

Land as a Site of Remembrance: An Ethnographic Study in Barkly East



By Karen Nortje

Supervisor: Dr. R. Ebr.- Vally

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Department of Social Anthropology
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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the ways in which people in Barkly East, a small town in the Eastern Cape, attribute feelings of belonging to the land they own and work. In a country such as South Africa, where the contestation of land is prominent and so integral to the political and social discourse, questions related to the idea of belonging are necessary and important. Significant questions addressed by this thesis are: Who belongs and why do they feel they belong? More importantly, the question of who does not belong, is addressed.

In Barkly East a tug of war exists between groups and individuals who want matters to remain constant and those who need the status quo to change. What stands out, moreover, in this community, is its duality on many levels of society, which is played out both consciously and unconsciously. This duality is also manifested through social, racial and economic relations, and is supported by an unequal access to land.

This thesis identifies three main elements which contribute to the creation of narratives of belonging in Barkly East. Firstly, history and the perception of history create strong links between personal and communal identity, which in turn reinforces and legitimises claims of belonging. Secondly, hierarchy in terms of gender and race plays an important part in this narration, as some residents are more empowered in this process due to either their gender or race. And three, the connection to the land that people appear to have, plays a definitive role in narratives of belonging. Those who feel they have a heritage in this place also feel a connection to the land. For this reason, land for these people embody, not only the physical space of 'somewhere to belong to', but becomes an integral ingredient to the act of belonging and even identity formation.

Declaration

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the requirements of the Degree of Masters in Social Anthropology, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Karen Nortje
30 June 2006

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Barkly East does not immediately grab one as the hub of activity, nor does it flatter you with eloquence or style. Rather this place lies in its cradle of mountains, unchanging it seems, experiencing life at the very slow pace of day-to-day living. From time to time some strangers pass through, usually on their way to somewhere exciting, maybe Queenstown or the Tiffindell Ski resort, even Bloemfontein. For most of these passers-by, Barkly East is hardly ever a destination. Neither its green hills in summer, nor its icy white, snow caps in winter, is enough to make them stay. The question is thus; why did I choose to stay – for a little while at least?

In 1999, Barkly East captured my attention and enslaved my pen and ink. I had decided upon this place as a study area for my honours project concerning issues of identity and gender. Having been somewhat familiar with this 'space', with some family staying there and personally visiting sporadically, I felt it would lend itself well to the kind of issues I would like to investigate. Little did I, at that stage, envisage the scope my work would later take. Upon finishing my honours research I came to realise that there was more to know about Barkly East and its people. My research in Barkly East to this point was limited in its focus to issues of gender, and I believed there to be another study, or rather other stories about this place that needed to be told.

This thesis will attempt to tell some of the stories of Barkly East as captured and experienced by myself. Barkly East however has taught me that the research inquiry is not easily answered, and that while I might be looking for one particular type of story, this place has chosen many more for me to reveal.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In what way (if any) do people in Barkly East create narratives around place and belonging in relation to land owned and land worked?

Research Aims and Goals

- To understand what the change of ownership of land in Barkly East means for both farmers and farm workers
- To determine how personal and communal identity is constructed through the ownership (or not) of land in Barkly East
- To examine in what ways land in Barkly East (in this case farms) is both gendered and racialised spaces
- To understand the impact memory has on the sense of belonging of people who live in Barkly East, especially in relation to land

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The politics around land, land dispossession and more recently land redistribution has been at the forefront of South African politics for the last century. Who has the right to own land and who does not? Who decides these rights and what implications have these decisions had on both majority and minority groups in South Africa? These are just some of the questions that have shaped the way we research land issues today.

In Barkly East, an area with breathtaking landscapes and families with genealogies older than seven generations, land is no small issue. Here white and black people live and work the land side by side, one group has ownership the other not. For both of these groups land and more particularly the ownership thereof, has significance. This research is therefore about land; living on land, owning land, working land and dying on land. Yet, as much as it is about land it is also about personal and communal identity that is constructed, legitimised and internalised through and over land.

This thesis tries to understand the ways in which (if any) people in Barkly East create narratives around place and belonging in relation to land owned and worked. Does belonging in Barkly East mean ownership of land? Or, can belonging in Barkly East also mean personal heritage, construction of social identity and economic dependency? In Barkly East notions relating to 'legitimate' history, racial and gender politics, as well as economic independence have made the issue of belonging more complex. A qualitative research methodology consisting of ethnographic data, focus groups and multiple interview strategies, with farmers and farm workers (men and women; white and black) facilitates an understanding of the issues at hand in this thesis.

The importance of history, the invoking of memory, the proof of ownership and knowledge of rights in relation to the land in Barkly East are integral to the way in which people define themselves in terms of their land. This research will therefore contribute to a better understanding of the underlying complexities involved in land ownership in South Africa. It will do this by moving beyond title deeds and formal transactions, toward an interpretative comprehension of the significance of belonging, place, land and land ownership for the residents of Barkly East.

RATIONALE

Democracy in South Africa in 1994 did not merely herald in a new political dispensation. In fact, democracy also sparked a significant movement toward a shift in our day-to-day interactions with people who previously only featured on the periphery of the social structures in which we navigated. To a greater or lesser degree people of different colour engaged with one another on professional and social (mostly clandestine) levels during Apartheid. At the same time however, law dictated, through mechanisms such as spatial segregation, extreme monitoring of movement, as well as unequal levels of education that cross cultural communities should, and must not form. This is no longer the case

today as our relatively new, democratically elected government proudly embraces the so-called “rainbow nation”. Now people from different cultures, races and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to learn from another. This sentiment does not always transcend all spheres of South African society despite initiatives by the current government and a broader acceptance of this changing environment by everyday people. This is particularly true in small settlements such as Barkly East. Communities have been primarily defined along racial lines for such a long time that most of the initiatives by government to change the face of the typically racially divided South Africa community, has not materialised.

During the last few years, many white¹ South African farm owners have awakened to a new reality of a possible loss of land. This in itself could form the basis for an extensive investigation as their fears and attitudes toward this particular reality may very well compel farm owners to drive farm labourers off their land. Important to note, however, is that Barkly East has thus far not had any land claims from previously disadvantaged peoples. This may be due to the fact that the labourers themselves do not know about the new land and tenure policies which could help them find permanent residence on a white farm, or, even more importantly, get access to their own piece of land. The development officers in Barkly East ascribe this problem to illiteracy of farm workers and the government’s inability to reach and communicate to rural people. There is also no official record of any farm workers evicted from white owned farms in Barkly East².

¹ The racial labels, particularly White, Black and Coloured are historically rooted in South Africa’s legacy of Apartheid. Please see Chapter Two, in the *Ethics* section for a more comprehensive discussion of the use of racial categories in this thesis.

² As a response to the government’s initiatives to secure land tenure form farm workers many white farm owners have evicted labourers from the farms. While the government argues that it has a duty to intervene in the occurrence of land evictions of labourers on white farms, the government recognizes the fact that sweeping policy changes to upgrade occupational rights would not be in everyone’s best interest. Therefore the implementation of the Extension of Security Tenure Bill (White Paper on Land Policy Issues, 1997: 24).

Another important role player in Barkly East is women and their position in relation to land. The Commission for Gender Equality argues that cutting across this legacy of landlessness in South Africa is the fact that historically, "women have had little access to personal ownership and tenure of land as patriarchal attitudes maintained them as a different kind of 'landless majority' " (Commission on Gender Equality, 2000). Government policy reflects a growing concern for women's issues in relation to land and steps have been taken in the right direction in the White Paper on Land Reform in South Africa, which reflects a strong commitment to gender equality. Yet, in a place such as Barkly East, where government policy has not been translated into reality for the majority of the people, women and their rights have even less of a voice than other groups.

The social relations between a farm owner and farm labourer becomes more complicated when the ownership of land as property is translated into the ownership of labour, thereby transferring the label of 'property', including the disappearance of basic rights, onto a person. In many cases farms in Barkly East, as in other rural regions, are sold inclusive of its labour. Therefore it is not only a title deed that is sold but a person's labour as well, making it more difficult to distinguish between the person and their labour. One can thus argue that it is the labourers themselves rather than exclusively their labour that are seen as property. This can and does have far reaching implications for the cultivation of personal relationships with others and a sense of self-worth. In the same way women, as a partner or a wife, may acquire a similar status as 'property' in relation to a male partner. Women in Barkly East who work in the house and garden as domestic workers (predominantly black women) are in most cases dependent upon the job security of a male partner for her own job. She will only be hired when and if her male partner has a job at that particular farm, and her employment will cease when her male partner's does. She thus becomes part of a 'package' the male labourer sells to secure a job for himself. In a country where women are a landless majority, this type of job insecurity has far reaching

consequences not only economically and financially, but also in terms of their dignity.

It is within this context of unequal power relationships that Barkly East plays out (in local everyday life) the complexity of issues one also finds on a national and even international level. The South African government still struggles with racism at many levels of our society and while women are increasingly featured in government, in many sectors women nonetheless face patriarchy and sexism. Currently the world has been forced to face similar obstacles, with East versus West; Muslim versus Christian. Where people have succumbed to generalisations nurtured over generations about one another; and the tragic consequences such as 911 and the US invasion of Iraq, thereof. In Barkly East one can also find generalisations at work: white versus black; male versus female. It is my contention that it is with anthropology, where we use the local to explain the global, that one can attempt a better understanding of the inner workings of conflicts such as these.

BARKLY EAST IN CONTEXT

Location and Geography

Barkly East is part of the greater Ukhahlamba District Municipality³ (DM) which is situated in the northern part of the Eastern Cape Province, and is bordered by Lesotho in the east, the Free State in the north and the Northern Cape in the west. The Ukhahlamba DM consists of four local municipalities (LMs): Gariiep, Maletswai, Elundini, and Senqu (of which Barkly East is a part). Senqu Local Municipality consists of four small towns namely Barkly East, Sterkspruit, Lady Grey and Rhodes.

³ The Ukhahlamba DM covers 26 518 km² with an approximate population of 341 837 (Ukhahlamba DM, 2004: 18).

Within a seventy kilometre radius Barkly East plays neighbour to two small towns namely Elliot and Lady Grey, both, much like Barkly East, is supported mainly by the farms in the outlying sections of the towns. The largest town close to Barkly East is Aliwal North, approximately 100 kilometres. The two largest centres relatively close to Barkly East are Bloemfontein and East London (both in a 350kms radius from Barkly East).

The Barkly East farming district frames the town geographically and constitutes four areas named New England, Wartrail, Clifford and Moshesh's Ford. Figure 1.1 illustrates this division. Note the red markings and writing on the map where one of my informants demarcated these areas. These farming districts are often divided by the locals according to the predominant language spoken by the land owners. For example, New England and Clifford is seen to be more 'English' versus Wartrail and Moshesh's Ford that is considered more 'Afrikaans'. A great deal of this geo- linguistic partition is superficial and merely refers to the original

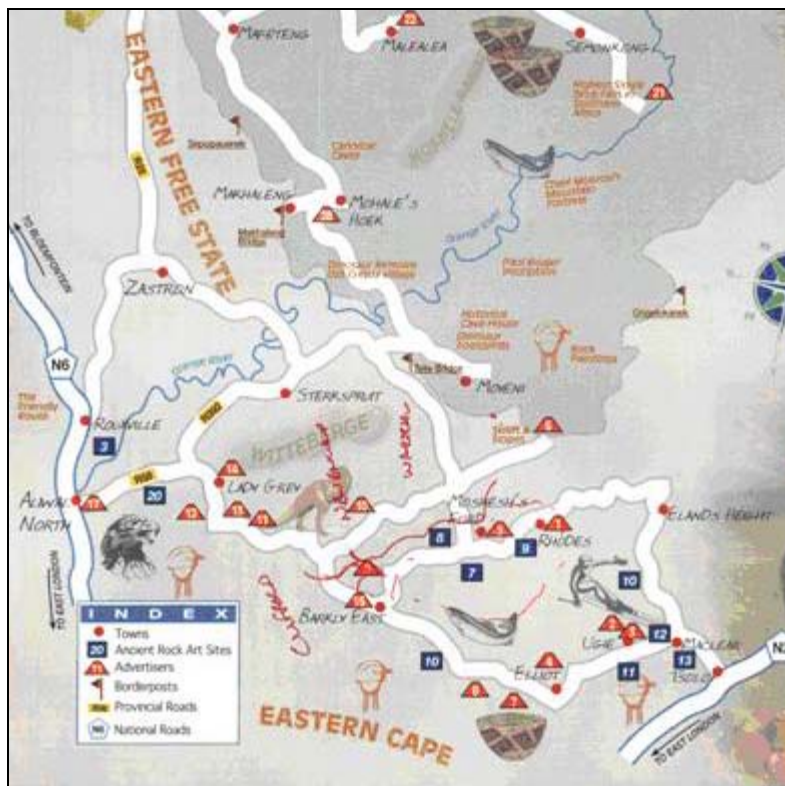


Figure 1.1 Local tourism map of Barkly East and its surrounds.

names given to these farms for example, *Pitlochrie* or *Witkrans* to name a few. At the same time however this division is also rooted in a cultural heritage that is celebrated through ties with the land itself⁴.

Barkly East is not a big town (see Figure 1.2 for a town map of Barkly East) and shows signs of a typical small town in South Africa. Barkly East is characteristic of small town South Africa mainly due to its spatial organisation. To the North East of the town a growing local township greets you as you enter and a towering Dutch Reformed Church watches over the residents from its position on the main road. The streets are dusted with small shops, one or two hairdressers, a Pep Store and the local BKB (farmer's co-op), all of whom are fighting for survival. Barkly East town also sports a local Town Hall, a dual medium school from grade 1- 12, a library and museum.

A large section of the Barkly East farming district forms part of the Southern Drakensberg mountain range. In fact, the town is nestled in the middle of a mountainous enclave that serves as a natural boundary around the town and farming district (see Image 1.1). Many residents still see the mountains as a way of keeping "unwants" out of their town, in much the same way as it was utilised in the 1880s as a natural vantage-, and strategic manoeuvring point from which the European settlers could defend themselves against the "natives" (Nortje, 1999: 18; Smit, 1973: 233).

The town is situated at approximately 1826 meters above sea level. While high, is still comparatively lower than the outlying farming districts which can reach up to 3000 meters above sea level. Due to its high altitude, Barkly East experiences

⁴ I discuss this issue in more detail in Chapter Six.

