# Reviews

*From Needmore to Prosperity: Hoosier Place Names in Folklore and History*. By Ronald L. Baker. Indiana UP. 10th & Morton Streets, Bloomington, IN 47405. Pp. 371. $29.95 (Hardcover), $15.95 (Paper).

"Needmore," as a placename frequent in Indiana, was labeled in George R. Stewart's *American Place-Names* as a "humorous derogatory," suggesting that "the place needs more of everything." By contrast, the name "Prosperity" was given to a single Indiana settlement during the boom times of the 1850s—although the post office was closed down by 1875. These are two of over 4,000 placenames listed in this volume, a greatly expanded version of the earlier *Indiana Place Names*, co-authored by Baker and Marvin Carmony (Indiana UP, 1975). The earlier volume contained only some 2200 names, but the new book is more than a mere expansion. As suggested by the word "folklore" in the title, Baker—who is Professor of English at Indiana State University in Terre Haute—has a special agenda in this new book. He intends it to be "a cultural study, rather than strictly an historical study," in which he strives to present "the diverse thoughts and feelings of a community...through an interdisciplinary study of cultural constructions...rather than focusing simply on so-called facts" (1). In this concept, folklore "provides a context for place-name history"; it "add[s] flesh to the bare bones of dates and details and contribute[s] to the humanization of the study of place names" (1). As Baker explains, folklore has been increasingly recognized as a valid source for historical research: "like written history, [it] may be true or false, [but] even if it is false, it may reveal values and attitudes that are nevertheless accurate" (2). Thus folk tales and songs often reveal cultural values and attitudes of the past. Many placenames are associated with legends, which may be more fanciful than factual, but provide the student of culture with "information on what the names mean to the people who use them and sometimes offer a better index of culture than do sober factual accounts" (13-14).

Folk etymologies and folk legends were in fact represented in the 1975 book by Baker and Carmony; however, this new book goes a good deal farther, drawing heavily on the Indiana State University Folklore

Archives. It is of interest to compare some entries found in the two works. In 1975, the town of Darlington was simply "Named for the English town by Quaker settlers," but the 1995 book adds: "According to an oral account, Darlington was 'once named Darling Town, although it was nicknamed the Sweet Town because it's at the point where Sugar Creek meets Honey Creek.'" In 1975 the city of Nappanee was named "from the Canadian town Napanee, which received its name from a gristmill there"—reflecting Missisauga (Algonkian) *na-pa-ni* 'flour', but in 1995, "A local legend offers another explanation: '.... It supposedly got its name from an Indian maiden found there knee deep in mud. Supposedly, Nappanee is the Indian name for mud.'" Baker's introduction adds still another story: "[E]arly settlers found an Indian maiden napping on her knees, so they called the place 'Nap-on-knee'." (Indian maidens are plentiful in the placename legendry of Indiana, as indeed they are in other states.) For a final example, Baker's own base of Terre Haute was described in 1975 as "A French settlement..., 'high land,'" but the 1995 book adds reference to "a legend that the city was named for Terry's Hut, a popular tavern in early days." Readers may wonder what particular insights these popular etymologies give us into the cultural history of Indiana. They certainly suggest the occurrence of certain whimsical or sentimental attitudes, of a kind of rude humor, and of indifference or willful ignorance regarding exotic languages and cultures such as those of the Algonkians or the French. But presumably we do not need toponymic research to demonstrate that those elements have long been prominent in American life.

If we look at Baker's book in comparison with placename dictionaries of other states, we find that it has many virtues. To begin with, the pronunciation is given for every name listed, even if we don't need to be told that North Grove is pronounced [nawrth grov]. As this example shows, the "phonetic" transcription—based on a system used by the Indiana Broadcasters Association—is diacritic-free and closely linked to traditional English spelling. (By contrast, the 1975 book had ['north 'grōv].) To be sure, readers are likely to find either of these systems more user-friendly that the International Phonetic Alphabet. Nevertheless, Baker's current practice, especially the consistent transcription of "long i"as [eye], can occasionally cause a reader to do a double-take, as when the rather straightforward Marion Heights is said to be pronounced [MEHR-ee-uhn-HEYETS]. Other welcome information—in

addition to history, etymology, and relevant folklore—includes the county in which each place is located, the date of settlement or establishment when known, post office information when available, variant spellings, and alternative names.

