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Reviews

Harrap's Book of Nicknames and Their Origins: A Comprehensive Guide to Personal Nicknames in the English-Speaking World. By Basil Freestone. London: Harrap, 1990. Pp. xii + 371. Cloth, £12.95.

There have been some rather unsatisfactory books of nicknames in recent years. One is reluctant to repeat the thumbs-down, but one cannot honestly overlook *Nicknames* (1975), Vernon Noble's fairly chaotic compilation, or *A Dictionary of Nicknames* (1984), L. G. Pine's idiosyncratic and error-prone collection. True, Noble gave his name a worthier showing in *A Who's Who of Nicknames* (1985), co-authored with Nigel Rees, which was more like the real thing. But we have had to wait till now to get what is possibly the most satisfactory selection of nicknames to date, even though I have a few reservations, which I will duly outline in their place.

Basil Freestone has provided a total of around 5,000 nicknames of historical, literary, media, and other celebrities (some not so celebrated, in fact). Each entry is duly annotated, with in most cases an indication of the nickname's origin, as well as a frequent separate gloss on the source bearer of the name where it was borrowed or adopted.

The annotations include dates, nationality and occupation of nicknamee, a few words on his or her contribution to society and role in general, and, where appropriate, a note of the person's real name if different from the one familiar to us. Independent glosses also comment further on the nickname itself, explaining allusions, punning references, and the like.

Here is a typical entry:

> GRACE DARLING OF AMERICA, THE. Ida Lewis, Mrs. W. H. Wilson (1842-1911), keeper of the Lime Rock Lighthouse, Rhode Island, who saved many lives from wrecks. • Grace Horsley Darling (1815-42), with her father, rescued survivors from a wreck in dangerous seas (1828) off the Farne Islands, Northumberland.

As can be seen, the detail and dating are full enough. In the case of some entries it is almost *too* full, so that the information provided is somewhat superfluous to the basic account. This seems to apply particularly for sports personalities, where Freestone cannot resist adding details of points scored, records broken, matches won, and the like. It is good to know that *Fiery Fred* is Frederick Sewards Trueman (1931-), cricketer for Yorkshire and England, and that he earned the sobriquet through his fast bowling. But do we really need to know that he was the first bowler to take 300 Test Match wickets, and that by the end of 1965 he had taken 307 at an average of 21.57? I think not, on balance. In fact, I wonder whether Mr. Freestone is not slightly pulling the padding of the book over our eyes when he goes into such detail. However, I could be wrong: he may simply be a keen cricketer or Yorkshire supporter or loyal Fiery Fred fan.

A system of cross-references (not explained anywhere, but fairly readily deducible) refers the reader back to the earliest alphabetical entry of a name for its fullest documentation. When we learn that Mr. Justice Avery was one of a number of judicators dubbed *The Hanging Judge*, we are cross-referred to the entry *Acid Drop*, where we discover his full name, dates, and aristocratic title, as well of course as the reason for this name.

Some celebrities have an impressive line-up of nicknames. Britain's Margaret Thatcher, for example, has held the prime-ministerial reins long enough to acquire no less than twenty, all listed under the first. Here they are: *Attila the Hen, Ayesha, Blessed Margaret, Boadicea*, the *Cold War Witch, 'Er Indoors, Gladys Hacksaw, Gloriana, H. M*, the *Iron Lady*, the *Mekon*, the *Milk Snatcher, Miss Floggie*, the *Plutonium Blonde, Rhoda the Rhino, She Who Must Be Obeyed, Snobby Roberts, TBW, Tina*, the *Westminster Ripper*. She has thus served as an excellent foil to journalistic wit. (Well, she would, wouldn't she?) Of course, it is extremely doubtful how many of these names will be preserved for posterity; such is the transient nature of many nicknames, especially media-devised ones. But they are genuine enough while they are here, and are valid as long as she is in power, so have a perfectly legitimate right to be recorded here.

I have two general criticisms of Mr. Freestone's book, and one or two small individual ones.My first rather big beef is that a fairly high proportion of nicknames are not explained. We are not told, for example, why astronaut Edwin Eugene Aldrin, Jr., was called *Buzz*, why film producer Albert Broccoli was (and is) know as *Cubby*, how famous

athlete *Daley* Thompson came by his name, why champion of the ring J. J. Tunney was nicknamed *Gene*, why actress Evelyn Laye was known to her friends as *Boo*, even how it was that child movie actor *Spanky* McFarland acquired his memorable moniker. And why is young Lady Gabriella Windsor, all of ten years old, known to her royal elders and betters as *Phub*? I, for one, would like to know. Sometimes there is a whole group of identically nicknamed people with no clue to the motive for the adoption of the common name. Freestone lists five people nicknamed *Peter* (in no case is it their real first name) yet frustratingly does not tell us how, or why, they all came to adopt this name.

My second brickbat concerns some rather obviously missing nicknames. Yes, 5,000 is a good and generous representation, but it does not include (to give only the first half dozen or so who spring to mind) *Cap'n Bob* (Robert Maxwell), *Gorby, Plon-Plon* (Napoleon Bonaparte), *Woody* Allen (even if he did adopt the nickname as part of his pseudonym), or, *sobriquet par excellence*, *Sting*. And, sad to relate, all the Marx brothers with their wonderfully evocative nicknames are conspicuously absent from Mr. Freestone's cast of thousands.

There are one or two slips and inaccuracies, although none that cannot easily be put right. Neil Kinnock (*Ramboyo*) was born in 1942, not 1932; the *Mekon* (see above), was not a "dictatorial monster in the TV series *Dr Who*" but the deadly foe of spaceman Dan Dare in the '50s comic *Eagle*; the first name adopted by Sophie Tucker (*The Last of the Red-Hot Mommas*) was not *Abuza* (which was her adopted family name); Tony Benn (*Wedgie*) was formerly *Anthony Wedgwood Benn*, with no *e* in the middle of his middle name. I wonder, too, whether *Koo* Stark, uninhibited actress and erstwhile friend of Prince Andrew, wasn't so called simply because she was christened *Kathleen* rather than because she imitated the call of doves when a child in America. Fact is sometimes, alas, more prosaic than fiction.

