

The Overlooked and Understudied Onomastic Hyphen

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Onomasts have generally not given the link hyphen the critical attention it deserves. This essay considers such hyphens as they have occurred and continue to appear in toponyms, personal names, and other kinds of names and naming processes throughout the world, particularly in English. It also suggests some potentially rich avenues of investigation into various historical, linguistic, sociocultural, psychopolitical, geographical, and legal aspects of the onomastic hyphen.

John Benbow, in his *Manuscript and Proof* (1937), opined that “[i]f you take hyphens seriously, you will surely go mad.” Though Benbow intended his remark for printers and copy-editors, its wit and sarcasm—and perhaps, depending on one’s view, its truth—have made it popular with the authors of style manuals, writer’s guides, and other handbooks that discuss the mechanics of punctuation. I want to suggest here, however, that onomasts have taken Benbow’s implicit advice too literally for too long: we have given almost no attention to the hyphen as it appears in names, and have thus overlooked a veritable goldmine of research opportunities.

Though Benbow does not discriminate, let me be clear from the outset that my remarks in this essay pertain only to link hyphens, which separate elements in compound words (as in *Vice-Principal*, *Wal-Mart*, *Judeo-Christian*, *Austria-Hungary*, *Jean-Pierre*, *I-70*, *Winston-Salem*, *Band-Aid*, and the surname *Clive-Wickham*), not to break hyphens, which divide words at the ends of printed lines. Break hyphens do have a long history (dating to the eleventh century in Latin, and to the thirteenth in English [Reimer 1998]), but, while the ongoing debate over whether their placement should be based on a word’s phonological or

morphological structure may be interesting in its own right (McArthur 1992; McIntosh and Fawthrop 2000; cf. *trium-phant*, usually favored in American English, to *triumph-ant*, usually favored in British), they generally are of little concern to those who study names and naming procedures.

Link hyphens, however, are a different matter. Their use (and perceived misuse) in names has played a major role in sociocultural trends, political strategies, regulatory measures, Internet errors, and public outcries of dissatisfaction. They have been central to local, national, and international disputes, numerous lawsuits, and at least one audit by the United States Internal Revenue Service. And they are routinely ignored in the personal names of customers by banks, credit card companies, and the publishers of telephone directories. In short, Pett (1990, U3) hardly overstates the case when he says the onomastic link hyphen

is smaller than an eyelash and less protective, a single, arbitrary mark in the human search for order. It promises clarity but risks anarchy and, like all efforts to standardize and thus regulate human behavior, it groans under many burdens and cries with painful exceptions. It is used to make war and peace and soothe the pride of nations, brides and banks.

For the duration of this essay, then, I will use *hyphen* and its derivative forms to mean or refer to the link hyphen exclusively unless I specifically note otherwise.

I

The complete history of the onomastic hyphen has not yet been written; indeed, we seem not to know even when that history begins, or when it begins to flourish. Isolated instances of hyphenation in common nouns began as early as 1000 A.D. (in *to-day*) and circa 1250 (*without*), but the phenomenon did not become frequent until the sixteenth century (in words such as *grand-child* and *vine-yeard*, among many others; McArthur 1992, Parkes 1993). It would be interesting to know whether the use of the onomastic hyphen also began in the Middle Ages (the several medievalists I have queried do not recall encountering even one in the many manuscripts they have examined, however), or during the Renaissance, or even later yet (as we shall see, hyphenated surnames in English did not become fashionable until the nineteenth century).

No one has yet determined, either, to what extent hyphenation in names has been affected by the three traditions out of which our other punctuation has evolved (Little 1984, 1986). Because names so often follow different rules of structure and use than do common nouns, it will not be surprising if there is little overlap, but at this point we cannot be sure. We need to know to what degree onomastic hyphens were ever largely rhetorical, used by scribes and printers as one means of indicating preferred rhythms and/or emphases to readers. And to what degree they were typographical, a by-product of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printers' self-proclaimed orthographic expertise. And in the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries, to what degree they were grammatical, influenced by the external, so-called logical tests of usage imposed by those seeking to refine the language and reduce it to a system of rules.

