The Namework of Ursula K. Le Guin

CHRISTOPHER L. ROBINSON

École polytechnique, University of Paris-Saclay, Palaiseau, France

With its focus on sound and form in language, Sigmund Freud's concept of jokework provides a useful analogy for studying invented names in fiction. This is especially true of a writer like Ursula K. Le Guin, who describes the onomastic creation in her stories and novels as a largely subconscious process. The namework in her fiction recalls the kind of wordplay and verbal experimentation in which children like to indulge, an activity that both Freud and Le Guin claim is inhibited in the course of growing up. It moreover privileges names in and of themselves as objects of aesthetic delight for the ears, eyes and minds of both the author and her readers. Finally, the concept of namework helps to explain how and why Le Guin recreates names that look and sound alike in her fantasy and science fiction.

KEYWORDS Ursula K. Le Guin, literary onomastics, names in science fiction and fantasy, Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*.

Ursula K. Le Guin recounts the genesis of her first three Earthsea novels in the essay "Dreams Must Explain Themselves." Addressing the question of how she creates names, the author reveals that three islands in her imaginary archipelago are named after her children. Apart from that, she claims, "[n]one of the other names 'means' anything that I know of, though their sound is more or less meaningful to me" (1979, 51). Echoing these words, John Algeo argues that these names are "long thought on, carefully considered, exactly right," but they are "not susceptible to clever analysis. They are magical names, and can be appreciated only with a sense of the magical, the fitness of name to thing" (1982, 65). For this reason "it would be worse than presumptuous to 'explain' the names in *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Names, like dreams, must explain themselves" (64). Algeo draws an analogy here between the formation of dreams in the unconscious and the creation of names in fiction, an analogy that is surely appropriate for an author who speaks of her fantasy world as a "subconscious" discovery (Le Guin 1979, 48). And it might seem presumptuous indeed for a literary scholar, acting as though she or he were a psychoanalyst, to attempt to delve into the private meanings of the names that Le Guin claims to "hear" in the depths of her mind (1979, 52).

Yet, meanings often do suggest themselves thanks to the resemblance between a given name and other words. Commenting on a name from *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Eleanor

Cameron writes that *Skiorh* makes her think of the words *scour*, *skewer*, and *core*. These are fitting associations for the name's designee, whom she describes as a man who "was hollowed out by [a] shadow-beast and possessed" so that he could then lead the hero Ged "to a certain desolate place and turn upon him" (1971, 136). Cameron's observations do not really go against the spirit of Algeo's argument, which is that sound and form take precedence over content in Le Guin's fantasy names, both in terms of creation and reception. There is no reason to doubt the author, he writes,

> when she tells us that for her the only meaning of most of the magical names of her fantasy novel is a product of their sound. Such meaning is not cognitive sense at all, but incantational, mantric meaning. It has more in common with sound symbolism or the phonestheme than with semantic features (Algeo 1982, 63).

The magic of these onomastic inventions is thus found in their appeal to readers' aesthetic sensibilities, to their senses of sight and hearing, and to their intuitive grasp of how a given name looks and sounds just right for the character, place, or thing it designates. Le Guin's explanation of how she makes up the names in her fantasy novels supports this view:

> People often ask how I think of names in fantasies, and again I have to answer that I find them, I hear them [...] For me, as for the wizards [of Earthsea], to know the name of an island or a character is to know the island or the person. Usually the name comes of itself, but sometimes one must be very careful: as I was with the protagonist, whose true name is Ged. I worked (in collaboration with a wizard named Ogion) for a long time trying to "listen for" his name, and making certain it really was his name. This all sounds very mystical and indeed there are aspects of it I do not understand, but it is a pragmatic business too, since if the name had been wrong the character would have been wrong – misbegotten, misunderstood. (1979, 51–52)

What the author describes here is a mysterious and intuitive, yet pragmatic activity of listening for sound-shapes in what she calls her subconscious mind.[1]

