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LITERARY ONOMASTICS IN POLAND

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Among the different branches of onomastics there is also literary onomastics which implies all proper names contained in a literary composition and their functions in it. Before 1953 there was but little interest taken in these problems in Poland. It was usually done when the literary output of individual authors was analysed, or some question of wider portent was elaborated, such as, for instance, the phenomenon of comicality. The first to carry out a more detailed investigation was S. Reczek in, "O nazwiskach bohaterów komedii polskiej XVII w." (On the names of the characters in Polish 18th-century comedy). The publications which followed can be divided into:

(1) dissertations of general theoretical character;
(2) dissertations discussing on some concrete material the developmental trends in onomastics within literary compositions;
(3) monographs discussing the onomastics in some chosen authors or a literary genre, and
(4) articles devoted to particular issues.

In this field, research tended to develop along the lines of the history of literature. The share of linguists-specialists was rather insignificant. As strictly linguistic publications we can list only the following: A. Wilkoń, "Nazewnictwo w utworach Stefana Żeromskiego" (Onomastics in Stefan Żeromski's Works); M. Nowotny-Szybistowa, "Nazewnictwo 'Cyberiady' Stanisława Łemę" (Onomastics in Stanisław Łem's "Cyberiad"); Z. Kurzowa, "Nazwy osobowe na -o w onomastyce literackiej" (Person
Names in Literary Onomastics), and "Męskie imiona zdrobniałe i spieszczone w pieśniach ludu polskiego / na podstawie Ozieź wszystkich Oskara Kolberga/" (Diminutive and Endearing Forms of Men's Names in Polish Folk Songs [derived from the Collected Works of Oscar Kolberg]). Other works on the subject have mainly concentrated on onomastics affected by semantics and stylistics.

Grzeszczuk in his article (of general theoretical character), "Przedmiot i zadania nazewnictwa literackiego" (The Object and Tasks of Literary Onomastics) distinguishes between "literary names" and "linguistic names." For him, the most important point is ontology. The set of literary names constitutes a separate though parallel plane in relation to the normal onomastic material, this identity being relative only. Not all the names are applicable to literary compositions; whereas names genetically literary are not included into the strictly linguistic stock of names. Literary onomastics, according to Grzeszczuk, takes into account "literary names" and their special functions of which the "linguistic names" are deprived or at least which do not impose their universal meaning upon the "linguistic names." This is a vital element in the stylistic analysis of a work, an element in the characteristics of the writers' poetic workshop, or the typical opportunities in this domain within the established literary trends. Literary onomastics can be considered along two lines: descriptive and historical. In the former the researcher should concern himself with the manner in which names are construed, their linguistic structure, their part in the composition, their artistic functions and values of expression. In the latter the problems at issue are the historic changes in the onomastic material in the history of literature, the appearance and disappearance of particular types of
"literary names," and the factors determining these changes.

Grzeszczuk is of the opinion that a linguist should concentrate on the following questions:

1. foreign loan-words and linguistic influences within literary onomastics,
2. the linguistic origin of literary names,
3. the relation of literary names to linguistic names, and
4. the morphological structure of names.

Linguistic problems cannot, however, be limited to the consideration of these factors only. In fact, linguistic analyses are an inseparable part of research on literary onomastics. Of vital importance is the fact that "literary names" are constructions which are part of artistic language. A writer in inventing names either models them on real constructions or transforms them. Hence, a linguist is concerned, apart from the external and systematic references of the material under examination, also with its functioning within the text. It is not merely a question of whether the given name is genuine or invented; a linguist seeks to show the lexical and structural connections between literary and real names, to trace back the origins and elucidate the grammatical structure of obscure names, to reveal and define the interdependences between the functions of current names, and to show the linguistic measures undertaken to convey on the names some definite "coloring" of expression.

Research works concerning problems of literary onomastics deal mainly with (cf. A. Wilkoń's division):

1. names classification,
2. the function performed by onomastics in literature in general and in the works under discussion, and
3. changes in literary onomastics.

