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Notes on functions of proper names in literature

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Abstract: In this paper, I would like to introduce some classifications of proper names in literature that are currently used in the Czech onomastic research. They are based on the typology of M. Knappová as well as German or Polish onomastics. I would also like to summarize some of my observations of the literary onymic function. Onymic functions are only one aspect which plays a role in the choice of the literary name. The others are literary genre, culture tradition, the author's poetics or contemporary poetics as well as formal linguistic and semantic aspects, etc. In my opinion, literary onymic functions should be understood in this wider framework, in their mutual relations, as they are intertwined, complementing each other and working together. One name can have multiple functions and all literary names must be analysed in the framework of the concrete literary text.

Keywords: literary onomastics, functions, proper name.

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Notes sur les fonctions des noms propres dans la littérature

Résumé : Je souhaite ici présenter certaines classifications des fonctions des noms propres dans la littérature telles que l'onomastique tchèque les traite actuellement. Elles sont essentiellement issues de la typologie de Mme Knappová, mais aussi de l'onomastique littéraire allemande et polonaise. J'aimerais également ici résumer mes observations sur les fonctions des noms propres en littérature. J'estime que le choix des noms en littérature se fait non seulement selon leur fonction onymique, mais aussi selon le style et le genre littéraire, la tradition culturelle et la poésie du contexte historique et de l'auteur. Les aspects linguistiques et sémantiques de la langue jouent également un rôle. Les fonctions littéraires doivent donc être comprises dans le sens large du terme et non pas de façon isolée, en prenant en compte les différentes relations car elles ont des effets mutuels. Un nom littéraire peut avoir plusieurs fonctions et tous les noms devraient donc être analysés dans le contexte de l'œuvre concrète.

Mots-clés : onomastique littéraire, fonction, nom propre.

Bemerkungen zu der Funktionen der Eigennamen in der Literatur

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Aufsatz möchte ich die Klassifizierung von literarischen Eigennamen (d.h. in Literatur benutzten Namen) vorstellen, die in der gegenwärtigen tschechischen onomastischen Forschung benutzt wird. Diese Klassifizierung folgt die Typologie von M. Knappová und von der deutschen und polnischen Namenforschung. Daneben mache ich auch eine Zusammenfassung von den Funktionen der literarischen Namen. Diese onymischen Funktionen sind nur ein Aspekt, der bei der Auswahl des literarischen Namens mitwirkt. Die anderen sind das literarische Genre, Kultur und Tradition, die Poetik des Autors oder die gegenwärtige Poetik allgemein, aber auch formale linguistische und semantische Aspekte, usw. Meiner Meinung nach sollte man die onymischen Funktionen in diesem weiten Rahmen und in deren gegenseitigen Beziehungen verstehen, weil sie miteinander verbunden sind und mitwirken. Ein Name kann mehr Funktionen haben und alle literarischen Namen müssen im Rahmen des Kunstwerks analysiert werden.

Schlüsselbegriffe: literarische Onomastik, Funktionen, Eigenname.

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Notes on functions of proper names in literature

ŽANETA DVOŘÁKOVÁ

This paper is a brief summary of some of my observations on literary onymic functions currently used in Czech literary onomastics.[1] It builds on the Czech literary onomastic tradition[2] and benefits from its research, at the same time it draws on the latest findings of general onomastic theory (Rudolf Šrámek). I believe that this theoretical study is valid in general and can be applied in the analysis of any prose written in any language.

1. Functions

Functions of proper names are considered to be the main subject of literary onomastic research (Gutschmidt 1991: 204). However, there is no agreement as to their conception and classification, "till today there has not been any generally accepted definition, not even their enumeration and description" (Karlík et al. 2002: 145). It is not only a problem of literary onomastics but of general onomastics as well, as Šrámek points out (1999: 22).

I agree with the pragmatic definition of function as expressed by Knappová (1992b: 212) and Gutschmidt (1991: 207). They see the function as the *choice*, *use* and *effect* of a proper name. In Czech literary onomastics the classification of functions by Knappová (1992b) is the most often cited. She follows the theory of Karl Gutschmidt and his typology and she adds an aesthetic function to Gutschmidt's set of functions (individualising, classifying, characterising and associating). In this paper, I would like to introduce other dimensions into the classificatory scheme as well.

I believe that the functions should not be understood in isolation, but in their mutual relations, as they are intertwined, complementing each other and

[1] I dealt with literary onomastics and onymic functions in more detail in my monograph *Literární onomastika. Antroponyma* [Literary onomastics. Anthroponyms] 2017.