According to McArthur (1992), hyphens play no small role in punctuation, though the rules are multi-faceted, to say the least. The hyphen in *re-enact*, for example, occurs to avoid the awkward collision of the first and second *e*, and the one in *re-form* 'form again' occurs to avoid semantic confusion with *reform* 'improve.' Those in compounds such as *player-manager* and *city-state* indicate that the connected nouns are in apposition, essentially forming a single concept—in these examples, a player who is also a manager, and a city that is also a state. One must wonder how often such phenomena have affected the use of hyphens in names, and how multi-faceted the rules are that govern them.

Similarly, one must wonder how frequently hyphenated names have become one-word compounds, as non-onomastic hyphenated constructions often do (e.g., *bloodthirsty*, *earthbound*, and *outbreak*, when Shakespeare created them, were spelled *blood-thirsty*, *earth-bound*, and *out-break*). The evidence suggests that hyphenated names resist such evolution, but again, no one seems to have investigated the phenomenon systematically.

Coca-Cola, *Bristol-Myers*, and *Rolls-Royce*, for example, have endured since 1886, 1899, and 1906, respectively (the second was formerly *Bristol, Myers*), and almost certainly will remain as they are, for they represent successful trade names and, in the case of the latter two, combine the names of former business partners.¹ But the hyphen in *New-York Historical Society*, which dates to 1804, when the museum was founded, is more difficult to understand. As a visitors' pamphlet

observes, everything designated *New York* in the early nineteenth century spelled the name with a hyphen. Why did the museum retain *New-York* in the face of all the hyphen-deletion that evidently ensued (Carroll 1984)? And why, on the other hand, did the Times-Mirror Company (parent company of the *Los Angeles Times*), the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad (which resulted from the merger of the Erie and the Lackawanna), and the Knight-Ridder news agency decide to abandon their hyphens, thus becoming *Times Mirror* (1962), *Erie-Lackawanna* (1963), and *Knight Ridder* (1998)?

The stories behind such evolution can be instructive. Para-Gould, Arkansas, for example, was established in 1882, but became *Paragould* in 1883, when the town incorporated. Both forms of the name were intended to honor J. W. Paramore and Jay Gould, leaders of once-rival railroad companies whose tracks happened to cross in the area, but Gould insisted on *Paragould* because he did not want his name to occur second in the hyphenated construction ("Paragould," n.p.). The point, again, is that we do not know how often such names have remained hyphenated, or become so after being single words, or, in either case, what has motivated any changes.

Perhaps other documented trends in the history of common-noun hyphenation can be observed in names as well. McArthur (1992) notes, for example, that the frequency of hyphenated common nouns has declined in recent generations, particularly in American English, and particularly when the elements of the compound are monosyllabic (*birdsong, playgroup*), prefixed (*reuse, coordinate*), or are perceived as being "closely associated" (*businesswoman, nationwide*) or as having equal semantic weight (*roadsign, snowgoose*). The same general observations may be true of hyphenated names, but we cannot be sure: McArthur (1992) also notes that when the two halves of a hyphenated common noun have "strong individual identities," the hyphen is more likely to remain, and the individual elements of hyphenated names may so routinely be perceived as having "strong individual identities" that any significant loss of hyphenation is impeded.

Little (1986, 70) has written that punctuation is a "complex phenomenon" with a "rich and varied" history. I am suggesting here merely that the history of the onomastic hyphen is equally rich and varied, and that it bears investigating.

II

Hyphenated place names are ubiquitous. In the United States alone, according to the on-line Geographic Names Information System (GNIS; see <http://mapping.usgs.gov/www/gnisform.html>), there were 34,292 as of April 2002. This number seems especially high given that the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) has always discouraged the use of hyphens in new names, even suggesting that hyphens should not be retained in the names in which they currently appear (Roger L. Payne [Executive Secretary of the USBGN], personal communication, 5 February 2001; Payne also notes that the “suggestion” was not a decree, was never enforced, and says the USBGN currently considers proposals for names containing hyphens on a case-by-case basis). In any event, however, the hyphenated names appearing in the United States represent only a fraction of those that occur worldwide.

Numerous unanswered questions come to mind. What kinds of places and/or features tend to have hyphenated names? Are the names more often phrasal (as with *Hole-in-the-Wall*, which, according to the GNIS in April 2002, occurred 34 times in the United States, often with a lowercase *w*, to name a variety of features and places, including glaciers, lakes, streams, valleys, and one cemetery) or dual-form specific (as with *Winston-Salem*, North Carolina)? How often, in the United States, are such names Native American, and within that particular subgroup, how often do hyphens merely separate syllables (a practice the USBGN guidelines frown on; 1997, n.p.)? What stories underlie the names, and what will those stories tell us about the motives of the namers? In short, what can we learn about names and the process of naming by studying the toponymic hyphen?

