

Language and Place-knowledge on Norfolk Island

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ABSTRACT *Using the place-naming practices in the small settler society of Norfolk Island, the home of Anglo-Polynesian descendants of the Bounty mutineers, we advance a linguistic argument against Saussure's claims concerning the arbitrariness of signs. When extended to place names, Saussure's claims about language in general imply place names in themselves hold no significance for how people interact with places. In contrast, we use ethnographic examples to show that people of Norfolk Island interact with the significance of the names themselves. Arguments for an integrated approach to toponymy in which place names are considered alongside other relational (cultural, economic and historical) factors that influence their use and meaning are put forward. We propose 'toponymic ethnography' as a useful methodology for understanding the connectedness of toponyms to people, place, and social networks.*

KEYWORDS *Norfolk, toponymy, ecologically embedded language, emplacement, naming practices*

Introduction

For a small island, Norfolk Island has many places and many place names. Rephrasing Ronström (2009: 179), the three islands (Norfolk, Nepean and Phillip) of the Norfolk Island Archipelago can be considered 'a linguistic archipelago: a "world of words"'. The history of these islands is rich in contrasts; from an initial agricultural settlement, to penal 'hell', to reclaimed and reinvented 'paradise', to a mission headquarters, to a historical yet modern touristic 'paradise'. These different conceptions of Norfolk throughout its history have generated competing notions of what constitutes place, and affect how place-space relationships are created, controlled and contested within this

small geographical space. Language, whether one speaks Norfolk or not, and *kamfram* (ancestry) – tracing one's lineage to the *Bounty* descendants who arrived from Pitcairn in 1856 – are the strongest discourses used to validate and locate belonging and emplacement on Norfolk. Norfolk Islanders' belonging and being-based connection and emplacement arises through a melding of language knowledge and use in significant social contexts – for instance, fishing knowledge related to fishing ground names, esoteric place name knowledge associated with easily forgotten locations and events (for example *Parloo Park* – literally Masturbation Park) – and through their recourse to history in the form of claims of descent from settler ancestors.

Despite the interest Norfolk Island offers anthropologists and linguists studying the languages and cultures of Oceania, little ethnographic field research aimed at describing Norfolk Islanders' relationships to the place of their settlement has been conducted.¹ Shapiro (1928) presented data relating to the results of inbreeding and the consequences of isolation on social stratification and Norfolk Islander society, and although Mühlhäusler and Stratford (1999) and Mühlhäusler (2002a) have presented initial descriptions of Norfolk society vis-à-vis language in its ecological setting, only scant research has been carried out focusing specifically on the role language plays in defining Norfolk Islanders' lived relationships to place.

'Space', wrote Lévi Strauss (1966: 168) 'is a society of particular places as people are landmarks within the group'. He saw names as a reflection of people's classificatory systems. He noted that proper names given to people and places represented the point in which a society's work of general classification gave way to processes of individuation (1966: 215). Proper names also represent the limit of naming, beyond which 'one does nothing more than point' (1966: 215), and as such are integral thresholds beyond which people employ language to refer to and distinguish between different aspects of their social and physical environment. Linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso (1996) reasoned that the ways in which members of a community go about this process of distinguishing – the work of classifying, naming, or appraising the landscape in which they reside – expresses the subjective and often habitual qualities of their occupation of a space.

Documenting place names is an important element in tracing the adaptation and the history of the Norfolk language and Norfolk Island society. In this paper, we consider the extent to which Norfolk Islanders' insider place names reflect their understandings of their relationships to the place of their ancestors' settlement. This begins in the ways they perceive their own island world toponymi-

cally and relationally to other places and how this toponymic standpoint – as a way of perceiving the particular environment of Norfolk Island – is then extended by Norfolk Islanders to make sense of their own place within a much larger series of interconnections with Australia and the rest of the world. We ask: what linguistic and social tools do Norfolk Islanders use to emplace themselves in the island? In particular, we examine how Norfolk Islanders' connections to place are reflected in common – but nonetheless political – acts of naming the landscape in which they live. Place names, the knowledge they evoke, and the circulation and retention of this place-knowledge within the Island's social groups all contribute to how emplaced social identities are constructed, bounded, and performed. While phenomenologically emplacement can be understood as a personal sense of belonging to place, social actors also mobilise these relationships to create social statuses vis-à-vis others.

Our primary argument is that toponyms cannot be considered independently of economic, historical, and environmental influences. We build on a critique of Saussurean linguistics, primarily by criticising Saussure's argument about the arbitrariness of signs, while drawing on phenomenological approaches and the work of Keith Basso to show how people's historical engagement with places shape naming practices. While Saussure's argument about the arbitrariness of signs does not specifically nor necessarily apply to place names, like Radding and Western (2010), we critique Saussure's argument by considering place names as distinct linguistic signs. We claim place names are different from other linguistic and cultural signs (for example, biotic names and common nouns) because of their resistance to change, their hyper-personal nature, and importantly their ability to connect people and history to and through place. Although we make no such claim, our critique of Saussure using place names may also be relevant to any critique of Saussure using analyses of any other linguistic signs.

Place names, as an important part of the referential lexicon of a people, are indicative of how human beings can adapt linguistically and culturally over time to a particular environment.² One of the implications of the short settlement period on Norfolk Island is that settlers often remember the social conditions, persons, and events that led to the creation of particular names. These circumstances enable us to analyse and observe a process likely to be implicit in practices of place-naming more generally. Our discussion is divided into five sections. We begin with a brief description of the social, linguistic, and geographical features of Norfolk Island. We then situate the study of toponymy within the context of modern linguistics vis-à-vis Saussure.

Following this theoretical discussion, we introduce two case studies that demonstrate the ways that place names are created, used, and managed on Norfolk Island. Finally, we introduce the concept of ‘toponymic ethnography’ as a tool for explaining and researching the connections between social relationships, place names and knowledge-management.

