

Onomastic Pleasures: Name Games in *Dubliners*

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Abstract

Joyce's play with the textual possibilities of characters' names, from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*, challenges his readers above all to provide a response that neither ignores nor overstates potential interpretive intricacies. An examination of the fifteen stories of *Dubliners* demonstrates that every single story incorporates at least one textually striking onomastic effect, suggesting chains and networks of connotation that extend and enrich the meaning both of the individual text and of *Dubliners* as a whole.

Joyce's interest in the textual possibilities of characters' names is well-established. "Joyce was an intricate namer," as Fritz Senn put it more than twenty years ago (1987: 465).¹ Our task as readers, clearly, is to respond appropriately, neither to ignore the intricacies nor to overstate them. The present discussion of Joyce's use of characters' names aims to carry out that interpretive mandate in a relatively circumscribed area, limiting itself to *Dubliners* and examining each of the fifteen stories in turn for what might be considered its most compelling onomastic feature. Unsurprisingly, some of the stories emerge as being more interesting than others in this respect; surprisingly, perhaps, every single story arguably turns out to incorporate at least one striking onomastic effect.

It was also Fritz Senn who observed that Euclid is the first proper name to occur in *Dubliners*—and that the name literally means "good key," Eukleídeios deriving from the Greek *eu* ("good") and *kleis*, *kleidós* ("key") (1987: 465). From the beginning, then, the onomastically inclined reader of *Dubliners* (and, by implication, of all Joyce's subsequent texts) is presented with the decidedly duplicitous suggestion that onomastics may get us somewhere, may help to unlock the secrets of Joyce's text(s). Even if it doesn't, however, it

can at least be intriguing to act as if it might do so, to treat the chase as more interesting than the quarry. Two preliminary disclaimers are in order: first, there is no suggestion in what follows that Joyce necessarily intended all the textual effects discussed here, though he very likely intended more than a few of them; second, quite a number of the effects discussed have already been pointed to or hinted at by other readers, though not necessarily with the same intentions or the same results. The overall point of the exercise is to suggest that by taking Joyce's literary names at face value we can occasionally manage to extend Joyce's text in a variety of sometimes quite intriguing ways.

One aspect of Joyce's literary names is of course the degree to which readers consider it appropriate (or even necessary) to see them as referring also to real persons known to Joyce or his family or his circle of acquaintances. The almost obsessive degree to which Joyce strove for verisimilitude by anchoring almost every character in *Dubliners* to a real inhabitant (or occasionally a combination of inhabitants) of the Dublin of the 1890s is well known and already very well documented. For some readers, fascinated by the resultingly rich biographical contexts of Joyce's fictions, this extratextual link is folded into the textual experience, becoming a part of the text itself.² For other readers, for other purposes, it may remain largely uninteresting. For the first group, for example, it is of pressing interest when reading "The Sisters" that Joyce had two maiden aunts called Elizabeth and Annie Flynn or that Joyce's family knew or may have known several individuals named Cotter. For the second group of readers, it is of much more immediate interest that the verb to cotter can mean "to clot, to coagulate (as of blood)" (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 2), thus providing a discursive link (gratuitous, perhaps, but fascinating to discover) to Fr James Flynn's fatal stroke.

The present essay, despite occasional reference to the biographical background of Joyce's naming practice, is intended primarily for this second group of readers.³

Joyce famously observed that he had written *Dubliners* in a style of "scrupulous meanness." "The Sisters" is marked by reasonably scrupulous onomastic meanness: the first-person narrator, the boy of the story, is nameless; his uncle is called Jack, but his aunt is nameless; "old Cotter" is a family friend; the priest Fr James Flynn—"poor James" (*D* 16) has two sisters, Nannie and Eliza, and a clerical colleague, Father O'Rourke; one Johnny Rush is the proprietor of a local business that rents out horse-drawn vehicles.⁴ It would of course have been even more scrupulously mean to leave Johnny Rush, mentioned only once in passing,

unnamed; the inclusion of his name —based on that of a real Dublin small businessman named Francis Rush (Gifford 1982: 34)— economically lends an air of locational verisimilitude as well as contributing to the characterization of Eliza by employing strategically selected elements of her way of speaking. Such a strategy is no more than one would expect in a solidly anchored realist text. But what is the attentive reader to make of the fact that Rush is a serendipitously appropriate name for the proprietor of a cab-hire firm proud of his speedy service? Or of the fact that Fr Flynn shares his first name with his creator Joyce, while the reader is of course more likely to see the unnamed boy as Joyce's intratextual representative? Or of the fact that Fr Flynn's surname, incongruously in light of the "heavy grey face of the paralytic" (*D* 11), is an anglicization of the Irish Ó Floinn, meaning literally "descendant of a man of ruddy (flann) countenance"? Or of the fact that a cotter is also a pin or peg for holding things together, while old Cotter is busily piecing together his "own theory" (*D* 10) about Fr Flynn's demise —just as Joyce's reader is busily piecing together his or her "own theory" of how the text works?

In the second story of the collection, "An Encounter," we have a once again nameless first-person narrator as a young boy; the two schoolboys Joe Dillon and his brother Leo; their teacher, Father Butler; "a boy named Mahony" (*D* 21); another teacher, a Mr Ryan; and a nameless "old josses." Readers have reacted variously to the onomastic information provided.⁵ In the case of Joe Dillon, for example, Jackson and McGinley suggest that "the fictional surname recalls the leader of one of the post-Parnellite factions" (1993: 12), the Dubliner John Dillon. While this fact may possibly have prompted Joyce to use the name and may possibly have been true of at least some readers of Joyce's day, it is undoubtedly untrue of the vast majority of Joyce's readers today, and Joyce's text has thus to this extent, for many readers, lost a resonance it once may well have had. In the case of the boy Mahony, the same authors see the name as possibly prompted by that of Fr Francis Sylvester Mahony, dismissed in the 1860s from his teaching post at Clongowes for (alcoholic) impropriety (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 12). The Clongowes connection supports the conjecture, as does the fact that Fr Mahony, a favourite son of Cork as author of "The Bells of Shandon," wrote under the name "Father Prout," a name not unrelated to the demotic French *prout* ("fart").⁶ Clearly, however, neither one of these possible echoes will significantly affect our understanding of "An Encounter."