One wonders, too, what countries besides the United States have policies or regulations that govern the use of hyphens in place names, and what those policies or regulations are. For example, Estonia's Institute of Estonian Language has devoted an entire subsection to the hyphen (1997, section 1.2.2.2, n.p.), decreeing that, on maps and in other official documents, it should be used only when the name is preceded by a qualifying word (such as, in English, *Great*, *Old*, *Northern*, and the like) or is a “copulative compound” (such as, in Estonian, *Karksi-Nuia* and *Abja-Paluoja*). In Canada's former Northern Territories, on the other hand, the Rules of Nomenclature dictated that

“[t]he use of hyphens to connect parts of names should in most cases be avoided and the name written as one word or as separate words established by useage [sic]” (“Northern Territory Rules of Nomenclature” 1995, n.p.).

As this latter example implies, regulations governing the use of toponymic hyphens in Canada occur at the provincial rather than the national level. And it is interesting to note that the various provinces often have conflicting regulations. In New Brunswick, for example, all place names of French origin are hyphenated (*Saint-Francois-de-Kent*), but in Newfoundland they are not (*Baie Verte*; Hamilton 1996). One potentially fertile area for further research is the political and historical (and perhaps also the psychological) motives underlying such decrees.

In Quebec, the rules governing hyphenation in place names are multifaceted, to say the least. As Rayburn (n.d., n.p.) explains, hyphens are used in all and only compound names of French origin (as in *Ste-Marthe-du-Cap-de-la-Madeleine*, but not in *Campbell's Bay* or *Ayer's Cliff*), but excluding any initial articles (so *La Decharge*, but *Le Grand-Village*). If the name of a person is used to identify a place, however, regardless of the person's or name's ethnicity, hyphens are used (thus the names of two school boards are *Lester-B.-Pearson* and *Sir-Wilfrid-Laurier*; according to Alain Vallieres, Executive Director and Secretary of Quebec's Toponymy Commission, this last regulation exists to differentiate the names of places from the names of people; Seidman 1998, A3).

Such rules, though complicated, may seem quite innocuous, but people having to live or deal with the names they affect do not take them lightly. The style manual of the newspaper that published the story serving as the basis of the preceding paragraph, for example, Montreal's *Gazette*, dictates that all place names be printed with no hyphens. Because the newspaper intends to follow its style manual, the way is paved for an interesting and ongoing onomastic conflict. And when the Toponymy Commission ruled on 24 January 2002 that several former Montreal suburbs now considered part of the amalgamated city must be respelled (as in the compound borough named *Rosemont/Petite Patrie*, which was ordered to become *Rosemont-Petite-Patrie*), a number of local officials objected. “You would think they'd have something better to do than pay these people for this idiotic nonsense,” said the ex-mayor

of one suburb. “These guys should get a job and get a life” (quoted in Gyulai 2002, A1).

Perhaps. But we cannot afford to dismiss the importance of toponymic hyphens entirely. In 1989, following the collapse of Communism in the Republic of Czechoslovakia, Slovaks there argued that the country should have the name *Czecho-Slovak Republic*, “thinking the hyphen would let the world know the country is made up of two separate states, five million Slovaks in one, 10 million Czechs in the other” (Pett 1990, 3). The country’s legislators denied the petition, and in fact decreed that the country be known by *Czechoslovak Federative Republic* in the Czech area, and *Czecho-Slovak Republic* in Slovakia. When thousands of Slovaks responded to the order by threatening a civil war, the country’s president, Vaclav Havel, implored members of Parliament to “Come to terms with this hyphen!” (quoted in Pett 1990, 3)—which, he explained, symbolized the Slovakian hunger for a national identity denied them for centuries. The ultimate result of Havel’s speech was the ratification of the name *Czech and Slovak Federative Republic*; with the partitioning of the country on 1 January 1993, however, the two nations resulting from the dissolution took the names *Czech Republic* and *Slovak Republic*.

