

THE THEMES OF THE THESIS

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„I am from Alsórácegres...”

**THE WRITER'S EPONYMY IN ERVIN
LÁZÁR'S WORKS**

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The topic and the aim of the thesis

The Hungarian research of names began to show interest in the customs of writers' eponymy after the memorable essay 'The Eponymy in Literature' by MIKLÓS KOVALOVSKY had been published (1934): at the beginning concentrating on the relation between the writer and the names in his works or on a work, then later on an ever increasing manifold approach. A complete life-work which covers all types of names had not been analysed before. That is why the aim of my dissertation is the introduction of Lázár Ervin's literary works from the point of view of onomastics. The author ranks among the writers who respond to names. In his prose, real and fictitious names of places, characters, animals, institutions, names of people's products and names of things appear in a fictitious place and time. The dissertation is, at the same time, an endeavour on how the subject-matter of names bearing esthetical values can be examined with the not yet completely strained connotations of onomastics.

2. The structure of the thesis

In order to explicate the topic it seemed necessary to make a survey first and then to expose the work concerning names of writers and names of literary origin as well as the exposition of these. What justified the survey was to get a clear picture of the topics and methods of research of writers' names. The ingenuity of the subject could only be declared afterwards. In the research of writer's names,

concerning people's names, we had to face the question of practicability of the already existing ideas. We had to deal separately with the meaning of name-forms that STEWART called quasi proper names, and the notion had to be rethought in the light of the data studied.

The investigation of the 'lazarian' (from the name of Ervin Lázár) name-types was preceded by the presentment of the corpus serving as a base for the research of names. The author wrote for both children and adults at the same time; he has novels, short stories, tales and fairy novels.

The most original central part of the thesis analyses Ervin Lázár's world of names. First it focuses on the author's relationship between his own name and other names. This is followed by the introduction of name-types: names of places, people's names and other name-types including all other name-types. Within the investigation of each group we touch upon the question of motivation. How names are embedded in the text and what the connection is between a name and the style is discussed in a separate chapter.

The structure of the thesis:

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. The topic
 - 1.2. Collecting data
 - 1.3. Processing of data
2. The research of the literary eponymy and author originating eponymy
3. The 'lazarian' corpus as the base of name research.

4. Ervin Lázár's world of names
 - 4.1. The author and his name
 - 4.2. The types of names with Ervin Lázár
 - 4.2.1. Names of places in Ervin Lázár's works
 - 4.2.2. People's names in Ervin Lázár's works
 - 4.2.3. Names of animals in Ervin Lázár's works
 - 4.2.4. Other name-types (names of institutions, naming human products, names of objects and events)
 5. Embedding names into the text
 6. Relationship between style and names
 7. Ending
- Related literature
Sources and their abbreviations
Data
Supplementary material

3 The subject-matter and the method of research

The subject-matter of the research is the system of onomastics in Ervin Lázár's work. Ervin Lázár's books are often so-called double-covered volumes. This means that both adults and children can read them. In spite of this dichotomy we are investigating all names in complete unity. The author himself didn't make a difference and his works go back to the same world of experience. His whole life-work is interlaced by even those playful methods of eponymy which are mainly used in children's literature.

The result of the collection of material is summed up in the Repertory. The difficulties emerged after we had reviewed mechanically the names, which appear

in Ervin Lázár's work. To confirm whether the data are authentic or fictitious, we had to ask the neighbourhood of the writer as well. At the time of data-collection Ervin Lázár was already very sick, so we were waiting for his recovery. Unfortunately, in December 2006, he passed away and he couldn't be questioned any more. However, we could use his diary as a source. His wife, Zsuzsa Vathy; his daughter Zsófia Lázár; his sister Zsuzsanna Lázár (Szabó Frigyesné); and his school-mate, the teacher Márta Tóth and Károly Demény, the mayor of Sárszentlőrinc supplied us with useful and valuable information.

4. The theses and the results of the research

Precursory hypotheses and estimations:

- we presumed the originality of the topic;
- we established, that Ervin Lázár ranked among the writers who respond to names.
- we anticipated the large-scale use of fiction
- we held Ervin Lázár for a master of playful naming

The results:

- The originality of the topic has been proved. About the work of Ervin Lázár there were only a few analyses which covered his whole life-work. From the point of view of onomastics it has only been touched upon. In the research of names given by writers or names of literary origin, complete systems of onomastics have not yet been analysed.

- We already had knowledge about how Ervin Lázár reponds to names. The research has confirmed it. It is not only that he knowingly chose the names of his characters, but also that he used great numbers of proper names and he used them as a means of style.
- The name-material of Ervin Lázár's works represents the real names much stronger than we would believe. In his place-names their predominance is clear: the dominating scene is Alsó-Rácegrespuszta and surroundings, which reminds us of the writer's childhood. In his works this place is not an existing one, it has turned to Rácpáces. The name embodies such symbolic subject-matters, which show the essential meaning of the 'lazarian' prose: that is, it is a place in the middle of the world at large, where one can live worthy (to man). In his works there are no closed grounds, which are exclusive sites of his stories. Even when the plot can be connected to a certain town – like the novel 'The White Tiger' is connected to Pécs - he will, sooner or later, take his heroes into the surrounding countryside, in the above mentioned case to a forester's house. Without boundaries, the writer's fantasy roams about across countries and across continents in the great world, by means of mentioning place names. So he can widely expand the often really small world. The smaller but rather articular part of people's names are the names of real persons. Quite often it was possible to identify them. The work contains such people's

names in abundance which can be connected to real living people, but there is either not a complete identity of the name or it refers to a different character. The flavour of the 'lazarian' prose is that the real or fictitious stories of the characters with real existing names appear in real and fictitious space. In the other name-types it is the fiction which dominates.