Norfolk Island, Norfolk Islanders and Norfolk

Norfolk Island is an external territory of the Commonwealth of Australia that is situated in the South Pacific roughly between continental Australia, New Zealand, and New Caledonia. It is around 35 sq kilometres in size and its topography is undulating and hilly. Norfolk has a patchy and mottled history divided by historians into several distinct periods extending from its European discovery in 1774 (Rickard 1995; Hoare 2003). The first of these historical periods was a settlement of East-Polynesian seafarers in around the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and abandoned shortly after. In 1788, an initial agricultural and penal settlement was established, but was abandoned in 1815. In 1824, a notorious penal colony was established on the island, but this was also abandoned by 1855. In 1856, the Pitcairn Islanders were resettled on Norfolk, and in 1867, the Anglican Melanesian Mission established its headquarters on a significant portion of the island, where it remained until 1920. In the twentieth century, after the establishment of the airport in 1942, a new era of tourism was heralded on Norfolk, which remains the current mainstay of the modern economy.

We focus particularly on the Island’s ‘Third Settlement’ or ‘Pitcairn Settlement’ period in our discussion.³ This period began in 1856 when the British Crown resettled the Pitcairn Islanders to Norfolk Island and extends to the present day. In its beginning, British authorities sought to observe the small Pitcairn community’s responses to relocation to an unoccupied territory, considering it to be a kind of social ‘experiment’ (Bladen 1906; Nobbs 2006: 51). The descendants of these Pitcairn settlers (Norfolk Islanders) have not typically understood the conditions of their resettlement as such, but rather as a gift from Queen Victoria and the British Crown (Bladen 1906; O’Collins 2002). However, they do largely disagree on many of the details of what the gift included. The Pitcairners’ contemporaries, such as the Bishop of New Zealand (Denison & Selwyn 1857: 6), additionally understood the Pitcairners’ acceptance of this gift as invitation to convert the dystopian historical landscape that developed during the second penal settlement into a form of paradise. The tourism industry today employs metaphors of paradise to market the island to would-be Australian and New Zealander tourists. ‘Paradise’ is a term that implies a

degree of closeness to a natural state and we see this term as linked to ideas of ecological and social emplacement relevant to the Third Settlement.

Norfolk's third settlement presents a unique case study of an entire community's displacement and re-emplacement in a new location. We are able to focus more explicitly on processes of emplacement and place-naming in a situation where Islanders' direct conflicts over space with *predecessors* have by-and-large been absent. This is because Norfolk was unoccupied at the beginning of the Third Settlement. Islanders not only remember and commemorate the beginnings of the Third Settlement, they have also been extensively recorded in a variety of historical documents from ship captains' logs to Pitcairners' personal diaries. This has allowed us to explore place names ethnographically by locating events, individuals, and places within a range of written and oral sources.

Island residents make social distinctions among themselves on the basis of descent. The proportion of the population who call themselves 'Norfolk Islanders' loosely define themselves as such by invoking their descent from the original Pitcairn settlers to Norfolk Island (such descent is often referred to in Norfolk as *kamfram*). Genealogical links with historic ancestors and living relatives are, therefore, employed by Islanders to differentiate themselves from all other residents on the island who are mostly Australian and New Zealander settlers who settled after World War II, locally referred to as 'Mainlanders'. Taking such a definition, of the 1576 permanent residents on the island in 2006, there were approximately 750 people who could be considered Norfolk Islanders by descent and 817 non-Pitcairn descendants, or 'Mainlanders' (Mathews 2006). Norfolk Islanders tend to claim a sense of superior association to the island in relation to Mainlanders. At a basic level, they claim the status of 'native' by virtue of their status as first comers to the island. Islanders also construct this identity around specific claims of enduring emplacement within the landscape through recourse to the historical circumstances of their ancestors' arrival (that is: that the island or substantial parts were purportedly an imperial gift to their ancestors). Islanders' knowledge of place names and their histories plays a role in the island's politics of belonging as such knowledge is a key means of signalling emplacement to others. The speaking of the local language, Norfolk, is also means of performing and solidifying one's associations to the island.

Two languages are spoken on Norfolk: English and Norfolk. The language originally spoken by descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers and their Tahitian counterparts on Pitcairn Island went with the Pitcairners to Norfolk Island.

Norfk is currently listed as an endangered language by UNESCO (2007) and was made co-official with English with the introduction of the *Norfolk Island Language (Norfk) Act 2004* (Nlk). The language has assumed several names – Norfolk, Norfolkese, and Norfolk Patois (Ross & Moverley, 1964; Harrison, 1985) – has been an integral part of the revival and embracing of the Pitcairn and Tahitian heritage of the Norfolk Islanders since the 1960s.

Norfolk's historical acceptance of its stronger historical and cultural ties to Britain, Pitcairn Island and Tahiti rather than to Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, has shaped various historical forms of social closure to more recent settlers to the island (Laycock 1989), Norfk is a language mostly spoken by Norfolk Islanders, and the ability to speak Norfk in a public situation is subject to social controls and to a process of recognition as a legitimate speaker. Norfk tends to be spoken instead of English when the topic of conversation is local in nature, when speakers are within an intimate situation – among close friends, kin – or more generally among Norfolk Islanders who are all of some demonstrated proficiency (Harrison 1985). As one elderly Norfolk Islander noted to Low, Norfolk 'was a language... that was developed for communicating amongst yourselves. But when you communicated with the outside world, [including Mainlanders] you communicated in English'. However, the actual *capability* to speak Norfk also crosscuts those descended from Pitcairn settlers. Not all descendants have spent large amounts of time on Norfolk, and not all families have strong traditions of speaking Norfk in their homes. Norfk proficiency also cuts across various non-descendants (Mainlanders) who are situated in various relationships of intimacy and distance from other speakers.

