reference is to Frye, 1957, pp. 249-250.

Culler's *Theory of the Lyric* (2015). As will become clear in the chapters that make up this volume, it was especially the latter work that served as an important source of inspiration for the authors who contributed to *Lyric Address*.

In our introduction, we will develop a number of ideas that we drew from the books we just mentioned and that have been operative in our discussions with the contributors to the volume. The book is the outcome of a lengthy but pleasurable and collegial collaboration among a mixed group of younger and more experienced scholars of Dutch poetry from what is locally known as the 'older periods', from the Middle Ages up to circa 1800, say. The collaboration started off with the joint reading and discussion of Jonathan Culler's work on the apostrophic nature of lyrical writing. The discussion immediately resulted in plans to assemble a set of close readings of single poems by Dutch authors that we wanted to make accessible to an international audience. The poems were selected by the individual authors, based on their own preferences. Most poems are written by canonical Dutch authors, or they are taken from important anonymous collections of poetry (like the *Antwerp Song Book*). Although the selection presented here is not meant to be representative for the period, the ten poems bear witness to the diverse character of the lyrical genre in the Low Countries between 1250 and 1800.

Like in many other parts of Europe, lyrical poetry was not at all a well-delineated literary category during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. In fact, the reference 'lyric' covered many subgenres (like odes, songs, panegyric poems and hymns), which means that 'lyric' was quite an unstable reference to different kinds of poetry. More importantly, the lyrical genre had to compete with epic and dramatic forms of poetry and thus the word 'poetry' was not at all equated with the lyric mode, as is often taken to be the case today. Early modern poetical treatises, like the *Poeticarum institutionum libri tres* (1647) by the Amsterdam classical scholar Vossius, considers all poetry other than drama and epic as lyric (see Bloemendal & Rabbie, 2010). Form and content of the lyrical poem are flexible and depend on the demands of the poet to express his/her inspiration most effectively, according to Vossius. Contrasting with the gravity of epic poetry, the style of the lyrical poem should be lofty and lovely at the same time (Spies, 1977-1978, pp. 564-565). One of the characteristics of the Dutch literary tradition with respect to lyric, is the strong connection between poetry and song and a tendency to stress the practical values of poetry, as for entertainment and moral instruction (Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 1984). In line with this, the social function of poetry was also very important, which may be

reflected also in the selection for this book, that contains no less than four occasional poems.

As the reader will see later on in this book, our readings are accompanied by wonderful translations of the poems by Myra Scholz. The readings are inspired on the one hand by the model of Stephen Burt and David Mikics' *The Art of the Sonnet* (like them, we wanted our analyses to convey the pleasures of reading that the poems discussed can bring), but on the other hand also by our sense that the reading strategies that Culler developed in *Theory of the Lyric* could also be made productive for poems dating from periods that are less central in his book. Most of Culler's examples date from what one could call the post-Romantic era, the eighteenth century and after. Inspired by Culler's reflections on the apostrophe, a group of Dutch literary scholars decided in the mid-1990s to publish a manual about reading poetry, but also their examples are limited to mainly modern poetry (van Alphen et al., 1996, pp. 23-35). As Paul Alpers made clear in a stimulating application of Culler's reflections on the 'apostrophe' and other issues of address to early modern poetry, these earlier poems invite us to adapt Culler's model in the direction of a more 'persistently *social* mode of address' (Alpers, 2013, p. 1, italics in original). Having had the privilege to discuss this volume with professor Culler at the occasion of his visit to Ghent in the Spring of 2016, we hope that he will recognize in this book the same spirit of collegial elaboration that in our view marks the late Paul Alpers' work.