This notion of names as sound-shapes that emerge in a largely unconscious process of creation would appear to bring us back to the analogy between names and dreams. Yet, as Algeo argues, there is a major difference when it comes to the interpretation of names and dreams. A psychoanalyst seeks to translate the manifest contents of an analysand's dream – its sounds, images, and events – into its latent content or repressed dream thought. In his gloss of two names from *The Lathe of Heaven* (Le Guin 2008), a novel that explores the power of dreams to transform reality, Algeo provides us with an example of the analogous approach in literary onomastics. Mirroring the personalities of their respective designees, the names *George Orr* and *William Haber* are transparently motivated (Algeo 1982, 61–62). Among other things, the first alludes to George Orwell, whose dystopian novel is echoed in the setting of Le Guin's narrative, a police state that was established in the year 1984. On several occasions, moreover, the text puns on the resemblance between the protagonist's surname and two familiar words: *or* and *ore*. The conjunction *or* underlines a certain indecisiveness in his character, while the noun *ore* suggests a lack of refinement in his personality. The given name of the second character, William Haber, signifies willfulness. Thanks to associations with Latin *habere* and German *haben*, the surname suggests such verbs as have, possess, or hold. Algeo concludes the name can thus be translated as "I am the will to have, to control, to dominate" (62).

Names such as these invite analyses of a traditional kind, in which the critic identifies puns, etymologies, and allusions, and then illustrates how these semantic associations mirror certain traits of their designees. But there are other kinds of names that resist such analysis, such those in Le Guin's fantasy novels. "Whatever associations these names have," Algeo argues, "they are not public but private and unavailable to the general reader" (63). The literary analyst simply does not have the same kind of privileged access to the unconscious mind of the author as the psychoanalyst has to the mind of the analysand. The analogy between names and dreams thus leads us into something of an impasse, at least so far as certain kinds of names in fiction are concerned.

Jokework and Namework

If we shift the analogy from dreams to jokes, however, the perspective changes entirely.[2] In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Sigmund Freud focuses primarily on the sound and form of verbal jokes, rather than their content, together with the effects that jokes create in speakers and listeners.[3] In the case of puns and other varieties of wordplay, "our psychical attitude [is focused] upon the *sound* of the word instead of upon its *meaning*," such that "the (acoustic) word-presentation itself take[s] the place of its significance as given by its relations to thing-presentations" (2001a, 119, italics in the original). Indeed, the same meaning in another form, Freud argues, would destroy the humor in a joke (17). In her guidebook for budding authors, *Steering the Craft*, Le Guin likewise puts an emphasis on sound as she invites readers to consider names as phonic objects of memory, play, and reverie. "The sound of the language," she writes, "is where it all begins and what it all comes back to. The basic elements of language are physical: the noise words make and the rhythm of their relationships" (1998, 19). This is especially true of names, for "[t]he sounds themselves and the echo-allusions hidden in them are intensely evocative, even if you can't 'translate' the meaning" (25). Names, in other words, evoke not only ideas, but also images, emotions, and physical sensations that resist "translation," notably of the kind that Algeo illustrates with *William Haber* ("I am the will to have, to control, to dominate"). This evocative power of names, moreover, is generated by the "sounds themselves."

Le Guin claims that children are particularly sensitive to the sonorities of names and words, while the majority of adults are not:

> Most children enjoy the sound of language for its own sake. They wallow in repetitions and luscious word-sounds and the crunch and slither of onomatopoeia; they fall in love with musical or impressive words and use them in all the wrong places. Some writers keep this childish love for the sounds of language [...] Others "outgrow" their oral/aural sense of language as they learn to read in silence. That's a loss. (1998, 19)

In a later passage, she acknowledges that many writers will find it difficult to indulge in the play of sound and sense for its own sake without some kind of justification or pretext, such as writing for children (26). This inhibition, in some cases at least, might very well be due to psychological factors. According to Freud, children acquire language by way of playing with the sounds of words and names:

