

*"We come and go,  
but the land is always here.  
And the people who love it  
and understand it are the people  
who own it—for a little while."*

*Willa Cather, O Pioneers!*

## **Senses of Place**

**Edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso**

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power is given to very few people and comes mainly from dreams and visions. It should also be noted that possession of supernatural power does not necessarily imply the presence of wisdom. As Dudley Patterson's story of the grasshopper plague at Cibecue illustrates clearly, persons with supernatural power sometimes act unwisely together." is nicely consistent with other dimensions of the water imagery that pervades the Apache model of wisdom. The fact that wisdom is likened by Apaches to water—and that using wisdom, or drinking it, is considered basic to survival—seems more than appropriate for a people who have lived for centuries in a demanding desert climate.

14. It is just for this reason, I believe, that novelists and journalists are often more successful than academic writers in conveying to readers an unfamiliar sense of place. Rather than trying to describe sense of place, or somehow attempting to characterize it, the former seek to *evoke* it by presenting a host of local details and taking note of their own and others' reactions to them. An implicit aim of this essay is to suggest that similar strategies, suitably modified, can be usefully employed by cultural anthropologists and other social scientists interested in the problem.

15. For several years after Dudley Patterson's untimely death, I sought without success to discuss the subject of wisdom with other members of the Cibecue community. Everyone I approached gave the same reason for resisting my overtures, namely that he or she could add nothing to what Dudley had already taught me. "But how can you be so sure?" I asked one of my Apache friends in the summer of 1985. "I'm sure," Nick Thompson replied. "You had a good teacher. You know what you're supposed to know. Don't get greedy. It's not wise." On that unequivocal note, I let the matter drop and found other things to do.

## 3

### Waterfalls of Song

An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea

Steven Feld

**T**he sense of place: the idiom is so pervasive that the word "sense" is almost completely transparent. But how is place actually sensed? How are the perceptual engagements we call sensing critical to conceptual constructions of place? And how does this feelingful sensuality participate in naturalizing one's sense of place? These questions guide my inquiry into the sensing and sensuality underlying how places are named and poetically evoked by Kaluli people of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea. My desire is to illuminate a doubly reciprocal motion: as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place. Because sound and an ear- and voice-centered sensorium are central to Kaluli experience and expression in the tropical rainforest, the goal of this exploration is to interpret what I call an acoustemology, by which I mean local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination embodied in the culturally particular sense of place resounding in Bosavi.

The chapter opens with brief notes on sensation, sound, synesthesia, and soundscapes that provide context for the general framework of my inquiry, that of a social phenomenology and hermeneutics of senses of place. I outline ways in which research on acoustic experience and expression of place has remained relatively underdeveloped and then introduce the sound world of the Kaluli. Next I offer two ethnographic sections on the acoustemology of flow. The first treats Kaluli naming practices to show how the inseparability of rainforest waters and lands is encountered and imagined to be like the flow of voice through the body's contours. This trope of flow is then examined as it appears in poetic song texts, where singing a sequence of named places takes listeners on a journey that flows along local waterways and through local lands. The flow of these poetic song paths is emotionally and physically linked to the sensual flow of the singing voice. Connecting these flowing paths reveals a Kaluli acoustemology of place relations, a fusion of space and time that joins lives and events as embodied memories. The evocative powers of

this acoustemology reach an aesthetic apex in poetic performance, where the expressive flow of the voice merges with the experiential flow of sung placenames to create waterfalls of song, a sense of place resounding.

### SENSE, EMBODIMENT, SYNESTHESIA

"Perception does not give me truth like geometry but presences" (Merleau-Ponty 1964:14). What are these "presences" that are given in perception? Merleau-Ponty insisted that they were first the presences of feeling and perceiving bodies, bodies whose sensory experience was never fully sublimated to abstract cognition. Sensations, he urged, were always experienced presences, presences of what later cognitive psychologists and philosophers called an "embodied mind" (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991) or a "body in the mind" (Johnson 1987).

But the senses, the body's "sensorimotor surfaces," are not limited to embodied presences, and they constitute more than experiential sites for establishing points and places of physical and social contact (Straus 1963). Drew Leder's *The Absent Body* (1990) develops this line of critique to ask why, if the body is so central to sensory experience, if it so actively situates the subject, might it also be so experientially absent or out-of-focus. Why is the body not the direct thematic object of one's attention and experience, and why does it recede from direct experience? Leder develops these questions by addressing Merleau-Ponty's observation, made in *The Structure of Behavior* (1963), that "to be situated within a certain point of view necessarily involves not seeing that point of view" (Leder 1990:12). He elaborates: "This constitutes the necessary supplement to the Gestaltist figure-background description of perception. As Merleau-Ponty writes [in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1962]: 'one's own body is always the third term, always tacitly understood in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space'" (Leder 1990:13).

Leder's conjecture as to why some bodily dimensions are always experientially foregrounded while others are backgrounded relies on the same "figure-ground gestalt to characterize not only the body's field of experience but the structure of the experiencing body itself" (Leder 1990:24). He claims that "these modes of absence arise directly out of the fundamental structure of embodiment," further characterizing "the lived body as an ecstatic/recessive being, engaged both in a leaping out and a falling back. Through its sensorimotor surface it projects outward to the world. At the same time it recedes from its own apprehension into anonymous visceral depths. The body is never a simple presence, but that which is away from itself, a being of difference and absence" (Leder 1990:103; see also Levin 1985; Schilder 1950)

Establishing this complex and multiple presence and absence of the body clearly implicates another interactive figure-and-background, that of the senses. Lived experience involves constant shifts in sensory figures and grounds, constant potentials for multi- or cross-sensory interactions or correspondences. Figure-ground interplays, in which one sense surfaces in the midst of another that recedes, in which positions of dominance and subordination switch or commingle, blur into synesthesia, "the transposition of sensory images or sensory attributes from one modality to another" (Marks 1978:8). Synesthesia points to the complexity of sensory ratios, the rich connections inherent in multiple sensation sources, the tingling resonances and bodily reverberations that emerge from simultaneous joint perceptions (Cytowic 1989). This "medley of the senses bleeding into each other's zone of expectations" (Tausig 1993:57) reveals how "the synesthetic, like the metaphoric in general, expands the horizon of knowledge by making actual what were before only potential meanings" (Marks 1978:254). Tausig's *Mimesis and Alterity* argues that this metaphoric and synesthetic potential recalls mimesis, "the magical power of replication . . . wherein the representation shares in or takes power from the represented" (1993:2). This same metaphoric and synesthetic potential also recalls iconicity, or the ways in which perceiver and perceived blur and merge through sensuous contact, experiencing inner resemblances that echo, vibrate, and linger as traces from one sensory modality to another, present at one level while absent at others, continually linking bodily experience to thought and to action (Feld 1988; Jackson 1989:119-55; Ohnuki-Tierney 1991).

