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"SIMPLE" SATIRE: THE ONOMASTICS OF THE SATIRICAL GENRE ILLUSTRATED BY THE WORKS OF MICHAEL WHARTON IN "PETER SIMPLE"'S WAY OF THE WORLD COLUMNS IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

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Who do you think is "both the funniest and the wisest writer in England" today? Anthony Burgess? Richard West in The Spectator has said it is Michael Wharton. I turn to him here to discuss his satirical names because of the intrinsic value of his work (which is unknown in America but can be most instructive to our own writers) and because literary onomastics has too often neglected widely-read but non-Establishment writers (especially humorists). From this man Anthony Howard of the Daily Telegraph has called "one of the few original British eccentrics left to us--a kind of Evelyn Waugh in aspic," we can draw instruction as well as delight and suggest general principles of naming in satire, applicable to the writing of humor and to the criticism of Waugh and other masters and non-humorous writers of equal and greater status in the eyes of the public and the literary critics.

Those who have never heard of Wharton (who for a quarter of a century has written a column signed "Peter Simple" in London's Daily Telegraph) may be well advised to seek out the 9 volumes of selections from his work which were published up to 1977 and a tenth, which I draw on for this paper, which was "a selection (or distillation) of what I hope are the best and most representative items in these collecti-
ions," said the author, adding "additional items covering the period 1977 to 1980." Lack of American familiarity with the work may add more amusement and constitute here a minor literary find, while the foreignness of the writer and his subjects may provide useful opportunities to stress for literary onomasticians that names are more than mere words or wordplay and must be considered in their social and cultural contexts. That fact is, in my opinion, the most neglected essential in literary onomastic criticism today and the failure to recognize its centrality condemns much criticism to shallowness, giving mainstream literary critics the false impression that literary onomastics is not serious explication de texte and onomasticians academics on vacation, mere hobbyists.

In the Fifties, when the column was first signed "Yorick" (a name colored by allusion to both Shakespeare and Sterne), the principal personages appeared who were to people the satire of the man who soon came to call himself "Peter Simple" (for other journalists began to call themselves "Yorick").

There were in the column a number of common people (some of them very common indeed) with uncommon monikers: Stanley and Doris Gloater, an elderly couple in a decayed caravan (trailer, more pompously "mobile home") in a bleak Midlands housing estate (project); Edith Grampus (of Ilkey, Yorks.) and Mostyn Foodbotham (of Cleckheaton), who argued in letters about the potted palms on the upper decks of Bradford busses and similar matters; Ron Frabb, skiffle player and punk, aged 15, leader of the X Cert Gang and son of Ted
Frabb, "boilerman and TV enthusiast"; Ron's headmaster at the Bog Lane Secondary Modern School in Stretchford, one J. B. Dimwood; Cliff Rampton, variety agent (booking vaudeville acts) and his secretary, Jean Neck ("a precocious fifth-former"); Plugden, Ron Frabb's butler and bodyguard when Frabb becomes a pop star; Len Nerp, "19-year-old turntable machinist," who ran away with Gloria Waspthwaite, "48-year-old dry-cleaning manageress," addicted as he was to older women; and others, including these debaters at the "Way of the World" Council on Youth (1959): Derek Tump, Alan Ghoul (teenage "apprentice disc-jockey from Halifax"), Doreen Gaggs ("girl political expert"), Dai Mugworth and Blodwen Cadwallader (Welsh "pin-table mechanics from Ystalyfera"), Bruce Fishcake ("racing cyclist"), Ross Ghaistrell ("nutrition expert").

We see Simple's amusement at Welsh forenames and his ear for old-fashioned and now faintly funny English ones (Edith, Doris, Gloria); his association of the short and simple annals of the poor with the short and simple names such as Ron, Ted, and Len (names such as The Duke of Bedford in his Book of Snobs argues will do their bearers no good these days); his play with slang which gives many of his names added significance perhaps unnoticed by Americans (bog = toilet, dim = stupid, neck = US pet and UK snog) or going beyond with American words (nerp seems to combine nerd and twerp); his sly allusions to Congreve (World Youth Council becomes "Way of the World" Council on Youth) and modern life (X certificates are issued by the British film censors to what Americans would call soft porn).
Anyone can see "vomits" in the surname of Doreen Gaggs, but "Simple" knows and his readers sense that Doreen (especially when accented on the first syllable) is the inescapably, ineffably lowclass forename.

Other "Simple" targets of The Fifties also turn up later. There are politicians such as Alderman Foodbotham (Chairman of the Bradford City Tramways Committee), education experts such as Sir William Goth-Jones (Vice-Chancellor of Stretchford University, mocking redbrick pretensions and the Welsh habit of combining an ordinary surname such as Jones or Davies with something more distinctive, here a reference to the barbarity of the Goths), scientists such as Jack Moron with their simple solutions and simple names (science offering one of the few ways that the lowborn can rise to prominence in class-ridden Britain), military men such as General Sir Frederick "Tiger" Midgett, GCVO, TD, of The Royal Army Tailoring Corps, and Field Marshall Erich Buber von Nittwitz. The jump from Clausewitz to Nittwitz may be easy (with the boob for a bridge) but it is effective and we can believe he is the author of the war memoir Sleeping Panzer (catch the pun), which critics proclaim "can be said to cast no more than a pallid, fitful light on the rise and fall of the Third Reich."

Obviously "Simple" has his times and journalistic tone down pat; his barbs at other literary types are well-aimed. There are the publishers Viper and Bugloss, the hackwriter (and first-class history don) Julian Birdbath, newspapers such as the Sunday Defective, the poet Eric Lard. Lard's slim volume (The Burst Hot Water Bottle) has an "Introduction by Colin and Angus Wilson." Just then
Colin Wilson was famous for his angry book *The Outsider* and Angus Wilson was emerging among insiders as a major short-story writer and novelist; to pair these men was a literary joke, enhanced by rumors of homosexuality. The introduction, by the way, was said to appear also in *The Oxford Book of Introductions* (edited, with an introduction, by Angus Wilson), a crack at collecting writers' forewords and afterwords (a practice still common), and "Simple" mocks publishing retreads further, adding: "It is being dramatised for the [BBC] Third Programme," the intellectual (and pseudo-intellectual) broadcasts. Scholarship takes its knocks with such items as Birdbath's *Doreen Bronte: the Formative Years*, the discovery of a fourth Bronte sister—a fifth is threatened later—who used to drink at the local pub disguised as her brother Bramwell and who founded the Haworth girls' Small Bore Rifle Club.

With small bores and big phonies "Simple" has little patience, and he will even parody place names and commercial names: Faintsbury's (from Saintsbury's, the grocers) and Porkax (manufacturers of sausage and pork pies on an industrial level), Glumworthy Abbey (Barsetshire, with a nod to Trollope), the "totally arid sheikdom of Todi (obviously toady, where Nidgett is charged with stopping arms smuggling "from the Bojd over the rugged Jebel Snakhbar," a snackbar being US greasy spoon more or less and associated with the toponymic suffix as in Zanzibar), etc. A piece called "Afoot in London" (by "Wayfarer," clearly fluff journalism) is a send-up of what-to-see-in London columns and directs one to the Boggis Hill Main Colliery, the "only
coalmine in London entirely operated by the British Council." Here Boggis combines bog and bogus and the British Council is confused with the county council. Note that all names are close enough to real English names to be credible as well as satirical and demand a full knowledge of British life. Occasionally, for effect, the names are deliberately farcical and more incredible: two departments at Stretchford University (a redbrick horror) teeter on the brink of overdoing it: the School of Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations and the School of Jazz, Ballet, and Commercial Astrophysics.

As the "Peter Simple" columns went on year after year--they now have passed 4 million words altogether--the characters have become familiar and the basic targets and techniques have been expanded and improved, but some of the most telling points were there from the beginning.

Interest in names was also there, of course, from the start. Here is a piece from 1958 satirizing newspaper columns on names:

Is this your surname?

If your name is Fruitperson, you probably had an ancestor who held his land under feudal tenure, being obliged to deliver a certain quantity of fruit to the Lord of the Manor annually. The seneschal on announcing the arrival of the fruit would probably say: "Here is the fruitperson." Hence the name.

The name Musicseller, common in parts of
Worcestershire, has no connection with music. It is probably of Gaelic origin, and means "one who removes the eyes of partially gnawed potatoes."

If your name is Sadcake, you may be descended from a member of the famous Red Indian tribe who emigrated to Manchester in the 1860's and took up birdcage manufacture in Salford. J. R. Sadcake, who played full-back for Accrington Stanley in the 1892 Cup Final, is probably the best-known scion of this dauntless race.