One might wish, however, for a few other useful features. Both the 1975 and 1995 books concentrate on the names of "settlements" or "populated places," i.e. counties, cities, towns, and villages; the 1975 work listed a few of Indiana's streams and lakes, but the 1995 volume does not. Thus the latter book tells us that the county and city of Wabash are named after the Wabash River, and in fact it gives us some etymological information on the Miami (Algonkian) name of the stream, but it isn't clear why hydrotoponymy should be downgraded. (Little need be said, of course, about the names of mountains in Indiana.)

Again, many readers could wish for a more helpful guide to the locations of the places listed. The 1975 volume gave coordinates on the "Official Highway Map" of Indiana, and in case that might not be readily accessible, a map was provided in a pocket at the back of the book. However, that map had no coordinates, and showed county boundaries but no county names! In the 1995 book, Baker has given up on maps altogether; readers are referred to *The National Gazetteer* for geographical coordinates, and for "the title of the U.S. Geological Survey topographic map on which the populated place appears" (35).

My only other complaint about this book has to do with names of American Indian origin. Baker's work is like that of most US placename dictionaries in offering etymological information such as the following for the name Mongo: the original form was Mongoquinong, and "Mon-go-quin-ong, 'Big Squaw' was the Potawatomi name for the Elkhart River." Readers with a little sophistication about Native American languages—including members of the Potawatomi communities in Indiana and Michigan, where the language is still spoken and where it is currently under study by linguists—may feel little confidence in either the rough-hewn "phonetics" or the insensitive translation of the Native name. Again like other authors of placename dictionaries, Baker gives the impression of being unaware that new information on American Indian languages and toponyms, more accurate than that in his unsophisticated sources, is available from linguists and anthropologists; in fact, the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where this book was published, has long been a center of scholarship in American Indian languages and cultures.

Perhaps the real justification for placename dictionaries, especially those with abundant folkloric content like the present volume, is that names serve as "equipment for living," to borrow a phrase from Kenneth Burke (quoted by Baker [6]). As such, they provide an endless topic for curiosity, perhaps mixed at times with the atavistic suspicion that knowledge of names can in fact have some magical power. In addition, Baker's book provides, especially for residents of Indiana, many glimpses of the state's history and folklore.

William Bright
University of Colorado

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*Choosing Auspicious Chinese Names.* By Evelyn Lip. Revised ed. Times Books International, Times Centre, 1 Industrial Road, Singapore. 1990. Pp. 170.

According to Chinese legend, family names originated with the emperor Fu Xi in 2852 BC. Names are very important in Chinese society and a person's self-esteem and regard for others is tied to one's name. According to Chinese cultural traditions, the name can affect a person's destiny and influence fortune. A full Chinese name may have three parts. The first is the family name or surname, a second may be a generation name (or a second given name), and the third, a first (given) name. A generation name is a name shared by cousins. The parts of a Chinese name should harmonize with one another. They should combine well and not be contradictory. Choosing an auspicious name requires attention to several factors. Two preliminary factors are shared with other cultures: a name should sound pleasant and it should be symbolically meaningful. Other important factors include:

**The Elements.** In Chinese culture, the number five is very important. There are five directions (North, South, East, West, and Central), five colors, five musical notes, and five organs. The five elements (gold, wood, water, fire, and earth) are the most important. According to Lip:

> The interaction of each character [logograph] in terms of the Elements follows the Chinese concept of mutual production and destruction. For example, Wood burns to produce Fire which gives rise to Earth in which

> Metal is buried. Water appears as dew on Metal and helps Wood to grow. In the order of mutual destruction, Wood covers Earth; Earth absorbs Water; Water destroys Fire; Wood is cut by Metal, and Metal is in turn burned by Fire. 9-10

Lip seems uses the term *character* to describe the representation of a word. Most of us would call it an *ideograph*; specialists would prefer *logograph*. When a horoscope is determined, it is desirable to have the elements in the birthdate, which are reflected in the characters with which the name is written. Lip describes some of the rules for analyzing the elements and thus determining the characters. She lists examples for each of the five elements. For gold, she has 164 characters (names) in Hanyu Pinyin (Roman transliteration) and the meaning of the name in English. Examples include *cái* 'talent', *càn* 'magnificant', and *chào* 'surpass'. The characters for wood include *gán* 'pole', *gong* 'jade', and *kōng* 'honest'. Characters are listed for the other elements as well.