But sensation, sensual presence, is still more than embodiment, more than perceptual figure-grounds, more than the potential for synesthesia. It was Henri Bergson's insight, long ago in *Matter and Memory*, that "there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience" (1988 [1908]:33). Hence, "what you have to explain . . . is not how perception arises, but how it is limited, since it should be the image of the whole, and is in fact reduced to the image of that which interests you" (1988 [1908]:40). Bergson's problem—linking the active body as a place of passage to processes of making memory—is developed in Edward Casey's *Remembering* (1987). He writes:

Moving in or through a given place, the body imports its own enplaced past into its present experience: its local history is literally a history of locales. This very importation of past places occurs simultaneously with the body's ongoing establishment of directionality, level and distance, and indeed influences these latter in myriad ways. Orientation in place (which is what is established by these three factors) cannot be continually effected *de novo* but arises within the ever-lengthening shadow of our bodily past. (1987:194)



Because motion can draw upon the kinesthetic interplay of tactile, sonic, and visual senses, emplacement always implicates the intertwined nature of sensual bodily presence and perceptual engagement.

## LANDSCAPE, ACOUSTIC SPACE, SOUNDSCAPE

The overwhelmingly multisensory character of perceptual experience should lead to some expectation for a multisensory conceptualization of place. But by and large, ethnographic and cultural-geographic work on senses of place has been dominated by the visualism deeply rooted in the European concept of landscape. Denis Cosgrove has analyzed how two distinct notions of landscape, both sharing a pervasive visualism, have merged in the West. In the first instance, over some four hundred years,

the idea of landscape came to denote the artistic and literary representation of the visible world, the scenery (literally that which is seen) which is viewed by a spectator. It implied a particular sensibility . . . closely connected to a growing dependency on the faculty of sight as the medium through which truth was to be attained: 'seeing is believing.' Significant technical innovations for representing this truth included single-point perspective and the invention of aids to sight like the microscope, telescope, and camera. (1984:9)

In the second case, that of landscape as a notion incorporated into the analytical concerns of academic geography, the concept "denotes the integration of natural and human phenomena which can be empirically verified and analyzed by the methods of scientific enquiry over a delimited portion of the earth's surface" (1984:9). Cosgrove argues that these two senses of landscape "are intimately connected both historically and in terms of a common way of appropriating the world through the objectivity accorded to the faculty of sight and its related technique of pictorial representation" (1984:9).

But what of place as heard and felt? Place as sounding or resounding? In contrast to the long history of the landscape idea in both artistic and scientific inquiry and representation, approaches to ways in which worlds are sonically apprehended have shallower histories. Arguing this point, that the "hearsay" of aural-oral experience was never accorded the same evidential or representational primacy as visual "insight," Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan introduced the notion of "acoustic space" in their journal *Explorations* (1953-59). The term derived from their projects at the University of Toronto Center for Culture and Technology concerning media transformations, specifically the ways the history of orality and literacy could be reinterpreted from the vantage point of electronic communications in the twentieth century. In this context, Carpenter's article on acoustic space was the first statement describing

the cultural implications of a directionally simultaneous and diffuse "ear-point," his alternative to "viewpoint" (1960). His later studies (1971, 1973, 1980) went on to relate acoustic space to visual-auditory interplays, as in the way the Inuit experience of spherical dynamic space in the Arctic related to local artistic imagination and process, especially visual puns and depictions of motion, depth, and noncontainment.

The notion of "auditory space" also emerged in the mid-1950s, in an entirely different context. The music philosopher Victor Zuckerkandl (1956), drawing substantially on the philosophy of Henri Bergson and Martin Heidegger and on the psychophysics and the Gestalt and perceptual psychology of William James, Géza Révész, and Erwin Straus, argued vigorously against the notion that music was purely an experience of tone as time. He did so by detailing ways in which space is audibly fused with time in the progression and motion of tones (1956:267-348). While this interpenetration of auditory space and time has not had a general impact on theorizations of space and place, *Music and the External World*, the first volume of Zuckerkandl's *Sound and Symbol* (1956), has certainly had a critical impact elsewhere, as in Kathleen Higgins's vigorous philosophical critique of musical Platonism (Higgins 1991), in anthropological explorations of ritual, music, and sound symbolism in the work of Ellen Basso (1985) and Paul Stoller (1989:101-22), and in Roy Wagner's theoretical essays on symbol and metaphor (1986).

Just as Zuckerkandl the musician influenced anthropologists, Carpenter the anthropologist principally influenced musicians. When composer Murray Schafer organized the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University in 1970, the Carpenter and McLuhan ideas, marginal both in the anthropology of the arts and in cultural geography in the 1950s and 1960s, were introduced to composers and acousticians in a new framework, the study of the sound environment and acoustic communication. Schafer's group began recording, observing, and acoustically analyzing the sonic experience of space and place, especially in Canada and Europe, and developed an analytical vocabulary, a notation system, and a comparative framework for the study of acoustic space and its human interpretation and feedback. This work went under the general rubrics of two terms coined by Schafer, "acoustic ecology" and "soundscape design."

Schafer and his colleagues disseminated their ideas in media ranging from music compositions to radio collages and from technical reports to print and cassette travel journals, all of which led to a general synthesis, Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (1977). This book has drawn substantial attention to the acoustic complexities of environments, especially northern ones, but its impact has largely been felt among musicians, acousticians, architectural designers, and audio and radio artists-

composer-recorderists (for example, see Schafer 1993; Truax 1984; Werner 1992). Acoustic ecology and soundscape studies have had rather less impact on ethnographers, who might study how people hear, respond to, and imagine places as sensually sonic. On the other hand, humanistic geography, deeply impacted by perspectives from phenomenology in the 1970s and 1980s, began to notice the acoustic dimensions of place somewhat less cautiously (for example, Buttimer and Seamon 1980; Seamon 1979; Seamon and Mugerauer 1985; Tuan 1977) but rarely explored them, and never in the fully grounded way that would draw anthropological attention.