Overall the use of Norfk is managed on a micro-level among particular groups of people who regularly or rarely interact with one another. Within these networks of speakers, different sociolects have formed; words, sayings, and phrases with slightly different meanings and connotations depending on the part of the island the speaker comes from, the speaker's family traditions, age group, or gender. As one of Low's informants noted, this was particularly pronounced within different enclaves on the island:

You had *Cascade, Steels Point, Headstone, Kingston* and *Anson Bay*. I guess that's the five major, points. And the language, whilst the same, there are certain words [...] that are sort of only used in these little enclaves and nowhere else [...] my daughter was one who brought one up – I'd never heard it in my life. It was '*bolos*' and it means 'really cold'. Her other family [by marriage] used it all the time.

Access to, and knowledge of different words in Norfolk therefore often arises unconsciously according to speakers' degrees of intimacy and distance towards others. This is a kind of larger level process of language knowledge management that has a bearing on the place name data we will discuss. Knowledge of place names is not only contingent on similar patterns of social and geographical location, but also on various forms of recognition such as that which applies to speaking Norfolk more generally. In addition, much like other Norfolk words, the fact that only certain people use certain Norfolk toponyms is significant and part of a wider process of identity signification and delineation through language.

Place names, People, and Language

The toponymic data presented in this paper problematises Saussure's (1983 [1916]) edict that system-internal relationships need not consider system-external factors. The relationship between sense-internal and sense-external aspects of toponyms are not arbitrary and are driven by language external factors – for example, social, cultural, and ecological factors – in addition to formal toponym structure. Such arguments are common in modern discussions in linguistics and semiotics and have been addressed by Radding and Western (2010) who critique Saussure and arbitrariness in language and how Saussure's edicts can be applied directly to toponymy. Without going into detail, it should be remembered that because toponymy involves dealing with the outside world and considers relations external to the language system, it has not been a central concern to linguistics.

Saussure's (1983) system and traditional sense relations can be applied to various non-arbitrary elements of some Norfolk toponyms to an extent; for example, descriptive names that are systematic like *Red Stone* and *Flat Rock*, lexicalised spatial descriptors that depict relationships between toponyms and topography – for example, out/down *Bumboras*, down/up *Cascade*. However, Saussure's system does not provide any powerful methodology to measure empirical relations between sense-internal and sense-external factors in toponymy, nor was this central to Saussure's perspective. By definition, Saussure's system focuses on a particular object in language that is not measurable. Saussure inadvertently then dismisses the possibility of the indexicality of signs. Analysing the indexical nature of toponyms as obvious linguistic and cultural signs used in the creation and projection of place-knowledge onto a landscape in (relation to) a particular place demonstrates how far sense-relations can be taken.

Saussure's (1983) specific focus is on system-internal relationships between parts of speech and language, i.e. 'langue', and not direct relationships between the system and processes outside the system. This view differs from a utilitarian angle that argues for 'regional universals' (Hunn 1996) where there will always be consistent 'relative' relationships between language and thought. These relationships are contingent on the particular context in which they occur, which underlies Hunn's notion of 'universal relativism'. Such approaches claim semantics and meaning arise out of culturally salient processes and practices such as utilitarian processes of naming behaviour; places are named because places are used (Hunn 1996). Whether such consistent and reliable cross-cultural patterns are found across all environments and cultures is questionable. This is where our approach – a parameter-rich method to linguistic analysis that considers both synchronic and diachronic data – differs from universalist perspectives (Hunn 1996) and cultural relativist perspectives (Whorf 1956; Lucy 1996, 1997). By considering the relationship between universal and culturally specific phenomena, our method is able to integrate and consider not only phenomena between, within and across toponymic, linguistic, and social contexts, but also to consider what these contexts actually mean.

In traditional views of linguistic analysis (cf. Saussure 1983) languages can be studied without any reference to the socio-environmental context in which they are used. They can also be transplanted and replaced by other languages; they are arbitrary codes to express universal cognitive categories. The degree to which linguistic practices are detachable from the world suggests that one can distinguish between two prototypical language types: ecologically embedded languages and disconnected languages. These are idealised types and in reality most languages are a complex mix between being constructed by their environment and constructing their environment (Mühlhäusler 2003: 2). However, such a split between conceptions of languages is useful for the purposes of empirical analysis.

Norfolk and the ecological⁴ and social networks integral to its existence show signs of ecological embeddedness, and it is for this reason we predominantly focus on Norfolk and not English. Using toponyms and place-knowledge as a membrane to observe other cultural memes, we observe that words reflect social interaction between humans and their environment, e.g. *Moo-oo Stone* on Norfolk Island is an offshore rock formation with a large amount of *moo-oo*, native Norfolk flax; *Dar Fig Valley* is the name of a valley where locals used to grow figs; *Deep Water* is a fishing location on the east

coast known for the depth of the water in this area. As such, we do not regard lexical and grammatical forms as arbitrary, e.g. the toponym *Johnny Nigger Bun Et* (English: *Johnny Nigger Burnt It*) as a grammatical unit is a sentence. It expresses an idiosyncratic Norfolk personal name form, i.e. 'Johnny Nigger' remembers the uncontrolled burning of a coastal area by a Melanesian Mission member. There is a strong racist sentiment associated with the form of this toponym and its historical connection to the Melanesian Mission. In addition, the same word can be used to describe human and other life forms, e.g. the Norfolk word *horg* (pig, hog) is used to describe animals, humans and even the name of a fishing location. *Dar Horg* is named after a terrestrial feature that resembles a pig from the sea. The lexicon and grammar of space may also reflect topography, for example, *Out ar Station* is in a location distant from most dwellings on Norfolk; *Up in a Stick* is topographically 'up' in comparison to the commercial centre of Norfolk. As a result, language can be posed as being a memory of past interactions between humans and nature; for example, *Gun Pit* is a concrete structure on the west coast of Norfolk built during World War II. It is also the name of the fishing ground *Ar Gun Pit* that uses *Gun Pit* in one of its marks. A diachronic approach is, therefore, of vital importance to the study of synchronic patterns of language use.