There are obviously many possible combinations of the elements in a full, three-part Chinese name. Some of these combinations are favorable, some fair, and some unfavorable. Lip gives an extensive table showing evaluations of various combinations. Gold, earth, and water are a favorable combination; gold, wood, and wood are unfavorable and fire, earth, and water are fair.

**Eight Characters** or **Bazi**. The year, month, day, and time of birth are important in determining an individual's personality, luck, and destiny. Each of the four aspects of the time of birth has two characters (binomials), thus *bazi* '8 characters'. Lip presents extensive tables for 1936-1996 to explain how to look up someone's bazi. For dates beyond 1996, you can extrapolate the table. There is also a chart for checking the elements of a person's eight characters.

**Yin-Yang**. In Chinese culture there are two complementary forces, *yin* which is negative and female and *yang* which is positive and male. It is necessary to balance these two complementary qualities in all matters. It is possible to categorize all characters into one or the other category. The number of strokes determines *yin* or *yang*. *Yī* 'one' has one stroke. It is *yang*. *Dǎo* 'knife' has two strokes and is *yin*. There is a table of *yin-yang* values.

**The Character of a Name**. The full name of the individual makes up the character (*zong ge*). In this case *character* seems to mean what I

think of as either the virtue of the individual or the strength, i.e good vs. bad and strong vs. weak. The surname (*tian ge*) is the 'heavenly character' as it is associated with one's ancestors. The first and middle names are the Earthly Character (*di ge*) as they are conferred by one's peers. By evaluating the total number of strokes (+1), you can decide whether the name is a good one. There is a table with about 30 favorable numbers (total number of strokes) between 3 and 81.

It is also possible to evaluate the *yin-yang* of a surname. Two hundred common surnames are listed. The table shows whether they are *yin* or *yang,* their element (water, gold, etc.), and their *tian ge* (number of strokes + 1). The name *Chén* 'old' is classified as *yang*. Its element is gold. Its *tian ge* is 8 which represents wealth. The name *Máo* 'fur' is classified as *yin*. Its element is water. Its *tian ge* is 5.

In addition to the analysis of Chinese names, Lip shows the English equivalents of about 160 male and 170 female Chinese names. While the rationale for their derivation is not explained, the Chinese and English sounds appear quite close. This may help to explain to non-Chinese readers why these names were adopted. An example of a female name is *É Wá* 'young beauty'. Its elements are earth for each of the two characters. The first character is *yin*; the second, *yang*. The English equivalent is Emma. A male example is *Ān Dǔ* 'calm'. Its elements are earth and fire. The first character is *yin*; the second, *yang*, just like Emma.

In the final chapter, "Choosing an Auspicious Chinese Name," Lip summarizes the information she presented earlier and demonstrates how to choose a Chinese name. For example, the name Sun Yang Jin (where *Sun* is the surname, *Yang* is the first name, and *Jin* is the middle name) has 6, 10, and 7 strokes, respectively. The *zong ge* (the total number of strokes) is 23 which is considered good. The *yin-yang* for the three names is *yin, yin,* and *yang* which is also considered good. The surname has the element gold, the first name has earth and the middle name has fire. This combination is also considered good. Tables show the evaluations of names with more strokes. There are several examples of how to calculate the evaluation of a name. At the end of the chapter there is a listing of about 340 names showing the Pinyin form, the meaning, the *yin* or *yang,* and the element. The bibliography has references in both Chinese and English.