(Next week: McSeedy, Gongworthy and Lemonsoda-wallah.)

There are traces of many elements of British thought, from the anti-Hibernian prejudice to memories of the raj (wallah = fellow) in the name confected from "lemon sodawater" and cracks at "Believe It or Not" hackwriting and genealogy.

A reader writes to "Genuflex" (a swipe at silly pen names for features writers in newspapers) to ask how he ought to address his "elder brother Eric, who is in holy orders and who also holds medical and dental degrees" and now has become both a detective sergeant and a baronet. "Genuflex" replies to this correspondent (from Mostyn Sheep-Harris, Loughborough):

"The Rev. Det.-Sgt. Dr. Sir Eric Sheep-Harris, Bt., DD, MD, LDS" is the correct form. Should
your brother be appointed a Privy Councillor,
join the Navy, Army or Air Force, or make a
pilgrimage to Mecca, please write to me again.

If you did not know the pilgrimage adds to the titles of Islam,
you must have known of the British way with honorifics, and the idea
that a man should worry about so formal a way of addressing his own
brother takes the whole thing to the necessarily ludicrous extreme.
But satire is serious: hereafter, surely one must look upon strings
of British honorifics as faintly silly. Folly has been scourged.

"Simple" (like Fitzgerald in The Great Gatsby and others before
him) sets the tone of a whole party by the use of names that are
"just off," too close for comfort in fact: in Hampstead he gathers
model Giselle Frabazan, actor Mike Tove, footballer-sculptor Ken
Valve, architect Crispin Spasholm, art historian Rex Weak, Jeremy
Cardhouse MP, drops names of houses (Bide-a-Wee, Spinoza Holm, Tre-
gastel, Kafkacote), says "The British Commonwealth of Nations" is
"the shadow of the Empire" persisting "under a false name," and makes
allusions to pop fads and "high culture": opera, for instance, accounts
for the Ombra Mai-Fu automobile and the Fafnir Engineering Company
(which built a mine cage in 1885). The informed reader has the joy
of cracking the code—to judge by all but a very few casual readers
and professional critics, literary erudition does not bring wisdom
so it might at least bring the reward of recognizing familiar mater-
ial, even one's superiority over the uninformed—which is one of the
delights of all literature, satire not at all excepted.
That snobism, if that is what it is, extends to noting that proles and yobbos have "funny names" and spurs the search for personal name gaffes among the lower orders. "Simple" is especially fond of the bubble-headed teenagers who occupy so much more of society's interest now than did the more disenfranchised youth of past times; satire always likes to take the prominent or powerful down a peg. So we meet:

Gloria Norp  Tracy Binns  Cheryl Toast
Marylou Boggis  Shirley Globes  Tracylou Hornet
Mavis Tuber  Sandra Cloggis  Vera Slabb

and Dinette Harris and others. Vera is, for instance, a "ninth-year sociology student at Nerdley University." The middleaged are not safe from satire either and include: Davina Bloatch ("supply teacher," US substitute teacher); Mrs. J. Behemoth, 41, of Clement Atlee Way (17-stone housewife); Mrs. Brenda O'Gourke, 46, of Termite Road, Nerdley (housewife); Mrs. L. Glottis ("of Thewall Road, Gnomeshall Heath," with a nod to the plaster gnomes the naph consider garden decorations); Mrs. A. Lemming, 56, a Loughborough homemaker; Mrs. Betty Tureen, 49 ("of Khandahar Road," a crack at the peculiar place names the great days of the vanished Empire left on pedestrian England); Mrs. Linda Wotan, 47 ("cake and biscuit superintendent at the Hanging Gardens of Babylon Supermarket, one of the Nadirco chain"); and Kay Gristle, harpist of the Stretchford Orchestra accused of being "under the influence" of drink "during a four-hour performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 13 ('the Intolerable')" on tour in Belgium.

The British will recognize as spot on really lowclass feminine
names "Simple" cites, even those he invents, such as Gjog (the Albanian au pair girl who works for a socialite-socialist family in Hampstead) and Carlene (a way of saying "God" to indicate annoyance or disgust with the cheap suffix -ene). Why has no student of personal names, in life or literature, investigated just what constitutes spot on, or where the public gets the idea that -ene names are tawdry or, say, that Brenda is the height (nadir?) of what Americans call square?

These modern realities are combined by "Simple" with literary traditions of old. For example, imitation eighteenth-century diaries give him such rural names as Blind Benjamin, Halfwitted William, Palsied Peter, Granny Turnip, etc., and elsewhere in the tradition "Simple" produces Adam Broadcloath (rustic birdwatcher), Seth Gummer ("the Waspkeeper," celebrating with his Mummershire mates such rustic holidays as Dough Tuesday and Shouting Friday, calling into question the similar names of folklore), and Adam Strongitharm (blacksmith). His modern churls include F. Brootes of Numb Road (S.E. added telegraphs it is an unfashionable London address) and R. H. Crevice of "Bash-teuton," Numb Lane Caravan Site, Canvey Island. There are also Norman Sock (Gildea), Max Nobespeare (Belper), Fred Mangle (Kingston Blatt), Fred Hashimoto (St. Austell), L. Scream (Bevindon Airport), J. H. Vector (Barrow-in-Furness, one of the real toponyms "Simple" often finds funny), etc. Howard Trembath is a "cold-chisel tester." Kevin Breath is a "27-year-old spongecake executive." Albert Rasp is the football goalie who "let through 1,107 goals last season" for Stretchford United. Rev. Bruce Nethers of St. Atilla's Church
is chaplain to the local vandals, Len Gollip general secretary of the Amalgamated Holeborers, and so on. One can grasp why caravan sites are tacky but not why the surname Breath should amuse "Simple" so often: J. S. Breath of Phantomsby Caravan Site turns up with his wife Thora, "Glamorous Granny winner at West Hartlepool in 1959," for instance. It is clearer, in the British tradition of xenophobia, why foreign names might be thought laughable, but "Simple" surprises us by his restrained use of them and the fact that usually they depend for their humor on awkward combinations of native British and exotic foreign elements, Les Das Gupta being one, and much more often on puns: Count Bengt Axelstierna, "hallucinated Swedish foreign minister," with bent axle suggested; Marxists Benzadrinov and Nembutalov (the latter a boring writer who sent Marx a copy of his 250,000-word pamphlet on The Roots of Political Inertia and for his pains was called "a decaying cabbage-stalk of the bourgeoisie"); and Sheikh Iblis Ez Zifti (in our American tradition of Hassan ben Sober).

"Simple" is irritated by Irish names like Tommy McGroan (Ulster Protestant extremist), Brig. Seán McGuffog (IRA Provisional), and those which involve spellings such as Rhiannon Morag O'Raghallaigh. He plays with Welsh names (Ieuan ap Iorweth) and other strange appellations. Anna Drinamylenko is an "enigmatic Ukrainian terrorist." American names (Elihu Jones III he considers typical) in his work include Senator Patrick Flannely of East Carolina. In the latter we seem to have not Canadian flannel-mouth = speak softly, but British Navy flannel = bluff (US slang brown-nose is like RAF flannel).
Such names as these underline the point that the adequate interpretation of names in satire often requires a broader knowledge than critics who have more or less mastered the standard language possess; what is frequently demanded (and ignored) is that satire's names may be based upon the colloquial speech of its audience, and so it can happen that a satirist's point will be clearer to ordinary readers than to the sanitized, unslangy professional literary types, especially when their esoteric pursuits have much removed them from common life.

Ivory-tower literary critics may well miss the fun in some of the satirical names such as that of Marylou Ogreburg and her Multi-Racial Bread and Marmite People's Dance Theatre Group. This vague but loudmouthed lass from Dissentville, California, one of the "Grand Rapids Sixteen," I could identify from my real experience in London but it would be ungallant to do more here than to assure the reader that confected names have to strive mightily to outdo the actual ones of those distant days of international artsy hippies, street theatre, and pretentious Happenings. ("Simple" even had her voice down pat.) Sometimes reality challenges parody to compete: for example, T.S. Garp, where the initials stand for Technical Sergeant, his father's rank, and the outrageous puns in the work of novelist Peter De Vries, have to equal an America where real people are called Pamela after FMLA or Oral, Oder, Voneria, and Lencola (the latter was Miss Arkansas in 1980-1981).

