The Linguistic Component of Onomastics

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ONOMASTICS HAS MANY COMPONENTS; the question at issue is whether certain of these, like history, logic and etymology, have tended to obscure and overwhelm the potential linguistic component.[1] If the answer is yes, the responsibility for correction lies not only on the historian, logician and etymologist, but also on the modern linguist, structural or transformational, who has been slow to plow in onomastic pastures. Before turning to the narrower range of linguistics, let us glance at some of the uses to which onomastics has been put by the other disciplines.

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In Europe there has been no lack of rigor in the conduct of the study of proper names. One need merely cite the work of Ekwall, Mawer and Stenton, Adolf Bach and Dauzat to underline the point. They all have demonstrated how place-name study can supplement archaeology in writing the prehistory of Europe. Mawer and Stenton, by meticulous work with Celtic, Scandinavian, Norman and Anglo-Saxon elements in English place-names, have provided valuable information not only about migrations but also about the settlements and feudal law which followed them.[2] Jean Adigard des Gautries has particularized the Viking settlement of Normandy by describing the extent and nature of Scandinavian names.[3] Dauzat, through a study of the names associated with bodies of water, has shown the relationship of Gaul to Roman,[4] and Ekwall has similarly

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[1] This paper was read in much abridged form at Cambridge in August, 1962. See the abstract in *Preprints of Papers for the Ninth International Congress of Linguists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 105.

[2] See the publications of the English Place-Name Society and Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon Britain*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947).

[3] *Les noms de personnes scandinaves en Normandie de 911 à 1066* (*Nomina Germanica* 11, Lund, 1954).

[4] Albert Dauzat, *La toponymie française* (Paris, 1946), pp. 103–141.

revealed the important Celtic element in the conservative river-names of England.[5] Through place-names Bach sheds light on the early neighbors of continental Germania,[6] and various Italian scholars make them yield data for the substratum question.[7] The predominantly Brythonic character of Celtic place-names in England argues against the older theory that Goidelic Celts were prior in that region.[8]

Indeed, the plotting of place-names on maps for historical purposes is physically similar to the plotting of dialect features, including place-names like the *caster-chester* group, and it is not surprising to find that place-name study has close ties with the respectable field of linguistic geography. Such a map and its attendant discussion by Dauzat inform us that in Beauce place-names in *-ville* date back to the Merovingian epoch, those in *-villiers* to the later clearings, and those in *Ville-* (Villeprévost) to the areas which resisted clearing and thus were named after the eleventh century.[9] Reaney (pp. 44–48) has testified to the value of the derivatives of OE *hyll*: Yorkshire Hoyland, Kentish Helsted, North Riding Hilton, Staffordshire Hulton, in establishing Old and Middle English dialect regions. Place-names help to clear up the error of assuming that West Saxon æ and ea join to become Southwestern a, an error of Marjorie Daunt, Robert Stockwell and C. W. Barritt.[10] Providing as they do firm locations, place-names are of great value in supplementing the tentative localizations of charters and manuscripts, made doubtful by scribal admixture and complex provenance.[11] The river-name technique is equally useful for establishing the linguistic

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[5] Eilert Ekwall, *English River Names* (Oxford, 1928).

[6] Adolf Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, 3 Bände in 5 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1952–1956), I. 2, 1–88; see Anton Scherer, "Der Stand der Indo-germanischen Sprachwissenschaft," *Trends in European and American Linguistics, 1930–1960* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1961), pp. 228–229.

[7] Carlo Battisti, "Orientamenti generali della lingistica in Italia," *Trends*, p. 246.

[8] P. H. Reaney, *The Origin of English Place-Names* (London, 1961), p. 97.

[9] Dauzat, pp. 49–51.

[10] Sherman Kuhn and Randolph Quirk, *Language* 29 (1953), 150; they cite diphthongal *ya, ia, ye, ie* from these sources.

[11] Samuel Moore, Sanford B. Meech, and Harold Whitehall, "Middle English Dialect Characteristics and Dialect Boundaries," *University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature* XIII (Ann Arbor, 1935), pp. 1–60. See the review by O. Arngart, *Studier i Modern Sprakvetenskap* 17 (1949), 17–29, which stresses the value of the use of place-names.

geography of Celtic Britain,[12] Gallo-Roman France,[13] and the Slavic-German east.[14]

Onomastics has likewise contributed to the study of literature both in its historical and its aesthetic dimensions. Ekwall's comments on an OE *Godleofu* have obvious significance for the name of Harry Bailly's shrewish wife in the *Canterbury Tales*.[15] Loomis makes place-names central to the discussion of Arthurian origins: Melrose and Mons Dolorosus; Edinburgh, Danebroc and "le Castiel as Puceles"; Glastonbury and the Isle of Glass (Isle de Voirre or Land of Goirre); Camelot and Avalon; Scaudone, Sinadon, Stirling and Snowdon.[16] Ekwall, unable to identify the last element of the magical name Tintagel, believes the first element to be a blend of the prosaic words *dun* "hill" and *tin*.[17] Documenting the aesthetic implications of names is not difficult; one need cite only the practices of John Milton, Stephen Vincent Benet, Archibald Macleish and Marcel Proust – above all the last, who makes of place-names and their etymology a clue to the reconstruction of the past as evocative as the *madeleine* itself. When James Tait ascribes English Belvoir, Beaulieu, Beaurepaire, Beaumont and the like to a kind of pastoral enthusiasm of sensitive Norman aristocrats he is perhaps not too far from a reasonable generalization;[18] perhaps these rough lords were themselves not too far in spirit from a group of twenty or so schoolgirls who accompanied a friend of mine on his first trip down the Grand Canal in Venice, and who made the vaporetto resound at every turn and every view with "Che beya, che beya!"

[12] Reaney, pp. 78–79, 88–89.

[13] Dauzat, pp. 103–141.

[14] Bach, 2.2, 15.

[15] Eilert Ekwall, *Early London Personal Names* (Lund, 1947), pp. 39–40; on Chaucer see John M. Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York, 1926), pp. 80 to 81.

[16] Roger S. Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition & Chrétien de Troyes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 110–117, 219, 480, 482, 490. See also J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (University of California Press, 1950); Reaney, *Origins*, pp. 69, 187 (Castle Hewin from Ywain ?; Tarn Wadling from "the tarn of Gwyddelen, the little Irishman"), 79 (the god Lugus, whom Loomis equates with Lancelot).

[17] Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1940), p. 453.

[18] A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, edd., *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, Part I (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 115–116; confirmed by Reaney, p. 193.

The magic of the city has been lost on him ever since. But linguists, somewhat wary of ethnocentric views of "beauty in language," will think Tait somewhat impressionistic when he applies the name "ugly" to the reduction of Stoke Courcy and Stoke Gomer to Stogursey and Stogumber.[19] Perhaps he is reflecting Shaw's characterization of the John Bullish chaplain de Stogumber in *St. Joan*, which appeared in the same year as the first volume of the English Place-Name Society's *Introduction*. William A. Read shows more linguistic sophistication when he comments that Tickfaw, harsh as it may sound, is the designation of a beautiful little river which flows through the piny region of Louisiana; the name, in the Choctaw tongue *tiakfoha*, probably signifies "pine rest," or more freely, "rest among the pines."[20] According to George Stewart the basic meaning of Minnesota, "muddy river," was transformed by the local pride of romantically inclined native sons to "cloudy river," "sky-blue river" and then to "sky-blue water,"[21] a phrase which agonized sopranoes in the first quarter of this century. As always the strict linguist is likely to be something of a spoilsport.

Other fields which have benefited from onomastic study are sociology, folklore and the history of religion. Bach discusses the sociological aspect of personal names, including the naming of Jews and the exploitation of *von* by the nobility.[22] Were onomastics to find no other place to lay its head, it might well be accomodated in the broad realm of folklore. All Wisconsinians know the folk etymology of Sheboygan, which goes back to an old polyphiloprogenitive Indian who rushed one day into the trading post with the remark, damaged by bilingual phonemic conversion, that "she is a boy again." The Irish literary genre known as the *Dinnsenchas* is wholly devoted to such fanciful explanations; and the traditional method of inventing eponymous heroes like Brutus for Britain, Romulus for Rome, a family named Sandusky for a town in Ohio (of Indian rather than the apparent Polish origin), and a borrowed king like Arthur for Arthur's Seat, all make it clear that there is a

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[19] Reaney, p. 120.