The work of the Carpenter-McLuhan-Schafer lineage was not taken up seriously by anthropologists; indeed, it was criticized by those most interested in its consequences for analyzing both the senses and orality-literacy issues (Feld 1986; Finnegan 1988:139-74). Despite its stated concern with sensory ratios, this line of thinking often reified a visual-auditory great divide, one that reproduced some variant of the notion that "seeing is analytical and reflective. Sound is active and generative" (Schafer 1985:96). Such oversimplified rhetoric led most ethnographers to turn their ears and sparked the critical tack taken by Don Ihde, whose phenomenological essay *Listening and Voice* pointed out the futility of countering the historical centrality of visualism in Western analytical discourses by simply erecting an antivisualism (1976:21).

What Ihde called for instead—a call recently echoed by anthropologist David Howes in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991:3-21, 167-91)—was a reevaluation of all the senses from the standpoint of their interplay. Only then, Ihde and Howes both claimed, could a serious analysis of sound emerge in an adequately experiential or ethnographic way. Given recurring tendencies to essentialize vision as a characteristic of the West (e.g., Ong 1982), in polar opposition to a presumed centrality of sound, smell, and taste that is essentialized to non-Western cultural "others," a reevaluation of sensory ratios must scrutinize how tendencies for sensory dominance always change contextually with bodily emplacement. That perspective informs my position on sound in sensory experience, specifically its implications for interpreting life-worlds of Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea.

## TOWARD AN ACOUSTEMOLOGY

If, in perceiving, "our whole body vibrates in unison with the stimulus . . . [then] hearing is, like all sense perception, a way of seizing reality with all our body, including our bones and viscera" (Gonzalez-Crussi 1989:45; compare Ihde 1976:81 and Ackerman 1990:186-90 on ways

sound penetrates the body). Sound, hearing, and voice mark a special bodily nexus for sensation and emotion because of their coordination of brain, nervous system, head, ear, chest, muscles, respiration, and breathing. "The vocal mechanism involves the coordinated action of many muscles, organs and other structures in the abdomen, chest, throat and head. Indeed, virtually the entire body influences the sound of the voice either directly or indirectly" (Sataloff 1992:108). Moreover, hearing and voice are connected by auditory feedback and by physical resonance, the immediate experience of one's presence through the echo-chamber of the chest and head, the reverberant sensation of sound, principally one's own voice. By bringing a durative, motional world of time and space simultaneously to front and back, top and bottom, and left and right, an alignment suffuses the entire fixed or moving body. This is why hearing and voicing link the felt sensations of sound and balance to those of physical and emotional presence.

This position problematizes Abu-Lughod and Lutz's argument that "emotion can be studied as embodied only after its social and cultural—its discursive—character has been fully accepted" (1990:13). Although they assert that "as cultural products [emotions] are reproduced in individuals in the form of embodied experience" (1990:12), it seems unwise to abstract discourse, or the production and circulation of topics through speech styles and genres, from the embodied voice, the site of verbal articulation, the resounding place of discourse as fully feelingful habits. Emotions may be created in discourse, but this social creation is contingent on performance, which is always emergent through embodied voices (see Urban 1991:148-71).

Acoustemology, *acousteme*: I am adding to the vocabulary of sensorial-sonic studies to argue the potential of acoustic knowing, of sounding as a condition of and for knowing, of sonic presence and awareness as potent shaping forces in how people make sense of experiences. Acoustemology means an exploration of sonic sensibilities, specifically of ways in which sound is central to making sense, to knowing, to experiential truth. This seems particularly relevant to understanding the interplay of sound and felt balance in the sense and sensuality of emplacement, of making place. For places are as potentially reverberant as they are reflective, and one's embodied experiences and memories of them may draw significantly on the interplay of that resoundingness and reflectiveness.

Acoustemology means that as a sensual space-time, the experience of place potentially can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension. This is so because space indexes the distribution of sounds, and time indexes the motion of sounds. Yet acoustic time is always spatialized; sounds are sensed as connecting points up and down, in and out, echo and reverb,

point-source and diffuse. And acoustic space is likewise temporalized; sounds are heard moving, locating, placing points in time. The placing of auditory time is the sonic envelope created from the layered attack, sustain, decay, and resonance of sounds. The placing of auditory space is the dispersion of sonic height, depth, and directionality. Space-time inevitably sounds in and as figure and ground, as comingness and goingness. Its presence is forward, backward, side to side, and is heard in trajectories of ascent, descent, arch, level, or undulation. What these rather abstract formulations suggest, in simple terms, is that experiencing and knowing place—the idea of place as sensed, place as sensation—can proceed through a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual, as well as through other intersensory perceptual processes.

#### BOSAVI ACOUSTEMOLOGY:

##### BODILY UNITY OF ENVIRONMENT, SENSES, AND ARTS

In common with their rainforest neighbors on the Great Papuan Plateau and in the surrounding rainforest region of Papua New Guinea, Kaluli people hear much that they do not see. The diffuseness of sound is significant in the tropical forest, and the bodily orientation of its inhabitants through hearing, listening, and voicing has strongly impressed itself on ethnographers who have worked in the area (e.g., Feld 1990; E. L. Schieffelin 1976; Sørum 1989; Weiner 1991). Kaluli commonly develop acute hearing for locational orientation. Whether it is used in marked forest activities such as hunting by sound or in mundane ones such as walking along forest trails or attending to the details of the surrounding bush from inside a village longhouse, the locational information available from sound in this environment often greatly exceeds that available from vision, in both variety and salience. Even though one quickly realizes that hearing is the most culturally attuned sense in Bosavi, audition is always in interplay with other senses, particularly in a tense dialectic with vision. This is because much of the forest is visually hidden, whereas sound cannot be hidden. A Kaluli man named Jubi once impressed this on me by analogy. He said that just as the identities of costumed ceremonial dancers, or those of spirit mediums performing in total darkness, are revealed only by the presence of a singing or speaking voice, so the presences of forest places are sonically announced even when visually hidden away.