The names of nerds and nobodies have to be true to and funnier than those of real people. So must the names of toffs and the titled,
familiar from international news and even the gossip found in the
glossy pages, idly turned at the hairdresser's, of *Vogue* and *Queen*.
Even the computer which *allegedly* "handles background research" for
"Simple" has a high-toned name: not Hal (from IBM) but Ughtred St.
John Mainwaring (pronounced "Utred Sinjin Manering," by the way)—
"no plebian 'Fred' or 'Len' for us." Actually, "Simple"'s upper-
class names, basically better publicized, may ring more bells with
the readers than the names of the great unwashed (and unwatched).
In fact, in Britain the lower classes are more likely to be bathed
than the upper ones, but by "unwashed" I mean Nancy Mitford's non-U.

Meet some of the titled and the *trendy*: Lord Mountwarlock, Lord
Burntalmond, Sir Osric Fenton ("left-wing actor-manager," the name of
a famous bit part used to be belittle), Sir Frank Tombs (Brass Stair-
Rod-in Waiting, mocking Britain's messenger between the two houses
of Parliament, Black Rod), Dr. the Duke of Cumberland (in "Simple"
a phony title but kidding the possibility of titles such as Lt. the
Prince of Wales, and reviving the title of one of the most despised
royal dukes, "The Butcher" of Culloden), Dr. Spacely-Trellis (go-ahead
Bishop of Bevinton, author of *God the Humanist*), Dr. Kiosk ("resident
psychiatrist" at Hambridge's, an expensive toy shop along the lines
of our F. A. O. Schwartz), the Goth-Joneses (add Sir William's black-
sheep brother G/C [Group Captain] "Jumbo" Goth-Jones, an RAF joke),
Trevor Dimwiddie ("35-year-old blond-bearded British underwater motor-
cycling champion," a dimwitted one), James Bonnington Jagworth ("de-
scribed as 'a motorist" in a trial, worth a Jaguar car), and Royston
Fotheringay (two surnames always sound uppity, though Fotheringay is essentially a place name, that of the castle where Mary, Queen of Scots was offed) "alias Lt. Col. the Rev. and Hon. Rollo Taskerville-Vavasour DSO, alias Prince Otto of Krampf-Frolstein-Lotenburg, alias Jim Fruitcliffe, 35, of no fixed address," in court for blackmail.

"Simple" is commenting on how names can impose on people; like many Americans contemptuous of British hyphenated names (his Mrs. Dutt-Pauker is "the Hampstead progressive thinker" and socialist climber), he deflates the overinflated. In satire, hot air balloons invite pins.

There is plenty of hot air in literary circles on both sides of The Pond, so we can readily appreciate The Theatre of The Abominable, The Feudal Times and Reactionary Herald, Traffic Jam (the magazine for gridlock enthusiasts), the social notes from Jellifer's Diary, and Coffee Table, the "coffee table book to end all coffee table books"; it is, in point of fact, as the Brits might say, your actual coffee table, published at £760.75, with a less sturdy version in paper at £153.50, by Nadirbooks, the West Riding [Yorkshire] Saga Division of the fiction writing service. Where we might fail to savor the names of writers, we can undoubtedly hear the authentic voice of idiotic criticism in some of "Simple"'s creations: Mungo Clang and Virginia Ferret are journalists, Clive Bombardon a music critic, Jon Glass-Derkeley the cultural czar of The Nerdley Scene, Murray Fringeberg an American poet and Julian Macnumb, Jim O'Vacancy, and Rodrigo Otiose "pop poets" of the Nerdley school. Julian Birdbath (remember him?) is the author of The Disconnected Goalposts, "the first 'avant-
garde' football novel...full of alienation, homosexuality, sadism, heroin-addiction and psycho-somatic diseases." This novel features Krebs (no first name!) and characters designated S., N., and V. (in the Kafka Kbnnektion) and is hailed by The Observer as "the anguished post-Christian world of professional football" laid bare. Newspaper columnists "Simple" calls Redshanks (stupid nature notes), Wayfarer (as I mentioned, hilarious guides to offbeat London sights such as "the only Indian fishing village still in the South of England," behind the Victoria Temperance Billiard Hall, "guide advisable, 5 s [hillings].," in Gormsworth Broadway, gormless meaning "stupid"), and Narcolept (Boring Notes). There are porno films for the mac (raincoat) crowd with names like Afternoon Teas of Lust and Boiling Virgins and progressive (Socialist) TV shows for the kiddies: Gillian Paste's Keep Left with Mother replaces, for children under 5, The United Nations Elf. The more one knows Now England (which is what I suppose followed Olde England and Young England), the funnier this stuff is, but anyone literate can laugh at the trendy lit couple Pippa and Neville Dreadberg, popular films such as Wittgenstein and the Quangos from Outer Space, and the new Bevinton translation of what might be called The Now Testament (of which "Simple" gives excerpts too close for comfort to what has recently been offered in all seriousness).

"Simple" is unquestionably conservative but all should applaud his attacks on the with-it artistic promoters, and self-promoters: the "cybernetic nudity" of Ms. Ogreburg's dancers, Jean-Paul Bourdon ("the most controversial film director alive," winner of the World
Boring Award for De Gaulle is a Woman, whom we see making Zero Minus Zero with pop group The Filthy Swine), John Gasby the "rubbishist" artist (previously into "destructivist" and "aggressivist" work and launching a new "terrorist" school of art), and the damn fools--there were some besides our own Norman Mailer--who regarded the defacement of public property as Graffiti Art ("Simple" describes the anonymous Master of Paddington, the London railway station before spray-can wonders were taken up by Twyla Twerp or sold like hotcakes in SoHo or other galleries). In a period of self-destructing art, in a time when Jack the Dripper's work was sold to unsuspecting antipodeans for millions, in a time when (as one critic said) England was "sinking giggling into the sea," when the postwar Britain of which novelist Kingsley Amis' Lt. Archer dreamed ("full of girls and drink and jazz and books and decent houses and decent jobs and being your own boss") was headed toward what I might call Moral Thorpe-itude and Thatcher-atcher and worse, "Simple" had targets galore and made attacking them (as the Hon. Gwendolyn Fairfax would say) more than a moral duty; he made it a pleasure.

It wasn't easy to be outrageous in the same paper in which, for instance, The British Council of Churches is quoted as asserting that the "'freedom fighters' of Africa kill in the spirit of love" or the news from America was that a United States Senator, defending his infamous colleague Harrison Williams (caught in the Abscam net), denounced the government's sting as "an operation to entrap corrupt persons in Congress" and added--get this--"it could happen to any one
of us." Imagination had to contrive characters wilder than Billy (or Jimmy) Carter and Idi Amin and presidential adviser Ed Meese (who announced that nuclear holocaust was "something that may not be desirable") and the bloodthirsty comedy team of Begin and Arafat, not to mention escapades of the minor members of the (dare we say it?) "Royal Family.

"Simple" tended to deal with stereotypical British politicians (rather than the incredible new lot). There was Sir Rufus Grunt (Cons. for Natterhurst—natter = nag—in favor of flogging), Miss Edith Sandpiper (Lab. for Shuffham, complaining about sex discrimination in Turkish baths), A. Grudge (Lab. for Stretchford North, who moved in Parliament the second reading of The Discrimination (All-Purposes) Bill), J. Computer-Smith (Lab. for Soup Hales, moving the second reading of The Unwanted People Bill, "an urgent social measure designed to fill gaps in The Abortion Act" for the quick "de-activation" of unwanted children), communists Abe Bummaree, Jack Tosh, Jim Grasp, Len Moth, and Mike McGahey (who prefers to spell it Micheál MacEachaidh), and so on. There could be no real people like this, surely, nor radicals such as the rich Gastriq Ali (there was a pawky Paki I knew called Tariq Ali), nor President Ngrafta of Gombola (formerly Gomboland) known as "The Redeemer," nor Dr. Abdul Ngong Castrumba, African with a touch of Havana, a "luxuriantly-bearded man of indeterminate, non-European race...a freelance, all-purposes revolutionary leader"). Can you believe that Deirdre Dutt-Pauker, daughter of that Hampstead harridan, becomes Deirdre Armature and the baby is
named Bert Brecht Mao Odinga when born at St. Ulbricht's Anti-Colonialist Nursing Home in 1966?

The mention of politics in "Simple"'s world inevitably leads to the discussion of education (which does not seem so strange when one considers how "reading English" is these days discussed in the London Review of Books or, for that matter, how decisions ranging from Open Admissions to Core Curriculum are made at the university where I am employed). "Simple"'s cast includes Dr. Braunszwerg (lecturer in Political Theory at Bevinton University), Old Miss Blather's Dame School personnel, and the dizzy faculty and 176,273 pupils ("one of the largest and therefore the best in the country") of Stretchford Comprehensive School, Dr. Ken Burst, headmaster. His conservative cry is, "Down with the social engineering freaks and monsters!" or "Raise the stones and expose the creeping technologists to the Eyes of Heaven!" To progressive education as a snare and a diversion he adds technology, a prime butt of satire since Swift excoriated experts who wanted to get sunbeams out of cucumbers.

