Assignment Title:
Assignment 1: Analysis of the Meaning of Place

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Attachment of this coversheet to your assignment is an acknowledgement that you have read and understand the University’s Academic and Scientific Misconduct Policy and you affirm that the work included in this document is your own, except where there is clear acknowledgement and reference to the work of others.
Knowledge is gained by experience; it is this experience which can define ones meaning of a place. The farming property named Clevesyde, is within the District of Tatiara, situated in the southeast of South Australia. In 1873 Gottfried Wiese, an early European settler and ancestor of mine, acquired freehold ownership of this land. This ownership changed the environment and purpose of the land which, in turn, created a lifestyle, income, culture and genius loci surrounding the place named Clevesyde. Memmott and Long (2002), state that a place takes meaning through an interaction process of those who live there and the environment. It can also be created by altering the physical characteristic of a piece of environment. This essay will analyse the knowledge and experience of this place that has formed my meaning of Clevesyde. To develop this analysis, knowledge has been acquired through experience and family history of Clevesyde post settlement. This essay will also reflect on the place and people who called this place home pre-settlement.

Childhood shapes who we are as adults; our values, beliefs and sense of belonging are created during this time. Clevesyde is an important place to me as it was my childhood, the place where I developed an intrinsic relationship with my family and surroundings. As an adult I treasure the memories of my childhood where I explored the natural environment within Clevesyde and its surrounds. This exploration was enriched by observing, touching, feeling, hearing and smelling, thus creating an innate sense of belonging (De Jong 2002). Apart from residing with my parents and two siblings, my grandparents also lived on Clevesyde. This fortunate ecology consisted of three generations from one family living within close proximity to one another. It is this ‘togetherness’ which allowed me to form not only my own knowledge, experience and meaning towards the place named Clevesyde but to also acquire
an understanding of my family culture, history through observation, stories and familiarity. Now that I have children of my own, the importance of Clevesyde as a significant place is made even more evident as I delight and cherish in being able to take my own children there. Memmott, Long (2002) identify that a place can be partly or wholly created by enacting special types of behaviour at a particular piece of environment, this behaviour becomes associated with that place. Offering my children to experience and re-enact my childhood in their own individual ways allows them to form their own place of belonging there. The added bonus, it also deepens my association to this place as I watch them experience behaviours common to Clevesyde in their own way.

Anita Lewis 2007

This behaviour of childhood exploration while growing up on Clevesyde included; having the freedom to explore the land on horseback, motorbike, by foot or canoe. Regular extended family gatherings were held at Clevesyde. This bringing together of family which included aunts, uncles and cousins, were a highlight of my time there. Climbing trees, playing in the shearing shed and riding motorbikes with my cousins and siblings are my fondest memories. It is from these experiences and knowledge obtained through ‘our togetherness’ which is the foundation of why Clevesyde such an important place to me.

Furthermore, communication is a way to accumulate an abundance of knowledge. Pre settlement the land known to me as Clevesyde was covered with big gum trees and there was
open grass land between them (Jones, 1985). It was this open grass land which enticed Godfried Wiese to the Tatiara over a century ago. The abundant grass provided the much needed feed for livestock, and the relatively open land allowed for immediate cropping. Today Clevesyde is still farmed the same way. Memmott & Long (2002) identify how a place can be created by the association of knowledge properties such as past events, names and memories. I vividly recall my Pop reflecting on an era where trees were felled for sleepers, or to create open farming land. He also discussed the olden times where draught horses were used to pull farming machinery, and the physically demanding work which was required to farm this land.