[20] *Florida Place-Names of Indian Origin and Seminole Personal Names* (Louisiana State University Press, 1934), p. 78.

[21] *Names on the Land* (New York, 1945), pp. 278–279.

[22] *Deutsche Namenkunde*, 1.2, 191–225. Note the contribution to lexicostatistics on p. 22.

realm of investigation of the non-prosaic which can live with only an occasional rebuke from linguistic science.[23] The history of religions profits by such demonstrations as the survival in England of pre-Christian Cult and fane names like Woodnesborough and Wormshill (Woden's hill), Thunderley and Thurstable (Thor or Thunor's pillar), and the probably euphemistic or renamed Gadshill.[24] The process of renaming is older than Christianity: Woden's Dyke in Hampshire is a rededicated earthwork which may have belonged to a pre-Saxon cult.[25] Anna Birgitta Rooth has shown that there may be an etymological connection between Loki and the appelative Locke "spider" which is a clue to the trickster nature of the Norse god.[26] British Cleveland was once named Othnesberg, from the Scandinavian stratum,[27] and the later Middle Ages offers us many names of chthonic fairy sites like Pookhill, Poppets (from Pouke-put), Puckscrift, Puck Shipton, Popple Drove, Pucklechurch, and the like.[28] After the sixteenth century in Germany Catholic saints' names are replaced with humanistic names like Lukrezia, Ovidius, and Cassandra, as well as with Protestant Old and New Testament names like Tobias, Holofernes, Judith and Salome.[29] Charles Bardsley wrote a whole book on Puritan names.[30] According to Ramsey, Adam-Ondi-Ahman "is the only town in Missouri with a claim to have been named by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of Prophet Joseph Smith," who applied it to his Mormon

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[23] See Robert L. Ramsey, A. W. Read and E. G. Leach, *Introduction to a Survey of Missouri Place Names* (University of Missouri Studies 9, 1, 1934), p. 25; for Chinese parallels to the Irish *Dinnsenchas* see my review of Michell Soymie's *Sources et Sourciers en Chine* in *Literature East and West* 6 (1962), 52–53. The pioneer scholar of place-names, J. J. Egli, had as one of his axioms that "Place-names seldom contain myths, poetry or humor." See J. T. Link, *The Origin of the Place Names of Nebraska* (Nebraska Geological Survey, University of Nebraska Bulletin 7, Second Series, 1933), p. 18. This is a salutary methodological warning against credulous acceptance of the romantic story, but our point is that the romantic story itself is a datum susceptible to the methods of folklore science.

[24] Reaney, pp. 116–123. The classic study of this kind is Magnus Olsen, *Farms and Fanes of Ancient Norway* (Oslo, 1928).

[25] Reaney, p. 119.

[26] *Loki in Scandinavian Mythology* (Lund, 1961), p. 207.

[27] Reaney, p. 190.

[28] Reaney, pp. 223–224.

[29] Bach, I.2, 40–43.

[30] *Curiosities of Puritan Nomenclature* (London, 1880).

settlement of 1838. Only a century has been needed to folk ety-
mologize it into Adam-on-Diamond, and to create the legends
that it is where Adam settled and blessed his posterity after leaving
Eden. He was buried in his American home, and hence he will come
together with ten thousand times ten thousand of his sons to await
the Judgment.[31] America may be somewhat lacking in rigor in
onomastic studies, but it is surely not lacking in the romantic, what-
ever Henry James or Sidney Smith might say.

If such historical matters are, on the whole, ancillary to the inter-
est of modern linguists with their abhorrence of the genetic fallacy
or even of the genetic dimension, the realm of logic, of the theory of
names, is much more central. Though place-names and personal
names seem rather easy to define, it is certain that *proper names* as a
category is not. There is the usual confusing conflict between in-
ductive and a priori approaches. Ernst Pulgram denies that the
etymological nexus between proper names and common nouns
argues their identity, but when he attempts to distinguish between
them he first must give lists of proper noun classes, an essentially
inductive procedure.[32] A priori approaches are threefold: proper
names are defined as being without distinctive meaning, or as being
in a unique category or one-class, or as possessing certain formal
characteristics. Scholars impressed with the historical and non-
linguistic features of place-names have emphasized their meaning-
fulness. Egli, whose forte is etymology, states the axiom, "There is
no place-name without a meaning";[33] Stewart (p. 10), whose forte is
the romantic naming of the land, says "The meaning of a name is
more than the meaning of the words composing it." His position
would seem to be strengthened by his own citation (in 1945) of
"Canebrake Cape, which is still Cape Canaveral."[34] That is a name
which has certainly acquired new meanings since.

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[31] Ramsey, pp. 28–30.

[32] *Theory of Names* (Berkeley, 1954), pp. 11–15, 19–20. For essentially the same
procedure see Link, pp. 155–160; Ramsey, pp. 18–20; 96–98; Pulgram, p. 9; Otto
Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar*, 7 vols. (Copenhagen, 1909–1949), 7. 544 to
579. E. C. Ehrensperger's *South Dakota Place-Names* (Vermillion, 1941) was a product
of student and WPA labor. Though largely non-linguistic in its entries, its classi-
ficatory arrangement provides valuable inductive evidence.

[33] Link, p. 18.

[34] Stewart, pp. 10, 13.

Sir Alan Gardiner, on the other hand, has provided us with two definitions, separated by some thirteen years in time. Both of them assert that a proper name indicates its object "by virtue of its distinctive sound alone, without regard to any meaning possessed by that sound from the start, or acquired by it through association with the said object."[35] A modern linguist, with his own assurance that the sound-basis of all words is arbitrary, wonders what the difference is between the distinctiveness of OE *hengest* "horse" before it becomes a personal name and after it becomes an eponym (Hengest and Horsa) and an element in place-names. It is impossible in derived place-names to tell whether we have the animal, the hero, or a namesake (Hinxton, Henscott, Hinchley, Trehinxta Co.).[36] Despite Gardiner's insistence that proper names are purer if their meaning is obscured,[37] he has done excellent work in rebuking the extreme form of the doctrine, which says that Mont Blanc is no place-name because its descriptive force is known to most Europeans, that Dartmouth could become a proper name only when sand and time silted up the mouth of the river and removed the sea from the city, or that Baker cannot be a proper name if the owner returns to the trade of his forefathers.[38] To say Mont Blanc is no proper name because a look at the mountain reveals the meaning of the name, or that Long Island is one because it does not look long to the mapless observer, seems to me a kind of categorial obsession. One would rather have *no* term at all than to be so patently false to ordinary language. Thus Pinegar as place or personal name becomes a common noun when one etymologizes it as "pine wood on a slope,"[39] much as a folktale is supposed to be ruined when a folklorist writes it down, no matter what precautions he uses in the recording. This is of course the common confusion of the science with the scientist, but such reasoning as Gardiner's compels such a fallacy. Pulgram says of Gardiner's argument:

[35] *The Theory of Proper Names: A Controversial Essay*, 2nd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 43, 73; see also his *The Theory of Speech and Language*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 338.

[36] A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols. (English Place-Name Society 26, Cambridge University Press, 1956), 1.243.

[37] Gardiner, *Theory of Proper Names*, p. 42.

[38] Gardiner, *Theory of Proper Names*, pp. 2–3, 41.

[39] Allen Mawer, *The Chief Elements Used in English Place-Names* (English Place-Name Society 1.2, Cambridge University Press, 1924).

> I might agree that in proper names it is the sound and not the dictionary value that makes them meaningful. But it is unjustified to affirm that certain names are less properly proper names because of their obvious dictionary value, which might give a clue to the character of the object named. After all, there is at bottom of each name a dictionary value which, however unrecognizable and overgrown it may be today, at one time was obvious to the speakers.[40]

He argues a relative scale of meaning: the change of noun to name is a decrease of extensive and increase of intensive meaning and vice versa (contrast *the King of England* with *the King*). On Gardiner's showing, which reflects some of the logical mazes of Mill and Noreen, we should have to define a proper name as a historical name without the history! Pulgram's critique is thus valuable.