### Lyrical functions of address

The idea that poems should be conceived of as linguistic events in their own right – Archibald MacLeish's famous New Critical dictum that 'A poem should not mean / But be' – has become somewhat of a standard in contemporary theories of lyrical writing. However, as Roland Greene writes in the introduction to *Post-Petrarchism*, his attempt to define the nature of lyric sequences in the wake of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, the very dogma may well have prevented the 'further investigation of how readers and writers engage the poem as immediate experience' (1991, p. 8). For Greene, lyric as a genre is defined by what he calls 'the dialectical play of ritual and fictional phenomena' (1991, p. 5). Lyrical poems are ritualistic in the sense that they urge readers to reutter the utterance they are reading and in doing so to assume 'the subjectivity of the scripted speaker' (1991, p. 5). In order to attain that goal, Greene argues, poems contain 'directions' for their own performance and readers (speakers) are expected to perform the poem

on the basis of those directions. In further stressing that poetry is fiction, Greene runs counter to Käte Hamburger's conviction that the lyric genre, unlike epic and drama, does not fall under that central literary category, if only because when performing the poems that we read, we become the 'I' that is speaking in the text. This is different, Hamburger and others believe, when we read out loud a passage from a novel or a play that contains the same personal pronoun. For Greene, though (in this he follows Barbara Herrnstein Smith), the fictionality of the lyrical text lies elsewhere, in the fact that, like novels and plays, poems are made up of 'fictive verbal acts' which they represent.<sup>2</sup>

One of the ritualistic 'directions' that lyrical writings offer their readers for performance is the poem's mode of address, the most explicitly visible marker of what since 1977 – in an early version, published in *Diacritics*, of what became the seventh chapter of *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981) – Jonathan Culler has been calling the poem's apostrophic character. Culler's attempts to define the nature of poetry go back even further. Already in his 1975 book, *Structuralist Poetics*, in the chapter entitled 'Poetics of the Lyric' to be more precise, Culler tried to come up with an analytical framework for the detection of core characteristics of lyrical texts. In that chapter, the 'apostrophe' is not yet mentioned as one of those defining hallmarks (a specific use of deictics and the expectation of unity and coherence are the two conventions that Culler considers to be distinctive features), but it is clear from several passages in this text that the way in which poems are about a specific use of 'address' – lyric address, we would obviously say – is already an issue of special attention to Culler (1975, p. 166). The poem is seen as an utterance that falls outside what Culler calls the 'ordinary circuit of communication' (1975, p. 166). Tying in with Culler, van Alphen et al. (1991, pp. 29-30) assert that apostrophic poems construct a 'timeless present' that highlights the *now* of speaking and writing and excludes itself from the time dimension of a story.

According to Culler it is not only the poem's indirectness that makes these texts stand apart from 'an actual situation of discourse', Culler writes there, but also its 'invocational-prophetic mode' (Culler 1975, p. 166). In *Theory of the Lyric*, Culler relates this mode explicitly to the poem's apostrophic quality: it is by apostrophizing someone or something that the author realizes his poetic powers (as we will also see in the contributions to this volume by Grootes and Madelein). While some critics relate the apostrophic quality of poems to the elevated emotive expression of the lyrical 'I', Culler considers

2 Greene, 1991, p. 10, quoting Herrnstein Smith from *On the Margins of Discourse*.

the apostrophe first and foremost as ‘a mark of poetic vocation’ (Culler, 2015, p. 13). This vocation – by writing apostrophic poems the poet manifests his office as a poet, irrespective of whether or not (s)he writes poems that thematize this office – entails an invocation. The mode of poetry, Culler claims repeatedly, is that of the ‘vocative’: the person or thing that is being addressed in a poem, is expected to respond, even though we are usually not given that response in the soliloquy of the poem. Often, the address is to phenomena that cannot be addressed in the real, ‘empirical’ world. These ‘unhearing entities’, as the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* calls them – ‘abstractions, inanimate objects, animals, infants, or absent or dead people’ (Waters, 2012b, p. 61) – clearly cannot do what they are being told to do in poems; they cannot respond to the poet’s calling in the world outside the poem. But the reader is also expected to respond ‘poetically’, that is, the reader is expected to recognize a poem for what it is and not as something different – not as a regular, normal communicative utterance (see also the complex reciprocal relationship between the speaker and his ‘you’ discussed by Grootes in regard to processes of truth-formation).