In each of the hitherto published works on the classification of names there are two divisions; one, semantic,
and the other, genetic. These publications deal with "telling" names, but the grouping of names according to their meaning is justifiable only as an illustration of the educational-satiric trends in the given literary age, the Age of Enlightenment in particular. The divisions applied by the authors are very detailed and sometimes even hair-splitting, which causes some of the names to be included in two or more semantic groups.

The genetic division means a classification of names occurring in literary works from the viewpoint of their origin. The authors who wrote on the subject have pointed to the contents of the name-base: the appellative word in the case of "telling" names. The problems of names classification have been discussed by S. Reczek, "O nazwiskach bohaterów komedii polskiej XVIII w." (On the names of Polish 18th-century comedy characters), K. Domagała, "Nazwiska charakteryzujące w dramatach Fredry i Bałuckiego" (Telling Names in the Plays of A. Fredro and M. Bałucki), and S. Gawor, "O funkcjach nazw osobowych i miejscowych w twórczości I. Krasickiego" (On the Functions of Personal and Locality Names in the Work of I. Krasicki).

The classification of names is linked with the problem of functions performed by them in a literary work. S. Gawor in the above article distinguishes between two functions: the localizing and the characterizing one. Then, using this division as a basis, he goes on to distinguish between six groups of telling names. This is, however, a purely semantic division.

The greater part of the authors who have concerned themselves with the problem of the function performed by names in literary works have followed the above division. K. Górski is of the opinion that "a proper name may perform, in a literary work, the function of
locating the plot in time and space; it may serve also as a symbolic abbreviation of the problem incorporated into an individual character or associated with some particular place, whether by historical connections with a definite event, or by its etymological connotation."

This does not comprise every possible function, considering that names contribute to create the atmosphere of a literary work, to acquaint the reader better with the characters, are a means of emotive expression, and often constitute a camouflaged hint at some person or place which the author does not wish to—or cannot—call by the true name. When discussing the function of names in a literary work, their connection with the work’s poetics should be taken into account. Owing to their specific character, names play a peculiar role in individual language, turning into a marker of subjective contents and emotions.

I. Sarnowska (and A. Wilkoń similarly) distinguishes six functions which can be performed by names in a literary work:

1. The **localizing** function situates the plot at a definite time and place,

2. The **sociological** function indicates that the characters belong to a given social group (class) or a given nation,

3. The **allusive** function is a camouflaged hint at some definite person or locality,

4. The **contentual** function determines the characters and localities in an unequivocal way, through its connections with the context of the work,

5. The **symbolic** function, when names become a symbol of abstract values and notions, and

6. The **expressive** function: a writer can express through names his moods, standpoint and attitude
to the created world and evoke an emotional atmosphere.

Some other authors also add a seventh function, the archaizing one, if they are discussing material which presents these problems. In such cases onomastics performs the role of a stylizing element, used to obtain the desired time coloring (this function can be regarded as a variety of the localizing function).

Names can perform a considerably greater number of functions in a literary work, but this is to a large extent connected with the contexts in which they occur. It is the context that modulates the meaning and coloring of names. The context is not merely the utterance containing a name, but also references of broader nature made up of the particular components or of the whole of a literary work. Reference should be made to the links connecting the given name with the plot motif, the presentation of the character who appears under that name, the writer's ideological aims and artistic intentions, etc. In every function, apart from the localizing one, a special part is performed by the telling names which are often created on the principle of mental associations.

Every function which can be performed by names in a literary composition is closely related to the whole of the linguistic material and the artistic and ideological intentions of the given writer. The situation may change in so far as one or another of the functions can come to the fore, but they all always contribute to create a literary work.

The changes in literary onomastics have been discussed by such eminent critics and theoreticians as K. Górski, K. Wyka, M. Piszczkowski, and Z. Kurzowa.

K. Wyka approached a name mostly as a product of a certain tradition, culture, and artistic language.
K. Górski and M. Piszczkowski traced the characteristic traits and functions of onomastics in the consecutive periods of literary history. Different literary styles and trends followed different models and principles.

Thus, in the classical age at first names performed only the localizing—in time and space—function; later, they were associated to problems predominant in the life of the dramatis personae; finally, telling names were introduced (mainly in the Greek comedy).