- His own children and the children in the neighborhood, as well as the logic of the way of thinking, and children's language had a great influence on Ervin Lázár. This is the basis of his playful name-creation.

5. Summary

The essential source of Ervin Lázár's works is his childhood-world in Alsó-Rácegrespuszta in the county Tolna. His stories originate from this world, the names of the people once living here come to life through the sieve of recollection. His name-system describes this world from *The Big Brambleberry-tree* to the *Republic Masokó*. The systematization and analysis of the examined name material (STOCK) pointed out that it is necessary to make a difference between the names of writers and names of literary origin, as well as the difficulties of exploration and standardization of people's names of writers. The concrete names or the names relying on real ones strengthen the biographical references of the examined text-corpus. The 'lazarian' method of name creation is, besides using the real name of a real person, the mixing of the real and the

fictional, and the playful eponymy which he took from the logic of a child's thought and use of language. How he responds to names can be detected in the extent of the use of names on the one hand, and in the milieu-creating and typical function of names on the other.

6. List of publications on the topic of the thesis

Book:

2006 Street-names in Győr. Győr: 2006. Publisher Hazánk. p.219.

Review by Erzsébet Erdélyi 2007. Street-names in Győr by Katalin G. Papp. *Letter of Onomastics* 29: 288-289

Studies and articles on the topic:

2009 About Talking Names on the pretext of Ervin Lázár, in *The lectures of the 12th Apáczai-Days Scientific Conferences* (21-22, October 2008 Győr) 286-290.

2008 How people's names are embedded in Ervin Lázár's tale-novels In: ANDREA BÖLCSKEI - ILDIKÓ N. CSÁSZI (editors) *Name and reality The Lectures of the 6th Hungarian Onomastics Conference* (22-24, June 2007 Balatonszárszó) Budapest: The Publications of the Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Department of Hungarian Linguistics p. 577-588

- 2007/a An experiment of approaches to the tale-novel *The Quadrangular Round Forest* in a cognitive way on the pretext of proper names In: KATALIN G. PAPP edit.: *Studies on Three Sounds. From the workshop of the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature Institute* The University of West Hungary, The Apáczai Faculty, Győr 96-109
- 2007/b Similarities and Differences in the Eponymy Customs of the Hungarian Folk- and Literary Tales. *Onomastic Report* 29: 151-159
- 2007/c Name and value of style: The Effect of Style of Naive and Bizarre View in the Proper Names of Ervin Lázár's Children's Literature. In: CSILLA SÁRDI edit. *Communication in the Era of Information Technology* 17th Congress of Hungarian Applied Linguistics. 19-21 April 2007 Pécs – Székesfehérvár: Hungarian Association of Applied Linguistics (HAL) – János Kodolányi College – on CD.
- 2005 Addressing the mother in the correspondence of Mária Madách and Anna Majthényi *Hungarian Guardian of Language* 129: 59-61
- 1997 Changes in the Street-names of Győr In: Piroska B. Gergely – Mihály Hajdú edit.: *The 1st-2nd Lectures of the 5th Hungarian Onomastics Conference* Budapest – Miskolc: Hungarian Society of Linguistics – Institute of Humanities at the University Miskolc 421-426

Reference:

2003 István Hoffmann: *Hungarian Research of Settlements' Names* 1958-2002 Publications of the Hungarian Name-Archives 7. Debrecen: Department of Hungarian Linguistics at the Debrecen University pp. 227 and 262.

Lectures at Conferences and Meetings:

- 2008 About Talking Names on the pretext of Ervin Lázár *Tradition and Development* The lectures of the 12th Apáczai-Days Scientific Conferences 21-22 October 2008, Győr. The University of West Hungary, The Faculty Apáczai
- 2007 How people's names are embedded in Ervin Lázár's tale-novels *Name and Reality* The 6th Hungarian Onomastics Conference, 22-24, June 2007 Balatonszárszó, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Department of Hungarian Linguistics
- 2006/a Similarities and Differences in the Eponymy Customs of Hungarian Folk-tales and in Literary Tales. 2nd Halfway. Conference of the Graduate School of Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities of ELTE Eötvös Lóránt (University of Budapest) 13-14 June 2006
- 2006/b Prince John or Mikkamakka? The practice of the choice of names in literary tales. *Keeping and Creating Merits* 11th Apáczai-Days Scientific Conferences, Győr, 12-14 October 2006, The University of West Hungary, The Faculty Apáczai

- 2005/a The research of literary eponymy in the countries of the European Union. 10th Apáczai-Days Scientific Conferences in the session. The position of the Hungarian Language in the European Union. 19-21 October 2005, Győr, The University of West Hungary, The Faculty Apáczai
- 2005/b How does the hydra become a seven-headed Fairy ? Literary eponymy in folk-tales and man-made tales The conference *Tale and man-made tale* 21-22 October 2005 Hajdúböszörmény. Faculty of Education, Hajdúböszörmény, University of Debrecen.

Winning competition article:

- 2005 Joint competition with the Publisher Hazánk from Győr in order to publish the book of onomastics *Street-names of Győr* (National Public Education Evaluation and Exam Centre, Győr-Moson-Sopron County): *TKP/2003*).