In his further reflections on the reader’s response to a poem, Culler pays a lot of attention to what in *Theory of the Lyric* he refers to as ‘voicing’ (Culler, 2015, pp. 31-32). The concept relates to those aspects of the lyrical text that give us the impression that we are indeed overhearing somebody who is speaking as we read, someone who has an own voice and feelings and thoughts that are made present by that voice. It is important for Culler, however, that we do not reduce the poem to the voice of the speaker – ‘voicing’ is not the same thing as ‘voice’, he keeps stressing. If they fail to see that crucial difference, readers will possibly limit their response to the poem to those forms of reading that Culler is adamant to avoid. Such a limited reading will only wonder who the speaker is and in which specific communicative and expressive context the speaker is uttering the words that make up the poem and to which larger narrative complex that context belongs. ‘This model makes the lyric into a mini-novel with a character whose motives are to be analyzed’, Culler fears (2015, p. 111). Thus, the model prevents us from paying attention to those aspects of the text that encourage us to ‘perform’ the lyric poem and to voice the words that the text invites us to repeat. Poems need to be read out loud, Culler believes, not simply because such a delivery enables one to appreciate better the aural matter of the text (the same could, after all, be said of literary prose and dramatic writing) but because that matter is an intrinsic part of the ‘ritualistic’ character of the lyric. With that concept Culler refers to the expectation that readers of poems do not simply receive the text passively (as is wont to happen in

ordinary communication) but actively perform it and in doing so, as Culler writes, ‘come to occupy, at least temporarily, the position of speaker and audibly or inaudibly voice the language of the poem’ (2015, p. 37).

## Music and address

Performance is central to the ritual element of the poem, which is composed of sounds and organized in the ‘reader-auditor’s experience’, according to Roland Greene (1991, p. 5). A poem thus has to be ‘experienced’ by way of a performance, the reutterance of the poem which is read as a script of sounds. This script has often been seen in the light of the lyric’s strong relationship with song: the act of singing transforms the auditor into a more active performer of the poem (as song), who ‘sings with’ the poet or the lyrical subject. Greene more explicitly refers in that respect to the early modern tradition of the love sonnet, whereas W.R. Johnson (1982) relates the element of sound and music to the Greek tradition of the lyric as a ‘lyre song’ (μέλος), performed by a singer in front of an audience. Heinz Schlaffer, in turn, points out the musical origins of the lyrical genre in respect to the effect of music (and dance) on the mind and body of both speaker and listener. The idea of the poem as song would extend its scope of comprehension (*Reichweite*), inviting the listeners to join in and to feel the power of song through the act of (imagined) singing: ‘Wer den Gesang hört, hat an dessen Macht teil [...]’ (Schlaffer, 2012, p. 76).

In epic poetry, the singer’s address of the muses at the beginning of the poem (*invocatio*) is a ritual element too, as is the address of the audience to listen to the singer’s story and to bring them in the good mood (*captatio benevolentiae*). However, the rhetorical function and ‘direction’ of these ‘epic’ addresses is less ambiguous and possibly even more ritualized than in the case of lyrical poetry (see also Paijmans in this volume). Culler considers the reader (or listener) as the ‘beneficiary’ of poetic communication, who should feel addressed by a poem directly or indirectly, temporally occupying the position of the speaker and reuttering his words (Culler, 2001). According to Johnson, the lyrical poem as an invitation to the auditor to ‘sing with’ the initial singer, is typical for the lyric form in classical poetry (Johnson, 1982, p. 4). For Johnson, the presence of the singer in front of an audience is crucial to the lyrical genre in the sense that the singer transforms universal emotions into something more personal and relates these emotions to a more specific context, inviting the listeners to share these feelings. Waters (2003, p. 20) criticizes this metaphoric approach of a personal addressee and

the strict dividing line drawn here between 'private words' and the public communicative framework: according to him, words in lyrics can remain 'private' even when 'nonaddressed bystanders' are invited to be involved in the communicative process.