[2] Systematic Czech (or Czechoslovak) literary onomastic research dates back to the 1970s. The published studies were mainly of material character, i.e. analyses of literary material, with very little theoretical approach or outcome. The rare theoretical works followed research into literary proper names abroad (especially in Germany and Poland). The basic terms of the research have always been the function and the social effect of literary proper names. Literary names have been analysed not only by Czech linguists (Karel Hausenblas, Rudolf Šrámek, Miloslava Knappová, Jaroslav David), but by literary theoreticians as well (Jiří Holý, Daniela Hodrová, Lenka Jungmannová).

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working together. One name can have multiple functions. Their evaluation is always based on the relationship between the name and the literary character and it is interpreted in the context of a particular work (see Hausenblas 1976: 1, Gutschmidt 1991: 205), or in the context of works of a particular author. The name is a part of the onymic system of the work, of the so-called "landscape of names" (*Namenlandschaft*; Gutschmidt 1983: 153–156) and a part of the overall construction of the artistic text.

1.1. Identification

The basic function of the proper name in literature is the identification and individualisation of the character, her/his differentiation from others. Most literary onomasticians rarely agree on a definition of this function, also called *nomination*, *individualising* or *differentiation* (see, e.g., Knappová 1992a: 14; Pastyřík 2000: 7). The identifying function has a privileged position because all proper names have it, unlike other functions.

A part of the identifying function is the *deictic function* (referring to the denotation). We can see how the character introduces her/himself in communication and how s/he is referred to by other characters. The usage of other forms or names, such as diminutives or nicknames, can provide information about the relation between the speaker and the character, about her/his subjective and emotional attitude, etc. (Knappová 1992b: 213). For example in the play *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, when *Gwendolen* meets *Cecily,* they use their first names in their communication, but when they mistakenly believe that they are both engaged to the same man, they begin to use their surnames – calling each other *Miss Fairfax* and *Miss Cardew* is considered "very offensive" in the context of the play (see Hořínek 1995: 124–125).

I am convinced that the name does not have only the identifying function but also the *self-identifying* function. It is a part of the identity of the character and her/his characterisation – even if the name is missing (see Hodrová 2001: 599). When a character loses her/his name s/he always tries to recover it, as well as the identity, or to replace it with a new one (a search for the lost identity and name is a central theme for example in the novels about the spy *Jason Bourne* by Robert Ludlum).

In several cases the identifying function can be "broken" or "eroded". The first of them is a situation when the character has no name or, on the contrary, when s/he has more names, or when more characters have very similar and mutually interchangeable or even the same sounding names (e.g. *Bobchinsky* and *Dobchinsky* in *The Government Inspector* by Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol – see Tyňanov 1988: 150–152). The second one is a general naming situation when characters are creating, changing or hiding

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their own names (e.g. in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys the husband began to call his wife by the name of her crazy mother *Bertha* or to change her name *Antoinette* to *Marionette* which is similar to marionette, i.e. "doll", because he wanted her to become insane.)[3] The last case when the identifying function is "eroded" is caused by the attitude of the character willing to give up her/his name as Romeo says to Juliet in Shakespeare's drama (Act 2, Scene 2): "'My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself / Because it is an enemy to thee. / Had I it written, I would tear the word.'"

1.2. Characterisation

The *characterising function* has been defined by several scholars (e.g. Knappová 1992a: 15). Wilkoń (1970: 83) calls this function *semantic (funkcje treściowe)*. Sometimes it is called *descriptive* (*deskriptivní*; Knappová 1992b: 213), and Pastyřík (2000: 7) uses the term *singulative function (singulativní funkce)*. Although the onomasticians are not of the same mind as for the terminology, they agree on the basic description of this function, claiming there is a direct connection between the name and the features of the denoted character.

Also, the extent of the concept of the characterising function varies from one author to another, e.g. according to Debus (2005: 205) characterising function contains also "phonetical, symbolical, mythical and associative relation, social, religious, ideological or temporal and local and other classifications". I understand the characterising function in the way closer to Knappová (1992b: 213) as it is limited to *nomen omen* (Lat. 'the name is a sign') and to nicknames in which the semantics of common nouns is still preserved (e.g. *Theon Greyjoy's* nickname *Reek* 'stink' in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by G. R. R. Martin or a nickname *Snowy Slopes* for a man who "had really bad dandruff" in Terry Pratchett's novel *Jingo*).