*Choosing Auspicious Chinese Names* is a splendid contribution to our understanding of the rationale and mechanics of Chinese names. Working through the book seriously enough to calculate and evaluate Chinese names will take a little patience but will lead to a better understanding of Chinese language and culture. This is the clearest presentation of the rationale of Chinese naming practices that I have seen. It provides a framework for understanding the complexities of the naming process. I highly recommend this book for general collections and definitely for onomastic collections.

Edwin D. Lawson
State University College
Fredonia, New York

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*Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk: A Survey Based on Medieval Records and Place-Names*. By John Insley. Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi 62. Uppsala. 1994. xliv + 459 pp. No price given.

I am a sucker for reference tools. They lead me to things I need for various purposes, but are not limited to those purposes alone; perhaps more practically, if I need them and have them, I do not have to grouse because my college library does not or because they do not circulate through inter-library loan. So I collect, as best I can afford, dictionaries, catalogues, and other basic tools, and I enjoy dipping into them from time to time even when I am not actually searching for any particular something.

John Insley's *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk* looks like a reference tool, but does not call itself one. I am not really sure what to make of it. Though it says it is a survey and is limited to Norfolk of the 10$^{th}$ through mid-13$^{th}$ centuries, it is more of a dictionary than a survey and the discussions do not focus on the Norfolk names so much as on sources or analogues outside of Norfolk (not just Suffolk) and long before, with much philological detail. Were it a survey, I would have expected some discursive treatment of preferences or trends; commenting that he has "not found it necessary to revise [his] conclusions" from the prior form as a Nottingham doctoral thesis of 1980 (xxxiii), the

author implies there are some general conclusions, but this should no doubt be taken as conclusions specific to individual names and their background, instead. The result is highly instructive with regard to specific names dispersed throughout medieval Scandinavian influences, but less so for Norfolk or even English patterns. I may just have misunderstood this, since Insley does later on specify "My aim has been merely to present a corpus of Scandinavian personal names found in medieval Norfolk with an accompanying commentary and comparative material as a contribution to the elucidation of the nature of the Scandinavian settlement of East Anglia" (xli). But I still wonder how this specifically contributes to elucidating the nature of that settlement.

The layout is to list the names first, with the commentary following. The names are given in groups "a)" and "b)," instead of "Place Names" and "Personal Names," respectively (for me, an unintuitive presentation with a counter-intuitive order), and often with something like "a) (i)" without any "a) (ii)" to justify the subdivision. Though the introduction says such subdivisions are made "where necessary," the need is not clear for b) (1) *Audenus carpentarius* and b) (ii) *Oinus carpentarius* sv. Auðun for "Odin" (84), versus only a b) (1) for a list of names running more than four pages sv. Þorke(ti)ll (414-18). Most fortunately, the names are evidently presented in their original forms and with some bibliographic sourcing so users might find the larger context of each name and form. However, since each group is given as a single paragraph, it can be very tiring to discover just how many times each oft-occurring name appears or in what forms, without writing them out by hand in another layout. The sources are necessary; but, given the single-paragraph design, they seem to interfere with browsing for name forms, especially since no typographic distinction is made for the particular names of concern. That is, the names are given in italics, but one cannot scan for italics to find the forms, since italics are largely used for original passages, which include the names and more, for Latin, though not always, and sometimes for other things. A few more cross-references might have been added, to help searchers using *Scandinavian Personal Names* as a dictionary: I early on thought of the 15th-century writer and translator Osbern Bokenham, but upon checking out of curiosity I found no entry for any Osbern; when reading continuously, however, I discovered "Osbern" subsumed under "Ásbiorn."

The origin of this book as a thesis and the preference of its author for trees, not forest, appear in numerous ways. Though over a decade passed twixt thesis and book, material published in the interim is simply excerpted without commentary in an appendix, not inserted into the main body. References are of many kinds and are sprinkled about in several locations: footnotes; abbreviated and unabbreviated references to primary and secondary sources, listed under "Sources" and "Other works consulted," not always a clear distinction (and the latter includes some of dubious value as abbreviations worth noting, e.g., Names and NED, not OED); "General Abbreviations" (including e.g., etc., nom., pp., and viz.; curiously, "YE" is "Occasionally used for ERY"); and a separate "Bibliography and Abbreviations" for the appendix. The abbreviations must thus be looked up in three or four separate lists, depending on where one is; they often overwhelm the commentary, seeming to shore up an insecurity in the validity of the discussion, and certainly interfering with a smooth reading of that commentary. For example, I find this quite unreadable, from the commentary on "Erik," the punctuation as in the original (116):