Acoustic revelatory presence is thus always in tension with visual hidden presence in primal experiences of the forest. Linking experience and expression, this same tension adheres in Kaluli poetic concepts—for example, the intersensory desire to interpret songs, conversations,

arguments, or stories by “turning over” (*balama*) their surfaces to reveal their *leg*, “underneath,” or *sa*, “inside.” Turned over insides and underneath reveal the resonant depths, meanings, subtleties, and implications of sounds, song poetics, stories, allegorical speeches, or dance costumes, just as they reveal the hidden presences of forest locales—the significance of the way places are physically shaped, such as the way rocks, waterfalls, mountains, or creeks emerge as presences with meaningful “inside” and “underneath” pasts. Thus the commonplace notion that objects and events are always more than they appear to be takes on a particularly sensual and poetic character when it comes to Kaluli modes of interpreting the depths and dimensions of local experience.

Another way the Kaluli dialectic between what is hidden and what is revealed emerges is powerfully signaled by the intersensory iconic *mama*, “reflection” or “reverberation.” *Mama* is one’s image in water or in the mirror; it is the close-up reflection of oneself in the eyeball of another, the visual presence of the self apart from the self. It is also the lingering audio fragment of a decaying sound, its projection outward as it resounds by vanishing upward in the forest. Like the fading sharpness of a mirror image, *mama* is the trace of audio memory, fragmentary sonic remembrances as they reverberate. And *ane mama*, a “gone reflection-reverberation,” is a spirit, a human absence returning in imagined (often avian) presence. Announced by flashes of sight or, more typically, by conspicuous sounds experienced without the accompaniment of a corresponding visual image, an *ane mama* presence instantly stimulates feelingful memories.

These Kaluli vision-sound interplays are also locationally intersensual to smell. Any number of everyday examples could be cited. It is hard to imagine the trickling of a shallow creek at a stand of sago palms without smelling the aroma of fresh or rotting sago pith; the experience and memory of sago-place presence is deeply multisensory. Similarly, the dense sensuality of evening darkness, with voices overlapping the misting light rains and insects and frogs of the nearby bush, is sensually continuous with smoky aromas that fires or resin torches release into the longhouse and diffuse out into the ever-moist night air. Evoking the diffuseness of this motional sensorium, the processes of sound and smell are incorporated into the same Bosavi verb, *dabuma*, or absorption by ear and nose. Hearing is the unmarked form, the major kind of sensory absorption or taking in; smelling requires marking the odor’s name before the verb, such that the action of smelling carries the linguistic feel of “hearing the odor.” The metaphoric potential here inversely plays on the familiar Western synesthetic notion that the pleasures of music have long been absorbed as the “perfume of hearing” (Ackerman 1990:202).



is suggested by the complexities of everyday practices linking sensory experience of the rainforest to artistic processes in visual, verbal, musical, and choreographic media. These practices are encompassed in discourse by two synesthetic metaphors: *duluu ganalan*, "lift-up-over sounding," and *a:ba:lan*, "flow." Both are important to Kaluli experience and expression of emplacement. Because I have discussed *duluu ganalan* in some detail before (Feld 1988), I will here review its importance to the interplay of the senses only briefly and then concentrate on flow. Flow concerns the interrelated sense and sensuality of water flowing through and connecting landforms, as well as the voice flowing through and connecting the thinking, moving, feeling body. It also concerns the hold, the lingering grip, of sound and poetic song, the resoundingness of voice in the silent memory. These notions of flow all merge in the performance of the path maps that are a central feature of poetic song texts.

"Lift-up-over sounding" is the metaphoric construct that prescribes and describes natural sonic form for Kaluli people. Calling attention to both the spatial ("lift-up-over") and temporal ("sounding") axes of experience, the term evokes the way all sounds necessarily coexist in fields of prior and contiguous sounds. When applied to the sound world of the rainforest, "lift-up-over sounding" highlights the observation that there are no single discrete sounds to be heard. Everything is mixed into an interlocking soundscape. Forest sounds constantly shift figure and ground to create staggered alternations and overlaps, a sense of sound that is completely interlocked and seamless. One hears no unison in nature. Presence and absence of sound or changes in its direction and dimension coordinate space as intersecting upward and outward. Sounds constantly interact to produce the sensation that one sound is momentarily about to stand out from the others, while at the same time conveying the sense that any primacy is fluid, as quickly lost as it is gained.

In the tropical rainforest, height and depth of sound are easily confused. Lack of visual depth cues couples with the ambiguities of different vegetation densities and with ever-present sounds such as the hiss of water to make depth often sensed as the diffuseness of height moving outward, dissipating as it moves. "Lift-up-over sounding" precisely yet suggestively codes the ambiguous sensation that auditorially, kinesthetically, and sensually projects a space-time: upward *feels* like outward. This placing of sound is at once a sounding of place. One knows the time of day, season of year, and placement in physical space through the time of wraparound of sound in the forest. This way of hearing and sensing the world is internalized as bodily knowledge, part of the everyday "body hexis" (Bourdieu 1977:87), the naturalized regime of "body techniques" (Mauss 1979 [1935]) basic to routine Kaluli encounters in their world.

Kaluli transform these everyday encounters with acoustic figure-grounds, extending their naturalness from the experience of the rainforest soundscape to their own vocal and instrumental music. Voices and rattles are made to "lift-up-over" like the trees of the forest canopy; sounds of drums and work tools are made to "lift-up-over" like tumbling waterfalls into swirling waterpools. These ideas are elaborated by Kaluli sounding that always avoids unison. To create a "lift-up-over sounding" or voices or instruments or both must be in synchrony while out of phase. To be in synchrony means that the overall feeling is one of togetherness, of consistently cohesive part coordination in sonic motion and participatory experience. Yet the parts are also out of phase, that is, at distinctively different and shifting points of the same cycle or phrase structure at any moment, with each of the parts continually changing, even competing, in degree of displacement from a hypothetical unison.