1.3. Mythisation

In Czech literary onomastic theory the term *mythical function* is not used very often. We can find it only in enumerations connected with the ideological, honorific or symbolical function of proper names (see Knappová 1992b: 213; 2002: 145). On the other hand, the mythical function has been thoroughly described by German literary onomasticians (Dieter Lamping, Friedhelm Debus). In the field of the mythical function, perhaps more than

[3] "'She tell me in the middle of all this you start calling her names. Marionette. Some word so.'
'Yes, I remember, I did.' *(Marionnette, Antoinette, Marionetta, Antoinetta)*
'That word mean doll, eh? Because she won't speak. You want to force her to cry and to speak.'" (Rhys 1966: 127)

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elsewhere, it holds true that the issue of literary naming is also a matter of cultural sociology (Grzeszczuk 1963: 387) and psychology of naming in general (Spal 1984: 58).

Mythical thinking is in contrast to scientific attitude of modern linguistics which sees the name as a sign unrelated to the nature of the person (Lamping 1983: 106) and connected with the denoted object only on the basis of social convention (Karlík et al. 2002: 205) without any meaning of the original common noun (Lederbuchová 1995: 216). On the other hand, in mythical (magical, archaic, primitive) thinking the proper name is a very important part of the person, and even her/his soul. The name – it is me, the signified and the signifier are one, they are in accord. The difference can be seen e.g. in Paul Anderson's novel *The shield of time* (1990: 189–190): "Aryuk had come to know him as Red Wolf. That was what the name meant in his speech. He would change it now and then during his life therefore it had to mean something. To Aryuk, his own name was merely a sound that singled him out. If he had thought about it, he might have understood that it said 'Northwest Breeze' with an accent different from his, but he never did think about it."

According to Lamping (1983: 121) mythisation is one of the main functions of literary proper names. He identifies this function e.g. in situations when the character relates her/his name to her/his nature, or when the name evokes an idea, event or another character, etc. However, as I understand these situations, they are a part of characterisation, associating or self-identification, not a myth. The fact is that connection between names and characters is much more important and frequent in fiction than in the real world but this connection which actually happens almost solely on fictional level does not mean that we should interpret it as a mythical function.

Mythisation can be recognised mainly in taboo names. As Debus (2005: 205) puts it, taboo names play also a role of anonymisation (*Anonymisierung*). We can distinguish two different kinds of taboo in proper names – a ban by society (e.g. wizards in *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling call *Lord Voldemort* as *You-Know-Who* or *He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named* because of their fear of him and his name), and a ban by the character her/himself (*Tom Marvolo Riddle* calls himself *Lord Voldemort* because he hates his own name).

1.4. Associating

The associative function is based on historical or cultural allusions, connections and associations (Pastyřík 2000: 6–11, Knappová 1992a: 15, David 2005: 29). Sometimes it is called the *connotative function* (*konotativní funkce*; Knappová 1992b: 213). "It refers to particular places and characters – real (i.e. identical with the name of the real object, e.g. historical places such

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as *Waterloo*), or (well) known from other literary works, legends, phrases, the Bible, etc." (Knappová 1992a: 15).

My understanding of associating is wider and I agree with Gutschmidt (1991: 205) that the associative function is not limited only to the names which are identical to the real or literary ones, but there are also names which only seem to be similar to well-known names. The evoked semantic or emotional elements are not a part of the "proprial content" of the proper name, as Šrámek states (1999: 23). In general, we can say that the more associations the more stylistically loaded the name[4] (Knappová 1992a: 15).

Literary proper names referring to real persons or places are called "personified" (*verkörpert*) and "names as citations" (*Namen als Zitate*) in German literary onomastics (Thies 1978: 314), or "social names" (*sociálonymá*) in Slovak literary onomastics (Odaloš 2012: 9). Some authors do not consider names of real persons to be literary. That is why Birus (1987: 39) distinguishes literary proper names of two kinds. However, I do not agree with his argument that the author does not have the possibility of choice of these names. It is entirely up to the author whether a name of a real person would be used, changed or not used. I believe that all names in a literary text are a part of a fictive world and are literary (see also Rymut 1993: 17; Sobanski 2000: 57).

Names referring to other literary characters or places are sometimes separated. They are ascribed a special function which is called *allusive* (*funkcija aluzyjna*; Wilkoń 1970: 95–98) or *intertextual* (*funkcija intertekstualna*; Cieślikowa 1993: 36).