> This name has been the subject of much discussion but according to H. Anderson, NoB, lx (1972), pp. 127-37, it goes back to a PrScand **Aina-rīkijaR*. The name is of considerable antiquity, appearing as runic *Airikis*, gen., on the Sparlösa stone of c. 800 in Västergötland (SRVg, no. 119) and as runic *ąiriks*, gen., in the 9th century Starup inscription in South Jutland (DR, no. 17; NK VII, p. 68), and is well attested throughout medieval Scandinavia (Lind, cols. 223-227; DgP, cols. 247-253, 1660; SMP, cols 694-768). An example of the name from the Hiberno-Norse settlements in Ireland occurs in the form *Torstain mac Eric* 1103 (Marstrander, p. 68). In early times the name seems to have been primarily borne by royal personages in Scandinavia (Wessén, *Nordiska namnstudier*, pp. 39-40), but in the medieval period the name occurs in all social groups.

The interruptions are too frequent, and too many facts and claims seem buttressed. Might the following version have been easier to read?

> This much-discussed name probably goes back to a PrScand **Aina-rīkijaR*. The name is of considerable antiquity, appearing as runic *Airikis* on the Sparlösa stone of c. 800 in Västergötland and as runic *ąiriks* in the 9th-century Starup inscription in South Jutland. It is well attested throughout medieval Scandinavia, even from the Hiberno-Norse settlements in

> Ireland, where it occurs in the form *Torstain mac Eric* in 1103 (Marstrander, p. 68). In early times the name seems to have been borne primarily by royal personages in Scandinavia, but in the medieval period the name occurs in all social groups.

This looks more dictionary-like and confident, and much less busy. However, it does not explain why, as the next paragraph points out, "In England the name is curiously quite uncommon" (four bibliographic abbreviations appended, plus one footnote), and only one Norfolk name is cited—a personal name, with no explanation or hypothesis for its existence. There is a cross-reference to "English forms *Iric, Yric*," but this lists only more personal names and focuses on philological matters to the exclusion of naming traditions. Happily, this does carry a cross-reference to *Iórek*, where a more satisfying discussion does appear, though not with specific consideration of the Norfolk materials.

The forest here is quite something other than what is indicated by the title—it is, more properly, perhaps something like *An Etymological Dictionary of Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk, c. 900-1250.* With fewer abbreviations and a bit more focus on the actual Norfolk material and its significance, this would be a fine tool for my shelf. The few readily-apparent typographic errors are not a problem, e.g., an unindented second line of "Nomina" (xxiii); and no doubt my composition duties make me excessively sensitive to slips in punctuation and looseness in writing, such as in the positioning of "primarily" in the passage above and of "only" in "In Yorkshire the Norse kingdom of York only ceased to exist in 954" (55). Insley's detailed and thorough compilation of material in *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk* is a wealth of information as it stands, only a wee bit off its mark, and quite welcome.

Juris G. Lidaka
Dept. of English
West Virginia State College
P.O. Box 1000 Institute, WV 25112-1000
lidaka@ernie.wvsc.wvnet.edu

*On the Name*. By Jacques Derrida. Ed. Thomas Dutoit. Trans. David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian McLeod. Stanford UP, Stanford, CA 94305. 1995. Cloth: $35.00. ISBN 0-8047-25543.

Elaborated independently and originally published in French as separate booklets in 1993, "Passions," "Sauf le nom," and "Khōra" make up, as their author himself has insisted, "a sort of *Essay on the Name*—in three chapters or three steps" (xiv). *On the Name*, which has recently gathered the English versions of the three pieces, does read like "a sort" of essay. Accordingly, it may not satisfy readers cherishing certain "traditional" notions of focus, rhetoric, or argument; nor will it fulfill the hopes of those who, less acquainted with Derrida's work yet lured by *On the Name*'s name, expect a "reasonable" inquiry into, say, the philosophy of naming. For one thing, Derrida's fashion of engaging the problematic of naming is anything but "reasonable," first and foremost because it purposefully challenges the discourse boundaries within which reason has historically confined its various analytic enterprises. In other words, *On the Name* is on names and naming, indeed—yet in ways that may alienate virtually anybody with some kind of "specialized" interest in the field: philologists, classical scholars, philosophers, theologians, critics, linguists and, of course, onomasts.

