What is your Name? The Question of Identity in Some of the *Waverley Novels**

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> "The stranger gradually withdrew himself from under the hand of his monitor; and, pulling his hat over his brows, thus interrupted him. 'Your meaning, sir, I daresay, is excellent, but you are throwing your advice away . . .'
> 'Who, or what are you?' replied Butler, exceedingly and most unpleasantly surprised, . . .
> 'I am the devil!' answered the young man hastily. . . . 'Yes! call me Apollyon, Abaddon, whatever name you shall choose . . . to call me by, you shall not find an appellation more odious to him that bears it, than is mine own.'
> . . . The stranger turned abruptly from Butler as he spoke, but instantly returned, and . . . said, in a fierce, determined tone, 'I have told you who and what I am—who, and what are you? What is your name?' 'Butler,' answered the person to whom this abrupt question was addressed . . . 'Reuben Butler, a preacher of the gospel?'"
> Scott, *Heart of Mid-Lothian,* Ch. XI[1]

The process of creating believable characters and establishing their identities convincingly is one of the major problems and most import-

*This is the much revised version of a paper read at the annual meeting of the American Name Society in San Francisco, December 30, 1979.

[1]In view of the availability of a large number of editions of the *Waverley Novels,* and of individual works within the set, quotations are given by title and chapter only, as this should be sufficient to identify the passages quoted, many of which have been telescoped for our purposes.

ant challenges facing any writer of fiction. The reader demands to be persuaded that he is in the presence of the same individuals whenever he encounters them, and therefore expects continuity of traits, integration of characteristics, and compatibility of action. Above all, intended and recognizable identity is summed up and located in the sameness of name. Names identify without a shadow of a doubt, are gates to a character's knowable personality, and bound that personality with isolating precision. Names prevent confusion, provide structured human relationships, determine the possibility of access, however limited. Deliberately withholding a name mystifies, creates the tensions of risk-laden unfamiliarity, makes for uneasy expectations. False naming disorients and, by removing the direct means of knowability, increases curiosity and builds an unreliable bridge to potential disappointment. The route from suspect stranger to reliable friend or assessable enemy lies through one's name.

When making a character's name known to their readership authors have available and employ a number of different dis-closure techniques from which appropriate choices can be made. The all-knowing third-person narrator of a novel has, if he chooses to do so, no problem in introducing a character by his or her name without any circumlocution or hesitation. Sir Walter Scott, whose *Waverley Novels* have been selected to illustrate the points we wish to make in this brief account, does so on many occasions:

For example, in Scott's second novel, the name of the titular hero is introduced casually, and without much ado at the end of the first paragraph. Having been previously informed that "a young English gentleman, who had just left the university of Oxford, made use of the liberty afforded him, to visit some paths of the north of England" and that "curiosity extended his tour into the adjacent frontier of the sister country" where he found himself still late on the road without accommodation, we are told that, "there are few ordinary occasions upon which fancy frets herself so much as in a situation like that of Mannering." And in the second paragraph we hear that "a female voice . . . assured Guy Mannering." Or, in the *Bride of Lammermoor, Lord Ravenswood* is simply presented by name as "the heir of this ruined family" and *Sir William Ashton,* his adversary, as the Lord Keeper and new and hated proprietor of Ravenswood Castle (Ch. II).

First person narratives present, however, peculiar problems of their own, especially if the narrator, in the course of his travels through unfamiliar territory, meets many persons unknown to him. One of Scott's little tricks in responding in advance to any potentially raised reader's eyebrow is the parenthetical comment explaining the narrat-

or's second-hand acquaintance with a particular name: Thus Peter Pattieson, in the introduction to the *Heart of Midlothian* (Ch. I) reports on a dialogue between two lawyers who have come to grief near his village of Gandercleuch: "'That's not my fault, Jack,' replied the other, whose name I discovered was Hardie." Or Frank Osboldistone, on his first excursion into the Scottish Highlands encountering a couple of Highlanders, refers to "the taller Highlander, whose name I found was Stewart" (*Rob Roy,* Ch. XXIX), and meeting a party of English soldiers speaks of "the officer, whose name I understood was Thornton, . . ." (Ch. XXX).