Basil Freestone tells us he took twelve years to complete his compilation, which is certainly impressive. Perhaps, after such a lengthy labor, he was rather too keen to get his *magnum opus* into print. I say this because, despite all the detailed documentation, there are at times signs of a rather hasty write-up, with disjointed sentences and even the odd grammatical solecism (Sarah Siddons's Lady Macbeth "never has and never will be equalled"). And although Mr. Freestone gives us a brief preface on the general nature and provenance of nicknames, he comes to the rather tame conclusion that just about any name can be a

nickname, if you think about it. This may be true, but I feel he missed a golden opportunity here for a more original consideration of the subject. (He does go into the origin of the terms *nickname* and *sobriquet*, and even *name* itself, but that tells us little about the true nature and function of a nickname, which is after all central to the theme of his book.)

However, I carp. This is actually a first-rate collection of nicknames of all kinds, with a select bibliography and a careful, detailed index of real names. If you want to know who has been called what in the anglophone world, from historic times to the present, go out and buy Basil Freestone's book. Apart from anything else, it is excellent value for money.

Adrian Room
Stamford, Lincolnshire, England

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Annotated Bibliography of Southern American English. By James B. McMillan and Michael B. Montgomery. Tuscaloosa, AL 35487–0380: The University of Alabama Press, 1989. Pp. xvi + 444. Cloth, no price listed.

When the personal computer became a household item and a scholarly tool, the age of bibliography surely began. Now that hard disks and storage "bins" can accommodate thousands upon thousands of discrete pieces of information, not all of them "bits," the bibliography– a list of segments of writing (books, articles, columns, reviews, notes) about a particular subject– came into its own importance and necessity.

Only a couple of decades ago, the writer or researcher had laboriously to search out information, probably earning additional education in the process. Now, with a few handy bibliographies around, the researcher does not have to travel to a library and transact business with a loan librarian to obtain information. For instance, I have within reach Lawson's *Personal Names and Naming: An Annotated Bibliography*, Rajec's *The Study of Names in Literature: A Bibliography* (with supplements), Smith's *Personal Names: A Bibliography*, Sealock and Powell's *Bibliography of Place Name Literature*, and Brewer's bibliography titled *Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Other Word-Related Books* (two volumes), and not far away are other bibliographies of literary figures, literary trends, linguistics, composition, and literary criticism. In 1960, only Smith and Sealock were available in

early editions, prepared totally by hand and head. Now such works are necessary tools and can literally be prepared rather swiftly by use of a computer and a bit of typing (word-processing) skill. And no doubt, they are convenient and conveniently near.

Of course, even now, not all bibliographies are prepared hastily by someone's "loading" a computer. I suspect that the second edition of the *Annotated Bibliography of Southern American English* was compiled the old-fashioned way, by hand and head and probably some paste. However it was prepared, it is a model of how a bibliography should be structured and compiled to fit the frame. It is what it purports to be, a bibliography of Southern speech, with a slight problem on defining the region, Southern. In the first edition, 1971 (containing more than 1,100 entries), South was "the area south of the Mason-Dixon line and the Ohio River, westward to Arkansas and East Texas." Although Southern speech patterns exist in southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, in West Texas, and probably in all parts of Missouri and Oklahoma, as well as in Delaware, Maryland, and a chunk of southern and southeastern parts of Pennsylvania, these have been excluded. The compilers claim, for bibliographic purposes, that "South encompasses fourteen states south and west of the Mason-Dixon line and from the Delaware Bay to Texas and includes also the District of Columbia."

Having defined the region, the compilers then delineate subject boundaries, including "items on folklore and literary language only if they discuss specific dialect features"; "works on foreign languages spoken in the region only when they are concerned with foreign influences on Southern English, such as place names"; and "general treatments of American English, such as grammars, dictionaries, and usage books," if they have commentary on specific Southern patterns. Excluded generally are "items in newspapers and local magazines" because they are inaccessible and ephemeral. Also, children's language has been excluded, at least that language used below the third grade, since most of the literature is concerned with receptivity and not with patterns of language.

The editors examined personally all the items that are annotated. They did exclude conference papers and unpublished manuscripts, unless they are deposited in a library and available through normal library practices. ERIC items, although mostly unpublished, are entered since they are available "at most research libraries." In addition, over two hundred master's theses are annotated, making a mass of unpublished but important literature available to users. Reviews are excluded, but reviews of books are noted within the entries for them. Reprintings are noted whenever possible.

The bibliography contains 3,833 entries, but within each entry are references to reviews, annotations, abstract references (if any), reprintings, and, of course, the publishing information. These are divided into general studies (a kind of catch-all category with 868 entries); historical and creole studies (479 entries); lexical studies (560); phonology and phonetics (393); morphology and syntax (253); placenames (670); personal and miscellaneous name studies (212); figurative language, exaggerations, and wordplay (71); literary dialect(149); language attitudes and speech perception (80); speech act and style (63); and bibliographies (35). The section on speech acts contains items on "mountain hollerin'," "dog trading and storytelling," "the rebel yell," "jokes," "cries," "toasts," "rappin'," "boasting and bragging," "talking and touching," and "sign language."