> During the period in which a child is learning how to handle the vocabulary of his mother-tongue, it gives him obvious pleasure to "experiment with it in play" [...] And he puts

words together without regard to the condition that they should make sense, in order to obtain from them the pleasurable effect of rhythm or rhyme. Little by little he is forbidden this enjoyment, till all that remains permitted to him are significant combinations of words. (2001a, 125)

Yet, as the individual grows and matures, this indulgence in word play "is brought to an end" and "rejected as being meaningless or actually absurd; as a result of criticism it becomes impossible" (128). Freud believes that jokes serve as a pretext to recreate a state of mind anterior to that stage of language acquisition when "the pressure of critical reason" (126) and "the burden of intellectual upbringing" (127) become too repressive for individuals to indulge in wordplay without inhibitions. "[T]he pleasure in a joke," he states, "is derived from play with words or from the liberation of nonsense, and […] the meaning of the joke is merely intended to protect that pleasure from being done away with by criticism" (131). In short, the logic behind or meaning of the joke serves as a cover for the childlike pleasure of indulging in nonsense and wordplay for its own sake.

Similarly, the practical demand or "pragmatic business" of creating names in a work of fiction may serve, at least in part, as a pretext for those writers who need to give themselves "permission," as Le Guin puts it, to "have fun, cut loose, play around with word sounds and rhythms" (1998, 26). This "liberation of nonsense," to borrow Freud's phrase (2001a, 131), not only affords a moment of childlike wordplay, but also an opportunity for adult authors to reawaken within themselves what Le Guin calls a "childish love for the sounds of language." This is not an altogether new idea, by the way. Étienne Souriau observes that onomastic invention can give rise to "a remembrance or resurgence of infantile language" (1965, 24, my translation). The memory in question, moreover, may involve the recovery of, not only a childlike state of mind or receptivity, but also specific sound patterns, syllables, words, or other names whose significance dates back to the actual childhood of the author. The name of the main protagonist of Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed* (1974) provides an excellent case in point. The portmanteau construction of *Shevek* combines the names of two friends of the author's father: ***Sheviakov*** is the name of a Russian student, while ***Klimek*** is that of a Polish anthropologist whom the five-year-old Ursula had a crush on (Phillips, 2010, 162).[4]

We find another example in the name Le Guin uses to illustrate how she hears or finds names. Though she appears to have forgotten it, she would have encountered *Ged* in her youthful readings of Lord Dunsany, an author whose tales, she claims, inspired her to begin writing fantasy in the first place (1979, 25–26). As there are no resemblances between the strange deity in Dunsany's "The Sword and the Idol" (2000, 286–288) and the eponymous hero of Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*, this similarity between their names is an example of blank association. In such a case, a name imitates the sound and form of a pre-existing vocable, in part or in whole, with or without modification. The phonic envelope of the original, however, is emptied of its contents and divested of its referent. It is thanks to this kind of divestment that the adult namemaker can then recreate the sound-shape of *Ged* into a renewed form when she gives the name *Gde* to a planet mentioned in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (2010, 37). This recreation of *Ged* illustrates that blank association is not a literary source, borrowing, or influence in the usual sense. Furthermore, given Le Guin's admission that she has a poor memory (1979, 49), and that she finds or hears names in her subconscious, it is very unlikely that she deliberately or even knowingly drew any connections between the original and refashioned vocables.

The best explanation for how this kind of association works is therefore found in speculations on the unconscious workings of memory and affect that a concept of namework can provide. In keeping with the analogy of Freudian jokework, namework suggests that the remembrance of emotionally meaningful words and names, or the aesthetic encounters with novel, colorful, and unusual vocables will leave residual traces in the namemaker's unconscious mind, and these traces will then get displaced onto or transferred into her onomastic creations. Such encounters and acts of remembrance may have occurred in the author's actual childhood or they may have happened when she was in a childlike frame of mind as an adult.