Hockett perhaps is trying to avoid some of these difficulties when he says that a proper name, though no *substitute*, acts "much like anaphoric substitutes, shifting their specific denotation from context to context."[41] Is this to say much more than that $Robert_1 = Robert_2$? And can we not equally say that $cow_1 = cow_2$ without calling *cow* a proper name? Pulgram fares somewhat better when he defines proper name as being "with or without recognizable current lexical value, of which the potential meaning coincides with and never exceeds its actual meaning, and which is attached as a label to one animate being or one inanimate object ... for the purpose of specific distinction from among a number of like or ... similar beings."[42] This seems to describe the logical process better than most other attempts, but it is likely that its confidence rests on Pulgram's earlier categories, which are inductively arrived at. Another major student, Jespersen, is frankly inductive, and his simple definition has the ring of common sense: "In general we may consider a proper name as an arbitrary label used to denote a certain familiar person or thing (or group of persons or things)."[43]

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[40] Pulgram, pp. 46, 47.

[41] Charles F. Hockett, *A Course in Modern Linguistics* (New York, 1958), p. 312.

[42] Pulgram, p. 49. Some difficulties remain; they are underscored in Eric Hamp's review of Pulgram in *Romance Philology* 9 (1956), 346–350.

[43] *Modern English Grammar*, 7.594.

A second a priori test, that of uniqueness, is sometimes urged, but usually, in reaction to traditional logic, only in order to be rejected. In a room with only one Mary in it, *Mary* is unique enough, but it is hard to see why the same cannot be said of a room with only one table.[44] The referent of the subject of "Mary has gone away," "Sister has gone away," "She has gone away," "The fat girl has gone away," might in that room of a unique Mary be as identical in signifies as it is in syntax; yet we are not in the habit of calling all these subjects proper names. The ballad refrain," Last night there were four Maries, tonight there'll be but three," destroys Mary's uniqueness. Some would say that it destroys the proper name; others not. Gardiner rejects the one-class criterion; a nickname used five thousand times is a class of five thousand members, and the single individual is not the same from one moment to another.[45] Two different Johns, of whatever kind, are named with two homonyms,[46] says Gardiner. Some of Hockett's linguistic objections to the logical one-class might be obviated by accepting this thoroughly linguistic solution, which resembles the $(-Z_1)$ and $(-Z_2)$ morphemes of the English nominal and verbal inflections. The idea of uniqueness, as we shall see, may have some validity in relation to formal considerations, like the general view that English place-names and personal names do not take the definite article, since they do not need it, and that *qua* proper names they do not usually appear in the plural form. Formal considerations can certainly be a part of a grammar of proper names, but that grammar, we shall learn in a moment, is by no means easy to construct.

Apart from their logical delimitations and their formal aspects, the heart of the study of proper names lies in the methodological use of etymology, a larger rubric which offers special techniques for its sub-class of such names. Yakov Malkiel has recently provided us with a welcome demonstration that etymology as art and science may be the bridge between philology and linguistics, and that in any event linguists ignore its lessons at their peril.[47] Clearly if linguistic rigor is to be sought in American onomastics it will be largely through the stepping-up of the etymological component,

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[44] Pulgram, pp. 25–26.
[45] *Theory of Speech and Language*, pp. 41–42.
[46] *Theory of Proper Names*, p. 16. See Hockett, p. 312.
[47] "Etymology and General Linguistics," *Word* 18 (1962), 198–219.

most particularly in connection with Indian names. Though the proper name may be logically prior (to the first man in the world the first woman was in the one-class), language allows both the development from proper noun to common[48] and vice versa.[49] "A Daniel come to judgment" illustrates the first process; by contrast "the tállest tree" is presumably a common, though unique, phrasal name and object, but it may become Tâllest Trêe or Táll Trêe with ease. Probably the usual form of onomastic etymology is the latter; and the essence of proper etymologizing is the eschewing of the romantic and the unmethodical in the interest of lists of known combining forms.[50] Generally the prosaic is to be preferred to the fanciful or poetic explanation; Minnesota, as we have seen, is "muddy water" rather than "sky-blue water," and Kentucky is "meadow-land" rather than "dark and bloody ground."[51] This is a rule of thumb rather than an axiom: the Danish Tivoli is a romantic borrowing from the Villa d'Este, Martha's Vineyard may be Biblical allusion with poetry in its soul, and the ineffable taste of American real estate developers mingles Tubbs Drive with Beauregard Lane. My own name, which I once tried to connect with OE *utlaʒu* "outlaw" or at least with *Uta*, a solitary Anglo-Saxon monk on record who must have had a love affair in order to have the necessary and sufficient progeny to produce an ultimate Utley, is pretty plainly the prosaic *ut-leah* "outer meadow," an attested place-name in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Folk-etymology is a branch of folklore and a legitimate subject for study, though its use in onomastics proper should be largely iconoclastic. It is probably *arrière-pensée* which led some Indians to explain Manhattan as "where we all got drunk"; the hundred or so Lover's Leaps are well-known varieties of local legends spontaneously generated; Ticklenaked, 'Scape-Whore and Longacoming represent innocent Indian names now misunderstood.[53] Newport News really

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[48] Gardiner, *Theory of Proper Names*, pp. 13, 20; Pulgram, pp. 7, 20–21. See the special study by Eric Partridge, *Name into Word* (New York, 1949).

[49] Pulgram, pp. 22, 47.

[50] See Smith, *English Place-Name Elements, passim,* which is an expansion of Mawer's 1924 volume.

[51] Stewart, pp. 178, 151.

[52] Stewart, pp. 26–27.

[53] Stewart, pp. 69, 109, 129. The Maine Lover's Leap is clearly of white manufacture; see Fannie H. Eckstorm, *Indian Place-Names of the Penobscot Valley and*

reflects the name of the Brothers Newce.[54] Barking is naturally brought into association with the Isle of Dogs, Barnwell is interpreted by the semi-learned as "children's springs," and a Cornish Marchas dyow leads to Market Jew.[55] Even more perilous are the ways of bilingualism, which must convert unfamiliar clusters to someting both phonemically and semantically more familiar: Chemin Couvert to Smackover, L'Eau Froide to Low Freight, Purgatoire to Picketwire, Ypres to Wipers, and Route de Roi to Rotten Row. Only the phonemic conversion is obvious in *Ni Bthaska ke,* which is said to mean to the Omaha Indian "water flowing through a plain," a proper enough name for the region which contains the Platte River.[56] This explanation seems prosaic enough to take seriously. One may explain the present form of Nebraska simply as a reduction in English of the unlikely cluster [bθ] to the more common [br], though one could counter with some such nonce construct as *Rob Thackeray* if one wished to be skeptical. It may well be that the resonant [r] in Omaha has some affinity with a slightly retracted and more fortis fricative [θ], and that the sound could therefore be heard by an English speaker in two ways, much like Japanese [R], which we hear both as [r] and as [1]. No demonstration of folk etymology can ever improve on the strange career of York: from a Celtic Eburos "yew tree" as base for Eburacon, to an Old English Eoforwic "wild-boar place," to a Danish Yorvik "bay, inlet," and thence to the modern forms, with the New World New York, an heritage from James II, once Duke of York.[57]

Etymology has not surprisingly been called an inexact science, when York can go through such transformations and when Churchill, a common enough name, can be referred either to a British *crūc* "hill" or an OE *cirice* "church."[58] One simple axiom might be that in place-name etymology we should not only suspect all names of being homonyms in their various occurrences, but that we should suspect any proper noun of *not* being a homonym of the common

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the Maine Coast (Orono, Maine, 1941), p. 16. For treatments of folk etymology see Eckstorm, pp. xvi–xvii; Ramsey, pp. 17–18, 24–25, 35; Reaney, pp. 14–16, 26; Bach 1.1, 38–39.

[54] Stewart, p. 58.   [55] Reaney, pp. 1–2, 15.   [56] Link, p. 38.

[57] Stewart, pp. 78–81; Reaney, p. 24; Ekwall, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names,* pp. 519–520.