Similarly, the fact that Mahony's name, according to MacLysaght, derives etymologically from the Irish Ó Mathghamhna, "descendant of a man called Bear (mathghamhan)" would not seem to have any particular relevance for a reading of Joyce's narrative.

And textual relevance is of course central in discussing the significance or otherwise of literary names. It may be of some interest that certain names may (or may not) have been prompted by Joyce's knowledge of the political or cultural events of the day, but it would clearly be misguided to seek such correspondences at all costs —to seek a link of some sort between, say, Fr Butler and the author of *Hudibras*, Samuel Butler, who was undoubtedly also well known to Joyce. The fact, on the other hand, that Fr Butler, an authority figure in the schoolboys' world, bears the name of one of the most powerful Norman families in Irish history, might serve, say, postcolonial critics well, while remaining at best a minor curiosity to other readers. The significance of textual names, that is to say, like the significance of the text itself, is essentially a matter for negotiated settlement between author, text, and reader.⁷

The "old josser" who approaches the two boys in "An Encounter" remains unnamed. The term josser has various equivalents in the Dublin vernacular, including the ubiquitous "eejit." In view of our josser's likewise unnamed activity during his temporary absence from the boys, some readers may see the use of the particular term here as a rhyming hint of a "tosser," a masturbator. Some readers may also wonder if the similarity to the name Joyce is entirely coincidental or if the scandalous old josser (in an early adumbration of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker's alleged delinquencies?) is an ironic authorial self-inscription.

Joyce, as we know, enjoyed playing on his own family name, famously (if inaccurately) asserting, for example, that Joyce meant the same thing in English as Freud meant in German (Ellmann 1982: 490). Perhaps the most striking onomastic feature of "An Encounter," however, is the narrator's proposed stratagem, if the old josser should ask their names, that Mahony and he should call themselves Murphy and Smith. One striking aspect of this Odyssean ploy, as Fritz Senn has observed, is that we may now deduce that "the narrator's name is not Smith" (1987: 466). We may also note that Murphy and Smith are the commonest Irish and the commonest English name respectively, and that the rather priggish narrator-character, who is at some pains to distance himself from Mahony's alleged gaucherie at various points, celebrates his own superior level of culture by choosing the English name for

himself —and thus implicitly aligns himself with the old jossler, who seems to be a person of some education, for the narrator “noticed that his accent was good” (*D* 26). Joyce, we may remember, was proud of the Norman rather than native origins of his own name. Claire Culleton further suggests (1994: 18) that the artisan name Smith, as in goldsmith or silversmith, may also be seen as establishing a link between the boy of the story and that reduced Daedalus to Stephen Dedalus.

The third story, “Araby,” once again has an unnamed first-person narrator, a boy who may or may not be identical with the boy or boys of the first two stories. The title itself involves a name, its old-fashioned, poetic form invoking a romantic vision of the mysterious east. The story features the boy’s failed quest to visit “Araby” and bring back treasures of the Orient for “Mangan’s sister” (*D* 30), with whom he believes himself in love, and who also remains otherwise unnamed —perhaps, in the boy’s overheated romantic imagination, even too sacred to be named. That name, which we never discover, is “like a summons” (*D* 30), it “sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises.” (*D* 31)

While Mangan is not a particularly unusual name in Ireland, for Joyce’s contemporary readers the phrase “Mangan’s sister” would almost certainly have been more evocative than the references to John Dillon or Francis Sylvester Mahony mentioned above, almost certainly evoking the romantically tragic figure of the Dublin poet James Clarence Mangan, famous in Ireland both for his patriotic ballads (most notably the widely known allegorical but passionate love song “Dark Rosaleen”) and his quasi-oriental verse —and who refers in his autobiography, as it happens, to having a sister. Perhaps “Mangan’s sister” may even be called Rosaleen —at any rate she is first approached through “dark muddy lanes” past “dark odorous stables” (*D* 30) and is discovered standing in a doorway with the light behind her. Her lack of a name may alternatively be read by some as an intertextual nod to another of Mangan’s better-known poems, “The Nameless One.” Joyce himself, as we know, had a personal interest in Mangan, one of the very few Irish writers he at least implicitly acknowledged as a productive precursor, and delivered an early address on his work at University College Dublin in 1902.

The narrator of “Araby,” enchanted by Mangan’s sister, strikingly refers to “the soft rope of her hair” tossing as she moves her head (*D* 30). Not only is the name Mangan a version of the Irish Ó Mongáin, a name meaning “descendant of a mongán,” which is to say

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someone with a mong or luxurious head of hair (Jackson/McGinley 1993:22). Intriguingly, the noun “mong” can also mean “ropes, cordage” (as of a ship), according to Dinneen. Equally intriguing, one of Mangan’s most striking images, in the poem “Double Trouble” (subtitled “From the Ottoman”), also involves female hair: “I am blinded by thy hair and by thy tears together— / The dark night and the rain come down on me together” (Smith 1973: 62). Though the tears in “Araby” are male rather than female, the mood of Mangan’s poem and its ostensibly Oriental origins are strikingly appropriate to Joyce’s story.

The supporting cast of characters in Joyce’s ironically tinged vignette of thwarted love includes the boy’s aunt and uncle, both nameless, and a young lady and two young gentlemen, all likewise unnamed, all three of them with English accents. An onomastic oddity in this context of anonymity is provided by the named Mrs Mercer, “an old garrulous woman” (*D* 33), who figures only in half a dozen lines of a single paragraph. One aspect of her narrative role is similar to that of “old Cotter” in “The Sisters,” namely to contribute to the narrator’s frustration. Another is that her name contributes to the reality effect of Joyce’s text, undoubtedly evoking Dublin’s Mercer’s Hospital for many readers. Yet another, and a further link to “The Sisters,” is that a mercer —from the French *mercier* (“merchant”)— is a dealer in silks and other textiles: Mrs Mercer’s name thus also provides an unobtrusive discursive link to the drapery in Great Britain Street over which Fr Flynn lives and dies.