Freud identifies "the rediscovery of the familiar" as one of the capital pleasures of jokes (2001a, 120). In an interesting comparison with child's play, Le Guin makes a similar assertion about writing fiction. "By 'imagination,'" she writes, "I personally mean the free play of the mind both intellectual and sensory. By 'play' I mean *recreation*, *re-creation*, the recombination of what is known into the new" (1979, 41, italics added). In her namework, this pleasurable recombination involves both wordplay and the rediscovery of familiar, well-liked sound-shapes. Drawn to the sound of a vocable she has borrowed or invented, the author will sometimes return to and reconstruct it in one or more variations that range from simple pairs of names that look and sound alike, such as *Ged* and *Gde*, to more elaborate series that contain multiple items. In a previous article I explored one of these longer series, *Estrel/Strella → Estarriol → Estraven/Estre*, from an aesthetic and formal perspective (Robinson 2011, 133–136). In what follows I would like to examine another series, *Otake → otak → Oket → Okzat-Ozkat*, in light of the concept of namework, or the psychogenesis of names.

Recreation and Re-creation

The main setting of Le Guin's second novel, *Planet of Exile*, is a colony located on a distant planet in the far future. In the Terran's settlement there is a street named Otake. This may have been taken from the name of a volcano in the Tokura Islands, a small industrial city located in Hiroshima prefecture, a female saint in Buddhism whose full name is Otake Dainichi Nyorai, or some other unidentified referent. The actual source, however, is less important than its cultural origin, as it is a commonplace in the onomastics of science fiction to blend names from diverse origins to imply a future society that is "completely fused, merged or integrated with respect to races and cultures" (Krueger 1966, 206). We find this in some of the personal names from the novel such as *Jakob Alterra*, *Alla Pasfal*, and *Jonkendy Li*. These appear to be macaronic constructions that have Jewish (*Jakob*), Spanish (*Alterra*), Muslim (*Alla*), Chinese (*Li*), and American origins (*Jonkendy* sounds like a corrupted form of *John F. Kennedy*).[5] Seen in this light, the choice of *Otake* holds no particular importance or interest for Le Guin's novel beyond its illustration of an onomastic commonplace in science fiction.

In the light of namework, however, the name is associated with a rather puzzling episode in the plot of what is otherwise one of Le Guin's most finely crafted early works of science fiction. In *Planet of Exile* two communities, one a group of Terran "farborns" and the other a Mesolithic tribe indigenous to the planet, come together in the face of a common enemy, a warring nation of nomads called the Gaal. There is a battle, and the threat of the invading enemy is repelled, at least for the moment. With the

crisis resolved, one would expect the novel to end, but for no apparent reason Le Guin introduces at the end of the story a "snowghoul," an imaginary creature that resembles a yeti. "White, runs like a man," says one character who has seen the monster running across Otake Street. "White, tall, and the head going from side to side," says another (1996, 200). The introduction of this creature awkwardly stands out in the narrative. As Charlotte Spivack observes, the novel's one flaw "is the inclusion of the snowghouls, an extraneous gothic element which has little relation to character or theme, does not further the plot, and evokes a somewhat ludicrous vision of an abominable snowman" (1984, 19). Thanks to the scene with this implausible creature, however, attention is drawn to the name of Otake St, an otherwise minor and easily overlooked detail in the construction of an imaginary world. Based on the text alone, of course, it is impossible to say whether this Japanese vocable holds any personal significance for the author, whether the name or its designee (be it volcano, city, saint, or other) "means" anything to her. Yet, it is evident from her life and work that Le Guin has always been fascinated with foreign words and languages, peoples and cultures, and this fascination coupled with what appears to be an appreciation of the sound, form, and appearance of the vocable in and of itself will suffice, for my purposes, to explain why she returns to and reworks *Otake* in several variations.