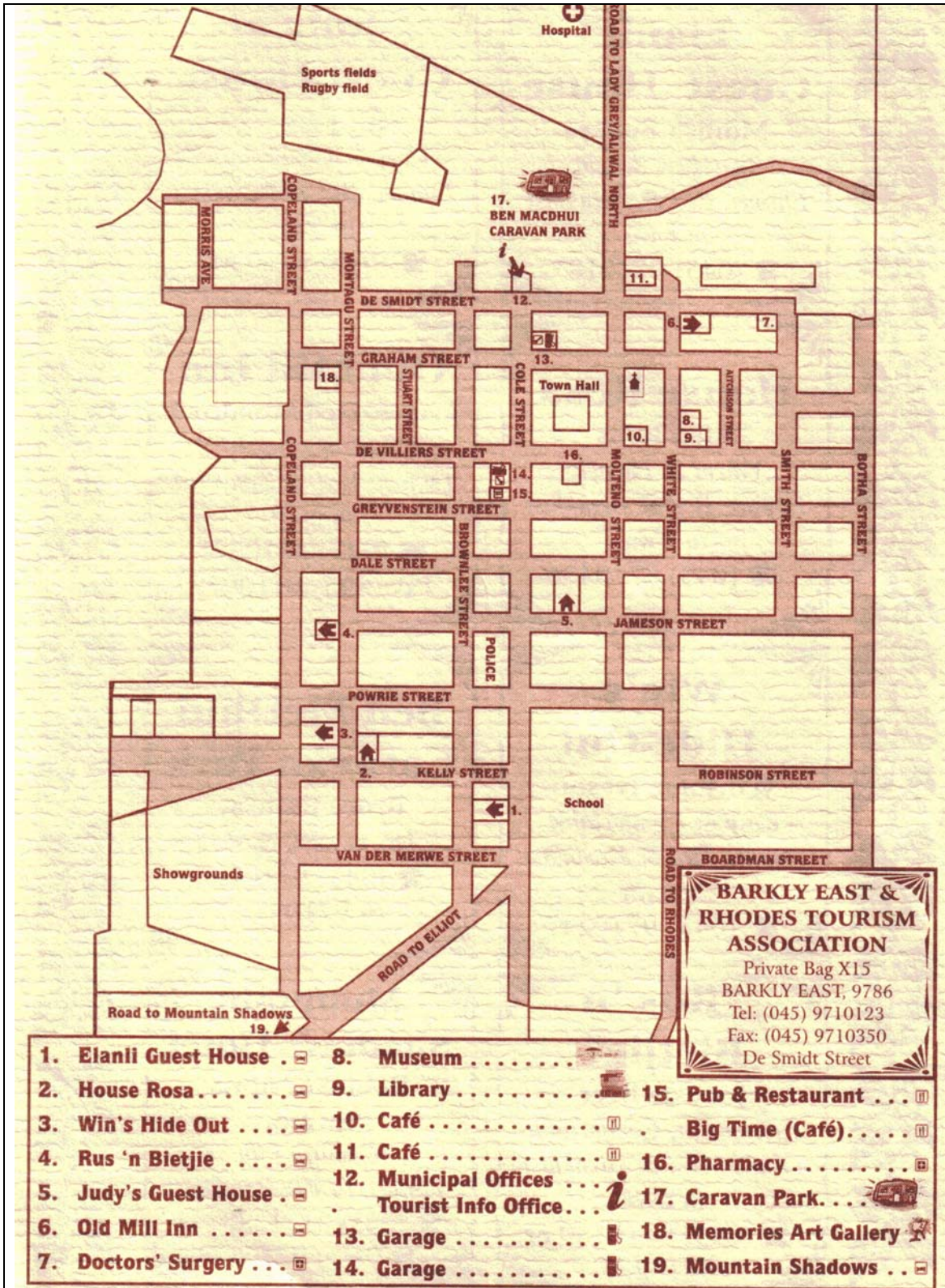


Figure 1.2 Town map distributed by the Barkly East Tourism Association

extremely cold winters during which it usually snows. Yet despite its freezing winters Barkly East farmers have been very successful at livestock farming, predominantly sheep and cattle (see Image 1.2). As a result, this district is known for its excellent wool production especially during the 1950s and 1960s when many of the sheep farmers made their fortunes during the ‘wool boom’⁵.



Image 1.1 Barkly East town is nestled against the Drakensberg Mountains

Today, due to limited government funding and the mediocre price of wool, many farmers have to supplement their livestock farming with crop production such as maize, cabbage and potatoes; there are even those who have started to test the viability of fruit production such as apples and raspberries.

⁵ Discussed later in this chapter.



Image 1.2 Sheep farming is very successful in the area.

Community Profile⁶

According to the 2001 National Census, the Senqu LM has an approximate population of 36563 people. The 1996 National Census estimates the population of Barkly East as 11059⁷. Figure 1.3 shows that of the Senqu residents, 97% is Black African, 1% is Coloured and 2% is White. Indian people do not feature in this statistic as there are not enough Indian people resident in this area to contribute significantly to a percentage within this statistic⁸. These statistics

⁶ All of the statistical data is taken from the South African Census 2001 except if otherwise indicated.

⁷ Here I use the 1996 Census instead of the 2001 Census for the population figures in Barkly East. The reason for this is that between 1996 and 2001 Local and District municipalities were re-demarcated. This means that figures after 1996 for Barkly East alone do not exist.

⁸ As far as I know, during the period of my research there were no Indian people resident in the town and district of Barkly East.

gain added significance once viewed in relation to who owns the majority of land in the area. In Barkly East the majority of land, i.e. farms and stands with houses in town, is owned by White residents. The majority of people resident in Barkly East are Black African and yet they are mostly housed in the local township. The fact that the minority of people own the majority of land is of great significance in the context of the land struggle in South Africa. This kind of unequal distribution of land is one of the key reasons why the government has implemented their land redistribution and restitution programme. I discuss the significance of this disproportionate ownership of land in more detail in Chapter Four.

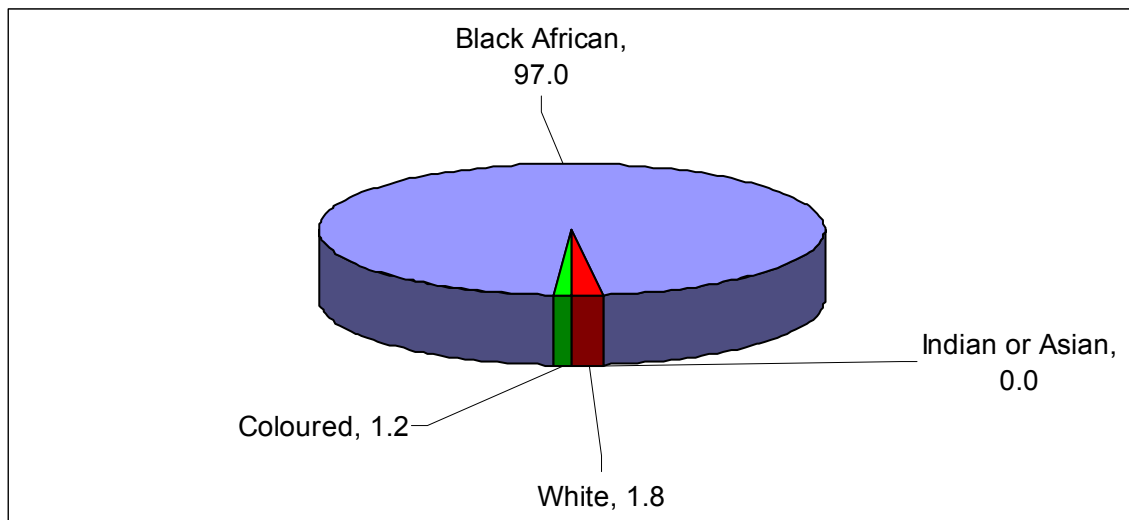


Figure 1.3 Distribution of population according to race, Senqu LM. (Census 2001)

While racial categories are important barometers for social interaction here, within these racial groupings, cultural affiliation is also important. Let me illustrate. True to stereotype, in Barkly East there is the local Greek shop on the corner. Owned and managed by Costas⁹ and his family, it is one of the more prominent and successful shops in town. Costas is a well respected and accepted member of the white community; however in many ways he is still treated as 'different' by them. For example, his daughter recently got married

⁹ All names of respondents in this thesis have been changed in order to ensure anonymity for my respondents.

and the wedding is rumoured to have been “spectacular” by those lucky few who were invited. Weddings in this community are always an event ripe for gossip, however in this case it is not typical dress and flowers (although also a point of deliberation) that was discussed. Rather emphasis was placed on the physical features of the wedding party and the actual wedding ceremony. The bridegroom’s *“thick black hair and olive skin”* and the bride’s *“big brown eyes and petite figure”* were noticed. Also, how they do things *“different from us”* was mentioned often. This illustrates how ideas of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ ideology are manifested more subtly than for instance when it comes to race. Here cultural heritage also serves to differentiate between groups.

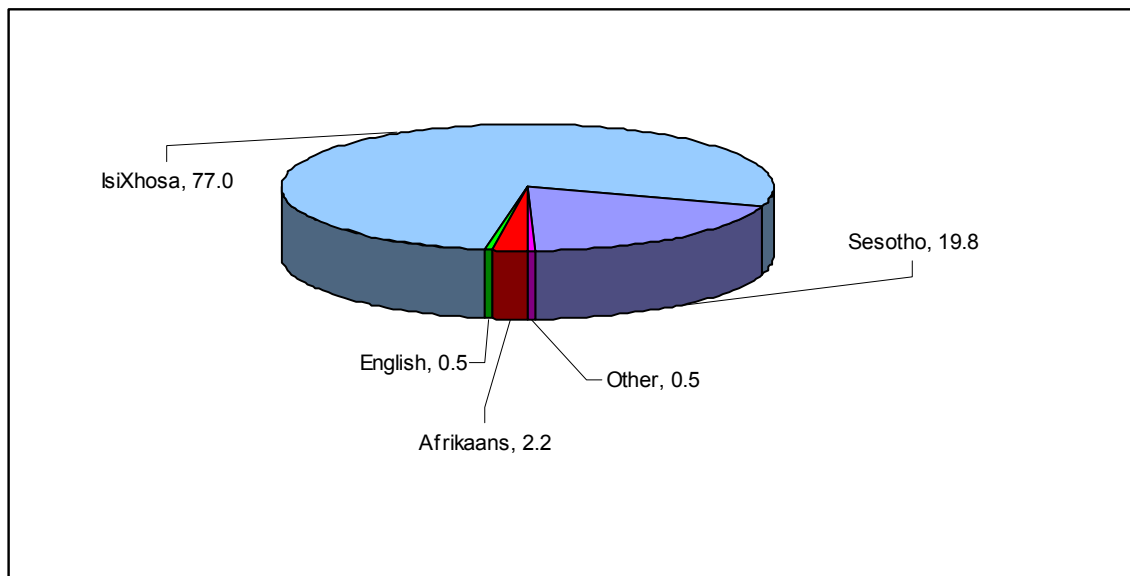


Figure 1.4 Percentage of language spoken across race groups, Senqu LM (Census 2001)

Language is another important denominator for division in the community. Figure 1.4 indicates that 77% of the population in the Senqu LM speaks IsiXhosa, followed by 19.8% Sesotho, 2.2% Afrikaans and 0.5% English. The high incidence of Sesotho is indicative of the large number of people from Basotho heritage who come to work and live in the area. My own research in Barkly East indicates that there is a surprisingly lower prevalence of xenophobia toward people who come from Lesotho, than what one would expect. In fact many of my

respondents commented on how people are united in poverty rather than divided by language and birthplace.

Language in Barkly East amongst Whites also serve to differentiate between groups within this racial category. For many of the older residents distinguishing between whether you are Afrikaans or English is important and resentment between the two groups surface often. The resentment that exists between these two groups has its origins in the Anglo Boer war. As much as this war was to gain independence for the Boers against the British, so also was it a battle for the survival for Afrikaans (Botha, 1989: 127-141). Today a great deal of the antagonism between Afrikaans and English (or Boer and Briton) is no longer based on actual events; rather it is rooted in the differentiation of language. While not always visible, the antagonism between the two parties does appear when something happens to pit the two groups against one another. For example, Jenny and Joseph Monroe still believe that the controversy around their son getting hurt when at school in Barkly East was as a result of Afrikaans/English antagonism, they eventually sent him to school in Queenstown with other English children.

When examining the population distribution across different ages and the four population groups, the two most prominent statistics that stand out is that of the Whites and Black Africans. Figure 1.5 indicates that white residents between the ages of 18-19 to about 25 are less likely to be resident in Senqu LM than their older counterparts. I also noticed this trend in Barkly East where there is a growing number of young Whites who either go to university after school, leave the district to go to the city (big centres such as Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town), or even leave the country all together (mostly on working holidays in the UK). This is in contrast to black youth in the area. Here Figure 1.5 shows an increased number of young Blacks aged 10-14 to about 25 years of age.

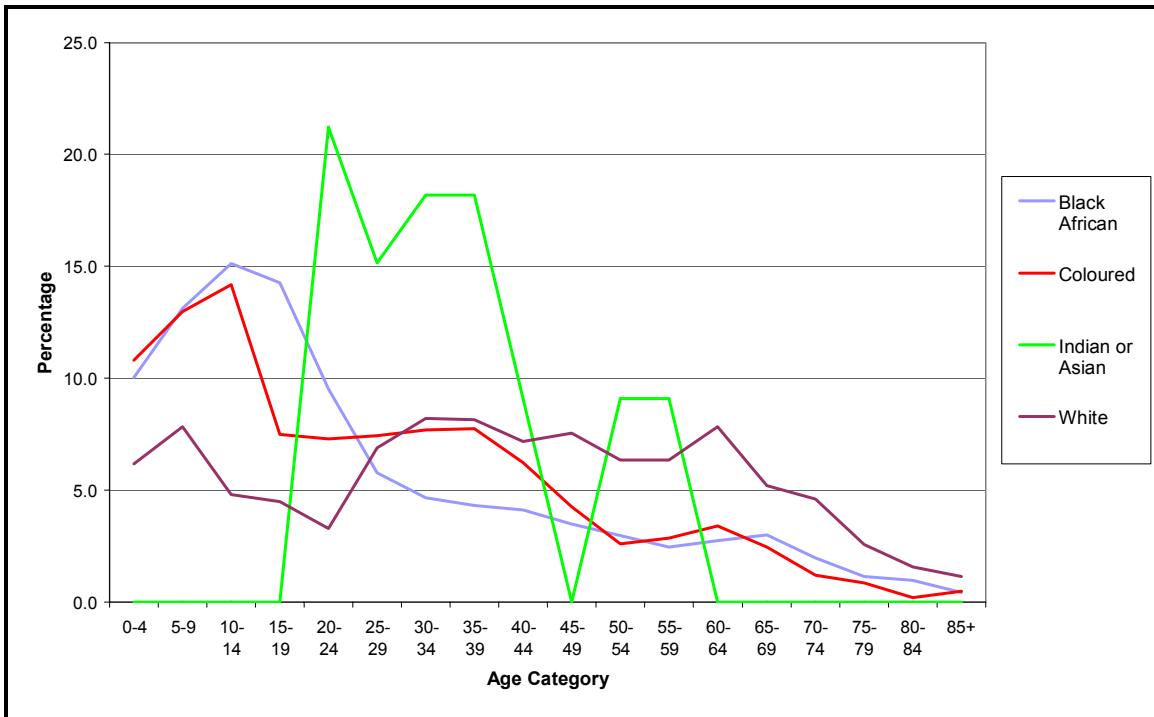


Figure 1.5 Population distribution according to age and population group, Senqu LM. (Census 2001)

In Barkly East many black youths leave school early to find employment either on the farms or in town. Most do not have the resources of their white counterparts to take them much further. Both of these statistics is a cause for concern for the Barkly East residents. On the one hand young Whites are not returning to the land – a sentiment strongly reiterated by the older residents as one of the main obstacles to keep the heritage alive. On the other hand, a lower level of education for young Blacks means a greater chance that they will end up poor or without employment.

Education and Economic Activity

There is a stark disparity between the levels of education among the different racial groups in the Senqu LM. Table 1.1 illustrates this clearly with 46 % of the white population having reached Standard 10 or Grade 12 and 33% reaching higher than that. In comparison only 8% of the black population has achieved education up to Standard 10 or Grade 12. In fact 27 % of this group has had no schooling, 27% some primary school education and 27% some secondary

education. The same trend follows for the coloured population in the Senqu LM. The poor level of education that both black and coloured residents of the Senqu LM have is a part of the legacy left by Apartheid in South Africa¹⁰.