"Simple" attracts by not being as attracted as American "soft" satirists to the easy targets of puerile Saturday Night Live and other stoned or show-biz humorists, but he shares with them the safe satire of that easy mark, the psychiatrists: Dr. F. Gestaltvogel, Dr. Heinz Klosk, et al., their foreign names mocking the irremediably mittel Europa ideas of what the British deride as trick cyclists. He tells us of the Horrorwicz Scale (for "aromatologists"), The Nadir Institute (Prof. Ron Hardware, Director), Seth Roentgen
("Britain's greatest scientific farmer") and other scientists such as Dr. Paul Ohm of Atomdene.

He also parodies the medical columns of newspapers, though those are less relied upon in a country with National Health than our own in which 10 percent of the GNP is spent on too-expensive medicine and the population cannot really afford adequate medical care. Here is Dr. Henbane (a surname he also uses for others he wishes to denigrate, such as police inspectors):

Quite a number of people have been writing to me for hints on how to cope with the hot weather. Mrs. F. S. of Aston Garfinkle (Notts.) is typical. "The other day," she says, "my feet got so overheated that they left charred patches on the grass as I walked along, and partially melted asphalt. Now I face a bill for damage from our local council [civic authorities]."

Her problem is not as uncommon as she may think. Trabb's Foot (or pedal hyperpyrexia, as we medicos call it) is a recognised condition. In the old days it was slow to yield to treatment. Patients usually wore a clumsy type of surgical boot with a compartment containing cold water, which had to be continually renewed as it turned to steam.

Today, a course of injections of a wonder drug--baborbomycin or one of the newly synthesised amphibog-
ulene group—plus a few day's rest, should do the trick.

Another, related foot trouble is Pedal Ef-floritis (also called Herbaceous Foot or Ojwen's Syndrome, after an early Welsh sufferer)....

for which one needs to be familiar with Welsh mythology, but the medical parody is obvious to all.

As I have shown above, one needs to know the language, even slang, to catch the points of many satirical thrusts, which would presumably attract more literary onomasticsians to discussion of satire were they only somewhat better educated, but even that is not enough. Sometimes satire, even popular satire, is an in-joke. Witness:

Stannard sucked his pipe ruminatively. "It was a rum [odd] joint," he began, "and no mistake—New York Eas t Side, right down on the slums of the river. A gloomy Swede kept it when I knew it—Dag the Drag they called him; a queer [odd] chap for the job you might think, but then it was a pretty queer job. A Burma Wallah [U Thant, UN Secretary-General] has it now, they say...."

This, in parody of the old sailor's yarn, discusses Dag Hammarskjöld (1905 - 1961, UN Secretary-General 1953 until his death in 1961 in an air crash in what was then Northern Rhodesia). Drag means something in connection with this gentleman's reputation for homosexuality (though never female impersonation) and queer has force here.
Less personal information is required to see the humor in some other "Simple" names, both personal and (say) The Royal Army Tailoring Corps ("The Grey Devils from East Ardley Junction" and "The Lads wi' the Needles and Thread"), spoofing the much-publicized nicknames of British regiments ("The Ladies from Hell" for the kilted Black Watch, for instance--the extreme example in military slang was The Eighteen Imperturbales, perhaps, a nickname for that handful of airplanes in the Desert Air Force in World War II), not of the Reemees (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) type but the Faithful Durhams variety. "Simple" mocks fumity-faced fusilliers--share that out among you as the slang of World War I trenches had it--of the sort sung in barrackroom ballads like this one:

We are the boys who fear no noise
When the thundering cannons roar.
We're the heroes of the night
And we'd sooner f*ck than fight.

We're the heroes of The Stand-Back Fusiliers.

Gen. Sir Frederick "Tiger" Nidgett commands traditional comic soldiers.

Between wars, the British battle over football: the Bog Lane Wanderers beat the Soup Hales Iconoclasts in the 1969 Stretchford Vandals League. Ron Gormley led the latter. Len Fridds and other "destructionists" operated as the Lampton Huns. "Simple" is especially outraged by the violence of football supporters.

Real scorn is reserved for the Socialist bureaucracy and such as:

The British Boring Board of Control (Sir Herbert Trance, Pres.), which
conducted the Global Boring Contests (1972) which involved Shloime ben Choloroform (Israeli champ), Antonin Bvorak (Czechoslovakia), et al.; The Eccles Cake and Garibaldi Biscuit Council (funny to the British because raisins therein are called squashed flies); Ethnic House, £45 million London HQ of the race-relations industry; The Moderate Commando Force (Modcomforce, playing on military jargon and the abbreviation for indoor plumbing, etc., mod con[venience])s; and Office of Dogmatics and Rule Book Exegesis of the Amalgamated Holeborers Union (founded by Habakkuk Luggage, 1779 - 1890); and, following The New Statesman's announcement that the monarchy was a part of the Civil Service, a Socialist monarchy of 2115 or so, with a Royal Socialist Anti-Nuclear Air Force, an inescapably working-class Royal Family (with a Queen Gran instead of the current Queen Mum or dowager Queen Elizabeth) and a king belonging to the Monarchial Workers Union.

Beside governmental and trade-union idiocies, these fads pale: Malebolge Chemicals (making contraceptive pills which "contraceptive wardens" may find useful when "statutory powers of persuasion" fail); Gotheby's (the auctioneers, getting £2500 for "Kevin," a "rare plastic gnome by Mulligan"); and Au Petit Coin Anthropophage ("the trendy West End restaurant that specialises in New Guinea dishes"). Here one needs to know of Dante, Sotheby's, and that trendy is très snob.

Less specific information is required to appreciate "Simple"'s way with a toponym than his handling of topicalities, and place names stay funny longer than events do (consider our Podunk). Real British place names often sound amusing to Americans--we are never quite sure
whether names such as Foulness are real or what the British call a send up. "Simple" creates place names that exploit reductio ad absurdum and the native tradition: in his work we encounter Suction Road, Wednesbury; Breathbury Old Sidings (Staffs.); Gogweston Abbas (Dorset); Simpleham and Simplehampton; Doomchester and Dorminster Newton; a few jokes on Notts. (the standard abbreviation for Nottinghamshire related to vulgar get knotted = "f*ck you"); Norbiton (compare the real Surbiton); Hallbut Bridge Street; River Stretch; Hokewell Wood and Lampton-on-Hoke; Sadcake Park (beloved of flashers and other sex criminals); Turgis Hill High Street (South London home of native British whirling dervishes, "sharp left at Gringe's Furniturama, left again at Chez Diane Coffeerama..."). The redoubtable leftist Mrs. Dutt-Pauker has houses "in Dorset, Beth Garth, another in Wales, Glyn Stalin, and another in the West of Ireland, Leninmore"--a sort of potted guide to potty house-name patterns, with Leninmore sounding enough like Erinmore to be quite convincing and the jarring notes struck by the others being quite deliberate. "Simple" is excellent at names of things: the Boggs works produces cars called the Boggs Yobbo and Bogg Super-Oaf and one of my favorite jokes is the confection Fry's Turkish Disgust.

When I consider that my own travel has taken me to Muckle Fluggs lighthouse, Maidenhead, Lower Upham, Wookey, Mousehole and Hutton-le-Hole, among other British places, and that the gazetteer offers even more (to us) incredible toponyms, I must say that "Simple" in this department of naming is prone to distance his fiction less from reality, and perhaps to amuse his readers less, than in some others. So
weird are common British place names, in fact, that when one finds in
life or in literature one that is ordinary, one is tempted to Rest
and Be Thankful (which is the name, as I recall, of the highest point
of the road in Argyll through one great glen's wild scene).