“Eveline” introduces an unnamed third-person narrator, which will remain the presentational standard in all the remaining stories. The protagonist is Eveline Hill, whose first name, as has been variously mentioned, evokes a range of possible discursive connotations in the context of Joyce’s story of a young woman tempted to abandon a life of drudgery, keeping house for her violent father and embark on a romantic future in South America with her handsome sailor Frank, who tells her stirring tales of exotic foreign parts. Fanny Burney, for example, wrote a highly popular novel *Evelina, or A Young Lady’s Entrance into the World* (1778), whose heroine, abandoned by her father, eventually marries the rich and handsome aristocrat of her dreams, and whose subtitle readers may see as directly relevant to Eveline’s own potential entrance into a world of which she is both ignorant and afraid. George Moore’s *Evelyn Innes* (1898), however, tells the tale of a young woman who renounces a life of public success and private immorality and abandons the world for a convent. Ominously for Eveline’s hopes of domestic happiness with her Frank, Thomas Moore’s ballad “Eveleen’s

Bower” is a tale of seduction and base betrayal (Gifford 1982: 48-49). Most ominously of all, many of Joyce’s readers of 1914 would also have known a fact largely lost on modern readers, namely that Eveline is also the title of a nineteenth-century pornographic novel (Brown 1992: 253n1), a fact potentially casting considerable discursive doubt on the purity of Frank’s motives in encouraging Eveline to run away from home with him. Eveline’s surname, moreover, is Hill, potentially strengthening the note of warning even more by evoking John Cleland’s scandalous eighteenth-century “memoirs of a woman of pleasure,” *Fanny Hill*. On the other hand, the name Hill at least has a certain homely stability: Eveline remembers a family picnic to the Hill of Howth in the old days, when her father was “not so bad” (*D* 37). All these potential discursive commentaries are of course inaccessible to Eveline herself —and a challenge to the reader as to how seriously (if at all) the onomastic hints are to be taken.

The immediate challenge for Eveline is to decide how entirely frank this Frank, who wants to take her away to Buenos Ayres, may be. The latter name, its spelling now standardized as Buenos Aires, means “good airs, pleasant breezes,” which readers are of course at liberty to see as an obvious and exotically appealing alternative to the stiflingly restrictive world of Joyce’s Dublin —whose very name characterizes it in terms of darkness, as a “black (dubh) pool (linn)” in which a girl like Eveline might very well drown. But, ominously once again for Eveline, the phrase “to go to Buenos Ayres” was also once slang for “to become a prostitute” (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 31), potentially raising serious doubts about Frank’s less frank motives. On the other hand, he takes her to see *The Bohemian Girl*, Michael Balfe’s opera set in similarly exotic foreign parts in which the heroine not only discovers that she is nobly-born but is both willing and eager to run away with the handsome hero, who turns out to be a Polish nobleman in disguise, and where everything does indeed end very happily ever after.

“After the Race,” though generally regarded as one of the weaker pieces in *Dubliners*, presents readers with an interesting onomastic combination of six named characters, all male. Jimmy Doyle, Charles Ségouin, and André Rivière all have first names; Villona, Routh, and Farley do not. Jimmy Doyle, the focal character, is in his mid-twenties, comfortably off though as yet without a profession, educated at a “big Catholic college” in England, then at Trinity College and Cambridge, the son of a one-time Nationalist prudently turned pro-British and capitalist. He shares Joyce’s first name and is clearly fascinated and somewhat overawed

by the foreigners —French, Canadian, Hungarian, English, American— with whom he consorts in the story. In Tindall’s pithy formulation: “Nothing alien is alien to romantic, socially-climbing Jimmy” (1959: 23). Even his own family name, despite its overt Irishness, invokes the motif of foreignness —and also, perhaps ominously once again, of blackness: an Ó Dubhghaill is by definition a “descendant of a black (dubh) foreigner (gall),” a descendant namely of the ninth-century Danish Vikings who devastated much of the Irish east coast before eventually founding the city of Dublin.

For the first time in *Dubliners*, names from beyond the British Isles appear. Charles Ségouin is rich, French, Cambridge-educated, and is about to “start a motor establishment” in Paris (*D* 43). Jackson and McGinley suggest that “the name was possibly adapted by Joyce from *sagouin*, which is French for a dirty fellow, either physically or morally” (1993: 35). Since he has been driving an open car over dusty roads, the physical sense at least may be apt, while his capitalism may qualify him, if rather unfairly, on moral grounds. But if *sagouin* was indeed in Joyce’s mind, another meaning of the word would be more obviously appropriate, namely as referring to the South American “squirrel monkey” (perhaps even from the neighbourhood of Buenos Aires?), thus ironically invoking the exotic, which for Jimmy Doyle constitutes the dangerous, fascination of Ségouin and his high-flying friends, none of whom is Irish.

As we know, Joyce was acquainted with a Dr. Joseph Rivière, and also with a Frenchman called Villona and a Eugene Routh, “of origin unknown,” during his stay in Paris in 1902-03 (Ellmann 1982: 112, 123). Reading the names as textual signals to the reader rather than as mere items of biographical data can lead to interesting results. André Rivière, a cousin and potential employee of Ségouin as manager of the future Parisian establishment, is likewise Francophone, though of transatlantic, Canadian birth. Since the name Rivière originally denoted a person who lived by the banks of a river, it might be seen as suggesting this dependent country cousin as something of an alter ego for Jimmy Doyle, dweller by the banks of Dublin’s Liffey. Villona, for his part, is poor, Hungarian, and artistic, and sensibly plays the piano instead of cards. His name, not particularly Hungarian-sounding, faintly invokes the romantically bohemian lifestyle of François Villon, the fifteenth-century French *poète maudit*. Alternatively, the name might be taken as suggesting the French Fillon —originally a nickname (“little son”) for a youngest son— and thus perhaps suggesting Villona as a rather

wiser alter ego of Jimmy Doyle. Routh is a young Englishman, Cambridge-educated, who eventually wins at cards, English winner to Jimmy Doyle's Irish loser, Haines to his Dedalus. MacLysaght lists Routh as a variant of Rothe, an Irish name of Norse origin, deriving from Old Norse *rauðr* ("red") —an ironic chromatic echo of Jimmy as "black foreigner."