An understanding of interrelated phenomena particular to the embedded nature of Norfolk toponyms can be achieved by interacting in real-world situations with people who know and use Norfolk toponyms. In other words, investigating how Islanders interact with their environments also includes investigating how they interact with each other as members of situated communities. For instance, as places tend to embody the tensions inherent in shifting relations of production (Gaffin 1993; Gordillo 2004), place names on Norfolk are reflective of a shift from primary subsistence fishing and agriculture to tourism. Names associated with tourism on Norfolk – for example, *Hibiscus Lodge*, *Day-dreamer Holiday Apartments*, and *Riggers Retreat* – show how intersections of history and changing forms of production can affect naming. Once again, the recurrent vision of Norfolk as an island paradise is portrayed through these names. This eco-critical (re)construction of Norfolk is seen in many domains of naming, including the (re)introduction of Polynesian names and the absence of Australian anthroponyms.

By posing Norfolk as an ecologically embedded language, toponyms as a word class are then important linguistic, cultural and environmental artefacts connected intrinsically to Norfolk Islanders' identity through language and

place. Norfolk toponymic maps, even if they primarily exist in the minds of those who know them, are a tapestry of toponymic wisdom related to social and topographic contours (names and the world), which can be unlocked by studying toponyms and their histories. In the example we now present, Islanders' relationships to families, place, and the past are expressed through their use of the toponym *Gods Country*.

Gods Country

It is not known when *Gods Country* became a part of the toponym lexicon on Norfolk. We speculate it happened shortly after the arrival of the Pitcairners in 1856. *Gods Country* is not a name that is localised to Norfolk Island. In fact, many Christian societies, particularly rural, make claims that their particular region is favoured in some way by God. The Pitcairner population is commonly presented historically as simple, well-mannered, God-fearing folk (Clark 1978: 107; Murray 1857). On arrival at Norfolk, different families were allocated lots of land on different parts of the island by the British Crown. For example, most of the Buffett family settled in *Steels Point* and *Pine Avenue*, the Nobbs families to *Rocky Point* and *Bumboras*, and the McCoys to the *Collins Head* area. As the Pitcairn settlers' households grew and children married, parents would generally subdivide sections of their land and gift it to marrying couples to form their own households. Kin groups have formed clusters in particular areas of the island, and adjacent households continue to support each other economically (Treadgold 1988: 87–88; Nobbs 2006: 109). Families typically worked the land together and operated in a close-knit network of reciprocity and mutual obligation. Family homes on these parcels of land were generally named and acted as durable symbols of family continuity and emplacement, similar to Weiner's (1992) inalienable possessions.

As a consequence of these continuities in property transmission within families, particular areas of the island continue to be occupied by, and associated with, particular kin groups. These groups exhibit significant emplacement in particular locales that dates back to the island's first settlers. This creates the conditions for what Allen (1990) calls a 'genealogical landscape'; a landscape in which people's names for – and ways of talking about – places reflect and locate persons within a series of genealogical attachments and property relationships that have taken place in a particular locale over time (see also Wagner 2002). For example, the following is an excerpt from an interview Low conducted with a Norfolk Islander woman in her 80s regarding her

childhood home, *Limerick House*, which was destroyed along with an entire island street called *Pine Avenue* to make way for the island's airport in the 1940s.

We lived in *Limerick House*. It was fifty acres. It was Thomas Buffett's grant, John Buffett's first son. He [Thomas] inherited *Limerick House*, and 26 acres of that. Next door, Aunt Selina 'Lina' Buffett. She was the last Pitcairn Islander, had her portion. Arthur Buffett came home from the war and when he turned up, he had a home built on another portion of it. Tom's parents had a property, then there was Aunt 'Lina's' place. Then 'Snar' – John Buffett – had a property, he was one of the constables that evicted the people from *Kingston*. All that was Buffett property.

With the exception of the *Pine Avenue* Buffett family, many descendants of original families still live in their initial granted allotments in the same locations. Family history is intimately connected to these historical landscapes and these are reflected in family specific toponyms. As an example, the array of coastal toponyms in the *Steels Point* area on the upper east coast of Norfolk is generally the linguistic property of the Buffetts. The names of the southern side of *Ball Bay*, for instance, *Side Saff Fly Pass* (literally 'Place Surf Flies Past'), are insider names of the McCoy families. Most of these names form a part of the spatial and orientational speech of the people who know and use them, whether or not these people speak fluent Norfolk. To some extent, these names have become integrated into the sociolect of Norfolk Island, particularly those involving fishing. Based on this very personal and emotional connection to the places they know and grew up in on Norfolk, each family claims the area they inhabit and know like the back of their hand is '*Gods Country*'. As one Islander, Rachel Borg, noted:

Gods Country is a general term often used in good-natured ribbing. If one Norfolk Islander talks to another about which part of the Island they live in, you will often hear them talk about Gods Country. It's a long-running joke, a subtle jibe and an allusion to the fact that they live in the best part of the Island. But here is the irony: Gods Country is no particular place at all. If you grew up at Steels Point, then that's Gods Country. If you then moved to Shortridge, then funnily enough, that's Gods Country too. At the end of the day, all Islanders agree that Norfolk is Gods Country.