[58] Mawer and Stenton, *Introduction,* I, 28.

noun it looks like, as will Orchard < OE Archat < Welsh argoed "shelter of wood,"[59] as opposed to orchard < OE ortegeard < hortus + ȝeard (*NED*). Mere "metathesis" or phonemic alternation to fit the normal English phonemic pattern is all that is needed to explain the change of L Rutupia to OE Repta, since the [tp] cluster is unlikely in English.[60]

The inconsistency, of course, is in the phenomena and not in the scientist; to demonstrate the alternate possibilities and to fix some of them in certain cases on the basis of a lengthy list of attested variant citations is what the etymological scientist is called upon to do. His "laws" may follow from that; and prediction is not impossible within probability limits. Only a list of well-documented variant spellings can give us the assurance we have in deriving Jay Wick in Essex from an original Claccinga-wic "the dairy-farm of the people of Clacc," via forms like Clacken-gewick and Clacton Jaewyke, with clipping of the first element and continued confusion of the morphemes or combining-forms.[61]

It is easy to see why the linguist does not find place-names paradigmatic, and refers them hastily to that harmless drudge the lexicographer. The assurances of the linguist that *his* methods are foolproof, when followed with rigor and theoretical consistency, are slightly shaken in this field, where certain linguistic purists have been often shown to be in need of a little external history. Hamsey (Sussex), for instance, was explained by a linguist as OE *hammes ēa* "stream bordering the enclosures" or *hammes ēg* "island or marshy land in the bed of a river," a thoroughly reasonable use of predictable etymological morphemic probabilities. Seven years later another linguist, who was also a historian, showed that the 1321 Hammes Say was a proper enough division, reflecting the Norman owner, Geoffrey de Say. To the linguistic purist Linshields (Northumberland) could mean either "lime-tree shiels (hut or shed)" or "shield by the lynn or pool"; to the geographer who has been there and seen the lynn and felt the climate, which could not possibly foster a lime tree, there is only one alternative.[62] Child as a surname

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59 Reaney, pp. 125–126.
60 Mawer and Stenton, I, 17.
61 Reaney, p. 114.
62 Reaney, pp. 18–19.

is pretty surely OE *cild* "a child," but the psychological reasons for such namegiving are none too clear.[63] Something more than linguistics was needed to reveal that many medieval London apprentices gave up their own surnames in favor of their master's name,[64] a status-seeking gesture akin to the immigrant's change of name in America and the Negro slave's adoption of the White surname he knew best.[65] The study of linguistics, in search for its own scientific status, could stand a little humility and interdisciplinary courtesy; it may stumble badly as it shrugs off non-linguistic evidence and raises its eyebrows.

II

Such contrition in the presence of ancillary disciplines is highly desirable as we proceed to assert that American onomastics needs much more linguistic rigor than it has yet acquired. Only the most invidious linguist will cavil, except in details, at the onomastic work of H. L. Mencken and George Stewart, both of whom have brought lively style and wit to their popular books on the subject. Stewart, indeed, has shown us recently a model of depth study in his argument that OE *leah*, which has been generally held to mean "a woods" as well as "a clearing in a woods," can only mean the woods after it has been cleared.[66] But Mencken always disclaimed knowledge of such linguistic fundamentals as phonology, and Stewart's *Names on the Land* is primarily an account of how the land was

[63] Ekwall, *Early London Personal Names*, pp. 144–145; P. H. Reaney, *A Dictionary of British Surnames* (London, 1958), p. 67.

[64] Eilert Ekwall, *Variation in Surnames in Medieval London* (Lund, 1945).

[65] H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York, 1948), pp. 420, 447.

[66] "*Leah, Woods* and Deforestation as an Influence on Place-Names," *Names* 10 (1962). 11–20. In 1962 Kelsie Harder and Meredith Burrill had an interesting discussion of rigor within onomastics itself; Professor Harder has kindly let me see the notes. The concern was not with linguistic and theoretical rigor so much as with accurate reporting, which has its own special rules. It is interesting to note that the Board of Geographic Names with Burrill, and the Stockholm Commission for the Naming of Streets with Gösta Langenfelt, have done yeoman service in converting onomastics from casual impressionism to a serious methodology; in this case the applied science has preceded the theoretical. [At the second Annual Names Institute, May 11, 1963, Professors J. B. Rudnyćkyj, Alfred Senn, and C. L. Wrenn held a panel discussion on "Onomastic Rigor."]

named, instead of how names fit into a grammar or how they evolve
linguistically, For better or worse these excellent stylists are our
models; and hence there is in this country a tendency to make name
study a matter largely of entertainment (Mencken's Positive
Wasserman Johnson)[67] or of regional pride, as when Stewart con-
fronts the British carpers at American violations of onomastic
good taste with a sarcastic list from England including Maidenhead,
Great Snoring, Shitlington, and Ashby de la Zouche.[68] Of the fifty
states only about twenty have book-length studies corresponding
to the thorough examination which the English Place-Name Society
is systematically giving to the British counties, or to Adolf's
theoretical and exhaustive German grammar of place-names, or to
Dauzat's ingenuity and skilful use of maps for France. There is
little consistency of plan among them, and the laudable work of
Edward C. Ehrensperger, Hamill Kenny, William A. and Allen W.
Read, J. T. Link, Fannie Eckstorm and a few others is belied by the
casual work of the majority.[69]

Perhaps it is not surprising that American onomastics has had,
in Prince Hal's words, but a pennyworth of linguistic bread to
balance an intolerable deal of non-linguistic sack. Most of a state
dictionary's entries consist of an endless account of secondary
borrowing of names of place and person from England or elsewhere
in Europe. We might, except for regional pride, better exclude all
secondary borrowings from abroad except where, as with Wor-
cester, Massachusetts and Wooster, Ohio, a significant linguistic
change is involved. Perhaps we are justified in awaiting the last
volume on the British Isles before proceeding to a planned national
project for the whole United States – a much to be desired goal.
But we should then remember to our shame that in systematic
dialect studies our Linguistic Atlas was the pioneer, and the English
and Scots projects the followers. The British have, indeed, heeded

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[67] Stewart, p. 15; H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, 4th edition (New
York, 1938), p. 525.

[68] Stewart, p. 35; compare his own warning, pp. 278–279. The rhapsodic element
appears on pp. 3–4, a natural place for it in a trade-book. Such a tone is notably
absent from Reaney's popular *Origin of English Place-Names*. Reaney, on the other
hand, could do with some of Stewart's style.

[69] See the reviews of Fitzpatrick's *Nebraska* (T. M. Pearce), Barnes and Granger's
Arizona, and Gudde's *California* (William Bright) in *Journal of American Folklore*
75 (1962), 76–82; for linguistic matters the Bright reviews are especially pointed.

our stimulus in dialect studies before our project was anywhere near completed. There would be no harm, then, in planning a stateside project now, before the missiles destroy both the Treasury and ourselves.

There can be no question that serious linguists have been discouraged by the non-linguistic components of onomastics. As Malkiel says:

> The main idiosyncrasy of etymology stems from the fact that, unlike most cognate disciplines, it operates consistently with fragmentary evidence, with dotted evolutionary lines. Every etymologist protests that he would prefer to rely, in his reconstructions, on a vastly increased stock of recorded forms; few would be candid enough to admit that truly complete records would deprive the etymologist's endeavors of their real charm, even of their *raison d'être*. The sparseness or even unavailability of critically needed material has fascinated some workers (moulding, in the process, their personalities) and has, with equal power, repelled others.[70]

Where attested documentary materials exist throughout the century for place and personal names, the puzzle element is not so great as it is with the residues of the etymologist of common words, yet it is always there. In America William A. Read and Robert L. Ramsay have been model workers in their careful segregation from the total corpus of dubious problems and puzzles[71]; thus they have been both a caution and a spur to other students.