"Simple" has strikingly amusing names for businesses. Rentacrowd
Ltd. "supplies crowds for all occasions," chiefly political. Models
available include the Aldermaston (read "peace march"), Trafalgar
Square ("in various sizes"), Kassem Howling Mob No. 2 and other
foreign lots such as the Meredeka and Lumumba Super-Raving Anti-
Colonialist Mob No. 4. Part of the latter name tells it all and it is
not essential to recognize Meredeka and Lumumba as anything more than
"dangerous wogs"--this was in a period in which, as the jest had it,
even white washing machines had black agitators in them--but we are
alerted to one problem in satirical names: topicality yields power
but eventually obscures, a literary fact that explains everything
from the reason Jonson's plays were more popular than Shakespeare's
for a century after their deaths to the fact that some satire which
once sparkled like champagne is now unpalatably flat; it has been
"left open" too long and all the bubbles have gone out of it. It is
a question what posterity will make of satire on such as Gordon Nadir's
Hippie Enterprises Ltd., which undertook to "buy up islands, derelict
country houses, disused churches, old folks' homes and other waste
spaces for hippie settlements and run them as tourist attractions,"
avowedly to "opt out of our materialistic, money-mad society." The
directors of Hippie Enterprises were a Sixties cross-section of hyped:
Swami Ron S. Bhattacharya, the only Indian holy man with a first-class degree in chartered accountancy, who owns a successful chain of yoga betting-shops in the Nerdley area; brilliant young disc jockey Jim Droolberg; millionaire anarchist badge manufacturer Norris Spivenham; millionaire hippie clothes designer Crispin Nidgett, bachelor son of Gen "Tiger" Nidgett; and brilliant Kevin Frabb, formerly a director of [TV] documentary programmes....

Some may recall the Maharishi scams of the Sixties--Dianetics, Hare Krishna, Sun Moon's moonies, and some other shall we say idealistic youth are still with us, as the Twenties and Thirties had various swamis and gurus with polysyllabic Indian names --but to grasp the full import of this passage you need to know something of the period, plus spiv (racketeer or blackmarket hustler) from the World War II period, as well as the gossip-column code (bachelor = gay), etc.

For the Darby and Joan Sunset Home name you need to know the euphemism for "senior citizen" storage bins and the traditional name for an elderly couple. Somewhat less background is required to appreciate "Simple"'s report of Mrs. Morag Ironheart. She breeds Clackmannanshire terriers--Clackmannanshire is real, from the clach (stone) of Manau in the Lowlands of Scotland--at Brig o' Dread (not real). Clackies, we are told, were "mostly used by Scots landowners for evicting tenants,"
and because they bite viciously "Simple" suggests they may now appeal "to Glasgow football fans as an additional weapon for their armoury."
The actual is bred with the imaginative; reality can be funny, too.

Among the real people with odd names who turn up in "Simple"'s column are Nkrumah, Cohn-Bendit (who does not steal ice lollies from babies, if you recall), Mr. Foot and Enoch Powell and other politicos, Kops the playwright, Hugh Greene (simpering sap of TV talent shows--"Simple" knights him), Lord George Brown (not George Brown, not the younger son of a peer as the name suggests but a Labour peer in his own right, i.e. left), Mr. Callaghan (launching a "major awareness campaign"), Mrs. Eirene White, Sir Anthony Blunt ("the much-loved Socialist art historian and darling of the people"--this was before he was caught spying, defrocked, and discovered to have had an interest in young queens as well as the old Queen's pictures), supporters of ASH (Action on Smoking and Health), and so on. When there are real people around with strange names or strange reputations (Jeremy Thorpe, for instance), satire has its work cut out for it, while at the same time satire's funny names gain a certain credibility when put up against real ones (one example: the poet Medbh McGuckian).

"Simple" peoples Stretchford with politicians named Grampus Smith, Goat, Croake, Gogden, Nadir. He creates a Public Relations Section of the Equal Environmental Opportunities Department and Mr. R. D. Viswas-swami, "the only naked sadhu in this country," employed by the Stretchford Council "to live in a specially-built hermit's cave of artificial stone" in Sadcake Park as an amenity, with "the status of environmental
amenity officer (grade three)." I know little of British environmental policies, not much of American ones (though it strikes me that not having balked at genocide to clear the land of Amerindians we are suddenly putting snail-darters and other minor fauna ahead of Progress), but the experience of my friends with The Arts Council in Britain suggests to me that government money has been spent on crazier projects than resident hermits; greater familiarity with the object of satire may reveal the apparently outrageous as wryly unequal to the foolishness it attacks, typical British litotes. At the rate things are going, the Nerdley State Individual Fruit Pie Factory "Simple" projects for A.D. 2116 may be with us much sooner, as 1984 of Orwell came well before its time.

Consider that right now Anthony Wedgwood Benn, later Lord Something, but he gave that up, then Tony Wedgwood Benn, is now Tony Benn; maybe some day he will be a Has Benn. Meanwhile, satire struggles to keep up.

As it does so, satire attempts to comment upon and correct reality. Whether it be of the gentler Horatian kind or the more bitter Juvenalian variety scourging folly, satire relies on devices of irony, burlesque and parody, sarcasm and innuendo, sly subtlety and harsh invective, all of them to be seen in the onomastics of satire. The devices, like those of poetry, are generally fairly simple and well-established.

To see some of the characteristics and traditions of satirical names, I have quoted extensively from "Simple," the more so because his millions of words over a journalistic lifetime longer than most are less accessible to my readers than are standard novels. Here I must also demonstrate that in such novels the devices are found.
This essay is long as it stands, but since there is no such brief survey elsewhere, so far as I know, I shall beg the reader's indulgence while I range over about 100 works as quickly as I can, knowing that it is a more useful exercise in this journal, perhaps, than elsewhere because my readers here seek further information on where their own research in literary onomastics might take them. I suggest a number of works that can be studied individually, some of them to some extent "done" already (as I have published, for instance, on The Deerslayer), others awaiting study; and I think it would be best were scholars to trace one particular satirical name device (say such as the verb + them system which gives George Eliot Chettam and Wakem in novels as it gives Gay Peacham, that is "betray to the police," in The Beggar's Opera) through a period or through a genre, for we have been in this journal and in our studies in general too enamored of the particular and have too long avoided discussing the names not of one novel or play (infrequently, one poem) but of many. But now to the many:

In Arrowsmith (Sinclair Lewis) Dr. Almus Pickerbaugh is clearly condemned for his Better Baby Week, Banish the Booze Week, Tougher Teeth Week; the alliteration trivializes. In Barchester Towers (Anthony Trollope) Mr. Quiverful is obviously unheroic. In Bleak House (Charles Dickens) Jarndyce is close to jaundice. In Brave New World (Aldous Huxley), Mustapha Mond must have a monde (world) to control. In Candide (Voltaire) Dr. Pangloss will explain everything. In Castle Rackrent (Maria Edgeworth) Thady Quirk will tell a quirky tale. In Clarissa
(Samuel Richardson) Clarissa Harlowe is not quite a harlot (though I am not certain the staid author had my interpretation in mind). In Chrome Yellow (Huxley) Jenny Mullion is a sort of window through which we view the action. In David Copperfield (Dickens) Mr. Murdstone is, if not capable of murder, hard as stone (and did you ever think of Oliver Twist as "all of a twist" in this author's tradition of Master Bates, etc.?). In The Deerslayer the impatience of Hurry Harry is but one of many onomastic points. In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Robert Louis Stevenson) the latter has something to hide. In Don Quixote (Miguel de Cervantes) Rosinante was previously a nag (rosin). In The Egoist (George Meredith) the Patternes will be symbols of virtues or vices. In The Enormous Room (e. e. cummings) nicknames such as Apollyon (devilishness, from Pilgrim's Progress) and Rockyfeller (wealth) refer to things outside the confines of the story. Erewhon (Samuel Butler) is nowhere backwards (as Mr. Bons in E. M. Forster's story "The Celestial Omnibus" is snob backwards--enough of these would make an article in itself). In The Good Companions (J. B. Priestley) Hitherton is near and Miss Trant will leave its sleepy confines to venture yon. In The Great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald) critics have often commented on the shift from Gatz to Gatsby but nowhere notice that a mention of the confusion of g and k sounds in the pronunciation there of Oxford raises the possibility that Gatz was Katz, more clearly Jewish. In Gulliver's Travels (Jonathan Swift) polysyllables such as Belfescu, Glubbdubdrib, Luggnagg mock the difficult and exotic names of travel literature. A Handful of Dust (Huxley) in its title dismisses the silly
lives of the eager Beavers and the last of Tony Last. In *Huckleberry Finn* (Mark Twain) names are handled as cleverly as the dialects and reveal more than critics have so far noted, even "the Royal Nonesuch" mishmash of Shakespeare. In *The Human Comedy* (William Saroyan) Homer and Ulysses in Ithaca, California, alert us to literary concerns. In *The Idiot* (Fyodor Dostoevsky), Ferdyschenko mocks his own name, which seems to mean "son of a horse," and the other names in Dostoevsky (as Charles Passage has shown) have meanings for Russian readers that we miss in translation, while we also miss the change in the relationship between writer and reader effected by this lack of verisimilitude. In *If Winter Comes* (A. S. M. Hutchinson) the firm of Fortune, East and Sabre has a striking name for church suppliers. In *Joseph Andrews* (Henry Fielding) names such as Booby and Slipslop maintain the rowdy tone of parody in this take-off of Richardson's *Pamela* and help to reveal what Martin C. Battestin has called *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art*. In *Judith Paris* (Sir Hugh Walpole) Stane is "stain." The Late George Apley (J. P. Marquand) has a willing narrator, Willing. In *Lord Jim* (Joseph Conrad) names such as Stein and Jewel are obvious, while the difference between Patna and Patusan is just "us." In *Main Street* (Lewis)Blodgett College hardly sounds like a place from which to set out to conquer the world, nor does Gopher Prairie promise much. The names of *The Maltese Falcon* (Dashiell Hammett) if read with the ingenuity displayed in an important article previously published in *LOS* generate a somewhat satirical tone, though they are not as obvious as the name of Philip Noland (no land) in *The Man Without a Country*. 
(Edward Everett Hale), or even König (king of Chiang Kai-shek's police in *Man's Fate* (André Malraux). Someone called Donatello will not go unnoticed in a novel involving Italian sculpture (Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*) even if not as heavy-handed as the tale of the young goodman who loses his Faith (his wife's name) in Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown." For Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (Thomas Hardy), see *hencher* in a dialect dictionary (which is easier than spying a suggestion of "cabbage" dandified in the Baronne de Saint-Choul in Gabriel Chevallier's *Clochemerle* or *millés amantes* in a Restoration drama name, Millimant).