Again: early in 2001 *The Washington Post* began being blitzed by complaints from readers offended by the newspaper’s longstanding use of a hyphen in *Adams-Morgan*, the name of a local neighborhood. No one else uses a hyphen in the name, the readers argued, so why should the *Post*? By June, the editors had begun spelling the name *Adams Morgan*, but not without explaining that its earlier choice had been politically and historically rather than orthographically motivated (Hopfensperger 2001, B8). It seems that in the early twentieth century, the area had been settled by both whites and African Americans, and had quickly segregated. By 1955, however, the problems associated with that segregation had become so severe that the principals of the all-black and all-white elementary schools attempted to unite the two factions by creating the Adams-Morgan Better Neighborhood Conference. Then for many years following, the name of the neighborhood itself became *Adams-Morgan*, though the hyphen eventually became an orthographic casualty.

The point, again, is merely that onomastic hyphens, however symbolically, are at the center of such disputes, and deserve to be studied further and understood better. One can only speculate on their roles, political or social or otherwise, in names such as *Austria-Hungary*

and *Bosnia-Hercegovina*. And, on a less global scale, on the psychological and/or political impact of decisions such as that made by the U.S. Federal Office of Management and Budget when it bestowed the name *Phoenix-Mesa* on Arizona's largest population center without consulting officials in either Phoenix or Mesa ("Phoenix-Mesa: What's in a Hyphen?" 1992). And, finally, on the cultural or historical importance underlying the toponyms that so often contain them (as with *Sutton-under-Whitestoncliffe*, which, because of its hyphens, was dismissed from consideration as the longest place name in England ["Thirsk and Easingwold," n.d.]).

III

Personal names, perhaps especially surnames, may provide the most fertile area for research on the onomastic hyphen. David Williamson, co-editor of the most recent edition of the well-known *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage* (Kidd and Williamson 2000), says that hyphenated surnames in English originated in the nineteenth century: British landowners having only female heirs frequently stipulated in their wills that sons-in-law had to add their wives' surnames to their own before they could assume ownership of the wives' family property (Pendreigh 1994). Predictably, hyphenated surnames soon came to be equated with distinction, privilege, and class, and the practice was quickly copied in other countries (such as Wales; Fowkes 1981, 270) and by members of the middle and lower classes (Heald 1998, 19).

Depending on the terms of the wills, the added names sometimes occurred as prefixes, sometimes as suffixes; the hyphens typically compounded in following generations. Thus one Thomas Duff was left property by his father-in-law provided he prefix his wife's family name to his own and pass on the new compound, *Gordon-Duff*, to any heirs. Gordon-Duff also had a son, but one who ultimately married a woman with brothers (thus they inherited the family property), so the son's name remained unchanged: he lived and died a Gordon-Duff. That son, however, also had a son, named Patrick, who, like his grandfather, married a woman having no brothers; thus Patrick would inherit the family property, but only if he added his wife's name to his, yielding *Patrick Gordon-Duff-Pennington* (Pendreigh 1994).

For similar reasons, a well-known contemporary explorer has the name *Sir Ranulf Twisleton-Wykeham-Fiennes*, and Lady Caroline Jemima

had the surname *Temple-Nugent-Chandos-Brydges-Grenville* (McIntosh and Fawthrop 2000, n.p.). According to Nevin (2001, 24), the longest hyphenated surname in British history was *Tollemache-Tollemache-de Orellana-Plantagenet-Tollemache-Tollemache*, which belonged to a military man having the title and given names *Major Leone Sextus Denys Oswolf Fraudatifilius*.

It would be interesting to know whether hyphenated surnames in England (and elsewhere) are still associated with the upper class, both regarding frequency of occurrence and how members of various demographically-defined groups perceive them. (At the very least, they are associated with membership in Parliament: the Royal College of Arms, which governs the use of names and titles there, dictates that all compound surnames be hyphenated [“-?” 1997].) It would also be interesting to discover why some rather well-known families, or at least some branches of those families, no longer use hyphens in their names (as happens with *Bowes-Lyon/Bowes Lyon*, the surname of the recently-deceased Queen Mother, and *Bonham-Carter/Bonham Carter*, the surname of the actress Helena [Pendreigh 1994]), and whether this marks the beginning of a general socio-onomastic trend.

