**Joshua Nash (2013)** *Insular toponymies: Place-naming on Norfolk Island, South Pacific and Dudley Peninsula, Kangaroo Island,* **Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company. 302pp, ISBN: 978-9-0272-0292-5. US$149.00.**

How do people name places on islands? Or, how do they place names on islands? In either formulation, this is the key question which Joshua Nash seeks to answer in *Insular toponymies*. He further asks: what effect on an island toponymy does connection with a larger neighbour have? do island languages and mainland languages differ in the way they are used in naming places? and how does human influence affect the results of toponymic fieldwork in island communities? Nash suggests that his research has produced several novel findings specific to Australian island toponymy, but which may be applicable to wider research on island and non-island toponymies.

Two Australian island environments provide contrasting locales for Nash's linguistic and ethnographic research. Norfolk Island in the south-western Pacific is actually an archipelago of three islands, 800 kilometres away from its nearest neighbour. Dudley Peninsula is the eastern part of Kangaroo Island, a 40-minute ferry ride from the coast of South Australia. The environments provide a worthwhile contrast in that, although both are island communities separated from the Australian mainland, Norfolk Island is more insular and less accessible to outsider purview than Dudley. Norfolk was originally a convict settlement from 1788, but in 1856 saw the relocation of the entire Pitcairn Island population. A tourism economy developed there after World War II. Kangaroo Island was uninhabited before casual settlement by sealers and whalers began in the early nineteenth century, but formal settlement in 1836 led some to retreat to Dudley Peninsula to begin agricultural development. The current population of the Peninsula is less than 600.

Nash's fieldwork in both locations was immersive or *ethnographic*: it involved "active participant observation through formal, informal, and ad hoc interviews in people's homes and on their properties, at work, and at sea in people's boats." Becoming part of established social networks is regarded as vital in gaining access both to primary data and to rare secondary archival sources. The final chapter of the book (Chapter 8, 'Toponymic Ethnography') is devoted to drawing out the implications of this ethnographic approach to toponymy.

Rather more problematic, however, is the use of the term *ecolinguistic*. In a footnote early in the book, Nash defines 'ecology' and 'ecological' as referring "specifically to the relationship between linguistic and natural environments." He does so as part of an explanation of what is meant by cultural and ecological relationships in toponymy, as exemplified by "indexicality and iconicity, between names, culture, people, and place." He goes on to stipulate that "the ecological implications of toponyms regarding their connection to the nexus of place where they develop and exist should be analysed in parallel" with any formal structural analysis of toponyms and toponymic structure, and will emphasise "the multitude of cultural and ecological parameters." These remarks imply a clear distinction between the cultural and the ecological, which sits oddly with the author's view that both cultural and ecological parameters are necessary in any ecolinguistic analysis of toponyms. The final chapter, the summary of the ethnographic approach, states that "an ecolinguistic approach to toponymy considers both linguistic structure and cultural content." In other words, the 'cultural' now encompasses the 'ecological', and any implication that the natural environment is the primary reference of 'ecology' has gone. That is not problematic for those of us who are comfortable with the use of 'culture' in its wide (anthropological,

ethnographic) sense; but since placenames are, when all is said and done, about places and their names, one might query the value of importing terms like *ecology* and creating a compound like *ecolinguistic* in order to discuss toponymic theory and praxis.

One of the key features of Nash's approach to island place-naming is the concept of *pristine* toponomy. For A.S.C. Ross, who introduced the notion of a 'pristine toponym', a placename can be regarded as pristine "if, and only if, we are cognisant of the actual act of its creation." Nash's work builds on this concept, though he modifies it substantially. His initial departure is to distinguish between embedded pristine toponyms (for example, unofficial and local placenames) and unembedded pristine toponyms (such as exonymic and colonial names). But his major modification of Ross's approach is to shift the concept from the placename itself to the toponymic system as a whole: if an island location was previously uninhabited, its toponymy is pristine, even though some toponymic stories may be unknown. Those placenames whose histories cannot be recalled are "still pristine because they are embedded." In other words, the determination that the linguistic/toponymic environment is pristine takes precedence over (and is theoretically prior to) the classification of an individual toponym as being pristine or otherwise.

The only difficulty caused by this development of Ross's conceptual framework is the possibility of ambiguity that arises whenever Nash refers to 'pristine toponyms': the meaning of the term is no longer "a placename whose history is recalled," but "a placename within a pristine toponymy."

Whether the adjective is applied to the toponym or to the toponymy and its environment is, in the final analysis, less important than the concept of 'pristineness' itself. What value does it have for linguists and toponymists? Does it provide a useful contrast with environments that are non-pristine? Do pristine environments provide clarity when analysing fieldwork data that other environments do not? Nash provides persuasive arguments that such advantages do indeed apply. And given that the concept is valid, Nash further contends that because people on Norfolk Island and the Dudley Peninsula remember a large amount of placename history, case studies of these two locations make a substantial contribution to pristine toponymy.

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