The first variation is found in *otak*, a zoonym that appears in *A Wizard of Earthsea*. References to the animal suggest that the otak is an odd amalgamation of more familiar creatures. Curiously, for example, characters refer to it as both a rat and a dog. "They say Gontish wizards often keep familiars," says Ged's schoolboy rival, Jasper, upon seeing the otak. "Lord Nemmerle has his raven, and songs say the Red Mage of Ark led a wild boar on a gold chain. But I never heard of any sorcerer keeping a rat in his hood!" (1968, 54). Later, hoping to escape a shadow creature that is pursuing him, the protagonist takes flight aboard a galley. On the ship Ged encounters the ruffian named Skiorh, who attempts to provoke him into a fight. When Ged refuses to take up the challenge, Skiorh belittles the wizard's courage and taunts him with the question, "Your little dog fight for you?" At that point another passenger says, "Otak. No dog, that is otak" (111). These odd cases of mistaken identity make sense by way of opposites, for in the popular imagination the common adversary of both dogs and rats is the cat.[6] Moreover, the otak has a round, feline face and behaves very much like a cat when washing its fur and chasing mice, sometimes bringing one back to its master. These features, together with the otak's ferret-like habit of nestling in the hood of Ged's cloak, suggest that the wizard's familiar may be a small civet or genet. These animals belong to the viverridae, a family within the feliaformia suborder, where domestic cats are likewise classified.[7] The association of the imaginary beast with felines is made even more explicitly in the fifth Earthsea novel, *The Other Wind*, when Ged explains how the otak once brought him back to life from the land of the dead, as it washed his face the way cats "wash themselves and their young, [...] with a dry tongue, patiently" (2001, 52).

With *Oket*, the name of an imaginary language in "Another Story, or a Fisherman of the Inland Sea" that is similar in sound and spelling to both *Otake* and *otak*, an association with cats reappears. And as with the zoonym from *A Wizard of Earthsea*, this association is indirect, articulated in both the diegesis and discourse of the novella. Koneko, the name given to one of the characters in the story, is said to be an "old name" in the language of Oket. Additionally, it "has a meaning in [her] mother's Terran language:

'kitten,' the young of the wonderful animal 'cat' with the round back and the round eyes" (1994, 166). The Terran word in question is the Japanese word for kitten. In addition to this association with felines, the name *Oket* thus reintroduces an association with the Japanese language and culture found in the first item of the series, *Otake*.

The last item is *Okzat-Ozkat*, which appears in *The Telling*. The morphology of this toponym symbolizes a recurrent theme in the novel, one inspired by the author's lifelong fascination with Taoism, namely the simultaneous representation of monism and duality, identity and difference. The narrator describes this as "two-as-one, or one in two aspects" (2000, 89).[8] This description easily applies to the yin–yang circle or *taijitu*: ☯. In this symbol the circle represents monism while the water-drop shapes and the smaller circles inside them represent duality. Like the visual symbol, *Okzat-Ozkat* is composed of two halves. Each of the two contains the same letters in a sequence that is similar to both eye and ear. But the metathesis of the *K* and *Z* in the first half of the name to the *Z* and *K* in the second half introduces a pair of differences into the construction, just as the inversion of the black and white shades in the drops and inner circles of the ying–yang symbol do. An association with the *taijitu*, a Taoist symbol, is especially relevant to the novel as Le Guin was moved to write *The Telling* upon learning about Mao Tse-tung's campaign to eradicate Taoism, a 2500-year-old tradition in China (Gevers, 2001). Even if the yin–yang circle is of Chinese origin, it is also highly popular in Japanese iconography. Over and beyond its symbolism in sound, spelling, and form, *Okzat-Ozkat* thus preserves Asian (if not explicitly Japanese) cultural associations introduced with the first name in the series, *Otake*. Finally, while there is no mention of the animal in the novel, the toponym spells out a popular variant of the word *cat* in its last three letters: *Okzat-Oz**kat***.