Their work and that of their colleagues make it clear that the greatest challenge to American onomasticians lies in the sphere of Indian names. These present many methodological difficulties: the lack of good printed grammars and dictionaries of the many Indian languages, the obsolete nature of many of the manuscript materials found in the Smithsonian Institution and elsewhere, the time-depth problem, since many of the names may go back to a period three hundred years or more before lexical and grammatical material was collected, and so forth. Long ago Lewis Morgan showed us how

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[70] *Word* 18 (1962), 200–201.
[71] Read, *Florida Place-Names*, pp. 43–55; Ramsey, pp. 26–38.

chaotic was the spelling of Iroquois names in various MSS.[72] We are
not even sure what language to call upon, since nomads cannot be
tied to place.[73] Yet it is possible to do systematic work. Fannie Eck-
storm, taking advantage of the early collections for the Eastern
Woodlands area, has canvassed part of Maine for us.[74] Most of the
Southeast has been covered by William A. Read with similarly well-
disciplined studies.[75] Hamill Kenny has turned his talents to Mary-
land.[76] George Stewart has noted that Indian names are not merely
good or poor phonetic records of Indian sounds, but that we must
also reckon with folk etymology and loan translations;[77] he reminds
us that J. Hammond Trumbull did pioneer work along these lines in
1870.[78] What we probably need more than anything else is a basic
dictionary of combining-forms from a wide assortment of Indian
place-names, to parallel the work of Mawer and of Smith in England,
and the work on non-Indian topographical names by McMullen and
McJimsey in the United States.[79] River-name techniques, so useful
in Europe, pay dividends in American Indian names as well. In

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[72] *League of the Ho-De-No Sau-Nee or Iroquois* (New Haven: Human Relations
Area Files, 1954), 1.47 (first edition 1901).

[73] Read, *Florida Place-Names*, pp. 56–66. Both Indians and whites were bor-
rowers; Catawba was borrowed from South Carolina by Indians; Kalamazoo and
Manhattan were borrowed by whites from Indians. As Stewart, pp. 8–10, remarks,
whites were more accustomed to definite names than Indians, and hence they may
have been the stimulus to much late Indian naming. Whites also misunderstood
many ephemeral Indian names as permanent; see Nils M. Holmes, *Indian Place
Names in North America* (Uppsala, 1948).

[74] *Indian Place-Names* as cited in note 53.

[75] *Florida Place-Names* as cited note 20; see also his *Louisiana Place-Names of
Indian Origin* (University Bulletin 19, Louisiana State University, 1894); *Indian
Place-Names in Alabama* (Louisiana State University Press, 1937).

[76] *The Origin and Meaning of the Indian Place-Names of Maryland* (Baltimore,
1961). Another study, not as systematic as one would like, but addressing itself to
the proper task, is William M. Beachamp, *Aboriginal Place-Names of New York*
(Bulletin 108, Archaeology 12, New York State Museum, Albany, 1907).

[77] Stewart, pp. 108–110.   [78] Stewart, pp. 333.

[79] E. Wallace McMullen, Jr., *English Typographical Names in Florida, 1563–1874*
(Gainesville, Fla., 1953); George D. McJimsey, *Topographic Terms in Virginia*
(Columbia University Press, 1940). Ehrensperger's classificatory system in *South
Dakota Place Names* provides similar evidence. See also Ramsey, pp. 22–23; 116 to
120; Link, p. 19; George P. Krapp, *The English Language in America*, 2 vols. (New
York, 1925), 1.19–89, 134–135, 161. Krapp's formal discussion of "Proper Names,"
1.169–224 should be more often consulted by students than it apparently is.

Eckstorm's Maine a whole group of localities stem from a form *Mata-* with a basic meaning "at the end of," but specifically meaning "at a river mouth."[80] In Florida and Alabama, as W. A. Read has shown, a Creek *wi-* and a Seminole *wiwa*, both meaning "water," create a whole set of reflexes, such as Wetumpka "sounding water," Whitewater Bay (a calque), Willochochee "little big river," Weekiwachee "little spring," Wauchula "stale water," and Weelawnee "yellow water."[81] In Alabama *Oak-* or its equivalent creates a multiple series of creeks.[82]

But American place-names are not all a matter of puzzles. George Stewart's book, with its salutary emphasis on process, provides us with a decade of characteristics of American naming, as valid for science as those characteristics of Germanic, Old High German, and Old English which we have learned in our graduate seminars. His list, compiled from the whole book, includes:

(1) map consciousness in naming (Long Island, which would never appear long to the naked eye; "branch" for many streams in the Eastern United States; and perhaps Oregon from a misreading of "Ouisconsin" on a map[83]

(2) extensive use of borrowed names[84]

(3) many new combining forms: creek (in a new meaning), swamp, pond

(4) many successive names for the same topographical feature (the Hudson River was successively called Mauritius, North, Manhattans, River of the Mountains, Groote)[85]

(5) many strata (Dutch, Spanish, French, English, all borrowing from the Indian aborigines and from each other)

(6) systematic naming (as on the Lewis and Clark Expedition)

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[80] Eckstorm, pp. 58–63.

[81] *Florida Place-Names*, pp. 38–41, 54–55, 69; *Indian Place-Names in Alabama*, pp. 76–77.

[82] *Indian Place-Names in Alabama*, pp. 46–49.

[83] Stewart, pp. 153–155. I cite this specific reference because the Oregon etymology still shocks many hearers, and is therefore by no means proven.

[84] A few American names went to England, such as Quebec, New York, New England, Virginia, California; see Reaney, p. 220.

[85] Stewart, p. 69.

(7) emphasis on meaningful names (the transparency of Wolf Meadow as against British Woolley)[86]

(8) new geographical features used as combining forms (prairie, arroyo, canyon)

(9) names linked with men and events (the many Lincolns, Columbuses, etc.)

(10) variety and lack of conservatism (Hell's Gulch, Oshkosh, Beaumont).

Of these only the third, the fifth and the eighth allow much scope for truly linguistic activity. Hence it is not merely the nature of the American scholar, but also the nature of the naming-process and our closeness to it in time, which has kept us from more rigorous use of linguistics in onomastics.

But the American linguist is not confined to the place-names of his own country, which are somewhat defeating to his axiom that all linguistic processes are unconscious. Should he deny diachronic approaches completely, including etymology and the rigorous methods inaugurated by British scholars, he would cut down the scope of onomastics severely. I hardly think that we need to limit the field; it is becoming apparent that the refusal to apply categorical and theoretical techniques to the older forms of a language is not consistently the heuristic device that some enthusiasts have claimed, and that the lack of progress in these fields may be due to negligence on the part of modern linguists as well as that of old-line philologists. Happily there are evidences, in Martinet, Lehmann, and a host of others, to indicate that historical linguistics (and its relative onomastics) are about to have the attention they deserve.

III

We have said enough about the diachronic, and it may be useful now to approach onomastics with some of our favored modern and synchronic procedures. The narrowest form of linguistic component, which would include phonemic, graphemic, morphemic and syn-

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[86] Stewart, p. 115. Perhaps this is why an American linguist finds a theory like that of Gardiner so difficult to accept. It would rule out the bulk of American place-names. Contrast Reaney, pp. 17, 50, 116–123.

tactic approaches, is largely undeveloped. Andre de Vincenz, in a paper offered to this Congress but not delivered, argues that the contrastive techniques of modern structuralism can be used to isolate morphemic, syntactic and semantic fratures in proper names as opposed to common nouns.[87] He finds little phonological contrast.

On the whole I agree about phonology, so long as we confine ourselves to purely synchronic techniques. But etymologies in general and place-names in particular, we have seen, provide a most exceptional area for the discussion of the "exceptions" in the fine print of historical grammars,[88] and a whole new grammar of sound-change can develop from the close study of names and their startling variants. In this discussion it is hard to divorce graphemics from phonemics, since one of the characteristics of place-names is that they are often pronounced in a way wholly unpredictable from the spelling. True, this is characteristic of English words in general (compare the *ghoti* = *fish* gambit), but Worcester (English [wustər] Massachusetts [wərsestər] or [wəsestə] with its Ohio derivative Wooster [wuwstər]), Cholmondeley, Ruthwell Cross (said now to be often pronounced in accordance with the spelling, instead of the traditional [rivəl]), Los Angeles, Gallipolis, Wilkes Barre, Chicago, Sevenoaks, and Beauchamps all suggest the need of a special graphemics for proper names. Misreadings of old letters, like *t* for *c* as in OE *þēot-denu* > *þetdene* read as *þecdene*, or OE *w* as *p* (Thunoreslowe–Thunoreslope) are factors in name development.[90] Hence the vigorously supported axiom that American researchers working in the field use the utmost care in recording the authoritative local pronunciation, even when it seems an obvious inference from the letters.[91] In another aspect of graphemics, it is apperent that capitals are not an absolute indication of a proper name[92] (French *jeudi* and *janvier*, English *the sun*, German *das Wasser, die Schweiz*, English *Big Man on Campus*). Yet one should not be so awed by

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[87] *Preprints of Papers for the Ninth International Congress of Linguists*, p. 21.