Additionally, "lift-up-over sounding" is created in timbre, by textual densification through a layering of attacks, decays, and fades, of playful accelerations, lengthenings, and shortenings, of the fission and fusion of sound shapes and phrases. Musical parts that interlock, alternate, or overlap create a form of participation that blurs competition and co-operation, mirroring the larger Kaluli tendency toward tense egalitarianism in social activities ranging from speech and work to negotiation, transaction, and exchange.

In concert with these dimensions of musical creativity, face-painting styles visually mirror sonic "lift-up-over sounding" through a parallel figure and ground principle in the texture contrast between shiny and dull and the color contrast between black and red. Ceremonial costumes and further exploit textural densification by mixing many types of materials, blending and layering fur, bird feathers, red, black, and white paints, shells, woven bands, bamboo, rattles, palm streamers, and colorful leaves. As the ceremonial dancer bobs up and down in this paraphernalia, layers of "in synchrony and out of phase" sound emanate from his shells and streamers in motion, "lifted-up-over" by his drum, rattle, or voice.

Taking in nature, music, body painting, costume, and choreography, "lift-up over sounding" metaphorically unites Kaluli environment, senses, and arts. In complementary ways, the notion of *a:ba:lan*, "flow," similarly pervades and unites experiential realities of place to its expressive evocation. To illustrate how this happens, I turn first to the routine ways in which Kaluli people encounter, sense, and name places in their world, and then to the ways this flow of world sensing turns into a sensual poesis of place.



# FROM SENSATION TO NAMING: PLACING PATHS OF FLOW IN KALULI EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

The importance of place and placenames to Kaluli everyday experience, discourse, and ritual expression has been a long-standing issue in the ethnographic and linguistic research that my colleagues and I have undertaken in Bosavi since 1966. Edward L. Schieffelin's first work recognized the primacy of Kaluli identification with locality:

The identity of each longhouse community is not primarily associated with the clan membership of the people who inhabit the *a* [longhouse]. Rather, over a period of time the community becomes bound up with the area it moves about in and comes to be referred to by the name of the locality. Thus for example, lineages of Gasumisi and Wabisi whose communities' successive longhouses have been located in the vicinity of Bagolo Ridge are called Bagolo people. (1976:41)

Moreover,

place names, including that of the longhouse vicinity, refer to familiar forested ridges, streams that are full of fish, house sites and sago stands where a person has lived most of his life. . . . These places are meaningful because they mark the contexts of one's past experience. Kaluli identify themselves with place names because they see themselves reflected in their lands. (E. L. Schieffelin 1976:44–45)

Banubi B. Schieffelin's discourse-centered ethnography of Kaluli socialization (1979, 1986, 1990; Ochs and Schieffelin 1983, 1984) has not focused thematically on place, but her transcripts of everyday Kaluli family interactions indicate the prominence of place and travel as conversation topics in the circulation of talk about family history, movement, and work activity. Of particular interest is her discovery of how everyday family discourse involves a report citation form in which placenames are preceded by the third-person possessive marker and followed by a verb of staying—for example, *ene Boleini sab*, "s/he's at her/his Bolekini" (B. B. Schieffelin, personal communication 1990). This form routinely ties place to person, identity to locality, and heightens the affective resonance of placenames. Its prominence in caregiver-child interactions underscores the biographical sense of place Kaluli children are socialized to assume.

My own work on Kaluli poetics (Feld 1990) has concentrated on the ways sequential citation of placenames in texts of song and lament construct improvised or composed maps that evoke memories of events, times, and social relations. The idea of a *tok*, or "path," emerged as one of the key devices of song composition and performance, and my Kaluli

teachers made me well aware of how much the emotional and memorial power of songs depended on their placename sequences. Continuing research reveals how invocation of the notion of *tok* signals a generic set of assumptions about the connectedness of Bosavi places, and with that connectedness, a connectedness of people, experiences, and memories. *Tok* signifies path, passage, canal, a nondirectional entry and exit, an opening in the sense of road, trail, or track. Connection as *tok* involves multiple images: a string of localities, contiguities and continuities of marked space, temporal progression from one place to another. The concept thus grounds the boundedness of places in the figure of their connectedness.

*Tok* are regularly placed in everyday experiences as Kaluli people travel to and from their home longhouse area, going to gardens, sago places, or other longhouse communities. Time traveling always means time walking on trails, time traversing places both familiar and new, time with others and time alone, time crossing the numerous brooks, streams, creeks, and rivers that section all lands in the Bosavi rainforest region. But Kaluli life also involves daily activities in the immediate longhouse community and its surroundings: socializing at the longhouse, gathering and cutting firewood, gathering water for drinking and cooking, making and repairing net bags, sharpening knives and axes, making and repairing clothing, tending pigs, making fences, hunting and fishing, cutting, planting, wedding, and tending banana, pandanus, vegetable, fruit, and sweet potato gardens, and cooking, distributing and sharing food. All these activities bring Kaluli people together to share and exchange, especially food and talk.

Indeed, one could say that almost every Kaluli social activity is constituted in action and talk, and one certainly doesn't get far listening to Kaluli talk without hearing about places. More formal discourse modes, including stories, arguments, negotiations, laments, and songs, equally participate in this pattern, validating the centrality of place to experiential exchange and memory. Central to all this talk is place-naming practices. At the most basic lexical and semantic levels, these practices indicate the perceptual salience of demarcating an exceptionally varied geography, one experienced by engaging with sensual continuities and discontinuities in the surrounding rainforest environment.

Whether a descriptive recounting or a prescriptive instruction, whether talk of home, of the world within reach, of a journey, or of travel, every naming practice involves path making through a co-referencing of specific placenames (henceforth PN) with a generic terminology of place forms. The most basic place form distinction is between *hen*, "land," and *ho:u*, "water." These are named and cited with *hena: wi*, "land names," and *ho:na: wi*, "water names." But the distinction fuses as

much as it distinguishes dimensions of place, because everyday experience in Bosavi always involves a coordinated intermeshing of named lands and waters.

