Crisis and Cognition in Onomastics[1]

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As the investigation of names and naming (in the broadest senses of these terms), onomastics is conceivably relevant to at least three sectors of inquiry: formal linguistics, the philosophy of language, and ethnography, all of which have ties to historicity. By formal linguistics, I mean theories of language, that is, models for the investigation of grammar such as transformational grammar, or structural linguistics, or dependency grammar, or any one of a growing number of purportedly "logical" views as to the functional or communicative aspects of language. The role of onomastics in formal linguistics will be touched upon in the course of this paper, while the matter of names and naming in philosophies of language is considered as being within the province of philosophy per se and will not be considered in any detail here. The relevance of onomastics to ethnography, defined as language in society, linguistic history, and literary studies, as well as in anthropology, settlement history, and other forms of linguistic archeology, is readily obvious. Indeed, the role of onomastics in these areas, particularly as a tool of discovery in describing and interpreting patterns of culture in their communicative dimensions, enjoys a record of distinguished accomplishment well documented in the literature. In contrast, onomastics has played little if any role in formal linguistics. One would, I think, have to concede that onomastics is quite peripheral to the mainstream of general linguistics, and the two disciplines are hardly now acquaintances, much less intimates. During the past half

[1]This paper was to be presented at Sec. 399 of The Modern Language Association in New York City, December 29th, 1981. However, due to some complications, I was unable to attend that meeting or present the paper. The original version has undergone some rather tortuous revisions, probably usually the case in any attempt to provide an overview and assessment of a discipline as this paper is intended to do. I am responsible for the eccentricity (and, in some quarters, insult and injury) of the views presented here, but I would like to thank Eric Hamp for some general discussion and some fruitful insights during a stay together in Udine last September. I would also like to thank Lennart Moberg, who first made me aware of the efficacy of onomastics while I was a student in Uppsala. Had it not been for his efforts, I, as is unfortunately the case with most American linguists, would never have been fully aware of onomastics. First and foremost, however, it was Gösta Franzén at the University of Chicago who first brought onomastics to my attention.

century, the ranks of linguistics have swelled, while those of onomastics have not. The excitement of discovery has accompanied the linguist, not the onomastician, and nothing has greater charm for youth than discovery. Moreover, onomastics, at least in this country, has had to go its own way. The American Name Society and The Linguistic Society of America have little in common. Few linguists have any idea what onomastics is about, and few onomasticians have participated in the linguistic mainstream. But this state of affairs is not restricted to North America alone, for one notes that the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences has been excluded from the Permanent International Committee of Linguists (CIPL/PICL). This schism has, one could assert, caused a crisis in cognition. Those dealing with names are certain that names are part of language, but remain perplexed that, somehow, names and naming are not part of linguistics. Linguistics is not receptive to onomastics, or so it would appear, but is onomastics receptive to linguistics? Indeed, there seems to be a lack of cognition within onomastics generally as to relevance or irrelevance for linguistics, while historians (medievalists, philologists, paeleographers, and the like) remain the firmest friends of onomastic inquiry.

Indeed, if one were forced to single out one area in which onomastics has had its most far-reaching and widely accepted accomplishments, then that would be the area of settlement history, the identification of toponymic strata in time. It is, I think, indisputably here that onomastics has yielded its most significant insights. But, so far as I know, no one has bothered to question why this is so, why it is that onomastics was most effective in uncovering the course of settlement. Then, too, as a related issue, no one has bothered to question the obvious discrepancies between toponymic and anthroponymic practices in settlement and resettlement. Why is it that, upon colonization, original place names persist (by and large), while original personal names (and personal naming systems) do not? Why, for example, are Polynesian place names retained in Hawaii, while Polynesian personal names are not? Why were the Celtic river names of Britian retained in areas of Anglo-Saxon settlement, while Celtic personal names were given up? Examples could be adduced in legion, but the general tendency is always the same. Answers to these questions would seem to shed some light not only on the history of the discipline as a whole, but also on the process of naming and its cognition.

