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# Literary Onomastics Typology: Analytic Guidelines to Literary Onomastics Studies

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# A METHODOLOGY TO LITERARY ONOMASTICS:
## AN ANALYTICAL GUIDE FOR STUDYING NAMES IN LITERATURE
### Grace Alvarez-Altman

Harry Shaw's DICTIONARY OF LITERARY TERMS, the latest of its kind, does not include a definition for Literary Onomastics; therefore our first challenge is a definition with limiting delineations.

Literary Onomastics is a more specialized literary criticism in which scholars are concerned with the levels of significance of names in drama, poetry, fiction and folklore. These include names of places, characters, cosmic symbols, etc., as they relate to theme, structure, and other literary considerations. Lexicographers, linguists, literary critics, historians, geographers, philosophers, psychologists and others work on the intrinsic and kaleidoscopic aspects of names. Two of the projects the Conference on Literary Onomastics is committed to are: Bibliography of Literary Onomastics, already in its genesis, and Studies in the analysis or typologies of Literary Onomastics. The keynote speech I presented in June of 1973, was an introductory guideline for those who begin studies in literary onomastics. Leonard Ashley's keynote speech June, 1979, at the Conference on Literary Onomastics was a plea to onomastitiens to consider the vast aspect of the study of literary names. Today I am trying to forge ahead in the project: critical analytical guide to Literary Onomastics.

We all agree that just collecting and listing names for a work of literature is not enough and not realistic. You can't say that "Cairo" in <u>Huckleberry Finn</u> is such and such because, to start with, its pronunciation is Kay-ro. There needs to be other considerations to make the literary name relevant to the work. Scholars must be able to determine what the author intended names to mean and then what they really mean to us. What of the name YERMA, a famous character and also a García Lorca play? After a long study I come to the conclusion that it doesn't mean the desert barren waste of land, but this neologism is a cosmic symbol of "sterility".

As we considered this vast subject we came to the conclusion that literary names can be studied within three general focuses: ~1 - Families or classes of names, 2 -The techniques used by authors in naming, and 3 - Typologies or functions of names. As we consider the vast kaleidoscopic subject, we think of twelve families of names in literature, six techniques of nominology and three typologies.

Before explaining the 12 families let us review the five formal approaches to literary criticism popularized by O. B. Hardison. The humanistic, neo-humanist, moral approach traced back to Plato. The name Lazarillo in the picaresque novel has been studied in this context. The second is sociological, in which names reflect characteristics of a society, for example, <u>Doña Bárbara</u>, written by the once president of Venezuela, Rómulo Gallegos, which deals with the starkly realistic struggle with freedom and progress perpetuated among the poverty-ridden populace. The third is archetypal, anthropological, totemic or telluric, tracing names back to the classical or epic periods. Then I. A. Richards adds the psychological or psychoanalytical interpretation of names. For example, this type of study has turned Don Juan into a sexual deviate, for the purpose is not merely denotative. There is singularity, expansion, definition, actuality, compatability, individuality of names. CORBACHO, title of a famous Spanish middle age prose work, is an interesting example. 'Corbacho', "the severed male organ of the bull, once severed, dried and twisted is used as a lash to whip the oarsmen in the galleys," is a connotative dichotomous symbolism of what the author tries to extol in virtuous women after chastising the majority of them for vices, faults and evils. The fifth approach is aesthetic, with its multitudinous ramifications, which tends to dwell upon and analyze the form of the names instead of the substance. It favors the part over

the whole.. The connotation furthermore may vary from person to person depending on ethnic background of the critics. Literary onomastics as a critical approach, delves beyond these five approaches if we would study it from a scientific point of view, not a romantic or subjective one. Authors' naming practices make up part of the poetic expertise, prose virtuosity and dramatic skill.