Much more commonly employed—in both first- and third-person narratives—than this somewhat artificial intrusion is the skillfully inserted first mention of a name in conversations or other passages reported in direct speech. Not uncommonly this takes the form of address, as when Jonathan Oldbuck, the *Antiquary,* summons the old lady dispensing coach tickets from Edinburgh to Queensferry: "Good woman,—what the d——l is her name?—Mrs. Macleuchar!" (Ch. I); or when Lady Margret Bellenden reminds her cousin at the game of the popinjay: "*He* ought to remember it, Gilbertscleugh" (*Old Mortality,* Ch. III); or when "the ruddy-faced host of the Black Bear, in the town of Darlington, and bishopric of Durham," applauds a recently met "Scotch gentleman" "Well said, Mr. Campbell!" (*Rob Roy,* Ch. IV); or when in response to Tressilian's request for a smith to shoe his lame horse, "'Master Holiday!' exclaimed the dame, without returning any direct answer—'Master Herasmus Holiday, come and speak to mon, and please you.' '*Favete linguis,*' answered a voice from within; 'I cannot now come forth, Gammer Sludge . . .'" (*Kenilworth,* Ch. IX). In other instances, reference to a person not yet encountered at all or not yet introduced by name is made in other, more oblique, ways: Edward Waverley, for example, shortly after his arrival at the hamlet of Tully-Veolan and the mansion of the Baron of Bradwardine, is gradually made acquainted with the existence and subsequent presence of the baron's daughter by the butler's reference to "Miss Rose's flowerbed," to the timely help Miss Rose received "when she was flemit with the Laird of Killancureit's new English bull," and his final announcement "But here comes Miss Rose" (*Waverley,* Ch. IX). Similarly, the appearance of "Christie of the Clint-hill, the laird's chief jackman" (*The Monastery,* Ch. IX) is onomastically foreshadowed by the mistaken assumption during the supernatural events of Chapter IV that the apparition the second-sighted little Mary Avenel has seen is indeed "Christie," instead of her father.

On these occasions, one cannot help the impression that the names

in question are introduced mainly for the reader's sake and only incidentally also come to the notice of the protagonists or other characters within the novels in question. Such is, on the other hand, not the case when names are particularly solicited by characters within the narratives, especially when such requests are clearly not made out of idle curiosity but because the names and the identities they represent are vital to the well-being of the questioners, often the protagonists.[2] Under these circumstances, as our inroductory quotation from *The Heart of Midlothian* indicates, the straightforward question "What is your name?" can easily become part of a dialogue of fierce interrogative bargaining for namable, knowable, and by implication manipulatable identities. The answer to this question will not only determine future human relationships but is in the first place designed to resolve in one way or another crucial, more immediate, conflicts. A request for the most personal information, for the revelation of self and the discarding of the cloak of anonymity, when suspicion is rife in uncertain times, frequently turns into a demonstration of trust or loyalty, however temporary or misplaced.

In the opening pages of *A Legend of Montrose,* a group of three riders ascending a pass from the Scottish lowlands into the Perthshire Highlands, meets a single well-armed horseman of military appearance (Ch. II):

> "'We must know who he is?' said the young gentleman, 'and whither he is going.'
> . . . 'For whom are you?'
> 'Tell me first,' answered the soldier, 'for whom are you?' [He is told].
> . . . 'Whose word am I to take for this?' answered the cautious soldier.
> . . . 'I am called,' answered the younger stranger, 'the Earl of Menteith . . .' [offering him hospitality].
> . . . 'May I be permitted to ask, then,' said Lord Menteith, 'to whom I have the good fortune to stand quarter-master?'
> 'Truly, my lord,' said the trooper, 'my name is Dalgetty—Dugald Dalgetty, Ritt-master Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, at your honorable service to command."

Thus one of Scott's most delightful and most memorable characters has been introduced by name, has his identity, has been created. His role and destiny, his foibles and quirks in this particular narrative have a satisfactory, tangible beginning.