This coordination is well indicated by the subtleties of the most generic names for place forms. For instance, the two most significant types of land formations are *fɛle* and *do:m*. The term *fɛle* is related to the word *fɛ*, "thigh," and refers to a relatively wide, flat expanse of land that rolls off and downward to either side—what Australian bushwalkers, in an instructive metaphorical contrast, refer to as a "saddle" of land. *Fɛle*, which can also refer to the relatively level area along a ridgetop, are reached from an ascent and lead to a descent at either end. Those conjoined segments of ascent, descent, and roll-off in the land are its "sides," or *do:m*. *Do:m* segments always imply the existence of *fɛle* above, below, and/or to the sides. *Do:m* has the same phonological shape as the word for "body" in Kaluli, and although this might be accidental, other lexical-semantic and discourse-in-context evidence leads me to believe that the image of the body as "hills" or "sides" connected by "thighs" is quite a primal one for Kaluli speakers.

In any case, *fɛle* and *do:m* are hardly experienced autonomously as interconnected land formations. They are inseparable from the equally prevalent but far more sensuous presence of waterways. Walking a *do:m* implies a body of water below; once it is crossed, there is another *do:m* to climb on the other side. And *fɛle* implies one and usually more water *ɛleb* lying off and below to either of its sides. *ɛleb* refers to the place in an ascending or arching elevation where creek water stops. Kaluli paraphrase this as the "head" of the water and say that water "sleeps going down from its head." In other words, water reclines, moves along a body lying down, typically flowing downstream from its slightly elevated "head." Another local paraphrase says that like a person standing upright, water stops and orients up to its "head."

In fact, water stops by moving along the *do:m*, up toward the *fɛle*. Following the local idiom, Kaluli guides are apt to point out that the *ɛleb* is not on the *fɛle* but in the *do:m*. This is another way of saying that the body is like the curves of land between, around, and over which water flows. But this embodied imagination goes farther still, for as these primal landforms are connected like thighs to the body, so the passage of water through them flows like the motion of voice. Voice flows by resounding through the human body, feelingfully connecting its spatially contiguous physical segments, resonating so as to sensually link and stress the whole. Likewise, when water flows through land, it is always multiply connected, always multiply present across and along a variety of rela-

tively distinct, contiguous landforms, linking them and revealing their wholeness.

It is worth inserting here that aside from the obvious correspondences between the forms designated *ɛn*, "land," and *ho:m*, "water," in Kaluli and English, there are considerable difficulties both in linguistically glossing and in paraphrastically evoking much sense of the distinctness and interconnectedness of *do:m*, *fɛle*, and *ɛleb* as either bodily or landscape images. Names like these three inevitably seem far more abstract when one reads about them in English than they must feel to Kaluli people, who experience them directly as signs of the sensual obviousness of place. Part of the difficulty of grasping them comes from the clear lack of visual correspondence between these Bosavi rainforest forms and ones more experientially familiar to Westerners. For while *do:m* are relatively hilly and chestlike, and *fɛle* relatively flatter and thighlike, these terms do not really mean "hill" and "flatland" in the sense of the English terms, any more than *ɛleb* exactly signifies the "head" or the "end" of a small creek.

An additional part the problem here is that *do:m*, *fɛle*, and *ɛleb* are experienced and distinguished less as purely visual forms and more in a multisensual way by the coordination of walking, seeing, and hearing—the kinesthesia and somesthesia of shaped place, encountered and learned by the moving, sensing, experiencing body. Surrounded by dense forest, Kaluli acutely attend to the heights, depths, and densities around their tracks through foot- and ear-felt indicators as much if not more than through visual ones. That is, they principally feel and hear whether the land ahead is relatively flatter or hillier than the land behind or to the sides. The land is virtually always wet from rain, so the presence of wetness in the air and the slick, slippery feel of different thicknesses of mud on the feet are central to orienting oneself in visually dense places. Additionally, one simultaneously hears what kinds of water presences are above, below, ahead, behind, or to the sides and whether these waterways are diminishing or augmenting in and out of presence. This sensuality of locating and placing, along with its kinesthetic-somesthetic bodily basis of knowing, is critical to a Kaluli acoustemology, a sonic epistemology of emplacement.

#### GENERIC PLACES AND PLACING

To continue with generic processes, land and water names often take the form of a specific placename plus a descriptive modifier that specifies the place form (henceforth PN + \_\_\_\_). Although the specific placename can stand alone, as can the descriptive modifier (as an abstract noun), they usually are combined. To take the most generic instances, one often

hears places cited as PN + *do:m*, or PN + *fele*, or PN + *eleb*. In the larger sentential discourse setting, these combinatorial sets may be further enhanced and illuminated by immediately conjoined locative and deictic particles, some of which encode directionality as specifically up, down, above, below, behind, or across. These and additional emphatic and paralinguistic markers all indicate aspects of the direction, elevation, density, and depth of land or water, as well as its experiential and evidential obviousness—for example, whether it is in or out of sight or audition.

Other terms that distinguish significant patterns in land formations are cited as PN + *dugun*, for the foothill area or the lower part of a hill or mountain; PN + *misiyo*, for a high place rising from a *do:m*; PN + *dagun*, for a visually distinct mountain site or peak; PN + *kugun*, for a valleylike area of uncut forest flattening off by the side of a hill or mountain; PN + *bulu*, an obviously flat segment of land on a *fele*. Additionally, the same placename can be attached to several different descriptive modifiers to indicate ways in which a large stretch of land connects to a diversity of specific forms. Several discontinuous places on the same land can have the same PN + form designation, further emphasizing the complexity of abstractly reckoning land strictly through naming.

Other familiar anchors in place terminology indicate lands cleared for living spaces. These include PN + *ba* or *ba-daido*, a clearing or de-grassed clearing, implying the presence of a main longhouse opening onto a cleared yard. This clearing would be connected outward to forest, gardens, and sago areas by customary trails of several different sizes and use patterns, ranging from the ten-foot-wide intervillage tracks (*gaman tok* or *dadaka*, from English “track,” for government road) that signal intensified contact and government presence in the area since the 1960s to the small forest clearing or mud-and-vine trail openings into the forest whose pig or human footprints indicate customary daily travels. These types of tracks lead beyond living, gardening, or familial arenas to forest places progressively *usa*, “within,” or *heno: usa*, “within the land.” They lead away from villages and larger trails toward *ilabode*, “bush,” deep in the forests.

Places are explicitly connected as paths by PN + *tok*, or by attaching a specific placename to a path descriptive like *soso:go:j*, the point where two trails come together, thus locating a place by means of its entry or exit point. Talk about paths also indicates qualities such as how “straight” (*digalo:*), “bending” (*kogelo:*), or completely “meandering” or bending back on itself (*sisi:li*) a trail might be, as well as how it might be distinguished by characteristics of forest vegetation or density.