Our interest is primarily with the sections on names, with the placename section probably holding the most interest for those who are working with the Placename Survey of the United States. Many of the entries do not appear in the Sealock and Powell bibliography. Some are rather inaccessible, such as item 6.22 on *Poca-to-Hell-you-go,* taken from *West Virginia Hillbilly*, or 6.64 on lower Mississippi River names. The editors have provided a rich body of onomastic literature that has not been brought together anywhere else so completely. Furthermore, within entries for books, the bibliographies are noted; an instance is 6.517, Robert M. Rennick's excellent *Kentucky Place Names*, which notes the forty-six pages of bibliographical literature. Sometimes, the bibliographical literature should have been highlighted, since these scholarly bibliographies have more importance than some of those listed in Section 12. On the other hand, outside of studies by Rennick, Bertha Bloodworth and Alton Morris (Florida), Hamill Kenny (West Virginia and Maryland), and Virginia O. Foscue (Alabama), not many book-length texts of any value have been published in the Southern states. Foscue's must have been published too late for it to have more than a bare entry, and the Bloodworth-Morris text has only a four-page list of references. A personal note: Many present and former members of the American Name Society are represented in the generous number of entries, but pride must be curbed. Hence, the roll and role of ANS contributors will not appear here.

The section on personal and miscellaneous names studies is illustrative of the variety of approaches, with entries on street names, Bible Belt onomastics, birds, animals, personal names (some entries being genealogical), plants, houses, siblings (what they call each other), yachts, names of churches, nicknames, slogans, slaves, cats, child naming in the depression years, apartment names (psychological implications), poetry of names,

prison nicknames, newspapers, mills, taverns, furnaces, schools, alleys, lanes, courts, colleges, and fiddle tunes, with more that could be added. The coverage is ample, and the editors have also annotated some of them so descriptively that a browser will be prompted to move to the book or article itself; an example is 7.163, Thomas Pyles' "Bible Belt Onomastics, or Some Curiosities of Anti-Pedobaptist Nomenclature."

And finally, Section 12 is a list of thirty-five bibliographies, including one on Appalachia, several on American English, the Ozarks (by Vance Randolph), black English, dissertations, and names (including Rajec and Sealock, already noted, Gary Dunbar's preliminary bibliography of Virginia placenames, and *The Ehrensperger Report*).

Anyone interested in language in the United States should have a copy of this really outstanding compilation. Those of us who work primarily in names should also avail ourselves of a copy, for nearly one fourth of the entries are contributions to onomastics, a very large amount in comparison with the other language entries. But, naturally, a good bibliography annotated so well leads the reader to want to know more. In such a sense, a bibliography (a good one) is never exhaustive and is always the door to greater knowledge and understanding. We have James B. McMillan and Michael B. Montgomery (both members of ANS) to thank for this major contribution.

Kelsie B. Harder
State University of New York College at Potsdam

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College Slang 101. By Connie Eble. Wilton, CT: Spectacle Lane Press, 1989. Pp. 96. Paper, $5.95.

Connie Eble has taught English at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill since 1971 and has learned from her students. Now she can offer what she calls "a definitive guide to words, phrases and meanings they don't teach in English class." *College Slang 101* purports to be a lexicon of "the 'second language' of students across the country." Actually, it is (like the reports Kelsie B. Harder has issued on the *langue verte* of SUNY Potsdam) sometimes local dialect rather than national speech, but for what it is the book is *rad* (from "radical," which is to say "excellent").

Here we can concentrate on the names that students at UNC and (to

some extent) elsewhere have confected "to identify with each other or with a trend or fashion," to be *in* or just to play with words or express themselves with more vim, vigor, and (now and then) vulgarity, than ordinary American speech allows.

With suffixes such as *-holic* they have invented *bookaholic, cokeaholic, hoopaholic* (basketball fan), and with *-ie* they have come up with *deskie* (desk attendant), *grungie* (from the British for "very dirty"), *homies* (friends from one's hometown). A new verb appears in "I have to *cramomatic* for Dr. Joyner's English test." We have a *party animal* and a *pizza dude, Miss Partyqueen, Bongbreath, Earth Daddy*, and *zipperheads* who "need to catch the *clue* bus."

Initials make Burger King into the *B.K. Lounge*, the Big Library into *B.L.*, and *MLA* is not the Modern Language Association but *massive lip action* (kissing).

Men's briefs are *tighty-whities, Jap scrap* is a motorcycle of Japanese make, and you agree with a statement with *Egg-a-muffin!* from McDonald's advertising.

Foreign languages are mangled in college slang, though of course most American college students study no foreign language whatever. Older people may find that hard to believe, but many subjects once thought essential in higher education are now being regarded as *history* or *art* (passé). Students know less about history and art than about Barbie and Ken (whose names are taken for the impeccably dressed but overly conventional) and how to *bring it all back home* (have a good time, from a Bob Dylan song of that title). They may cut classes because of a *GH attack* (uncontrollable urge to watch the soap opera *General Hospital*, pretty clearly from the *Big Mac Attack* advertised by McDonald's). The names that occur in their slang tell us of their subculture: where they like to eat fast food, what movies and TV shows they watch (sometimes old ones such as *Leave it to Beaver* or *The Jetsons, The Flintstones*, etc.). They imitate the voice of Mr. Rogers (he of the Neighborhood) or the Church Lady ("Could it be—Satan?" from *Saturday Night Live*), etc. So far no dictionary has found a way to record "impressions" and tones of voice as they give words special references and meanings. "I'm sure" in California or "Sure, I knew you could" in North Carolina are ironic, sarcastic expressions of doubt, but no dictionary can tell a foreigner that *sure* is used in this way. You can learn only from observing the subculture how *killer* is used or that an *A&P suitcase* is a grocery shopping bag used to "pack clothes for a trip," that *Butter Cookies* are "an off-brand of athletic shoes," or that *Mogen David* has become *Mad Dog* among the Tarheels.

Words with more than one meaning (such as *cheese* or *bitchin'*) confuse, but by their very nature names are pretty clear in their designations. Most come from the *toxic waste dump* (drug world), *quaffing* (drinking), *cooking the books* (not cheating on the accounts but studying, *cracking the books* being the oldfashioned phrase), *Greek* (not anal sex but fraternities), *ragging* (clothes), and *cruising for scoopage* (the opposite sex).