	Black African %	Coloured %	Indian or Asian %	White %
No schooling	27	32	0	1
Some primary	27	19	0	1
Complete primary	7	12	0	1
Some secondary	27	25	17	19
Std 10/Grade 12	8	8	27	46
Higher	4	4	57	33

Table 1.1. Level of education across population groups, Senqu LM. (Census 2001).

Today the South African government strives toward equal access to education for all its residents. While a worthwhile sentiment the application of the policy in reality is more challenging. Senqu LM and Barkly East is an example of the government’s struggle to operationalise their plans. In Barkly East there is one school in town. It is a combined primary and secondary school taught in English and Afrikaans. There are two primary schools and one secondary school in the township. There are also numerous farm schools in the district. While these schools share the same syllabus they do not share access to facilities and well trained teachers. Predictably the formerly ‘white school’ located in town is the best equipped. The schools in the township are overcrowded and many of the buildings are dilapidated (see Image 1.3).

¹⁰ The Bantu Education Act was implemented in 1953. This Act laid the foundation for a separate, yet inferior education system for African students. This was based on the notion that African students only needed education “in accordance with their opportunities in life” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998:6).



Image 1.3 Sezamalwazi Primary School in the township.

As a result of this unequal availability of resources many of the “new” black elite, especially those who live in town are able to send their children to school in town (see Image 1.4). Now increasingly black children whose parents can afford the school fees can register at the school in town. At the same time however, this has motivated many white residents to remove their children from the school and send them to schools in Aliwal North, Queenstown and Bloemfontein, adding to the already dwindling numbers of students in the school. Currently there are very few white children who continue at the school after Grade 7 and many of these residents see this as a sign of poor education and the government’s inability to keep standards high. The local school in town has suffered a great deal since increasing numbers of white residents are now sending their children to boarding school.

While there has been a change in the access that at least a few of the young black children have, the disadvantage their parents and grandparents have is still felt keenly. Their parent’s disadvantage is also shown in their job description, level of employment and remuneration. The 2001 National Census indicates that



Image 1.4 A Variety of children can currently attend school at the Barkly East School that is situated in the town itself.

42% of black residents (aged between 15 and 65) in the Senqu LM earn between R100 and R400 per month. In 2003, effective 1 March 2006, the National Government stipulated a minimum wage of between R650 and R800 for farm labourers in the agricultural sector in South Africa¹¹. Not all farmers in Barkly East district keep to these criteria and many still pay their labourers in kind¹² rather than in cash. The 2001 Census indicates that Senqu LC has a 59% unemployment rate which has caused an escalation in petty crime and burglaries (SAPS, Barkly East 1994/1995 – 2003/2004).

¹¹ Sectoral Determination 13 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997.

¹² Before the minimum wage for agricultural labourers was set in place nationally, farmers would often pay their labourers limited cash and the rest in kind. This would include meat during slaughtering season, fresh milk, candles, mieliemeel and the like (Luck, 2003; and own observation).

Many residents feel that Barkly East has been in a steady economic decline since the advent of the wool boom and more particularly the tarring of the road that leads in and out of Barkly East during the late 1940s and early 1950s (see Image 1.5). For example:

“When I was a young boy there was no such thing as quickly driving to Aliwal North for the day to do some shopping . . . no the tar road out hadn’t been built and as a gravel road, it was terrible to drive on. I remember it used to be a thing when the train still came to Barkly East. There were no trucks the train brought everything to the town. You could buy everything you needed in the town. My dad would order some stuff by train and we would go in the morning to the little train station – you know the little one you can see from the road, that was the station – and wait for the train to come in. “Today the train does not come to Barkly anymore – you know it used to be a big thing where the train had to go around the corner there at that place – and it used to have to reverse just to make the corner – that made us quite famous you know! Now we have to rely on trucks but the trucks you see do not want to come all the way here! The roads are bad and it is far – why come to Barkly if everyone can go to Aliwal or Bloem or even Queen’s Town to buy their stuff – I think they think it is just not worth it!” Jack White, farmer.

When speaking to the older residents it is clear that on the one hand the gravel road was a terrible inconvenience to the residents as it hindered their free movement from the area to other areas especially during winter when the snow melted and you could not drive on the road for days on end. Yet at the same time they see it as something that preserved their way of life. *“You certainly could not easily get out but strangers could not easily come in either!”*

Residents such as Jack White and his wife Zoë, who have lived in Barkly East all their lives, argue that the gravel road was part of their childhood experience of the Barkly East that is forgotten today. *“The kids have it easy today – a few hours and you are in Bloemfontein”*. Before they tarred the road people ventured outside the borders of Barkly East usually only at the end and start of the school term, that is to say if they were wealthy enough to send their children to the Queenstown or Bloemfontein schools. Usually this trip spanned more than a week at least.

“It was an outing – you knew you were going out, it was not an everyday thing! And of course if it rained or snowed you can forget it, that road was so slippery. We used to hope that it rained but more snowed so that we wouldn’t need to go to school!” Zoë White, farmer’s wife.

The tarring of the road was initially seen an important step toward not only easier access to and from the town but a modern lifestyle for the residents as well. The consensus among local business owners however are that it in actuality contributed greatly to the economic decline of the town.

“Sure the road was terrible before it was tarred but I mean that, I mean then everyone shopped in town and supported the local business. Now they go at least once a week if not two to Aliwal or to Bloem [Bloemfontein] even – you know for their kids and school and stuff. They buy everything they need food, clothes, everything. They don’t need the town and we are suffering for it! We cannot compete in price and selection so the town is actually dying I tell you” Jack White, farmer.



Image 1.5 The tar road that leads to Bloemfontein

In those early days only the really wealthy could afford to send their children away to boarding school. Today there are people from Barkly East that go to Bloemfontein almost everyday and many of the residents have formed lift clubs that makes the financial burden less. Children who go to school in Bloemfontein and Queenstown come home every weekend. As a result of this growing educational exodus parents buy what they need elsewhere and many of the smaller (more expensive) shops in Barkly East are suffering. Understandably, not only is it more convenient to buy from a shop that has variety and stock but it also makes better financial sense for families.

The Ukhahlamba DM has identified more obstacles that have contributed to the decline of smaller local municipalities such as Senqu of which Barkly East is a part. These obstacles are high unemployment; illiteracy and poverty; limited diversity in the economy; unequal ownership of resources; small revenue base; limited internal investment in district; limited or non-existent marketing of district; outward migration of the economically active; crime and violence; and limited access to economic information, such as the tender processes, for rural and peri-rural communities. (Ukhahlamba District Municipality, 2004: 31).

Origins

In this section I briefly trace some important events and eras in the history of Barkly East that have had an impact on the residents of the town and farming district.

White Settlement

The first official proof¹³ of ownership of land in the Barkly East district is during the late 1860's. In 1867 the first two farms in the district were allocated, the first to a Joseph Millard Orpen which he called *Avoca*, and another to John William Sephton, called *Glengyle*. Both of these men were descendants of the 1820

¹³ Here I mean historical documents such as title deeds

British settlers to South Africa and this British heritage is revealed quite clearly in the names given to these farms. *Avoca* and *Glengyle* are still farmed by the descendants of Joseph Orpen and John Sephton respectively¹⁴ today.

While official proof of ownership of land was only found in 1867, these farmers were definitely not the first people to inhabit the district of Barkly East. Historical accounts¹⁵ written about the area indicates that this area was called a “no-man’s land” in the early 1800’s. These accounts however generally tend to disregard the presence of people not from white colonial heritage, even though it is clearly evident that the proof of their presence does exist, for example, the various rock art and war memorial sites¹⁶ in the district.

*Anglo-Boer War*¹⁷

Toward the end of the 19th century, after the last of the frontier wars were fought, the general sentiment in South Africa was that of colonial expansion. Sir George Cathcart and Sir John Cradock, of the British Empire expressed the view that the settling of numerous European farmers on land in return for military services would be an ideal way to start this process (Giliomee, 2003: 58-87) Land was also made available to those without a military record, under the Perpetual Quitrent system. According to this system land of no more than 3000 morgen could be allocated to a person upon him paying a yearly quitrent stipulated by the

¹⁴ While both of these farms are still in existence they consist, like many of the other farms in the district, no longer of exactly the same amount of land. Throughout the years some of the land was sold, yet in most cases the bulk of the land remained. In some instances such as the farm *Avoca*, the land was divided into two farms. Originally the two pieces of land was named *Avoca* (where the original farm-house was situated), and *Orpendale* (aptly named after the original owner Joseph Millard Orpen), though later the name was changed to *Millard*.

¹⁵ Chapter Three gives a more detailed discussion of the kinds of documents mentioned here.

¹⁶ The rock art and war memorial sites and thus non-colonial heritage have only been recognised and even embraced by the communities in this district in the last few years. This has happened due to the severe financial difficulties small towns and communities in South Africa have experienced, and many towns like Barkly East have turned to tourism to boost their economy.

¹⁷ Otherwise known as the South African War or the Second Boer War, 1899-1902.

government, after which ownership for himself and his descendants could be claimed.

It is during this period that the town of Barkly East was established in 1873, and was named after Sir Henry Barkly, who was the Governor and High Commissioner to the Cape from 1870 – 1877. Legislation on land allocation and ownership, and labour practises in the British colonial states of the Cape and Natal, and the Boer settler states of the Transvaal and Orange Free State made it easier for farming districts and small towns such as Barkly East to flourish and prosper. During the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 – 1902 the town and district of Barkly East saw many changes not the least the fact that it was used by both sides as a military centre.¹⁸ In 1902 Britain claims victory and opens up the way for the consolidation of the different states of South Africa under centralised white control (Harsch, 1986: 10). Finally in 1910 this unification came to fruition, as South Africa became a Union.

Town Development

During the Colonial expansion the little town of Barkly East and its surrounding farming districts were booming. With the support from the government and the extremely suitable farming conditions, Barkly East became one of the foremost sheep farming and wool producing districts in the country. Already by 1910 the district of Barkly East boasted with the highest number of sheep in the Union (Barkly East Reporter, 1973: 26). This early success with sheep farming played a huge role in the development of the economy of the town and also the fall and depression of the economy today.

¹⁸ The following editorial appeared in the Barkly East Reporter during December 1901, “To have spoken of our little town a few years ago as a military centre would have been the height of absurdity. A war has now been raging between Briton and Boer for over two years and during the whole of that time Barkly has been used as a military centre by one side or the other.” The divided loyalties of the residents during the Anglo-Boer war continued well into the next century. For further discussion on this see Nortje, (1999).

Apart from the district's success with farming, the town's development also prospered. During the period of the late eighties and nineteen thirties various new additions to the town were made. In 1893 the *Loch Bridge* was built over the *Kraai River* making accessibility to- and communication with the town much easier; in 1906 the official school building was erected, as well as the local general dealer *Mukheibir Brothers*; 1930 saw the opening of the railway in Barkly East, it is no longer in use however; and in 1932 *Buys en Seuns* (sons) a ladies' and mens' outfitters was established, it was sold in August 2001 and is no longer in existence. Many residents view the demise of *Buys en Seuns* as a sign of the times and the ultimate and subsequent demise of the town. The town and district of Barkly East was not greatly affected by South Africa's entry into World War II in 1939. Apart from forty-two men who enlisted, and general shortage of consumables etc. the life in the little town continued as usual.

By the middle of the seventies the municipality of Barkly East was already advertising itself by highlighting certain qualities of the town, foremost on the list featured sufficient cheap labour and cheap land (Barkly East Reporter, 1973: 32). This fits the historical, political and economic precedence already set by the South African government. Here exemplified through its subsidy for farmers; its legislation prohibiting the sale of land to non-whites; and the influx of cheap labour, be it through the migrant labour system or created by the political subjugation of black people at the time.

The Wool Boom

The Barkly East sheep farmers have reaped the success of the wool industry through out both World War I and World War II as part of the post-war wool price booms. This continued right into the nineteen seventies and early eighties as a third wool price boom started as part of the oil boom (Mallett, 1992: 11). During these wool price booms, the district of Barkly East was considered to be a "*million-rand*" region because of its high quality wool and suitable conditions for sheep farming. Ironically though, the extended wealth of these farmers

contributed largely to the demise of the town. As more and more people were able to send their children away to better and more prestigious schools, the economy of the town dwindled. The local school registered less and less students, and many of the smaller stores could not maintain a profit for an extended period of time.

Democracy

The unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 sparked various landmark changes in South Africa. The town and district of Barkly East, though generally affected by the political changes happening in the country, was not directly affected. Apart from general concern over the wellbeing of the country and typical fear and angst over the future, tangible changes in Barkly East that have taken place due to the shift in South Africa's political dispensation can only be seen after the general elections in 1994. These changes were slow to happen, however inevitable in coming.

The first of these changes which has been a major bone of contention for the residents of Barkly East is the fact that there is no longer a white mayor. In 1994 after the general elections, the ANC won by a majority not only comprehensively in South Africa, but also in most small towns such as Barkly East. South Africans from all races could vote in the 1994 elections, resulting in vast numbers of black people living in townships and shantytowns at the border of these towns, now having a voice, especially in who their political representatives are. In Barkly East, this culminated in the town's first black mayor.

Secondly, after 1994 small towns such as Barkly East did not have the support and financial assistance the previous government afforded, now funding no longer came from the state but from local government. Suddenly small towns across the country found that their economy was lacking and had take steps to

deal with this growing problem¹⁹. Barkly East has been no different. In the last few years since 1994, Barkly East has looked toward its natural assets to attract people to the town and thus boost their economy. In response different kinds of tourist attractions have cropped up, as Barkly East, now part of the *Maloti Route*²⁰, boasts private nature reserves, guest farms, rock art routes, dinosaur footprint trails and mountain safaris.

Lastly, one of the last vestiges of racial segregation no longer exists in Barkly East. The town no longer consists of only white residents and presently both white and black residents can live next to each other. Yet while these racial boundaries of where people live have been officially done away with, the residents of Barkly East still demarcate themselves into black and white “spots”. On the farms however, no such change has happened as almost all the farms are still under white ownership. The fact that white ownership of these farms continue, is in itself problematic and further discussion on this issue follows in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis consists of seven chapters including the conclusion. Chapter One has been an introduction to the main concepts and questions this thesis will address. Chapter Two follows with a discussion of the relevant literature, methodology and methods. Chapter Three discusses the creation of history in Barkly East. This discussion is pivotal for the understanding of how this community places themselves in history and sets a base on which the rest of the thesis is built. Following Chapter Three’s examination of the dual nature of the Barkly East community, Chapter Four emphasises this division along the lines of space and place, especially the unequal distribution of land according to race.

¹⁹ For small towns to turn to tourism as an alternative way of boosting their economy is an international phenomenon.

²⁰ The *Maloti Route* is quoted as being “an exciting and innovative initiative” (The Maloti Tourism Association, 2001: 1) that spans the borders between South Africa and Lesotho. This route covers areas in Lesotho, the Eastern Cape and the Eastern Free State.

