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Mudpies Which Endure: Onomastics as a Tool of Literary Criticism

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Less fashionable in criticism these days than the feminist or hermeneutic, as interdisciplinary as the psychological or sociological, as solid as the genre or archetypal, as strict as the rhetorical or structuralist, as scientific as the philological or linguistic, is the onomastic approach, briefly defined as

A study of the origin and history of proper names. From a Greek term meaning "names," onomastics is concerned with the folklore of names, their current application, spellings, pronunciations, and meanings...

and, in literary onomastics, with how an examination of names and the way in which they reflect or expand the author's intentions can add to our understanding and appreciation of a work of literature.

Literary onomastics helps me as literary critic (as Clive Bell would say) "to account for the degree of my aesthetic emotion" in reading. By concerning itself with the author's communication it stresses the utilitarian function of literature. That is at least as old as Horace, teaching delightfully. We seek both the "pot of message" and the skill used in making the point clearly and subtly, the thrill that comes from the mastery of technique, the poet or
maker performing (as Ferlinghetti said) "high above the heads of the audience." With literary onomastics we escape the dangers of regarding text as pretext for Marxist, psychiatric, or other theories, and consider the basic counters of literary art, the words. We see them releasing their magic. We see the writers ringing the changes on the logical and psychological significances of words, exploiting to the fullest the littera and controlling with purpose and power the intellectual and emotional resonances so as to produce reinforcing levels of meaning. We study how names, as well as other words, are suited to the structure in which they are arranged, first to the purpose, second to the nature and capacity of the likely audience. We see how names help create the characters in a work of fiction and connect them with the literary "strategy" (in the Kenneth Burkean sense), the readership and its experience, the "cultural context" and the rest of the real frame of reference. We see how names reveal the success (or failure) of the writer in balancing freedom and control, responsibility and serendipity, propaganda and art, intent and effect, the desire to play ("fooling around with words") and commitment ("no fooling"). We see how names comment upon and judge moral and political issues in fiction and what I.A. Richards calls "Badness" in literature. We see how names expose both the author's investment of self in the work and the problems arising from the fact that "the poem belongs to the public" (as Monroe C. Beardsley wrote in The Verbal Icon, 1954) and that the "intentional fallacy" is a trap. We can use onomastic inventio as one measure of those who "want wit, not words" and who fail to employ all the devices of diction, not excluding what used
to be called, so charmingly, festivitas (word-play), or we can discover to our satisfaction the verbal and psychological nuances of the names, the many meanings--Dante uses polysemous--which use all the techniques from punning to psycholinguistics.

The word poem, as something made, has crept into our discussion, and I wish to argue that literary onomastics is not very different from standard approaches to the criticism of poetry. Emerson once remarked that every word was "once a poem"; in names, words carry more than ordinary words do of enriching connotations, the freight that gives poetry its complexity and intense satisfactions. Names have (as the Hon. Gwendolyn Fairfax told John Worthing in Wilde's great comedy) "vibrations," or at least they create them or set them up in the mind of the reader. Minturno said an epigram was a particella dell' epica poesia or scrap of epic poetry in itself, and it really is a fragment with argutia, a sharp point, that makes it stick. Jonson in Timber found a whole "poem" in a single line of an epic:

Aeneas haec de Danais victoribus arma;

and he argues cogently that "a Poeme is not alone any worke, or composition of the Poets in many, or few verses; but one alone verse sometimes makes a perfect Poeme." To this I add Croce's query from his Aesthetic (1922):"If an epigram be art, why not a single word?" Consider names as miniature poems.

My point now is simply that names in literature frequently demand to be considered as if they were complete little poems, with all the richness that implies. We must see in each name all of a
poem's "cerebral phosphoresences," to use Wallace Stevens' phrase, for in names writers of skill pack many connotations and taking Emily Dickinson's advice to poets to "tell all the truth/But tell it slant" they produce little puzzles for the critic who must "by indirection find direction out."

Onomastic science, then, gives us in literary onomastics a valuable tool for the criticism of the "poetry" in names. It is a method of critical analysis that should be adopted by all critics, whether they are concerned with historical criticism or the New Criticism, Aristotelian or revisionist, Marxist or aesthetic, psycho-analytical or sociological, formalist or rhetorical criticism, the histoire des sentiments or the histoire des mentalités. Literary onomastics works equally well on the most didactic morality play or the most obscurantist modern poem, whether the names are invented or real or as general as Everyman or Mother. It brings out the system in a humour comedy in which Jonson undertakes to name all his rapacious characters after beasts and birds of prey; it explains how Hardy's "Wessex" and its various places function entirely in a world of fiction; it simplifies the points scored by a writer of farce and shows how such a man gains instant recognition for his "man of mode" Sir Fopling Flutter or servants called Foible and Mincing; it send us to the Greek to find "penis" in the name of Phlebas the Phoenician in T.S. Eliot's Wasteland and hints at a whole sexual reading of the poem; it warns the uninitiated to look up the connotations of rue de Rivoli and Bourbon Street, the Barbary Coast, Grinzing, Chelsea, Fleet Street, Cannery Row, Bath in eighteenth-century England or Continental Baths in late twentieth-century New York City. It alerts us to the unreliability of a Shamwell or a Cheatley, leads us to expect stratagems from beaux called Aimwell and Archer, instantly types Manly, Freeman,
Mark Meddle or Gnatwell, and (not so instantly) Laura in The Glass Menagerie or the protagonist of Hedda Gabler. Names assist us to keep track of the army of characters trooping through a novel by Dickens and epitomize the two-dimensional minor persons whose handles even sound right: Crumblies, Podsnap, Wardle, Pickwick, Lillywick, Scrooge, Uriah Heep, Mrs. Gamp. Sometimes the names in a literary work are as obvious as that of Christian in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress or Billy Pilgrim in Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five. Sometimes they require more work, such as that of the actor Müller-Rosé in Mann's Felix Krull or of Raynham Abbey in Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.

