

Mariusz Rutkowski / Katarzyna Skowronek

Onomastic Discourse Analysis

A New Perspective on Proper Names

Onomastic Discourse Analysis

Fields of Linguistics – Aktuelle Fragestellungen und Herausforderungen

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By

Mariusz Rutkowski
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Introduction to Onomastic Discourse Analysis

1. Onomastics is a science that studies proper names. Traditionally, it is perceived as a branch of linguistics which investigates proper names (also called *nomina propria*) as significant elements of any linguistic usage and system. Like common words (*nomina appellativa*), proper names constitute a layer of the lexical stock of a given language, and therefore, when considered as a group, are an essential component of human communication. The aim of traditional onomastics is to explain the origin of proper names, their morphology, meanings they used to express or express now, as well as to study their history and the evolution of the naming system, and, less frequently, the way they function in language and text. Such investigations also focus on the properties that determine whether a linguistic element is a proper name (as opposed to a common name). Typically, a few branches of onomastics are distinguished: anthroponomastics (dealing with names of people, both individuals and groups, cf. Upper 2023), toponomastics (concerned with geographical names) and chrematonomastics (which covers all types of tangible and intangible man-made products) – still, this tripartite division does not exhaust the entire stock of proper names. More recent perspectives also include extra-linguistic research on proper names, treating onomastics not only as part of linguistics, but as a more autonomous science. Such an approach is due to the multifaceted nature of proper names, which function in many references and contexts, and to the research conducted from the point of view of various fields and scientific disciplines (see point 3–5 below).

Although onomastics goes back to the 19th-century historical research (see below), its academic career in Poland began after World War II. For a few decades it was dominated by the structuralist paradigm, and in the social sense – the utilitarian paradigm. Today, it seems to have irreversibly lost its ‘single paradigm’ character in favour of a multiplicity of different schools and research directions. Contemporary onomastics has become largely independent and functions at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, anthropology, theory of culture and literary theory, history, religious studies, psychology, neuroscience and other humanities and social sciences (Hough ed. 2016). It has thus become a kind of conglomerate of terms and concepts understood in a number of different ways, absorbed from various linguistic, social and other sciences (e.g. archaeology, history, geography, cultural anthropology, sociology). The only common point that binds all these concepts together is the distinct object of study of onomastics, that is proper names.

At present, onomastics is a field of knowledge that is grounded also in the institutional sphere: in organisations (e.g. ICOS – the International Council of Onomastic Sciences), journals (specifically, onomastic journals, e.g. *Onoma*, *Names*, *Acta onomastica*, *Onomastica*), and academia (onomastics is taught as a course at the level of higher education, mainly in language studies). In many countries, there are special academic units (departments and research groups) whose activity is focused solely on naming (cf. e.g. Bright 2003).

2. Proper names as a specific lexical class are the main focus of onomastic research. Their distinctive properties, which are assumed to define them (although scholars argue about both basic and more detailed issues in this respect), most often include: a single identification (a name refers to a specific, single object, e.g. *John Keats*, *Ben Nevis*, whereas a common word distinguishes a whole class of similar objects, e.g. *writer*, *mountain*), a lack of lexical meaning (which is attributed to each common name and understood as the sum of all potential meanings of a word, both literal and figurative), and an arbitrary relationship between the name and the named object, which is a consequence of naming a given object with a given name (a decision of a single person or group of people, or a naming convention). Syntactically, proper names do not function as predicates in sentences because they do not predicate about the properties of an object (they lack lexical meaning). In Polish orthography (and in many others), proper names are distinguished from common words by capitalizing their initial letters.

One of the most controversial issues related to proper names concerns their meaning. In line with the dominant view, based on the logical-philosophical tradition and for years regarded as one of the ‘axioms’ of onomastics, proper names have no meaning (Kaleta 1998; van Langendonck 2007; Nystrom 2016). Within this approach, it is assumed that a proper name has a single denotation (reference), and identifies a specific, single object – and thus cannot point to a class of objects that share some defining property (lexical meaning). At the same time, linguistic studies on the theory of names pointed to the existence of certain semantic properties associated with proper names.