But, I hasten to add, this is business as usual for Derrida's deconstructive approach. What we are witnessing here and pretty much anywhere in his work is an interrogation of both the "subject" proper *and* the forms which dealing with this subject has taken in the past or is about to take in *On the Name*. Now as ever, in Derrida's essay (of sorts) reflection and self-reflection remain inextricably interwoven. His longstanding investigation of naming issues in philosophical writing, from, e.g., *Of Grammatology* (French ed. 1967) to "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name" (in *The Ear of the Other*, French ed. 1982), thus falls within the same "tradition of the oblique" (*On the Name* 12) in which his analyses have generally been inscribed. That is to say, "instead of tackling the question or the problem [of names] head on, directly, straightforwardly" (12), Derrida usually starts off with a "detour" that involves scrutinizing aspects the discussion of which some of us may find pointless: the circumstances of the essay's elaboration, the ordeal of coming up with an appropriate title (name) for the piece, the bewildering amount of work on the subject (supposedly) at hand, the critical genre most available interpretations

have illustrated, and so forth. Trivial as they may seem, such aspects more often than not lead the critic, if not always directly to the core of the problem, then to an unexpected facet of it. And it is Derrida's compelling valuation of this unexplored facet, dimension, or implication that forces his readers to rethink the whole matter in a new light or, at the very least, to ask the old questions with a renewed confidence.

And these are, as "Passions," *On the Name*'s first part, shows, fundamental questions: "The name: What does one call thus? What does one understand under the name of name? And what occurs when one gives a name? What does one give then?" "One does not offer a thing, one delivers nothing, and still," Derrida notes, "something comes to be which comes down to giving that which one does not have, as Plotinus said of the Good." It follows that further questioning is legitimate: "What happens, above all, when it is necessary to sur-name [*surnommer*], renaming there where, precisely, no name comes to be found lacking? What makes the proper name into a sort of sur-name, pseudonym, or cryptonym at once singular and singularly untranslatable?" (xiv). It goes without saying, these questions, like so many others in Derrida, are—and *must* remain—"urgent and unanswered" (16). To *address* them, which is a totally different story, Derrida takes the longer or the "oblique" road. I should here mention that the opening essay's subtitle is "'An Oblique Offering,'" and that it has been suggested by David Wood, who included the translation of the French version in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, which he edited in 1992. Now, "Passions" begins by tackling issues in which one might view as many red herrings: the distinction between a critical and a "noncritical" attitude of a "ritual analyst," which, in this case, is Derrida himself, convinced by Wood to contribute to the scholarly ritual or "ceremony" (the *Reader*) that has the French philosopher's work as its object; the ethical consequences of Derrida's participation in the project; his "duties," namely the manner of responding to the "invitation" received; the "problem" lying before him as a result of this "offer," which is to say, the responsibility the "other's" "offer" brings along for Derrida. Remarkably enough, though, since this responsibility is "exercised in my name *as* the name of the other" (11), it is at this point that the name finally shows up in Derrida's intricate argument. Should he take Wood's invitation seriously, the author points out, then he cannot eschew the question of the responsibility his own "oblique offering" (contribution to the volume) raises. The question is, as the philosopher insists, "as serious