Sometimes names just establish social class: Aubrey Tanqueray and Sir George Orreyed, Higgen and Ferret and Prig and Snap. Sometimes they allude to history or (like Laura) to earlier literature. Sometimes they create a tone of realism or fairy tale or the impressive or the absurd. Sometimes they make mood music, for every play is like a melodrama or a movie in that words (having sound) are musical. What would Marlowe's "mighty line" (as Jonson called it) or "drumming decasyllabon" (to use Thomas Nashe's more biased, envious description) have been without the impressive polysyllables of Tamburlaine, Zenocrate, Theridamas, Techelles, Usumcasane? There is (as Marlowe says in a stage-direction but we can remark in these names themselves) "Trumpet within." Sometimes names underline allegory (as in Hawthorne -- Young Goodman Brown loses his wife, Faith) or universality (as in Ionesco's Mr. and Mrs. Smith in The Bald Soprano) or nationality or relationship (as with Gogol's Bobchinskij and Dobchinskij) or satire. Translating Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi, Margaret Ganz and I encountered two characters whose names in English should be Heads and Tails, but we undertook to help carry out Shakespeare's idea as parodied by Jarry in this early example of The Theatre of the Absurd: we called them Rosenstern and
Guilencranz. Translating Chekhov for the same volume (Mirrors for
Man: 26 Plays of the Modern Drama), I could find no way to bring
over into English the deflating "funny sound" that makes the name of
the peasant Boris Borisovich Simyonov-Pishchik amusing to the Russians.

Some other onomastic points may be lost (as some say all poetry is) in translation. That his peasant parents had hopes above their station (or, more likely, that he changed his given name when he left
Sweden for--he claims--a job as a sommelier abroad) is obvious in an
English translation of Jean in Strindberg's Miss Julie (really "Countess
Julie"). The pretentious French name for a servant works well in Swe­
dish and English. But it would be lost in a French version of the
play. Brecht loses in the German Dreigroschenoper the significance of
Macheath ("son of the heath," a highwayman) and Peachum ("rat on 'em,"
turn them into the police) but these eighteenth-century resonances of
Gay's Beggar's Opera are lost on many English-speakers by now also.

What happens to Major Major from Heller's Catch-22 (a novel slated to
have been called Catch-18, by the way, until that digit was preempted
by another novel published just before) when that comic masterpiece is
translated into languages where the military rank does not sound like
Major? Some of the joke remains: Major Major's given name is also
Major.

Criticism, as Eliot put it, cannot be autotelic. We all must
realize that just collecting and listing names for a work of literature
is not enough. Nor is it profitable, as Nicolaisen and others have
had so strongly and repeatedly to insist, to tell us that Hardy's
"Casterbridge" is really such-and-such (since it exists only in the
Wessex novels) or even about "Cairo, at the bottom of Illinois, where
the Ohio River comes in" in Huckleberry Finn. Useful to know it's
pronounced Kay-ro, even to look on a map, but it's not the Cairo of
today, not a Cairo any of us could have visited. Similarly, in The
Whisper in the Gloom by the poet who writes detective fiction as
"Nicholas Blake," the Notting Hill Gate is not the Notting Hill Gate
in London I know from personal experience.

Also, the "funny names" with which so many people begin (or even
end) their interest in onomastics are not as they seem to the solipsist
or the mere modern man. Ibsen's Gråberg (bookkeeper to Håkon Werle in
Ibsen's The Wild Duck) suggests "grab-bag" only to my immature students;
Strindberg's courtier Uren in the historical Erik XIV does not suggest
"urine" to Swedes. Even Swedes who speak excellent English, I have
found, see no such false connections, for they know how the names are
pronounced in the Scandinavian languages from which they come. Con-
versely, Poles (for example) may miss the point that Willie Loman in
Death of a Salesman is the "low man on the totem pole," just as Ameri-
cans (even those who can connect Stella with "star" and Blanche with
"white") will probably not know Stanley Kowalski's surname means "smith"
in Polish. Still the author of A Streetcar Named Desire incontestably
wants us to regard the meanings of the names, even note that Belle Rêve
plantation is only a "beautiful dream."

Drama, a form of mass communication, depends upon convention, the
"running together" of the ideas of dramatist and audience. But what
audience? Milton's "fit audience, but few" or the masses? How many
know the full significance of the names of Didi, Lucky, and Godot in
Beckett's play? As few as understand all the references in an Eliot
poem, all the obscurities in a Joyce novel? And times change: when
Latin was part of a standard education a writer could call his maid
Scintilla without sparking obscurity. When Galsworthy presents us
with "Four-in-Hand" Forsyte does he expect us to think of the
Anglo-Saxon swiðr ("strong, violent") because this character in the saga is named Swithin? How can he keep us from the red herring of "rain" (St. Swithin's Day)? The conscientious writer must consider not only what he wishes a name to convey and what it can convey in his day and age but also what misleading connotations it may have in his own language and even those into which his work may be translated.

Indeed, every work that lasts is "translated" over the centuries as cultural context changes and the language is modified in the mouths of the living. A compliment on St. Paul's cathedral ("awful and vulgar") of the seventeenth century now sounds like an insult to all but the experts.

The onomastic critic must be an expert, able to grasp both what the author intended the names to mean and what they do mean. No one can miss Caelia's three daughters (Fidelia, Speranza, Charissa) in The Faerie Queene but there are other names in that vast allegory which baffle scholars. (Do you agree that the Souldan is Philip II?) No one can mistake Eatanswill in Pickwick Papers or Arnold Bennett's Grand Babylon Hotel or Sir Novelty Fashion in The Relapse or Mrs. Ponsonby de Tomkyns in du Maurier's Punch sketches or the significant switch from Perceval le Galois to Perceval li Chaitis or from the Bible's Naïomi to the bitter Mara or the irony in Fortunato's getting bricked up in a wall in a Poe tale. Most people can see the point in the neatly-handled names in Waugh and Huxley and (with Wayne R. Kime's help) Washington Irving. But telegraphing onomastic points in novels—one thinks of Lady Dedlock in Bleak House, Strong in Erewhon ("nowhere" backwards), Charlotte Magnus, Magnus Derrick, Mr. Nireck, Sir Percival Glyde, Hester Prynne, Mr. Glowy and Mr. Toobad and Listless, the Bushes on The Prairie, etc. -- is now somewhat out of fashion. What are we to make of Nezhdanoff (Virgin Soil) or Smerdyakov (The Brothers
Karamazov) or Pushkin's Abbé Triké or Gogol's Chichikov; of Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmaidine, Esq., in Orlando or Thorbjorn Slowcoach in the saga of Gettir the Strong? Even those who see the connection of Rose with the rose-colored worms in Kafka's "A Country Doctor" or can explicate the name of Unferth in Beowulf may have trouble with these examples I cite at random. Dimmesdale (The Scarlet Letter) is easy (I think); but what of Winterbourne (Daisy Miller) or Widmerpool (in the series Dance to the Music of Time)? De Levis is obviously a rich "Levi" in Loyalties -- but what of the name Shylock? Portnoy? Finzi-Contini? The shift from Gatz to Gatsby is significant, but what is unusual about Hayraddin Maugrabin (Quentin Durward)? Is Christopher Mahon (Playboy of the Western World) a Christ-y Man, or Joe Christmas (Light in August) a real "J.C."? Jonson's Mosca carries contagion like a fly, but Count Mosca (The Charterhouse of Parma) does not. Jewel in Lord Jim has a name that makes a point, but Jade in Dragon Seed does not. What to make of Decimus Saxon and Tertius Lydgate? Probably nothing. Dirk Strove= "strove" (The Moon and Sixpence) seems unwarranted; also fiddling with Dirk Peters (The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym). Clearly we are not to use modern American slang to make something of names like Disko Troop (Captain Courageous) or Fanny Legrand (in Daudet's Sappho). If readers do, are they "wrong"?