Similarly, land names are made more distinct by markers indicating human impacts. Names attach to swidden garden sites as PN + *ikuwo*: or

PN + *ge:lo*: (literally “tree-cut” or “plant-planted”), as well as to garden qualities. For example, PN + *asak* indicates a garden edge with planted ridge on the top. PN + *ikuwo:sak* (“tree-cut” + *asak*) indicates the appearance of a double ridge with some trees cut and some left above; hence the appearance of two canopy layers, the lower layer regrown on a hill and the upper layer including original growth on a ridge.

Places where sago palms grow, are felled, and are processed into the staple starch of the Kaluli diet further link human impacts to land tracks and to waterways, particularly small creeks and streams. Sago places are noted as PN + *ma:n kuuwo*: (“sago-cut”), and the placename can equally mark the adjacent land or waterway. Like the centrality of longhouse site names in creating the merged time and space of a community, human presence is always relational to named gardens and sago places and thus central to the identity of those who work and live nearby. Memories—of food, work, labor assistance—are magnetized to those names, making place a fused locus of time and space.

## WATER

Always heard even when it cannot be seen, water has dramatic visual presence as well, a depth and dimensionality of presence as it travels through places, linking and demarcating them throughout the forest. The acoustic presence of water changes constantly through the seasonal weather patterns, swelling and resounding with every day’s rains. At first a seemingly constant hiss, water’s ever-present varieties of sonic volume and immediacy comprise a multiplicity of subtly differentiated presences. These are instantly felt and interpreted by Kaluli as indexes of the progressive space-time of day and season. In addition to the terms *ho:n* and *eleb*, numerous other descriptives indicate the variety of waterway dimensions and segments encountered every day. These include PN + *kini*, “downstream”; PN + *magan*, “deep waterpool”; PN + *besq*, a “recess,” a depression or minor pool where water slows; and PN + *sa:*, the “bank” of a creek or river, the edge of water. Waterways are further demarcated as *sisi:li*, curved, crooked, or meandering, with constant bends, or *tili*, with no pool, just water flowing downstream. There are specific water forms as well, like *ho:n-si*, a little spring hole where one draws drinking water.

The two most significant waterway forms besides *eleb* are those that link waterways together and mark significant boundaries or land elevation changes. Water PN + *so:k* marks a “conjunction,” a place where two waters come together, and water PN + *sa* indicates a “waterfall.” Because water conjunctions and waterfalls mark boundaries that coordinate land and water forms, they are additionally important for demarcating fishing areas, boundaries, and rights. Waterfall segments themselves are further



marked for both their contour in the surrounding land and their impact on shaping the water below—for instance, water PN + *sa-wel*, “waterfall crest” or ledge; water PN + *sa-mi*, a “waterfall drop-off” or break point; water PN + *sa-mogan*, a “deep waterfall” at the base of a waterfall; water PN + *sa-ko-f*, where water breaks off a *mogan* beneath the fall; and water PN + *sa-ga*, where water rejoins after a split below the fall.

Other ways in which downstream waterways are co-referenced with landforms include water PN + *da-l*, where a water section opens up to flow from a cleared gap; PN + *du*, marking a land or rock bank between two segments of the same waterway; and PN + *miin*, where one water break into two to rejoin later. When two creeks run roughly parallel over a long stretch of land, thus coordinating land and water features, they are termed *ida:ni galali*, “two of them lying/staying together.”

But the sensual primacy of water emerges in Kaluli naming practices in another way, namely, through the descriptive prominence of onomatopoeic ideophones for water sound and motion. While these ideophones are common in talk about waterways, they only rarely substitute for either specific water names or for water descriptives. Six iconic patterns convey the sound sensations of the basic water motions:

“falling”	<i>bu, bulu, gu, gulu, gulugulu, guluu</i>
“spraying”	<i>fu, fuga, fuwa:n</i>
“flowing hard/fast”	<i>fo, foa, oo</i>
“flowing light/slow”	<i>tin, tintin, tyu, tyutya</i>
“swirling”	<i>go, gogo, gola, gologola, gololo</i>
“splashing/plunging”	<i>kubu, kubukubu, tubu, tubutubu</i>

Further extensions of these terms use lengthened vowels to iconically mark durative intensity, or syllabic reduplication to iconically mark durative continuity. Additionally, ideophones can attach to regular verbal morphology in talk, as well as attach to special poetically marked aspectual morphology in songs. In a few cases, placenames actually incorporate these sonic ideophones. The waterfall named Gulusa (the *sa* of an iconically named creek, the Gulu) is formed from *gulu* + *sa*, “downward falling water sound” + “waterfall.” Bulusani, the place where the Bulu creek (again, the name is ideophonic) joins the Gamo river below a large waterfall and waterfall, is formed from Bulu + *sa-mi*, Bulu creek + “waterfall-drop edge,” literally, “sound of loud, downward rolling water sound” + “drop place.” In these examples the evocative powers of ideophonic expression enmesh the direct relationship of sound to sense in the voice, forcefully linking everyday sensual experience to the aesthetic depths of poesis.

## LAND AS WATER AS LAND

In *The Sonnet of the Lonely and the Burning of the Daners*, Edward L. Schieffelin notes the connectedness of Bosavi lands and waters:

Most places in the forest are named after the stream that gives the land its contours in that vicinity. . . . The waters, as they turn and fall, generate new localities for every new configuration of the land. The name of a locality carries, in effect, its own geographical coordinates, which place it in determinate relation to the brooks and streams that flow through the forest. (1976:30)

Hence, the experience and naming of Bosavi lands and waters is always interpenetrated. This is most forcefully indicated by the flexibility of attaching landform descriptive modifiers to specific water names and water-form modifiers to specific land names.