Contemporary research on the meaning and role of proper names in the message structure confirms the presence of their semantic (connotative) properties. Nowadays, scholars generally agree on the basic, primary function of proper names, that is naming an individual object, which is related to identification (indicating a specific denotation) and differentiation (distinguishing a given object from other similar ones). For instance, *Denali* names a specific peak of 6190 masl, referring to it as an individual object (the highest peak in North America, distinguished from other mountain peaks on this continent). These basic functions are fulfilled every time a proper name is used in commu-

nication. There are also, among others: a connotative meaning, a minimal categorical meaning (e.g. *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* 'man,' *Mount Adams* 'mountain,' *New York* 'city'), an etymological meaning (related to the lexical meaning of the base from which the name is formed). First and foremost, however, what is acknowledged is connotations attributed to the named object and then linked to the name itself, which in consequence facilitate, among other things, a secondary usage of the name (in metaphors and metonymies such as: *New Yalta*, *Czech Messi*, *Budapest protests against Brussels*, cf. Rutkowski 2007).

3. Nowadays, names are no longer regarded as detached, self-contained, isolated units of language, but they are considered to be elements of certain utterances – that is, they are names in communication. Therefore, they perform a number of additional functions, derivative or secondary. For instance, the following functions are proposed: deictic, appellative, emotional (emotive, expressive), associative, evocative, social, psychological, mythologising, perspectival and others (Šrámek 1999). The proposal of a systematic, model-based approach (Rutkowski 2002) refers to Jakobson's concept of the functions of language and is based on a universal naming model, where the name performs the following functions in relation to the listed factors: descriptive (the name constitutes a synthetic description of the object's properties, e.g. *Black Mountain*), expressive (the name reflects the emotions of its giver, e.g. a nickname *Texas Ranger* 'a person who scrupulously follows the rules'), impressive (the name influences the user, e.g. the name of the pizzeria *Maestro da Napoli* implies the Italian origin and works like an advertisement), commemorative/allusive (the name commemorates or alludes to the circumstances of its bestowal or other elements), poetic (the name focuses the user's attention on its structure, e.g. *Shakesbeer* 'the name of a pub'). Some names can perform several functions at the same time, such as *Tani Armani* (literally in Polish 'cheap Armani') – the name of a second-hand clothing shop, indicating the type of products but also being a kind of joke, irony, self-promotion. All these definition- and classification-related proposals are firmly rooted in the history of onomastics. It is a relatively young discipline which evolved following the research conducted in the late 19th and early 20th century on the etymology and origins of place names and water names. Findings in this area were used by dialectologists, historians, geographers and archaeologists. Another relatively early research direction within this branch of knowledge was stratigraphy – a study of the word-forming types of local names over large areas in relation to history, geography and frequency of usage. The etymological-historical paradigm dominated for a long time also in the field of personal name research. Moreover, studies on proper names were undertaken in

linguistically mixed and border areas. Additionally, attempts were made to reconstruct Proto-Slavic and Proto-Indo-European names (cf. Kaleta 1998: 45–47).

The second paradigm important for the development and shape of onomastics as we know it today is based on structuralism and post-Saussurean thought. Interest in the linguistic system (*langue*) typical for these approaches shifted the attention of scholars to issues related to the synchronic functioning of various naming sets and their word-formation structure. In Poland, as in other Slavic countries, the structural-grammatical classification of local place names or personal names, in which their word-formation structure (and to a lesser extent – their lexical-meaning base) was the main criterion of dividing them into categories and the main object of inquiry, determined the paradigm of onomastic research on naming for at least three decades (1960s–1980s). The aim of so-called structural onomastics was to trace word-formation onomastic models. Thus, word-formation analyses, linked to etymological-motivational studies, became the basic tool of onomastic research.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a ‘sociolinguistic turn’ in onomastics. The ideas fundamental to sociolinguistics or the sociology of language – i.e. going beyond the linguistic system and taking an interest in the empirical aspect of language, seeing it as a social fact that is subject to sociological rules, and noticing social differences in language users – found their reflection also in onomastics, which led to a methodological and theoretical revaluation (cf. Bubak 1982(1983), Lubaś 1980, Ainiala 2016). At present, Polish researchers are strongly convinced that proper names are not mere naming labels but carry social meaning and reflect wider cultural and historical processes. Most often, they explore how naming conventions reflect social realities in different communities and time periods. Concepts concerning the isomorphic relationship between proper names and social structure come to the forefront. Socio-onomastic research is to foreground relationships between the functioning of naming systems, including categories of proper names, and the structure and range of social or ethnic groups. However, regular systematic interdisciplinary links between onomastics and sociology are not thoroughly studied.