The days of Peter Simple (Marryat) and simple Mr. Murdstone (Dickens) and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy (Jonson) are by no means over, especially in comedy. But playwrights on the whole -- exceptions like Shaw, the Royal Court dramatists, the Garcia Lorca of The House of Bernada Alba, spring to mind -- now eschew easy points like Sir Pertinax MacSycophant (Man of the World), Sir Epicure Mammon (The Alchemist), Corporal Nym (Henry V), Sir Abel Hardy (Speed the Plough), Mrs. Pyannet Sneakup (The City Wit), and Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia Languish ("as headstrong as an allegory on
the banks of the Nile" in The Rivals). When we hear of Joe Slater (Lovecraft) or Rozi (Móricz) or Crow (Ted Hughes) we must be careful not to misread. Pinter names all the characters in No Man's Land after real cricketers to defeat criticism. Instantly I start thinking of his theme of territoriality, defending the wicket (wicked?)....

Modern literary onomastics demands inventiveness and restraint, skill and taste, insight and industry, not mere listing or translating. To distinguish between Glendower and Glendoveer, to get the point of Benvolio and Malvolio we have to have one of the two kinds of knowledge to which Dr. Johnson referred: we have to know a thing or know where to find it out. And we have to know (what is seldom taught in graduate schools) when to leave well enough alone. To cope with more than 400 names in Willehalm, Charles Passage needed linguistic skills. History tells us Derrick was a hangman at Tyburn about 1600, that "Thomas Atkins" was a fictitious name used illustratively on British Army enlistment forms after 1815, how Ireland came to be the Shan Van Vocht ("little old woman" in Gaelic). But how would you locate Serjeant Ballantine's explanation of why hackney coachmen were named Jarvis or that English butlers used to be called James (whatever their names were) but Algernon's butler in The Importance of Being Earnest is called Lane as a private joke (for Wilde's publisher was John Lane)? Pistol and Pyrocles and Eustacia Vye are easy. But do you know that surveys show that Tony is "sociable," Adrian "artistic," Michael "strong," Isadore "passive," Hubert "a loser," etc.? More importantly, are you sure whether your author shared these common, current, American prejudices?

In this limited space I have been able only to touch on some of the pleasures and pitfalls of onomastic criticism and, while there are many other aspects of the subject of literary onomastics as a critical tool I should like to examine, I shall content myself with only a few more and then conclude, hoping I shall have whetted your appetite and perhaps sharpened your perceptions.
I choose as my examples now (for a variety of reasons that will become apparent) place-names in literature, personal names in literature, and what I might call plot names in literature.

My first category is place-names, and I ask: to what extent is it necessary to give the etymology of Greenwich Village, West Egg, San Francisco's Barbary Coast, Beacon Hill, Soho and SoHo, Washington Square, etc.? My answer is that etymology is generally of very little use in literary place-names. Linguists cannot discover the origin of Piccadilly but your work set in London is not concerned with that. Rather, it relies on what Piccadilly means to the reader. If a character calls it The Dilly he or she is most likely a denizen (or a student) of the underworld, probably a prostitute, female or male ("dolly boys on The Dilly" -- and "on the game"). To a Londoner, London may be The Smoke (that's where Margery Allingham got that title: Tiger in The Smoke, which also holds a suggestion of enshrouding mystery), and The East End and The West End are synonymous with "slums" and "toffs" (or "theatre"). Staying in the more fashionable West End for a moment, we note Shaftesbury Avenue, an actual street but suggesting the equivalent of a New Yorker's "Broadway," Wardour Street (as in "Wardour Street English," once synonymous with trashy antiques but now redolent of "tinsel," since the film industry has offices there), Soho (with connotations of tawdry nightlife and Bohemia -- a word the British incorrectly associated with gypsies, who came from India and neither Bohemia nor Egypt, any more than the Spanish flamencos came from Flanders), Charing Cross Road (don't tell us of ma chère reine -- what we probably need is information about its association with Foyle's and other bookshops and, more recently, suppliers of musical instruments to rock 'n' roll bands), and so on.

In America we may need to know details of the place where Louie dwells (in the song), Needle Park (in a gritty realist film about New
York), The Garden District and The Garden of Allah, Grosse Point or The Loop, Bel Air or Hollywood and Vine -- and what they meant at the time the author used these names. A locale for a story, a setting for a novel, a street address for a character, all may carry a freight of significance, which (in the best traditions of old-fashioned historical criticism) a critic must look up and (in the current traditions of the New Criticism) relate to the whole work of art. But reference books are not always helpful. Let me illustrate with a specialty of mine, the Elizabethan drama. What significance (if any) should one attach to place-names in (say) The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green? Is Bethnal Green to be translated as, for example, Kensal Green, which means "cemetery" in the line:

Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green?

What about A Chaste Maid in Cheapside? A joke, as a writer in New York in 1978 might say "A Virgin at Plato's Retreat"? "The Maid of Kent" was the mother of an English king, but what about The Fair Maid of Bristow (Bristol) or The Fair Maid of Italy, The Fair Maid of London or The Fair Maid of The Exchange? What was the reputation of The Exchange in 1602? What does a Londoner now think when you mention Kensington, Chelsea, Carnaby Street, Paddington, Bayswater, Jermyn Street, Earl's Court, Kilburn, Notting Hill Gate? The answer is respectively snobs, artists and pop boutiques, (former) main street of the peacock gear of the 'Sixties youth cult, railway station (with attendant cheap hotels), tourist hotels, expensive shops (but also an infamous turkish bath described in an underground guide as "only for collectors of Edwardiana"), Australians and sex, Irishmen, and (only recently) riots. These are buzz words, harder to locate than Harley Street (medical "consultants") and 10 Downing Street (prime minister's residence) and Chequers (prime minister's
house) and Grosvenor Square (United States embassy).  