Primary examples of this process derive from the many small creeks running along large stretches of land. In the community I know best, a creek named Sulu is not just an abstract watercourse but one whose path connects to lands named Sulu *do:mo*: and Sulu *fela*. Moreover, even though Suleleb (Sulu + *eleb*) marks where the Sulu creek comes to a head, it is equally a name for the arch of land where the Sulu stream ends. And because the hill just beyond this particular place is where members of Bono: cleared land and built their longhouses in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, Suleleb is also a longhouse site name and, by extension, the primary referent for people who live there (Suleleb *kulu*, Suleleb people). At the same time, everyone knows that Sulu is quite explicitly a creek, with named places along its banks where there are varieties of sago palms and named waterpools (Sulu *mogan*) and dips (Sulu *bese*), as well as a downstream (Sulu *kini*), a waterfall (Sulu *sa*, Sulu *sa-wel*), and a junction (Sulu *so:k*). What this example indicates is the constant play between specific and general, personal and social, momentary and historical resonances for these names, along with the time-space connections they consummate in place.

## PLACENAMES, LINGUISTIC REFERENCE, AND MEMORIAL INDETERMINACY

The formula “PN + form descriptive” names and thereby implements everyday emplacement, anchoring everyday talk descriptions of where one is, has been, or is going. Additionally, tendencies in the formation of placenames hold important potentials related to memory and biography. For the Kaluli, as for the neighboring Foi, “place names act as mnemonics for the historical actions of humans that make places singular and significant” (Weiner 1991:45). Some placenames serve forcefully as shorthand, encapsulating stories about historical or mythical events whose magnitudes vary from mundane to cosmic. Some Bosavi places, for example, are named in relation to mythic origins or events responsible for

establishing taboos. Others are directly constructed as primal sources of spiritual or supernatural power, and stories are attached to these place-names to indicate why the place is avoided in sight or visitation or why certain actions, words, or motions are avoided there, sometimes lest they create resentments or offend mythocosmic beings. Some of these matters are revealed in stories that are variably well known or quite esoteric; others are exposed through the kinds of talk and revelation specific to spirit-medium seances (E. L. Schieffelin 1976:29–45, 1977, 1984, 1985; Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991:58–87; Schieffelin and Kurita 1988).

At the simplest level, name structure itself points toward layers of referential possibilities. An example of the most explicit variety would follow the pattern seen in the placename *Himbululo:wo*, which is formed from *hini* + *bulu* + *lo:wo*; literally, “earthquake” + “broke open” + nominal, meaning “place where earthquake broke open the ground there.” The place referred to is a dramatically visual and unusual landform, and the event that created this depression is historically rare and at the edge of current historical memory. Because the place in question now follows alongside a major government road outside the longhouse community of Suguniga, there is a clear linkage between the referential semantics of the placename, an event, a placed landform, and stories that are important to the history of a specific community and its members.

Yet semantically bundled placename packages like this one are relatively rare in the Bosavi language. Far more prevalent among names with some overt referential distinctiveness are ones taken to be related to an event or act without specifying a land or water formation itself. These are quite important in local community history. For example, while walking Bono: lands in 1992, I came across places named *Baamisa:n* and *Baoho:mo:no*. The first is formed from *baō* + *a* + *misa:n*, signifying “ceremonial hunting lodge” + main longhouse (“house” + “head”), that is, “longhouse site where people lived during a *baō a*.” The second, *Baoho:mo:no*, is formed from *baō* + *ho:n* + *mo:no*, signifying “ceremonial hunting lodge” + “water” + “drink,” indicating “drinking place during time of holding a *baō a*.”

The *baō a* was a male ceremonial lodge and a period of seclusion, hunting, esoteric instruction, and homosexual liaisons between men and boys (E. L. Schieffelin 1982). The institution ended in 1964 because of the simultaneous threat to secrecy and call for labor when missionaries arrived to construct the Bosavi airstrip. The lands named *Baamisa:n* and *Baoho:mo:no* are close to a place named *Wogole*, the site of the last since the last *baō a* was held in Bosavi and thirty-five years since the last one held on Bono: lands, meanings and stories connected with this institution shift considerably in the living population. Names like *Baamisa:n*

and *Baoho:mo:no* are thus explicit reminders of past presences and activities to which members of Bono: or other communities have varying degrees of linkage or distance according to age, gender, and knowledge of esoteric cultural practices. The names thus ring variably transparent or deep, and lead to stories variably shallow or dense.

More typical yet are names whose referential potential opens out to biographical or historical stories that have complexly varied personal or regional resonances. For example, one morning in July 1992, Ayasilo and I were walking on the government track past the former Bono: longhouse site of *Sululeb*. As we crossed the Yolo creek I asked him the land name of the hill arching above along the left side of the track. He replied, with a sweeping, nose-pointing deixis (another bodily placing-spacing convention), that the place was called *Gasoomisa:n*. This was instantly recognizable as a name formed from *Gasō* + *a* + *misa:n*, that is, *Gasō*, a man's name, plus “main village longhouse,” or the “place where *Gasō* built a large village longhouse.” I then asked if there was an “underneath,” a *leg* or “reason” for the name, and as I switched on my cassette recorder Ayasilo remarked (in Kaluli, rather literally translated), “A man named *Gasō*, Wasoba's father's father, a man of clan *Wabisi*, well, long ago, having left *Mulumu*, staying here by the Yolo he built a big house, later he quit it, left to stay at *Nageba:da:n*, that's all.”

Despite the contextual artificiality (i.e., a direct question elicitation), it is striking to notice how quickly and thoroughly a person and a memorable feature of his life are narratively located in a placed space-time. *Gasō* is generationally linked to an elder man of Ayasilo's father's generation from their longhouse community; he is also linked to a specific clan, to a land name of central historical and contemporary importance to that clan and the surrounding community, to the creek we were just then crossing, to a defining act marking significance and boldness around a man's personal memory, to the people of the former longhouse community of *Sululeb*, and to another longhouse community involved in a history of fission and fusion with Ayasilo's own. Biographical, geographical, historical, and regional memories are thus encapsulated in and unleashed by the name *Gasoomisa:n*, reciprocally indicating how personal identity is emplaced and how places are central to personal identities. As with the neighboring *Bedamini* described by Sørnum (1989:4), “temporality is usually concretized by location, and phenomena of time may be seen as objectivated through this practice. The landscape is also history. Time is located as an immanent part of the topography. . . . time and space must be seen as dimensions of a unified space-time percept.”

Sometimes name structures are referentially descriptive of a land formation alone. In these cases the significance of the name is transparent at one level but in no way obvious at others. For example, *Walaheg* is