In line with the development of socially aware research, a theoretical and methodological discussion emerged on the distinction between socio-onomastics and the sociology of proper names, seen as separate branches of studies (cf. De Stefani 2016: 57). Within the former, sociological methods would be applied, such as the use of social opinions, questionnaires, surveys, community interviews in studying names with focus on determining the significance of preconceived categories, e.g. male/female, young/old, indigenous/migrant, etc. (Ainiala and Voultenenaho 2006; Pable 2009). The latter

would focus on the variation in the use of proper names in communication in different milieus and environments (Puzey 2012).

Soon, many onomastic studies began to postulate including pragmalinguistic, psychological, cognitive and cultural factors as important for the linguistic naming processes (for more on this topic see Górny 2022). In other words, proper names began to be studied in a particular communicative context – with focus on their creative/receptive aspect and the psychological/cognitive, cultural, social and (neuro)biological determinants of the act of naming and the act of reception of a proper name. Neuroscientific research has shown that the human brain reacts differently to proper names and differently to referential appellative constructions corresponding to them (Proverbio et al. 2009; Rutkiewicz-Hanczewska 2016). This proves (this time in relation to how the brain functions) that they are important as separate linguistic entities, distinguishable from other elements of the language system.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, onomastic research drew inspiration from the pragmalinguistic thought of J. Austin and J. Searle. The concept of the speech act occurring in a specific communicative context, its creative aspect, the criterion of intention and perlocutionary effect were reformulated and applied in the onomastic theory and practice. Yet, they were not of paramount importance. There are not many examples of applying the pragmalinguistic methodology to describe proper names, and the existing ones are diverse: from studies attempting to describe the function of names (Coates 2006; Van Langendonck 2007) through descriptions of eponymic structures and secondary applications of names (Peng 2009).

4. The 1990s and the turn of the 21st century brought further attempts to go beyond traditional analysis based on semantics and word formation as well as etymology and motivation. At that time, it was cognitive linguistics that became an important theoretical framework for onomastics. Thanks to such inspirations attention was focused on, among other aspects, the existence of ‘transitional,’ non-prototypical, ‘borderline’ naming phenomena which function between common words and proper names (cf. e.g. Kaleta 1998: 31–32), and which enhance the richness and diversity of linguistic reality. A layman is likely to consider a first name, a surname or a place name to be ‘better,’ prototypical specimens of proper names. What is much ‘worse,’ controversial, even among experts in the field, is the names of serial industrial goods, names of inhabitants of countries and regions, historical periods or cultural currents, associations and parties.

Adopting the cognitive model of language meant abandoning rigid typologies of proper names and going towards their relativisation. Instead of strict categories, it is the degree to which proper names belong to a given category

that is discussed. Within this framework, both the appellative and the naming spheres of language are direct reflections of the process of human cognition, so they should be studied as integral aspects of the overall structure of the human mind. Answering the question: what is a proper name? in the cognitive approach means answering another question, namely: how does the user understand these concepts and what psychological, cultural and sociological context influences this understanding?

Adapting the tenets of cognitive linguistics in onomastics also means accepting that proper names have their own conceptual meaning. This meaning is understood as a set of: sensory and mental experiences accompanying the use of different types of names, contextual knowledge and motivations accompanying the selection of proper names from the inventory available to the user, and ability to constantly create new proper names. What is also visible here is the human capacity to recognise and understand an immediate social, physical and linguistic context of an utterance in which a particular name occurs.

In the course of development of onomastics it was also investigated whether metaphor and metonymy show their systematic nature with regard to proper names. The function of this phenomenon and the extent of its occurrence were also determined. This was connected with such issues as stereotyping proper names, their role in creating cultural codes, and their axiological description. Currently, the processes of metaphorisation and metonymisation are explained with concepts from contemporary semantics and syntax (semantic field theory, predicate-argument structure, theory of descriptions), pragmatics, cognitive and cultural linguistics (ethnolinguistics), text theory and logical theory of proper names, quantitative and comparative linguistics. These disciplines are regarded as elements of a contemporary 'comprehensive research method,' recognising the opportunities they inherently offer for the development of modern onomastic research. Significantly, researchers' attention has shifted from the proper name itself to the act of naming – in other words, from the artefact to the process, to the 'happening' of the name. Different types of proper names are then considered to be the end result of different complex linguistic and cultural processes.