Conclusion

These last observations might give the impression that the preceding glosses of the four names from Le Guin's fiction are of a traditional variety and thus require no recourse to a concept of namework. Yet, even if the symbolic construction of *Okzat-Ozkat* mirrors elements of the text, the spelling of "kat" in its last three letters does not. Moreover, the associations with Japanese culture in *Oket* and with cats in both *otak* and *Oket* are indirect, not linked in any way to the content of or sound symbolism in the vocables themselves. From the point of view of traditional methodology, such associations are insignificant, for there is no overlap between the contents, sounds, or forms of the vocables taken individually, and the signifier *kat* or the signifieds "cat" and "Japanese" as found in the diegesis and discourse of the texts.[9] Rather, these associations acquire significance only in the ensemble of names.

The preceding glosses do illustrate, however, that the concept of namework does not dispense with the meaning, symbolism, or lexical associations of names altogether. Even as it inverses the usual hierarchy between the signifier and signified, namework operates on both aspects of the sign. The sound-shape of *Otake* furnishes the model for the invention of *otak*, which is neither a toponym nor has any relationship to Japanese. Next, the construction of *Oket* takes *otak* as its model, preserves an association with cats, and reintroduces the association with Japanese. Finally, *Okzat-Ozkat* is a toponym that preserves an association with cats in its last three letters and with a symbol that is

popular in many Asian cultures, including Japan. In terms of the signifier, the initial *O* of *Otake* is decapitalized and its final *E* suppressed in *otak*, while in *Oket*, the capital is restored and the *E* reinstated, albeit in an intermedial position. The missing *A* in *Oket*, meanwhile, is then restored (twice, as if to compensate) in *Okzat-Ozkat*.

Such displacements of sound, form and association bring to mind an observation by Samuel Weber on how names operate in Freudian semiotics. Commenting on Freud's celebrated analysis of how he was once unable to recall the name of the painter Signorelli, Weber writes: "[t]he names acquire signification as vehicles of repetition and recurrence, and this function is effective even if there is no connection between the signifiers and the 'proper' meaning of their vehicles" (1991, 95).[10] Applied to the concept of namework, these words help to explain the invention of certain names as a form of playful re-creation and rediscovery of the familiar. From an initial base form, a foreign vocable in the case of Le Guin's particular series, new names are fashioned. The making of each new sound-form sparks an epiphany of rediscovery, stirring the author's subconscious memories of attraction and delight associated with *Otake*, and then displaces these same feelings and sensations onto the sound-forms of the newly minted *otak*, *Oket*, and *Okzat-Ozkat*. Rather than any issues related to reference or designation, signification or symbolism, it is in the repetition of like forms and the playful feelings associated with their invention that best explains why Le Guin returns to and recreates like-sounding names in her fiction.

Once again, this argument does not exclude the possibility of other factors, including an appeal to the more familiar types of associations observed in literary onomastics. Even as the different phonic, graphic, formal, referential, symbolic, and affective elements get carried along Le Guin's series of names, the creation of each new name follows its own individual criteria of fabrication. First of all, each name must look and sound fitting for its designee, as Le Guin herself insists. In their survey of authors who write for children and young adults, Sharon Black and Brad Wilcox note that writers also seek to make names that are fitting, not only for their designees, but also for the genre and the historical and cultural settings in which the characters appear (2011, 162). Le Guin provides a good example of the latter with her use of *Otake* in the futuristic setting of *Planet of Exile*, a choice that conforms to the generic convention of blending names of multicultural origins in science fiction. Among the criteria for what makes a name fitting, Black and Wilcox observe that some authors give careful attention to meaning and etymology, while others focus like Le Guin on sounds and sound patterns (156–157). Black and Wilcox list a number of further considerations that enter into onomastic creation, such as a desire to give characters names that are phonetically accessible to the reader, yet distinct from and not easily confused with the names of other characters (157–158). Le Guin likewise makes an effort to render the names in her fantasy novels easy to read and pronounce – with the occasional exception, such as *Kurremkarmerruk*, the name of the Master Namer on the Island of Roke, which she intends to sound "formidable" (1979, 52).

