

of the Victorians. In Chapter 1, “The Birth of ‘Shakespeare’,” Thomas explores what had, for want of another word, become the myth of Shakespeare’s birth and upbringing as it was imagined and even represented in etchings, engravings, and later photographs produced in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 2, “Bidding for the Bard: The Auction of the Birthplace,” chronicles the various and competing efforts to raise funds for the purchase of the house amid rumors that Shakespeare might not even have been born there, as well as the fear that it might be bought by P. T. Barnum and removed beam by stone by piece to America to be shown as a curiosity.

In Chapter 3, “Bringing Down the House: Restoring the Birthplace,” Thomas presents the very real dilemma that no one could be entirely certain what the house actually looked like in Shakespeare’s time. All that leads very easily into Chapter 4, “Real Estate: Authenticating the Birthplace.” Just as there are those who cannot believe that Shakespeare even wrote the plays that are attributed to him, there were those who questioned if he were actually born in the portion of the house on Henley Street that is referred to as the Birthplace. While his family may have lived as tenants on the property prior to and at the time of his birth, records show that his father, John Shakespeare, a glove maker, leather worker, and dealer in hides and wool, did not actually purchase that part of the house until several years after William was born.

The title for Chapter 5, “Eight Things to Do in Stratford-upon-Avon: A Guide for the Victorian Tourist,” is actually somewhat misleading, for the eight things are never enumerated or delineated. It is, however, an interesting chapter, drawing upon descriptions from actual guidebooks, travel writing, and memoirs of the period that described how people behaved and/or were meant to behave when visiting the Birthplace.

Finally, in the Conclusion, “The Place and the Plays,” Thomas refers to the several parallels between Shakespeare’s characters and people he knew or might have known in Stratford. She also reminds the reader again that it was the Birthplace that the early tourist came to see, for the Bard’s plays were not even performed in Stratford until 1879 with the construction of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. The first production was *As You Like It*, “which was set in an imaginary version of Warwickshire’s Forest of Arden” (165).

It is the author herself who aptly sums up her contribution to Shakespeare scholarship: “As this book has shown, Shakespeare’s Birthplace was essentially created by the Victorians, who inserted it into Shakespeare’s biography, bought and restored it for the nation, authenticated it, and placed it at the center of the Stratford tourist trail” (156).

The book is meticulously sourced. Notes for each of the numerous quotations and references to and from the work of others are provided in a separate section at the end of the book, and a substantial bibliography, including materials from the collection of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, is provided.

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Jane Austen’s Names: Riddles, Persons, Places. By MARGARET DOODY. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2015. Pp. 438. \$35.00. ISBN: 978-0-226-15783-2.

In Val McDermid’s 2015 updating of Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*, would-be romantic heroine Catherine Morland laments the unsuitableness of her neighborhood as a potential locale for her story, solely based on her local villages’ names: “It would have been hard to make credible a romantic fiction set in Farleigh Piddle, Mid Piddle, Nether Piddle, and Piddle Dimmer” (1). Apparently, Margaret Doody, author of the highly engaging *Jane Austen’s Names: Riddles, Persons, Places*, is not the only one who has noticed Austen’s very intentional, often-playful, and at times sly, way with names.

Doody — John and Barbara Glynn Family Professor of Literature at the University of Notre Dame — has researched her topics painstakingly, drawing extensively from Austen’s own letters and

other writings, in addition to relevant works with which Austen would no doubt have been familiar. Using the phrase “no doubt” is a reminder that, in fact, in many cases Doody is indeed speculating and without hard evidence, but the depth and breadth of her research are always persuasive.

She organizes Austen’s novels into two useful categories — “Steventon” and “Chawton” (essentially, early and later) — associating them with the places where Austen lived while composing them. Her decision to analyze, first, names of persons, including nicknames, titles, and ranks, in addition to first and last names, and then to analyze place names, of necessity means there is some repetition as the novels are discussed twice. As is the case with Doody’s speculations, because the analyses are done with such care and with such a level of research detail, duplication is easily forgiven.

In Part I, “England,” Doody contextualizes Austen’s works, not only with respect to events and writers contemporary with Austen, but also with English history — beginning with the Conquest. Anyone with the same command as she might conceivably skip this section. Such persons, however, are in short supply. For most of us the section is a very useful summary indeed. Lest we think that Doody’s historical interest would not be matched by the novelist, she reminds us that Austen wrote her satirical “History of England” at only age sixteen.