At some point in the development of onomastics it was also recognised that proper names co-create culture and reflect it. Various categories of names began to be treated as microtexts of culture, allowing one to indirectly infer certain features of culture in which they are immersed. Taking the cultural element into account in onomastic studies had two implications. First of all, the sphere of *nomina propria*, similarly to other spheres of language, arises and develops within culture – it is the effect and the 'mirror' of culture. Secondly,

knowing proper names and being able to use them are prerequisites to participate in the culture and social life in an appropriate manner. Such capabilities are addressed by anthropologists and ethnomethodologists as a 'sociolinguistic,' 'cultural' or 'communicative' competence (cf. Hymes 1980: 41–72). For example, merely knowing another person's name is not always sufficient, it is equally important to know in which social situation this name can be used to refer to the person. Additionally, such knowledge is not universal but may take different forms in a different culture or historical period. The relationship between language, including its naming sphere, and culture is thus a kind of 'paradox of interdependence.'

Contemporary onomastics draws important inspiration from text linguistics and discourse linguistics. Nowadays, it is crucial that proper names are an integral component of many texts, utterances, messages, dialogues, and discourses. Texts are a projection of particular social structures and a system of ideas and social values. An application of text analysis methods to describe names is presented by De Stefani (2016), whose approach interprets names as unique elements of the utterance structure. Such research draws on the achievements of ethnolinguistics and conversation analysis (Schegloff 2007). A similar theoretical approach is typical of the analysis of using names in institutional situations, where the specific relationships between participants of a communicative act are additionally taken into account – the question of legitimacy and agency as regards correcting names in utterances may come into play here (Pennesi 2014).

Discourses create a certain 'symbolic world,' a socio-cultural image that does not need to (and most often does not) have much in common with the world as it is perceived by an individual. Analysis of this symbolic world may concern its history, geography, demography, sociology or portrayals of heroes of the collective imagination. The portrayed characters or places usually carry values that dominate at a given time. Thus, it becomes valid to examine proper names that refer to these characters and places as linguistic 'labels' denoting these values. *Nomina propria* are important elements of discursive reality – media, political, religious, cultural, etc. (much more on this below and in subsequent chapters of the book).

Inspirations for text onomastics and discourse onomastics understood in the aforementioned way include: critical discourse analysis (CDA), systemic-functional text analysis, cultural linguistics, pragmalinguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitivism (especially cognitive analysis of metaphor and metonymy), as well as contemporary genre theory (inspired by the theses of M. Bakhtin) and stylistics. Among social sciences and humanities, the most important are: literary theory, semiotics, social communication, sociology, psychology

(including social psychology), cultural anthropology, political science, history, media studies, game studies, and gender and queer studies.

5. As presented above, the research field and the theoretical-methodological framework of onomastics broadened, and modern onomastic research methods continued to develop. All this undoubtedly happened due to the emergence of new spheres of social and cultural reality which are distinguished and characterised by proper names. The development of current post-modern civilisation, the advancement of many fields of technology, the speed of the information flow, the third and fourth waves of globalisation, the transformation of social, national and state structures count among the most important factors that contribute to the enormous pace of change in various spheres of life, including political, social, educational, cultural, economic and ideological. Thus, the phenomena that an expert on onomastics is supposed to consider when studying contemporary proper names include, among others: democracy in society living in post-capitalist conditions, free market and (post)consumerism, the expansion of the so-called new media, technological advancements, Poland's contacts with other countries of the EU and the world, international conflicts and migration due to war or climate issues as well as related problems, such as multi-ethnicity, globalisation, and transnationality.