Farley, finally, is a rich American with a yacht moored in Kingstown harbour. "The name is not uncommon in Ireland, and the suggestion is that Farley was an Irish-American. In Middle English, however, the word meant 'surprising' or 'strange'" (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 39). Farley, according to Hanks *et al.*, can be an Irish name, a variant of Farrell, both of them anglicized forms of Ó Fearghail, "descendant of a man of valour." It can also be an English habitation name, denoting a dweller in a clearing (Old English *fealh*) among ferns (Old English *fearn*). Perhaps the most significant thing about the wealthy Farley, as far as young Jimmy Doyle is concerned, is that he comes not just geographically from afar, but also from far outside Jimmy's field of experience. We may or may not choose to remember that German *fern* means "far" —or that German *Gefahr*, *gefährlich* means "danger, dangerous." Jimmy Doyle, who comes to financial grief in his brief encounter with false foreign friends, might have done well to remember it.

"Two Gallants" has just two named characters, both male. The dominant member of the pair, Corley, bears a name that derives intriguingly from the Irish Mac Thoirdhealbhagh, "son of Toirdhealbhach," the latter name magniloquently meaning "in the shape of Thor" (MacLysaght). Corley the conqueror, we are told, "aspirated the first letter of his name after the manner of Florentines" (*D* 52), thus producing what various critics have seen as an approximation of "Whorely" (Gifford 1982: 57; Brown 1992: 261). We may take this as a coarse joke on Corley's part, celebrating his own predatory successes with vulnerable young women, or we may take it as a less favourable narratorial commentary. The latter is perhaps more likely, since the immediately following description of Corley unambiguously implies that, whatever about being in the shape of Thor, he is also in the shape of a giant penis (*D* 52). Moreover, since the Florentine pronunciation of the initial c is actually a uvular fricative as in German *ach*, and since a similar peculiarity can also often be heard in emphatic Kerry English, it is also conceivable that Corley, the son of a policeman, is merely being mocked by the narrator for allegedly provincial origins —as in Martin Cunningham's comic anecdote in "Grace" involving policemen and airborne cabbage. Or again, Corley himself may simply be

exaggerating such rural origins for comic effect. The name of his companion, Lenehan, the focal character of the story, is an anglicization of the Irish Ó Leanacháin, “descendant of a man called Leanachán.” While the derivation of Leanachán is uncertain, Irish *leanadh*, serendipitously, means the act of “following,” and the parasitic Lenehan, pathetically eager to share in Corley’s ill-gotten gains, is nothing if not a follower.⁸ The unfortunate “slavey” is appropriately nameless.

“The Boarding House” has three named primary characters: Mrs Mooney, Polly Mooney, and Bob Doran, the focal character. Mrs Mooney, who runs a boarding house, has a shrewd eye for the value of money: MacLysaght derives the name from the Irish Ó Maonaigh, “descendant of one who is rich (maonach, maoineach).” The anglicized name, as various readers have noticed, even includes the word money. Her daughter Polly Mooney has the look of “a little perverse Madonna” (*D* 62-63), a look that is also adumbrated onomastically, for Polly is a variant of Molly, which is a pet form of Mary.⁹ For some readers, the name more immediately evokes Polly Peachum, the distinctly dubious heroine of *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728), whose surname means “betrayed” (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 54).

Finally, there is Bob Doran, the sacrificial victim to be manoeuvred, willingly or not, into marriage. The surname derives from the Irish Ó Deoráin “descendant of Deorán” (MacLysaght). The term *deorán* can variously imply “exile,” “alien,” “fugitive,” and “beggar,” and all are appropriate for the hapless Doran, whose anglicized name, as has variously been noted, is also a near homonym of the Greek *doron* (“gift”). Woebegone Doran, his misted spectacles suggesting an ironic self-projection of the author, is truly a gift for pretty Polly and her ruthlessly rapacious mother. A contemporary slang meaning of the verb *bob*, meanwhile, included “to cheat” (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 57).

“A Little Cloud,” the centre story of *Dubliners*, has two named primary characters, both male, the egregiously self-confident Ignatius Gallaher and the shrinking would-be poet Tommy Chandler, Shem to Gallaher’s Shaun (Tindall 1959: 27). Gallaher’s dactylic surname anticipates Mulligan’s in *Ulysses*, suggesting a common origin in Joyce’s rival in all things, Oliver St. John Gogarty. Gallaher’s self-confidence derives from his having spent a number of years in England and, at least by his own account, even visited Paris on more than one occasion. His name derives from the Irish Ó Gallchobhair, “descendant of Gallchobhar,” the latter combining *gall* (“foreign”) and *cabhair* (“help”). Gallaher is Irish gone English, with the

aid of “foreign help.” His first name, Ignatius, common among Irish Catholics, is not only a nod to Joyce’s teachers, the Jesuits, founded by the supremely self-confident (and eventually canonized) Ignatius Loyola. It also contains a suggestion of Latin *ignis* (“fire”), while poor Chandler can onomastically produce only the much fainter gleam of a candle.

Chandler (the name literally denotes a maker or seller of candles) is a man of wax, still in need of his mother’s help, at least onomastically. Unlike the boy of “An Encounter,” who gives himself the English name Smith, Chandler considers it “a pity his name was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his mother’s name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about it” (*D* 74). Given an appropriate context, the name Chandler, as “candle maker,” could conceivably be read as suggesting a sexual connotation; in Chandler’s case, however, despite his recent paternity, the connotation seems wholly uncalled for. To add insult to injury, Terence Brown notes that a chandler in Hiberno-English is a “meat-maggot” (1992: 271n18).