[88] Malkiel, *Word* 18 (1962), 211–212.

[89] Krapp, *English Language in America*, 1.59.   [90] Reaney, pp. 22, 120.

[91] Ramsey, pp. 16, 23. One recalls the story of the group of betters in a bar who were debating about the pronunciations for Hawaii [həwa+i] and [həva+i]. They agreed to accept the first newcomer as authority, and did so, but their assurance was somewhat dampened when one of them said "Thank you" and he answered [yuwr+velkəm].

[92] Gardiner, p. 53.

absolutes that one ignores the value of capitals; the process of *a flat rock*'s becoming *Flat Rock* (Michigan) is of significance despite all the cautions about capitalization one must utter.

Special phonologies have been written for proper names,[93] and there would be value in compiling some of these, comparing them with the other patterns of the language, and seeking some system for them. Folketymologies of the Smackover-Chemin Couvert variety would play a large part in such a compilation. One potential line of investigation is the possible importance of suprasegmentals. The proper name often stands alone as train-call, citation form, or response sentence; more so, one assumes, than other words. Possibly the 3–1 pitch pattern, with its attendant stresses and terminals, creates certain special features in proper names. When he remarked on the special distinctiveness of the sound of proper names, Gardiner may have been more cautious than he needed when he said, "It is of course not meant that proper names are pronounced more loudly or emphatically than other words."[94] True enough in ordinary contexts, perhaps. But the special distortions of the train call, and the patterns which surround the child's name as pronounced by the irate, seeking mother, do provide special contexts. And even in ordinary contexts the 3–1 pattern may have created a contour which dominates the proper name. *Spain* is basically a monosyllable, but its pronunciation as citation form surely suggests a disyllable to conform to the falling pitch. Robert Lees has noticed an interesting and unexplained contrast between Mádison Strèet and Màdison Ávenue. But neither Hill in his review, nor Lees's,[95] note that it can be Màdĭsŏn Strĕĕt as well, an important contrast to distinguish the Street from the better-known Avenue. The inimitable local pronunciation of New Orleans may be a similar result of conformation to pitch pattern. The shortening of *La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco* to *Santa Fe* and of *El Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles de la Porciúncula* to *Los Angeles* would be predictable either according to the obsolescent ease theory or to what we know

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[93] Hamill Kenny, *West Virginia Place Names* (Piedmont, West Virginia, 1945), pp. 48–56; Bach, 1.1, 38–43; Ekwall, *Early London Personal Names*, pp. 179–198; Reaney, pp. 198–202.

[94] *Theory of Proper Names*, p. 40.

[95] *The Grammar of English Nominalizations* (Indiana University, 1960), p. 120; reviewed by Archibald Hill in *Language* 38 (1962), 440.

of American lack of pride in leisure, but the contour of the remnants left after the clipping may owe as much to suprasegmental pattern as to religious piety. The frequently cited contrast between ³*White House* and ²*white house* may be further evidence of such contextual contour. With all these names we appear to be safely in a synchronic closed system, though if we were to transgress into diachrony we might well call upon another contributory factor, the Germanic fixing of the accent on the first syllable.[96] To avoid infinite regression of causes, we should end our brief phonological discussion here.

We have said enough about combining-forms and phonemic clusters to indicate the importance of morphemics in historical onomastics. But if *partisan, citizen,* and *denizen*[97] present a problem to the synchronic morphemicist, surely the *-ing* names present an even greater one. It is a long time since such names were thought to be confined to a tribal or a family cognomen, and very likely few structural linguists have bothered much with the type. Again I would make the charge that this is lack of courage; a grammar which does not include proper names is no grammar at all. The assertion that proper names are rare and therefore not paradigmatic is specious; we live among them every day and use them incessantly. Yet I know of no synchronic technique which could make the brilliant series of analyses which culminates in Smith's long entry, which distinguishes four varieties of *-ing* (1234) along with three extended forms: (1) a common noun-forming suffix (Fleming); (2) a singular place-name and river-name forming suffix (Deeping); a true patronymic (Æthelwulfing); (4) a connective particle (Wolverley, which hides an original *-ing*); (5) an *-ingaham* for group-names (Aldringham); (6) an *-ingas* for folk and group-names (Hastings); and an *-ingtun* = -ing⁴ + tun (Teddington).[98] Smith's elaborate

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[96] For Germanic fronting of accent in borrowed words see Bach, 1.1, 31–32.

[97] The question is the meaning of the morpheme (–zən) which has a clear formative meaning in the first two words but not in the third. Harold Whitehall, as a synchronic linguist who recognizes his etymological responsibilities, once told this anecdote to a group of English students in the relatively new *Denney* Hall at Ohio State University. A clear voice from the audience explained that in this locality there was no problem about the third word's two morphemes, or about the general meaning of the suffix.

[98] Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 1.282–303; see also Bach, 2.2, 458–464; Reaney, pp. 99–116.

dissection of the *-by* derivatives[99] is a similar challenge which modern morphemicists would probably prefer not to take up, unless they fell back on a broad and unsatisfying rubric like "bound form used as a suffix in a place-name." A similar systematization of high value which can be attained by no synchronic technique is Bach's masterly account of the clipped forms of personal names.[100] The merged forms behind modern bound forms, originally free forms, like *-grave, -grove, -greave; head* and *Howden*,[101] continue the morphemic paradox. An unusual affix, which the paradigmatic linguist is apt to disregard, is the pot of gold for the fortune-seeking etymologist.[102]

One does not find in English the easy contrast between appelative and family name which de Vincenz finds in Russian;[103] functional shift is here as usual obscured in English words. But perhaps we could contrast William and Williams, John and Jones; baker and Baxter; oak, Sevenoaks, and Snooks. The trouble would be that the loss of meaning, usually posited of proper names, destroys a simple differential contrast which might be called common noun vs. proper name. The blurring between the combining form and the bound form, the common noun and its derivative proper noun, is excellently shown in Rune Forsberg's study of Old English place-names.[104] Hockett remarks that Big Chief Rain-in-the-Face, though no doubt invented, reflects the Indian composition of personal names from other syntactic groups than mere nominalizations; [awaˑnohapeˑw], for instance, means "he sits in fog."[105] The modern problem of the submorphemic categories of which Dwight Bolinger and Morton Bloomfield have apprised us[106] is curiously paralleled by Danish and Old English alliterating dynastic names: Healfdene, Heorogar, Heoroweard, Hroðgar, Hreðic, Hroðmund, and Hroðulf.[107]

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[99] Smith, 1.66–72; Reaney, pp. 171–172.   [100] 1.1, 97–138.

[101] Smith, 1.207, 236; for further "convergers" and "divergers" see Reaney, p. 42.

[102] Malkiel, *Word* 18 (1962), 214–215.   [103] *Preprints*, p. 21.

[104] *A Contribution to a Dictionary of Old English Place-Names* (Nomina Germanica 9, Uppsala, 1950).

[105] Hockett, p. 311.

[106] Bolinger, "Rime, Assonance and Morpheme Analysis," *Word* 6 (1950), 117–136; Bloomfield, "Final Root-Forming Morphemes," *American Speech* 27 (1953), 158–164.

[107] Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd edition (New York, 1941), pp. xxx–xlv.

In later Old English times there is a more factitious use of full combining-forms like Wulf- and Æðel-.[108] Morphemics and morphophonemics are the stepsisters of the structural hierarchy;[109] they provide scarcely so many triumphs as phonemics and, of late, syntactics. There is still, despite these cautions, ample value in the contrastive techniques of modern morphemics. But we must ask ourselves whether any synchronic method besides morphemics, applied rigorously, would lead to such an analysis of Oxshott as "where the ox was shot," which Reaney (p. vii) cites as a special horror. The true analysis, "Ocga's scēat, the projecting piece or corner of land belonging to Ocga," demands all the resources of historian, geographer, and linguist-philologist.[110]

<div align="center">IV</div>

Finally, there is syntax. On the simple etymological level this merges with morphology, since combining-forms, lost to sight in modern zero variations because of inflectional reduction and the rise of word order as signal, must be reconstructed by a look at their old full combinations. Hence the careful student of word-composition must concern himself with lost inflections. We have fossilized reflexes from OE dative plurals like *Inhrypun* > *Ripon*, *wudu-hūsum* > *Woodsome*; genitive plurals like *bulena hyrst* > *Bolneherst* > *Bolnburst*, *calfra-tūn* > *Calverton*; adjectival inflections like dative singular *nīwan-hām* > *Newnham*.[111] Larger syntactical patterns are sometimes preserved, as in Thurleigh from *æt þære lēaȝe* "at the glade or wood," Nash from *æt þæm æscum* "at the ash tree," Ray, Rea, Rhee and Rye from *æt þær ēa* "at the river" or *æt þær ēg* "at the water." Other prepositional formations with the noun, leading to a proper name, are Bythorn (*bī-*, *bē*), Teyning (*betwēonan*), Underhill and the like.[112] Personal names as well as place-names preserve ancient syntax, as with Roger Agodeshalf

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[108] Reaney, pp. 50–51.

[109] See, for instance, Henning Spang-Hannssen, "Glossematics," in *Trends*, p. 145.

[110] Ekwall, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, p. 339; Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2.102–103.

[111] Reaney, pp. 38–40.

[112] Reaney, pp. 30–32, 37–38; Smith, pp. 13–14.

1222 "in God's name, for God's sake."[113] Thus English, like Hockett's
Menominee, allows syntactical structures not originally nominal
in nature to become proper nouns. The genitives need not, any
more than in Modern English, all be inanimate; compare Maplesden
"maple tree's woodland pasture."[114] Celtic, Latin and French word
order survives in such words as Bryn Mawr (wood big), Stokes
Regis, and Marylebone, the last pronounced [márləbòwṅ] with a
typical accent and pitch contour. German personal names show an
alternation between appositions (adjunctive) and genitival com-
pounding: Gottfried Eberhard and Gottfried Alt, Gottfried Eber-
hards Sohn, Gottfried des Schneiders Sohn. Bach is able to write a
fairly complete grammar of such compounding.[115]

Sooner or later when grammarians discuss the syntax of proper
names they generally agree that proper names differ in some fashion
from common nouns in their use of the articles *a* and *the* and in their
use with adjectives and as adjectives. Jespersen gives us the fullest
grammar, and it may be noted that he makes a fairly sharp division
between personal and place-names, a division which lends some
support to my argument that *proper name* is a much harder thing
to define than *personal name* and *place-name*. Inductive lists like
Jespersen's are convincing enough, taken in themselves; the real
trouble arises when we attempt to identify proper names in dis-
course. Jespersen says that personal names like John, applied to one
definite person, generally take the zero article, whereas place-names
sometimes take the definite article and sometimes not. River-names
are originally without the article, but probably through ellipsis of
"River" forms like The Thames are common enough. (Gardiner
denies the ellipsis.)[116] Oceans and seas generally have *the*; lakes have
zero; countries, islands, mountains, towns, parks, streets, except
where plural, have zero. For buildings the common form is zero plus
determinative word and building-name, as in Westminster Abbey,
New Scotland Yard; but contrast The Tower, The Empire State
Building.[117]

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[113] Ekwall, *Early London Personal Names*, pp. 135, 198.
[114] Reaney, p. 53.
[115] Bach, 1.1, 61–66.
[116] *Theory of Proper Names*, p. 21.
[117] Jespersen, *Modern English Grammar*, 7.544–579.

This is enough to show that our grammar of proper names is likely to prove complex. German is generally said to possess the article in names of nations, as in *die Schweiz*, but *Russland* is a common enough type.[118] *Le Havre* remains transitional in French; Dauzat illustrates it, without premeditation, when he cites in another connection "Le Havre *de Grâce* (ancien nom du Havre)."[119] *Je vais au Havre* is the regular idiom, not **Je vais à Le Havre*. Personal names are slightly different. My colleague Mme. Monicque Léon tells me that a name like Le Corbusier is fairly constant, as in *Je parle à le Corbusier*, but that in Besançon (the Auvergne) *Je parle au Corbusier* is a frequent variant. If one looks at the names beginning with *La* and *Le* in Dauzat's dictionary one will find almost the whole section a mass of cross-references to the simplex, a sure sign of the impermanency of the article.[120] It is clear that no simple contrast is available for zero article and *La/Le* in French personal or place-names.

A. H. Smith, who is usually almost the final authority in such matters, has an entry under *þe* which is anything but lucid: "Its use implies that the name was still significant and probably often an appellative rather than a formal p.n." He then cites *Even Swindon* from a ME *Theveneswyndon* "the level swine hill," *Thurleigh* from OE *æt þære leaȝe*, and some wrong divisions, like *Ede Way* from *þeod weg* and *Ramacre* from *þreom aecere*, "at the three acres."[121] Here we have the placid assumption that a name becomes a proper name only when it loses its descriptive dignificance (Mont Blanc is no proper name, but Popocatepetl is one). That Smith does feel a faint hesitation is evidenced by his less than precise qualifications: "probably often an appellative." The false divisions enforce the idea of lost signification, but what about the fossilized preservation of *the* in Thurleigh ? Does this not "signify" long life for the determiner, much as in plurals like The Dalles and The United States and in a singular like The Empire State Building ?

The indefinite determiner likewise plays a part in such development. We recall that a proper noun may evolve into a common

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[118] Bach, 2.2, 67, 115–120.   [119] Dauzat, p. 12.

[120] *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de famille et prénoms de France* (Paris, 1951).

[121] Smith, 2.202, 213.

noun, and in more subtle ways, we should remark, than in Mac-Adam, Quisling, and Watt. George Stewart has sought to explain the British-American divergence of "a woods" and "a wood," the second to prescriptionists a somewhat illogical expression. In cleared England "a wood" would be a commonly encountered small grove. American settlers, however, were originally confronted with "the Woods," an extensive forest, to all appearance continent-wide. Then, as clearings emerged and "the woods" became small tracts of forest once more, "a woods" became the unspecific form.[122] This demonstration is certainly a victory for the combination of synchronic and diachronic linguistic techniques, unless its semantic underpinning rules it out of court.

Pulgram rightly considers the article no final indicator of proper or common noun; in support of his relative scale from the extensive meaning of common noun and intensive meaning of proper noun he cites the king of England vs. "The King!"[123] Here one falls back on capitals, which if they have linguistic meaning at all, must involve some kind of suprasegmental increment. There is a similar contrast between titles like "the president of Kappa Sigma," "the president of Harvard University," and "the President of the United States." I cite the last with a capital, which I believe is fairly common, but it is not absolutely necessary, and might depend on rhetorical emphasis as well as convention. In the 1930's there was at Harvard considerable dispute on the subject. Hitherto "the President" without specification always meant the president of the university. For the first time then, with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, enthusiastic converts were using it to mean the President of the United States. Thus we had a serious clash of semantic ambiguities, unrelieved by grammatical sign.

A mental set leading to such a clash is especially well illustrated in England. Call it provincialism or local pride as you will, the phenomenon, though well outside the realm of linguistics, depends on linguistic signals. The Folklore Society in London means the British Folklore Society; we must say the American Folklore Society. Similarly with the Philological Society and the Linguistic

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[122] *Names* 10 (1962), 18–20.

[123] Pulgram, pp. 46–49; for the complexities of titles see Jespersen, *Modern English Grammar*, 7.562–69.

Society of America. British titles, indeed, move slowly into the anonymous, or perhaps we should call it the allegorical. King Edward VIII becomes the Duke of Windsor. We have the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Lord Mayor – much more commonly, I should think, than in even official circles in Washington, though no doubt imitative protocol does sometimes create the Secretary of the Treasury or the Chief Justice instead of Secretary Rusk and Chief Justice Warren. I well remember my own experience when an old friend lost his identity and was absorbed into the Commonwealth. It was when I received a Christmas card for the first time from "the Consul of Canada and Mrs. Newton."

At an American college or university today "the Dean" would mean very little; deans like professors are a dime a dozen. But in a summer cottage one may become the Dean or the Professor again. We once had a department chairman called the Boss; he is still called that today, though he has been successively a dean and a private citizen. Closely related as transition forms are such words as "the City" and "the Island." Any group of English speakers with a few exceptions would, when asked what the City is, be likely to answer the center of London or of Paris. But a son at Cornell University has informed me that there it means one thing and one thing only – New York City. Perhaps this is merely a specificity created to contrast with the State of New York. But "the Island" has no such contrast-pattern; it is simply Long Island. Does it become that to avoid the dialect perils of [làhŋgáylən]? A regionalism of semantics, in short, to replace a regionalism of pronunciation? Probably any suburbanite, even in Kalamazoo, would speak of going to "the city"; whether he would capitalize it in emphasis or in writing is unpredictable.

We may agree, then, that the absence of articles in plurals of place and personal names, and their presence in singulars, is a general tendency in English, but we clearly cannot assert the contrast as an absolute. We must have, as in Jespersen, a number of subclasses, and allow for the special changes in Pulgram's intensity of meaning spectrum in various localities, where the attitude towards the name in question may vary. Some of these could perhaps be

called dialectical, and cause no harm to the generalization about the *langue* as against the *parole*.

Another common generalization about proper names is that they, like pronouns, are unlikely to be preceded by adjectives. No doubt this is the source of Hockett's designation (p. 312) of proper names as similar to anaphoric substitutes, as well as the justification for the constituent structure rule in generative grammar which reads:

$$Name \rightarrow Name$$
$$prop$$
$$Name$$
$$pron$$

The rule assumes a logical similarity in proper name and pronoun signalled by grammatical similarity, which includes both absence of preposed adjectives and absence or presence of articles. Yet surely we commonly speak of "beautiful Ohio," "the Beautiful Ohio," "this free and independent United States," "a free and independent United States." "A beautiful *she*," on the other hand, sounds boldly Shakespearean, and might in most grammars be described as a pronoun which has shifted to noun function. Though it is probably substandard to say "I believe in United States," I have found the usage in many student papers. Hence the generative rule is at most a statistical statement of preponderance rather than an absolute, since the equivalence of proper name and pronoun is merely approximate.

Closely allied is the problem of the use of proper names as adjuncts or adjectives. Some would argue that we never say "a United States flag," since we have a corresponding adjective, "an American flag"; but the difference is probably one of rhetorical levels rather than of linguistics. Surely there is nothing wrong with "United States Government"; "American government" is ambiguous, in view of the other governments in this hemisphere. *China* and *Chinese* offer a set of derivative contrasts parallel to German *die Schweiz* and *schweizer(isch)*, but though we speak of Chinese communism, Chinese art, and Chinese girls, we always did speak of the China trade when there was one. Adjectives, by the way, are not proper nouns; then why do they take to capitalization? In English, that is; French and German in their respective ways keep a contrast. The difficulties are demonstrated by Hill's attempt

to deal with "the fact that unmodified proper names also appear as group 1 modifiers, as in *the good old Smith house*." We cannot, he says, transpose to "This good old house *is Smith" as we can to "This good old house is stone." Instead we must say "This good old house is Smith's."[124] Hill has uncovered a genuine feature about the use of the adjunct, but he misses an obvious ambiguity in the transformed nominalization "the good old Smith house." It *may* go back to a kernel sentence "This good old house is Smith's," but it also may go back to other kernel sentences, the first of them the most likely of these three: "This good old house is the Smith family's," or "This good old house once belonged to a man named Smith." There is an apparent lack of specification in the adjectival-adjunct use which is like that in "the American government," though the latter is semantic, and the former syntactic.

Obviously our grammar of proper names needs much fuller exploration than is possible in this paper. I pose one final possibility, which may help sketch a few geographical features on the map of darkest Onomastica. Could we, seeking to find a formal signal to clarify the spectrum of intensive and extensive meaning identified by Pulgram, say that proper names are names which do not take restrictive WH-clauses in English? I offer this tentatively, since I do not recall its suggestion before. The experiment should prove useful. Contrast:

> Basingstoke, which is a large town, is dull to live in.
> The Basingstoke which is a large town is dull to live in.

Compare:

> The Rome which is in Italy is larger than the Rome which is in New York.

Perhaps we can extend this to personal names as well (we should recall that our grammar generally has to keep these two subclasses well apart).

> You are not the John Brown I know.
> You are not *the* John Brown, I know.
> You are not John Brown.
> You are not John Brown, who has grey hair.

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[124] Archibald A. Hill, *Introduction to Linguistic Structures* (New York, 1958), p. 232.

I think we may have something here. One will admit to some difficulty with distinguishing between restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers themselves, with equating linguistic and graphemic signals. Yet surely there are formal distinctions which work fairly well. "The man who came to dinner" and "The John Brown I know" are alike in being a one-stress, one-pitch nexus, as opposed to "The man, who came to dinner," and "*The* John Brown, who has grey hair." And even elusive features like plus vs. single bar juncture or single vs. double bar juncture may correlate with the stress and pitch, and show up as commas in written English.

Perhaps there is a spectrum of relativity and free variation here, but if so it may correspond in some measure to the relativity of Pulgram's intensive vs. extensive meaning. The point is that, if more than one Rome or John Brown is involved, we are moving towards a class noun and away from a proper noun. The restrictive modifier is a signal of this larger class. Narrow the horizon, and there can be only one Rome or one John Brown; then no restrictive modifier is needed, though one may always give additional specifications about these more proper nouns, if one wishes. One will indeed be likely to use a non-restrictive clause or a modifier following the noun, because in English it is generally less likely (though not impossible) that such a modifier will be preposed:

> Rome, which is in Italy, is magnificent.
>
> Rome, full of Americans, is magnificent.
>
> Rome, running with fountains, is magnificent.
>
> Rome, of all places, is magnificent.

But notice that these non-clausal modifiers could equally be "restrictive," that is, pronounced without the intonational features we associate with non-restriction. The single dominant stress would move, in sentences two, three and four, to *Americans, fountains* and *all.*

> Rome full of Americans is magnificent.
>
> Rome running with fountains is magnificent.
>
> Rome of all places is magnificent.

But not

> *Rome which is in Italy is magnificent.

We cannot develop all the possibilities here. But consider another set:

> I like a girl.
> *I like a sky (*The sky*, though uncapitalized, is unique, and hence like *the sun*, often called a proper name).
> *I like a United States.
> I like a United States which is free and independent.
> I like a free and independent United States.
> I like a blue sky.
> I like a sky which is blue.
> I like the United States.
> I like Rome.
> *I like a Rome.

Such sets are enough to say that a special grammar of proper names is desirable and possible, though not exactly what that grammar is.

Of all those we have read we have found Pulgram most valuable for theory and Jespersen for English examples. We may therefore close with a paraphrase of Pulgram's statement that proper names are a category as universal as phonemes, morphemes and sentences – a category more universal than "nounlike and verb-like form-classes, categories of number, person, case, and tense, or grammatical positions of actor, verbal goal, and possessor."[125] Pulgram himself is quoting Leonard Bloomfield. It might be well to modify the much-debated term *universal* with a very valid term, not enough used by linguistics, "semi-universal," since the realm here involved is that of a positive one, and there is always the possibility that a tribe might turn up in the Amazon country or on the moon to destroy the universality. Clearly from what we have said we may see that, though the category "proper noun" is universal or semi-universal, its syntactic and other linguistic signals may differ greatly from one nation, language or dialect to another.

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[125] *Pulgram*, p. 49.

If we were willing to work on a priori grounds, as we have not done in this paper, we would have to go back to my statement that to the first man the first woman was a proper noun, as well as a helpmate. Perhaps many things are proper nouns in speech which are not in language. As our experience grows wider, departing from the idiolect, many proper nouns are bound to become common nouns. "Last night there were four Maries." Yet we also create new proper nouns all the time: Levittown, Telestar, the Kennedy Administration. So the universality, a priori or inductive, is not merely tribal; it includes civilizations as well.

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ANS Notes

MONKEYS NECK ROAD. – According to 1720 Processioners' Reports, the name of a road, now North Sycamore Street, Petersburg, Virginia. In 1784 it was changed to Walnut Street; in the middle 19th century the walnuts were replaced with Sycamores.

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