The analysis should be based on the relation between the name and the named character. There could be four[5] possible situations according to Thies (1978: 14):

a) Real persons keep their real names in a literary text – it is a typical situation in a biographical or historical novel (e.g. *Napoleon* in the novel *Napoleon and Josephine* by Octave Aubry), these names activate reader's "general cultural encyclopaedia"; their associations could differ, very often they are time-related (depending on the time when the text was written and the time when it is read) and may contain a sort of evaluation (that is why Szewczyk 1993: 16 uses the

[4] Of course, it does not mean that we should connect all female characters called *Eve* with the biblical Eve and we should not see Hitler in any man called *Adolf*. Names must be interpreted in the context of the whole literary work.

[5] Gutschmidt (1991: 204) distinguishes three situations: a) the name and the character are authentic, b) name and character are fictive, c) the name is authentic which means that it is from the real world but the character is fictive (see also Windt 2005: 43, Kosyl 1993: 68n.). Wilkoń (1970: 22) identifies: a) authentic names from real onymy, b) non-authentic names that can be b_1) realistic, b_2) fictive.

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term *axiological function – funkcja wartościująca, aksjologiczna*). Using real names is a part of the illusion of reality and truthfulness so we can talk about the *veristical function* (*funkcja werystyczna*) of these names as well (see Kosyl 1993: 75).

b) Real persons have different, fictive, names in literary texts – allusions to real subjects are very often hidden in "key names" (Holý 1995: 57). The reader must decipher them to be able to recognise the information about the prototype of the character or the place. It is a part of the author's play with the reader (e.g. *Jean-Sol Partre* instead of Jean-Paul Sartre in the novel *Froth on the Daydream* by Boris Vian).

c) Fictive characters have real names of real persons but without a connection between them (e.g. islands on the planet Damogran in Douglas Adams's novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* are "coincidentally" named *Easter Island* and *France*).

d) Fictive characters have fictive names – there are intertextual allusions to other characters with the same name from other literary works which are also a part of this group, finding and understanding this allusion could be a key to our interpretation of the whole novel (e.g. the Egyptian doctor *Sinuhe* in the novel by Mika Waltari was named after a character from an old Egyptian fairy tale and the fates of both characters are very similar which is reflected in the text as well).

1.5. Symbol

The *symbolic function* is sometimes understood as a subtype of the associative function because it is based on conventional associations connected with the named object. The borders of the symbolic function are ambiguous and can be perceived subjectively. The way I understand the symbol, it represents a general, abstract concept. Symbols could be real persons (*Napoleon*) and places *(Waterloo*), or literary characters as well (*Romeo*). These names are used in social communication as labels of a specific type of a person (*Don Quixote*).

1.6. Classification

According to Karl Gutschmidt and Miloslava Knappová "names can classify characters from many points of view, e.g. time period and place, nationality, social status, religion, etc." (Knappová 1992a: 14). We can find the same definition of classification in works of other onomasticians but labelled with different terms. Pastyřík (2000: 7) calls it *collocation* (*kolokace*). Debus (2005: 205) ranks names with social, religious, ideological or time-local classification under the *characterising function*. Šrámek (1999: 11) uses the term *localisation* for "classification of a named object

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into some factual, local, social, cultural, historical and economic relations", and according to him, the classifying function is the basic function along with identification and differentiation. In Polish onomastics (e.g. Wilkoń 1970: 83–95) the terms *function of localisation* (*funkcja lokalizacyjna*) and *sociological function* (*funkcja socjologiczna*) are used.

For instance, in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by G. R. R. Martin, there is a system of names for bastards which is typical of fictive societies in the Seven Kingdoms described in the novels. In the North they all get the surname *Snow*, in the Vale they are named *Stone*, in Riverlands they are *River*, in Reach they call them *Flower*, in the Stormlands *Storm*, in Dorne *Sand*, etc. The surname indicates the social status and localisation, thus all characters know that e.g. *Jon Snow* must be (according to his surname) a bastard from the North.

The way names are perceived is influenced not only by their linguistic but also their non-linguistic features and by the stereotypes about these names (and the name bearers) as well.

1.7. Aesthetics

The *aesthetic function* is also called *poetic*. It is very close to the functions called *expressive*, *emotional* or *psychological*, etc. (Knappová 1992b: 213). Friedhelm Debus calls it the *accenting function* (*Akzentuierung*). In some theories these functions are mixed, in others the only thing they have in common is the effect of the name (see Šrámek 1999: 24).

