

Philocafe September 2014

IF YOU HAD A DIFFERENT NAME WOULD YOU BE A DIFFERENT PERSON?

From Ceasar, Alexander, Vladimir The Impailer, Boadicea and Diana to Lunchbox, Peaches and Trixibelle (Oh Jesus Christ) to name but a few. How might any of these characters' lives have been altered by the act of changing their name and perhaps more importantly, how might our own?

A name is an objective fact but may also arouse a subjective response. Lineage gives us each a family name which according to our current social custom is passed down from the paternal side. In earlier Matriarchal societies the descent of name would have worked differently. Either way, we have already a dynamic of "Tribe" at work which amongst other things will surely involve some weight of history, responsibility, celebration, resentment and the comfort or the discomfort of belonging. To be in receipt of, or in possession of a name would not usually seem to be taken lightly. A family name is inherited and a given name comes with christening. At our first naming we were not consulted. It would seem that this is not a matter of indifference – to change one's name is not a light matter. In Shamanic practice and in American Indian culture re-naming is/was a practice used to mark a rite of passage. In our modern western societies we can change our name through the appropriate agencies of the state. So a name is not necessarily forever but even if it is changed, it usually remains unchanged for a considerable length of time before the move to change it comes about.

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet"

The passionate, teenage love of Juliet Capulet and Romeo Montague dares to take root in the poisonous chasm between their warring families. To avoid being torn apart by the conflict suffusing their existences and in order to be united Romeo rejects his own family name while equally, Juliet asks him to deny his father. In this story we are placed in no doubt that a huge amount is at stake in a name. Romeo is prepared to sacrifice his while Juliet dares risk tainting hers. Name is in fact everything. Ironically perhaps, roughly one hundred years before Shakespeare, between 1455 and 1487 the dynastic "Wars of The Roses" were fought for the throne of England. Peace followed.

According to the Kabbalah and Numerology, every name has a number which is calculated by adding the value of each letter. Modifications can be made so as a name may become more auspicious. Jesus Christ was an 18 – a portent for his future. Like the steps of a musical scale, the variation in vibration/pitch creates something distinct from what precedes it and what follows on in the chain of vibration.

It was noted that as part of their decimation of local culture, the British when they invaded changed Irish place names, obliterating them with their own. How telling as to the power of a name.

Strangely, even though the contents of our discussion seemed to point in a different direction, in summary the group seemed generally to think that being "named" was not in itself such a major thing....unless the name was embarrassing! It was said that the meaning we each ascribe to a name is what really makes the difference- that our own personality and philosophy matter most. While I do agree with the power of the meaning we ourselves can give to things, I feel very struck by the

Numerological approach. If we accept that each name has its own vibration, then how can changes to that name-either subtle or gross- not create differences in the fabric of our beings?

What's in a name ?... sound and silence....everything and nothing

Till we meet again,

Peter