This brief historical overview of onomastics (presented from a Polish or, more broadly, Slavic perspective) allows one to visualise the path of its development since the end of the 19th century to the present day and, above all, to realise how many research traditions and theoretical schools have been involved in this process. Looking at the history of onomastics, it also becomes apparent how the interests of researchers have shifted quite radically from anthroponyms and toponyms perceived in a historical and geographical perspective to various types of proper names regarded as *signum temporis*, the linguistic emblems of modernity. We believe that the proposed discourse-based concept of understanding and primarily studying proper names combines a number of the theoretical and methodological patterns presented above. Nevertheless, it also constitutes a significant innovation in the discipline, being yet another (though by no means the last) stage in the development of contemporary onomastics.

6. The book employs a research method that is based on the assumption that proper names mean and, in social terms, act. We look at different categories of proper names in their textual and discourse settings – that is, we scrutinise names in use. We are interested in names in specific utterances, names used purposefully, names that are sometimes the axis and sometimes the background. All this allows us to reach the real semantic, pragmatic, ideologi-

cal, axiological and performative value of the analysed acts of communication. Adopting such a research perspective justifies (which will be subsequently proven) the validity of the initial assumption that proper names mean, although perhaps it would be more adequate to say that they 'mean' in various usage contexts (usages).

The proposed thesis does not (although it might seem it does) radically reject the classic onomastic theory, according to which proper names are merely referential units that identify entities to which they are attributed, by definition devoid of lexical meaning (cf. Kaleta 1998). Undoubtedly, semantics-wise, names differ from common words, and here our position aligns with traditional views. Yet, at the same time it must be remembered that the lack of meaning and reference to individual entities characterises both names excerpted from real texts and separated from them, i.e. names treated as elements of an abstract linguistic system (lexicon) (cf. Rutkiewicz-Hanczewska 2013: 13; Rutkowski 2013). In our book, however, this theoretical perspective is on the margin of the proposed discourse. The traditional version of onomastic theory, with its assumption that proper names are asemanic, has been so strong and long lasting that each time a different perspective is mentioned, one should make initial reservations concerning the level of description which maintain (and paradoxically, perpetuate) the thesis that proper names lack meaning. This is also what we do in this book, leaving the systemic level intact (as it is not discussed here) and situating our considerations, analyses and resulting conclusions at the discourse level.

One of our aims is to investigate whether and how certain worldview and ideological structures are revealed in the studied texts through the presence of proper names, and which traditions or discourse assumptions lead to the rise of these structures. Another issue to be addressed is how they can be interpreted against the background of the current socio-political, religious and cultural circumstances and transformations in Poland. Proper names are treated in this study as symptomatic – they indicate (usually indirectly) certain general properties of the discourse to which they belong. In a broader perspective, this monograph constitutes yet another attempt to develop methodological tools (needed for analysis and interpretation) which could facilitate studying dependencies and relations between the naming layer of a text and its genre, stylistic, pragmatic, rhetorical, cultural, socio-political, and finally – discursive-ideological.

7. The proposed ideas are fundamentally shaped by the notion of discourse, understood as a socially sanctioned action performed by means of language, undertaken and realised in a spoken or written form by social actors in a particular setting determined by rules, norms and social conventions (Wodak

2011: 16; the terms of text and discourse – key to our considerations – are defined and clarified in the theoretical chapters). Understanding discourses as social practices or communication actions conditions a hypothesis that no expression used within a communication action is accidental and that each expression can play an important role in describing the effectiveness of such an action as well as in interpreting the intention of the active sender. This also applies to proper names. We assume that elements of both lexical classes (*nomina appellativa* and *nomina propria*) undergo similar discursive-communicative mechanisms – and thus, in a similar way, can ‘mean.’

Discourse, as mentioned above, will be understood here as “a way of organising human action, a communication practice of a particular community that in the course of various interactions determines and agrees on the content (a vision of the world) that they deem significant. Such a practice preserves the relevant scripts of communication behaviours and the rules of how to realise them through speech (and/or non-verbal means)” (Wojtak 2011: 70–71). Thus, discourse is a kind of practice of social action, a process of (re)construction – both creation and recreation – of a symbolic social reality. In this process, new symbols are negotiated and established, and they can give a start to social action at an even higher level of group identity formation centred on elements of newly established myths. Proper names can become, as will be shown, the linguistic centres of new mythologies because their symbolism is clear and they render concrete certain abstract values which are relevant to a given social group.