In *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* (H. G. Wells) the direct American is Mr. Direck; he goes to meet the famous author Britling at Matching's Easy. Introducing a Dr. Holmes in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Virginia Woolf) the author risked a connection with Sherlock Holmes that would do no good, as calling the notorious pawnbroker Luker (lucre) in *The Moonstone* or the hero with his heart in the right place Hartright in *The Woman in White* may have been errors by Wilkie Collins in those pioneering detective fictions where humor is the last thing desired. Is Jasper Milvain the writer in *The New Grub Street* (George Gissing) to be accused of a thousand vanities while Arthur Yule is ticketed as a hack (suitable for employing for Christmas annuals)? Surely Mr. Toobad and the other caricatures of *Nightmare Abbey* (Thomas Love Peacock) are intended to be as funny as the title itself. Is it amusing that big Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* (John Steinbeck) is surnamed Small? Isn't the husband of the hero/heroine of Woolf's *Orlando* silly to be named...
Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, Esq.? Isn't M. Visire satirical for the ruler (vizier?) of the North Pole country featured in *Penguin Island* (Anatole France)? Don't people named Grizzle Pickle--she marries Commodore Hawser Trunion--make the satire rollicking in *Peregrine Pickle* (Tobias Smollett)? Actually Smollett never leaves us in doubt about the atmosphere of his yarns (and of course discourses importantly on names in his *Tristram Shandy* and elsewhere), any more than Dickens does in works such as *Pickwick Papers*, but in "serious" works little satiric touches can be attempted with more or less danger of destroying the overall tone (Burlap the editor of a pretentious literary magazine fits fine into the snide *Point Counter-Point* of Huxley, but the Bushes in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Prairie* may be too much) and we may read in things unintended (Gaganov in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* is not English *gaga* = crazy but Russian *gaga* = eider duck) or uncertain (I feel pretty sure that the arrogant Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice* is a mere Burke in disguise, as the Mullins family became des Moulins, etc.). Especially in popular fiction, where (to use a phrase that turns up in an unpublished letter of 2 July 1840 [sold at auction at Sotheby's on 15 December 1982]) Dickens and others tried "homely narrative with a great appearance of truth and reality and circulated in some very cheap and easy form," satirical names can wreck verisimilitude and wreak havoc where they are noticed or even imagined by the reader. This is especially true of toponyms, which have a peculiar ability to root a story in fact and even invented ones (such as Ruritania in Anthony Hope [Hawkins]'s *The Prisoner of Zenda*)
have to attain credibility at some level or other if the fiction is not to be arty beyond most people's tolerance. Of the journalistic quintessentials (who? when? where? what? why?) fiction neglects the where (as well as the who) at its greatest peril. And although two Italians have now provided us with a list of imaginary places in fiction (Oz, Utopia, and the rest) no Americans have as yet given adequate coverage to what these fictional toponyms, let alone what satirical toponyms, do for the writer's art.

Names can be played with in other ways. Slade the Terrible in Roughing It (Twain) proves to be a gentle desperado. Yorick in The Sentimental Traveller (Sterne) is confused by a supposed devotee of Shakespeare with the Hamlet character of that name; foolish not only because Shakespeare was long dead by the time of Sterne's writing in the mid-Eighteenth Century and the characters of his play all dead when he came to them but also because even in the period in which the events of Hamlet supposedly occurred Yorick had been dead for years. Flopit (Miss Pratt's pet lapdog) in Seventeen (Booth Tarkington) helps us by its name to grasp what lovesick William cannot: his love is a silly girl. I have written elsewhere about the clever ways in which the names function in The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man (Thomas Mann) and cannot repeat details here, nor have I space to discuss (say) Space (James Michener), which has names such as Dr. Leopold Strabismus' (the eye disorder of the name suggesting failures in perception).

We need studies of names that are satirized in literature itself.
My favorite American names in that line are T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock in verse and for the novel that of Enoch J. Drebber of Cleveland (who appears as a corpse in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*). Even song names are mocked, and not only in Alphonse Daudet's *Tartarin of Tarascon*, whose hero can sing only "No, No, No." In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* Hardy satirizes noble names that descend to peasants such as the Durbeyfields, though mostly in literature the satire is of pompous names among the elite and the climbers.

We need to consider the sound of names more in our studies. The Morlocks of the future in *The Time Machine* (Wells) are evil and may wed warlocks to the *mor* of Mordred and Morgan le Fay in Arthurian legend. To what extent are certain sounds associated with unpleasantness and thus available for satire? Do we hear cheater, jitter, lesser in Jeeter Lester's name in *Tobacco Road* (Erskine Caldwell) and is there a sound pattern for the much-discussed names in Dickens? Or do we imagine denigrating sound elements in names which are merely realistic for rubes and rascals and no fag suggestion in Fagin and his little boys? Is there something essentially villainous about the name of Blifil in *Tom Jones* (Fielding) or is it simply that that name (perhaps even elements of such names) will always carry a tinge of the color Fielding put into them? Who will provide writers of today with a list of sound elements designed by nature or nurture for the manufacture of denigrating names in our (and other countries') language? Some writers employ plot wheels; is it possible to construct name-making wheels? Perhaps not, but it is worth investigating.
To character names we must add product names of satirical character (Tono-Bungay by Wells offers one example) and names of animals (Modestine in Travels with a Donkey by Stevenson, Platero in Platero and I by Juan Ramón Jiménez, etc.) and straighten out the distinctions between comedy and satire, whimsy and humor, and so on. This field is largely unexplored by literary onomastics. If I may pass over part of Rabbi Hillel's famous question (if not me, who?), may I ask: if not now, when?

Especially in British literature (which is, after all, "comparative literature" to us in the United States, a different culture at least in part) and in American literature (with pseudonyms from "Moziž Addums" to "Zit," as well as important factors from puritanism with its extraordinary forenames to pluralism with its kaleidoscope of surnames) the search for satire in names is perilous (art is long, life is short, decision dangerous...). Personally, I find Mound City (St. Louis) amusing; am I entitled to think of Two Mounds, setting of an American novel, as intentionally funny? One has to know a great deal about the culture before one can leave behind novels in which wordplay and satire are obvious (if subtle)—Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea and Ulysses and The Unbearable Bassington, not to mention science-fiction and other popular genres—and old-fashioned fiction (Trollope's The Warden with Sir Abraham Haphazard or Butler's The Way of All Flesh with its earnest Ernest, let alone pre-Victorian fiction with its traditions of transparent names), to launch on the search for satire (and other significance) in modern writing. Moreover, when one takes on literary onomastic study of modern writing, one ought to
leave the obvious alone and undertake more difficult tasks. I fear that when our literary onomastic colleagues do venture into the more difficult field of modern writing they far too often batten upon very easy targets; they often merely list names rather than explaining exactly how they function and waste much time at conferences detailing the plot to those who have not read the work in question. That defeats the purpose of conferences (which are to discuss papers, not just hear read aloud what might better be studied at home, with the authors) by failing to go beyond specifics to more general questions which all literary onomastics ought to be able and ready to tackle.