I shall attempt to answer these crucial and related questions, but first I want to raise a serious issue that has direct bearing on these questions and the answers I will propose to them. This is the issue of standards in the field on onomastics. Names are an intriguing and ubiquitous fact of linguistic life. They are objects of interest for everyone, and the price of admission to the arena of onomastic inquiry is low, namely, mere recognition of etymological detail, however recondite. As they are singular terms, the knowledge of a name does not require knowledge of language. At worst, the singularity of names (*Smith, Springfield*) results in mere scientistic recitation of anecdotes devoid of appeals to logical entailment, implicature, considerations of naturalness, or the systemic aspects of language. I will explain. Names are linguistic isolates; they are singular terms. Once *Smith* or *Springfield* has been provided with an etymology, sometimes an intriguing enough task, chronicled as to frequency, geographical distribution, and attestation in history, or even identified as to its possible symbolic (or otherwise) usage in texts, then the case is closed. The construction of inventories, with or without anecdotes, may well be interesting, but it is simply not tantamount to the construction of grammar. Insights about the genesis of names are not insights about the genesis of language. Obviously, the genesis of language and the conduct of grammar are two of the most serious issues in linguistics, and, one must agree, this has generally been the case for most serious linguists and grammarians. Names have little bearing on the current debate between the advocates of pre-wired vs. pre-programmed views as to the origin of human speech. As singular terms names are isolated tokens of communication, labels, if you will, that rarely plug into more immediate and pressing grammatical concerns such as the relationship of deixis to diathesis, ergativity vs. passivity, SOV vs. VSO, and so on. It is only when they are constructed as complex nominals that they become interesting as objects of morphological investigation and a concern for linguistic theory.[2] Moreover, and this is crucial, it is only when names can be viewed in a systemic dimension or as part of a systemic dimension that they have genuine interest for the linguist. If this were an empty claim, then we would not be witnesses to the schism between onomasticians and linguists outlined above.

This last assertion is a natural lead-in to my answer to the question of why it is that, within historical linguistics, onomastics has had its most meaningful achievements within the realm of settlement history.

Onomastics, more specifically the study of toponyms, was an outgrowth of nineteenth century historical linguistics, that golden age whose crowning insight was the reconstruction (or discovery) of Indo-European. It was indeed an era possessed by the aura of adventure and discovery as

[2]For a penetrating analysis of complex nominals and their bearing on linguistic theory, see Judith N. Levi, *The Syntax and Semantics of Complex Nominals* (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

one-by-one the languages of Europe yielded their mysteries to a least common denominator termed Indo-European. The excitement of this discovery is perhaps best captured in the account by Holger Pedersen in his *Sprogvidenskaben i det Nittende Aarhundrede: Metoder og Resultater.*[3] The findings of comparativism were based on the recognition of formal and semantic identities or near identities and regulated by the perception of relationships as being governed by "laws," the exceptionless hypostasis of the neogrammarians. It was an age that found its philosophical impetus in the developmentalism of Spencer, the doctrine of continual change in the direction of ultimate perfection. The overwhelming emphasis of the period was on dynamic change, rather than, as now, static description and interpretation. The findings, methodologies, and philosophical roots of the comparativists of the time were merely translated to the investigation of names, particularly place names. This translation signalled the birth of onomastics as we know it today. I will provide a few illustrations to support this assessment.