We need a full accounting of where surnames are hyphenated worldwide, and why, and how that hyphenation occurs. By cultural convention in Mexico, for example, a married woman must keep her family’s name, but prepose her husband’s surname to it, resulting in a His Name-Her Name compound (Heald 1998, 19). This is true even if the woman is not Mexican: Helen Smith, on marrying Juan Gonzalez, becomes Mary Gonzalez-Smith. There is no such cultural expectation in the Netherlands, though hyphenated surnames do often occur, and again always with the husband’s name occurring first (Corser 2001, 6). And in Japan and much of Eastern Europe, there exists a strong cultural proscription *against* hyphenation, the expectation being that a husband and wife will share the husband’s surname (Tabakoff 2001, 15).

In the United States, the cultural requirement stipulating that a married woman should replace her family’s name with her husband’s has gradually weakened since the nineteenth century; as of 1993, about five percent of all married women hyphenated their surnames (Brightman 1994), representing a threefold increase from just the preceding generation (Johnson and Scheuble 1995). But again, presently we can

only guess why such hyphenation occurs (as opposed to blending or unhyphenated compounding, which also occur, though not as often) and what it might signify socially or culturally.

Of course, the psychology and politics of hyphenated surnames can be complex, not least because they nearly always involve culture-specific connotations and individual perceptions. The modern Irish poet C. Day-Lewis, for example, published his early poetry under the name *Day-Lewis*. He then began omitting the hyphen because he believed it suggested a class distinction he wanted no part of, but ultimately reinserted it when he realized that, in its absence, he was being addressed as *Mr. Lewis* rather than as *Mr. Day*, which he prefers because he believes it sounds more Irish (Pendreigh 1994).²

Other potentially fruitful avenues of research regarding hyphenated surnames exist as well, for the phenomenon does not occur only among married women. In the United States, at least, the name of a stepfather is sometimes hyphenated to an existing name; thus Robert Silk legally changed *Silk* to *Kilroy-Silk* (Heald 1998, 19). Or, again, a husband may hyphenate his surname to his wife's, as when John Zodrow, on marrying Gina Rester, changed his name to *Rester-Zodrow* (unfortunately, this latter kind of name-changing is so rare in the United States that it raised a red flag with the Internal Revenue Service, which promptly charged Rester-Zodrow with tax fraud [Nelson 1997, E2]). And children may be given hyphenated names to symbolize that they are a product of the union of their parents (as when the child of a Ross and a Murray became a Ross-Murray; Murray 1999) or to represent the parents' different ethnicities (as when the child of a Sangheri and a Warren became a Sangheri-Warren; Heald 1998, 19).

In fact, it may be that the hyphenated surnames of children will yield some of the most fertile ground for onomastic research, particularly as those names are allowed or even determined by the courts. France, for example, recently adopted a bill that allows parents to hyphenate their children's surnames (Tabakoff 2001, 15). No comparable law exists in the United States (Lombard 1984, 130) or Australia (Connolly 2002, 9) or, indeed, most other places, though its absence (and the absence of any cultural conventions to the contrary) has generally been construed as a sign that parents in those countries can hyphenate or not, as they wish.

Corser (2001, 6) reports that in the Netherlands, for example (where, as I have already mentioned, many married women hyphenate their names to their husbands'), the cultural convention is that children take their father's surname, as happens in patrilineal societies generally. No reliable statistics exist on how often parents hyphenate their children's surnames worldwide, though they surely constitute a distinct minority. Connolly (2002, 9) notes, however, that hyphenated surnames for children were "relatively popular" in Australia until the early twenty-first century, when they came to be viewed as too long, too awkward, and as causing innumerable logistical headaches (the newest trend is for parents to adopt the mother's maiden name as the child's middle name).

Onomastic freedom produces onomastic conflicts, of course, as in the case of the baby born to an unmarried Colorado couple whose relationship ended when the mother was still pregnant. At the time of the birth, the father, surnamed Rosenthal, agreed the baby's legal name would be *Kyleigh Madison Ella Newman*, *Newman* being the mother's surname. Shortly after he signed the birth certificate, however, Newman decided he wanted the baby to bear his name too, and suggested *Kyleigh Madison Ella Newman-Rosenthal* or even *Kyleigh Madison Ella Rosenthal-Newman*. The mother countered, stipulating that while she could accept *Rosenthal* as the baby's fourth name (*Kyleigh Madison Ella Rosenthal Newman*), there would be no hyphen, given that she and Rosenthal were no longer a couple. Rosenthal, however, wanted the hyphen; thus he and Newman went to court, and, after a trial that lasted nearly a year and cost a total of some \$60,000 in legal fees, the (male) judge ruled in favor of Rosenthal. The child's legal name is now *Kyleigh Madison Ella Newman-Rosenthal* (Good 2001, 40; Lindsay 2001, 40).