As is to be expected, the quest for identity is not always as success-

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[2]Some of the aspects of the close relationship between name and identity are alluded to in

ful as in this instance, and it is hard to tell whether a refusal to reveal one's name or the substitution of a false name causes the bigger problems. Certainly the identities involved are in both cases unknowable and therefore truly unmanageable, for better or worse. Our introductory quote provided a hint of the lopsided relationship developing out of a determined refusal to be named. Similarly, the success of Gurth's clandestine visit to Rebecca's father (*Ivanhoe,* Ch. X) is threatened because he firmly declines to identify himself:

"'Art thou Isaac the Jew of York?' said Gurth, in Saxon.
'I am,' replied Isaac, in the same language, . . .—'and who art thou?'
'That is not the purpose,' answered Gurth.
'As much as my name is to thee,' replied Isaac; 'for without knowing thine, how can I hold intercourse with thee?'"

Deliberate refusal to answer the question "What is your name?" not only withdraws the necessary solid foundation on which a business transaction involving mutual trust can be based, it can become a threat to one's very life, even if loyalty to one's master is the justifiable motivation, as Gurth experiences in his encounter with Robin Hood's outlaws the same night, not long after his meeting with Isaac (Ch. XI):

"'Who is thy master?'
'The Disinherited Knight,' said Gurth.
'Whose good lance,' replied the robber, 'won the prize in to-day's tourney? What is his name and lineage?'
'It is his pleasure,' answered Gurth, 'that they be concealed; and from me, assuredly, you will learn nought of them?'
'What is thine own name and lineage?'
'To tell that,' said Gurth, 'might reveal my master's.'"

Fortunately, the dangerous situation in which Cedric's swineherd finds himself as a result of his stubborn refusal is resolved, and the potentially unpleasant consequences of namelessness in a society of named people are averted, a society in which one neither fights "nameless men" (Ch. XLIV) nor allows oneself to be "prisoner to a nameless churl" (Ch. XXXI).

There are, of course, many good, and some not so good, reasons why someone wishes to withhold his name. Robin Hood's very existence as an anti-establishment outlaw is threatened if his name is revealed, and he declares himself to be "a nameless man," even when

W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "Literary Names as Text: Personal Names in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley,*" *Nomina* 3 (1979), pp. 29–39.

questioned by King Richard from whom he has just requested assistance (*Ivanhoe,* Ch. XX). Montrose is similarly rebuffed when enquiring after the name of Ranald MacEagh, fugitive from the law (*Legend of Montrose,* Ch. XVI):

> "'What is your name, my friend?' said Montrose, turning to the Highlander.
> 'It may not be spoken,' answered the mountaineer.
> 'That is to say,' interpreted Major Dalgetty, 'he desires to have his name concealed!'"

To be without a name in the law is utter onomastic deprivation to a man, as Frank Osbaldistone discovers when cautiously demanding to know the identity of his self-appointed conductor to the Glasgow prison (*Rob Roy,* Ch. XXI):

> "'Before following you, I must know your name and purpose,' I answered.
> 'I am a man,' was the reply, 'and my purpose is friendly to you.'
> 'A man!' I repeated. 'That is a very brief description.'
> 'It will serve for one who has no other to give,' said the stranger. 'He that is without name, without friends, without coin, without country, is still at least a man, and he that has all these is no more.'"

The proud, naked despair of a man whose family name—Macgregor—has been proscribed by the authorities for political reasons and who, as we have seen, has to call himself Campbell outside his native land, stripped by force of his very own identity!

Quite a few of Scott's characters adopt of their own volition the expedient and ingenuous device of giving false names in precarious situations, hiding under the disguise of a protective, because misleading, onomastic cloak. One *is* one's name, as one *is* one's clothes!

A master in this respect is Donald Bean Lean, the Highland robber in *Waverley,* "thin in person and low in stature, with light sandy-coloured hair, and small pale features, from which he derived his agnomen of Bean or White; and although his form was light, well-proportioned, and active, he appeared, on the whole, rather a diminutive and insignificant figure" (*Waverley,* Ch. XVII). It is perhaps this last characteristic which allows him to appear undetected as a pedlar "called Ruthven, Ruffin, or Rivane, known among the soldiers by the name of Wily Will" in Edward Waverley's regimental headquarters in Dundee to make mischief for him by the spreading of false accusations (Chs. XXXI, XLV, and LI), while on another occasion rescuing him, with the help of the same disguise, from the guard of Habakkuk, or

"gifted," Gilfillan (Ch. XXXVI). In the same novel, Callum Beg, Fergus Mac-Ivor's footpage also expediently and rather quick-wittedly adopts a new name when challenged by the suspicious and inquisitive Ebenezer Cruickshanks, landlord of the Golden Candlestick (Ch. XXIX):

> "'Aweel, Duncan—did ye say your name was Duncan or Donald?'
> 'Na, man—Jamie—Jamie Steenson—I telt ye before.'
> This last undaunted parry altogether foiled Mr. Cruickshanks"

is Scott's own comment on the success of this deception.