Chapter Five looks at yet another dimension of the way in which the residents of Barkly East create narratives around belonging. Here gender signifies hierarchical relationships to the land that bleeds into the experience and interpretations of everyday life, especially for women. Narratives around belonging also come into existence through our perceptions of the sacred nature of place as well as memory. Chapter Six examines the role memory plays in our creation of places and spaces of meaning. In Chapter Seven I look at the way overtures of change are received by farmers in Barkly East and how this links to their and the town's future. Lastly, Chapter Eight brings to a close the issues debated in this thesis and comes to some conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to systematically investigate the available literature applicable to this study I decided to initially work within a broad perspective and thereafter narrow my enquiry down in order to concentrate on a more focussed view. This literature review therefore tries to make a logical progression from the broad issues such as land and land dispossession in South Africa in general to more focus related areas of research such as, farm workers and owners, women and land, space and place and lastly, memory and landscape.

South Africa and Land

Historical Context

Land has been a major point of contention throughout the history of South Africa. For that reason, I trace some of the seminal works that illustrate this point. Mostert's (1992) *Frontiers* which details the many frontier wars in the Eastern Cape between the major role players of the time (1400s-1800s), the Xhosa, Briton and Boer, is one such example. During this period the occupation of land seemingly meant a way of life much simpler from what was to come. Then it meant self determination, self preservation, power and ability to defend one's enemies. Giliomee's (2003) *Afrikaners* tells a similar story of a fight for survival through the attainment of land, in this case for the Afrikaner volk (1800s to present). Here Giliomee (2003) establishes that land for the Afrikaners also meant the preservation of language, culture and religion, a sentiment echoed by authors such as Hofmeyer (1987) and O'Meara (1983). Both of these epics, while by no means exhaustive in argument and detail do present a basic broad understanding of its timeframe, the place, and the role players that are of particular importance to my own study, namely, Xhosa, Afrikaner and British.

Another dimension of significance to this study which I would like to introduce is that of the Basotho. This is important as many of the black residents from the Barkly East community share a heritage with the Basotho of Thaba Nchu. In terms of a broad understanding of the time, space and land continuum at work here, Colin Murray's (1992) brilliant *Black Mountain* satisfies one last component of the broader puzzle. Murray (1992) chronicles the changing fate of the people of Thaba Nchu (a district in the Orange Free State) from the 1880s to the 1980s. Once more the story of the Basotho in this district exposes the importance of land as Thaba Nchu has been contested ground for more than 150 years. Thaba Nchu has changed ownership numerous times, from the Barolong, missionaries, white farmers under the Orange Free State, the British settlers under the Orange River Colony, the Bophuthatswana government and lastly the South African government (in its various guises).

Acts & White Papers

Integral to this study are the government policies regarding the legal right of people to work and own land. Act No. 27 of 1913, better known as the 1913 Land Act, and the 1950 Group Areas Act are certainly two of the most important pieces of government legislation that have to be examined for this study due to their historical significance in South Africa. Government legislation after 1994, such as Act 22 of 1994 (Restitution of Land Rights Act 1994) and its subsequent amendment Act in 1997 (Land Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act 1997), is also of importance since South African history has shown how deep an impact government policy and its implementation thereof can have. In addition, of importance is the White Paper on Land Policy Issues 1997, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, No. 3 of 1996, and the Extension of Security Tenure Act, No. 62 of 1997.

Land Dispossession and Rights

The pre-eminence of land as both a political and cultural tool reaches its crescendo with the Apartheid government's many attempts and successes at depriving black South Africans from access to land. Understandably, therefore, there has been extensive writing on land dispossession. Firstly, the South African government itself publishes prolifically on the issue of land, land rights and dispossession. The South African government publishes these documents through the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the National Land Committee (NLC). The publications from these government institutions are quite helpful in the construction of the historical context within which this study is situated on a very broad level. For example: DLA (various publications of *Land Info*²¹) TRC (1998); NLC (2000); DA (2001).

These documents raise issues with regard to the historic landlessness of the majority of the population in South Africa, and put forward several reasons why land in places such as Barkly East has remained under white ownership. Yet despite the growing number of these publications they have to be seen in light of their benefactor. Clearly a document published by the government will show a relatively one-sided account of the situation and a more nuanced explanation of the issues at hand is needed. This leads us to a second set of publications, not government related or issued, but that still focuses on the issues of land, dispossession, rights and reform.

Putting a Plough to the Ground edited by Beinhart, Delius & Trapido (1986) presents a comprehensive historical perspective on the changing rural society and agrarian history of South Africa from 1850 - 1930, that is important for any study on land in South Africa today. It provides a detailed history of the relationship between people and land across South Africa, thus creating a historical framework in which my study on Barkly East fits.

²¹ A magazine on land issues published by the Department of Land Affairs.

Further documentation of land dispossession and population displacement in South Africa from the 1930's onwards, can be found in the work of Platzky & Walker (1985) who explore in particular forced removals in South Africa, and Harsch (1986) who, in turn, tackles the important issues surrounding the fight by previously disadvantaged groups, for land to farm. Claassens (2000) also joins the debate on land ownership and government policy, with her discussion on the implications of the repeal of previous Land Acts for South Africa. This work provides insights into what was expected of these reforms in relation to what we know has happened, and how the government has dealt with the effect of Land Act reforms, such as the backlog of land claims. Adding to the already copious amount of literature on this topic, the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) has provided a three part report series that tries to assess the progress, problems and perspectives within the land sector. These reports cover three periods, i) 1994- 2000 (Turner & Ibsen, 2000); ii) 2000-2002 (Turner, 2002); and iii) 2002 – 2004 (Hall, 2004).

Another recent publication on land rights struggles is that of Harley & Fotheringham (1999) who documents 20 years of land rights struggles (1979-1999) by AFRA (Association for Rural Advancement). This very 'hands-on' documentation is especially helpful in the contextualisation of the work and effort organisations have put into the land struggle. Authors such De Wet (1997); Van Zyl (2000); Lahiff (2001); Roth (2002) and Roodt (2003) also work within this broader topic of land reform and restitution however, they are more critical of the government's actual success and ask whether the government is meeting the challenge of land reform in this country. Work done in this area of study is significant in relation to Barkly East, as it demonstrates the government's inability to communicate the new rights and privileges of farm workers living in secluded rural areas, as implemented by the Land Act reforms.

Writing on land issues in the Eastern Cape, (where my own research is situated) has also not escaped the attention of scholars, for example De Wet (1999) who traces the process of collective ownership farms in the Eastern Cape, and Cocks & Kingwill (1998) on land and agrarian reform in the former Ciskei region. Both of these, while anthropological in nature, take an applied stance in their approach. This approach, while informative regarding the process of the transference of land from white to black hands, is not suitable to my own more empirically and ethnographically orientated research. In comparison, Luck (2003) uses an ethnographic approach to discuss game farming in the Eastern Cape. Some of the issues here are more applicable to my own research interests, for example questions around belonging and heritage in relation to land, as well as sacred sites and landscape.

More broadly, South Africa shares the issue of historical land dispossession with other countries around the world. As in the case of South Africa the same questions arise regarding the ability of the government to meet the needs of the formerly dispossessed (Toulmin & Pepper, 2000; and Toulmin & Quan, 2000). We find examples of land dispossession in other countries such as Australia (Hiatt, 1990; and Myers, 1990), Canada (Asch, 1990; and Feit, 1990) and greater sub-Saharan Africa (Rutherford, 2004; Delville, 2000; Palmer, 2000; Platteau, 2000; and Gordon, 1990).

While the above mentioned texts have been particularly useful, their application can only be taken so far. What many of these authors focus on is the “where, when, how, and to whom”. Also, all duly note the fact that the farm evictions or disproportionate access to land has caused uncountable hardship and poverty. However, what is mainly lacking is an anthropological understanding of the situation and its implications on the lives of the people, not merely how they cope with not having food to eat because they do not have access to land, but how it affects who they are. Not having land does not only affect your purse but also how you see yourself and how you think others see you. It becomes intertwined

with issues of identity, self worth, belonging and meaning. I believe more individual stories have to be told in order to tell the story not only of what happened but also of the consequence and meaning it has in the life of the individual.

Farm Workers and Farmers

Literature for this section of the research acquires most significance in other ethnographic studies, in particular on other farm workers in South Africa. Work by Mayson (1990) and Waldman (1993) both examining farm workers' experiences on farms in the Western Cape, and Luck (2003) who examines game farming in the Eastern Cape are such ethnographies. Contrasting existing ethnographies to my own research provides a useful dimension, as such comparative analysis can provide me additional insight into issues surrounding the experiences of farm labourers and the relationships between them and those with whom they live in other regions in South Africa.

Other literature (academic, government and NGO publications) relevant to the position of farm workers in South Africa can be found in the work of Cocks and Kingwill (1998); Davies (1990); Keegan (1988); Masia (1988); and Ainslie (1977). More specifically, research on farm workers mostly focuses on topics such as land tenure and reform (Lahiff, 2005; Greenberg, 2000; Mushi, 1999; and Munnik, 1998); alternative employment strategies (Hadju, 2005; Kepe, 2005; McAllister, 2005); housing and work conditions (Msimanga, 2000; and Trac, 1988); and the absence of trade union organisation (Dladla, 2000; and Malope, 1998).

There is a clear paucity of ethnographic literature on farmers in South Africa, in particular white farmers²² in the country. *People of the Valley* by Brian M. du Toit (1974) is one of few that I have found that deals with a rural farming community

²² Here one can also include white people who live in the small towns in South Africa.

in South Africa. This ethnography is an interesting story of life in an isolated Afrikaner community in Gamkaskloof in the Western Cape. Du Toit's amusing retelling of the resident's reaction to outsiders who called their community "The Hell" (because it was viewed as backward and primitive) is a good example of outsider /insider politics in small communities such as theirs and Barkly East. Vincent Crapanzano's (1985), *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa*, based on ethnographic research he conducted on the white Afrikaans and English speaking residents of a village north of Cape Town, also stands out. Crapanzano's ethnography is however not solely focussed on farmers and looks rather at small town South Africa. In contrast political scientists and historians have focussed on Afrikaners frequently. Afrikaners have been a point of study, especially their construction of a nationalist identity in relation to the rise and fall of Apartheid (Giliomee, 2003 & 2005; Wicomb, 1998; Hofmeyer, 1987; and, Grobbelaar, 1988).

White farmers have received extensive media attention mostly on the subject of farm attacks and farm murders (Steenkamp, 2006; Agri South Africa, 2001), their concerns about land reform and restitution (Du Plessis, 2001; Van Vuuren, 1998 & 1997; Van Jaarsveld, 1995; Claassen, 1995; and Du Toit, 1994), as well as poor working conditions for the labourers on their farms (Agri South Africa, 2001, and Harrison, 1996).

Both groups, farmers and farm labourers in Barkly East, can boast a diasporic legacy. In particular, on the side of the English speaking farmers whose ancestors came from the United Kingdom²³ and those labourers whose ancestors came from Lesotho. A Great deal of literature can be found on diaspora, for example, diaspora can be typified into some categories such as victim, labourer or imperialist (to name a few) (Cohen, 1997). Others such as Koser (2003) and Hall (1999) argue for a more complex expression of a diaporic identity that encapsulates issues such as hybridity, heterogeneity and diversity.

²³ Afrikaans speaking settlers came from the Cape Colony.

Women and Land

As owners of land, women are still in the minority. There are an increasing number of writers focussing on this issue. Visible signs of the incorporation of women's rights into government policy are evident, yet work done by Meer (1997) and Walker (1998) shows that this has not been translated into reality for many rural women. *Women, Land and Authority* edited by Meer (1997) show how women are generally disadvantaged compared to men, they have less access to resources, little authority and have different priorities in the development process than men do. Due to the fact that the majority of land in Barkly East is owned by men, most women are dependent on men for financial security. Meer (1997) argues that this dependency of women on men for security is a real and increasing problem; as a result, more than just a 'quick fix' approach is needed from government. In the same way, Walker (1998) assesses the policy frameworks, challenges and constraints to the effective implementation of the commitment to gender equity within the land reform program.

The Commission on Gender Equality (2000) has published an extensive document on gender issues that need to be addressed at government level. This document gives special attention to the legal status, position in the family and access to land of rural women, which is of central concern to my study in Barkly East. In addition, Cross & Hornby (2002) has also published a comprehensive research report for the Promoting Women's Access to Land Programme. This report looks specifically at the opportunities and obstacles women still face in their struggle for access to land in South Africa.

Additional work done on issues regarding gender policy can be found in Cross (1999); Govender- Van Wyk (1999); Hargreaves (1999); Ngubane (1999); Sunde & Gernholz (1999); and Hassim (1996). Other topics are: gender, land tenure and the environment (Mapetla, 1999; and Mjoli-Mncube, 1999); women, land and housing (Lloyd, 1992) and rural women's movements toward land rights (Telela,

1994). All of these articles deal with gender issues particular to the plight of rural women and are integral to understanding the full scale of obstacles rural women face in their quest for land.

More internationally, I have found a number of articles on female farmers in particularly the United States. The articles make mention of many similar obstacles that face rural women in South Africa, however it is evident that the need for ownership of land is not as significant as it is here. Issues around what is considered women's work versus men's work on farms and the devaluation of women's work is analysed (Adams, 1993 & 1991), as well as ideas around femininity (Adams, 2004), gender equity (Goetz, 1997), and agricultural development (Ferguson, 1994). In similar fashion to my own research (Nortje, 1999 and Chapter Five of this thesis) on women and gardening, Volkman (1994) in Sulawesi, Indonesia, and Murrieta & WinklerPrins (2003) in the Lower Amazon, Brazil addresses the same issues of gender roles and economic constraints.

Space and Place

Since the 1990s there has been a new awareness around issues of space and place in anthropology (Low & Lawrence Zúñiga, 2003:1). This is not to say that anthropologists ignored the spatial dimensions in which they did their research before. This interest in the spatial however usually only extended to the description of the lay of the land, the physical characteristics of day-to-day life (Low & Lawrence Zúñiga, 2003:1), or the longitude and latitude of the ethnographic atlas (Hastrup & Olwig, 1997: 3). In contrast, anthropologists are now "rethinking and reconceptualising their understandings of culture in specialised ways" (Low & Lawrence Zúñiga, 2003:1).

The reason for the renewed interest in space and place in anthropology is that the world has changed to such an extent that it challenges anthropologists' thinking about the places and spaces we frequent. Marc Augé (1995) even goes

as far as talking about the “non-spaces” that we inhabit in a world of supermodernity. What has changed is that there is increasing movement of people between places and spaces especially migrants, refugees and indigenous people. Hastrup & Olwig (1997: 6) argue that up to and until the 1990s mobility of people was viewed as “special and temporary” in a world consisting of stability and social coherence. In other words space is hardly ever neutral and is more often than not practiced (de Certeau, 1987: 117) and contested. As a result we now think of space in relation to some of the following²⁴: embodied space, gendered space and place as belonging. Contested space and sacred space generally also fall under the banner of space and place. I am discussing them here under the theme of landscape.