According to Knappová the aesthetic function of proper names "is implemented by the form of the name, especially by the phonological structure, length and euphony, creating pleasant or unpleasant impressions which can also be suggestive" (1992b: 213). It is very similar to various definitions of other onomasticians – they ascribe the aesthetic function to unusual, unfamiliar or remarkable names.[6] But what about other names? Do they have an aesthetic function, or they do not?

Roman Jakobson cites Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky who thought that "each adjective becomes poetic just by being used in a poem, even adjectives like 'great' as in *Great Bear* or 'little' in Moscow urbanonyms such as *Bolshaya Presnya* and *Malaya Presnya*" (Jakobson 1995: 104). I believe that all names in literary texts have the aesthetic function. Even the most common names have some effects on readers and create impressions in them. I agree that in unusual names the aesthetic function is more explicit. However, all names are chosen by the author with a specific

[6] Names are evaluated as unusual according to their form, frequency in the onymy etc. They are tied to a specific language (so they work differently in the translated text) and they are connected with our stereotypes as well.

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purpose as a part of the author's strategy and all of them are motivated (see Hausenblas 1976: 2).

1.8. Illusion

Debus (2005: 205) points out that using names from real life with social, regional, time period, religious, ideological or national classification increases the illusion of reality (cf. the veristical function above). It means that *the illusionistic function* is based on confrontation between the literary and the real onymy (Rzetelska-Feleszko 1993: 21–26), because "anthroponyms and toponyms in literature are always in a relation to real (or historical) names. The author creates names of her/his characters and geographical objects according to real proper names or according to real naming models and types" (Majtán 1984: 78).

We can compare the real onymy in the time of writing of the literary work with the onymy of the time of the perception, but we can also compare the real onymy of the period described in the story with the present-day onymy. We can analyse whether the chosen names are common or unusual or whether they are created with respect to the epoch in question, etc. (see Gutschmidt 1983: 155). Not only names but also using names, thematisation of traditions, superstitions and naming processes typical of the society described in the literary work are a part of illusion, because we confront these circumstances, opinions and assessments with our experience of the real world and our "general cultural encyclopaedia" as well. Naming can give us information about the character, the society, the epoch and the fictive world, too.

Opposed to the function of illusion seems to be the function which I call *anti-illusionistic*. In this case the aim is to deliberately highlight the fictionality and play. Anti-illusionistic names sometimes pretend to be real but they actually do the very opposite (e.g. some urbanonyms in Terry Pratchett's series about Ankh-Morpork like *Shamlegger Street*, *Sniggs Alley* etc.).

2. Notes on functions

As we have seen, onomasticians use different terms. Each function can be understood to some extent differently, depending on the individual onomastician. However, there are some common features (see Table 1).

Onymic functions are only one aspect that plays a role during the choice of the literary name. The others are: literary genre, culture tradition, the author's poetics or contemporary poetics as well as formal linguistic and semantic aspects, etc. In my opinion, literary onymic functions should be understood within this wider framework.

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Table 1: Literary onymic functions

	Knappová	**Wilkoń**	**Lamping**	**Debus**
identification	individualizační (identifikační)		Identifizierung	Identifizierung
classification	klasifikující	lokalizacyjna	Perspektivierung	Charakterisierung
		socjologiczna		
characterisation	charakterizační	treściowa	Charakterisierung	
associating	asociační (evokační)	aluzyjna		
aesthetics	estetická	ekspresywna	Ästhetisierung	Akzentuierung
illusion			Illusionierung	Fiktionalisierung / Illusionierung
mythisation			Mythisierung	Mythisierung
			Konstellierung / Akzentuierung	
				Anonymisierung

The fact is that our classification of functions is based mainly on the analysis of anthroponyms (and not other kinds of proper names) mostly in prose (not in drama or poetry). Therefore, it is questionable whether we can apply this classification to e.g. literary toponyms or zoonyms.

Very often we can come across the opinion that "secondary functions" play the main role in the text (see David 2005: 29). However, it means that the basic function, i.e. identification, is usually neglected, although (mainly in the literature of the 20th century) the identity and identification of characters is rather problematic (see in more detail Dvořáková 2017: 246–252).