It was a fortuitous fact for onomastics that European toponyms generally consisted in constants and variables fused together as compounds: (X + Y, where either element can be a constant (e.g. Germ. *Biel(e)-, -dorf*) or a variable (e.g. *Mor-, Mul-, Rin-,* etc. + *-ing* = constant, in Flanders). Constants provide a typological index, for toponyms are categorized in terms of constants, e.g. Swedish names in *-torp, -lev, -har/-harg, -hem,* etc., that is, so-called "*torp*-names", etc. Recognition of the rules of form-meaning constraints permitted comparison of types, e.g. Swedish *-torp*, Danish *-trup*, German *-dorf*, or even cross-language comparison, e.g. Alemannic names in *-wil(er)* derive from a late Latin loan *villaris.* Toponymic studies proceeded hand-in-hand with the methodologies established by traditional dialectology and its cartographic practices. Names and name-types were mapped to yield distributional patterns, and the patterns thrown into relief were thought to demarcate the limits of settlement. For example, Scandinavian (Danish and Swedish) names in *-lev/ -løv* were found to be contiguous with German names in *-leben,* earlier *-lef*, 'the leavings, the inherited goods' of the person referenced by the personal name as the first component of these (generally) compound names. A language community, a cultural space, was considered enclosed within the *lev*-isogloss. Next, it was found that name types could be ranged chronologically in levels as strata of toponyms. More recent names were superimposed on layers of older names in much the same

[3]Available in English in the translation by John Webster Spargo, *The Discovery of Language. Linguistic Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962).

fashion as an onion is composed with its easily separable layers. The age of a toponymic type, say *-torp/-dorf*, was inferred by the location of one name type to another and by the geographical situation of a type (generally in clearings, or by bodies of water, or by age-old communication routes, etc.), as well as the relative ages of their formation, of the rules governing their phonological shapes and morphological composition, and of the personal names that figured (generally) as their initial components. As even a cursory glance at the handbooks will show, such as the exemplary studies by Bengt Pamp and Paul Zinsli, this is the procedural thrust of the bulk of place-name research.[4] As the methodologies of place name studies and the quality of etymological insights became increasingly sophisticated and better informed, so too did the understanding of settlement history. However, the basic underlying assumption, the fundamental presupposition, of place name studies was the same as that for other branches of historical linguistics at the time, namely, the assumption of continuity, of continuous change. The assumption of continuity is, of course, implicit in the very formalism of historical linguistics: X›Y›Z, or, conversely, Z‹Y‹X. Until quite recently, comparativists had never broached the problem of discontinuous change, the flip-flop without intermediary stages between, say, plural on the one hand and distributive on the other hand, between number-based enumeration and mass-based enumeration respectively. With the advent of pidgin and creole studies and more intensive scrutiny of language-contact situations generally, discontinuous change has now become a leading concern for general linguists interested in variation. And this, of course, leads me to my next point, namely, the discrepancy between original toponyms and imposed anthroponyms upon colonization. First, however, I must summarize the above survey and suggest why it is that onomastics has had its most remarkable (and respected) accomplishments in the area of toponymic research.

To the discerning reader, my answer is by now obvious. Historical toponymic research built upon the rigorous procedures and firm traditions of nineteenth century comparativism. In fact, it augmented and complemented that particular brand of comparatisim. It appealed to the high

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[4]Bengt Pamp, *Ortnamnen i Sverige*, Lundastudier i nordisk språkvetenskap Serie B Nr 2 (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1974) and Paul Zinsli, *Ortsnamen. Strukturen und Schichten in den Siedlungs- und Flurnamen der deutschen Schweiz* (Frauenfeld: Verlag Huber & Co., 1971). Of course, this is but a gross simplification, for, as any practised place name scholar knows, a detailed study of but even one name type can lead from philology to paeleography to geography and on to botany, archeology, geology, or any other body of knowledge that will yield a fix on the relative chronology of a name or name type.

