

surprise readers from Britain and their ilk, acquainted with the quite opposite use of *cognate*, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: “Of languages: Descended from the same original language; of the same linguistic family. Of words: Coming naturally from the same root, or representing the same original word, with differences due to subsequent separate phonetic development” (OED3, 2000, s.v. cognate *adj.* 2.a.). Caveat lector.

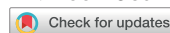
While the ongoing changes to names are likely to instigate further revised editions of the important work, it is very timely that we now have the fourth edition with its thoroughly reworked coverage of South African names and its enhanced geographical detail. This work showcases the onomastic wealth of Southern Africa, and the existence of the four editions also provides an important repository of data marking a period of significant cultural change.

## Bibliography

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**Naming Thy Name: Cross Talk in Shakespeare’s Sonnets.** By ELAINE SCARRY. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2016. Pp. 291. \$16.00. ISBN 9780374537234.

*Naming Thy Name* is another attempt to decipher the identity of the unnamed “beautiful youth” present in Shakespeare’s Sonnets (1609). Without much ado, Elaine Scarry gives her reader a name: Henry Constable (1562–1613), a poet and international diplomat said to be highly considered by several monarchs, such as James IV of Scotland, but who also spent years of his life in exile and in prison because of his religious devotion. “Carmen xv,” one of his poems, is used as the opening of Scarry’s book to demonstrate that, even if the name of Henry Constable does appear surreptitiously in Shakespeare’s works, as she argues in Chapters 1, 4 and 6, one needs also to consider Constable’s writing in order to observe the dialogic aspect of both men’s poems since they seem to reply to and/or address each other. Indeed, Scarry uses available documentation, including letters and reports, together with historical and biographical events in order to suggest that Constable’s and Shakespeare’s poems should be read as evidence of “Henry Constable’s place in Shakespeare’s heart” (7).

The first chapter of the book is devoted to the meticulous cryptographic analysis of Shakespeare’s and Constable’s poems in which the names of both men are spelled out in full. Scarry explains that the name of the beloved is visible in Shakespeare’s poems, either embedded within a line (Sonnets 18, 65, 106) or closer to the surface (Sonnets 53 and 55). In Sonnet 106, the letters constituting the name *Henry Constable* appear almost in the correct sequence: “Have EYes to woNdeR, But LaCk tONGueS To prAisE” (14). She points out it would be unlikely that the name occurs by accident since another line – or the very same line – announces the presence of the name: “But You shALI SHiNE more Bright in these CONTEnts” (12). She also adds that no other name of Shakespeare’s contemporaries – such as Philip Sydney, Christopher Marlowe, or Edmund Spenser – can be identified in the same way.

Henry Constable, she claims, seems to reply to Shakespeare by embedding the name *Will Shakespeare* in his own poetry: “If ever SorroW SPoKE from souLE that LovEs.” Constable inserts the name of his beloved within his lines, but in a less successful way than Shakespeare, given the length of the Bard’s name. Scarry even suggests that another poem acknowledges this apparition with the line “Forgive mee Deere, for thundering on thy name.”

The need to disguise the presence of the male lover’s name – or naming the name without clearly naming it – would stem from the 1533 Act for the Punishment of the Vice of Buggery, which Queen Elizabeth I reinforced in 1563 and which made it a crime for homosexuals to display their love, i.e. acknowledge their practice of sodomy, in public.

The next chapter is less about the presence of names and more about the poetic influence Henry Constable had on Shakespeare and other writers. Sonnet 99 is a borrowed version of Constable’s “Of His Mistress upon Occasion of Her Walking in the Garden,” not only because it looks like Shakespeare has rewritten it, but also because it is a poem about theft, the beloved being “robbed” (33). Moreover, gender is presented as fluid in both Shakespeare’s and Constable’s writings.

Chapter 3 deals with the act of infidelity of the beloved man the speaker suffers from in Sonnets 35 and 40. The man is unfaithful with his friend’s “property,” that is to say his mistress or wife. Relying on the widely recognized presence of Anne Hathaway’s name in Sonnet 145 (“hate away”), Scarry sees in Henry Constable’s “Myne eye with all ye deadly sins is fraught,” in which he acknowledges he has betrayed his friend by having sexual intercourse with his mistress, a possible proof that the transgression alluded to involved Constable and Shakespeare’s wife.

Once again, the fourth chapter delves into the poems to find the lover’s name, but this time the search is extended to nicknames or “intimate names” (84). The hypocoristic form of Henry, *Hal*, is embedded in the word “shall” in the sonnets. Scarry explains that this auxiliary verb designates the future, which is why the beloved will live “in the eyes of all posterity” (Sonnet 55). The reader can literally see Henry Constable’s pet name in “sHALL,” thus allowing the beloved to survive to the passage of time. Scarry strengthens her argument by noting that “shall” appears thirty-two times in the sonnets dealing with the young man while no such occurrence can be spotted in the Dark Lady sonnet sequence. Moreover, the fact that Shakespeare does play on his own name, *Will*, in Sonnets 135, 136 and 143 strengthens the possibility that “shall” may hint at the name of the lover.