The Anonymical family literary names may be subdivided into twelve categories.. These names do not impart a sense of clearly marked individuality or personality but a sea of anonymous faces like an idea that has no exact term to express it. Anonymical names at times induce fear or have cosmic implications. They are nameless, alluded, implied, generic, numerical, titles, initials, anagrams, neologisms; acronyms, computerized and programmed names. The numerical names are becoming more popular with the space age literature. , The concept originated with the Romans, who had an ancient practice of designating the name of a person by the numerical value of the letters in his name. Revelation 17:18, last book of the New Testament, reads "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." The pope, whose name 'Vicar of the Son of God' spelled in Latin Vicarius Filii Dei, gives 666. Houses excavated in Pompeii show the numbers of the names of dwellers. My number would be 151 from Altagracia while Martha's number would be 1000. For each of the Families. I only have time to discuss one category. Each of these twelve families will constitute a paper in itself. The name search for SYBRON, the outstanding corporation in Rochester, cost over $235,000 in 1965, after a computer narrowed them down to 250,000 possibilities and came up with the finalists: Omco (bridegroom in Japanese), Manicomio (mental hospital in

Spanish), Kinated (too close to the German word for movies), Pifco (Piefke is a legendary German comic strip character), Robaron ("they stole" in Spanish).

The second family is <u>Diactinic Names</u> or attributive names. I've chosen the word diactinic because these names are capable of transmitting intellectual actinic rays of light upon the characters and their attributes. Most lower social characters have diactinic names. There are ten categories in this family. They are personality traits (Smarty), trade identity, numerical names only, abstractions, special ranks, change of names, charactonyms, label names, emblem, and praelognomen.

The third is <u>Chimerical names</u>, purely invented fantastic names with no precedent. The ten categories here are invented, doublins, phallic names (Corbacho), unusual "Houyhnhm", hyphened, elliptic, slang, misuse or deliberate distortion, fantastic 'Yahoo' in Swift's book, transliterations.

The fourth and easiest to understand is the <u>Mythological Family</u> of names also falling into ten categories: Greek, Roman, Nordic, Sagas, Epic, Indian, Exotic, Semitic, Sanskrit, African (Kinta in <u>Roots</u>).

The fifth is <u>Biblical</u> with the following categories: Hebrew, Aramaic, New Testament Greek, Prophetic, Pentateuch, Apostolic, Biblical analogues, Hagiographic (13 books forming the third division of the Jewish Old Testament), symbols (shakina) and names of the sixty-six books of the Christian Bible.

Family <u>Six</u> is <u>Etymological Simple Names</u> falling into five categories: traceable to exact original language, contextual, common, suitability to context, unsuitable to context. Here a thorough knowledge of the Indo-European eleven Family of languages is desirable. For example, it is important that the Italic Family be associated to the Oscan, Old Latin, and Umbrian languages, and some expertise by the scholar in the ten romantic languages would be an asset.

For scholars who dabble in the Germanic Family of languages some knowledge of the East, North and West Germanic, Anglo-Frisian descendants is necessary. North German descendant languages are the Old West Norse and Old East Norse·language groups. (Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish)

Category seven is the Family of Etymological Multilingual Names. These may fall into five categories: two languages, three languages, transformations, transliterations, and pruning etymology.

In family eight we have the National Identity Names reflecting a country, a capital, a city, village, town or suburb, a simple national identity and a multiple one.

The ninth group is the Toponymical Family Names, which falls into 22 categories: municipal building, corporation, railroad station, bay, ravine, promontory, island, hillock (mound, small hill), col, beach head, hermitage, gulf, ranch, lake, mountain, summit, rock, peak, beach, port, eliptical toponyms. An example of this grouping is my book, Topónimos en Apellidos Hispanos; 1968, a Castala publication. It proved with lengthy documentation that 78.8% of all Spanish surnames are toponymical.

The tenth Family of Names is Paronomasic which shows the creativity of authors in punning. We have puns-simple, puns-combined, straight or ironic, nicknames, disease names (lady in Rochester, New York, named her children Apendicitis, Meningitis, Tonsilitis), combinations, change of gender (Caroline is feminine of Charles), childish distortions of names, phrases as names and nonsense words.