and intractable [*intraitable*] as the responsibility for the name one is given or bears, for the name that one receives or the name one gives oneself" (12). The matter is heavily compounded by what Derrida calls the "infinite paradoxes of narcissism." In brief, he explains, something or someone bears our name, that is, our "title," and we may live under the illusion that "all that returns to X" (that named something or someone) naturally returns to, bears on, in some way honors us. Yet Derrida insists that we are *not* our names or titles, which means that the named does very well without us, "the place toward which something could return" (12). Moreover, the named may simply break free from the name we gave him/her/it, which can therefore "disappear *in* [*our*] *name*" (13). In either case, the relation between the name-giver and the named confirms Derrida's well-known dynamic of originless *trace* (an important term in the vocabulary of deconstruction): the subject is no "source" to which our name or the names we give the world can return. The name's destiny appears, in this light, "destinerrant" (30), to use another Derridian coinage. The name "errs" on its way back to the elusive source, a source which, in his/her/its turn cannot be reduced to the name he/she/it bears. The secret of our being, of a subject or object (a text, for example), can be spoken, as Derrida contends, in other names, too—and here onomastics, hermeneutics, and theology meet. Being is indeed "irreducible to the very name which makes it secret" (26). Yet then, I dare ask, what does the difference between the name and the named consist in? Is there anymore any difference at all? Further, is it the same thing to name a subject (human being), an animal, or an (inanimate) object? Do these bear, or react to, their names the same way? Does not the last one depend on the name-giver to a greater extent than man? Even in the case of "text-naming," which is more commonly known as reading, does not the whole process hinge on the "one who names" (reader), on his or her ability, background, interests, authority ultimately? And finally, may we really equate names and titles? Is not their synonymic treatment in Derrida a bit too inadvertent? I think these are not only "unanswered" but also *unasked* questions of whose "urgency" Derrida seems to be unaware and the absence of which affects his inquiry into the nature of names.

Much like "Passions," "Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)," *On the Name*'s second essay, begins its "oblique" pursuit of onomastic matters by addressing its own genre and context of publication. In this view, it is perhaps noteworthy that the piece came out in English translation as

"Post-Scriptum" (subtitled "Aporias, Ways, and Voices") in *Derrida and Negative Theology* edited by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay in 1992. "Sauf le nom" is basically a "fictive dialogue" (34) meant to provide a response—a "post-scriptum"—to the papers reunited in Coward's and Foshay's anthology. And the essay does take up itself as a "post-scriptum"—and writings by Augustine and Angelus Silesius as symbolically fulfilling the same function—to bring forth an intriguing ethics of reading, namely the construction of the reader as "friend." *Confessions* or Silesius's religious poems, Derrida maintains, lay down through their reading a remarkable invitation or prescription. "The friend, who is male rather than female," the philosopher specifies, "is asked, recommended, enjoined, *prescribed* to render himself, by reading, beyond reading: beyond at least the legibility of what is currently readable, beyond the final signature—and for that reason to write" (41). Analyzing one of Silesius's addresses to his audience, Derrida shows how the reader is entreated to reach, through the reading of the poem, beyond the poem and to become writing himself, moreover, that essence (*Wesen*) the "writ" embodies. Importantly, this "essence" does not predate the act of reading—and here we notice, again, Derrida's resistance to any suggestion of "source," "origin," or founding authority or anteriority. The "essence" is that which the "friend-reader" instantiates during the reading; it is, as Derrida, argues, "born from nothing and tends toward nothing" (42), pure "becoming" (*Werden*), "becoming-self" which also allows for an "engendering *of* the other" (43). Thus, reading, ethics, which stresses the relation with another, and negative theology spectacularly reveal their common ground since, as Silesius writes, "To become Nothing is to become God." As we can see, it took Derrida such a long-winded opening to get closer to the crux of his argument: this becoming brings about the "possibility of the impossible," that is, the possibility of death; but reading has also led us to questions of "address, destination, ...love, and friendship" (45), in other words, to the very *raison d'être* of the Calgary colloquium on negative theology (where Derrida had actually not been present).