College Slang 101 makes a dab at explaining the nature and the "social dimension" of slang but it confuses college-generated slang with the slang of the rest of the population, suggests that *I'm outta here* is confined to colleges, and makes some *goofs* in definition and spelling. It's *Gumby*, not *Gumbey*, but Prof. Eble may simply be reporting the way her students spell, not making an error on her own that detracts from her *cool points*. The local names for UNC locales are neither very clever nor useful in a book with hopes of national circulation (*The Beach, Bo-Boro, The Convent, E-Haus*, etc.). Those are of interest only to *dookies* at Duke University or to students at UNC (for which I propose a new name: *eunuchs*).

The real way to write a book like *College Slang 101* is to make up a questionnaire to be filled out on each and every US campus and then processed in someone's computer, identifying nationwide and local coinages. Meanwhile, Prof. Eble's little book, though it does not give us the *skinny* on everything, gets from me a *B-out* (grade of B).

Sko. Outta here. Check you (on the flip side). See you on the rebound. It's been real. Gotta slide. G.B.

Leonard R. N. Ashley
Brooklyn College, City University of New York

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Deer Man Has the Antlers to Your Horny Questions. By Deer Man Antlers. Martinez, CA 94553: T. S. Press, 1226 Vine Avenue, 1989. Pp. 221. Illustrations. Paper, $11.95.

Why would a thoroughly scurrilous attempt at sexual humor and takeoff on Ann Landers have onomastic interest? Because *Deer Man* (DMA) includes over 200 bogus letters written and *signed*. The pseudonyms attached to these letters evoke two little-studied aspects of onomastics: the curious names used in some advice columns and the even more fascinating genre of humorous names.

Some advice column letters carry conventional name disguises: initials

(Petersen), first names (Westheimer), or no names (Martin). However, for DMA—and for the "serious" Abigail Van Buren (AVB) and Ann Landers[1] (AL) columns upon which DMA is based—initials never appear and first names rarely. (DMA's few first names invariably fit into punning phrases: *Olga Sore Butt, Ben Gettinany.*) Instead, the most common patterns among all three columns are as follows:

- Noun/noun phrase: *Old Fashioned Mother* (AVB 45), *Father of the Pride* (DMA 157)
- Adjective/adjectival phrase: *Not Guilty* (AL 12), *Eager for Beaver* (DMA 47)
- Gerund/past participle phrase: *Ashamed to Sign My Name* (AVB 52), *Licking Forward to It* (DMA 116)
- Verb Phrase: *Hates Squirrels* (AVB 112), *Just Wants Her Share* (DMA 27)
- Entire Sentence: *My Name is Mud* (AL 91), *My Dad Can Lick Your Mom* (DMA 26)

Only the first pattern is common among modern English names for people, as nicknames and by-names (e.g., Hendley; Clossen). Adjectival names are rare, despite Disney's Seven Dwarves. Names containing verbs appear rare indeed, although not in other languages. John Algeo (39) cites Iroquois *He-raises-the-sky*, while Lu Zhongti and Celia Millward (278) give the Chinese *Wei-xing* 'launch a satellite.' A diligent pilgrimage through the Human Relations Area Files would doubtless uncover many examples, both adjectival and verbal.

While non-nominal names for people are rare in English, they are not so rare for other entities, e.g., placenames (*Knockemstiff*, Ohio [Vogel 116]); commercial firms, consumer products, and racehorses (*U-Haul, I Can't Believe It's a Girdle, Little But Fast* [Algeo 39–40]); beauty parlors (*Share Your Hair* [Eckler 205–17]); and clothing stores (*Wear It Again, Sam* [Eckler 217–22]). Perhaps non-nominal names in English are mostly associated with creative and competitive naming environments.

As for advice columns, creative pseudonyms do lend colorful idiosyncracy to the letters. The practice goes back at least to Nathanael West's 1933 novel *Miss Lonelyhearts*, which includes letters signed by *Sick-of-it-all, Desparate*, and *Broad Shoulders* (2, 3, 43). Name watchers should track out this interesting idiom further.

It is humor that distinguishes DMA's names from those in Ann and

Abby, but what is a "funny name"? Perhaps such names incorporate an incongruity both sudden and surprising, yet somehow meaningful. It is an old American—and British—habit to create funny names, primarily of three types: pseudonyms of real people, fictional characters, and bogus authors, as here.[2]

Of pseudonymongers, surely few could top the doggedly dedicated W. C. Fields, whose monikers included *Oglethorpe P. Bushmaster* and *Mahatma Kane Jeeves* (Taylor 239, 274). Moreover, characters in Fields' films sported such unlikelies as *Mrs. Hermisillo Brunch* and *Eustace McGargle* (275, 153). The screen personas of Groucho Marx are also legendary (*Wolf J. Flywheel, J. Cheever Loophole* [Eyles 216, 215]), as are some of Shakespeare's and Dickens' characters. More recent and less known are the erotic cartoon heroines *Cherry Poptart* (get it?) and sidekick *Ellie Dee*—for LED, light-emitting diode: "she's so hot she glows in the dark" (Welz).

Bogus authorhood has been raised to high art in the "references" appended to papers published in the *Journal of Irreproducible Results* and the *Journal of Polymorphous Perversity* as parodies of the usual scholarly apparatus. An example of our own coinage is Ali R. Church and D. Tom Perdu, *Grapholalia: An Interesting Side Effect of Cork Impregnated Wallpaper: A Case Study* (Paris: Marcel Press); but, as with the folkloric "authors" and "books" cited by Alan Dundes and Robert A. Georges, such as *The Yellow Stream* by I. P. Daly, parodies of scholarly names often seem deliberately silly or even sophomoric.[3]

Nevertheless, we suggest that these supposedly humorous names often reveal more than meets the eye initially. Let us return to DMA.