Embodied Space

One of the more innovative ways in which to think of space since the 1990s is in terms of embodied space. Here we look at the role of the human body in the creation of space. The idea that space is embodied fits well with the phenomenological approach of anthropology’s participant observation (Casey, 1996). Casey (1996: 24) argues that bodies and places are interanimate, meaning they vitalise each other. So also Merleau-Ponty (1962) argued that our body is our general medium for having a world and as such, we can also argue that the body is the specific medium for experiencing a place. This means that bodies are needed to sustain a place. Embodiment however, is not necessarily about the body *per se*; rather it is about culture and the experience of it – the bodily understanding of being-in-the-world (Csordas, 2000; Lambek, 1999; Nettleton & Watson, 1998; Lock, 1993). Some themes that emerge here are personal space and identity (Hall, 2004) and also how space, personal identity and race shape understandings of the world around us. Ruth Frankenberg (1993) and Nora Räthzel (2000) for instance looks at how women experience the

²⁴ The categories I use here are by no means exhaustive and one can reorganize them in many different ways. The way in which I have divided issues of Space & Place in this literature review works in conjunction with my thinking on chapter layout for this thesis.

social geography of race and examines how this geography is perceived through social rather than natural processes and is sometimes even confronted in the face of fear. Research on language and embodied space is also prevalent (Duranti, 2003). Hill (1999) for example investigates how white public space is constructed through intense monitoring of speech.

Gendered Space

Feminists in the 1970s made a strong case against theories of biological determinism. Two prominent somewhat opposing streams of theorizing about the subordination of women emerged. Firstly Sherry Ortner (1974) and Michelle Rosaldo (1974) argued that gender is culturally constructed and not naturally pre-ordained. Here women's status is directly related to the functions of giving birth and raising children. It is also from this stream of thought that the domestic vs. public spheres, through which women and men respectively operate, become a way to breakdown and examine the relations between genders. In 1978 Eleanor Leacock and Karen Sacks (1980) criticised the thinking of both Ortner and Rosaldo, arguing for an explanation of women's subordination that is less ethnocentric and that can be applied more readily cross culturally. Leacock and Sacks reasoned that women's subordinate position in society is more complex than their capacity to have and raise children, and their confinement to the domestic role. Both Ortner and Rosaldo, and, Leacock and Sacks' arguments found resonance in research that followed. More particularly their research laid groundwork for seminal studies on spatial dynamics in relation to gender hierarchy (Bonvillian, 1995; Massey, 1994; Ardener, 1993; and, Lamphere, 1993) and gendered meanings of space (Blunt & Rose, 1994; Ramphale & Boonzaier, 1988; and, Moore, 1986).

Houses as gendered spaces have also attracted the notice of anthropologists. Bourdieu's (2003 [1973]) discussion on the Algerian Berber house sets the groundwork for this kind of analysis. When houses become gendered spaces, a room in a house, while occupying physical space, can also embody cultural and

gendered significance. My own research (Nortje, 1999; and this thesis) show how this kind of sentiment can be applied even broader in a rural context where the house and farmland (as a part of the larger farmstead) become gendered spaces with gendered hierarchy attached. This is in contrast to many European studies on home as gendered spaces (Booth, 1999; and James & Kalisperis, 1999) where we mostly see areas such as the kitchen become female and, by default, a domestic space as well.

Place as Belonging

Places are an important source of individual and communal identity, and expressions of deeply felt commitments to particular environments. The study of *place* has also broadened to include issues of belonging in relation to specific places. Relph's (1976) work for example, addresses the relationship between 'one's place', 'one's home' and the 'deeply felt commitment' people might experience through a relationship with their land, such as I have found in Barkly East. Lippard (1997) asks similar questions in her study of place, locality and belonging. For Lippard (1997) imagining yourself as a part of a place is as significant as being there; the historical and personal narratives written in a place or landscape becomes paramount in order to foster a sense of belonging. Within this understanding of place and belonging authors have also looked at how houses are more than the centre of domestic social organisation (Bridwell - Pheasant, 1999; Brettell, 1999; and, Sutton, 1999). Instead, the house becomes a locus of personal, familial and communal identity.

Landscape

Place as landscape in anthropological enquiry has gained in popularity among authors, especially since the mid 1990s (Steward & Strathern 2003; and Hirsch, 1995). Before then, landscape was not problematised in any great deal by anthropologists except as "framing convention" to enhance the ethnographic study (Hirsch, 1995: 1). In contrast anthropologists today dedicate a great deal of effort in the study of landscape as edited publications such as *Landscape*,

Memory and History (Stewart & Strathern, 2003); *Locality and Belonging* (Lovell, 1998); *The Anthropology of Landscape* (Hirsch & O'Hanlon, 1995); and, *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Bender, 1993) show.

One important contribution anthropology has made to the study of landscape is to cast light on the manner in which local people understand their landscape. Following this, research of sacred sites and sacred landscape has emerged. An influential publication on sacred sites is that by Carmicheal *et al* (1994) who argues that sacred sites are not just about describing or locating a piece of landscape, rather it has set conventions in relation to the conduct of people who live there (Carmicheal, 1994; and, Hubert & Reeves, 1993: 3). Sacred sites also usually involve specific philosophical attitudes and values about a non-rational world. Other works on sacred sites and landscapes also focus on the cultural and environmental politics of sacred landscapes (Schreiber, 2005; Arnold & Gold (eds.), 2001; and, Strang, 1997).

Landscape as contested space is another important facet to the current writing on landscape, place and space. One of the reasons this area of study has become more prominent is that as anthropologists it has become important "to try and understand how people in a turbulent world create a sense of place and belonging, loss or negation" (Bender, 2001: 1). With the study of contested landscapes there is an understanding that things are not always "in place". There is also much movement and tension that can be examined in the study of landscapes especially in a growing globalised and diasporic world. Saunders (2001) for example looks at landscapes of war (the Western Front in northern France and Belgium) in particular how memory of landscapes change through time, and as signs of war slowly disappear so do the recollection of the war. Humphrey (2001) on the other hand examines the idea of dual landscapes. In much the same way as my own research she examines how the Chinese and Mongols (in Inner Mongolia) live off the same landscape and yet view it quite differently. Another dimension to contested landscape comes from those who

have migrated or are in exile. Here narratives of longing and belonging inform constructions of place and locality (Butler, 2001; Dawson & Johnson, 2001; Preis, 1997; and, Sørensen, 1997).

Landscape and Memory

Memory as a social manifestation is paramount to this thesis in many facets, especially in relation to landscape. Therefore research on landscape and memory in anthropology overlaps quite effortlessly with research on contested- and sacred space. Examples of such an intersection can be seen in edited volumes such as *Landscape, Memory and History* (Stewart & Strathern (eds.), 2003) and *Trauma and Topography* (Field & Bunn (eds.), 2000). Other work on memory deal with notions of how identity is constructed through memory (Hendon, 2000); and, a contested past especially in relation to nation building (Eidson, 2001; Amadiume & An-na'im (eds.), 2000; and, Lucas, 1997).

I have come across a lot of literature on issues of memory and landscape in South Africa, especially in relation to the forced removals of communities during Apartheid (Coombes, 2003; Soudien, 2001; Field, 2001; and, Ralo, 2000). Here researchers have done extensive work on how memory is put to work in the construction and reconstruction of identity in a re-imagined South Africa. For example Nuttall and Coetzee's (2002) edited volume *Negotiating the Past*, in which various authors examine issues such as memory and narrative (including research on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), oral history and public memory.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is more than just the methods used by the ethnographer to get things done – it is much more than merely a way of looking. Methodology is a way of seeing (Wollcott, 1999: p65). Wollcott (1999: 70) argues “ethnographers do not engage in what has been referred to light heartedly as “immaculate

perception””; rather ethnographers have to look at ‘something’. This something is the choices we make from the inception of the topic, the questions we ask, the roles we are asked to play, to finally, the process of writing and the inherent choices integral to this process.

This methodology section will look at the ways in which I define and understand my position in the field as ethnographer and anthropologist. I will also examine some of the methodological tools I employed to accomplish this research.

Ethnography and Anthropology at Home

Hastrup (1992:117) argues that fieldwork, and thus by implication also ethnography is situated between autobiography and anthropology. “It connects an important personal experience with a general field of knowledge” (Hastrup, 1992:117). While not at first realizing it, it has become increasingly clear to me that my choice to go to Barkly East, and to study the particular topic I did, is a part of my personal autobiography. Like many other white, Afrikaans speaking South Africans I too have family staying on a farm somewhere in the rural annals of this country. This means that I did not come to the field as a blank piece of paper – I too ‘know’ about how precious the land is and that our²⁵ roots lie firmly in this land and the legacy it holds.

As a young child I remember sitting on the *stoep*²⁶ of the farmhouse with my family breathing the fresh air and marvelling at the quiet that seems to permeate through every fibre in your body and mind. I remember gossip sessions of people I did not even know, and especially the awe I felt at people living this idyllic life, far from the reality of Johannesburg. Today I know that this idyllic life is every bit as real and messy as anywhere else in South Africa, yet as a child it

²⁵ ‘Our’ here referring to Afrikaner roots, which historically is closely linked to the land. While I currently may or may not ascribe to the values and ideals inherent to Afrikanerdom is another matter, however at this stage in my life, a young child of parents who considered themselves to be Afrikaner, I also considered myself Afrikaner.

²⁶ This is an Afrikaans word for ‘veranda’.

was the picturesque landscapes and romance of it all that stayed with me. One cannot eliminate one's own consciousness from our activities in the field argues Hastrup (1992: 118), and the more time I spent in Barkly East, it becomes clearer to me that I rely heavily on those childhood experiences to guide me in this study.

My personal experiences of Barkly East as a child, and the impact these experiences have had on my thoughts today as I am taking notes, as I am talking to respondents and as I am writing is part and parcel of this research process. It would be a false representation of my research experience not to make explicit my own role. Reed-Danahay (1997: 3) argues that the ethnographer is a 'boundary-crosser' and the role can therefore be seen as a dual-identity. Hastrup in her 1998 anthropological study on Iceland illustrates this point nicely. She recounts the story of Kristín, a milkmaid on an Icelandic farm – her encounters with the cows she is supposed to milk and take care of, as well as the obstacles she has to face in the process. In this initial recounting of the story there is no indication of who Kristín is, but the milkmaid. It is only later (page five) that Hastrup reveals the subterfuge:

“As stated, Kristín is milkmaid on an Icelandic farm, but she is also an anthropologist doing fieldwork – me. At home I am Kirsten, but in Iceland I was translated to Kristín; it was not only my name that was translated but also my identity” (Hastrup, 1998: 5).

It is clear through Hastrup's example that the ethnographer has to negotiate different roles in the field. In Hastrup's case it is as milkmaid and anthropologist. In my own case it is as someone who already has peripheral knowledge. Having some knowledge of the community already; family living in the area as well as being a white Afrikaans speaking person in South Africa, I already share some similar experiences with my respondents. At the same time I am an anthropologist who comes from a university, which is historically seen as a liberal rather than conservative institution. In fact, it was interesting to measure the responses of various informants in the community to me, for example, someone

who knew my history i.e. that I have family staying in the area and have been visiting there for many years would assume that I am privy to all kinds of local knowledge, however someone who did not, usually asked me to tell them how people from the cities viewed people living on farms.

Both Fabian (1990) and Hastrup (1992) speak about the idea of *social drama* and performing in and through the field. Social drama in the anthropological context speaks of an awareness on the part of the anthropologist that she, as much or even more so, is a part of the field. Inherent in this is the question of whether anthropology can be objective. Do we as anthropologists still aspire to objectivity? And are we in actual fact equipped for objectivity? The answer is that one cannot get away from the fact that the anthropologist as well as the informants and respondents are all performers. We take part in the performance of everyday life, maintaining a level of constant interaction with one another. The anthropologist however is at the same time also audience member.

The performance of roles and enactment of plots in the anthropological encounter became clear to me when I stayed in a respondent's [Millie] house while they were away on vacation. Millie and her family moved from the farm to the town because she felt unsafe on the farm as her husband travelled quite frequently abroad [he works as a Rep. for a company]. She "brought" two ladies with her from the farm to help in the house. Queen and Grace used to stay on the farm but when Millie decided to move to town they moved into the local township in order to keep their jobs. An interesting game unfolded in front of me between Millie, Queen and Grace. Millie who has lived in Barkly East for about 20 years has always refused to learn Xhosa and as a result her Xhosa vocabulary is limited to one word phrases. Queen and Grace can only speak a very small amount of English and Afrikaans, and so Millie's instructions regarding what has to be done inside the house takes a considerable amount of time to get across, not to mention the frequency with which they are interpreted wrong by Queen and Grace. When I stayed in the house Millie instructed me that I do not need to

worry about Queen and Grace and if I wanted to, I could ask them to do my laundry. I saw this as an ideal opportunity to get to know Queen and Grace and maybe utilise their knowledge of both farm and township community life. I nearly fell off my chair the first morning I was alone in the house with Queen and Grace, when Grace asked me whether I would like a cup of tea in broken, but clearly articulated Afrikaans. And so I became an accomplice in Queen and Grace's subterfuge, choosing rather to support the status quo.

Current anthropological writing on fieldwork practices argues more and more for reflexivity in one's own work – writing one's self into your research. To this end however many anthropologists have argued that the reflexive process causes one to almost lose sight of where the fieldwork begins and ends. Working and living in Barkly East for approximately six months I now see caused me to lose some perspective on where the research ends and begins (not necessarily a bad thing many anthropologists would argue). In fact for me everything became research – myself and my interactions with others included. Shore (1999: 26) argues that the discipline of anthropology has only just started to reconceptualise the way we think about fieldwork. Fieldwork can no longer be compartmentalized and the intersections between the personal and professional are becoming greater. In fact Shore (1999:26) contends that to still think this way is highly problematic and even “dubious”.

Reflexivity in the work of the anthropologist has been mainly due to the post-modern critique of the practice of ethnographic fieldwork. Who is speaking in the research as well as to what degree the anthropologist can speak about and/or for the community or people they are studying has become defining questions in anthropological discourse on fieldwork methodology. Reed-Danahay (1997:3) notes that the issue of representation within the text is becoming increasingly important. Who speaks for whom? Whose voice may be heard? It might thus be prudent for me at this stage to declare my views on these issues in relation to this particular piece of research.

I cannot escape the fact that I had already been in Barkly East on several occasions. Okely (1992: 3) argues that “the autobiography of fieldwork is about lived interactions, participatory experience and embodied knowledge”. She argues that we acquire a bodily memory through our fieldwork (Okely, 1992: 16). I however already started this bodily memory much earlier to most anthropologists – yet not consciously. Gardner (1999: 49) also notes that, that which we learn in the field, as well as the manner in which we learn is subjective to our “personal locations and identities which themselves change over time”. As anthropologists we are not restricted by temporal boundaries and our “personal locations and identities” become filters through which we interpret and experience the world in which our respondents and informants live. However, taking this argument into consideration, to what extent can I speak about the lives of these people and how they experience change and feelings of belonging and rootedness? Anthropology has already answered many of these questions especially with their work on ethics. I include a discussion on ethics later in this chapter.

We do not leave our field site per se. Anthropologists carry the knowledge gained ‘back home’, and reengage with the field during the writing process. The field-diary, anecdotes jotted down on a piece of paper, tape recordings etc. are re-read, re-interpreted and re-lived. To gain coherence of this you engage in a process of “making sense”. How does one make sense of something? I would argue that it is precisely this process of writing down and of linking it to experiences, events or places your readers already know of and of which they have already made sense of. And so-doing the anthropologist brings together once more the unknown and the known, and crosses the boundary between cultures, races, genders and individuals.

METHODS

The anthropologist must use all the tools available to her for successful research. This includes both sensory as well as methodological. Very often one of the first things neophyte ethnographers are told is to totally immerse themselves in the community they are studying; to “eat what they eat”! Luckily for me I do not have any aversion to eating copious amounts of red meat²⁷, however utilizing the correct methodological tool at the most productive and most opportune time is more problematic – and usually happens through trial and error.