Unlike Gallaher, Chandler’s foreign travels have been limited to a trip to the Isle of Man, insular halfway house between Ireland and England. Despite Chandler’s wish to shine as a specifically Irish poet, the name Chandler is unambiguously English; and while England’s favourite Irish poet of the nineteenth century was Thomas Moore, popularly known as “Tommy,” the name Tommy was associated with British soldiers, rather than with the heroes of Irish legend, as early as the Battle of Waterloo. Nonetheless, Tommy Chandler has at least two *bona fide* onomastic claims to kinship with Tommy Moore, for the term chandler also means “grocer,” and Thomas Moore was famously a Dublin grocer’s son; while the name Thomas, according to McKenzie, derives from the Aramaic *teôm*, meaning “twin.” Chandler, indeed, moves among the great: linked with Byron in his own mind, he is onomastically linked with an even greater poet by his wife, who, as in Shakespeare’s case, verily *hath a way*: the “hatred” in Annie’s eyes when he frightens her baby — “My little man! My little mannie!” (*D* 85)— terrifies little Chandler *père*. Appropriately, the name Ann derives ultimately from the Hebrew *hannah*, meaning “God has favoured me,” which is to say, “favoured me with a child,” another little Chandler in fact, perhaps also called Thomas.

The central character in “Counterparts,” Farrington, bears an English name found in Ireland as early as the fourteenth century (MacLysaght). Various readers have noted that *fear* in Irish, homonymous with the first syllable of Farrington’s name, means “man” or “husband.”

Jackson and McGinley add that “given this man’s evident swinishness, the word also recalls the Middle English term *feareh* —a pig” (1993: 76). One might go on to note that Middle English *farre* (Old English *fearr*) means “bull,” evocative perhaps for some readers of Farrington’s blind rage. Etymologically, however, Farrington’s name has nothing at all to do with virility, swinishness, or blind rage, being merely a habitation name from a place whose name derives from Old English *fearn* (“fern”) and *feormehám* (“farm”), an inoffensive “farm in the ferns” (Hanks *et al.*) —thus providing an onomastic link to Farley in “After the Race.” What is perhaps most striking about Farrington’s name, however, is that the narrator refers to him consistently throughout just as “the man” or “a man,” depriving him of any name at all —except when he is in the pub, where he is on home ground and comes into his own (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 79), capable of naming his poison and, normally, making a name for himself.

Farrington’s immediate superior is a Mr Alleyne. “Perhaps the suggestion of the German *allein*, meaning ‘alone,’ appealed to Joyce” (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 76). Maybe, maybe not. MacLysaght sees the name as “primarily the name of a war-like branch of the Scottish Campbells brought to Ulster by the O’Donnells,” which is nicely appropriate for the diminutive Alleyne’s pugnacity. The name is an orthographic variant of Allen, which probably derives from the Irish *ailín* (“little rock”), a diminutive of *ail* (“rock”). As Hanks *et al.* note, however, the homonymous personal name Alein derives —much more appropriately for the context— from the French *aguillon* “spur, goad,” which is exactly Alleyne’s role with regard to Farrington.

Shaken by his verbal encounter with the goading Alleyne, Farrington comes to grief on a name, mistakenly writing “Bernard Bernard” when he should have written “Bernard Bodley” in the matter of Bodley and Kirwan. The former is English; the latter is an anglicized version of the Irish Ó Ciardhubháin, a doubly “black” name (ominously for Farrington on this black day), denoting a descendant of someone both *ciar* (“dark”) and *dubh* (“black”). Mr Alleyne’s friend Miss Delacour, witness of Farrington’s downfall, has an originally French name that shares a meaning with the English Court (appropriately, as Alleyne is paying her courtly attention), but even so overtly foreign a name can also, according to MacLysaght, unexpectedly be an anglicization of the Irish name Ó Dubhluachra, which once again contains an ominous *dubh* (“black”).

The final straw for Farrington is his defeat in a public-house trial of strength by the “stripling” Weathers, who bears “a noticeably English name, from the Old English *wēðer*, later wether or weather ‘castrated ram’ —and hence somebody lacking in sexual prowess. It reflects badly on Farrington to be beaten by a eunuch” (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 81) — especially an English one. Returning home in a blind rage, befuddled by drink and the shame of physical defeat, Farrington, literally seeking a whipping-boy, has momentary difficulty in distinguishing his own frightened children, Charlie and Tom, in the dusk. Their perceived similarity is etymologically underlined: the name Charlie is cognate with churl, “fellow”; the name Thomas, as we have seen, is an Aramaic “twin.”

Tindall, ingeniously, sees Farrington’s son’s terrified promise to say a “Hail Mary” for his abuser as pointing forward to the protagonist of the next story (1959: 29). “Clay” demonstrates an onomastic strategy closely linked to its focalization through the central character, Maria, an elderly spinster, possessed only of a given name, perhaps as befits her diminutive stature or perhaps with reference to her virginal status. Maria feels benevolently superior to two other women who work in the Dublin by Lamplight laundry, Ginger Mooney and Lizzie Fleming, whom she thinks of by their family names as “Mooney” and “Fleming.” On the other hand, she is the one-time nanny of Joe and Alphy Donnelly, who figure in her reported thoughts only by the petname forms of their given names. Joe Donnelly’s surname is revealed only because Maria thinks of his wife as “Mrs Donnelly” (who calls her “Maria”). Joe’s brother Alphy is a pregnant absence, rejected for some unnamed offence by his brother Joe, but represented onomastically, a ghost at the feast, by Joe’s son, also called Alphy. Joe has three other children, unnamed. The “next-door girls” who play the titular trick on Maria also remain unnamed.

In “A Painful Case,” Mr James Duffy, so introduced in the first three words of the story, is the third character in *Dubliners* to share his given name with Joyce (as also his interest in the German dramatist Gerhard Hauptmann). The name Duffy is an anglicization of the Irish Ó Dubhthaigh, “descendant of a man named Dubhthach,” once again containing the element *dubh* (“black”). The unfortunate Mrs Sinico, whose tender feelings for the robotic Duffy drive her first to drink and eventually to apparent suicide, owes her name to her husband, one Captain Sinico, who is originally of Italian descent —and owes his name in turn to a singing-teacher of Joyce’s in Trieste (Ellmann 1982: 199). Sadly, only her death notice in

a newspaper reveals her given name as Emily. Mr Duffy, always so called after the first sentence, pensively walking after her death through the Phoenix Park (onomastically, at least in English, a place of renewal), hears a train, “the laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name” (*D* 117) as he gradually recognizes the extent of his own lack of humanity. While Mrs Sinico may well be a native Dubliner, her married name stamps her definitively (if erroneously) as an alien. “Damned Italians! coming over here!” (*D* 40), as Eveline’s father might have put it. Indeed, as an Italian variant of the Latin *sinicus* (“Chinese”), her husband’s name stamps her doubly as a misunderstood outsider. Claire Culleton has also suggested that “the appearance of a ‘Captain’ Sinico in a story that borders on adulterous themes might well suggest to readers the Captain O’Shea/Kitty O’Shea/ Parnell triangle, especially since Joyce encodes the word sin in the first syllable of the Sinico name” (1994: 12).