A "letter from a policeman" tells how he dressed as a woman to entrap two mugger-rapists. They attack him, one pulling up his skirt from the rear and trying to rape him. The partner pulls up the skirt from the front—and sees the *victim's* penis. "Now you've done it, Joe!" the partner exclaims to the first. "You've gone all the way through!" The letter is signed *Fearless Fuzz Dick* (DMA 21–22), a seemingly simple play on the Al Capp comic strip detective Fearless Fosdick.

Yet many meanings lurk within this story, with its "funny name" *Fearless Fuzz Dick*, quite independent of the obvious puns "fuzz" for police officer and "dick" for penis (*and* detective). We begin with *Joe*. At one level, *Joe* stands in opposition to the "funny" name of the letter writer. It is a common name, and its use tells the reader, "This is not the funny part." Accordingly, we see that one purpose of the funny name is as a pointer to where one is supposed to laugh. At a second level, however, one then observes that use

of such names as pointers to humor implies that the humor is not in itself obvious and not even, as we shall see here, funny at all.

It is not the rape scenario that is unamusing, though rape is not funny, but an unspoken aspect of the joke itself, which is easy to miss—at least consciously. Joe's partner believes that Joe has penetrated the victim so forcefully that his penis protrudes out "her" front. But he could not possibly make this mistake if Fearless Fuzz Dick's own penis were flaccid or shrunken in fear. Instead, the tacit premise of the story is that Fearless Fuzz Dick *himself has an erection*: the joke is not at all about the rape of a woman but instead about a consensual seduction of two heterosexual (?) men by a homosexual dressed in women's clothing. Now we see that *Fearless Fuzz Dick* is more than simply a pun or funny name. It is also a "joke" description of the transvestite homosexual's own penis, symbolically "fearless," that is, erect, when confronted by rapists—who are thus changed from rapists to the seduced themselves. Accordingly, the names in this "letter from a policeman" reveal it as a specimen of anti-homosexual "humor," no more amusing than any other "joke" about rape.

Finally, we return to *Joe*. Perhaps unintended by DMA's author, nonetheless *Joe* and "Joe's penis" suggest the *Reader's Digest* series of "interviews" with body parts: "I am Joe's Liver" (Ratcliff). Here, *Joe* is the moniker—no other word suffices!—of an average, all-American "joe," now meaning "guy" or "man." Thus in embedded puns and covert layers of reference, this letter from the pseudonymous *Fearless Fuzz Dick* is actually a complex and not at all humorous story about the willingness of the average American Joe to participate in homosexual anal intercourse, provided that he is the active, not passive partner and that he does not "know" that the other is male. In fact, the joke turns on Joe's partner's *refusal* to believe that the "victim" is male, despite obvious evidence. Are both mugger-rapists dupes? Fools? or willing participants in a homosexual threesome?

Do we perhaps make too much of a "simple" joke? Hardly. "[O]ne of the main functions of folk-humor," wrote the great erotic folklorist Gershon Legman, "... is the rationalization —the attempt to make ... endurable, if only as a 'joke'—of some highly charged neurotic situation.... Sexual humor is a sort of whistling in the dark, like Beaumarchais' Figaro, who 'laughs so that he may not cry'" (17–18). Thus a second purpose of funny names is to point to material that is disturbing and not openly discussed. *Wolf J. Flywheel* is perfect for the Groucho character because like a flywheel he is spinning madly and like a "wolf" he approaches women indiscriminately, instrumentally, and outrageously. The viewer envies such freedom, but in

real life Mr. Flywheel would be locked up. W. C. Field's view of women as air-headed over-refined bloodsuckers is reflected in *Abigail Twirlbaffling, Mrs. Hermisillo Brunch*, and *Mrs. Hemoglobin* (Taylor). Oh happy, happy humor writer! How many times can we, in our normal lives, look at people around us and give them such names, even when we think they deserve them?

So while DMA may or may not succeed in delivering sexual humor (depending upon one's tastes), it does succeed in delivering a veritable smorgasbord of fascinating questions—telling us what we already know, or should know, that objects for study are everywhere under our noses and that for every name there is A Story. And that's why you are reading this journal, isn't it?

Martha Cornog and Timothy Perper
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Notes

1. *Ann Landers* is the pen name of Esther Pauline Friedman Lederer and *Abigail Van Buren* the pen name of Pauline Esther Friedman Philips. They are identical twins (Van Buren 9–12). *Ann Landers* was the name used by the retiring prior columnist. *Abigail*, however, was taken from the Old Testament, "for Abigail was a prophetess in the Book of Samuel and it was said of her, 'Blessed art thou, and blessed is thy Advice, O Abigail'"; *Van Buren* was taken from the eighth US president, because of its "aristocratic, old-family ring" (Van Buren 16).

2. It is also an old habit to collect "real" funny names, either as so-called "aptonyms" (Dickson 28–37) or simply names that sound odd to the collector (Lorenz).

3. Here are two examples (we're not making these up!): "K. O. Tex, T. M. Poonz, and C. F. Doosh, The correlation between choice of menstrual paraphernalia and assertive behavior: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Radical Feminist Gynecology, 12*, 8–17" (in *Journal of Polymorphous Perversity* 4.2 [Fall 1987]: 21; and "Lau Z. Lay, Upp N. Down, and Steel Die. Reference, cross-reference, and bibliographical indeterminancy. In Fee, Fi, Fo, and Fum, editors, *Ference, Reference, and Rereference: Philosophical Perspectives*, D. Riddle, Dardreck, 1959" (in *Journal of Irreproducible Results* 33 [July/August 1988]: 15).

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A Reader's Guide to the Place-Names of the United Kingdom: A Bibliography of Publications (1920-89) on the Place-Names of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. Edited by Jeffrey Spittal and John Field. Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1990. Pp. xxi + 341. Cloth, £30.00.

This wonderful work is what many of us on this side of the Atlantic—and maybe several the other side too—have long been praying for. Until 1959, when the periodical bibliographical record *Onoma* published, as a supplement, R. J. Roberts' *Bibliography of Writings on English Personal and Place-Names*, there had been nothing like a full bibliography of literature on British placenames. Now there is, and this is it.