There is a variety of methodological tools available to the anthropologist, some of these that I considered for my own research are: participant observation, focus groups, interviews, library and document research, maps, and general photography.

Participant Observation:

Participant observation is certainly the cornerstone of anthropological fieldwork. It is one of the defining factors of our discipline (along with ethical considerations). Participant observation, Wolcott (1999: 46) argues is seen often as an umbrella term. A general way of doing ethnography that includes all other kinds of ethnographic research techniques. At the same time however he argues that participant observation should rather be seen as, “founded on firsthand experience of naturally occurring events” (Wolcott, 1999: 46). Inherent in this definition is the assumption then that the anthropologist’s everyday coming and going fall under this term. This assumption is supported by the experiences of anthropologists like Okely (1994:21) who argue that: “the anthropologist-writer draws also on the totality of the experience, parts of which may not, cannot, be cerebrally written down at the time. It is recorded in memory, body and all the

²⁷ In Barkly East, both in the black and white community, young children (especially young boys) are encouraged to eat copious amounts of red meat. While explicitly linked to masculinity, the consumption of red meat also alludes to a way of living that is (and explicitly so) different from those who live in the cities. The argument is that red meat is good for you if you know how to eat it, for example rare and preferably with red wine or beer. This is in stark contrast to current modern ideas of healthy living and eating.

senses". I have also found this in my own research where something as innocent as arriving home in the evening becomes participant observation, let me illustrate.

I was living in quite a large flat (by city standards) on the ground floor of a two story building. The top floor is rented out to some of the town's older folk who, by their own standards, do not as yet feel they belong in the old age home. One evening, coming home in the early hours of the morning I noticed that I was being watched. The compound in which the building is located has some garages for cars at the back, however to get in one has to switch off the car, open an incredibly large and noisy gate, drive through and then get out again to close the gate. In the process of closing this gate I looked up and saw the corner window's curtains quickly closing, hiding my would-be voyeur's features. I never found out who it was, however I still have my suspicions. The following morning at breakfast, my landlady (who lives on a farm a few kilometres out of the town) gave me a particularly long sermon on the dangers involved when coming home late in the evening. Later that day while speaking to one of my key respondents she candidly asked me where I was the previous evening. I responded by saying that I had visited some friends. To be honest, by the end of the day it felt like I had been through an inquisition!

This whole incident is interesting, not because they wanted to know if I was interviewing someone that late at night, because obviously (in their minds) my research kept office hours – rather they were on the look-out for a possible marriage candidate for me! Having acknowledged on a previous occasion that I am not currently involved with anyone in particular, it seems that my single status became somewhat of a 'problem'. In the wake of this revelation I found many conversations steered in the direction on my views on marriage and who they think would be a suitable match for me.

This kind of goodhearted banter among the white women²⁸ in the community I found is normal and I was not the only young single female who had to endure it. This experience taught me a very valuable lesson, in that my mere presence in the area already became part of my participation and observation. This is also the reason that I consider every moment spent there, even when I was on my own, as part of my participant observation.

Focus Groups, Interviews and Questionnaires

Interviews naturally play a significant role in the process of anthropological research. The interview procedures available to the anthropologist are varied and usually reliant on the place and occasion. Interviews, semi-structured, structured and unstructured, also played an important role in my own research. I interviewed approximately 100 respondents over a period of 6 months using semi-structured and structured interview methods. Every day conversation for example became my unstructured interviews through which I could draw much information and insight. I found it most useful to organize structured interviews with a set date and time with people who either held or used to hold significant positions in the community. Often these people were very busy and difficult to track down thus making a structured interview technique most suitable. This technique was however totally unsuitable for day-to-day activities and social events. I found that by being in a place, for example one of the local bars, facilitated a lot of conversation, especially on a Friday evening when the town's rugby players and their supporters would gather after their weekly match. Similar situations would arise for example when I accompanied women on their daily activities, or joined in with the local beading projects at Sinenjongo²⁹.

²⁸ I had made the same revelation to the black women of the community; however I experienced no such intrusion. This, I believe is part of the distance between the white and black communities in this town. There is no integration as yet and this is clearly signified in the way that these women felt that they have a lesser position to me (being a white person), and therefore could not be as candid. It was only much later when I came to know some of these women particularly well, that I was asked similar questions. At no time however was I offered a young male from their own community – it seems that racial boundaries are still too strong in the minds of both these groups.

²⁹ Sinenjongo is a local beading enterprise by a group of local black women.

Gender also proved significant. For example, my initial contact point with the community has been through its women. Being a young woman myself, it made sense that in a community that generally considers itself to be more conservative than liberal I might find a better *rapore* with women. Callaway (1992: 32) argues that our gender becomes, and is innately part of whom we are and thus consequently how we do our fieldwork. She argues that “our gender differences may also set up different patterns of social relations and can create differential access to domains of knowledge” (Callaway, 1992: 35). Personally therefore attending the local women’s association meeting is a better opportunity to gain entry into the community than to join the weekly rugby practice of the town team!

While it was quite acceptable for me to join in on so-called female activities, activities considered male, such as farming, was more difficult for me to join in. Seemingly men preferred me to have some sort of formal interview setting, for example joining them at the house for lunch. When I enquired about this many of them explained that a) they are too busy otherwise to talk to me, b) I would be in the way, and c) farming would not be interesting to a woman! This kind of sentiment is common in Barkly East. Women are not considered farmers and they are not connected to the land the same way as men³⁰. When I was allowed to join in on some of the activities it was as a ‘once in a life time’ excursion orchestrated on my behalf.

Gender was not the only external factor that impacted on my interview and participant observation schedule. My informants’ race was also a delineating factor – this was something that I had anticipated beforehand. For example, while I could visit black families on the farms in their rooms, I was not allowed to join them on their daily work activities due to the fact the white farmers employ these men and women and that they did not feel comfortable with me joining their employees in their activities. This sentiment I think is mainly due to firstly, the

³⁰ See Chapter Five for further discussion of this issue.

fact that the type of work the black men and women were doing is something that they (the white employers) did not see a white person doing and secondly, the perception that I would not be “safe” in the company of the black men in particular.

For many of the same reasons as with the interviews, men did not participate in any focus groups. I did however have some focus groups with white women. I organized five focus groups. Two of the focus groups included white women who live on the farms. Another two focus groups consisted of mainly black women who lived and worked in the town itself. My last focus group consisted of development workers and government officials in the Barkly East area. Ideally another focus group with black women who live and work on farms is needed, however their economic situation did not make it possible. Many of my black informants lived on farms far away from town, as a result it would be insensitive of me to expect these women who by situation alone do not have the capacity and resources to come into town (or another farm), to come to a focus group for my research. One way to overcome this was to join them at local church gatherings where they would meet (if convenient) once a month. While not solely “my time”, a lot of valuable information came from there. Another convenient resource for me to collect information from people otherwise very difficult to contact was through on-the-spot interviews whilst they were standing and sitting in the queues on pension day.

Questionnaires are not an ideal tool for qualitative anthropological research; however they are at times utilized. The reason questionnaires are not readily used in anthropological research is that when focusing on a qualitative research strategy one of your main aims is to reach a level of intimacy with your informants that is not possible through quantitative research. I limited my use of questionnaires to a small number of women³¹. The sample of women who filled in the questionnaire was all white women living in the community either in town or

³¹ See Appendix I for a copy of the questionnaire.

on a farm. A total of approximately forty women completed out a form. This number is not suitable for any degree of conclusive statistics to emerge, however it has given me an extra dimension to some general questions of interest to this study.

Textual Strategies

Hastrup (1992) contends that as a part of our methods and methodology, one aspect that cannot be ignored is that of textual strategies. By textual strategies I mean the strategies we as anthropologists use to transfer the story we want to tell onto paper. I believe that this process is important and needs equal mention, as much as any fieldwork method or strategy. Hastrup (1992: 122) supports my argument here by noting that:

“The purpose of ethnography is to speak about something for somebody; it implies contextualisation and reframing. At the autobiographical level ethnographers and informants are equal; but at the level of the anthropological discourse their relationship is hierarchical”.

The crises of representation taught anthropologists to be aware of their own position as enquirers and the hierarchical position it supports. We have charged ourselves with creating a more equal, less patronizing environment for our informants when telling their stories. In other words, to let them tell you what is important, to ensure informed consent and to acknowledge our own role as participants in the social drama of ethnography. However, as Hastrup (1992: 122) mentions, when it comes to the actual writing of the story the “relationship is hierarchical”. We, as writers of the story, choose how we tell the stories and in what order. We select the quotations and edit the statements.

In light of the preceding discussion I would like to mention some of my own textual strategies I employed during the writing-up of this thesis. One of the most important strategies I chose is poly-vocality - to let my respondents speak as much as possible. In some cases like Oom Naudé’s (Chapter Four) it was an

easy choice to make as he led the conversation completely, and the bulk of history was told in one sitting. Other cases such as Uncle Siswana's (Chapter Four) were more difficult. While I tried to let him speak as much as possible in the text, many factors hindered his voice from emerging. One of these factors was that he operates in a world 'coloured' by Apartheid ideology. The fact that I am white and he is black, I believe, influenced him greatly. Mostly he waited for my prompt or question before he spoke. Secondly, Uncle Siswana did not have all the information concerning his situation and it became clear to me that to tell his story satisfactorily I had to include information that he did not (and could not include) when telling me his story.

I also found myself telling more of my own experience – another of my textual strategies. For example, while visiting Uncle Siswana and his wife (Chapter Four), describing his home and telling his story it seemed was not enough to purvey the gravity of his situation. I mention that his wife curtsied to me and indicated how uncomfortable it made me feel. I point this out because this one action already puts Uncle Siswana in a more vulnerable position³² since it speaks of deference and submission. Deference from his wife to an elder or man is culturally understandable, but deference from her, an older woman to a younger one, indicates the internalisation of unequal race relations between white and black. My presence here as role player becomes important in the telling of this story. My own political orientation caused me to feel shocked and embarrassed in a situation that occurs here often without its participants feeling any of what I felt. My personal reaction therefore brings in an extra dimension as it throws the spotlight on not only the story being told but also the wider history and context of race relations in South Africa.

³² Not only does he not have the finances, knowledge and support needed to really make a change in his situation, but who he is and what he has endured in his life makes it difficult for him to think and act differently from what he knows. See Chapter Four for more detail.

ETHICS

In 1979 Edward Said wrote a ground-breaking book called *Orientalism*. In this book he argued that the 'Orient' had been appropriated by the 'West' primarily through "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, [and] ruling over it . . ." (Said, 1979: 4). Anthropology was fingered as one of the culprits in this process and as a result the anthropological "crises of representation was born" (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). In response to this crisis, anthropologists began to re-examine their methodology and methods. Consequently, Anthropology has emerged armed (so to speak) with new techniques of understanding and researching culture, and ways of being, not only of others but also of ourselves. Some of these new means of anthropological enquiry include an acknowledgement of the history and heritage of Anthropology and using this as a reminder of the road we have travelled. Another is to include more prominent reflexivity on our role and part in the ethnographic process, from the initial idea, the choice in questions asked, and lastly, the putting of our findings on paper.

One of the foremost ethical considerations to come out of the crises of representation in Anthropology is informed consent. Here the anthropologist has to make sure that their status as researcher is clear. The researcher must also make sure that the participant has no objection to being a part of the study. I found that it was often much easier to explain to younger participants (who have had more access to education and the outside world) what their participation in the study means, whereas older participants, especially black farm workers, found it more difficult to comprehend. Often I was asked whether or not I will be able to organize employment, a better house, or even land for them. In these cases the anthropologist has no choice but to put her research interests second and be as truthful as possible, not only about the research process, but also what she could give in return for their sharing of their information. For many it seemed enough that they could tell someone about their plight, for others not and their disinterest in my questions showed. I have come to value both of these

responses equally as both, that what was said as well as not said, has become part of the story I am telling today.

My motives for researching land issues came under scrutiny frequently, especially by my white respondents. Coming from Johannesburg and studying at an English university known for its liberal stance regarding race matters³³ many of my white respondents distrusted my motives for coming to Barkly East at first. I was often asked whether I was there to condemn them as racists and to only show the worst among them as representative of the group. In cases such as these I found myself time and again reciting the history of anthropology to these mistrusting respondents in order for them to have a better understanding of the moral and ethical position from which anthropologists are supposed to operate.

In both cases I found that mutual trust and respect was the only way in which this research could be carried out. It is therefore also why it has been of vital importance for me to write my own story and position as ethnographer into this study.

Lastly, respect for one's respondents goes beyond the boundaries of fieldwork. I have taken this sentiment to apply to the way in which I refer to people as well. Firstly I use pseudonyms throughout this research in order to keep my respondent's identities private. Secondly, I have been very careful in the way that I speak about race and racial groups in this thesis. The politics of racial labelling of population groups in South Africa is complex. As a result of this utmost care has to be taken not to cause any insult. All Census (1996 & 2001) material used in this thesis has been divided into four racial categories namely Black African, White, Coloured and Indian. When I discuss the Census statistics

³³ The University of the Witwatersrand is well known both nationally and internationally for its liberal stance towards issues of race and education. It was one of the first universities in South Africa who refused to bar black, coloured and Indian students from enrolling for class, much to the chagrin of the Apartheid government. As a result the University was often in the news for the liberation marches that were held on campus, by both students and staff.

in Chapter One I use the Census distinction. However in some government documentation the racial term *black* would include Black African, Coloured and Indian groups. While I am aware of this distinction I refrained from using it and instead opted for a similar distinction as the Census one, i.e. Black (Black African), White, Coloured and Indian. The motivation behind this choice is that people's perceptions of racial labels and boundaries in Barkly East are much different to that of government and academics. Here Apartheid racial labels are used in everyday speech and is used and accepted as a way to refer to one another. Accordingly, in the rest of this thesis I use the racial labels as my respondents use them.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF OUR FUTURE

“The History of our Future”: Rampart Walk – the best view you will get of Constitution Hill, of Johannesburg and of South Africa in Transition. Using South Africa’s Constitution and Bill of Rights, this exhibition looks at where we are today, standing on the ramparts of a society in transition, looking back at the difficulties of the past and the possibilities of the future”

Information Pamphlet – Constitutional Hill

INTRODUCTION

If you turn left at the corner of De Villiers and Molteno streets on your way into town, and then left again into White Street³⁴, on your right hand side you’ll find the Barkly East Museum. The museum is situated to the west of the town, and is usually not very busy. It is a quaint little building, a bit run down and one can see that little money is available for the upkeep of it. Nevertheless, despite this seeming neglect of history, many residents of Barkly East consider their history to be mostly rich and colourful, almost to the point of exaggeration.

I take my cue from the Barkly East Museum primarily because it is here that one may find the dual nature of its history at work. This chapter does not profess to delineate the entire history of Barkly East since the first Khoi to the last citizen today. Its history is not only much more complex than that; historical documents to corroborate such a task on both sides of the racial divide do not exist. Rather, I examine the inability of history and the re-telling of history to be neutral; here I use both the example of South Africa and more particularly that of Barkly East to illustrate the point. My argument points to a dual history in operation where a lot is known about one side of the community and very little about the other. To support this argument I examine the role museums and monuments have played in South Africa to perpetuate particular political ideologies. In Barkly East this

³⁴ These street names has no significance today except that they are streets to places in town. The people or families they were named after are long forgotten by the residents.

legacy can also be seen in its museum and I contextualise this within a broader South African dimension.