Even though Culler disagrees with some of Johnson's premises (especially the idea of the poet who directly addresses his audience) he seems to agree on Johnson's I-You model in regard to classical poetry and the idea of recreating thoughts and feelings through the lyrical device of address (2015, p. 199). In its 'ritualized' form, the address of the auditor (you) by the singer (I) indeed creates the opportunity for that audience to get involved in the perspective of the singer and to feel what (s)he feels and to think what (s)he thinks. Thus, this form of address can easily transform the I-You structure in a poem into the perspective of a lyrical 'we', as we will see in the chapters by Daróczy, van der Haven and van der Poel for instance.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of the lyrical poem as song that creates an atmosphere in which singer and listener share the same feelings and thoughts can also be discussed in terms of what Johnson calls 'musical intimacy' (1982, p. 5). The idea of a 'recreation' of feelings and thoughts through lyrics was adopted by medieval and early modern poets as well. As we will see in the chapters by Strijbosch, van Dijk and van der Poel, music can be an instrument in poetry to get a grip on certain emotions. In combinations with other sound dimensions of the poem, music can strengthen the emotional effect of the message on the explicit or implicit addressee of the poem. Not only the direct address of the audience, also more indirect forms of lyric address support the idea of the poem as something that invites us 'temporarily [to] occupy the position of the speaker' and to 'try on this speech', as we feel ourselves addressed by the poem and/or engaged in the process of addressing other entities (Culler, 2001). As the chapter by van der Poel will illustrate, music can strengthen this effect on the reader, supporting processes of social bonding.

Both in medieval and in early modern poetry, there is a strong connection, not only between the lyrical poem and song, but also between the lyrical poem and the religious hymn or prayer. In both cases, the poem connects the individual perspective of the lyrical 'I' with a broader community of speakers, in which the lyrical 'I' is instrumental to the identification of the reader both with the object of adoration (God, the beloved one) and with the (religious) community around him or her. As we will see in the chapters by Daróczy and van der Poel, the lyrical 'I' in this religious mode of address is what Käte Hamburger calls a 'pragmatic statement-subject' that serves the

3 About a 'collective self' in poetry, see also Hunter, 2012, pp. 80-81.

collective address of God (1968, p. 239). While the lyrical form strengthens the suggestion of individuality and intimacy, the I-perspective remains *pragmatic*, which means that it is a congregational I that 'pragmatically' engages the individual prayer in a shared religious sphere and thus mediates between the feelings of the individual and the congregation.

### **Winking at the reader**

The apostrophic address of abstractions, impossible addressees or unseen powers tends to 'embarrass' the reader, according to Culler, but on the other hand, the reader can also identify with these addressees and be induced to try out that strange speech (Culler, 2001). The idea that nobody actually speaks that way, is the exact point – it is the difference from actual discourse that is at stake in the lyrical poem, and the apostrophe, for Culler, is an important marker of that difference. The difference is also tied up with the 'indirectness' of lyric address. This indirectness in the first place concerns what Culler describes as the 'triadic' relationship between the lyrical 'I' on the one hand and the object of address and the indirectly addressed reader on the other. Even though the apostrophe presumes to address creatures and things, they only seldom are expected to respond (2015, p. 187). This is what Culler calls the ritualistic function of address, as the address of these absent or impossible interlocutors only asks for a response of the reader, who feels connected to the event of address and could temporarily occupy the position of the speaker and thus engage with the act of addressing.