Polish names appeared in literature only toward the mid-sixteenth century. The seventeenth century introduced plebian names in ribald comedies and picaresque tales. Until the mid-eighteenth century (old-Polish literature) the names were fulfilling in literature the chronicler's part, stressing geographic and historic truth.

In the Age of Enlightenment "telling" names and surnames were introduced, which had a triple aim:

(1) illustratory (explaining the author's intention),
(2) educational, and
(3) satirical,
and were consistent with the leading trends of the age. One can observe a lively sense of humour and considerable word-formative invention in literary onomastics of that time. At first the names given to the characters had been rather conventional, inherited from ancient literature, but little by little an almost exclusively national stock of names came to be applied.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth the influence of foreign literatures began to be felt, which prompted the dissemination of names chiefly derived from the Ossianic trend, the sentimental French and English novel, and the English ballad. A characteristic trait was the tendency to apportion names and surnames according to the respective
age, role, and social status of the characters. When authentic, widely spread names were introduced, it was usually in order to create a realistic atmosphere.

In the Romantic Age it was a frequent use to introduce local names of places as well as symbolic and allegoric, sometimes very elaborate, personal names. This introduction was aimed at creating a proper regional coloring, or evoking an aura of mystery, romanticism, sometimes of horror.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century name-giving began to be increasingly linked with the life of the community and the various changes which were taking place in it.

During the first six decades of the twentieth century the development of name-giving in Polish literature went toward extending the realism of presenting the customs and morals, geographical and historical fact, and social problems, while simultaneously a greater stress was laid on rendering all the subtleties of the satiric and artistic implications of both personal and locality names.

In her paper devoted to personal names in literary onomastics, Z. Kurzowa has presented the development of stylized onomastics. She has distinguished between natural and applied onomastics. Natural onomastics consists in the use of personal names ending in "Q; without any additional stylistic encumbrance. On the other hand, applied onomastics is when a writer introduces consciously the given names or creates them himself. Applied or, in other words, stylized onomastics had first appeared in the eighteenth century as an element in the creation of "telling" and satiric names, in order to individualize the characters described. Later it began to be used in the historical novel as an archaizing element. These functions of stylized onomastics are
relevant for the artistic construction of the work.

The previously discussed publications approached the problem of literary onomastics from the viewpoint of the theory of literature; and the artistic function performed. Against this background three studies stand out, as tackling the problem mostly from the linguistic standpoint, written, respectively, by A. Wilkoń, J. Nowotny-Szybistowa, and Z. Kurzowa (for the titles, see above, pp. 166-167).

The former two are of the opinion that onomastics in literary compositions is mainly derived from two sources: (1) the stock of current names, and (2) the author's individual inventiveness.

Upon confronting the names occurring in literary works with those used in everyday language, Wilkoń has distinguished two basic name groups:

(1) genuine names adopted from the existing stock of current names, and
(2) non-genuine names, created by the writer himself, or borrowed from the creation of other authors.

Within these two groups he goes on to subdivide the names as follows:

(1) genuine names:
   (a) designating the same object as in real life, and
   (b) conferred on non-existing objects;

(2) non-genuine names:
   (a) modelled on names occurring in the vocabulary and according to the grammatical rules of the language (realistic names), and
   (b) non-consistent with the grammatical rules of the language (artificial names).

Wilkoń does not consider the general point of reference for names taken from literary works as adequate. Such cases call for onomastic classification,
making it necessary to take into account criteria of correctness which combine the contentual and structural aspects of a name into one. The distinction between genuine and non-genuine names often involves serious difficulties. Sometimes it is hard to establish whether a given name has been borrowed from somewhere or invented by the writer. In fact, it is possible for a writer to invent a name which actually exists in the language, but with which he himself has never come into contact. The point lies in tracing the main trends pursued by the writer, the main sources of his loan-words, and the main linguistic models he is following. The genetic-linguistic analyses should be adapted to the artistic function and origins of the name, to the specific character of its context. Genetic-linguistic analyses are pointless in cases of genuine names. A linguist doing research on literary names, apart from providing a classification and description of ontologically literary names, should discover the method applied by the writer who has recourse to onomastics. Such a discovery may prove very helpful in defining the sources of origin and the way in which a number of names have come to life.