THE NATURE OF HISTORY AND ITS DUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND BARKLY EAST

In this chapter I propose that a dual history operates in the community of residents in Barkly East. The duality of history and the common perception of history in Barkly East is reliant on three levels of societal and historical interaction to stay in place: firstly, historical documentation or the actual act of writing down historical facts and events. Secondly, the duality of history is maintained through every day living in this place and interaction between residents; and thirdly through official repositories of knowledge such as museums and heritage sites.

Writing History

David Lowenthal, (1995: 105-107) argues that we all screen history through manifold lenses and so *true* history is not made but found. To explain this he notes that when examining history there are two main premises at work. First is the aim of “meticulous objectivity” in a historian, an aim he acknowledges to be impossible. Here Wyschogrod (1998) echo’s Lowenthal’s sentiments. In her prologue Wyschogrod (1998: xii) asks when we retell history whether we can do so in the face of truth? This she argues, like Lowenthal (1995), is a promise that cannot be fulfilled! And so history becomes encrypted by ethics.

Lowenthal (1995: 106) argues that to fulfil the first premise “no hint of the historian should intrude”, no aspect of the life of the historian should impact upon the history, and lastly, no voice should be heard apart from that of history itself. But the mirror that is history cannot reflect this aim of impartiality. And yet impartiality is deemed important, why? The answer lies in its inability to be impartial and it is here that we can learn more about the societies within which the writers of history lived. The critical factor in answering this question thus lies

in the goal. Lowenthal (1995: 109) explains that like the Hippocratic Oath which binds doctors to obligation, so also must historians obliterate self-interest in their quest for “true” history.

Lowenthal’s second premise is that the past shapes both history and heritage in a form or shape that we think it should be or look like. Arguably then there is no such thing as “true” history and one should rather ask whose history is being written? Why is this history written? Who is writing the history? What are the goals behind the writing of this history? And, is it to immortalize the leader of a great nation, or to commemorate deeds? Blok (1992) illustrates this by asking how different power relationships affect the writing of history.

“The past is more than a construction and to the end that it is a construction – or reconstruction or deconstruction – one has always to specify whose construction and to delineate the constellations of power: whose claims on the past obtain recognition and acceptance, by what means, and why? Rival factions compete for historical truth”. (Blok, 1992: 121)

History then is not neutral or immune to influence. Rather it is interpreted and filtered and therefore history derives meaning and significance for those who write it as well as for those who are still to read it. History is thus “an interpretation and not a replica: a view, not a copy, of what happened” (Lowenthal, 1995: 112). The South African example of this, Nuttall (1998) argues, is the conception of history during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission where “the past, it sometimes seems, is being remade for the purposes for current reconciliation . . . where past conflict may be repressed in the interest of present togetherness” (Nuttall, 1998: 75).

Knudsen (1992: 83) gives another example of how different groups can have alternative understandings of history. The example is that of European history where peasants are mostly seen as being passive in the process of history. She argues that they were viewed as “not living in the realm of progressive history”;

rather they were seen as “cyclical” and “traditional”. These peasants like their counterparts in India, South America and Africa (in particular Sub-Saharan Africa) were seen without history living in a “timeless primitive order” (Knudsen, 1992: 83). What emerge here are two possibilities, one is history which is legitimate and viewed as an “objective condition”. The other possibility is that of “traditional society not yet touched by history and seen as speculative” (Knudsen, 1992: 85). In this sense a legitimate and illegitimate history is created where ideas about “us” and “other” define the legitimacy of the history. Lucas (1997: 10) argues here that this “other” history becomes (in the minds of those who own so-called legitimate history) pre-history; the time where humans lived before history (and arguably a contradiction in terms).

South Africa is a good example of a dual history in operation. The idea of a dual history and society for South Africa is not surprising in light of its political stance of Apartheid during most part of the 1900’s. Foner (1995:164) argues that it was the ideology of apartheid “to eliminate Africans from history”³⁵ and in so doing trapping them within Knudsen’s label of cyclical, traditional and thus historically passive. In South Africa this has changed somewhat. With the abolishment of Apartheid and implementation of democracy many scholars have embarked on rewriting the South African history to emphasize the experience of black labourers in rural areas and in urban mines and industries, and highlighting the role that they played in South African wars such as the Anglo-Boer war (Foner, 1995: 166). We also see this in the heritage institutions such as monuments and museums of South Africa that have undergone drastic reinterpretation by South Africans³⁶.

³⁵ An example of this is the National Archives of South Africa which worked on a basis of exclusivity according to primarily race as supported by the Archives Act of 1962. With the ‘new’ democracy in 1994, these racially exclusive modes of historical archival were repealed. This process includes the introduction of the following: The National Heritage Resources Act of 1999; The Cultural Institutions Act of 1998; The National Archives of South Africa Act of 1996; and, The National Monuments Act of 1969 (amended), to name a few.

³⁶ I discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

Being a very small town, quite far removed from any big centres Barkly East has not featured in 'history-making' on a national level. Usually it is noted for its name-sake, Sir Henry Barkly, who was the Governor and High Commissioner to the Cape from 1870 – 1877 (Mostert, 1992: 1247). Another mention Barkly East gets would be for its share in the Anglo-Boer war. A small rebellion group from Barkly East fought against the British and were consequently incarcerated during the war. In 1901, in Aliwal North, a large town approximately 100 kilometres from Barkly East, the British also set up one of their infamous concentration camps (Coetzer, 2000: 116). Locally however there has been a lot of interest in the town, its establishment and achievements. In Barkly East and its surrounds it is evident that the writing of history and historical facts has been squarely in the hands of white residents, and it is clear that the white community's propensity to "producing" historical writing and by default also history is much greater than that of their black counterparts. Three documents in particular add to this conclusion. Here I refer to two publications by the local newspaper, The Barkly East Reporter, namely *The Barkly East Centenary: 1873-1973* (Barkly East Reporter: 1973), and *The Barkly East Reporter Centenary: 1886-1986* (Barkly East Reporter, 1986). The third document I refer to here is a centenary commemoration edition of the history and establishment of the Dutch Reformed Church, named *Ligglans oor die Berge: Eeufeesgedenkboek Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk en Gemeenskap, Barkly Oos 1873 – 1973*³⁷ (Smit, 1973). These three documents have become the local authoritative voice in explaining the history of the town and the community.

There are three main elements that need to be mentioned in relation to the documents named above. Firstly, the author of any document can be as important to the general explanation of the argument as the content itself. The two Barkly East Reporter documents are both written by the staff of the

³⁷ My Translation: "*Light-footed Across the Mountains: Centenary Commemoration Edition of the Dutch Reformed Church and Community, Barkly East 1873-1973*".

newspaper and members of the public who were asked to contribute. All of these contributors are white, Afrikaans or English speaking, current or former residents of the town. The author of the Dutch Reformed Church document is A.P. Smit, a professional writer paid by the church to compile the historical narrative of mainly this church and its community. The book is written in Afrikaans and the author is white. Secondly, all three of these documents are written during Apartheid, 1973 and 1986 respectively. These two points alone do not make any significant statement regarding the nature and historical position of the content. However, in conjunction with closer scrutiny of the actual content it is clear that this is definitely a one-sided narrative. The content of all three these documents focus on the achievements of the white residents of the town.

For example the town was built, bridges raised, hospitals erected, railroads built, schools put in place and amongst many other historic milestones, wars fought and lost. At the same time all this historical progress took place and was recorded, no such record exists for the other part of the community. Little mention is made of the historical progression of the black residents of Barkly East. The only mention made is in the local newspaper concerning the local black township.

“Bantus are housed in a location situated to the north of town. This location developed on its own. Very little was done about the location by the Council in the early days. In 1905 the Colonial Government donated the 16 morgen of ground on which the location is situated to the Council on condition that they erect houses and sanitary conveniences for the natives. In 1922, 24 additional four-room houses were erected as well as three washhouses. The cost of this project amounted to £4454 19s 6d. As the Bantu population increased so speedily there was soon a housing shortage and in 1925 a further 100 one-roomed houses were erected costing £4475. In 1945 housing once again became a problem and 55 two-roomed houses were erected at a total cost of £12580” (Barkly East Reporter, 1972, 33-34).

This excerpt is the only mention I have found made about the local black community. Not only is it very short in comparison but it shows a certain lack of

regard for this section of the community. All it refers to is the amount of money the black community have cost and it mentions how quickly their numbers increased. Clearly a conscious choice is made here about who embodies history and who owns history. In this way only certain stories are told officially, and only one group, usually the writers of those stories, get to establish themselves as part of the history and place. Unfortunately, in such a situation even if your story is significant, or you have made a contribution to the history of the place and community, someone else will decide for you whether or not that particular story will be retold, and whether it is deemed legitimate. Lowenthal's (1995) ideas regarding the way in which we or a particular group shape history and heritage in a manner that we (they) think suitable, proves true. This is however not to say that the black community in Barkly East has had no part in history, the argument here is that they occupy no place in the "official" history written about the community. They have proverbially been "written out of the story".

Everyday Living

The way in which, as well as the level to which this routine of historization is internalised manifests itself in everyday living. "Legitimate" history in Barkly East has rested in the hands of the white residents for most of the 20th century, while the black residents encompassed the speculative and traditional. Knudsen (1992: 82-83) argues that history may mean different things, from a societies' self representation in written or told stories of the past, or in the reality of today or as she puts it "concrete social circumstances". Therefore to "find" history in Barkly East it is important to not only go to the "official institutions" of history such as newspaper or church for example, but to also hear the history (and the impact thereof) of the place as it is spoken and lived by the people who reside there. In Barkly East we are thus faced with what Knudsen (1992: 82-83) explains as not only a dual history, but also "a kind of dual society".

Everyday life in Barkly East establishes a social hierarchy in which all should 'know' their place and through which expressions of life is formed through their

place in history³⁸. History here then refers to a history written and enforced by one group and which also informs social order. In order to examine this further I would like to relay two instances which illustrate how one particular view of history can inform everyday life.

During my stay in Barkly East I befriended a specific family that eventually became one of my best sources of information. This family can trace its heritage back to before the Anglo-Boer war and it is well respected in the community. I spent a lot of time on their farm and got to know the two sons, Jerry and Simon quite well. When I first met them Jerry, the youngest at five years of age wasn't in school yet and used to play 'farmer' with his uncle's foreman and labourers. Early in the morning before breakfast Jerry would run out of the house wearing a t-shirt, shorts and gumboots. During the day you would not see him and he would only return later in the afternoon when he had done the rounds on the farm. Jerry would in whispered confessions admit to me that he liked spending time at the *stroois*³⁹. Simon on the other hand, then already in school, was not that interested in farming and after school he would play Playstation games or watch M-TV on the satellite television.

I always felt quite proud of Jerry for what I thought at the time was an embracement friendship with the labourer folk on the farm and also acknowledging their role as his educators on the farm. Jerry changed that for me however with a comment he made one Sunday afternoon. While their parents were sleeping after lunch I watched Jerry and Simon playing soccer with some of Baleka and Nompumelelo's (domestic workers in the house) younger sons. At that stage I was not as familiar with all the children on the farm and I asked Jerry and Simon to introduce me to them. Without blinking Jerry said "You don't have

³⁸ Whether or not one belongs in Barkly East leans heavily on a number of factors. Owning land for instance plays an important part in this as well as ones family and heritage; even gender can play a role. Notions around memory, history and landscape influence these ideas. I go into more detail on these issues later in the thesis.

³⁹ *Stroois* is an Afrikaans word for a labourer's house on the farm.

to worry, they are *my quidinkies*⁴⁰. Unsure of his meaning I enquired further. The gist of it is that there are some of the black children who are more or less the age of Jerry and who have in a manner of speaking been *assigned* to Jerry. This means they play with him when he wants to play. The difference here compared to any other gang of young boys playing, is that Jerry is the ‘boss’ by default due to his position as farmer’s son. And so I am told it works on most farms where an uneasy friendship exists between the children of the farmers and the children of the labourers. This friendship is dominated however by one party that makes all decisions, is always right in a dispute and that considers his ‘friends’ to be his property.

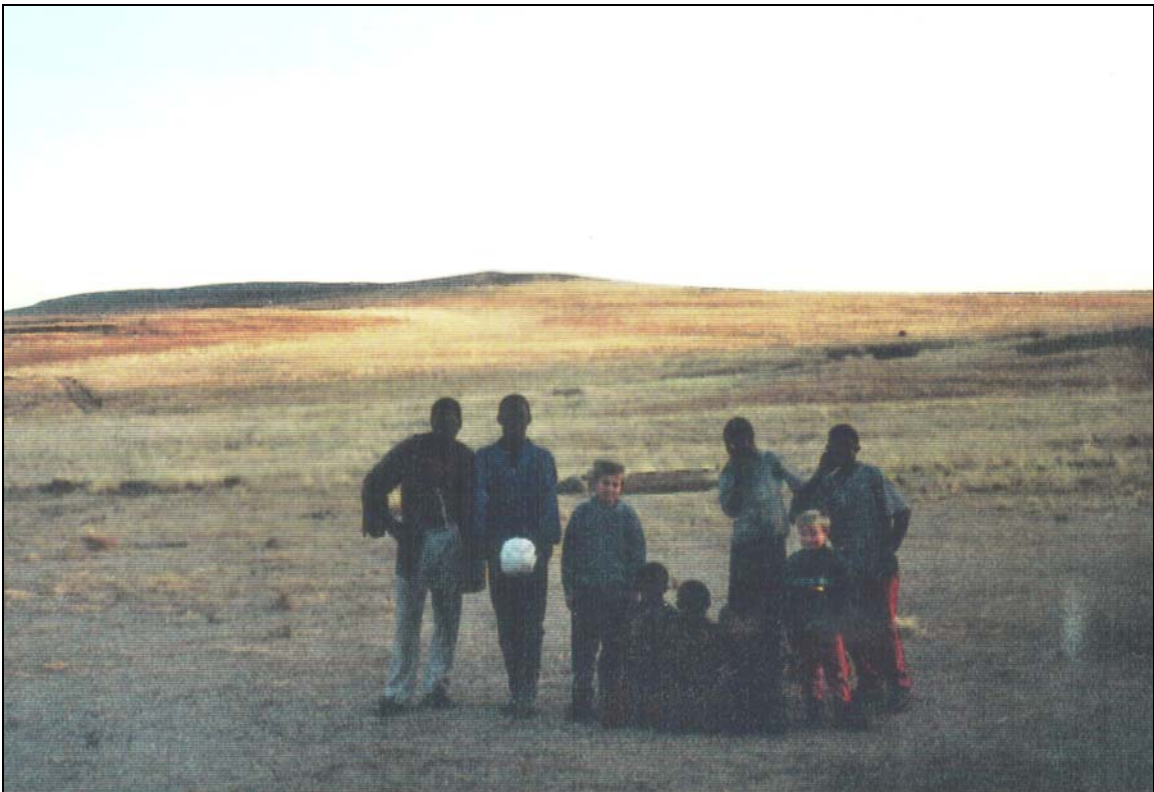


Image 3.1 The soccer “team”

Jerry does not see that this type of commodification of his so-called friends is problematic. But then again why should he? What Jerry knows is that this is the

⁴⁰ A word used by farmers in this district to describe young black children of the farm labourers.

way things are done. He sees his father and uncle treat the farm labourers in the same manner, as property to be used and disposed of at their discretion. The socialisation of the children, both white and black in the Barkly East community is very much informed by their (and their parents) understanding and acknowledgment of history. One of the first important lessons for early anthropologists is that culture is learned and that we are socialised into our community primarily by our parents. Here is a prime of example of such socialisation for no matter how much Jerry desires to visit the *stroom* he does not acknowledge it freely, in fact he is ashamed of it because he already knows that this type of behaviour is frowned upon by his parents. I have never seen Jerry's father, Mr Donaldson, being anything but courteous to the labourers who work on his farm, yet at the same time he has mentioned to me on numerous occasions that *"black people just are not the same as us [white people] – just look at how they live, their attitude to work and life – it is different!"*.