No reference book permits you to look up Drydock Country or Passy or Hampstead. No one can keep entirely up-to-date on this sort of thing, yet if a novelist tells you his character was "hanging out in the Christopher Street bars" he is telling New Yorkers, at least, a good deal about the character's sexual orientation (see the magazine Christopher Street, a title suggesting a lifestyle, like Mayfair, Rive Gauche, etc.). Wentworth and Flexner's Dictionary of American Slang (1960, first in the field) defines Hell's bells but not Hell's Kitchen. We need a book that will, on historical principles, define Lower East Side and East Village and Mentone and Scarborough, too. Eric Partridge's Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (1961) defines Seven Shilling Beach (Sydney, Australia) but only comes as close as Seven Dials raker (harlot) to explaining Seven Dials in Victorian days was an infamous London thieves' kitchen.

In time South Bank, which now means museums, concert halls, the ugly new National Theatre, may mean something else. To Shakespeare's Londoners it meant theatres outside the control of the Puritan burghers of The City. In Victorian times it meant "the Surrey side," and transpontine melodrama. Once The Tower meant death or imprisonment. Now it means tourist. Today Petticoat Lane is a name familiar to London's visitors to outdoor markets, but 125 years ago it would have meant second-hand shoe-makers' lasts for sale. What did Berlin mean to Isherwood, Venice to Mann's Aschenback, North Africa to Gide, San Francisco to Babel? Your reference books may note Gotham but can they give you the feel of Central Park West? You may not need help with Fleet Street (newspapers) or Grub Street (hack writers), Wall Street (finance) or Easy Street (success), but The Bowery is passing from "Skid Row" to "punk rock" just now. Some
day readers may need to know of such things, just as they need to understand names like *Araby*, *Prufrock*, the *Old State House*, *Dorian*, *Hogmanay*, the *Crab* (*Cancer in Spenser's Epithalamion*), *Urizen* (*"your reason" in William Blake's Cockney*?). Every work of art (says Coleridge) has a reason why it is "thus and not otherwise" in each particular; every short story (says Poe) has an economy that demands that everything tend toward the one preconceived effect; so every title, every characteronym, every place-name (real or "fictitious," though in fiction we repeat that *everything is fictitious*) is a little poem calling for explication of denotation and connotations.

We need a *Dictionary of the Literary Onomastics of Place-Names*.

To move on to a special problem of personal names in literature, one not covered by the dictionaries of fictional names, I draw your attention to modern trends that avoid fictive names that "sound phony" or too clearly betray the intrusive author in this age of Realism. What about *Tess* and *Adam*, *Tom* and *Daisy*, *Father Holt* and *Mrs. Bennett* and "Peachy" *Carnahan* and *Brutus Jones* and *Tom Sawyer* and *the Grandissimes*? What are we to read into "simple, ordinary" names? These present special problems.

As students of mine point out (critics never do), authors have to call their characters *something* (or attempt universality with *The Father*, *The Lover*, *The Girl*). We are taught to look, as it were, for bumps on the cortex which may indicate something in the nucleus, some emphasis in the fiction which hints at deeper truth or significance. It takes judgment (not the rules students demand) to distinguish between what is reading out of a work and what is reading in, what is there as a result of the writer's conscious intention and what is accidental or imagined by the reader.¹² Ms. Lurie in *The War Between the Tates* presumably chooses the surname to make a catchy title and
does not want it to make other points in the novel. True, the careful writer (and I believe we must give the writers the benefit of the doubt even in this time past Kerouac, to whose writing Truman Capote reacted strongly: "That ain't writing, that's typing!") may be using simple names from real life or be loading them in a roman à clef or have chosen them because they "just sounded right" (for reasons which even his psychiatrist might not be able to winkle out of him, reasons he doesn't even know) but he should know (though he may not stop to think about it) that in Britain Fred and Charlie suggest "losers," that in America Dick and Peter have sexual overtones, that Irving, Norman, Neil, Morton, Mortimer, Seymour, Stuart, even Sidney are thought of by some people at least as "Jewish" names. When Philip Roth in Goodbye, Columbus gives us Brenda Patimkin and Neil Klugman he is making a point about "secular Jews" assimilating via WASP given names. (Presumably the alteration of surnames represents a later stage, as when the Greenbaum's drop the baum.) When Tennessee Williams in (Eccentricities of a Nightingale -- new title of Summer and Smoke) calls his heroine Alma, there's a lot going on, one hopes and trusts not more than Williams is aware of.

Alma came to popularity as a feminine name in the last century after the battle of Alma in the Crimean War (1854). It got publicity on pub signs. Spenser had an Alma, the Lady of the House of Temperance, in The Faerie Queene but the general public doesn't know things like that. Williams' Alma helpfully explains that "it's the Spanish for 'soul,' but what the name really shows is that Alma, thirty-ninth in popularity among girls' names in 1900 in the US, enjoying a little vogue in the 'Twenties but out of the top fifty by 1925, would have been considered a little different (eccentric?) in a small Southern
town when Williams' character was born. It is Latin (as in alma mater, "bounteous mother," used by Romans for certain goddesses but in America carrying only the idea of one's college or university) but it is as more than a dead word that it works for Tennessee Williams. Alma is a soulful, sensitive, unusual person.

So far as I know, no one has yet studied how personal names can help an author to suggest religion (Moishe, Kevin, Calvin, Wesley), race (Washington Jones would "sound black" to most Americans, as would Black Muslim names; to the British Clyde sounds West Indian, despite Scottish origin), age (Martha and Violet are long out of fashion; Norma, Alfred, Herbert and Warren were probably born before 1930; Shirley may date from Charlotte Bronte's novel of 1849 or, more likely, from Shirley Temple, a film star who like Debbie Reynolds popularized a name for a while which then went quite out of fashion). A name may bear social stigma (for the 'Seventies Leslie A. Dunkling in First Names First lists as British lower class Stephen, Jason, Gary, Kevin, Lee, Craig, Carl, Wayne, Scott, Shane, Barry, Dean -- many of which score different points in America). A name may convey strength (Michael, Brad, Buck, but not Percy, Elmer, or Adrian), even sexual ambiguity (Evelyn, Kay, Lee, and for some reason no one seems to be able to explain Bruce). I am not arguing (with Roger Price, the creator of "droodles") that you can spot a Leonard or a Lois or a Myrtle or that all girls named Linda are pushovers. But incontestably the public has a stereotype for Michael and a predictable reaction to Samantha or Gillian or Edna (a literary invention, like Ramona and Lorna, which once caught on) and it behooves a writer to be aware of that. And a critic too.