The indirectness of address can also be inherent to the ambiguity of the addressee itself, like in an I-You mode of address in which the identity of the 'you' remains undetermined, inviting the reader to get involved in the poem as the addressee, either directly or indirectly. According to Ralph Johnson, this I-You mode of address is dominant in both classical and early modern poetry. Around half of the poems written by poets like John Donne and George Herbert are written in the I-You mode, whereas in the other half of their poems we hear the poet either talking to himself or to no one in particular. Whereas Johnson qualifies these I-You poems as the 'older rhetorical, pronominal, *social* form' (1982, p. 6) that originates in more concrete models of I-You communication (such as between the poet and his audience), Culler believes that the situation of I-You address is much more complicated and ambiguous, as this 'you' can only seldom be identified unambiguously with a reader (2015, pp. 193-194). Discussing the examples of Keats and Goethe, Culler speaks of a 'blurred you', a you that does not

apply to most readers, though it certainly 'gestures toward the reader, but is also plausibly taken as either the poet himself or someone else' (2015, p. 194). Elsewhere, Culler describes 'double address' as a lyric device to 'wink at the reader' (2015, p. 206). In love poetry for instance, the beloved one is primarily addressed but always with an eye to how that discourse 'will be received by others' (2015, p. 206). Discussing the example of address in Catullus' poems, Waters points to the poet's own doubts about the effectiveness of poetic address in relation to real communicative exchange. It is exactly this tension between the addressee's 'irreplaceable particularity' on the one hand and the 'lyric's removal from any set interlocutor' that characterizes the lyric genre as a genre *about* address (Waters 2003, pp. 4-5; see also Waters, 2012a).

Even though the addressee remains undetermined, the verbal 'direction' of lyric address can be very specific. Heinz Schlaffer (2012, p. 19) considers invocation (*Anrufung*) as the dominant mode of lyric address, constituting speech acts that aim at an identifiable goal. According to Bronzwaer (1993, pp. 10-11), such songs had an 'instructional' aim, inviting the singer to praise, to bless, to thank, or to pray to someone. These speech acts connect the speaking I with an addressable 'you' from whom no answer is expected. For Schlaffer (2012), address is thus a one-directional speech act which is based upon the non-response or even nonexistence of the addressee. In that sense, lyric address is noncommunicative and does not primarily rely on any social function of poetry. The lyrical 'I' is like the preacher who leads in prayer, a prayer to a God who will not answer, and a prayer which can only be silently reproduced by the audience, i.e. the congregation of readers of poetry. This model of address is not triangular, as it does not even allow the reader of poetry to feel indirectly addressed through the address of the (undetermined) 'you'. The direct addressee is inexistent or unable to respond and the reader or audience is only involved in the communication process as the passive witness of one-directional speech acts carried out by the lyrical 'I' alone (Schlaffer, 2012, pp. 23-24).

The strict dividing line between genres that directly address a living person (like in a letter, or a speech) and indirect address in poetry is criticized by Johnson and more explicitly by Alpers, who discusses several examples of lyrical poems addressed to what Culler calls 'empirical listeners', or 'to beings (like God) who are conceived as real' (Alpers, 2013, p. 8). Alpers mentions the example of the many early modern occasional poems that are specifically addressed to a living person, but more central to his argument are the many forms of metonymic address in early modern poetry. The apostrophic address of the muses for instance can function very well in a metonymic relation with 'something represented as contiguous

to the speaker', like the 'real' muses who surround the poet in his social environment (Alpers, 2013, p. 14). In early modern Europe, poets were highly dependent on the financial aid of patrons and/or political guardians. The invocation of the muses, as one of the most ossified forms of lyric address, could in some cases be read as an address to a prince, or to the aristocrats to which the poem is dedicated.<sup>4</sup> Waters (2003, p. 50) also states that lyric can be 'deeply communicative', but he immediately relates this to what he considers as one of the main concerns in lyric, namely the difficulty or impossibility of such a communication. In this book, Maaïke Meijer states that apostrophic address should not necessarily be read as moments of poetic self-reflection and introspection, but could also open up to the social world and identify several social roles, both of the speaker and the addressed. Especially in occasional poetry, examples of which are discussed in this volume by Meijer, Paijmans, Pieters and van Dijk, we simply cannot ignore the way in which lyrical poetry had to communicate feelings and thoughts between the poet/speaker and an identifiable addressee, opening up a world of same-sex desire (Meijer), political reflection (Paijmans), deep religious feeling (Pieters) or lyrical correspondence (van Dijk).