Waverley himself is, of course, no slouch in the game of onomastic identity-swapping. After eluding the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers at Penrith, and after exchanging his uniform for civilian clothes (!), he goes into hiding at a farm called Easthwaite near Ullswater, owned by a farmer named Williams, where he "passed for a young kinsman, educated for the church, who was come to reside there till the civil tumults permitted him to pass through the country" (Ch. LX). Determined to go to London after learning about his father's death and of an unjust accusation made against his uncle, he is faced with being discovered accidentally by a talkative traveling companion, "Mrs. Nosebag, the lady of Lieutenant Nosebag," who, at an awkward moment, enquires (Ch. LXI):

> "'Come, Mr.—a—a, —pray, what's your name sir?'
> 'Butler, ma'am,' said Waverley, resolved rather to make free with the name of a former fellow-officer, than run the risk of detection by inventing one not to be found in the regiment.
> 'O, you got a troop lately, when that shabby fellow, Waverley, went over to the rebels? . . .'
> . . . Then she Captain'd and Butler'd him till he was almost mad with vexation and anxiety; and never was he more rejoiced in his life at the termination of a journey, than when the arrival of the coach in London freed him from the attentions of Madam Nosebag."

Unfortunately for Waverley, though, this is not the end of his troubles, for, while in London and when setting out again for Scotland, it becomes necessary for him to assume the identity of his benefactor's, Colonel Talbot's, nephew Frank Stanley and to travel on his pass, a circumstance which causes Talbot to comment sagaciously and with a certain amount of irony that "this youngster, Edward Waverley, alias Williams, alias Captain Butler, must continue to pass by his fourth *alias* of Francis Stanley, my nephew; . . ." (Ch. LXII). At no time in the novel is the first element of his name—*Waver*—perhaps

more appropriate than here, true symbol of the precarious brittleness of identity.

The problem of identity is, as should be abundantly clear by now, a favorite, recurring theme of Scott's, and its anthroponymic effects are noticeable throughout the *Waverley Novels.* A few illustrative examples must suffice: There is, for instance, the young laird of Ellangowan in *Guy Mannering* who for many years is known, and returns for the property of which he has been deprived, as Vanbeest Brown; young Lovel in *The Antiquary* first turns out to be a Major Neville and then Williams Geraldine, Lord Glenallan's son; Elshender the Recluse, or Canny Elshie, the *Black Dwarf,* is in the end revealed to be Sir Edward Mauley; Henry Morton in *Old Mortality,* during his exile in the Netherlands, calls himself by his mother's name, Melville, and even after his return to his inheritance continues to be known as Melville Morton; in the *Heart of Midlothian,* George Robertson not only borrows Madge Wildfire's feminine clothes but also her name when attempting to break open the Tolbooth during the Porteous riots, a cloak-and-dagger episode which becomes even more intriguing and complicated when one remembers that Geordie Robertson is really (Sir) George Staunton and that Madge Wildfire is a nickname for Margaret Murdockson; Father Vaughan at Osbaldistone Hall is in reality Diana Vernon's father, "Sir Frederick Vernon, or, as he was called among the Jacobites, his Excellency Viscount Beauchamp" (*Rob Roy,* Ch. XXXVII); in *A Legend of Montrose,* James Gordon, Earl of Montrose, is initially introduced as Anderson, Lord Menteith's servant, a circumstance which causes Sir Duncan Campbell to remark caustically that he "had some difficulty in recognising him in the disguise of a groom" (Ch. VIII); in the same novel, the Marquis of Argyle pretends to be his own "lackey," Murdoch Campbell, in a macabre prison scene, Ranald MacEagh is introduced by Major Dalgetty "under the fictitious name of Ranald MacGillihuron in Benbecula" (Ch. XVII), and Sir Duncan Campbell's only surviving daughter is found to live ". . . in the Castle of Darnlinvarach . . . under the name of Annot Lyle" (Chs. XIII and XXI); in *Ivanhoe*, the titular hero, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, remains for much of the narrative the Disinherited Knight; King Richard the Lionhearted, at the famous tournament of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, is labeled by the spectators *Le Noir Faineant,* or the Black Sluggard, because of his behavior, is later playfully called Sir Anthony of Scrabelstone by the Clerk of Copmanhurst, and is subsequently titled the Knight of the Fetterlock; Robin Hood masquerades under the names of Locksley, and Diccon Bend-

the-Bow, the ancient Ulrica had long lived under the assumed name of Urfried, and in the most complex substitution of identities Cedric, the Saxon chief, in an escape ruse takes the place of a monk who is in reality Wamba, the jester, in disguise; in *The Monastery,* Henry Warden, the zealous Protestant preacher, and Father Eustace, sub-Prior of St. Mary's, recognize each other as Henry Wellwood and William Allan, college students together in their youth; in its sequel, *The Abbot,* the main protagonist, Roland Græme is discovered to be Roland Avenel, Sir Julian Avenel's lost son, his grandmother Magdalene Græme makes her way into Lochleven Castle and the captive Mary Stuart's presence as Mother Nicneven, and old Abbott Boniface, formerly of St. Mary's, now lives as Blinkhoolie, the gardener, at Kinross; in *Kenilworth,* Lancelot Wayland, former stageplayer, juggler, and quacksalver's apprentice, mythologically transforms himself into Wayland Smith, and later into a pedlar, while Dr. Demetrius Doboobie turns out to be identical with Alasco, the astrologer. There is no doubt, therefore, about the centrality of the theme of named identity in Sir Walter's fiction, especially since this long set of illustrative examples can easily be supplemented from the remaining *Waverley Novels.*

In view of so much onomastic expediency and anthroponymic obfuscation, it is not surprising that frequently uncertainty reigns with regard to the correct name form of some new or casual acquaintance, as when Pleydell, the Edinburgh lawyer, inquires of Dandie Dinmont: ". . . my friend Dandie—Davie—what do they call you? . . ." (*Guy Mannering,* Ch. I), or when the Captain of Knockdunder tries to recall the proverbial Major of Altringham's name: ". . . like your Major what-d'ye-callum" (*Heart of Midlothian,* Ch. XLV). Knockdunder, of course, receives himself similar treatment at the hands of Effie Deans: "I have been telling Mr. —, Captain—, this gentleman, Mrs. Butler, . . ." (Ch. L). It is a little more plausible that Frank Osbaldistone, confused by the onomastics of politics, should complain with reference to Rob Roy: "Campbell, or MacGregor, or whatever his name" (*Rob Roy,* Ch. XXV). Christie of Clinthill is similarly baffled by "this man Warden, or whatsoever be his name" after the latter has been found to have been called Henry Wellwood in his youth (*The Monastery,* Ch. XXXIII); and even such highly placed people as the Earl of Leicester —". . . yonder Cornishman, yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is . . ." (*Kenilworth,* Ch. VII)—and Queen Elizabeth herself—"And where is Farnham, or whatever his name is— . . ." (Ch. XXI)— occasionally suffer from onomastic amnesia.

When the real or pretended inability or unwillingness to cope with names current, even common, in a different cultural and linguistic setting is exploited by Scott in the foregrounding of the age-old Scottish-English animosities, the results can be quite humorous. Thus the English justice Inglewood has some problems concerning the disguised Rob Roy's credentials: "These are to certify, that the bearer, Robert Campbell of—of some place I cannot pronounce . . . is a person of good lineage, and peaceful demeanor, travelling towards England on his own proper affairs, &c. &c. &c. Given under the hand, at our Castle of Inver-Invera-rara-ARGYLE" (*Rob Roy,* Ch. IX). The easily annoyed Captain of Knockdunder, on the other hand, finds it difficult to get his tongue around an English name, when introducing Effie Deans, now Lady Staunton, to her sister: "Mrs. Putler, this is Lady-Lady-these damn'd Southern names rin out o'my head like a stane trowling down hill—. . ." (*Heart of Midlothian,* Ch. I). Perhaps the funniest of all such anthroponymic tomfoolery is the boisterous, merciless tampering with the name of Hermann Dousterswivel, the less than likeable German agent at the GlenWithershins mining works, who is teasingly addressed and mischievously referred to by Edie Ochiltree and others as Dusterdeevil, Dustandsnivel, Dousterdeevil, Dousterdivel, Dustanshovel, Doustercivil, Dustersnivel, Dustansnivel, Dunkerswivel, and the like, an almost unending list of deliberate, provocative wrenchings of onomastic otherness, suspicious for its own sake (*The Antiquary,* Chs. XVII, XXIV, XXV, XXIX, and XLIV). Playing games with names and identities is quite clearly an implicit, indeed an inevitable, ingredient of Scott's creative repertoire.