Looking at *Gods Country* semantically, the toponym specific 'God' indicates there is something special about the generic place or 'Country' being referred to. The Norfolk Islanders have tilled the soil, built houses and brought up families in the particular places they have lived. They have created strong local support networks based on and around recreation, socialising, work, fishing, and

education that are bounded and remembered in the areas where these activities occurred. Long-standing family ties create bonds, emotional attachment, and memories such as house names; for instance, *Cup a' Teas* near *Cascade* and *Annie Dongs* on House Road. For people to think of their own area, their point of orientation, as *Gods Country* is appropriate. This designation implies a kind of existential and spiritual relationship to Norfolk, a method people employ to attribute mythical significance to the places they know and love. In addition to these feelings of attachment, Islanders' designation of island territory as '*Gods Country*' is a means of social signification. Islanders invoke *Gods Country* as a way of performing emplacement and membership of exclusive social groups at a variety of scales from household and founding family, to native Norfolk Islander identification.

Gods Country is thus a de-personalised, abstract and reified realm that nevertheless incorporates local specificity and relationship to people and place. These deeper perspectives on toponymy, unofficial processes of place-naming and the significance of insider names for understanding express what deeper truths underlie conceptions of how Norfolk Islanders see their island through toponyms (cf. Gaffin 1996; Kearney & Bradley 2009). *Gods Country* cannot be mapped as it is a place that does not exist independently from a subjective point of personal or familial allegiance. However, mapping Norfolk is nothing but mapping *Gods Country*.

Gooty's

Gooty's is a fishing ground named after Norfolk Islander, Gustav Quintal whose nickname was 'Gooty'. When Nash asked Islander Bev 'Bellie' McCoy to describe *Gooty's*, Bev detailed not only its physical location, but also chose to locate the person, Gustav, in relation to it:

Gooty's is close to *Cascade*, just off *Bird Rock*. It's three or four miles out. You line up the *Moo-oo Stone* in the valley down at the *Captain Cook Memorial* with some pine trees at Byron Burrell's property. Named after Gustav 'Gooty' Quintal. He lived on the corner of *Pine Avenue* and *Country Road*.

Gooty's is as much a place as a recollection and embodiment of a person *in* a place. Gustav 'Gooty' Quintal was born three years after the Pitcairn Islanders settled on Norfolk, in 1859, and died in 1919. He was not only the headmaster of Norfolk Island's school at the turn of the twentieth century, he was also a prominent composer of hymns. Hymn-singing and composition is a well-respected

skill on Norfolk, and Gustav continues to be recalled positively for his authoring of several still commonly sung hymns at public events. Over Gustav Quintal's lifespan, fishing, alongside farming, was a primary source of subsistence; nearly every male in the community engaged in some form of boat or rock fishing activity.

Fishermen interact with the name *Gooty's* and the person Gustav Quintal through relating and identifying with (t)his place. They locate *Gooty's* by triangulating other known terrestrial places as references. During fieldwork, Nash travelled with fishermen in their boats out and through *Gooty's*, a fishing ground close to Norfolk's north coast near *Red Stone*, which is a short distance north-west from *Cascade Jetty*, the main launch on the northern side of the island (*Kingston* in the south is the other main launching site). Nash's informants declared *Gooty's* is named such because Gooty used to fish in this location. A past exists in this name, linked to a particular person, and the activities and remembrances of him occur within or with reference to this specific place. Gooty's actions in the landscape (or seascape) are remembered and are constitutive of *Gooty's* as a place. *Gooty's* animates Gooty as a person, an actor, somebody represented and recalled in and through landscape. Ultimately *Gooty's* is a cultural description of place – it also poses a name as a lineage of knowledge and information that is used pragmatically during daily fishing life and pursuit of livelihood.

Gooty's is one of the more frequented fishing grounds – or at least one of the most frequently passed by – due to its location close to shore, its proximity to launching sites, and its position en route to other fishing sites. Several informants knew of the place and knew it was named *after* the person, Gustav Quintal, but none knew who had originally named the place. Nevertheless, knowing that Gustav is a known and fondly remembered historical figure inside and outside of Norfolk's fishing community, and noting that the anthroponym is used in a positive way, there is little doubt Norfolk fishermen respected Gustav and wanted to remember him and his connection with the place. The name is a serious appellation and not one used in jest or as a slant at Gustav Quintal. Hence it appears Gustav was an important element in the fishing community on the island and worthy of individuation in the form of a place name.

Gooty's is connected to a much larger cultural and toponymic network. However, the fact that *Gooty's* is unknown outside of the fishing history and fishing name usage on Norfolk Island means this name 'belongs' to a *particular* network of people, names and relationships. The existence of other linguistically similar names shapes wider cultural understandings of the relation-

ship between names and persons. The structure of *Gooty's* as a possessive links to the actions of a person. This is consistent with the naming structure of other eponymous fishing ground names such as *Bellie's*. *Bellie's* is a fishing spot named in living memory after Bev 'Bellie' McCoy. The fishermen Nash spoke to all knew Bev fished at this location regularly and were aware he had been the first to designate successfully the location of *Bellie's* through triangulation. Other fishermen recognise *Bellie's* as linked with Bev (it was *his* fishing spot). The possessive, *Bellie's*, contrasts with other Norfolk non-possessive toponyms such as *Monty*. It is significant that some Norfolk toponyms do not have a grammatical possessive (in the above examples, an '-s'). Although named *after* people, names without possessives such as *Monty* do not denote proprietorship over the fishing ground or topographical area, nor do they indicate the person was intimately connected with this location through their actions *in* the place.