standards set by the likes of Karl Brugmann (1848-1919), Hermann Osthoff (1847-1909), and the young Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). It observed form-meaning relationships, the rigidity of grammatical rules (that, for some at least, applied without exception), and the principles of dialect geography. Moreover, as was the comparativism of the day, it was firmly grounded in a belief in continuity, a belief supported by the philosophy of a reigning developmentalism. Finally, such toponymic research held out the fascinating prospect of significant implication, of establishing logical relationships, as one chronological level of names pointed to the next. Of course, this particular brand of toponymic procedure has some prerequisites for its effective operation, foremost among them being continuity of culture and language in which one anteriority points to another in a great chain of being, just as Modern High German points to Middle High German, and Middle High German points to Old High German. This continuity was simply not readily available in a colonized North America, for colonization denoted disruption of continuity. Just as the strands of the Kwa languages were stretched to the breaking point by creolization, so too the traditions of English, or German, or French naming practices were frayed by colonization. Hence, with the deprivation of a chain of being necessary for continuous reconstruction, North American toponymics was reduced to trivializing about isolates such as the Moscows, or the Springfields, or the Daytons that dot this fair land. In lieu of a highly evolved knowledge of linguistic prehistory (with the possible exception of Algonquian studies), even the analysis of Amerindian toponyms became an exercise in futility.

Deprived of an amenable laboratory, American onomasticians also abandoned the established tools of a venerable trade. They retreated in droves to literary onomastics. But if the analysis of isolates, such as the Moscows of the land, is an exercise in futility when deprived of continuity, then literary onomastics is even more of a futile exercise. There can be no continuity to literary onomastics, and no meaningful history that appeals to implication. Even less than literature itself, literary onomastics is no branch of linguistics. If linguistics is a science at all, then it is so because of the processual univerals it seeks to uncover, the hypotheses is seeks to establish and defend, and the significant implications and developmental hierarchies it hopes to uncover. It is not apparent to me, at least, what, if anything, meaningful could be said about the construction of language on the basis of a study of the personal and place names in the works of Charles Dickens. Nor is it clear to me how my appreciation of Dickens could be enhanced by being told that there was (if there were) a specific deep structure that moderated Mr. Dickens' choice of particular place and personal names. One cannot make a science of sensitivity. The literary onomastician is caught somewhere between a philosophy of language based on logic and a philosophy of language based on rhetoric, between, say, Otto Jespersen and Jacques Derrida respectively, not a very enviable position, but one which is reminiscent of the 12th and 13th century mystics.

I now return to the question of the contrast between basilectal toponyms and acrolectal anthroponyms, that is, the tendency toward complementarity between indigenous place names and non-indigenous personal names. This tendency can be formulated as a rule of thumb: an indigenous population regularly gives up its personal names (and personal naming system) in favor of those introduced by newcomers, while newcomers regularly adopt indigenous place names, but not indigenous personal names. Therefore, toponyms from non-indgenous sources are characteristically younger than anthroponyms from non-indigenous sources. Note that I say *regularly,* not *always*; this is a general tendency, not an absolute condition.

Earlier, I cited the persistence of Celtic river names in Anglo-Saxon Britain beside the wholesale adoption of Anglo-Saxon personal names concomitant with the abandonment of Celtic personal names. The classic reference on this matter is, of course, Kenneth H. Jackson's *Language and History in Early Britain*.[5] With further reference to the situation in Britain, note the following case of secondary overlay in which non-indigenous toponyms are characteristically younger than indigenous toponyms, a case that bears out the general, rather than absolute, nature of the topo-/anthroponymic complementarity rule. Elsewhere, I have demonstrated that predominantly Saxon *hurst*-names, which attest to the practice of slash-and-burn agriculture among the West Germanic peoples, are, generally, in complementary distribution with Nordic *tveit*-names (‹ **twaitō-* 'forest clearing', generally by burning), a name type that was introduced to Britain by Scandinavian, primarily Norwegian, settlers.[6] Eric Hamp (p.c.) points out that Anglo-Scandinavian *thwaite*-names are concentrated in areas which correspond closely to *Elfed (silva Elmete)* and the putative western route that Mynyddog may have taken to Catterick. He notes semantic relationship between *thwaite* and British Celtic (Welsh) *gwastad* (‹ **wostato-s*) and suggests that *thwaite* may have replaced Cumbric **wostat* 'level, flat', possibly as a result of semantic

[5]Kenneth H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1953), pp. 219–246.