The importance of such stories for onomasts may lie primarily with the legal precedents that are set and how such precedents will affect naming practices in the future. Historically, courts in the United States (Lombard 1984, Murray 1999) and other free-naming countries (Tabakoff 2001) have been disinclined to express opinions in such cases, though the increase in divorces and nontraditional living arrangements (in Australia, to offer just one example, 29 percent of all children are now born out of wedlock, and the average legal marriage lasts just five years [Tabakoff 2001]) will probably necessitate more judicial opinions such as the one just discussed.

There are other issues involving hyphenated surnames that deserve to be investigated as well, such as why, as I mentioned earlier, there is such widespread refusal to acknowledge them among banks, credit card companies, publishers of telephone directories, and other industries that deal with surnames daily (Prior 1997, H2). As the husband of a woman who has hyphenated my name to hers for many years, I can testify that the reason offered most frequently is technological. Indeed, on the many occasions my wife and I have called to request that a hyphen be inserted into her name, we have been told by customer service representatives that “the computer won’t let me do that.” It is interesting, however, that hyphenated surnames cause no apparent problem for other surname databases (they occur often on course rosters at the university where I teach, for example).

Finally, it is not only hyphenated surnames that are worthy of investigation, since certain ethnic given names often contain hyphens as well; consider the French *Jean-Baptiste*, the Aramaic (or possibly Arabic) *Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz* (see in the Bible, Isaiah VIII.i), and the Chinese *Hui-mei* and *Tse-tung*. (These latter two names are especially interesting: the first belongs to a Chinese singer who also goes by *A*Mei*; the second was changed to *Tsetung* in 1969 when Chairman Mao dropped the hyphen amidst speculation that he wanted his name to be more visually similar to Lenin’s and Stalin’s, then later was respelled *Zedong* when China revised the official English spelling of its names.) And Puritan jury records dating to 1658 reveal what appear to be hyphenated nicknames such as *Search-the-scriptures* Morton and *Strong-in-the-faith* Jenkinson (McIntosh and Fawthrop 2000, n.p.).

IV

Among the many other sorts of hyphenated names that onomasts might investigate, those denoting various groups of people who display their ethnicity by linking it to *American*—as in *Mexican-American*, *Irish-American*, *Japanese-American*, and the like—come to mind first. Woodrow Wilson is said to have reviled such labels (McCourt 2002, R3), though John Wayne, when he recorded his now-famous “America: Why I Love Her” in 1973, venerated the people they represent by dedicating one of his 10 recitations to them (it was titled, appropriately, “The Hyphen;” see “Concert for Sept. 11” 2001, 43).

More recently, following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, appeals have been made for the elimination of these hyphenated names on the grounds that they create suspicion, hatred, and separation. As Mitrovich and Winters (2001, B-11) put it,

[t]he hyphen is more than a literary punctuation mark. Its presence symbolizes cruel facts of our history, especially the treatment dealt in the past by the majority population to those we called “minorities.” The hyphen represents the division many still feel in America, even while pursuing the assimilation readily offered those with lighter skin.

Mitrovich and Winters conclude that the labels used by and for so-called “hyphenated Americans” too often “take precedence over the only name that should ever matter—American!” (2001, B-13).

Again, numerous questions come to mind: Why do certain groups of Americans, and certain individuals within those groups, use such hyphenated names, and others not? At what point do hyphenated Americans generally become simply “Americans,” and does the answer have more to do with interethnic marriage, residential longevity, or the ethnic group’s internal sense of identity? Does hyphenated ethnic terminology actually invoke such strongly negative feelings among non-hyphenated Americans as Mitrovich and Winters suggest? And why have some groups dropped the hyphen, instead favoring a simple unconnected compound (*African American* is now preferred to *African-American*)?