With the ever-increasing volume of writings on placenames in

Britain, from learned articles in scholarly journals to more wide-ranging popular books, such as *Place-names of Great Britain and Ireland* (1980) by John Field, the co-editor of the present compilation, a comprehensive bibliography of the subject was becoming an increasingly urgent necessity. Spittal and Field's book now provides all placename scholars with a definitive work which cannot fail to be of considerable use and guidance to anyone involved with the study of placenames.

Despite its academic presentation and content, the work is readily approachable and follows a logical plan that makes it simple to refer to and a pleasure to consult.

After a readable and thoughtful introduction of the history and development of twentieth-century placename studies, and a summary of the content and use of the book, the work proceeds from the general to the specific. It first lists dictionaries, gazetteers, and other general writings on different aspects of placenames, such as their archaeological or historical background, then continues to itemize publications on the placenames of England, county by county, followed by a similar treatment for Britain's "autonomous" islands (the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands), Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. (As is usual in British placename studies, the counties are the "historic" ones, those that existed before the boundary changes of 1974 and 1975 resulting from the reorganization of local government.)

The start date of 1920 was selected as being that of the year when placename studies in Britain began to receive serious scholarly consolidation. The pioneering work undertaken in those fruitful postwar years would lead to the formation of the prestigious English Place-Name Study in 1923. Since that year, the Society has published sixty volumes on the placenames of England, so far covering twenty-five counties and ranging from Volume 1, Part I, the *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, to Volume 60, which is Part II of *The Place-Names of Dorset*.

The *Bibliography* covers much more than the EPNS volumes, of course, just as it covers much more than England. Its literary scope is as comprehensive as its geographical range, taking in anything and everything of value in the way of placename writing from the briefest article to the largest book, on the condition that it appeared within the 1920-89 parameters. In fact, it goes even further than this, for the first of three Appendices contains a selection of placename works published earlier than 1920. (The two remaining Appendices are devoted respectively to

works on placenames transferred abroad from Britain, typically to North America, and to British placenames that appear in the Arthurian legend.)

The work concludes with no less than four Indexes: of Authors, *Festschriften*, Places, and Place-Name Elements, and these both individually and jointly help to make it the invaluable and accessible reference tool it is. In the main text there are useful cross-references.

A welcome feature is the addition of comments on individual works listed. These can range from the purely factual, including the provision of an English translation of all foreign-language titles, to the critical. Like all critical comments, the latter can be either favorable ("An excellent introduction to the subject") or disapprobatory ("etymological treatment inadequate"). The real oddballs in the field, incidentally, like the Lincolnshire author who attempted to derive his county's well-established Saxon and Norse placenames from spurious Celtic elements, are conspicuous by their absence, and rightly so. (How indeed could one include a book by an author who is bold enough to derive the name of *Ingoldsby* 'Ingjaldr's village' in his own county from "Celtic *gol*, a gool, a fork, *de*, worship, *s*, out, *bi*, settlement" with a Latin prefix *in* "added by the monks"!This surreal curiosity was published as recently as 1945.)

Spittal and Field's labor of love, which understandably inveighs against such whimsies in its introduction, is equally lovingly printed and produced, and is published in an attractive format on quality, longlife paper. In origin the book is the first new study issued by the modest but undoubtedly enterprising publisher who has to date concentrated on the production of important medieval studies, such as Florence E. Harmer's *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, first published in 1952.

Even if it were not such a handsome book, this work would still deserve a prominent place on the shelves of all placename students and of anyone interested in placenames in the English- speaking world. And those who possess some or all of the EPNS volumes should place it alongside them, for it complements them perfectly, not only in subject but also in size: the publishers have had the foresight to make it match them exactly.

Adrian Room
Stamford, Lincolnshire, England

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Namn i Norden och det forna Europa: Valda artiklar utgivna med anledning av Thorsten Anderssons sextio-årsdag 23 Februari 1989, Med en bibliografi över Thorsten Anderssons publicerade skrifter av Margarete Andersson-Schmitt [*Names in Scandinavia and in Ancient Europe: Selected Articles Published on the Occasion of Thorsten Andersson's Sixtieth Birthday, 23 February 1989, with a Bibliography of Thorsten Andersson's Published Writings by Margarete Andersson-Schmitt*]. Edited by Vibeke Dalberg and Bent Jørgensen. NORNA-rapporter 40. Uppsala: NORNA forlaget, 1989. Pp. 202. FIM 75.

In a recent issue of this journal (*Names* 38 [1990]: 151-54), I reviewed several Scandinavian *festschriften* published in honor of prominent name scholars and praised this felicitous convention. One of the volumes reviewed (*Studia Onomastica*) was dedicated to Thorsten Andersson, the Swedish onomastician who celebrated his sixtieth birthday on February 23, 1989. I am happy to report that two of his Danish colleagues, Vibeke Dalberg and Bent Jørgensen, prepared a second *festschrift* in his honor which was published as Volume 40 in the NORNA-rapporter series; but, whereas the anthology already reviewed consists of articles contributed by other name scholars to commemorate this special event in Andersson's life, the present volume contains reprints of seven of the honoree's own articles focusing on names in Scandinavia and ancient Europe and published separately elsewhere between 1968 and 1988, as well as a comprehensive bibliography of his substantial body of writings.

This alternative way of recognizing the status of a scholar has the added benefit of bringing together papers which, over a period of twenty years, have appeared in different publications most of which are not easily accessible to the general reader. Four articles are in Swedish, three in German; the former have English summaries.

Considering the central theme of the collection, it is not surprising that, apart from drawing repeated attention to the suffix *-st(r)-*, quite a few of the articles discuss carefully and in detail Hans Krahe's theory of an "Old European" hydronomy which is said to have preceded the river-nomenclature created by individual Indo-European languages, especially in Central, Western, and Northern Europe, and thought to be roughly datable to the Bronze Age. Andersson's critical stance concerning this bold concept is well known, but, whether one agrees with his views or not, it is good to see his arguments rehearsed between the covers of one book in several related articles, particularly his distinction between primary and secondary naming.