[6]See my "The Place-Name Element *-hurst (-horst),*" *Naamkunde* 4 (1972), 26–35; "Nordic *tveit-/tved*-Names and Settlement History," *Onoma (Kongressberichte Bern)* 22 (1978), 47–83.

extension of *thwaite* ('clearing in a forest' › 'low-lying clearing') in the successor English of the Northwest to cover both lowland fields and newly cleared land.

But the question remains why there is a general tendency toward complementarity at all. The existence of the complementarity suggests disparities between the linguistic and cognitive values associated with personal vs. place names.

First, let us consider some linguistic differences between the two types. In compound toponyms, the classificatory formative, the constant element (e.g. *-by, -town*) typically has spatial, but never personal, reference. Place names, as opposed to personal names, are reified as locatives, and the predication of locatives is an abnatural condition. Cf. *We are Poles* and **We are Polands*. Whereas personal names may have instrumental usage, place names may not. Note the instrumentality implied by the Indo-European suffix **-ter* (**-tor*) in *Verwandtschaftsnamen*. There are also differences in the acquisitional strategies employed for place vs. personal names; the former involve syntagmatic association, the latter paradigmatic. Now, interesting as these differences, as well as others, may well be, they do not permit inference of reason for the personal vs. place name complementarity.[7]

Second, let us consider some conceivable cognitive differences. Place names have greater general accessibility than proper names: place is permanently accessible, person is not. Place labels readily become categoremic, but this does not hold for proper names as singular terms. This assertion is supported by the observation that, in the acquisition of names, children readily generalize place names but never personal names. For the child, mommy is always mommy, but New York is any large city. A further cognitive distinction was put forth by Oleg Trubačev as a provocative comment in the discussion following his paper on archaic Slavic names at the XIVth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences. Trubačev maintained that toponyms require a more intensive *conscience collective* than anthroponyms. Invocation in an onomastic context of this Durkheimian notion has a definite appeal. However, I would contend that the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of precisely the opposite of what Trubačev says, particularly so when *conscience collective* is defined as interpersonal group awareness, the realization of a sense of community (as opposed to another community). I would assert that, in situations of

[7]For an insightful discussion of the linguistic value(s) of proper names and, by inference, of those of place names, see Jerzy Kurylowicz, "La position linguistique du nom propre," in *Esquisses Linguistiques* (Wroclaw-Krakow: Wydawnictwo Polskieij Akademii Nauk, 1960), pp. 182–92.

resettlement and colonization, greater cognitive emphasis and a more refined sense of *conscience collective* is concentrated on personal, rather than place, names. It is only common sense to assume that, in such situations, realization as a social entity is more important than awareness of the labels assigned the geography of resettlement or colonization. One notes that, whereas Anglo-Celtic place names reflect diglossia, Anglo-Celtic personal names do not. There is nothing comparable to the diglossic tautology of Anglo-Celtic toponyms, such as *Cheetwood* ‹ British **cēt* + Anglo-Saxon *wudu*, in the inventory of personal names stemming from the Anglo-Saxon *landnám*.

A further example to support my contentions is supplied by OHG *diutisc*, MLat. *theodiscus*, the source of Germ. *deutsch*. Initially, this term denoted the vernacular, the language of the people as opposed to that of the scholars, namely, Latin. Subsequently, it denoted the ethnicity of a Germanic subgroup, literally 'those people of ours', and then 'our community'.[8]

From the discussion so far, it is clear that there are definite linguistic and cognitive differences between the strategies governing place names and those governing personal names. With respect to the tendency toward complementarity between place and personal names, however, it would seem that this complementarity is actuated by realization of ethnographic differences and the sociological exigencies attendant upon resettlement, colonization, and contact. But the important fact that emerges from all this is that, of the two, place names provide by far the more secure tool for discovering linguistic history. The earliest strata of Indo-European personal names and personal naming systems are largely irretrievable, while those of Indo-European place names may well be recoverable.[9] We will probably never know anything very specific or general about the proper names and proper naming systems of those Indo-Europeans who furnished Europe with *apa*-names, one of the earliest strata of European hydronomy.[10] Moreover, and this distinction is essential, while place

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[8]For an etymological survey of IE **t^{e}/outā-*, see Émile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969), I, pp. 364–6.