Now, "since we have already said everything," as Derrida wrote in "Plato's Pharmacy" in Tel Quel, "the reader must bear with us if we continue on awhile," lest I myself be accused of evading the necessity of making some general conclusions on the basis of the particulars I have adduced. I have given numerous examples—not too many, I hope—of "Peter Simple"'s onomastic art, related them to what ought to be more familiar works of fiction, certainly more traditional objects of names study than newspaper columns are, and now I must try to say something about names in satire that will have some general application for writers who make up such names and critics who examine them.

Satire combines realism and fantasy and so in some ways makes more demands upon the reader's knowledge of the real world than does fiction which undertakes to transport us wholly into an artificial world (if indeed that is really possible). The appreciation of satire, then, demands not only the agreement on what constitutes just and pro-
portionate action and belief that is the foundation of all comedy—people acting immorally or ignorantly, affectedly, eccentrically; nothing can be off centre if no centre has been agreed upon—but details of how people really do act and think, just as parody is enhanced by, sometimes totally dependent upon, a thorough knowledge of the thing parodied, just as burlesque demands concurrence on what is enough and what is too much. Satire may attack a literary target (as in parody) or a real person (as in lampoon) or a system (as in travesty), even a world (as in the utopian or dystopian novel) and may be witty or wily, gentle or vicious, outrageous in any one of a number of ways but never out of contact with the real; and therefore the appreciation of names in satire requires the reader to know more about names in real life, what they look like, what they sound like, what they mean, how they function, what their connotations and colors (as well as their denotations and details) are, than may be usual in literature, just as comedy demands more intellect than tragedy. Satire is for the aware, the alert. It cannot rely upon mindless laughter; satire must have point; its essence is what a writer in another connection called "the shock of recognition," for it makes us smile or roar with the delight of discovery, the sense of superiority of those who have "caught on."

It can also make us grin or laugh with surprise, but the satirist must keep within bounds of relevance and refer continually to our expectations of how names work in real life and in fiction: he or she—and why when male chauvinists insist that women are catty, bitchy, and so on, are there comparatively so few women satirists of import—
ance, when there are certainly enough of the second if not the very first rank to prove that satire is not, unlike (say) epic poetry, an exclusively male preserve?—he or she, I say, must get names funny, as it were, never get them "wrong." (Irony and pretended ignorance and such literary stances are quite another thing than inaccuracy or real ignorance.)

Satire, therefore, may be able to tell us more about the function of names in fiction and their relation to names in real life than can the fictive names of other literature. Most certainly the satirist is held more accountable for his choices of names than is the ordinary writer ("I had to call them something") or even the ordinary humorist ("OK, so you don't think these names are funny, but I do; it's just a matter of taste"). The satirist is more there than most other writers, for where the ordinary writer may try to slip away and let the tale unfold, drawing us by "the willing suspension of disbelief" into the world of the fiction until we experience it rather than merely read about it, the satirist is constantly (or fairly constantly) by our side: he (or she) nudges us—get that?—and calls for our approbation of his (or her) manipulation, for the work is more artifice than conventional fictional artifact, more consciously created and self-consciously savored. Some modern fiction is like some modern acting, the goal being to make it seem to be real, not "an imitation of an action" but action itself, really happening; satire is more in the old style of presenting or representing rather than being characters onstage, and it offers us (as did certain kinds of drama of the past and survivals such as no
and kabuki and so-called innovative techniques such as Brecht's Vef-
freidung or "making alien") the opportunity to applaud artifice and
meticulous manufacture (as it were), to enjoy the pleasure that the
Eighteenth Century had when, even when actors who were described as
"natural" appeared, the audiences flocked to watch actors acting. Satire
and its names and naming techniques draw attention to the maker as
well as to the target aimed at. We applaud on-target performance.

To keep us abreast of what to deplore in real life and what to
praise in satire, the satirist tips his hand. This theoretically ought
to make the criticism of names in satire either more unnecessary or
at least easier than the onomastics of any other form of literature.
If the satirist's frankness distances the reader from the fiction at
the least it ought to point the critic to the target. What happens
very often, however, is that the onomastician sees no challenge in
"easy" names (Everyman, Christian, Mr. Zero, Duessa, Willie Loman)
and so neglects to address the important matter of how "easy" names
function in works complex in other ways (and great works such as The
Faerie Queene and lesser ones such as Death of a Salesman contain more
than one kind of names) and rushes off to explain the "hard" ones
(such as Godot, Tartuffe, Vdovushkin, Sang Po, Jun-tu), and when it
comes to satire either thinks the point is self-explanatory or it
eludes the critic altogether. In my opinion, the satirist, being an
artist, dismays the critic (who ought also to be an artist but is
more often a dogmatist) most of all when he creates characters in a
single work who are more "real" than others and whose names serve
different purposes (in Shakespeare Hamlet and Fortinbras, Benvolio and Romeo, Henry V and Nym, Prospero and Ferdinand, etc.). When satirists make names pretty much all alike (as does Jonson in Volpone) the critics jump at discussing one of their favorite things: system. When the names are mixed, historical and confected, "real" and redende, discrimination and taste are involved, and though those should be the critic's stock in trade many critics are then all at sea.

When the names of satire send up things critics tend to know about (literary traditions, customary naming patterns, standard orthography, and so on) the critics are quick to comment. When the names of satire depend upon things critics ought to know about but may not know (social fashions, fads and fancies of common life, slang words and expressions that do not get into reference books) the critics are silent. In the case of "Simple," obviously the common reader grasped and enjoyed things the learned academic has to dig for, if indeed he has the wit to realize that something has in fact been buried to be unearthed. The satire in writers such as "Simple" may be on the one hand so simple that the sophisticated (and the foreigner) may miss it—or so relevant to everyday life that the critic has to know more than he usually does about that (which he may dismiss as not "high culture" and therefore beneath his notice, unworthy of expertise).

"Simple" likes to deflate pomposity and to ride his (conservative) hobby-horses and to insult crudely and sneer sneakily, to punish non-conformity and ridicule the Establishment, to push the annoying to the limit of the ridiculous, to reveal unsuspected connections and play on
new sources of scorn, to engage in wordplay for its own sake on occasion but usually to enlist it in the cause of political and social commentary. He invites the reader to be one of the in-group and doubly superior, in values and in knowledge.

"Simple" separates the sheep from the goats and tries to get the goat of those with whom he disagrees. His business is with the elect and with the damnable. He (and his sympathetic reader) are in Column A; Column B contains the object of laughter, They. If you are not on his side and he cannot win you, then you dismiss him as you dismiss all satirists who insult you, make you feel aggrieved, "go too far," are "crude" or "unwarranted" or (this is the cheapest shot) "not funny" (which puts all discussion to one side and in truth makes satire what George S. Kaufmann cynically claimed it was: what "closes on Saturday night"). None of us enjoys being denounced; only a few of us will tolerate criticism, and that usually only if it is what we define as "constructive," so satirists chiefly have to preach to the converted, or to rage and end despondent (like Swift, who was too easily described as "mad" when he was angry or "lacerated," as he put it). We are not too terribly unhappy, however, to see other people corrected, even crushed, especially groups which we seek more reason to dislike, feeling as we sometimes do uncomfortable with our prejudices. There is for most people some joy in Herabsetzung or "taking down a peg" the Others who soar. Chalk it up to jealousy as much as to righteous indignation that the wicked have prospered, or to contempt as much as to outraged justice that the base should dare to
rise. There is a kind of democratic feeling in satire, though it is
more often a weapon of the \textit{élitist} (or would-be \textit{élitist}), for the \textit{prole}
will throw a brick or give up inarticulately; it is in the hands of
conservatives such as "Simple." It must be confessed that its concept
of democracy is flawed (I should say French). The American, seeing
someone driving by in a vulgar, flashy car, traditionally has thought:
"Some day I'll have a Cadillac!" The French attitude tends to be:
"Some day that bastard will walk, just like me!" \textit{En bas}! The peculiar
history of modern Britain has cast the "Simple" people into opposition
to New Things and the simple people are in the saddle. So for once we
have an articulate underdog, and from that comes the trenchant satire
of "Simple."

This does not frequently happen, which (for my money) makes the
satire of "Simple" all the more interesting.

"Simple"'s background provides him with a sense of lost grandeur
which makes modern decline all the more infuriating. Traditionally,
English satire has bludgeoned--it's the Anglo-Saxon way, for only
\textit{dago} denouncers employ stilletti such as epigrams, aphorisms, sneakiness--but here we have in "Simple" ingenuity as great as insult and
the taste of his class for doing people in deftly, for turning what
Charles W. Morton used to call "a slight sense of outrage" into a
more or less tasteful attack on the distasteful, a reasoned battle
with the absurd, a traditionally clever riposte to the revolutionary.
The satirist, as self-appointed guardian of virtue, is of course limited
by no rules he does not want to accept, for all Anglo-Saxons must
concur that moderation in the defense of Truth is at worst immoral and at best ill-advised or inconvenient.