Notably, the gathering, the "event" to which the French philosopher responds "after the...event" (*après coup*) in his "post-scriptum," had been permitted by two factors. First, by the "friendship" putatively underwriting any meetings; second, by "that very polylogue through which are written and read those for whom 'negative theology,' through

the enigma of its name and its original lack of meaning, still signifies something and pushes them to address one another *under this name, in this name, and by this title*" (46). "Negative theology," Derrida contends, is in fact a language or a linguistic "mode," a way (*via negativa*) of talking about the unknowable God. "[O]f him," the philosopher reminds us, "there is nothing said that might hold...[s]ave his name,...[s]ave the name that names nothing that might hold, not even a divinity" (55). Ironically, much as Derrida grapples with the question of God's name's "untranslateability," Derrida's own translators wrestle with the French phrase *sauf le nom*. As Thomas Dutoit points out in his introduction, "Translating the Name," Derrida's formula plays on several grammatical values of *sauf* simultaneously. Accordingly, "save the name" should mean "[everything] except the name" *and* "[let us] save the name" (or "keep the name safe"), to list just the main possibilities. The philosopher activates both meanings in his long discussion of theological "onomastics" to stress the "inadequation of reference" in any naming of God. For naming God—speaking to him, calling, entreating him and even letting him speak in us (58)—boils down purely to an "event *in* and *on* language" (58). While calling his name in hopes to reach beyond the name (68), the calling itself is the only reality available to us even though the name coaxes us into believing that it(s calling) may open access to something or somebody beyond the call. To sum up, God's name is possibly the biggest "onomastic hoax" or paradox in the sense that it insistently invites exploration of the "truth" lying (in all senses!) beyond itself (*save* itself, except itself) at the same time that it remains "safe," that is, impenetrable, elusive, and multiple. Thus, it is nothing more than a *topos*, "some *khōra*" (56), a bodyless body and place of everything *in* place of everything, finally, and simply, a place (of naming and everything else). I am wondering, though, if Derrida's agnostic survey of this mysterious locus will be met by philosophers of religion without reservations.

The notion of *khōra* is the topic of the essay bearing the same title, the last in *On the Name*. The text's first version appeared in a festschrift presented to Jean-Pierre Vernant (*Poikilia: Etudes offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant*, 1987). The place of the original publication is once again relevant as "Khōra" opens with an epigraph from Vernant's *Mythe et societé in Grèce ancienne*. The passage underscores the mythologist's search for "the structural model of a logic which would not be that of binarity, of the yes or no, a logic other than the logic of the *logos*" (88).

From the outset, Derrida insists that the intensely discussed Platonic notion reaches us basically as a name, a body of sounds. And, he goes on, "when a name comes, it immediately says more than the name: the other of the name and quite simply the other, whose irruption the name announces," an "imminence" of a continuously postponed presence. It is by virtue of such a logic of naming—a logic as fleshed out in Derrida's re-reading of *Timaeus*—that *khōra* resists the pressure of the binary Vernant talks about. The term's name, let alone its translation, lays bare a profound "incapacity for naming" (89). That is, it names without naming since it defies the logic of noncontradiction philosophers indulge so much. It is both sensible and intelligible—or rather neither—a "genre beyond genre" yet a place or "receptacle" giving place to oppositions and distinctions and thereby opening up the possibility of naming the world. It does not remain beyond naming, much though we shall never be able to come up with an exact name for it, with a *mot juste* (93). "Not having an essence," Derrida asks, "how could the *khōra* be...beyond its name?" (94). At this juncture, he distinguishes common and proper names to argue that, if the notion cannot be named (renamed, translated) through a common name, an all-too-specific, category or genre-bound denomination, we might just think of the proper name. As Derrida holds, *khōra* should rather be understood as *the khōra*, a unique entity without a referent one might locate in a *class* of objects.

Now, it is exactly this impossibility of identification and localization of what allows other things to take or have a place that catches us in a pure scene of reading (98). *Khōra* and the huge hermeneutic body accumulated around it problematize the very process of reading, of reading as a perpetually recommenced act of naming and renaming, entailing endless "permutations, substitutions, displacements" (111), and so forth. And, as a matter of fact, this might very well be the main lesson of Derrida's onomastic exploits in *On the Name*: naming is another...name for reading, for comprehension in general. Again, while philosophers, theologians, or linguists may seriously question Derrida's often carefree use of philological evidence, this lesson, I think, stands: the name is a dynamic reality, its history and structure calling for careful, insistent perusal as it always says more than it names.

Christian Moraru
Indiana University
cmoraru@indiana.edu