Basso's (1996) place theory presents names as living things within Apache metalinguistics. Living names then can be considered healthy and vital linguistic, social, and cultural property. *Gooty's* (the name) remains a positive cultural and linguistic artefact for the memory of Gustav Quintal in the minds of Norfolk fishermen. It is known through the activity of fishing and interacting with other fishermen. There appears to be no specific social prohibitions to passing knowledge of this place to others, but Norfolk fishermen are often reluctant to disclose such information to the uninformed or those who do not have any need to know this history – that is, they wonder why non-fishers and people who do not use these areas would be interested in knowing this name. Names and locations of fishing grounds are particularly guarded as such names articulate closely with the political economy of subsistence and small-scale commercial fishing on Norfolk. Those with knowledge of such places, in particular their locations, are then viably able to access the resources therein. There are certain people who are long-term residents of Norfolk Island, generally Mainlanders who do not speak Norfolk, who fish regularly and yet are generally not told about such locations.

Gooty himself did not name *Gooty's* but rather others endowed the place with his name. They have linked and materialised – that is, made durable through mnemonic practices – Gooty's self and identity to this place through naming. Linking through naming renders this fishing ground into the historical and linguistic landscape of Norfolk. Consistent with Myers' (1986) perspective on language, self and the solidification of identity in and on landscape, Gooty, the person, is made real through linguistic means – the name *Gooty's* – and through embodied practices of using, inhabiting and

moving through place – the name is remembered and the place personalised, localised, and created. Not only this, considering Gustav ‘Gooty’ Quintal passed away in 1919, this name indicates the durability of Gooty as a person long after his death.

The creation and use of the name *Gooty’s* is a method to claim toponymic space (Crocombe 1991). It is also a method of culturally loaded and embedded linguistic colonisation. It is through knowledge of names via the conduit of language that place-knowledge involves and implies a greater access to and increased ‘right’ to use the place. Place-knowledge and language use is articulated through and connected with the political and social economy of place names – knowing these names also shapes access to the location of the fishing ground and the use of the fishing ground. Carter (1988) offers a historical cartographic perspective that can be employed to understand the placement of *Gooty’s* within the historical creation of Norfolk toponymic history. He argues that colonising occurs through mapping and creating places from spaces. This process is made clear by and through naming – the personification of names and the processes of naming are methods of ‘micro-colonisation’ that have become remembered. Those who remember the name re-enact the colonisation of the name and the place-space the name represents. There is a degree of ownership associated with the knowing of names, their location in time-space and the mental and physical maps of these places that come to be used.

Gooty’s is a linguistic and cultural lifeworld that lives and exists both within the minds of those who know and use it and in the physical and cognitive maps where the name is used. *Gooty’s* represents a place, a spatial descriptor and a story with a strongly grounded and placed meaning and importance. The syntactic component of the toponym is ultimately not necessary for the sense and historical placement of this name to achieve its semantic and cultural status. The analysis of *Gooty’s* represents a way of understanding how Norfolk Islanders perceive their people, culture, and language and how these facets of life are ecologically embedded in the place they inhabit.

‘Ecological embeddedness’ is a way of knowing the world that can be located in several facets of linguistic and social connectedness. Borrowing from Heidegger, Ingold’s (2000: 172–188) ‘dwelling perspective’ emphasises the need to evaluate toponyms in terms of how people construct notions of self, personhood and identity. From Ingold’s (2000) ‘dwelling perspective’, *Gooty’s* as a place and a person comes into being as an agent in a particularised social and ecological setting. Ingold is careful to distance his ‘dwelling perspective’ from what he calls a ‘building perspective’. This building perspective rests on an

assumption that human meaning is separated from substance; that is, meaning is inscribed on the natural (real) environment from a separate (virtual) plane of mental representation (2000: 178). From this perspective, as Ingold states, 'worlds are made before they are lived in . . . acts of dwelling are preceded by acts of worldmaking' (2000: 179). The building perspective, therefore, presents a pre-existent natural world overlaid by a tapestry of human meaning that precedes interaction with the environment. Meaning in this perspective must be created in consciousness and affixed to the environment prior to any human engagement with it (2000: 177, 191). Ingold posits we may better understand the relationship between human beings and their environments – and the forms they build in their imaginations or in the physical world – by beginning with the context of their practical relationship and involvement in their surroundings (2000: 5, 177).

The Saussurean linguistic perspective outlined earlier represents a building perspective by Ingold's typology. It takes the idea that linguistic worlds are created and affixed to objects in the environment before the users of a language interact with it. Language, in this sense, exists in a mental space separate from the environment. This division appears all-the-more stark when considering the settlement of the Pitcairn Islanders from a building perspective; the Pitcairners brought Pitkern to a new environment and affix meaning to it on the basis of existing cultural schema. An ecolinguistic perspective, on the other hand, does allow these processes of affixing to be seen as preceding or fully separable from experiences of living and dwelling in this environment. Following Ingold's parallel argument about home construction (2000: 186), we can argue that while humans have the capacity to envision and consider linguistic forms 'in advance of their implementation', they cannot merely import these forms into the world from a mental location completely detached from it; their thoughts are inseparable from their unavoidable inhabitation of that same world.

While place naming could be conceived of in a Saussurean sense as the act of attaching of pre-envisioned linguistic forms to undifferentiated space, acts of naming similarly cannot be detached from human activity and their engagements with their environments. The name *Gooty's* has become embedded and immersed in a living lifeworld and is signified by the fact that it exists and is used. This perspective appreciates toponyms, and here *Gooty's*, metaphorically as names and processes existing within the world (in a place) – in the minds of a select group (language and thought) and in an actual place – although this place, or acculturated space, cannot be set apart from the people who interact with it. The name, the memory, the person, the place, the location and the

spatial orientation of the place and the fishing activities associated with it 'dwells' and lives in the minds and actions of the people who use the name. The linguistic manifestation of *Gooty's* – the formal structure and semantics – is only one element in understanding and realising the importance of the pragmatic usage of the name, what the name represents, and the realisation of where the name exists and 'dwells'. The place name itself must be located within the series of contemporary and historical social relationships and activities that enliven it as a place. Locating these historical relationships and activities is part of the project of what we term 'toponymic ethnography'.