The Historical Family of Names is one of the most attractive because it involves Ancient History, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Modern Times, Contemporary, Political textual, Surnames as nomen, social rank, acceptance names such as Tycoon and pre-historic names.

The last and twelfth family of names is <u>Hagiographic Names</u>, lives of saints, variants of their names and any author who writes about lives of saints. Thus we can look at the table of Literary Onomastic Families of Names and see that, when added up, a beginner in Literary Onomastics has at least one hundred twelve keys to open up the kaleidoscopic literary onomastic criticism of literature while focusing specifically on names.

The techniques in nominology mastered by authors such as Shakespeare or Cervantes are amazing. Shakespeare, for example, chooses his invented names on grounds of propriety for poetic utterance, or a mood, or a national origin. His fascination with possibilities of attributive names was partially a return to an older tradition and not to his immediate predecessors--Lyly, Greene, Peele, Marlowe, and Kyd, who showed little interest in nomenclature. In ii, 3 <u>Henry IV</u>, in which Peter, an armorer's apprentice, is to fight his master, we witness a very serious event because Peter has accused the armorer of treason. In calling for the bout to begin, the Earl of Salisbury asks the apprentice:

> Sals.: Sirrah, what's thy name?
>
> Peter: Peter, forsooth.
>
> Sals.: Peter, what more?
>
> Peter: Thump
>
> Sals.: Thump. Then see thou thump thy master well.

What is significant here is the origin of Peter's last name, taken from a necessary activity in making armor. Shakespeare underscores this by having Peter refer to his hammer in the speech preceding the above quoted question of Salisbury. The name of Don Quijote's horse Rocinante shows how Cervantes, who took four days to name his horse, toyed with twenty variants of the name before he finalized on Rocinante. He violated the Spanish language syntax of

placing a prefix in the position of a suffix, for it should really be Anterocín. As if these 112 avenues of possibilities in studying names in literature were not enough, we must also consider the techniques which according to available studies fall into six categories: The first is <u>Polyanthroponimical</u> technique in which one character in a subtle manner has two or more names. The second is <u>Synecdochic</u> technique in which the name is a trope of a part for the whole or the whole for the part (fifty sails for fifty ships). Cervantes was a genius in using this technique. Quixote means a "greave" or "armor for the leg from knee to ankle," part of the medieval suit of armor. Thus quixote is synecdochic not only of armor but of knight-erranty as a whole, as well as of Quixote's type of madness.

The third is the <u>Evocative</u> technique as shown in the fascinating presentation by Allen Walker Read in his paper at the Conference on Literary Onomastics entitled "Evocative Power of Placenames in the Poetry of Carl Sandburg," (LOS Vol. VI, 1979, pp. 1-14). The fourth is <u>Name symbolism</u> technique or perspectives studied by George Sommer's article "Some Name Symbolism in the short stories of Fitz-James O'Brien," (LOS Vol. VI, pp. 51-74). The fifth technique, <u>Alienative</u> technique, is carefully developed in the article "Naming as an <u>Alienative</u> Device in Popular Literature," by Jack C. Wolf, also in Vol VI, pp. 200-212. The sixth is <u>Encantatory</u> technique, presented at the 1980 Conference on Literary Onomastics, by Allen Walker Read.