Literary onymic functions can be seen from different perspectives. "There are usually distinguished two types of functions, those related to literary characters and those related to the status and the role of proper names in the text" (Knappová 2002: 293). Besides these relations "name – character" and "name – text" we can find more relations:

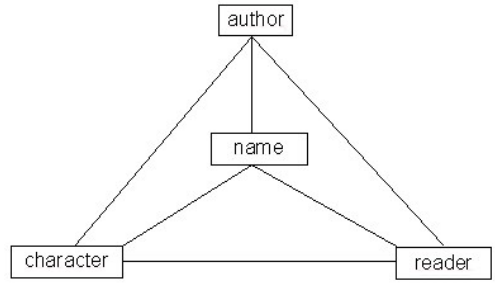


Figure 1: Relations between the name and the character, the author and the reader

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A name and its functions can be seen from the perspective of the author (how s/he uses real names; how s/he creates fictive names, etc.) and also from the perspective of the reader and her/his experience and interpretative skills (Majtán 1984: 78, also Gutschmidt 1991: 207). As I mentioned before, the function is the *choice*, *use* and *effect* of the name – the choice and the use are the domain of the author and the effect depends on the reader. The author obviously assumes certain effects and approaches the selection of names with regard to them. But "the function of the name which corresponds to the author's strategy is not identical with its function in terms of readers" (Gutschmidt 1991: 207). Our interpretation of functions is always hypothetical. Reading is influenced by the situational context (historical and geographical) and interpretation of the text can be different from the author's intention in the epoch and place of creation of the text (see Porcelli 2006: 143–145). It can be seen especially in associating, when the text refers to authentic persons – allusions transparent to one generation may no longer be recognised by the following generations (e.g. the references to real Florentine citizens that appear in Dante's *Inferno*). Or we can mention the characterisation of the sultan *Saladin* in Lessing's drama *Nathan the Wise*, as Gutschmidt (1991: 207) writes, this name (meaning "the innovator of the world and the law"[7]) was conceived as a nomen omen but a contemporary German reader does not understand it. And last but not least, our understanding of the text can also be influenced by the translation.

A literary name can be analysed from the perspective of literary characters as well. Names are topics of dialogues and reflections of the characters. Characters evaluate the aesthetic effect of names, they tell us about their relation to their proper names, they look for a link between the name and the temperament, or they try to find the origin and the "meaning" of the name. The name can be an important part of the self-identification of the character and her/his reflection of the fictive world.

In my opinion, the function can be defined not only on the basis of its relation to the text, but also to intertextuality and to our "general cultural encyclopaedia". These relations create the following schema:

[7] However, *Saladin* is from Arabic *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*, i.e. 'rectitude of the faith' (Hanks & Hodges 1990: 380).

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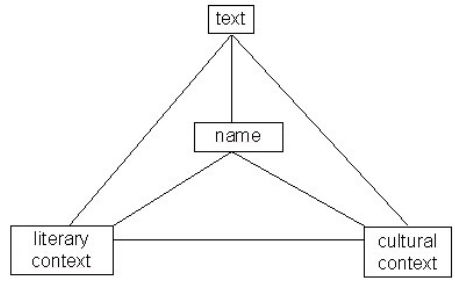


Figure 2: Relations between the name and the literary context, the text and cultural context

All literary names must be analysed in the framework of the concrete literary text. "The name helps to create the meaning not only on the language level but also on the level of composition and thematics, it is a part of the content and the meaning of the literary work" (Lederbuchová 1995: 221). The name of the character is perceived by readers against the background of "the landscape of names" (*Namenlandschaft*, see Gutschmidt 1983: 153–156), they are compared with the names of other characters and a certain system of naming and a key to this system are looked for. Names in texts can be interpreted also in relation to common nouns.

Some functions point outside the text, e.g. the basis of associating is an intertextual overlap and allusion to characters from other literary works, to the real world, or to a cultural tradition. Classification (i.e. characterising the characters) according to their nationality, religion, epoch and place of the story, etc. activates the reader's knowledge of "general cultural encyclopaedia" (along with stereotypes) – the reader is able to evaluate these names as associative or classifying, based on her/his knowledge and experience.

Literary context (i.e. contemporary poetics, the tradition of the genre, etc.) influences the choice of names as well as their use, reception and impact (e.g. the fashion of names with characterising function in comedies during the Czech national revival, the emphasis on classifying names during the literary realism, etc.). In their cultural context, we perceive names with mythisation based on folk ideas about the relationship between the name, its bearer and her/his destiny.

Readers confront literary names with their own awareness of the real onymic system, classify them as realistic (existing) or fictive (created). They evaluate them as common or unusual, fashionable or archaic, etc. D. Lamping in this context defines the illusionistic function, striving precisely for the names to excite the appearance of the real world.

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