Naturally, as the title of the anthology suggests, there is a special Nordic slant to his views which has been honed in his lifelong preoccupation with Scandinavian onomastics. We are fortunate to have this personal anthology at our disposal.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen
State University of New York at Binghamton

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Dictionary of American Literary Characters. By Benjamin Franklin V, editor, and Gary Geer and Judith Haig, associate editors. New York: Facts on File, 1990. Pp. 542. Cloth, $60.00.

All right, class, in which American works of fiction do the following people surnamed *Jones* appear: an envious preacher, the Rev. Jones; a New Yorker who befriends Melville, Addy Jones; Alice Jones; Alpha Jones; Anna Jones, Barney Jones; Charlie Jones; Conrad Jones; David "Railroad" Jones; Easley Jones; Ed Jones; Electra Jones; Emma Lee Lessenberry Jones; Eric Jones; Senator Garwood B. Jones; George Gordon Lord Byron (L. B.) Jones; Hilary Jones; Januarius Jones; Jefferson Jones; Jerome Jones; Brother John Jones; John Paul Jones (as a character in Melville and in James Boyd); Joshua "Shine" Jones; Karl N. Jones; Lamont Cranston Jones; Lamont Quincy Jones; Lionell Jones; Lou Jones; "Mitchy-Mitch" Jones; Nevada Jones; Nigra Jones; Olin Jones; Lt. Oliver Cromwell Jones; Pete Jones; Richard "Dickon" Jones; Sally Elizabeth Jones; Sherman Jones; Simolean "Sim" Jones; Theophilus Jones; Wash Jones; William "Super" Jones; Wissey Jones?

For the answers, see *Dictionary of American Literary Characters.* Why are most of these Joneses African-American? The novels, novellas, etc., chosen for this lexicon from the South boast, in my opinion, a disproportionate number by black writers, whether one judges by quality or influence. Four of the selections, for instance, are by the much overrated Zora Neale Hurston (no Joneses, but one God).

The selection of works included ranges from William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789, when *Fidelia* and *Jack Worthy* and such names were in vogue) to 1979 (the editor uses the rather specious argument that "I stopped with the year 1979 in order to permit critical

consensus to evolve"). The list of authors and works is necessarily subjective, but one cannot help but be brought up short when one sees the names of authors unknown to the standard *Literary History of the United States*, such as triple-barrelled entries like Jesse Hill Ford (*The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones*), Carlene Hatcher Polite (*The Flagellants* and *Sister X and the Victims of Foul Play*, with two novels represented, while, say, James Purdy has but one), and Sarah E. Wright (*This Child's Gonna Live!*). There seems to be a preference also for Joyce Carol Oates (many entries) among bestselling "arty" writers and William Goyen among almost-not-selling "arty" writers, while *Gone With the Wind, The Godfather, Forever Amber, The Exorcist, Jaws*, and other one-shot blockbusters are here as well. Many books, such as *Up the Down Staircase* and *Up the Sandbox!*, really are not worth including. Four novels by Jessie Redmon Fauset and only one for Ray Bradbury and fourteen for Wright Morris, and . . . ! But this is nitpicking and could go on and on. Where is William Dean Howell's *A Chance Acquaintance* and why have we more William Burroughs than James Fenimore Cooper (my answer would be: because he's a better writer, but this is a reference book) and why eleven works by Jack Kerouac when space is so limited and so many writers are omitted altogether (here I offer no defense)?

In point of fact, the 280-odd contributors (unthanked in the brief preface but listed on the last two pages of the book and—I know, because I happen to be one of them—rewarded only in being permitted to buy a copy of the book at the same price the publisher sells it to bookshops) have done a pretty good job with *Girard Girard, Fats Terminal, Charity Royall, Weucha, Max Marvelous, the Marquis of Tempo-Rubato, Dirty Eddie, Captain Howdy, "YooMoo" Marvel, Lt.-Gov. "Tiny" Duffy, Benny Profane, Hrant Yazdabian*, all characters from Melville's *A* and Heller's *Capt. "Arfy" Aardvark* to Berger's *Harry Zwingli* and Upton Sinclair's *Mde. Zyszynski*.

If the work of fiction concerned happens to be in this generous list of nearly 400 individual authors and some of their leading works (up to 1979), as I said, so Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is not here with her earlier *Meridian* and *The Third Life of George Copeland*, nor her more recent, less-well-received fiction), then this reference book will be appreciated. Larger libraries but not individual scholars (I think) will buy it.

There are among the contributors, by the way, an Erwin M. Ford II and a Gordon van Ness III, but they are outclassed by the outrageously numbered editor, Benjamin Franklin V. The *V* seems hardly required and it is surpassed in the new game that Mary Ann Madden has devised

(In *New York* magazine) of making funny new names out of old ones by just shifting spaces, which makes roll-and-roll moniker *Jon Bon Jovi* into *Jo Nbon Jo VI*, a name for a "Vietnamese pope."

One thing *Dictionary of American Literary Characters* does not include is a comment on any *redende Namen*, whether *Pearl* or *Mike Fallopian* (of the Peter Pinguid Society) or *Mr. What's-his-name* or *Ahab* or *Technical Sergeant Garp* or *Isabel Archer* or *"Itchy Mitch" Mitchell* or *Maloney the Areopagita* or *"Pudd'nhead" Wilson*, etc. A dictionary leading us to the riches of the onomastic content of American fiction would be a very useful reference book, requiring more skill than this one demanded of the many collaborators, two busy associate editors (Gary Geer and Judith Haig), and Benjamin Franklin V. We may have to wait until Benjamin Franklin VI for that.