Toponymic Ethnography

Insider and esoteric fishing ground names like *Gooty's* and terrestrial names like *Gods Country* exist behind literal and figuratively locked gates. The ability of the users of these names to keep them locked within family sociolects of landscape implies that through knowing a place intimately, which arises over time and interaction with an ecology, a degree of wisdom evolves which becomes a part of one's identity. This is a type of 'toponymic identity' or the action of realising one's self interacting with the 'lie of the land' (cf. Myers 1986; Gaffin 1996; Dominy 2001). Within this location of self through toponymy – which can be described in a toponymic ethnography – there is a humble, unconscious yet 'wise' self, which is accessed.

This paper has so far illustrated the theoretical friction associated with Saussure's (1983) edict of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Saussure considers some elements external to the linguistic system but primarily focuses on structural and lexical properties. The analysis of Norfolk toponyms suggests the need for a much broader analysis of the sense and reference relations of toponyms to their socio-historical and natural environment and further their relationship to identity relations. In departing from Saussure's perspective, we have considered several anthropological and ethnographic approaches concerning relationships between the linguistic structure of toponyms and their related cultural and ecological relationships. We now consider further the relevance of Keith Basso's work, and primarily the relevance of his 1996 book *Wisdom Sits in Places* to the results of this research.

In his analysis of the cultural import of Apache toponyms and cultural maps, Basso describes Apache ways of knowing and how the Apache have attached meaning to place through toponymy. Through Basso's poetic and eloquent presentation of Apache toponymic perceptions, he appears to prioritise linguistically and culturally convoluted names such as 'Juniper Tree Stands Alone

People' (Basso 1996: 21) over apparently trivial or topographically descriptive names such as many of those found on Norfolk: *Gooty's*, *Gods Country*, or *Little Green Lane*. Some of the methods Basso used are similar to those employed by Nash to obtain the data for this paper; with wise tribal elders and storytellers as his guides, Basso was admitted into an inner realm of Apache toponymic folklore. It is this 'conscious wisdom', which is expressed in Basso's depictions of the toponymic knowledge and insight of his guides, which he argues is the authentic description of the landscape and maps of the areas his guides know.

We believe that for insiders who know these 'linguistically uninteresting' toponyms, that is, toponyms whose grammatical structure are not any different to other English place names elsewhere, their aesthetic import and linguistic and cultural weight is arguably as significant as those presented in Basso's analysis of the elaborate toponymic expressions of the Apache. The significance and relevance of Norfolk Island toponyms as cultural economy appears to be measured in terms of the utility and cultural connectedness to the ecologies where the respective toponyms are known, used, exist and have relevance. Where it seems Basso sought to find 'wisdom heavy' Apache toponyms that often come across as being deliberately idiosyncratic and sophisticated, in contrast we have selected certain features that enabled our analysis to deal with the majority of the toponyms Nash documented, that is, both the less esoteric as well as the more esoteric toponyms.

While Basso did not explicitly distinguish between the degree of conscious or unconscious self-aware wisdom in relation to toponymic knowledge, our reading of Basso infers that he believes wisdom to sit in places *consciously*, through Western Apache people's deep connection with the land and the knowledge of toponyms in places such as 'They Are Grateful For Water', 'She Became Old Sitting' and 'Trail To Life Goes Up' (1996: 29). Through this knowledge, one becomes attentive to the inner workings of nature and place and their connection to the knower's own awareness. Basso also implies these knowledgeable yet humble persons are vessels carrying not only a large amount of toponymic knowledge, but also a large number of eccentric names opaque to the outsider. It appears Basso claims knowledge of these idiosyncratic names constitutes a precursor, a conscious indexical marker, to gaining wisdom from and about the land.

One of the distinct differences between Norfolk informants and what Basso expresses is intrinsic to the existential and spiritual makeup of his 'informants' – or perhaps more appropriately 'masters' – was that Norfolk Islander informants

generally did not perceive themselves as wise men or women with extensive or deep-seated toponymic, and hence cultural, knowledge and wisdom. Much of the toponymic 'wisdom' – insight into the cultural and ecological movements of toponyms and their connection to land – on Norfolk Island is a product of habitualised practices of living and dwelling in a particular place; it is rarely remarked upon and rarely reflexively apprehended as knowledge or wisdom by informants. This can be contrasted to our interpretation of Basso's mapping, which implies that 'wisdom sits in places' consciously. Partly, this contrast between *conscious* and *unconscious* forms of wisdom may be a reflection of the role of the researcher in transforming local knowledge into a different form (to ethnography or linguistic data in this case), thereby taking it out of its existing social milieu and re-contextualising its significance.

The differences in interpretation between Basso's (1996) study and the results of this paper have several methodological and theoretical ramifications for the interpretation of toponymic knowledge. What Basso does not consider, nor was it one of his priorities, are the 'boring' names either known to so many or those known to so few that the knowers themselves cannot see past their apparent triviality. Nash encountered many such supposedly insignificant and inconsequential Norfolk toponyms that informants would not consider telling others simply because, being so deeply embedded into the confines of the immediate locality, these names appeared to hold little utility outside their immediate social and topographical contexts. The apparently trivial or matter-of-fact nature of these insider toponyms does not undermine in any way that wisdom also sits in 'unwise' or 'unconscious' places, or in the knowledge and experience of those holders of toponymic knowledge. On Norfolk Island, there is a great degree of humility and unconscious knowing among the custodians of large amounts of toponymic knowledge. Custodians of Norfolk Island's toponymic knowledge believe themselves to be 'ordinary folk' with the experience of a life spent on the sea or hard work and toil on the land. Our humble informants with vast toponymic and cultural knowledge do not consider themselves 'self-aware wise masters'. We nevertheless perceive these informants as possessing great (unconscious) wisdom connected intrinsically to Norfolk's topographical and identity-based social landscape.