We also subscribe to a generally accepted assumption that language (including its naming layer) contains a certain worldview; it presents ideological aspects and group (party) symbolism, it is an expression of certain beliefs, attitudes towards the world, judgements, norms and values, goals, action plans and slogans concerning certain situations and representing interests of a given social group. The term ‘ideology’ itself is understood here in a broad sense – as ideas that bind a particular social group together and justify its actions (cf. Barker 2008). While retaining their primary functions, proper names can clearly serve an ideology thus understood. Moreover, we believe that proper names serve ideologies in a special way, namely they bestow meaning, both by potential connotative markers and by denoting certain entities, which are often clear symbols of those ideologies. Proper names are characterised by high intensity of ideological content, yet due to the lack of lexical meaning ‘decreed’ by the system such content can be blurry, vague and adaptable, which makes its carriers (i.e. proper names) very useful at the discourse level.

A proper name, like any other element at the lexical level (but also at the grammatical level, involving its position in an utterance and context, and its grammatical form), can therefore be discursively marked – in a sense that

such a use can reveal hidden intentions or ideologies of language users. Virtually any choice of a lexical (naming) unit or its form is significant for discourse analysis – such analysis ranges from what is currently realised in a given utterance to what is omitted or merely possible (Fairclough 1989: 21, Kress 1990). As will be shown in the analytical chapters, choices of this kind have an impact on building and understanding discourse. It will be particularly interesting to consider them in the process of creating *worlds*, understood here as relatively permanent cognitive constructs relevant to a given discourse community. Such constructs are so permanent that they are either rendered neutral in use (and thus undefinable and in some sense unnoticeable), or they form a basis for a system of values and ideology. They also have influence on exercising power: political as well as symbolic (Sinclair 2018).

The main idea behind onomastics of text and discourse (or to put it better: naming-oriented analysis of text and discourse) is to establish rules governing how proper names function in different types of texts and discourses as well as style varieties of various European languages. What is more, onomastic discourse analysis examines the connotative meaning of proper names in different types of texts and discourses and their stylistic, pragmatic and intertextual properties as well as their part in creating metaphorical and metonymic structures. The connotative aspect seems to be especially important as it creates a context-dependent layer of meaning and corresponds to the culturally conditioned systems of beliefs, convictions, values, etc. of language users. Notably, proper names co-create and co-organise the semantics of basic, universal categories of culture: various notions of time and space, the sacred and the profane, man as an individual and as part of community, good and evil, etc.

For onomastics-oriented discourse analysis, it is fundamental to distinguish between the primary function of a proper name, i.e. to mark an object that is denoted, and its secondary use in a text in which additional meanings reveal themselves. Onomastics focuses on the process, which takes place in various utterances, in which a proper name loses its naming properties and acquires features of a common word. The latter are manifested both in the case of names whose motivation and origin are clear, i.e. clearly perceptible, as well as those whose structure is unclear, i.e. when they undergo various types of metaphorization or become symbolic. It is the most important assumption that a proper name used in a predicative utterance has a potential to describe and create reality. It can also project various interactions between the sender and the receiver. Discourse-oriented research also pays attention to the impact of extra-linguistic factors (e.g. socio-political, ideological, historical, cultural, institutional) on the appearance of specific ‘telling,’ i.e. meaningful, proper names in text and discourse.

8. The presented book is an overview of our previous studies on the discursive character of proper names.¹ They have allowed us to determine a few general, relatively permanent theoretical and methodological rules or assumptions, which are only briefly quoted here in slightly modified versions:

- A. Proper names in a particular type of discourse are not accidental. *Nomina propria* are the result and product of a number of choices made by the author of a text, starting from the stage of making general assumptions: “what to say, how to say it and to whom?,” through adopting a general discourse theme and outlining a model of a ‘textual world,’ to the stage of constructing this world (cf. Duszak 1998: 122).
- B. Proper names should not be regarded solely as markers of a narrowly understood style of texts representing a given discourse.² In fact, they are a functionally important discourse component. Every discourse represents reality in a particularly oriented manner. When proper names appear at the lexical level of text, they contribute to the process of selective description of the surrounding world.
- C. The use of proper names in predicative utterances makes them carry several informative properties. In a specific sentence context, they acquire their unique meaning, ‘baggage’ of added senses, which is sometimes fixed in the social, general knowledge shared by the receiver and the sender of the text. That is why a proper name appearing in a particular utterance, while (at least partly) losing its primary identifying function, at the same time may gain new content, meaning and additional values. It may also perform roles whose nature cannot be reduced to purely linguistic issues.
- D. At the core of every text there is a specific intention of the author. Thus, a text represents some illocutionary activity, which can be (and most often is) very complex. Proper names and unit descriptions are important, though not the only verbal indicators of such intentions.
- E. A proper name used in a predicative utterance has a potential to describe reality and can co-organise speech acts. This is because an appropriate sentence context attributes to a name certain pragmatic properties or foregrounds them. Sometimes, a proper name also co-creates the course