Reference books help us with Dr. Heidegger and Dr. Jekyll, Mlle.
La Rue and Mde. Delfine, Nimbus Desmit and Natty Bumpo, Casper Goodwood and Melanie Hamilton, Slim Girl and Ikkemotubbe, Esther Gay and Fred Grey and Dorian Gray, La Perichole and Mde. Saratoff. We need little help with Hautboy and Standard in Melville, even that Scarlett woman in Gone With the Wind. But we need more help with John and Mary and Gladys and Alexander. Why Alexander Portnoy? Why Clark and Debbie? What would a Lamont Cranston or a George Brent have to be called today? What's an effective name for a detective in a wheelchair? one over 250 pounds? a Jewish divorcee of 38 who moves to Santa Barbara from Long Island? Why? To hell with George = "farmer," because that's not at all what George means today. Does it fit Martha's scholarly, historian husband? If so, to what extent does it echo the name of Hedda's historian husband? Elmer has no lexical meaning but it has an aura about it. Writing Elmer Gantry today, one would have to recognize that Elmer (once as macho as Clarence) hasn't got enough force for the character, and change it. (See the dictionary for gantry. That's easy.)

One can use a dictionary for Foible or Dandiprat. Collins, if you use the best dictionary, you'll find suggests "bread-and-butter letter," but it follows that egregious Collins in Pride and Prejudice and does not precede him. Foreign dictionaries will assist with Hrothgar, Gunhilda, Autolycus, and explain perhaps that Ascanius was changed by Virgil to Julius to compliment his patron (from the Julian gens). One must be careful to get the name as the creator wrote it: for example, the innkeeper in Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem (from which we have already noted two characters) has come down to us as Boniface14 but was clearer in its original form: Bonnyface. One must use a dictionary of the correct language, otherwise one will never know why a nag is
Rosinante (the horse that before Don Quixote found it was a nag). Dictionaries of surnames may possibly be useful but it takes ingenuity to equate Ezra Mannon with Agamemnon and you'll never see why Hew Makeshift is the proverbial lightfingered tramp until you find Tusser's Hundreth Good Points of Husbandrie (an obscure book of 1557). To understand Andrew Undershaft you need to know a bit about steamtrain construction (how the wheels are connected) and then you look up Andrew only to discover that he was crucified on a cross shaped like an X, is patron saint of Scotland, has a name that "means" so-and-so (forget it) and that in the Middle Ages Andrew was the common name for a manservant (whence Merry Andrew). Any help? Suppose your novelist notes that his Jeremy diddles. He may be pointing you toward Jeremy Diddler in Kanny's farce Raising the Wind (1803) and he may never have heard of it. Certainly a translation of the name from the Hebrew is not going to be useful, nor will the comment of Dunkling that it is "most used in the mid-1970's in the U.S.A. and Canada" nor the fact that in New York (along with Jason and Gloria) it's "Jewish." A characteronym can be one of those redende Namen beloved of Teutonic Professoren in what it suggests as well as what it says. The point of Marty's name in Paddy Chayevsky's television play (and subsequent film) is that he is just an ordinary guy -- and the -y slightly belittles him, slightly endears him to us. Ralph Cramden in The Honey-mooners (seemingly as indestructible on television as commercials) has a WASP, lower-class name. His friend, who works in the sewer, is Ed Norton, rather an old-line English name -- and his relationship to Ralph is established partly by the fact he calls Cramden by his first name (Ralph) and Cramden calls him by his surname (Norton). Cramden's wife calls him Ed. Her name is Alice. She had to be called something. Forget Alice in Wonderland -- maybe, just maybe, you can do something with
"Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire." I doubt it.

In Dick Tracy there is the idea of a detective tracing persons and in the naughty film Fun with Dick and Jane adult playing with the names in children's primers. The John Doe of one culture, however, may run afoul of unintended "vibrations" in another, even another culture speaking the same language (more or less). Consider Flash Gordon. Gordon is strong, WASP. Flash suggests quick. But in Australia (as in Cockney slang, common enough Down Under) flash = "to expose oneself sexually," exhibitionism. So Flash Gordon in the antipodes is Speed Gordon. (And in the US pornoflix, Flesh Gordon.) There's always going to be someone reading Dick and Jane as "penis" and "plain Jane," but when adverse reaction is powerful and predictable, one fixes things. Presumably my reaction to the names of Neil Simon's Odd Couple (Oscar and Felix, suggesting Oscar Wilde and cattiness) may help to explain that the two men living together are not gay. Why call them Oscar Madison and Felix Unger? Actor Jack Klugman is obviously no WASPy Madison (nor a suave advertising man) and actor Tony Randall is not by any stretch of the imagination of even distantly-German origin. But then the characters were originally cast in the stage version.... And so on. There are many factors at work. "Hard names" (Cerberus, Toby Philpot, Nassauer, Dicky Sam, Matalas, Sam Spade) are really easy: at the least, when you do get the right answer, you hear (as Yeats said) the click of a box, a finality. The methods of discovery are similar for Widow Blackacre, John Pitcher, Azuma-zi, Sherlock Holmes, Lord Greystoke and the village of Greymarch. But every Tom, Dick, and Harry (as in The Trouble with Harry) may present the knottiest sort of critical problem, that which involves sensitivity, intuition as much as ingenuity.
The "local color" names chosen to fit into the historical period of the setting are fairly easy to handle. But we need to know of naming systems and naming traditions at various periods and in various places. We expect "American names" in American novels, different ways of referring to the same person in Russian novels. We ought to be aware of the significance of role names: does this character call himself Professor or Doctor, does that call his own wife Mother? We should note affectionate diminutives (Nevill Forbes' Russian Grammar tells us Russian diminutives express "affection, politeness, and good humour") and other ways of using names to underscore relationships.