Leonard R. N. Ashley
Brooklyn College, The City University of New York

Namenforschung: Eine Einführung in die Onomastik [*Name Research: An Introduction to Onomastics*]. By Gerhard Koß. Germanistische Arbeitshefte 34. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1990. Pp. ix + 134. Illustrations, bibliography. DM 24.80.

Didactic materials or publications concerning the study of names are quite rare in any language, including English, although the onomastic sciences have progressed considerably in the last few decades, moving beyond the phases of collection, description, and classification to more analytical and interpretative approaches. Name scholars are even getting ever closer to the formulation of viable theories about the nature, significance, and function of names, but if these are to be passed on to students they still have to be filtered through the minds of individual teachers who make their own selections, provide their own highlights, and, above all, project their own attitudes toward what a name is and does. That this will always remain an important aspect of teaching is only to be expected, is indeed to be encouraged, for there will never be a substitute for the personal touch, the infectious nature of one's own enthusiasm for the subject matter, and one's own individual pedagogical skills. And yet it helps greatly if one has at one's elbow suitable teaching aids which not only provide common, or at least neutral, ground but also take the students' minds beyond the walls of the classroom. It has been

said that an independent discipline has become established and acquired its own identity when, among other factors, there is a corpus of secondary literature available large enough to permit its critical study. Perhaps it is just as important in this respect that there be a sufficient number of appropriate textbooks and other teaching aids. For this reason, it is probably symptomatic of the status of onomastics in university and college curricula, and of its recognition as a teachable discipline, that such textbooks and aids are hard to come by, if they exist at all.

The recent publication of Gerhard Koß's *Namenforschung: Eine Einführung in die Onomastik* is therefore especially welcome, particularly since the author brings to the subject both his credentials as a published scholar in the field—he specializes in brand names—and his long experience as a teacher of teachers at the University of Regensburg. This felicitous combination permeates the whole book which, in twelve chapters, treats such topics as the "Old European" hydronomy in Europe, selected other early toponymic strata in Germany, common German surnames, the thorny question of the relationship between *nomina propria* and *nomina appellativa*, proper names as linguistic signs, abbreviated names, onomastic amnesia, names and their referents, the learning of names, name fashions, microtoponymy (in street and field names), hypocoristic names and nicknames, pseudonyms, fictitious names, brand names (of course!), and, finally, the place of name studies in didactic textbooks and approaches to teaching.

Each chapter begins with a striking, often humorous, example or two—a news item, a directory entry, a quiz question, etc.—of the topic to be discussed and step by step moves to models and general conclusions before suggesting special problems and tasks which will help the students to apply their new-found knowledge (potential "solutions" are offered at the end of the book). In fact, the structure of the book and of each of its units is such that students and other readers without any, or only little, knowledge of onomastics will by the end of working through its pages have acquired a wide-ranging overview of the discipline as well as a good grasp of its aims, techniques, and strategies without being treated, as so often happens, only to the quaint and the curious. This is a solid book which thoroughly repays close reading, and the really nice thing about it is that it is very enjoyable too.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen
State University of New York at Binghamton

Publication Notes

Following is a list of books received, most of which will receive more detailed notice in future issues of *Names*. Those marked with an asterisk (*) have been assigned for review. For information about the others, contact the Book Review Editor or the Editor.

*Allen, Irving Lewis. *Unkind Words: Ethnic Labeling from* Redskin *to* WASP. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990.

Alvarez-Altman, Grace, and Frederick Burelbach, eds. *Literary Onomastics Studies* Volume 16. Brockport, NY: SUNY College, 1989.

Baker, T. Lindsay. *Ghost Towns of Texas*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1985.

*Barnes, Anne. *The Names of Comedy*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990.

Beck, Warren A., and Ynez D. Haase. *The Historical Atlas of the Western West.* Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1989.

*Bily, Inge, et al., eds. *Studia Onomastica VI: Ernst Eichler zum 60. Geburtstag.* Namenkundliche Informationen 13/14. Leipzig: Karl-Marx-Universität, 1990.

Coates, Richard. *The Place-Names of St. Kilda.* Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales: St. David's University College, 1990.

*Danchev, Andria, et al. *An English Dictionary of Bulgarian Names: Spelling and Pronunciation.* Sofia: Naouka i Izkoustvo, 1989.

Fleissner, Robert F. *A Rose by Another Name*. West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill P, 1989.

Goddard, Ives, and Kathleen Bragdon. *Native Writings in Massachusett.* 2 parts. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988.

*Jones, George F. *German*-American *Names.* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1990.

LeMay, Harold, et al., *New Words.* New York: Facts on File 1990.

Leskinen, Heikki, and Eero Kiviniemi, eds. *Finnish Onomastics/Namenkunde in Finnland.* Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1990.

*McNamara, John. *McNamara's Old Bronx.* The Bronx: Bronx County Historical Society, 1989.

Neaman, Judith, and Carole G. Silver. *Kind Words: A Thesaurus of Euphemisms.* New York: Facts on File, 1990.

*Nickon, Alex, and Ernest F. Silversmith. *Organic Chemistry: The Name Game.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Books, 1987.

*Padel, Oliver J. *A Popular Dictionary of Cornish Place-Names.* Penzance: Alison Hodge, 1988.

*Penelope, Julia. *Speaking Freely: Unlearning the Lies of the Fathers' Tongues.* Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Books, 1990.

Reinlein, Dean, ed. *Connecticut Onomastic Review: Selected Articles, 1982-1989.* Williamantic, CT: Eastern Connecticut University, 1990.

"Seek 'N Name." Game. Edmonton: Friends of Geographical Names of Alberta Society, 1989.

*Solin, Heiki. *Namenpaare: Eine Studie zur romischen Namengebung.* Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1990.

Warren, James Perrin. *Walt Whitman's Language Experiment.* University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1990.

Weslager, C.A. *A Man and His Ship: Peter Minuet and the* Kalmar Nyckel. Wilmington, DE: Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, 1989.

*Wick, Douglas. *North Dakota Place Names.* Bismarck: Hedemarken, 1988.