Besides the division into genuine and non-genuine names, the same author also draws another, pertaining to the different sorts of names (name, surname, coat-of-arms, locality name, etc.). In describing the names used in Stefan Żeromski's works, Wilkoń strictly adheres to this division. In his conclusion he states that most of the names used are genuine names conferred on real or imaginary objects, and names invented by the writer, but carefully modelled upon onomastic patterns existing in Polish. In the case of Stefan Żeromski, this realistic model of onomastics was the outcome of two strongly felt tendencies: (1) one, modernistic, which was derived from the
ambiguous and symbolic onomastics of the Romantic Age, and (2) the second, realistic, derived from the Age of Positivism and Naturalism, strongly linked with extra-literary reality and giving a realistic coloring to the writer's work.

A similar classification was introduced by M. Nowożny-Szybistowa. Within the group of non-genuine names she supplied a division into four subgroups:

(a) formally modelled and semantically transparent,
(b) formally modelled and semantically opaque,
(c) not modelled formally and semantically transparent, and
(d) not modelled formally and semantically opaque.

Within this general division she distinguished a number of minor groups, determined by definiter material. This material is remarkable by its unusual linguistic character, both formal and semantical. Among names one can distinguish between those which are semantically realistic and semantically unrealistic. In that particular case the very character of the writer's imagination, the fairy-like atmosphere of his work, led him to create an unusual onomastics. In fact, the predominant type of names in this work are either ones having no formal equivalents in onomastic models or, and this is more frequent, names deprived of meaning. This is onomastics very different from the one traditionally encountered in life and literary work. Nevertheless, however, its functions are the same as in the case of realistic or genuine names:

Z. Kurzówna has approached the problem of onomastics in literature from the standpoint of word-formation. In her article dealing with names in folk songs she has distinguished 51 suffixes, forming diminutives and terms of endearment. She has discussed the functions performed by the particular formatives as well as the names created
by them, against the general background of Polish dialects. Hers is an analysis of an authentic material, which in the light of Wilkoń's considerations, seems rather pointless. It can be of use only if we begin to examine the emotional and artistic significance of diminutives and terms of endearment for a work.

As can be seen from this brief review, research on literary onomastics in Poland is now at its initial stage. Most works on the subject are strictly related to the history and theory of literature, while linguistic problems are rather overshadowed. Yet these publications constitute a theoretical and material basis for carrying further research, provide a proof of the necessity of such investigations. The recent dissertations, A. Wilkoń's monograph and M. Nowotny-Szybistowa's article among them, bear witness to the fact that the linguists have also much to say in the matter. As it appears from these studies, literary onomastics is a discipline bordering on poetics, stylistics and linguistics. The interest taken in problems of artistic language as a material of which literary works are formed is constantly spreading and promises further development. Cooperation between historians of literature and linguists might certainly throw better light on a number of literary puzzles.

One more point deserves attention. It is characteristic of Polish research on literary onomastics that it follows several different lines. These investigations are of use to writers, historians and theoreticians of literature, ethnographers and linguists. It is evident that this branch of scholarly pursuits can be put to good use by specialists of different disciplines of the humanities for extending our knowledge about culture.

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LIST OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PAPERS

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2. K. Domagała, Nazwiska charakteryzujące w dramatach Fredry i Bałuckiego, Językoznawca 1964, nr 11-12, s. 61-66.

3. S. Gawor, O funkcjach nazw osobowych i miejscowych w twórczości I. Krasieckiego, Onomastica X, 1965, s. 204-223; Onomastica XI, 1966, s. 252-281.

4. I. Górk-Bartmińska, O imionach w polskiej powieści historycznej (okres piastowski), Językoznawca 1963, nr 10, s. 71-83.

5. K. Górski, Onomastyka w literaturze polskiej XIX i XX w. Zarys problematyki, Pamiętnik Literacki LIV, 1964, s. 401-416.


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