We must know some maids and manservants were addressed by forenames, others by surnames, depending upon their rank in the household; that the cook was always Mrs., even if never married (a point which confused American TV watchers of Upstairs, Downstairs). We should know Mr. and Mrs. Bennett are being conventional, not unloving, in using titles to address each other. We should know how a Lord David differs from a Lord Elgin. We should know British Army officers are not being childish when they use childhood nicknames (Boney, Boy) and that Americans may use given names before they are intimates. We should know the etiquette of families and businesses in various countries. We should know what Judge Brack is up to with "Mrs. Hedda" (and how Norwegian's two ways of saying you makes the point better), why we get a chorus effect in The Father (Swedish servants address the master in the third person), why it is unusual for a headmaster to call his student Peter.

I've necessarily bombarded you with many examples. Let me expand one. Returning to that ordinary mystery novel, The Whisper in the Gloom, we find suspense built around a villain with firearms and an American accent. (He turns out to be an ex-"G" Man, though we wouldn't call him that in
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1977.) He is known as Elmer Steig, which the author comments upon as an "American-sounding name." Later he is Elmer J. Steig (the middle initial very unBritish) and finally it transpires he's Jameson Elmer. The point? If a British author introduces an American character, an "American-sounding name" is as essential in the novel as an American-sounding accent in a play or a film. Seeing ourselves through foreign eyes, we may ask: what is an "American-sounding" name? T.S. Eliot offers J. Alfred Prufrock, American pompous; Eugene O'Neill, Eben Cabot, New England old-line American. Peter De Vries gives us many humorous American names, as clearly "American" as Leopold Bloom is un-Irish. The general public is at least vaguely aware of name traditions: anyone can see that Bubbles La Trine and Her Educated Sheepdogs parodies names in vaudeville and music hall, that Marcus Welby fits a doctor, and that Ms. Scarlet Schwartz was born about the time of Gone With the Wind to non-religious American-Jewish parents who had never read Stendhal and would see no joking reference to The Red and the Black. (To them Schwartz, quite rightly, does not suggest "black").

How good is your own ear for names and what Rudnicky17 vaguely called their "quality"? If, for instance, you haven't read Anthony Burgess' Tremor of Intent, what can you tell us of "Sebastian Jagger"? Read the novel and check your guess. How adept are the authors you read at naming? Dickens? Anqus Wilson? William Burroughs? Vladimir Tendryakov? Tom Wolfe? John Barth? Pyncheon?

The name once chosen, how does it function in the text? We have spoken of the drums and trumpets in Marlowe and many another poet has sought "un nom bien doux, fait pour la poësie." To see what a name can accomplish, try reading a Poe poem and substituting "the beautiful Gwendolyn Glotz." Note how one poet uses allegorical names, another
puns, another allusions, another manufactured names. Note how novelists (Thackeray or Fitzgerald or Dickens) use names to sketch in quick characterizations when throngs appear, say at a party. In the first line of Coleridge's greatest poem there may be three orthographic inaccuracies, but "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan" has power -- and calling the sacred river Alph produces effects that Alf (or Fred) would not achieve.

Someone ought to study how strings of names are used, in Thomas Wolfe, in Stephen Vincent Benét, in more talented writers, such as Shakespeare:

Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words --
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester....

Consider what various poets can do with:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chimborazo</th>
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<tr>
<td>Uroncon the City</td>
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<td>Don John of Austria</td>
<td>Granchester</td>
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<td>Lenore</td>
<td>Sir Beelzebub</td>
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<td>Dagobert and Peregrine and I</td>
<td>Apeneck Sweeney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Shakespeare and Praxitiles</td>
<td>0, my America, my New Found Land!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land of Abraham Lincoln and Lydia E. Pinkham</td>
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What did you see in Palestine?
Kill Devils Hill at Kitty Hawk
Talking of Michelangelo
West-running Brook
Pale Galilean

Onomastics experts will recognize the passages concerned. Names energize the verse of Whitman and Ginsberg, reverberate in Pound and Eliot, take fire in Shakespeare and Yeats, make Under Milk Wood (set in the Welsh village which is bugger-all spelled backwards -- and bugger all without their magic) a mini-masterpiece. And there is a poetry of
prose as well: Mr. Murdstone sounds in the imagination. So do Dingley Dell, Martin Chuzzlewit, Edwin Drood. The Castle of Otranto and The Mysteries of Udolpho wail and whisper and The Moonstone has an ominous echo. American authors are good too: the names in James fall mainly on the right planes.\(^{19}\)

We have mentioned De Vries, who strikes a humorous note with puns in names, but humor depends on how the pun functions. We have puns in Biblical names such as Issac (laughter), Adam (earth), Saul (desire), Peter (rock). In fact, Professor James Brown (\textit{PMLA} LXXI, 1956,14-26) lists eight types of puns (and does not, I think, exhaust the possibilities). We must understand how the names function, not simply what they "mean." In \textit{The Odyssey} the hero is asked his name by The Cyclops and (believing in name magic as much as did God, who would only reveal Yaweh, "I Am," not His name) says he is Outis, which is to say "no somebody," nobody. Later The Cyclops is attacked by "nobody"! Virgil in \textit{The Aeneid} changes the traditional Elissa to Dido, a "giving" woman.

Names, therefore, can do more than characterize (Volpone, Lazarillo, Sir Gudgeon Credulous, Leach) or set a tone (Clay Modelling, Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, or the German Unknown Soldier, Anonymous Boche). To continue with some examples from classical literature which may be less familiar than British, American, and other modern literatures we have been citing, let us turn briefly to the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. From the Greeks, an epic and a play from each of the three great tragedians; from the Romans, \textit{The Aeneid}. We shall add the Greek "historian" Hesiod to suggest the importance of names in myth and folklore.\(^ {20}\) In \textit{The Odyssey} the hero's name suggesting "I learn by suffering" adumbrates the plot. Odysseus is concealed on the island of Ogygia, where he is forgotten for seven
years, by Calypso. Her name hints at "hidden." In Oedipus Tyrannus, the name of Sophocles' hero is derived from ὠξείνος ("swollen foot") for his parents, fearing the prophecy that he would murder his father Laius and marry his mother Jocasta, exposed him on a hillside, with his feet bound. The bonds were broken, he fulfilled the prophecy, and he destroyed himself in his search for the truth -- and the second aorist ὀίδα can be translated as "I know" ("I have come to know"). In the Heracles Mad (to translate Euripides' title) the name of the hero derives from the Greek for "persecutions of Hera" (the goddess), and it is in meeting the challenges she offers (we call them "the labors of Hercules") that Heracles established himself as a great man. In the Agamemnon of Aeschylus we meet Helen (who sparks so much trouble) and her name means "destruction." In The Aeneid the voyagers are looking for the western land (Hesperia) and cannot for a time locate Italy because they know not what name to call it by. Finally, in Hesiod, we encounter Pandora on whom have been lavished "all gifts," though her box when opened brings confusion.