[9]For an attempt to uncover the patterning of Indo-European theophoric proper names, see my "Indo-European Theophoric Personal Names and Social Structure," in *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (p. 9 (1981), 227–43), where I show that totemism is non-Indo-European.

[10]The *apa*-name problem has held perennial interest for historical linguists, and the subject has enjoyed a veritable *embarras de recherche*. For a survey together with extensive references to the literature, see Heinrich Dittmaier, *Das* Apa-*Problem. Untersuchungen eines westeuropäischen Flussnamentypus*, Bibliotheca Onomastica, 1 (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1955). For discussions, see Rudolf Schützeichel, *Die Grundlagen des westlichen Mitteldeutschen*, Hermaea, Bd. 10 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976), pp. 62–3, 309–10; Hans Kuhn, "*Apa* zwischen Aller und Elbe," ZfdA 94 (1965), 214–21.

names are tiered in recognizable chronological strata, personal names are not. In Scandinavia, names in *-lev/-løv* are earlier than those in *-tveit/-tved*, which area earlier than those in *-torp*, and so on. Conversely, a proper name from the Viking period such as *Sigurd* is not fixed in a temporal or spatial stratum. It may recur at any time, and it is therefore not a very reliable procedure to date place name strata on the basis of the putative chronology of personal names.[11] It is factors such as those reviewed here that promoted place name research to a leading role in an onomastics dominated by diachrony.

Finally, then, there remain the vexed questions of the nature, both linguistic (grammatical) and philosophical (referential), of namehood and the place of names in the system of language. In short, is onomastics a part of linguistics? In order to answer these questions, as Lévi-Strauss astutely notes, one would have to determine whether or not names are an integral part of systems treated as codes: "as means of fixing significations by transposing them in terms of other significations."[12] Immediately, the further question arises of whether or not names have meaning: do or do not names contain or represent a residue of unintelligibility essentially recalcitrant to signification? It is generally accepted by philosphers and logicians that, while names have reference, they lack sense.[13] Indeed, they apparently "acquire" sense by dscriptive backing, e.g. John, the baptist; Judas, the traitor. However, proper names ordinarily remain undefined, for they are contextually singular terms and themselves discrete, distinct, specific, and concrete determinates. As opposed to Mill, Frege took a different stance and contended that proper names have sense, for they may have the same referent but different senses: morning *star* and evening *star* have different senses, but the planet Venus as a common reference. The possibility of difference in sense implies semantic value,

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[11]For a critical assessment, see my review of *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire,* by Gillian Fellows Jensen, *Speculum* 51 (1976), 137–40.

[12]Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. of *La pensée sauvage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 172. Names and naming figure prominently in the works of Lévi-Strauss. Moreover, a fact that has apparently been lost on onomasticians, his treatment of names in both linguistic and cultural contexts in *The Savage Mind* is perhaps one of the most profound anywhere. In fact, the whole of this work may, in a sense, be considered an extended disquisition on names and naming and the formal, functional, cultural, and cognitive, if not solely linguistic, properties of names.