Mr Donaldson accepts his historically entrenched, hierarchical position over black people and through his actions, words and everyday life communicates this to his sons. It is important however to mention here that the history that informs this position in Mr Donaldson's mind, ends in the early 1990s. Any event that follows the uprising of the ANC and the democracy it brought is dismissed and labelled illegitimate. On the opposite side of this coin are the children of people such as Baleka and Nompumelelo. Socialised in the same manner by their parents these children like Arri and Sonny, Baleka's sons, also learn about history and their place in it. Unfortunately for them education is much more difficult to come by; extracting them from this life of subservience even more so. Baleka once noted that *"as long as I work for a good family my children will be ok. At least he [Mr Donaldson] makes sure they go to school and gives them a job on the farm"*.

Mr Semantle, a local municipality development officer argues that there are very few of the farm workers in this district, especially those living on the farms, who actually know that there has been a shift in government, not even to mention how

this has affected their access to rights. Since the ANC led government came into power in 1994 there have been a lot of changes in legislative policy, in particular relating to land issues. Unfortunately one of the biggest problems have been the fact that farm labourers do not know their rights and do not have access to them especially when it comes to land tenure rights (Hall, 2004:37-38) (see Table 3.1 for a detailed breakdown of how land reform legislation has changed since 1993). The Ukhahlamba District Municipality has many development officers such as Mr Semantle working to educate the farm worker about their rights. This has however not been as successful as they hoped for as old Apartheid structures and 'ways of doing' is still entrenched in many people's minds; black and white alike.

Legislation Purpose	Provision of Land and Assistance
Act 126 of 1993	Empowers the Minister of Land Affairs to make available grants for land purchase and related purposes to individuals, households or municipalities.
Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994	Establishes the right of people dispossessed of property after 1913 to restitution of that land or alternative redress.
Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act 3 of 1996	Provides tenure rights to labour tenants living on private farms and enables them to apply to acquire full ownership of the land they already reside on and use.
Communal Property Association Act 28 of 1996	Enables groups of people to hold and manage their land jointly through a legal entity registered with the Department of Land Affairs.
Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act 31 of 1996	A temporary holding mechanism to protect the tenure rights of people who occupy land in the former homelands without formal documented rights, pending promulgation of an Act regulating communal land tenure rights (see Communal Land Rights Act below) – and renewed annually.

Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997	Protects farm dwellers from arbitrary eviction and enables them to acquire long-term secure tenure rights, either on the farms where they currently reside or elsewhere.
Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act 94 of 1998	Repeals the Rural Areas Act 9 of 1987 ('Act 9') and establishes procedures for upgrading the tenure rights of residents to commonage and residential land in the 23 former 'coloured' reserves (formerly Act 9 areas).
Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act 48 of 2003	Empowers the Minister of Land Affairs to expropriate property without a court order, for restitution or other land reform purposes.
Communal Land Rights Act 11 of 2004	Provides for the transfer in ownership of land in the former homelands to communities residing there, or alternative redress, on the instigation of the Minister (not yet in effect).

Table 3.1 Legislation regarding land issues (Taken from Hall (2004:7))

Black and white, farmer and labourer, both play out the apartheid history and legacy in everyday living; the way they treat each other as well as how they refer to one another. Following from this the other event I would like to relay examines how this community establishes Knudsen's (1992: 82-83) dual society. The point here is to illustrate how these two parts of the Barkly East community, through their mutual disregard for one another, live out the historically imposed divisions put in place by the old Apartheid government.

On more than one occasion both sides of the community would mention to me how the other side is not *human*. Human in this case refers to the so-called innate human quality of compassion for one another and treating other people with respect. For example:

“I don’t like those whites. They don’t care for people like me. They are not human like us you know. Things are bad but they don’t care – they are ok in their houses. I tell you we suffer” Xangtha, Sinenjongo beadworker.

“Just look how they live. They don’t care for their children man. They don’t have the same standards. Sure there are some good one’s among them but they are not like us. They’re not human like us – we see something is wrong and we fix it. I don’t wait for someone to tell me I have to do I just do it!” Joe, farmer.

There are many factors here that need to be examined, especially relating to the way in which generalizations are used to substantiate opinions. For my current argument however I focus on the fact that both groups create distinctions according to racial divides and stereotypes defined during apartheid, such as the ‘tyrannical white farmer’ and the ‘lazy black worker’. In both instances I have met and know people from Barkly East who in their actions and everyday relationships with people contradict these statements. And yet, generalisations such as these persist. Why is this case? For many it is an unwillingness to believe that what they think and believe might not be the truth, for others, their own experiences have clouded their view of the ‘bigger’ picture to such an extent that no other viewpoint can penetrate. The question that follows is whether or not these generalised perceptions are admissible to prove my point?

In 1937 Evans-Pritchard, while studying the practice of witchcraft among the Azande of northern Africa, taught anthropologists that just because something is not rationally defined, recognisable and scientifically elucidated does not mean that it cannot have a real impact upon the lives of people and how they experience life (Evans-Pritchard, 1937). Evans-Pritchard’s Azande believed in witchcraft and while he could not experience the effect of witchcraft himself he acknowledges that it does not mean that it did not exist. In anthropology we are in the business of examining that which makes an impact on the lives of those we study – whether it is ‘real’, tangible, rationally definable or even factually correct really does not matter. Our role here is not to ask whether it is real, rather our role is to capture its effects. Therefore, the perceptions and stereotypes that

people ascribe to in Barkly East, while not always 'real' or the 'whole picture' does have significance in the impact that it has on their lives and the relationship they cultivate with the 'other' group. Consequently, negative stereotypes (often racially driven) about one another, white over black, and black over white reinforces notions of moral hierarchy. That which is virtuous, moral and honourable therefore becomes defined according to historical legacy (such as apartheid) which in turn underpins continued division and assumptions about one another.

The aim of these two examples is to illustrate two important points. Firstly, history and our perceptions of history influence how we live today, our opinion of others, and how we consequently treat other people. Secondly, our actions today will become history tomorrow. Our everyday interaction with others lays the groundwork for future interactions to come. In this way residents of Barkly East are therefore constantly reinforcing duality in community and history through their actions and exchanges. Moreover, not only do their actions support duality it also reinforces divisions that become markers for 'us' and 'other' sentiment that echoes South Africa's Apartheid past.

Official Repositories of History and Knowledge

Reinterpretation of History and Heritage in South Africa

In South Africa, heritage institutions such as museums and monuments have been used to impose ideological and political positions (Witz & Cornell, 1991; Brink & Krige, 1998; Deacon, 1998). Khazanov (2000) illustrates this when arguing that museums and their collections and exhibitions are never neutral and this one can argue by the mere fact that someone chooses what to place in an exhibition and what not. Through this inability towards neutrality museums and monuments therefore are "never simple depositories of knowledge" (Khazanov, 2000: 35). During Apartheid, heritage institutions in South Africa were used to foster a nationalist spirit in terms of a common shared heritage under the

Afrikaner people, for example the Afrikaner Broederbond and the FAK⁴¹ (Bloomberg, 1989: 32). This included monuments like the Voortrekker Monument and Taal Monument for example, where Afrikaner nationalism was presented as a heroic past. Monuments, museums and other heritage institutions were integrated into an ideology of Afrikaner nationalism, so that when people go and visit these places they could not only learn the past, but also the heritage and envisaged future. It is also through this pedagogical process that clear distinctions could be drawn between Afrikaners and 'other' groups. Karp (1992) thus argues that:

“As repositories of knowledge, value and taste, museums educate, refine or produce social commitments beyond those that can be produced in ordinary educational and civic institutions” (Karp, 1992: 5).

With the diminishment of Apartheid South Africa has embraced a new political ideology that is based on a black consciousness, and heritage of “the struggle” against Apartheid. But as Witz and Cornell (1999:1) note the way in which history was presented was not reflected in heritage institutions instantly, and to support their argument they quote [former] President Mandela as saying that:

“Museums must get rid of the kind of heritage that glorified mainly white and colonial history. Black history, when represented, is gripped by racist and stereotyped approaches.” (Nelson Mandela quoted in Witz and Cornell, 1999:1).

As a result of this new dispensation Foner (1995:164) argues “a new future inevitably requires a new past!” Here heritage institutions played an important role to reformulate public memory in South Africa. Now “new” South Africans see “struggle” symbols and heritage institutions such as Hector Peterson, Robben Island and the Old Fort on Constitution Hill, as iconic and significant for a new future despite being previously demonised by Apartheid rhetoric.

⁴¹ FAK: Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuur Vereeniging.

The Hector Peterson Memorial has been founded in the interim and Robben Island's symbolic value has increased as not only a symbol of national transformation, but also an important symbol for the triumph for human rights. Deacon (1998: 164) notes that the significance of the island today is not because of what actually happened there, but in the way history is being interpreted and presented. The Old Fort and its ramparts have now, in conjunction with Constitutional Hill, been incorporated into a heritage site with an exhibition called "*The History of our Future*". Here the official pamphlet reads:

"No longer needed for surveillance, intimidation or incarceration, the ramparts now serve as a vantage point over Constitution Hill – and also over the city of Johannesburg and South Africa in transition. They are a bridge between the difficulties of the past – as represented by the derelict old prison buildings – and the possibilities of the future – as represented by the construction of the Constitutional Court".

Davis (1992: 16) argues that one is not disputing the fact that something did happen, for example Nelson Mandela was elected as President of South Africa on 10 May 1994. Interpretations of this event however, as well as meanings attached to it differ quite dramatically across the South African Nation. The expression of these sentiments, usually the more accepted and 'official' sentiments gets captured in museums, statues, names of places and so forth and exhibited at these times. Davison (1998: 145) echo's this sentiment by arguing that "museums gives material form to authorized versions of the past". The Barkly East museum has followed the same route, significantly however the current authorized version of the past i.e. one of freedom and democracy prevailing over apartheid is very scarce in this museum. Rather, this museum somewhat blatantly tells the "old" story while making overtures to the new one.

Barkly East Museum: Which History?

Following in the footsteps of many museums in South Africa the Barkly East museum has faithfully captured the road the community has travelled, from

colonial conquering and expansion to family heritage and memorabilia. Up and till the 1994 National elections in South Africa, the museum mostly focussed on 'white history', legitimising its existence and status as the 'official' version. Since democracy many things have changed, including some of the exhibitions on display at the Barkly East museum.

One of the latest additions to the Barkly East Museum's collections is a very colourful exhibition dealing with the 1994 South African elections. To the one side of the room are massive bulletin boards decorated with photographs of Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk. There are also photographs depicting scenes from the freedom struggle with the historical events neatly written down next to the photographs for those who have the time and inclination to go closer and read. Across the room on the wall are pictures of the 'glory' days of Barkly East such as when they opened the railway. On the bookshelves are some memorabilia from the Anglo-Boer war, and in the middle of the room are a few pieces of antique furniture. *"We have to incorporate everything nowadays"*, one of the visitors to the museum said to me, referring to the *1994 Elections* exhibition. *"But off course it is not nearly as nice as the other stuff in here"* she finished.

When standing in that room one gets the feeling that the *1994 Elections* exhibition does not really belong there. It does not fit in. It has no place. I can only speculate whether or not this was done with intent. What this does indicate though is that this exhibition's quick assemblage and temporal nature alludes to it being out of place in the history of Barkly East and also South Africa. The museum's main exhibition focuses on the establishment of the town and the achievements by its residents, the Anglo-Boer war and Apartheid politicians and government. In contrast stands the 'new' history which incorporates a distinctly black voice that was not heard previously.

The Barkly East museum illustrates how one version of history become official and the other not. It also highlights how history becomes legitimised through its sanctioning by an official institution such as a museum. The Barkly East museum also shows the reluctance of the white community to relinquish their hold over the exhibition of history.

CONCLUSION

History plays a very important role in the establishment of community and identity. In Barkly East we see how a dual history has been cultivated in which one side dominates to such an extent that the other becomes inaudible. High and low history or official and unofficial history emerges and in a community divided according to Apartheid racial divides the duality of history becomes colour coded, namely white and black. For many decades the official history was that of white residents, and was sanctioned by the authors of that history, reinforced (then and now) through interaction between the two groups and legitimised by official repositories of knowledge such as the museum.

The two histories I suggest in this chapter relate very strongly to a “being in” and “being out” of place in Barkly East, and this dilemma of dual history thus introduces the significance of ‘place’ within the context of this thesis. ‘Place’ not only in relation to a physical space i.e. a house or a piece of land, but also ‘place’ in relation to that which is not physical, that which can not be seen, touch or even owned. ‘Place’ as a sense of belonging, a sense of heritage and a sense of memory. Chapters Four, Five and Six uses the groundwork laid in this chapter in order to expand these ideas looking at how place and belonging is created and established in a historically, socially and economically divided community such as this.

CHAPTER FOUR

“PLACING” BARKLY EAST

INTRODUCTION

The anthropological understanding of spatial politics is extensive and anthropologists have written prolifically about it (Low & Lawrence Zúñiga, 2003). Space as being embodied (Casey, 1996), gendered (Bonvillian, 1995; Massey, 1994; Ardener, 1993; and, Lamphere, 1993), inscribed (Steward & Strathern, 2003), contested (Bender, 2001), and even used as tactic fill much of our lives. Something as simple as differentiating between where we eat and where we sleep informs us as well as onlookers about hierarchy, economy, and politics, not even to mention cultural practises. In Barkly East the politics of space is no less complex. Not only are we dealing with personal space that are severely bounded and fortified⁴², Barkly East also uses space covertly in a manner reminiscent of apartheid restrictions.

This chapter looks at how space is not merely used to inform our everyday movements but also how residents are categorised, labelled and sanctioned according to it. The basis for this argument is found in the examination of the historical context to spatial division in South Africa as influenced by government policy, as well as how people have internalised these positions. This chapter then builds upon this historical basis by looking at how space in Barkly East has become “practised places”, where a broad category such as race influences place, how place is used, as well as how it is interpreted and how it categorises the people who use it.

⁴² Personal space is bounded and fortified in Barkly East mainly due to the perceived geographical location as well as the small and limited community (see Chapter One for more detail).

PRACTISED PLACES

Cresswell (2004) argues that the idea of “place” is both simple and complex. On the one hand you have place as we use it in everyday language, for example “let’s go to my place!” This Cresswell (2004:1) argues, implies an aspect of ownership and a connection between the person and the location where this connection is supported through the meaning we bestow and attach to the location. Place therefore refers to a particular space that has been given meaning, for example a house is not only a building it has deeper meaning such as home and belonging. Agnew (1987) divides a space that denotes meaning into three primary facets namely location, locale and sense of place. By location is meant a fixed co-ordinate on earth or a location one can plot on a map. Locale refers to the form and figure the place takes, the way it actually looks. Cresswell (2004: 7) argues that this could even be imaginary places such as the Hogwarts School of the Harry Potter novels with its classroom, dungeons and staircases through which the characters move. