Introduction

VALUABLE IN ALL AREAS of knowledge (Antisthenes, c. 400 B.C., said, "The beginning of all instruction is the study of names"), onomatology is an indispensable aid in literary criticism. There is a story in every name. Even so, precious little in the practice of critics reveals the extent to which names help authors achieve an organic relationship of form and meaning and intensify the emotional impact of the works whose construction they bolster. Reasons are not hard to find. Apart from a relatively few specialized disquisitions, there are almost no authoritative general studies of nominology. It is, therefore, easy for critics engaged in onomastic exploration to succumb to more than one danger. Endlessly guessing, sliding along a slippery scale of uncertainties, they may waver in interpretation or proceed past the rigid and literal to end at the speculative and farfetched.

This is not to say that criticism dealing with literary nomenclature suffers from gross defects. Many critics have commented on an author's choice of names, often with perspicacity and skill, but have frequently left their remarks in so fragmentary a form that the reader who cannot integrate them in the corpus of an author's work is left skeptical. Obviously, there is distinct need for an extensive study of the theory and actual use of names in literature.

Just as study makes clear that Dos Passos reversed Kipling's *Soldiers Three* for his own *Three Soldiers*, so research could reveal to what extent Hemingway incorporated Crane's Henry Fleming in his own Lt. Henry. Just as dictionaries of names are available for Trollope and Faulkner, each of whom contributed a mythical county to literature, so they could be prepared for O'Neill in drama, Robinson in poetry, and James in the novel. Despite the excessive amounts of critical energy lavished upon minor aspects of the plays, Shakespeare – a master at naming – has yet to be investigated thoroughly even though a definitive study of his names would shed light on major aspects of the plays.

Although students have innumerable uses for them, there are almost no definitive onomastic studies in literature. Outside of literature, names are generally given without consciousness of their

meanings. Within literature, as in primitive society, an individual's name is taken too often to be in large measure only an expression of his personality – a charactonym like T. S. Eliot's Prufrock. So, too, place names and group names are regarded as indicative of fundamental traits. Witness More's Utopia and Swift's Houyhnhnms.

But authors, making full use of names, have found many other applications, a few of which follow:

1. Use of mythological names to fill an era with echoes of the past, as in Joyce.
2. Use of real names to tie the imagined to the actual, as in Keats.
3. Use of archetypal names to allow a character to remain himself and yet be other things, as in Ben Jonson.
4. Use of word play to obtain allusiveness, as in Faulkner.
5. Use of onomatopoeia to help sound reinforce sense, as in Dickens.
6. Use of namelessness to create doubt and induce fear, as in Kafka.

One could go on and on. And one needs to go on if we are ever to develop full understanding of names in literature. We must learn how an author's naming practices make up part of his poetic expertise, prose virtuosity, and dramatic skill even as they indicate his links to predecessors and contemporaries.

To that end, this issue of *Names*. Tarnawecky opens with a bold attempt "to lay a theoretical foundation for research in literary onomastics as a whole" while Hanning and Rogers clarify naming practices in medieval literature. Fleming and Champion deal with nominological connotation and denotation in the Renaissance. MacAndrew and VanEgmond demonstrate how names contribute to the unity and meaning of the novel. Kime and B. Pollin reveal something of how authors engage in onomastic exploration. Howell traces Faulkner's imparting additional significance through place-names, and A. Pollin takes us out of American and English literature as she proves that onomastics can throw light on Spanish style, structure, and objectives.

No wonder that the guest editor for this issue of *Names* has hopes of its encouraging greater effort and further research into literary names. If these hopes are realized, certainly a giant share of the

credit must go to Professor Kelsie Harder, who not only conceived the idea for this issue but did many of the editorial chores as well. May Professor Harder continue to harvest material for many, many more issues of *Names*, whose pages he has made available to all aspects of name study.

A. F. B.