[13]On this matter, see, for example, Stephen P. Schwartz, ed., *Naming, Necessity, and Natural Kinds* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977); John Searle, "Proper Names," in *Philosophy and Ordinary Language*, ed. C. E. Caton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. 154–61; H. S. Sørensen, *The Meaning of Proper Names* (Copenhagen: Gad). On the cognitive aspects of naming and names-reference-sense, contact Richard Coates, Department of Linguistics, the University of Sussex, who is currently working in this area.

rather than semantic opacity. Moreover, the existence of culturally prescribed conditions on the semantic appropriateness of names (cf. *That is John* and *She's a John*) implies that they have sense. Then, too, the classificatory institutionalization of names (e.g. in kinship systems, as denotata of clan and moiety) indicates that they have sense, as do the vocative and referential, didactic and performative, implementations of nomination. Note didactic nomination in ritual and associations with tabu. Clearly, some names have symbolic (semiotic), translational and/or etymological sense. But it is the contrast between appellative and onomastic usage that provides a way out of the [+reference, -sense] dilemma.

Appellative *field* is a descriptive term (with both reference and sense in context), but onomastic *(Spring)field* is not. Unless considered etymologically, names are non-descriptive referents. A name illustrates or exemplifies certain contingent facts, but does not describe those facts, not even etymologically. The etymology of *-torp* says nothing about *Jönstorp*, neither its physical reality nor its incidence in discourse. It is as if *Jönstorp* were not part of the "language" of its context, and, as John Lyons and others before him have pointed out, there is no clear-cut theoretical answer to the question whether names belong to the "language" in which they are embedded.[14] Names are adjuncts of ordinary language: they have reference, but do not describe and therefore, unless considered etymologically, have sense only as referents. Proper names necessarily have reference, but have sense only contingently.

It is this contingent aspect of names that defines them as peripheral to the ordinary encoding and decoding of grammar. It is the matter of contingency that prescribes the necessary and sufficient conditions for applying a particular name to a particular reality. Voiding contingency, the bleaching of etymological value(s), entails the exosystemic appropriation of names, their grammatical *Entgleisung*, their persistence as "freezes," their compartmentalization (i.e. compounding of native and non-native formatives), and their ability to persist in tautologies (e.g. *Cheetwood* as cited above). The establishment and loss of contingency also promotes their ability to, seemingly, glide in and out of grammar. All of these phenomena are, of course, well documented in the literature and need not be referenced here, but it is the identification of the modality of contingency that is important. The fact is that a proper name need not be logically tied to some particular characteristics of the object named in such a way that the name has sense as well as reference. The contingent

[14] John Lyons, *Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1, pp. 222–3.

aspect of names also comes to the fore when they are considered within the context of the accessible/available dichotomy, a natural property of ordinary language. This dichotomy has often been misunderstood, but may be illustrated as follows. Money in a bank is not readily available, but is accessible via check, savings book, letter of credit, etc. The general significance of a name type may be available (e.g. *torp* as an appropriate label for a small village), but its full etymological significance may not be accessible (at some posterior stage in its application). This observation provides a clue to why names are renewed syntagmatically, but, in opposition to other items in the grammar, not paradigmatically.

Another aspect of the contingent modality of names, an aspect that is justifiably emphasized by Lévi-Strauss, is synecdochism.[15] Naming performs two fundamental tasks: universalization and particularization (or totalization and detotalization). In doing so, it forms a paradox: naming is both a fixed and transformable signification. When, for example, proper names are constructed from totemic appellations, then a particular individual's name refers, either directly or indirectly, to a universal, to a totality, and, by transformation, a portion of a totality is conferred upon a particular individual. Such names represent one polarity in the naming process: nominal identification conducted by application of rules whereby the individual is established as a member of a preordained class. At the other extreme, as in the case of hypocoristic names, the name is a free creation on the part of its donor and expresses (often enough) a transitory and subjective state of the donor. A preordained class may well be lacking in such subjective identification. We therefore recognize both subjective and objective polarities in naming, a process which simultaneously conveys both totalization and detotalization. There are, of course, procedures intermediary between these extremes, but it is impossible to define *nomina propria* other than as a contingent means of assigning positions within a system.