Another abbreviated form of Henry, *Hen*, would stand for Shakespeare’s beloved friend. Constable himself would often use this hypocorism to sign documents. Coupled with “shall” in Sonnet 81, the adverb “HENce” contains this shorter form: “Like ‘shall’, ‘hence’ always outpaces Time: the faster Time runs, the faster it propels what is hence into the future” (110). Embedding Constable’s nicknames within the sonnets would thus be a way to perpetuate the beloved’s name, to make it immortal. Scarry further suggests that both the hen flying to escape the housewife in Sonnet 143 and the checkered flower (guinea hen flower) growing on the dead body of Venus’s lover (*Venus and Adonis*, l. 1165–70) refer to Henry Constable.

Chapter 5 gives a new identity to the rival poet present in Sonnets 78 to 86: King James VI and I (1566–1625). James and Henry did spend some time together, especially in 1589. The poems they both wrote about the delayed arrival of Anne of Denmark (1574–1619) on the Scottish coast and Constable’s “To the King of Scotland” that James VI included in his 1591 book *His Majesties Poeticall Exercices at Vacant Hours* show they had a privileged relationship. The unlikely accidental cryptographic presence of Henry Constable’s name in two consecutive lines of the King’s poem “A Complaint of His Mistress Absence from Court” is another argument leading Scarry to the conclusion that James may be Shakespeare’s rival poet: “Is absENT, ABSEnT dOtH allLaCE RemaINe/Whose COmELIE BeAuTier gRaced our priNcelie traiNe.” Elaine Scarry also infers that James’s son, Frederik Henry Stuart (1594–1612), might derive his name from

Henry Constable: “Just as Shakespeare ... urges the beloved to perpetuate his biological line, so Henry Constable was very much at work to ensure the perpetuation of James VI’s biological line. It is not unreasonable to suppose that his own first name was honored in the first infant that resulted from a marriage union” (148). Even if it would not be “unreasonable,” one should still keep in mind that Henry was also the name of the Prince’s grandfather, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545–1567).

The sixth chapter explores the presence of and pun on William’s and Henry’s family names. Scarry disagrees with the 1609 quarto where Sonnet 76 is published: “That every word doth almost tell my name” should actually be “That every word doth almost tell *thy* name” because the next line almost tells Constable’s name. In “SHowiNg ThEir BiRth, And where theY did prOCEEed,” Henry’s surname appears almost entirely, “I” being the only missing letter. Several of Constable’s poems describe the action of being struck by lightning or thunderbolt, two elements similar to the [Shake]spear, which is particularly striking when we know that the poems refer to the “conceit of seeing the countenance of the beloved dispersed across the vast plains of the night sky” (178).

The last part of the book, the afterword, is openly “suppositional” because there is no reliable documentation relating to Henry Constable after his departure to France in 1591. Scarry conjectures that the sonnets, while already written in the 1590s, were published in 1609 only because Constable was imprisoned at that moment and reading these poems would have been a way for Shakespeare to hearten his dear friend. The ornament on the opening page of the sonnets confirms Scarry’s supposition since the letters “H” and “C” (initials standing for Henry Constable), together with two hens, can be distinguished and would thus show that the book was dedicated to him. Last but not least, Scarry tries to explain Constable’s mysteriously undocumented death through “wishful thinking” (228): he would have undergone a false death and would have lived in the house Shakespeare had bought in Blackfriars in London as his tenant. In order to do so, he would have undertaken an alias, John Robinson, *Robinson* being the equivalent of “Sir Robert’s son”, after Sir Robert Constable, his father. Furthermore, Henry Constable was related to two young people who used the same alias as documented in an index of the Society of Jesus (233–4). This might explain why Shakespeare’s tenant was given the right to stay in the property in Shakespeare’s will and why John Robinson was in Stratford-upon-Avon at the time of the Bard’s death despite being under no legal obligation to be there.

*Naming Thy Name: Cross Talk in Shakespeare’s Sonnets* offers a new theory concerning the identity of Shakespeare’s male beloved based on the cryptographic presence of Henry Constable’s names in Shakespeare’s poetical work (and Shakespeare’s name in Constable’s poems). The similarity of the themes and situations dealt with in the two men’s poetry, and other bibliographical elements lead Scarry to conclude that Constable and Shakespeare addressed one another through their literary works. However, as Scarry humbly acknowledges in the introduction, the theory developed in this book is her own belief and more evidence would be needed to prove her hypothesis, especially concerning the period after 1591 for which she provides only speculative arguments. Despite her meticulous and engaging analysis of literary texts and visual elements, her theory mainly relies on cryptographic discoveries, some of which appear far-fetched, i.e. the presence of *Hal* in “shall,” or conjectural, i.e. *John Robinson* might be Constable’s alias. *Naming Thy Name* is a fascinating book but one that needs to be considered for what it is: an elaborate – but unsubstantiated – attempt to give a “local habitation and a name” to the “beautiful youth” alluded to in Shakespeare’s sonnets.