Most significantly of all, however, in this respect, is Sir Walter himself who not only for many years publically denied authorship of the novels but also hid behind Jedediah Cleishbotham and Peter Pattieson, and usually a third narrator (Robert Paterson known as "Old Mortality," Sergeant More McAlpin, Dick Tinto the painter, a farmer and his old shepherd, a Benedictine monk) in his *Tales of my Landlord*, in a triple layer of false identities and names designed both to suggest authenticity and to provide protection, until, at the end of *A Legend of Montrose,* the whole elaborate protective mechanism is abandoned. In Scott's words, "Jedediah has melted into thin air," although he admittedly parts with him "with idle reluctance." The mystification is, however, not totally dispelled, perhaps rather aggravated, insofar as, without revealing his true identity, Scott declares that "the present author" is "himself a phantom." Anonymity, in

contradistinction to namelessness, turns out to be also a form of naming. Anonymity conceals identity; it does not represent a total lack of it.

In this respect, it is not unlike a suit of armor without unidentifiable markings, as worn by the Black Knight or the Disinherited Knight in *Ivanhoe* or by George Douglas in *The Abbot*—"a knight, or man-at-arms, well mounted, and accoutred completely in black armor, but having the visors of his helmet closed, and bearing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield" (Ch. XXXVII), an anonymous, though brave and helpful knight, so unlike the jauntily displayed insignia, asking for recognition, as watched with anticipated joy by the Lady of Avenel from her castle window earlier in the narrative (Ch. III):

> "Even at that distance, the lady recognized the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colors of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch; . . ."

Ivanhoe "had refused, even at the command of Prince John, to lift his visor or to name his name" (Ch. X), thus keeping his anonymity doubly protected, but when, at the insistence of the marshals, "the helmet was removed . . . the name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced then it flew from mouth to mouth . . ." (Chs. XII–XIII). A later challenge forces Ivanhoe into a similar action (Ch. XLIII):

> "'The stranger must first show,' said Malvoisin, 'that he is a good knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men.
> 'My name,' said the Knight, raising his helmet, 'is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe.'"

Once the onomastic visor has been lifted, all attempts at preserving a self-contained identity are in vain, and one is at the mercy of those who have access to one's name.

Perhaps the wisest counsel therefore comes from two of the most disreputable characters in the *Heart of Midlothian,* Jim the Rat, arch thief and experienced liar turned jailor, and Madge Wildfire, crazy, unpredictable daughter of Mother Blood. The former is being examined by the magistrate in connection with the Porteous riots (Ch. XIII):

> "'Your name is James Ratcliffe?' said the magistrate.
> 'Ay—always wi' your honour's leave.'
> 'That is to say, you could find me another name if I did not like that one?'

'Twenty to pick and choose upon, and always with your honour's leave,' resumed the respondent.
'But James Ratcliffe is your present name?— . . .'"

A multiplicity of names, it seems, guarantees multiple protection and several interchangeable lives. Madge Wildfire advises otherwise (Ch. XXX):

"'Never ask folk's names, Jeanie—it's no civil—I hae seen half-a-dozen o'folks in my mother's at anes, and ne'er ane o'them ca'd the ither by his name; . . .'"

Those who are uncivil enough to ask folk's names may only get the one that is presently current, and access to an identity as fleeting and untrustworthy as its onomastic front—a thought worth pondering. Scott did. It did, after all, go to the heart of his craft.