We now come to the third general aspect of the study of literary names, namely typologies or functions of names. The first study was made by J. B. Rudnyckyj in a paper, "Function of Proper Names in Literary Works," (in German) Heidelberg: 1959. This study explored relevance of names to form and established the theory of "redende namen". The second study, "Literary

Onomastics," <u>Names</u> 16, no. 4, Dec. 1968, by Gerys-Tarnawecky, explores relevance of names to forms in poetry rhyme (anaphora, alliteration, paronamasic, etc). The third study was my paper "Sexual Nihilism Within the Typology of Literary Onomastics," (published in <u>Onomastica Canadiana</u>, 1972) read as guest speaker at the Canadian Institute of Onomastic Sciences, Montreal. I attempted to explore the typology of relevance of names to ontology and cosmology. The study of relevance of names to sociology and psychology is yet to be explored seriously. I would like to finish with getting your answers to the following question: In which of the general aspects (Family names in literary onomastics, techniques of nominology or typologies in Literary Onomastics) would you place:

a. refractory names or backward names: EREHWON, TREBOR.

b. personal endearment expressions: "negrita"

c. extinct names like Xoe, Thea of Greek Origin

d. neologisms: Quijotero.

In this study we have only scratched the surface of a suggested scientific analytical Guidepost for the study of Names in Literature.

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# POSSIBLE ANALYTICAL GUIDELINES TO
## Literary Onomastic Studies

## FAMILIES

### 1
### ANONYMICAL

1. nameless
2. alluded to
3. implied
4. generic
5. numerical
6. titles
7. initials
8. anagrams
9. neologisms
10. acronyms
11. computerized
12. programmed

### 2
### DIACTINIC

1. personality traits
2. trade identity
3. exclusively numbers
4. abstractions
5. special ranks
6. changes of names
7. charactonyms
8. label names
9. emblem
10. praelognomen

### 3
### CHIMERICAL

1. invented
2. fantastic
3. doublins
4. phallic names
5. unusual
6. hyphenated
7. elliptic
8. slang
9. misused deliberate distortion
10. transliterations

### 4
### MYTHOLOGICAL

1. Greek
2. Roman
3. Nordic
4. Sagas
5. Epic
6. Indian
7. Exotic
8. Semitic
9. Sanskrit
10. African

### 5
### BIBLICAL

1. Hebrew
2. Aramaic
3. New Testament Greek
4. Prophetic
5. Pentateuch
6. Apostolic
7. Biblical analogues
8. Hagiograph
(13 books forming the 3rd division of the Old Testament)
9. symbols (Shikina)
10. 66 names of the Bible books

### 6
### ETYMOLOGICAL

1. exact original language
2. contextual
3. common
4. suitability to context
5. unsuitability to context

## 7
### ETYMOLOGICAL-MULTILINGUAL

1. two languages
2. 3 or more languages
3. transformations
4. transliterations
5. pruning etymology

## 8
### NATIONAL IDENTITY

1. country
2. capital
3. city
4. village
5. town or suburb
6. simple or multiple

## 9
### TOPONYMICAL

1. municipal building
2. corporation
3. mountain
4. railroad station
5. bay
6. summit
7. ravine
8. promontory
9. rock
10. island
11. hillock
12. peak
13. col
14. beach head
15. beach
16. hermitage
17. gulf
18. port
19. ranch
20. lake
21. elliptical

## 10
### PARONOMASIC

1. puns-simple
2. puns-combined
3. puns-straight
4. puns-ironic
5. nicknames
6. disease names
7. combinations
8. change of gender
9. childish distortion
10. phrases as names, nonsense words

## 11
### HISTORICAL

1. Ancient
2. Middle Ages
3. Renaissance
4. Modern Times
5. Contemporary
6. Political textual
7. Surnames as nomen
8. Social rank
9. acceptance names (Tycoon)
10. prehistoric

## 12
### HAGIOGRAPHIC

1. Saints' lives
2. Variants of their names
3. Any author who writes about saints

## TECHNIQUES

1.   Polyanthroponimical
2.   Synechdochic (10 types)
3.   Evocative
4.   Name symbolism-Perspectivistic
5.   Alienative
6.   Encantatory

## TYPOLOGIES

1.   "redende namen"
2.   relevance to form in poetry
3.   relevance to ontology & cosmology

## POSSIBLE
## TOTAL APPROACHES

121

12-Families
 6-Techniques
 3-Concepts or Typologies