One hopes that literateurs can be persuaded that naming is much more than "the simplest form of characterivation," a kind of vivifying, animizing, individuating," a form of characterizing economy." Warren R. Maurer was preaching to the converted when he wrote in Names XI (1963) that we must consider "well-chosen character names to be an integral part of a work of art" but we must continue to stress that, and over the last 15 years the literary onomasticsians, in these institutes, in journals, in other ways have spread the gospel to the wider world of literature. We have begun to convince the critics that Philip="lover of horses" or a footnote on vines attached to Madame Eglantine or "identification of the original of Christminster as Oxford" or a summary statement that the names in a work of literature are "amusing" or "inventive" or "effective" or
"borrowed from the old romances," etc., are insufficient, to say the least. This (as a critic once said of the poetry of Wordsworth, with far less justification) will not do. It is time to go beyond vague comment that the names in a work are "unusual" or many or few and to pay more attention to how the names function in the work of art, whether they have "meanings that can be looked up" or not. This involves a whole linguistic and cultural context and factors such as the psychological, the sociological, and historical, more taxing than simple taxonomy. Names require serious and sensitive handling. And names are necessary: even Dogpatch's unnecessary mountain had a name (Onnecessary Mountain).

I think it remarkable that at this late date we should still have to argue our literary colleagues into adding literary onomastics to their armamentaria of criticism. It is also remarkable that so ancient a discipline -- and Antisthenes as long ago as four centuries before Christ wrote that "the beginning of all instruction is the study of names" -- should still be of practical modern use. In this essay I have tried to argue a few points which I trust have not been obscured by a multiplicity of examples, but I think the specifics enliven the argument, and I recall what Addison wrote in The Spectator in 1712: "There is nothing in nature more irksome than general discourses, especially when they turn chiefly upon words." I hope to have encouraged believers and converted doubters, for literary onomastics is a sharp, handy, multipurpose tool of criticism and we all need all the help we can get as we approach with all due reverence and all possible skills the critical examination of literary art, art which Cyril Connolly so movingly called (in The Condemned Playground, 1945) "man's noblest attempt to preserve Imagination from Time, to make unbreakable toys of the mind, mudpies which endure...."

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FOOTNOTES

1Harry Shaw, Dictionary of Literary Terms (1972), seems to omit literary onomastics unless "application" is extended to cover this.

2Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetae;
   Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitae. -- Ars Poetica.
   Of course Aristotle, whom Ben Jonson called, "the first accurate critic and truest judge," in the Poetics stressed dianoia (thought) and said literature captured and conveyed wisdom.

3M.H. Abrams (The Mirror and the Lamp) sees criticism as related to one of four things: the world ("universe") - mimetic theory; the work - objective theory; the artist as maker -- expressive theory; the audience - pragmatic theory.

4Tennessee (Thomas Lanier) Williams' sister was Rose and there are indications in the text she may have so appeared in drafts ("blue roses," etc.) but in the final version of the play she is Laura, for she is the inspiration of the poet Tom (as Laura de Noves) was the inspiration of Petrarch. She is connected with laurels and fame. Hedda, married to George Tesman as the play opens, should be Hedda Tesman, but she is more the late General Gabler's daughter than she ever will be the academic George Tesman's wife.

5"Lucky" Felix discovers backstage that the glamorous matinee idol is a simple base peasant ("miller") whose reality has been distorted by the flattering lights of the stage "rose-colored" glasses also being adopted by the audience who in what Coleridge would term their "willing suspension of disbelief" participate gladly in their own deception). Thus
Felix learns one more important fact about being a confidence man. In the English novel, Meredith has the family reign over 'em from Raynham Abbey and the town below the great house is Lobourne, for there the low-born live. Similarly names score points of character and plot in such writers as Thackeray, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Heller, Anthony Powell, Anthony Burgess, E. M. Forster (whose Mr. Bons is "good things" in French and snob spelled backwards), etc.

6Hawthorne also changed real names to avoid misinterpretation: the man on whom his preacher in The Minister's Black Veil was based was a Mr. Moody.

7In Shakespeare's time the Anglo-Saxon for "take" was still remembered.

8Clearly the British reverberations from the name Soho were not sought by the real-estate managers who saw commercial profit in creating an image, via a name, for Soho (the New York loft area South of Houston Street). We note that a name may have different connotations in different places, as Soho itself has had in different periods. Derivation from "Soo hoo" is useless.

9In The Whisper in the Gloom (1957, given currency by a 1977 reprint) Blake says it's called "The Hill" by locals. In 1977 it is not.

10To discover if that's what Lady Bracknell is referring to in her mention of potential "riots in Grosvenor Square" one has to check the date of the embassy and of the play. Even if Wilde did not mean it in the last century, however, today's audience in London has that element in their response. To say we must "forget" what the author did not or
could not mean is like Tolstoi's advice: "When you step on cracks don't think of a white bear."

11 Thomas Love Peacock refers to Gotham in *Nightmare Abbey* (his use of names is hilarious) and D.C. Browning's Everyman's *Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs* (1961, reprinted 1965) explains a proverb by noting that "Gotham was proverbial for folly." O. Henry knew that when he called New York City (Babylon-on-the-Hudson) Gotham. Did the creators of Superman want the idea of "folly" in it when they created *Gotham City*? And "the wise men of Gotham" remind us of "the wise men of Chelm"....

I should just like to mention in a footnote that we need more study of the names of things in literature. Why *Rosebud* for that sleigh, to what effect? In *Lord Jim*, the difference between the name of the ship (Patna) and the island (Patusan) is only the two letters *us*, as in the words of Conrad's narrator, Marlow: "one of us," a major point of the book. Was Roy Rogers quick on the *Trigger*? What about *Gort* for a robot's name (why not *John Galt*) or *C3PO* and *R2D2*? I see *Hal* from the letters just before *IBM* but I wonder if I'm missing something (say) in *Star Wars*. Would it fit in with my theory that the Guinness character's name hints at *cannabis*...?