In “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” a group of hired political canvassers converse during a local election in the office of a nationalist candidate on the anniversary of Parnell’s death. The canvassers come from a variety of political backgrounds, and their conversation consists largely of back-biting remarks concerning former friends as well as current enemies. Naturally, Parnell is a focus of the conversation: a man with an English name who (for some) was the “Uncrowned King” (*D* 134) of Ireland, paralleled in the story by the proposed visit of the newly crowned king of England, Edward VII, who is of course of German origin. The story opens with “Old Jack” (*D* 118) bemoaning the unfilial behaviour of his unnamed teenage son, introducing a central motif, that of fathers and sons and betrayal. The parallelism between the unnamed boy of “The Sister” and his uncle Jack provides a discursive link. The most striking onomastic effect in “Ivy Day,” however, involves Mr Hynes, still an unrepentant champion of the uncrowned king, who declaims to general applause a patriotic poem he has written on “The Death of Parnell, 6th October 1891” (*D* 134). The poem operates on the verges of the mawkish, but it is clearly deeply felt, and appears to be modelled self-parodically on one Joyce himself wrote as a precocious nine-year-old on the occasion of Parnell’s death. The date in the subtitle later came to be called “Ivy Day” because of the sprigs of ivy mourners at Parnell’s funeral had worn in token of remembrance. It is therefore teasingly appropriate that the name Hynes is a version of the Irish Ó hEidhin, which MacLysaght suspects is related to *eidhean*, one of the Irish words for “ivy.”

“A Mother” offers a parallel to “The Boarding House” in its portrayal of a dominant mother who quite ruthlessly uses a compliant daughter for her own purposes. In this case, “when the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs Kearney determined to take advantage of her daughter’s name” (*D* 137). Soon her daughter, Kathleen, is mixing with the right revivalist set and has even, fashionably, taken some classes in Irish. Kathleen’s onomastic credentials for the role are already strong: Lady Morgan’s song celebrating “Kate Kearney,” a winsome Irish colleen memorialized even still in “Kate Kearney’s Cottage” near the rhyming Killarney, was already widely-known in appropriate circles, as Mrs Kearney certainly knew. What she did not know, however, is that the allusiveness of Kathleen’s name for the reader, as Claire Culleton has observed (1994: 11), is significantly extended by the textual presence of “Mr Holohan, assistant secretary of the Eire Abu Society” (*D* 136), whose name, in combination with Kathleen’s, immediately summons up Yeats’s iconic play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), the titular heroine of which, “Cathleen the daughter of Houlihan,” is a powerful symbol of a renascent Irish Ireland. As Jackson and McGinley note, however, the fact that Mr Holohan “had a game leg and for this his friends called him Hoppy Holohan” (*D* 136) somewhat undermines the Yeatsean echo (1993: 133). Their position is supported by the fact that the names Holohan and Houlihan alike are versions of the Irish Ó hUallacháin, designating its bearer as a descendant of one who was *uallach*, meaning “proud,” according to MacLysaght, but also “vain, boastful, foolish,” and even “whining,” according to Dinneen.

Mrs Kearney was once a Miss Devlin, and, not finding a young man to match her romantic aspirations, “Miss Devlin had become Mrs Kearney out of spite” (*D* 136). The name Devlin in English is almost homonymous with *Duibhlinn*, one of the two Irish forms of the name Dublin, thus perhaps providing an onomastic motivation for Mrs Kearney’s inflated desire to see her daughter as representative not just of a city but of the entire country. But Mrs Kearney badly overplays her hand in unreasonably insisting on a higher fee for her pianist daughter’s performance than the beleaguered organizers of an undersubscribed event can provide, recklessly jeopardizing her daughter’s future career in the process. Miss Devlin’s name, from the Irish Ó Dobhailéin, appears to derive from *dobhail*, meaning “unlucky, unfortunate” (Hanks *et al.*), while Kearney, according to MacLysaght, derives from two different Irish surnames, Ó Catharnaigh (meaning “warlike,” which Mrs Kearney certainly turns out to be) and Ó Cearnaigh (from *cearnach*, meaning “victorious,” which, living up to

her maiden name, she unfortunately turns out not to be).

“A Mother” contains two amusing onomastic grace notes. Kathleen’s friend and supporter Miss Healy finally betrays her by agreeing to accompany one of the singers when Kathleen, on her mother’s orders, has refused to do so. Miss Healy in all likelihood owes her name to Joyce’s first piece of writing, a childhood poem excoriating under the title “Et Tu, Healy” an Irish politician of that name, Tim Healy, who had originally supported but later, treacherously, turned against Parnell. A discursive link to Mr Hynes’s patriotic effusion in “Ivy Day” is also provided. Meanwhile, Jackson and McGinley see Mr Bell, the nervously-agitated second tenor, “a fair-haired little man who competed every year for prizes at the Feis Ceoil” (*D* 142), a description also evoking the silken-haired Little Chandler, as a parodic self-inscription on Joyce’s part (1993: 126). According to MacLysaght, the name Bell usually derives in Ireland from the Old French *bel* (“beautiful”) and is among the ten most numerous purely English names in Ireland. The etymology has the ring of truth, given Joyce’s natural modesty. The choice of an English pseudonym would of course echo the would-be Smith’s choice in “An Encounter.”