## Reading lyric

In *Theory of the Lyric*, Culler refers on more than one occasion to Roland Greene's definition of the lyric. While he agrees wholeheartedly with Greene's analysis of the poem's ritualistic character, he does not seem to follow the latter's conviction that single lyrical poems are best considered as fictional utterances. On this point, Culler seems to side with the author of *Die Logik der Dichtung*: for him, as for Käte Hamburger, poems make claims about the actual world rather than create or represent a fictional universe (Culler, 2015, p. 128). Our own focus on medieval and early modern poems makes it hard for us to conceive of lyrical texts as fictional constructs, given the predominance of religious and occasional poems in our selection. These poems do indeed make claims about actual situations in the empirical real, to which they also refer in an open and direct way. Still, for the present book the disagreement between Greene and Culler with respect to the fictionality of the lyric is of lesser importance than their consensus about its ritualistic nature. Their joint emphasis on the ritual character of poetry is clearly related to their attempts to correct current theories that, in their view, fail

4 See Alpers' discussion of Spenser in Alpers, 2013, p. 19.

to see the particularity of lyrical writing. In the case of Culler, this becomes clear in his repeated references to the shortcomings of both the Romantic and the New Critical paradigms of reading poetry (Culler, 2015, pp. 84-85). Both models, according to Culler, reduce the poem to a mode of expression, whether it be the poet who is seen to do the talking (the Romantic view) or a fictional persona, whose speech we are then expected to analyse (the New Criticism). Despite their representatives' attempts not to reduce poems to textual messages, authorial intentions or thematic utterances, New Criticism seems to have installed a reading paradigm, Culler argues, that mistakenly treats poems as dramatic narratives (2015, p. 110). What this model presumes, Culler argues, is a way of reading that encourages us to 'interpret [the lyric] by asking what is the situation of the speaker and attempt to make explicit what would lead someone to speak thus and feel thus' (2015, p. 110). The same could be said of the Romantic expressive model.

In the chapters that follow, the contributors to *Lyric Address* have attempted to sidestep the pitfalls that Culler identified in earlier standard reading methods of lyrical poetry and they have done so with a specific view to analyse the fascinating complex of 'address'. As will become clear throughout the volume, the inspiration of Culler's work has been central to our undertaking, but we hope that our use of it has not led to a mere repetition or straightforward application of his ideas. We have asked the contributors to pay specific attention to the historical specificity of the poems that they have chosen to analyse and to relate aspects of the apostrophic character of the lyrical texts at hand to the historical and social moments of their production. In doing so, we aim to investigate the continuities with respect to form (apostrophe and other forms of address) on the one hand and on the other hand the changing social and poetic functions of lyric address between the twelfth and the late eighteenth centuries, from the songs of the medieval mystic Hadewijch to the sentimentalist poems of Jacobus Bellamy. The way in which a medieval poet addresses a religious congregation through poetry (see Daróczy and van der Poel) of course will be very different from the way in which seventeenth-century sonnets discuss issues of deep religious feelings by means of the (indirect) address to God (see Pieters and van Dijk). The contributors to this book will pay special attention to these (dis)continuities with respect to the forms and functions of specific instances of lyric address. The social dimensions of the poems that address 'real' and 'existent' recipients will be at the fore too, as four of the ten contributions will discuss occasional poems. Our selection confirms Paul Alpers' claim that pre-Romantic forms of address are less about the vocational self-identification of poets than Culler's largely

post-Romantic corpus seems to suggest.<sup>5</sup> However, an investigation of how poems functioned in their specific social contexts should not prevent us from presenting a 'ritualistic' reading of the poems discussed. While 'trying out and on their speech', as Culler (2001) describes it, we hope to make clear how the poem indeed not only addresses explicitly mentioned objects and creatures in the poem itself, but also us, its readers.

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5 Alpers, 2013, p. 11; see also the chapters in this book by Grootes, Pieters and Madelein.

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