Regardless of whatever the specific criteria may be that go into her making of individual names, it would seem that one of the primary aims of Le Guin's onomastic creation in general is to liberate the kind of childlike play and experimentation with the sounds and forms of language that both she and Freud claim is progressively inhibited in the course of intellectual maturation. This act of remembrance may blend both actual

memories, such as that of the author's encounters with foreign vocables like *Otake*, *neko*, and *koneko*, together with the reconstitution of a childlike frame of mind in the actual instant of creation. Whether the memories in question date to when Le Guin was a child or an adult is immaterial. What matters most so far as namework is concerned is that the author find in names a pretext or simply an occasion to indulge in the enjoyment of "the sound of language for its own sake," to wallow "in repetitions and luscious word-sounds," and to use over and over again – not in all the wrong places, but rather in all the right names – those "musical or impressive words" that give her ears and eyes such delight.

Notes

1. I have taken the term sound-shape from the title of Roman Jakobson and Linda R. Waugh's *The Sound-Shape of Language* (1979). Where they use the term to refer to the sounds of individual words, utterances, and languages as a whole, I use it solely to refer to the phonic sequences that make up individual names.

2. I originally formulated some of the ideas in this section in a study that speculates on how Le Guin's childhood readings may have provided sources for some of the names in her Earthsea novels (Robinson 2010, 92–99). While partially inspired by Freud, this earlier paper did not draw an explicit analogy between jokework and the psychogenesis of names in fiction.

3. Freud makes a distinction between playing with words in verbal jokes and playing with thoughts in conceptual jokes (2001a, 138).

4. Cited in Lindow (2012, 5). Black and Wilcox provide examples of other writers who create names in their fiction based on childhood memories and friends (2011, 159–160).

5. I cannot identify the source of *Pasfal* with confidence, though I suspect it is Germanic, possibly a corrupted form of *Parsifal*.

6. Representation by the opposite happens to be a common technique of jokework that Freud discusses at length (2001a, 70–74).

7. For Brian Attebery the otak is similar to a lemur (1980, 171), though I fail to see any resemblance between the creature described in Le Guin's novel

and this particular animal, which belongs to the primate order.

8. The term monism, which Taoist thought employs in combination with duality, should not be confused with Unism, the name of a fundamentalist religion in *The Telling* that is virulently opposed to all forms of alterity and dissent. Insightful studies of Taoism in Le Guin's fiction include those by Bain (1980), Wytenbroek (1990), and Lindow (2012).

9. The traditional model of onomastic interpretation I have in mind is that given by François Rigolot, who imagines, as in a Venn diagram, one circle that represents the totality of associations that a name evokes in and of itself, and another that represents the totality of signifieds generated by the text where the name appears. The intersection of these two circles will give "the exact extent of the literary signification of the name" (1977, 22). In other words, any features of the names or textual associations outside this zone of overlap must be considered as insignificant, from a critical point of view.

10. Freud's anecdote and analysis of his forgetting the name of Signorelli appears in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. This is the first and most widely discussed example of parapraxis, a mental error due to unconscious interference or obstruction, such as forgetting a word or name, misplacing an object, or what would later come to be known as a Freudian slip (2001b, 1–7).

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Notes on contributor

Christopher L. Robinson is Assistant Professor of English at the École polytechnique, University of Paris-Saclay. His studies of names in the fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin, Lord Dunsany, and H. P. Lovecraft have appeared in the journals *Extrapolation*, *Children's Literature*, and *Names*. His article "What Makes the Names of Middle-earth So Fitting? Elements of Style in the Namecraft of J.R.R. Tolkien" was voted by the American Name Society as the best article to appear in the journal *Names* for the year 2013.

Correspondence to: Christopher L. Robinson, Department of Languages and Cultures, École polytechnique, University of Paris-Saclay, Route de Saclay, 91128 Palaiseau, France. Email: christopher.robinson@polytechnique.edu