The central character of “Grace” is Tom Kernan, a devotee of good cheer whose surname, for MacLysaght, is a version of the Irish MacThiarnáin, “son of a lordly one,” from *tiarna* (“lord”), allowing a (rather weak) pun on “child of the Lord,” appropriate for the parodic ecclesiastical context in which this all too literally fallen sinner (specifically, fallen drunk down the stairs of a pub) is shepherded by a quartet of enthusiastically misinformed friends towards a distinctly dubious redemption, as preached by the equally dubious Jesuit Father Purdon. Father Purdon’s name (of English origin) is a punning reference in turn not only to “pardon” for sins committed but also to the notorious Purdon Street, at the heart of Dublin’s then red-light district, where many sins were both contemplated and committed. Before the sermon, which is concerned with grace less in the theological than in the commercial sense and revolves around a (deliberate or unintentional) misreading of the chosen Biblical text, the would-be penitents contemplate and Father Purdon briefly prays before the “distant speck of red light” (*D* 172) marking the tabernacle in Gardiner Street Church.

“The Dead,” the final and most complex story of *Dubliners*, opens with a personal name that is also a complex symbol. The flower that is Lily’s namesake is not only a traditional symbol of purity (and Lily may have lost hers), it is also a symbol both of death and

of resurrection —as well as which, white as snow, it evokes the snow that is central to the story and eventually general all over Joyce's Ireland. In traditional iconography, moreover, the lily is an attribute of the archangel Gabriel, thus serving to introduce with fitting pomp the nervously pompous central character of Joyce's text, who is also a parodic authorial self-inscription, continuing the line that includes the old josser of "An Encounter," Little Chandler, Lenehan, and Mr Duffy. Gabriel, a more self-aware version of Mr Duffy, appears finally to achieve a degree, however indeterminate, of new personal insight during his contemplation of the falling snow in the final lines of "The Dead" (and of *Dubliners*), but some readers may wonder to what degree the authenticity of this apparent insight is parodically undermined by the flagrant inauthenticity of Gabriel's very name, which, as one might say, is actually the name of another character altogether. It seems clear, indeed, that Gabriel Conroy owes his borrowed onomastic plumes to Bret Harte's novel *Gabriel Conroy* (1875), the opening (rather than the ending) of which portrays snow covering everything as far as the eye can reach, though the setting is the Californian Sierras of the 1840s rather than Joyce's Dublin. Not for nothing, perhaps, does Gabriel conceal his name behind his initials in his writings.

Gabriel's insight (if it is one) is won because of a struggle with a dead man who also bears the name of an archangel, Michael. Gabriel and Michael, indeed, are two of the chief archangels of the heavenly host, and their names are strikingly similar in meaning, Gabriel's deriving from the Hebrew *gabri'el*, meaning "God is strong," and Michael's from *mica'el*, meaning "Who is as strong as God?" (McKenzie 1965: 291, 573). The archangel Gabriel is primarily a messenger, associated with beginnings and endings, and his iconographic symbol, as we have seen, is the lily: he announces the glad tidings of both the birth and the eventual return of Christ the Saviour. The archangel Michael is of a different stamp, captain of the heavenly host, patron of soldiers, casts Satan down to Hell, and often depicted carrying a flaming sword. Gabriel deals in words, Michael in actions. In Joycean terms, Gabriel is Shem, Michael is Shaun.

Gabriel Conroy is at least momentarily devastated by the discovery that he has a rival in his wife Gretta's affections, a seventeen-year-old boy long since dead who once loved her. Michael Furey's surname derives from the Irish Ó Furreidh or Ó Fiúra, "but the personal name lying behind these names is of uncertain form and meaning" (Hanks *et al.*). Etymologically the name has almost certainly nothing at all to do with "fury," but it is difficult not to read it,

especially in combination with the archangel's flaming sword, as indicative of the unquenchable intensity of the young man's doomed love, as opposed to Gabriel's self-satisfied matrimonial complacency. To this degree, indeed, as Gabriel himself slowly comes to fear the contrast between them, the dead Michael Furey, as an invincible adversary, is named, so to speak, through Gabriel's eyes. The narrator underlines the irony: Michael Furey was in fact "very delicate" (*D* 219) and fatally "in decline" (*D* 220), and the angel with the flaming sword was merely a sick boy who worked, bathetically, "in the gasworks." (*D* 219)

Names are strikingly important in "The Dead." Thus, for example, in a story where the relationship between the authentic and the spurious is central, Gabriel's patronizing smile at "the three syllables" Lily gives his surname (*D* 177) also plays a role: etymologically, at least, Lily's uneducated trisyllabic pronunciation is actually more correct than the conventional two syllables of the anglicized Conroy, the name deriving from the Irish Ó Conaire ("descendant of a keeper of hounds"), where Conaire quite properly has three syllables (Hanks *et al.*). Similarly, it is ironic that the Gaelic enthusiast Molly Ivors has an overtly Norse family name ("descendant of Ivarr"), while the "West Briton" Gabriel's surname has impeccably Gaelic credentials.

Alliteratively linked to her husband, and largely wasted on him, Gretta's name is a diminutive of Margaret, the name of at least one martyr and several saints, deriving ultimately from the Greek *margaron* ("pearl"). While poor Gabriel is more of a donkey, the Biblical advice on the inadvisability of casting pearls before swine may not be entirely irrelevant. As to the Misses Morkan's annual dance, it is difficult in a text called "The Dead," with direct or indirect reference to death on almost every page, not to hear the French *mort* ("death") in the family name of "the Three Graces" (*D* 204), even though once again there is no etymological connection: MacLysaght sees the name as a variant of Morahan, itself a variant of Murphy. Along similar lines, Jackson and McGinley note that Joyce took Danish lessons shortly before writing "The Dead" and would have known that *Mørke* in Danish means "darkness" (1993: 158); a corresponding Scandinavian surname, the Swedish *Mörk*, likewise means "dark" (Hanks *et al.*).