The satirist's job calls for someone as secure in his beliefs as "Simple"; that "Simple"-minded, you might say. Satire cannot shilly-shally; the satirist (like Prof. Irwin Corey, whose jokes are too near the bone for most of us academics to hear with equanimity) must be The World's Greatest Expert. The satirist might write (as Marya Mann puts it in the title of one of her books) More in Anger, righteously and indignant but not impossibly bitter, annoyed by human folly all around but not coldly contemptuous of mankind (Swift's fault):

For bitterness is the reaction to personal hurt, a revenge against suffering. I speak out of a full life, and my anger is directed against the sappers of this fullness in others.

The more you believe in human beings, the less you can tolerate nervous, dry-balled, tranquilizer-gulched, countdown-minded, out-of-style, slithering snakes.

"Simple" chooses a persona above such name-calling but as mean (or meaningful) in a British mode. It depends--here is one of the big problems of name study in this connection, relevant nonetheless to all onomastics in some degree--on the family jokes of that tight little island, its traditions of whimsy and punning, its "rush" from the indirectly devastating and the neat kill, its pleasure in incongruity and nonsense and reserve where other nations might substitute illogical-
ity and boisterousness, and its centuries of rock-founded superiority which allows both self-deprecation and even attacks on the lares and penates, untouchable in some other societies. The Britishness of "Simple" warns all critics of every kind of satire, but especially that which is the product of a long tradition and a tight Establishment, of the problems of breaking the code or even catching the clichés.

On the latter point, Sir Anthony Glyn (The British: Portrait of a People, 1970):

The crudest joke told and heard often before will, unless it is at somebody else's expense, always raise a smile or a laugh; the hearer dare not risk not laughing, dare not risk the accusation that he is the one without a sense of humor .... The clearest-cut examples of all are the British joke clichés which are endlessly repeated in music halls (where these still exist), at seaside concert parties, at pantomimes, even on television. It is only necessary for a comedian to mention a kipper, a mother-in-law, a bailiff, a seaside landlady, a honeymooning couple or someone with a funny accent (from some other part of Britain or, better still, from abroad) and the audience will laugh automatically.

Actually the word knickers is the most sure-fire, but the point is sound. He continues:
It is partly, of course, a conditioned reflex, a Pavlovian reaction, but more importantly, it is the fear of appearing humorless to those sitting nearby. Clichés and repetitions are an essential part of the routine, the audience can quickly get the idea that it is being told jokes, and however bad or stale the jokes may be, it is required to laugh uproariously. The tradition, judging from some passages in Shakespeare, goes back a long way, and the idea of an unfunny joke becoming funnier by repetition may well be a legacy from pre-Elizabethan humor. Then, as now, the audience was a captive one, captive to the need to laugh publicly. (Pages 196-7.)

Readers of "Simple" have no need to laugh publicly as they read, though in certain conversational circles undoubtedly it would be considered wrong not to agree with his notions or fail to admire his work. Here is an aspect of funny naming which, to my knowledge, has hitherto escaped comment: written humorous names are a different kettle of fish than spoken ones and the demands of literary satire are different from those of personal storytelling. In both, the repeated joke or running gag is supposed to gain from iteration. Some of "Simple"'s characters achieve the status of old friends by frequent appearance in his columns; the Socialist Royal Family, for instance, I found got funnier and funnier. At the same time, there are books which (unlike
Norman Douglas' *South Wind* or the stories of Ring Lardner, etc.) do not mellow with age and devices which (as e. e. cummings said in a poem of some poetic devices) are, like razor blades, definitely not to be resharpened. In satire especially, with its heydays and lulls and particularities of period and carping about ephemeral eccentricities, dating takes place rapidly, deterioration sometimes irreversibly.

But there are some things we may have noticed in "Simple" that are permanently instructive, and now, having made a lengthy article out of a single author's work, albeit in the hope of stimulating continued onomastic research and criticism in the neglected genre of satire and a more thorough and effective approach to it, I must conclude with a list of the ever useful devices of the genre, in more or less random order: irony, understatement, exaggeration, reductio ad absurdum, false naivete, unattractive sounds or associations, mockery, mimicry, parody, invective, reduction (cutting down to size), bisociation (the late Arthur Koestler's term for double association), trivializing, irreverence, bold lies and bald statements, snob appeals, whimsy, farcical elements, invective.

"Simple"'s names exhibit all these devices and make clear, as I have been at pains to demonstrate, that satire in a political columnist (for that is what he is) also demands that we know the details of the society; its fashions and traditions (in names as in other particulars), its language (including slang) and allusions (from popular sources as well as "high culture" such as literature) over a broad spectrum, the very breadth of which both flatters and tests its audience; its standard
targets of mockery and denigration (as well as the idiocyncratic opinions of its writers) as they enliven the passing show (and raise the ire of the committed social commentator); and the long tradition of charactonyms, toponyms, commercial names, and fiction in general.

Satire has in common with other literary art the task of teaching delightfully, a moral function, a serious purpose (with mere wordplay as a secondary, aesthetic, art-for-art's-sake corollary). The satirists share with writers such as Bernard Shaw (who like them said his specialty was being right when other people are wrong, of seeing clearly and speaking boldly) the conviction that many a serious word is said in jest and that, sometimes, society will permit important things to be discussed only in the guise of humor. "Simple"'s brief and frequent columns have allowed him to capitalize on two of the great strengths of satire: aptness and currency; at the same time they excuse him from two of its great pitfalls: the tendency to be bitty as well as bitchy, fragmentary, disorganized, to go on too long, fueled by anything from fun to spite. He is, as Alvin P. Kernan tells us every satirist must be, "always crowded, disorderly, grotesque" to some degree, "always indignant, dedicated to truth, pessimistic, and caught in a series of unpleasant contradictions incumbent on practicing his trade," yet perforce as a popular columnist always entertaining, aware of his public's interests as well as of his own.

These factors make this much-published and yet much-neglected satirist ideal, I think, for the onomastic critic to study if he would see satirical name coining at work in its variety and in the full con-
text which, I have argued, is too often neglected in published criticism and yet which must be comprehended if we are to see what satirical names really are and how they work.

"Simple" may be more crotchety and cantankerous than most American satirists these days, Oxfordian in his dedication ("What decent man ever refused," he asks, "to fight for a good cause because he knew it was a lost one?"), but he is certainly not without relevance even to us transAtlantics. Here is Curt Suplee of the Washington Post writing in The Dial (June 1982, "Roasting Washington," p. 19) on one of our own political satirists, Mark Russell:

Unlike the smutty titters of the Johnny Carson monologue or the adolescent hostility of Saturday Night Live, Russell's humor is serious, rational, and fueled by earnest intent. He wants to "educate people" and is frustrated when a public figure seems too vague to satirize—Arthur Burns, former head of the Federal Reserve, for example—or the subject too difficult. "I'd like to do more with issues than people—medicine, engineering, farming, chemistry; but the audience 'won't perk up, you can't grab 'em. We're a people-oriented personality culture. It has to be peppered with names."

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NOTES

Instead of elaborate footnotes, I have undertaken to present as much as I could of the British columnist of the Daily Telegraph whom Stephen Pile hailed as "one of our finest satirists." All I need say here is that the columns can be found in that periodical (starting on 18 October 1955) and that the cream of the "Way of the World" columns is conveniently collected in The Stretchford Chronicles: 25 Years of Peter Simple, first published by the Daily Telegraph (1980) and now available in paperback from Papermac (a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, London and Basingstoke, 1981). I wish to express my thanks to Messrs. Leo and John S. Reynolds of London for having brought "Simple" to my attention as a goldmine of satirical onomastics and to the directors of The Conference on Literary Onomastics (1982) for giving me the opportunity to read a paper on the topic before that group and to take up so much valuable space in this Literary Onomastics Study volume with this greatly expanded treatment of the subject, offered for whatever intrinsic value it may have and as a stimulus and guide to the study of the genre of satire by my colleagues in name study. Not only is there "a treasure house of truth, fantasy and wit" in "Simple" (as novelist Kingsley Amis has written) but in satire as a form, and I hope by indicating here how "Simple" may be profitably read to create a paradigm for the study of other names in other satirical writers that will by its usefulness excuse its somewhat inordinate length.