Accessing and documenting 'unconscious toponymic wisdom' and 'toponymic experience' possessed by Islanders (cf. Gaffin 1996) is based on an understanding of more profound cultural priorities and social structures and how these influence identity relations based on place-knowledge.

Residents of Norfolk Island are part of close face-to-face networks of obligation, reciprocity, local political factions, and various histories of interaction within the island space, all of which shape local people's (including to some extent local researchers') access to knowledge of Norfolk toponyms. In such segmented societies, knowledge is commonly governed by gender (males generally hold the esoteric toponymic knowledge), social status (experienced people, normally men, who fished and worked the land hold much of the toponymic knowledge associated with such activities) and age (elder members of the Norfolk community are commonly deemed to be the caretakers of the toponymic knowledge). Where outsiders may be perceived as threats virtually by default, insiders are potentially even more dangerous because of their ability to manipulate the social networks of which they are a part.

Norfolk Island toponymy, especially insider Norfolk toponymy such as fishing ground names, is indeed an *insular toponymy*; it is a guarded element of Norfolk's linguistic and social past. Large amounts of this history have been lost because such knowledge was never documented. It is likely that taking large amounts of toponymic knowledge to the grave, in the past and possibly still in the present, is in accordance with well-established cultural norms (such as those surrounding the speaking of Norfolk) which solidify stark insider–outsider dichotomies of Norfolk society. Moreover, such dichotomies emphasise the strong societal allegiances on Norfolk through restricting access to the transmission of toponymic knowledge to outsiders, whether they are from outside Norfolk or outside the respective circle that is granted access to this knowledge.

Conclusion: Language, Place names and Place-Knowledge Circulation

We have argued for an integrated approach to toponymy in which place names are considered alongside other relational factors that influence their use and meaning. Both of the detailed examples of Norfolk toponyms we have given illustrate the benefits of taking such an approach in understanding the nature of language in the world. Contrary to traditional linguistic approaches influenced by Saussure we have pointed to the need to interpret toponyms beyond any structured domain that can be isolated or purified of other influences (social, environmental, and contextual). It is impossible to describe adequately the significance of Norfolk toponymy if one disassociates language from environment and the social context of toponym use. We further argued that Norfolk demonstrates qualities of an ecologically emplaced language that is additionally not regarded by speakers as open to be spoken

by all. Toponymic data in particular offers a means of accessing the extent of this ecological embeddedness, as toponyms are a type of word class through which actors directly engage with their environments locate themselves within it (Sapir 1912). They are cultural descriptions of place that link forms of personhood, landscape, and relationships with the environment.

It is through processes of naming the landscape that Norfolk Islanders affect the specificity of their intergenerational social and environmental emplacement on Norfolk Island. Norfolk place names express various forms of past and present inhabitation of the landscape and the ongoing interpretation of Norfolk landscape and the social relationships by Norfolk Islanders within it. In the two case studies of Norfolk Island place names we have presented, collective, or individual identities are constituted, performed, or made durable through naming and remembering places. *Gooty's* and *Gods Country* are examples of two types of place that are known and invoked by Norfolk Islanders in different ways. *Gooty's* is a specific location (though like many places its exact boundaries tend to blur as one approaches them), while the location of *Gods Country* is far more nebulous and contingent on a speaker's particular relationship and allegiance to a specific region of the island rather than a continuous, stable place. Both *Gooty's* and *Gods Country* represent two different means by which place-knowledge is shared or held within particular groups. *Gooty's* is known particularly by a group of fishermen, while any part of Norfolk Island can be claimed as *Gods Country* provided the speaker has some demonstrated family or experiential connection with a particular Norfolk locale, a home place. To varying extents, Norfolk Islanders (and indeed individuals and family groups) have limited the circulation of these toponyms and through this managed their relationship to place vis-à-vis others. So, rather than place names reflecting a cultural whole, they seem to reflect the relational nature of people's interactions with the environment and with other persons within different arrangements of social and physical space.

The stake in holding, passing on, or preventing others from knowing about particular toponyms is locality itself. Within the Norfolk Island context, much as in other small island societies (Gaffin 1993), localness and claims of emplacement are values in themselves and insider knowledge of local places are an important means of claiming emplacement and being emplaced on Norfolk Island as a social status and identity. As such, place names offer a method of capturing and describing Norfolk Islanders' emerging, and unfolding relationships in place over time. Integral to processes of place creation, belonging, and attachment, toponyms are sites of relative stability that memorialise persons, events and social relations by imprinting the landscape with the accretion of human action.

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Notes

1. Nash (a linguist) and Low (an anthropologist) have conducted separate periods of fieldwork on Norfolk Island since 2006. Our fieldwork has focused on creating long-term links with an insular community where social delineations based on descent and language are integral to carving up societal and cultural space. Our analysis draws on a large place name database compiled by Nash (2013) and anthropological data collected by Low during several periods of extended research on Norfolk Island.
2. In the case of the Norfolk language and how the Pitcairners adapted linguistically once they arrived on Norfolk, it has been shown that it took very little time to adjust to this new and foreign environment (Mühlhäusler 2002b, 2006, 2008).
3. We do, however, recognise that despite being subject to rigid periodisation, all of Norfolk's settlements remain interconnected.
4. Without entering into a detailed discussion about the multitude of definitions of 'ecology' and 'ecological' phenomena with respect to language and culture, in this paper we use the term 'ecology' and 'ecological' to refer specifically to the relationship between linguistic and natural environments as discussed in Pennycook (2004) and Mühlhäusler and Peace (2006).

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