12 I realize that there is a school of critics who ferret out what they consider to be the author's unconscious intention (which isn't at all the same thing that bedevils the conscientious artist, which is to say the unintended effects, even those feared but not forestalled). This, however, is no part of the college student's job, which is (as I take it) to be no more than being receptive to what was sent. Of course readers can and will add to the communication significances wholly or partly unexpected, the result of their private and personal experience.
But one must grasp what the author meant before attempting to enrich it with personal reactions. The text's intention (Poe's "poem per se") comes first. Sentences first, verdict afterwards. Ripples, sure. But what is the nature of the rock dropped into our pools, and what was the nature and the nature of the act of the one who dropped it? We are "into" literature, one hopes, not the psychoanalysis of the absent "patient."

13 We may use Williams as a convenient example of literary onomastics, for although his cast in I Can't Imagine Tomorrow consists of One and Two, in general he uses names consciously and well. We think of Chance and Heavenly in Sweet Bird of Youth, Rosa delle Rose in The Rose Tattoo, Jonathan Coffin (Nonno) in The Night of the Iguana, Dog Hamma in Orpheus Descending, Sebastian in A Streetcar Named Desire (where the name of the New Orleans district fitted so well the theme of the play — I recently saw a bus in Norfolk, Virginia, marked Cavalier Manor), Brick and Big Daddy in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and so on. Only two of the characters in The Purification have names (Luísa and Elena): the rest are The Father, The Mother, The Son, The Judge, etc. In The Glass Menagerie the author (whose name is Thomas Lanier Williams) appears as Tom. The surname is Wingfield, aristocratic, Southern, WASP. His mother is Amanda ("to be loved") and his sister Rose is Laura (as we have noted above). The Gentleman Caller turns out to have a local habitation and a name (as Shakespeare would say) when he ceases to be a concept -- the long-expected something that one lives for -- and materializes as Jim O'Connor. I think Jim equals friendliness, causalness, not the gym of the (former) high-school athlete. O'Connor means he is common Irish, which Amanda equates with drunkenness and irresponsibility.
(But she tries to get him for Laura anyway, for she thinks him to be Laura's last chance and she is charmed by his blarney).

14In fact, the word has entered the dictionary as a noun, as have the names of other dramatic characters: Romeo, Lothario, etc.

15That's as a surname. Ruth Gordon (Jones) (b. 1896) suits it perfectly as an actress. Bruce Gordon (b. 1919) and C. Henry Gordon (1884-1940) were both Hollywood heavies (but what can you expect from a Bruce and C. Henry?) and a number of British stars born with the name stayed with it. But as a given name it's bold (Gordon Lightfoot the singer).

16This name is echt Brooklyn College to me. (My joke name for a BC student is Genghis Cohen). At BC -- true story -- a black student named Herman Schwartz was asked by a registrar: "What kind of a name is Schwartz for a black boy?" Typically American (I think) is the mixture of English/Italian (Edward Paolella, not Eduardo), Irish/German (Kevin Kraus), Linda Levine, etc. Looking for a pseudonym under which to publish a French cook book, Myra Schwartz came up with Colette Black. Americans do not (unlike the French) demand a limit on acceptable given names and do not see (hooray for them!) any reason why given surnames should derive from the same country or language. This proves that Americans don't think of Linda as "Spanish for 'pretty'" but as a name, a name that (to American ears only) goes will with Lipschitz, Lorenz, Luana, or Jones.

17J. B. Rudnyckyj, "Function of Proper Names in Literary Work," Stil und Formprobleme in der Literatur (Heidelberg, 1959), 378-383, offers a typology of functions:
I. Relevance to content:
   a) relevance to the quality of literary characters (meaningful names) (redende Namen);
   b) relevance to the place of action (couleur locale);
   c) relevance to the time of action (couleur historique).

II. Relevance to form.
Eugene Green of Boston University is the author of a better, more extensive monograph, "On the Uses of Names in Literature," which I have had the privilege of reading but which I do not quote because it has not yet been published. Anyone interested in literary onomastics should read Professor Green's article when it is printed.

18Two of many works on names in poetry are Max Eastman's Enjoyment of Poetry (especially pp. 25-30) and R.W. Chapman's Portrait of a Scholar (especially pages 23-28). Those are 10 pages to introduce a vast topic, well worth reading.

19More skill is being shown in the names of TV characters (now much researched before adopted, for their power to create image is recognized). In films we get (say) Robin Turner in Outrageous! A transvestite's name: Robin is sexually ambiguous (in the U.S. and Canada) and Turner is fine for one who turns from one sex to another.

20One whole "fair field full of folk" (as Piers the Ploughman would say) that is of particular interest to me I cannot undertake to outline in so brief a study as this, and that is names in folklore and the folklore of names. The importance of names in the folk ballads has been studied by Nicolaisen and others. The importance in fairy tales might well commence with Rumpelstiltskin. The onomastics of folklore still awaits, however, its St. Thomas Aquinas to plumb its levels of signi-
ficance, its Isidore Hispaniensis to gather encyclopaedic material, its specialist critics who will give this rich and revealing material the same careful study that has been lavished on (say) the Biblical names in Milton (Shawcross), the Explicator articles on various individual literary works, the articles in Names and the papers of this Institute. If M.H. Abrams is correct in his assertion that "the pragmatic view, broadly conceived, has been the principal aesthetic attitude of the Western world," and if critics tend to talk more about Life than Art ("criticism of life"), then it is surprising we have still to unearth from the deep mines of folk literature and folk tradition the very valuable and very rewarding and useful treasures preserved in names.

21Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (1949), 226-227. The name Felicity, for example, in Flaubert's short masterpiece "A Simple Heart," does far more than vivify, animate, individualize, characterize. Recent articles have shown that Poe's Morella, or Brownings's Clara de Millefleurs, or Milton's Manoa, or Wright's Dalton, are names that demand and deserve more than passing interest and reach outside the work. There are "Joycean echoes" in Waiting for Godot, "ambiguous names" in the plays of Seán O'Casey, and many other onomastic problems from James' "kind of onomapoeitic toning" to the secrets of romans à clef more subtle than the film The Greek Tycoon wherein Tomasis=Onassis, Cassidy=Kennedy, Matalas=Callas, etc.