![Image of a farmer with a tractor]

Colin Wiese 2011

Additionally, my father’s account of Clevesyde is often during the era where the land was used to breed Guernsey cows. An annual family highlight was the pilgrimage to Adelaide to enter the best cows into the Royal Adelaide Show. Regular success at the show identified our family’s ability to breed prized cows; this consistency was an important contribution to Clevesyde’s ‘placefulness’ within the agricultural community. These reflections of personal memories by my Pop and Father bring into being, knowledge properties held by my family and our association to Clevesyde. Memmott & Long (2002) describe the sharing of collective experiences regarding a place as social intelligibility. In order to define our own family’s cultural heritage, experiences have been transmitted socially. These experiences have enhanced my knowledge of the place and have stayed constant through generations, characterising and placing our own personal identity to Clevesyde.
This significant place has not always been named Clevesyde and the Wiese family have not always been associated with this land. Seddon (1997, p23) indicates that an obvious form of taking possession is to give names to things and places. These names also record experience and use – they tell a story. It is these experiences and knowledge that account for the time the Wiese family has been at Clevesyde. Pre-settlement, the Tatiara district was placed as the Potaruwutj group, and (Gary Toone Associate, South Australian Museum) stated by email on 16 August 2011 that he liked the name “Bindjali” which is another name for the Tatiara/Potaruwutj group. He also identified that there are a lot of interpretations of group boundaries and names, which he is investigating at the moment. Placing a name to the Aboriginal people who belonged to this area, also leads me to wonder what their meaning of this place is. The exploring of the environment engaged in by the children, the gathering and preparation of food, the ‘togetherness’ of generations from one family or group where metaphors were shared by communication and observation. This knowledge and experience is not unlike the familiarity I experience of the same place.

Therefore, as the time looms ever closer that Clevesyde will be sold and our families association, sense of belonging and history will become non tangible. The opportunity to observe, smell, touch and hear will disappear. Upon reflecting the imminent chosen departure from this place named Clevesyde, I once again wonder of its meaning pre-settlement. Following settlement the Aboriginal population within the Tatiara was dislocated and dispersed, so now-a-days Aboriginal people who live in the Tatiara come from elsewhere and those with ancestral connections live elsewhere. Mr G Toone (Associate, South Australian Museum) confirmed this by email on 12 August 2011. The area including Clevesyde can be
regarded as a ‘rich’ resource area for Aboriginal people, this area has previously been described as the land of ‘milk and honey’ (Jones, A 1985). The Ephemeral swamps of Mootyang Gunya, Penny’s and Poocha encircle Clevesyde, these were good places to gather all sorts of food and these places would have been central foci for living. Adjacent to Clevesyde is a ‘lunette’ which would have been a good camp site. This Aboriginal ontology created a place of being and knowing, an environment where Aboriginal science evolved to allow human beings fit into rather than outside of the ecology (Christie, M 1991) whereas, the ontology surrounding European settlement including from my family was to sustain an economically prosperous future. This required an environmental and ecological transformation.

Colin Wiese 2011

People were dispersed, trees were felled, and native fauna (vermin) were culled to achieve the goal of economical sustainability. Recent years there has been a desire to amend such an environmental change. An example of this is where the creek which flows through Clevesyde has been fenced off to promote the regrowth of native vegetation.

Colin Wiese 2011
To wonder what an Aboriginal person would think while gazing over this landscape today is confronting. Gary Toone (South Australian Museum), describes by email on 16 August 2011 his experience of this scenario as very emotional; where everyone has ended up crying. Additionally, the passing of generations causes the loss of important knowledge and experiences which are critical in forming a place of significant importance.

In conclusion; association, experiences and knowledge of a place are personal. One landscape can be viewed in many different ways. Family beliefs, history and experiences can persuade individual opinions. These experiences evolve into the special meaning of a place. The renamed piece of land known to me as Clevesyde, identifies who I am, my history and place of belonging. In owning these emotions it is also necessary to recognise the same emotions yet different experiences which were encountered pre-settlement by Aboriginal people belonging to the Potaruwutj Group. It is with this in mind and through written communication with G Toone, (South Australian Museum, August 12 2011), that I agree with his view that Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is located with the rural landscape being Clevesyde. As such it is a place where my family has managed and conducted their business through generations and has placed value to our cultural heritage. This landscape is also valued by Aboriginal people, so in effect, the cultural heritage landscape is ‘shared’.
References


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Wiese, C 2011, Mundulla, South Australia, viewed 23 August 2011, Endnote Ref type; email