"The Dead," indeed, offers readers a much greater variety of onomastic effects involving parodically overdetermined names than any of the preceding stories. Freddy Malins's unusual surname, for example, appears to be a variant of Mallon, deriving from the

Irish Ó Mealláin, designating, according to MacLysaght, a descendant of one who is *meall* (“pleasant”) (MacLysaght 1980: 206). And Freddy, habitually inebriated —and even shaped like a bottle with his “very round shoulders” (*D* 184)— goes well out of his way to be pleasant to all and sundry. Donald Torchiana has suggested instead that the name may derive rather from the Irish Ó Maoláin, meaning “descendant of a tonsured one, a monk” (1986: 231), which would provide a discursive anticipation of Freddy’s trip to Mount Melleray. Cottle provides the information that the English name Malins means “son of Malin” and that Malin was formerly a diminutive of Mall, itself a pet form of Mary, allowing readers to wonder if there might even be parodic Christological aspects to the character of Freddy, as “son of Mary.” While the apparent contradictory presence of the French *malin* in his name teasingly suggests that he might be “crafty” or even “wicked” or “malignant” instead, there is little textual evidence to support any such assumption, and Gabriel even specifically volunteers the information that “he’s not a bad fellow at heart” (*D* 217). He is certainly not *le Malin*, the “Evil One.” Mr Browne, indeed, himself befuddled, several times even calls Freddy Teddy, a pet form of Theodore, a Greek “gift of God.” But Teddy is also a pet form of Edward, and one of the real-life models for Freddy Malins was in fact one Edward Malins, who shared not only Freddy’s drunkenness but also his unusual name (Ellmann 1982: 246). Freddy’s decidedly overdetermined name, indeed, reads like a teasingly direct challenge to the onomastically disposed reader.

The same is certainly true of that of Bartell D’Arcy, who, as artist figure and professional singer, with an originally Norman name borne, like Joyce’s, by one of the tribes of Galway, has a strong claim on onomastic grounds to be considered one more parodic authorial self-inscription. The Norman name, so written, indicates descent from an ancestor who came from the region of Arcy, in La Manche (Hanks et al.). In Ireland, however, the name, usually written without the apostrophe, is also used as an anglicized form of Ó Dorchaidhe, meaning “descendant of the dark one,” from *dorcha* (“dark, gloomy”) (MacLysaght). The name Bartell, meanwhile, is a form of Bartholomew, which on one level is merely one more example of Joyce’s obsession with verisimilitude, since there was a Dublin tenor of the day called Bartholomew D’Arcy (Jackson/McGinley 1993: 165). But the highly unusual form Bartell suggests that it may not be going too far to remember also that the Biblical Bartholomew was one of the apostles, and that the etymology of the latter term is the

Greek *apóstolos*, “one sent forth, a messenger,” which thus shares its primary meaning with the Greek *áγγελος*, an “angel.” Bartell, the final syllable of whose name even echoes the Hebrew *el* (“God”) contained in both Gabriel’s and Michael’s, emerges in this light also as an “angel,” a messenger from the past, from the west, from the dark world of the dead.

Various readers, finally, have seen the ubiquitous Mr Browne as an envoy also from the world of the dead. Other than his “wizen-faced” appearance and “swarthy skin” (*D* 182), the main evidence is of course onomastic. Mr Browne overtly plays, à la Joyce, on his own name: he is “all brown” (*D* 200), and, as Aunt Kate tartly puts it, “Browne is everywhere” (*D* 206), just as the brown of dilapidated brick is one of the pervasive colours all over Dublin. Even in “Araby,” suffused with all the romance of the Orient, the houses “gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces” (*D* 29), and Mangan’s sister herself, as the boy surreptitiously follows in her wake through Dublin streets, is reduced to merely a “brown figure” (*D* 30). More than a chromatic reference is at play here and elsewhere: the Irish for “brown” is *donn*, and in Irish mythology *Donn* (“The Dark One,” literally “Brown”) is the god of death.¹⁰

“Clearly, names resonate in many different and complex ways in Joyce’s texts. The discernible patterns, the recycled jokes, the careful attention to names in the texts—all these indicate Joyce’s wide-ranging and canny interest in the meaning and complex functions of names” (Culleton 1994: 41). Joyce’s demonstrated interest, in turn, overtly challenges his readers, from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*, to demonstrate their own abilities as interpretive partners in his onomastic games. The aim of the present essay has been to address two central questions relating to characters’ names as one component of a literary text whose meaning, once again, is seen as emerging in a process of negotiated settlement between author, text, and reader: first, the degree to which names and naming patterns in *Dubliners* can be seen as setting up chains and networks of connotation that interact with and extend the meaning of the text as a whole; and, second, if largely only implicitly, the degree to which the identification of these chains and networks can avoid the merely arbitrary.¹¹

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Notes

¹ Page references to works organized alphabetically will be cited only where specifically necessary.

² See, for example, Claire Culleton's *Names and Naming in Joyce*. Joyce seems to have been a regular reader of the weekly *Irish Times* column "Irish Family Names." He also owned an annotated copy of his namesake P.W. Joyce's *Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* (Culleton 1994: 46, 132n5).

³ Several of the derivations and possible connotations of the names of characters mentioned in this paper have already been pointed out in the excellent 1993 edition of *Dubliners* by John Wyse Jackson and Bernard McGinley. My debt to the authors for individual details is gratefully acknowledged; the use to which those details are put, however, is in general quite different in my work and theirs.

⁴ Parenthetical page numbers preceded by *D* refer to the Scholes/Litz edition of *Dubliners*.

⁵ Tindall, for whom the old jossler "resembles Father Flynn in clothing, teeth, perversity, and preoccupation with ritual" (1959: 18), was perhaps the first to suggest this. Cf. Tindall's query: "Smith, his pseudonym, anticipates Stephen's smithy?" (1959: 19)

⁶ Flann O'Brien was to develop the theme in *The Hard Life* with the scatologically named Fr Kurt Fahrt.

⁷ I have discussed the notion of reading as a three-way negotiated settlement elsewhere (O'Neill 1994: 116-28).

⁸ Noting similarities between Lenehan and Joyce, Tindall sees the relationship of Lenehan and Corley as anticipating that of Stephen Dedalus and Mulligan as well as that of Shem and Shaun (1959: 25).

⁹ For Tindall, "Polly is Corley's female counterpart" (1959: 26).

¹⁰ On elements of Irish language and mythology in *Dubliners* see Nilsen (1986).

¹¹ One aspect of naming that I have discussed elsewhere concerns the unexpected changes that some characters' names may undergo in translation—which introduces the at least theoretical possibility of new chains and networks of connotation (O'Neill 2005: 99-102).