Now, of course, the question remains whether names share the formal and developmental properties of "normal" lexemes in grammar. As onomastics has participated so intimately in diachrony, it would make sense to attempt to answer this question by subjecting names to the same developmental principles as could be applied to any other grammatical form. The "developmental principles" involved here are those of what has become known as "developmental linguistics."[16]

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[15]Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, pp. 174–6.

[16]For references and a survey, see my "Diffusion, Fusion and Creolization: A Field Guide to Developmental Linguistics," *Papiere zur Linguistik* 24 (1981), pp. 3–37.

Grammatical forms are said to occupy distinct semantic spaces, e.g. number, deixis, station, motion, quality, quantity. If they have sense at all, names clearly lie within the cadres of station and quality, and, with reference to Mass (collective, distributive), quantity. So far, so good. Next, viewed in a timeful context, grammatical forms enter into implicational hierarchies established on the basis of linguistic universals ranked in terms of cognitive prominence, e.g. [+Animate] both implies and dominates [−Animate]. Such implicature does not hold for names. The constructional encoding of grammatical forms is characterized by markedness which consists in more or less marked, marked vs. unmarked, and receptive to vs. not receptive to surficial marking (i.e. *merkmalhaft* vs. *merkmallos* respectively). One would be hard pressed to apply such markedness constraints to names, except, perhaps, in the case of metaphorical usage (= + marked), e.g. *It is John* vs. *She's a John*, at best a trivial utilization of markedness. The formal encoding of grammar is generally directed toward constructional iconicity which obtains when a formal asymmetry refers to a (deeper) semantic asymmetry, e.g. the singular is usually less marked than the plural, that is, the singular is typically "shorter" than the plural. *sheep* sg./pl. is non-iconic, while *ox* : *oxen* is iconic. Iconically encoded rules are natural, while non-iconically encoded rules are not, and uniformity of encoding denotes simplification: *sheep* sg./pl. is abnatural vs. "natural" *ox* : *oxen*. Discussion of names in terms of iconicity is meaningless, for they are non-relational and non-paradigmatic. The course of natural grammatical development is from what is more marked to what is less marked in marked environments. For example, indicative (= unmarked) *dares* (= marked) conditional (= marked) *dare* (= unmarked). Again, with the possible exception of metaphorical vs. non-metaphorical usage, it makes no sense to consider names in terms of markedness reversal.

From this it is obvious that names do not share the developmental properties of "normal" grammatical items. Names are, in this sense, non-linguistic items. They simply do not participate in the processual universals that orchestrate the "linguistic" items of language. On the other hand, names clearly enjoy privileged associations (e.g. tabu, numinous) often denied to purely linguistic items. Nevertheless, names are peripheral to concerns which lie at the core of the theoretical investigation of language. The notions of onomastics are by and large of a different order than those of linguistics, but this distinction does not make them any less valued. Names represent a repository of language data that is highly relevant by virtue of the inferences those data permit about etymology, settlement history, social structure and status, cultural attitudes, and intertextual symbolic values. Names and naming provide quintessential evidence of the institutionalization of language and the multiple contextualization of cultural phenomena. They are, at least seemingly at this stage of its development, more open to the approaches of New Philology than the formalisms of current linguistic theory.[17] They are, and probably always have been, a blurred genre. At a time when mainstream linguistic theory has become evermore abstruse in the demands on its formalism, the juxtapositioning of the blurredness of names and naming within the rigidly prescriptive linearity of mainstream theory incites a crisis in cognition on the part of onomastics. But the anxiety is unnecessary, for onomastics should not waver in its standards or stoop to atomistic anecdote, but persist with the standards of its venerable past as it seeks its own philology.

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[17]The New Philology refers to the proposals by my colleague, Alton L. Becker, who is currently working on an explication of his intricate and subtle views as to textual construction and understanding at The Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton. Becker's New Philology addresses itself, in the main, to the conceptual questions concerning the construction of texts. That is, devices such as repetition in proof and demonstration, the ways in which symbols are strung together, the modalities that actuate the sentience of proverbs, and the like.