1 Publication details of works addressed here are provided in Bibliography at the end of the book.

2 In this view, style is merely a set of marked units of language realised at the level of text. In a much broader concept – which we find favourable – style is a humanities-related structure of a text understood as a unity of linguistic, extra-linguistic (e.g. social, psychological, pragmatic) and paralinguistic elements constituting a given text and their functions (cf. e.g. Gajda 1983, Witosz 2009).

of the message by, for instance, being appropriately positioned within a text (e.g. at the beginning or end of an utterance). The actual functions of a name in the text on these three levels are marked by e.g. its grammatical properties (cf. Eggins, Martin 2001: 157, 162–163). It should probably be emphasised here that a proper name rarely performs any of the aforementioned functions on its own, hence it is essential to take into account the broad verbal and non-verbal context.

- F. Strong contextual conditions (in a sentence or text) combined with colloquial, common-sense knowledge about objects often give rise to temporary but surprisingly complex and diverse meanings of *nomina propria*. They can thus acquire one-time meanings but also ones that are relatively stable. This reveals their capacity for partial or, more rarely, complete, appellativisation.

The theses proposed above are general enough to be applied to the way proper names function and the methods they are studied in essentially every type of discourse. However, when analysing *nomina propria* in a particular type of discourse, it is worth taking into account elements that contribute to its specificity, distinguishing it from other types of discourse. This concerns the functional level in particular. We are thus interested in the entanglement of a text in its diverse purposes and strategies, the genre and form it represents, sender-receiver relations at varying level of complexity, the background (time, place and circumstances), i.e. elements which are very different in different types of utterances. As a consequence, an appropriate method of analysis is to be selected consciously among the proposals of contemporary linguistics. For example, in the so-called women's press, the scope, form and function of proper names are determined by, above all, the specificity of mass communication and basic features of popular culture (including multiculturalism and consumerist attitudes) (Skowronek 2001: 32–34, 57–60; cf. also chapters 8 and 10 in the present book). Hence, the research method appropriate to study such names is what can be generally called social discourse analysis (cf. van Dijk 2001: 31–32). However, when considering the status of proper names in religious discourse, it is necessary to take into account essential features of this discourse, which – while determining its specificity – also determine the properties and features of proper names that appear in it.

9. The book reflects our views on onomastics, which have obviously evolved, been extended, developed or modified. When we first undertook to identify the relationship between proper names and discourse more than twenty years ago, our goals were modest: we intended to reconstruct the 'telling,' 'meaningful' character of proper names in particular texts and to move these observations, within the scope of our research possibilities, to a higher level, a level

related to social practices. Thus, the undertaken attempts were supposed to profile onomastic research discursively and to extend the framework of onomastics to include a methodology that would allow us to notice and describe the mechanisms of social action through proper names. Our earlier descriptions of the secondary use of names and their functions in various types of texts (cf. Rutkowski 2003, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2012a, 2012b, 2018; Rutkowski, Skowronek 2010a, 2011, 2020; Skowronek 2000, 2001, 2006a, 2006b) were gradually extended within a broader perspective – first of all, including the level of social context. This way our research shifted from scrutinising ‘telling’ or ‘meaningful’ names to analysing ‘acting’ by means of proper names.

We first presented this way of thinking as regards names, clearly emphasising the methodological and theoretical level of research, in the text *Onomastyka dyskursu: zakres, problematyka i metody badawcze* [from Polish: Onomastics of Discourse: Scope, Problems and Research Methods] (Rutkowski, Skowronek (2010b)). Therein the onomastic perspective was still of primary importance (which is reflected in the title of the text: *Onomastics of Discourse*). In subsequent analytical studies, the traditional onomastic research methodology was increasingly extended to include elements of critical discourse analysis, until it assumed the form embraced in the present book.

