

A NOTE ON THE NAMING OF INFANTS

Myron Brender's article on "Psychodynamic Significance of Infant Name Selection" (March, 1963) is very interesting and opens up a field that I should like to see represented more often than in the past. I think, however, that something needs to be added in a section or two, even in as brief an expository article as it is.

I believe that Mr. Brender is quite right in suggesting that names of well-to-do relatives are often bestowed upon innocent infants in the hope of appropriate reward. What is missing here, from my point of view, is that often the name of a well-loved member of the family may also be given when there is no expectation of future benefit other than the warmth of affection that identical names may encourage.

Mr. Brender might have made reference also to a widespread custom of preserving the mother's maiden name in American society by using it as a middle name of the first-born child, especially when it is a son. This practice may be observed even in cases where the wife adopts her maiden name as a regular feature of her signature for formal or legal purposes.

One other category of Mr. Brender's article might have been expanded: *Naming for Real or Fictitious Eminent Persons*. When the *eminent* person is what one may call relatively eminent and has some ties with the parent, the name may be given to a child from this feeling of admiration or affection without being either a pretentious or a vulgar act.

Mr. Brender mentioned, under *Aesthetic Considerations*, the role of euphony in choice of name. I wonder how often lack of euphony may be the reason for rejecting an otherwise desirable name which is uneuphonic only in combination, say, with the infant's surname.

Another reason for rejection of a name may be that the parent has a more or less violent objection to the diminutive form. For example, Anthony might fit very well but it might be that a parent

would not want a child of his (or, perhaps, more likely, hers) to be called "Tony" by his fellows.

It would be of great interest to find out what motivates the average intelligent, sophisticated parent in choosing names for his child. When the time comes we reflect that all names, unless we wish to fall into the class of those who *Desire to Display Uniqueness, Distinctiveness, or Novelty*, have been names of people before. We must, therefore, follow some rationale. Let us, then, hear more from Mr. Brender.

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