The section also serves as a needed reminder that, in fact, Austen writes from a time and culture vastly different from our own. The past quarter of a century has seen many analyses of Austen’s popularity (whether in print or in the now-vast film and digital adaptations) and why it continues unabated, but most of them circle around the so-called universality of Austen’s themes and values. We are, after all, the same species still, the argument goes, with the same pluses and minuses, and consequently we readily recognize and appreciate both her heroines and her villains. This is as may be, but Doody shares a myriad of ways in which Austen’s writings, and specifically her names, would have triggered reactions in contemporary readers who shared her knowledge, both of British history and of more current events — reactions that twenty-first-century readers would never have. For example, there is a long discussion of the class implications of names with which Austen, and her readers, would have been familiar. “A first name like ‘Bridget’ gives away a person’s Irish Catholic background, marking her as ‘low,’” Doody notes (56). Further, she comments that, even in her very early writings, “Jane Austen conducts vigorous experiments with names, savoring their various implications” (61). She remarks on Austen’s use of *Fitzroy* as the surname for two of the characters in an early story: “high if naughty Norman, meaning ‘illegitimate son of the King’ — the name of the Duchess of Cleveland’s son by Charles II” (61). In *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward Ferrars’ solidly Saxon first name matches his solid moral character, while his far less stalwart brother Robert appropriately bears a name of French origin (107). Doody gives example upon example such as these, conclusively proving her point that Austen’s names contain layers of meaning which modern readers will not discern.

Titles and ranks are similarly loaded with implications that eighteenth-century readers would have recognized. Doody notes helpfully that “[k]nighthoods were cheap and did not clutter up the landscape by passing to descendants” in Austen’s day, so the title “Sir” in reference to a knighthood rather than to a baronet would have been much less prestigious than an American reader might surmise (67). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Doody comments that “Sir” William Lucas receives his title simply for giving a speech, which detail may easily escape a less careful reader than she (66).

Doody gives the same thorough, contextualized treatment to place names in Austen, commenting at the start of her discussion that “[p]lace is central to Jane Austen’s fiction” (234). There follows a very helpful (in particular, for Americans) discussion of the cultural differences between the North and South, and the East and West of England. The South and the East are generally privileged, thus place names in those locations connote greater status. When John Thorpe, in *Northanger Abbey*, boasts of fox hunting in Leicestershire, dropping the name of a county renowned for the exclusivity of its hunt, it is yet another way in which Thorpe attempts to puff himself up in the eyes of his listeners — the place name is another signal to knowing readers of Thorpe’s foolishness (252).

Interestingly, Doody points out that the lack of namedropping may cast a character in an equally negative light. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward Ferrars’ mother is a formidable matriarch who controls the family’s apparently vast wealth, but the names of her birthplace, the location

of her family home, and the birthplaces of her children — we learn none of them, and an astute eighteenth-century reader would have suspected that Mrs. Ferrars, in obscuring these place names, is hiding the stigma of riches derived from commerce. She cannot claim a heritage of traditionally derived wealth that certain place names would have revealed (267).

More intriguingly, Doody argues that part of Austen's artistry is that she also works against the conventional associations which names may convey. Fitzwilliam Darcy, for example, initially the quintessential Southern gentleman in *Pride and Prejudice*, ends the novel by establishing his family in the North (390). Thus readers may not rely completely on any neat one-to-one correspondence between a name and a historical allusion or cultural reference. Doody uses examples such as this one to support her contention that, based on early writings, Austen was less conventional than later published works might suggest.

Austen's most famous place name is arguably Pemberley, Darcy's country estate, and there has been much speculation as to whether the estate is based on a real home and, if so, which one. Doody offers some possibilities, but, more importantly, she examines the origins of the name itself: "'Pemberley' is an Anglo-Saxon locational description, 'place on the barley field near a hill.' 'Pember' would originally have referred to a man owning a barley field or fields" (299). She goes on to explain how appropriate it is for the most admired place in all of the novels to "return us to simplicity, to the primal work of loving Nature and raising food in it," by virtue of its name alone (300).

In her conclusion, Doody states of the body of Austen's work that "[h]istorical allusions abound in her fiction. . . . Combinations of place names and personal names point both back and forward. . . . The writing is dense with allusion, thick with multiple sensations and meanings" (389). Her meticulous research supports her thesis admirably, giving even the most ardent Austen fan new perspectives on her writing.

Bibliography

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How to Change Your Name in California. 14th edn. By LISA SEDANO and EMILY DOSKOW. Berkeley, CA: Nolo, 2014. Pp. 212. \$34.99. ISBN: 978-1-1-4133-1989-7.

Published by Nolo, a company known for making the law accessible to everyone, *How to Change Your Name in California* is an instructional manual for California residents seeking a formal legal name change. Unlike many other law books, this one is not written in "legalese." Attorneys Lisa Sedano and Emily Doskow use language that is accessible to any audience as they explain the legal process necessary to enable a name change.

The table of contents in this self-help book is clear and designed to make it easy to navigate between chapters according to specific needs. Included in the introduction are bolded category titles, each with a quick summary of a situation in which a name change might be desired. Each chapter is divided into subcategories and sub-subcategories, and parenthetical references throughout the book save time by directing readers to specific chapters in order to move past information irrelevant to their situation.

This book is thorough, but Sedano and Doskow recognize its limitations and warn the reader when their situation has moved beyond the scope of this book. *How to Change Your Name in California* is useful even for the reader whose situation cannot be covered adequately by it, however,