It is as a collection of theoretical and methodological reflections on the functioning of proper names in various discourses which are supported by analyses of instances excerpted from authentic material. Most of the chapters have been published earlier, but they are to appear for the first time in their new versions – thoroughly revised, extended and adapted to the needs of the English-speaking reader. We decided that, due to its concise form the book could constitute a methodological guide for those who are interested in contemporary ‘open onomastics’ and/or contemporary possibilities or applications of discourse analysis. The former, as defined by Polish linguist Antoni Furdal (1990), is intended to indicate the possibility of supplementing onomastic reflection with concepts that originate from cultural anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, political science, etc. Onomastics cannot and should not be limited to just one field of knowledge or cognitive perspective.

The inter- or transdisciplinary character of onomastics is understood here as epistemologically justified research on proper names which is possible thanks to the adoption of two assumptions. The first one is an effort to provide a full (as much as possible) description of proper names, without unnecessary reductionism. In consequence, a number of methodologies are to be granted an equal status as onomastic research procedures. The second assumption is that linguistics occupies a non-central position in onomastic research. Lin-

guistics is no longer the 'core' of onomastics in our approach, and therefore the position of other sciences within onomastics is equal (and more significant than merely auxiliary – as has been assumed so far). The acceptance of coexistence of linguistics on an equal basis with other fields of humanities-based knowledge may seem 'iconoclastic' to many onomastic scholars because in some sense it challenges their way of thinking. The 'dethronement' of linguistics requires continuous negotiations with representatives of other fields of knowledge and acknowledging their arguments and points of view.

Consequently, this book and the concept it embodies showcase the 'open' nature of onomastics, representing its interdisciplinary, discursive dimension, at the same time including in its (broad and multi-aspectual) field of study context, intentions, sender-receiver relations, genre conventions and, finally, culture and society. We shall consider our research goals achieved if the book is welcomed, especially if it is critically developed, adapted and extended to cover new research trends, currents or paradigms. This book is an expanded and revised version of the book we presented to Polish readers in 2020.

PART 1

**Proper Names and Discourse:
A Theoretical Approach**

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Onomastic Discourse Analysis

This opening chapter is both introductory and representative of the whole work. It presents an overview of our concept, showing its theoretical background and pointing out some possible and potentially interesting avenues of research. At the same time, chapter one constitutes an attempt to specify certain methodological elements indicated or only hinted at in our other works on discourse-oriented onomastics (cf. Rutkowski, Skowronek 2010; Rutkowski 2016, 2017; Skowronek 2013). Here, we present a comprehensive outline of our theory, which is to provide a set of tools facilitating analysis of all spheres related to proper names (naming categories) in terms of their discourse functions and socio-communicative entanglements.

1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Onomastics. Discourse and Proper Names

In line with critical discourse analysis (CDA) (in various versions presented by T. van Dijk, N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, among others; cf. e.g. Fairclough 2013, van Dijk 1984, 1993, 2001, Wodak 2001a, 2001b, 2003, Wodak, Meyer 2001, Weiss, Wodak 2003), a message expressed in language (discourse) is based on social, political and ideological assumptions (often implicit rather than explicitly expressed). Therefore, “the essence of social action can be explained, or even revealed, by means of various linguistic analyses” (Warzecha 2014: 167). In this perspective, discourse is not an isolated textual structure, but a complex communication phenomenon through which cultural and ideological circumstances are usually expressed only indirectly (cf. Czyżewski 2013, Jabłońska 2006, Warzecha 2014). An ideological message can be revealed through, e.g., lexical-semantic, grammatical (syntactic) and textual analysis, while in the case of onomastic discourse analysis proposed here, also analysis of naming processes. Hence, it is the aim of CDA to disclose relationships (which are most often indirect, implicit) between textual and discursive structures, on the one hand, and social, political and ideological structures, on the other hand. CDA focuses on the social context of “language in use” and its relationships with social reality. It can be defined as a certain kind of scientific thought on the role and functioning of language in society “a broad platform” where onomastic scholars can meet scholars working within other disciplines.