Other issues involving the onomastic hyphen also persist. It is interesting, for example, that we humans more readily tolerate some kinds of hyphenated names than others. Mineral designations such as *bario-orthojoaquinite* rarely get a second glance; nor do the names of religious ideologies (*Judeo-Christian*), airlines (*Air-India*, as compared to *Air Canada*, *Air France*, *Air Jamaica*, and *Air China*), political titles (*Governor-General* and *Lieutenant-Governor* both exist in Australia), universities (as in *Tennessee-Chattanooga* and *Arkansas-Little Rock*), telephone company subsidiaries (as in *Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania*; Rozansky 1993, C2 notes that the Bell Corporation created such names in 1993), discount stores (*Wal-Mart*, created in 1962), highways (*I-70*), or games (*Mah-Jongg*). On the other hand, some hyphenated names create quite a stir, as when a newspaper in Gwinnett County, Georgia changed in 1992 from calling itself the *Home Weekly* to the *Gwinnett*

Post-Tribune, and received numerous calls and letters to the editor (Brac 1992, J2; the conflict arose over the hyphen, not the change in names).

We should also investigate in what sorts of names besides those regulated by governments and their agencies the use of hyphens is formally prescribed or proscribed, and what those prescriptions and proscriptions are. Or, in other words, we should explore to what degree the use of the hyphen, as a mark of punctuation, is truly “a personal matter” (Parkes 1993, 5). The structure of *Bario-orthojoaquinite*, for example, the mineral name I cited in the previous paragraph, is tightly regulated by the International Mineralogical Association (see “The IMA Commission on New Minerals and Mineral Names: Procedures and Guidelines on Mineral Nomenclature” 1998). And the now-privatized Internet no longer allows “trailing” hyphens in its Web-site names (as in *www.microsoft-.com*) because those names were too often and too easily confused with the nearly-identical site names of well-known corporations and individuals (“Nearly Identical Net-address Registrations Revoked” 2000).³

V

My conclusion can be brief; I hope the message I have tried to convey in this essay is clear. Until now we onomasts have virtually ignored the hyphen, only occasionally noting its appearance and never thoroughly investigating its history or analyzing its many roles. The result is that a vast wealth of untapped information exists on this aspect of the formation and use of names. Of course, nothing like a unified theory of onomastic hyphens may be possible, given that they occur in so many kinds of names, and with so many different underlying cultural, social, historical, psychological, geographical, linguistic, and legal purposes and motives. Indeed, it is difficult even here to draw general conclusions about their use.

I can only hope that this difficulty does not overshadow the fact that the study of hyphens as integral components of numerous individual names is long overdue, however. Especially because onomastics is, by definition, such an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, the few suggestions for research I have offered surely constitute only a fraction of the numerous important aspects of this most remarkable and most overlooked mark of punctuation.

Notes

1. As an interesting aside, I follow McIntosh and Fawthrop (2000) in reporting that a play titled *Rolls Hyphen Royce* was staged in London's West End in 1977.

2. As Pendreigh (1994) notes, Day-Lewis's son, actor Daniel Day-Lewis, has also both used and not used a hyphen in his surname, though for reasons that are less clear. In his first major films, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and *A Room with a View* (1986), the credits read *Day Lewis*, as they did for most of his films in the 1980s, including the 1989 production *My Left Foot*. One notable exception to all of this, however, was *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), in which his name was listed as *Day-Lewis*, as it was also in the 1993 film ironically titled *In the Name of the Father*.

3. Until 1999, the Internet and its names were controlled by the federal government; currently Web names can be registered by some 23 different privately-run companies. This privatization has not solved a similar sort of problem concerning the use of hyphens in Internet names, however. Many pornographic sites, in an attempt to recruit new customers, add or omit hyphens to create Web names that differ only minimally from those of people and businesses likely to have numerous visitors. Thus potential customers type in what they believe to be the Web name of a site run by or dedicated to, say, Northwestern Airlines or Sharon Stone, but wind up (as they say in Internet slang) surfing blue. Many then decide to stay, and the ploy of the pornographer who runs the site is successful. But it is not only companies or celebrities on a par with the likes of Northwestern Airlines and Sharon Stone who have had such problems: in 2000, the Sno-Isle Regional Library, which serves two counties in Washington, discovered that its Web name, *www.sno-isle.org*, was often being confused with *www.snoisle.org*, that of a California-registered pornographer (Montgomery 2000, B1).

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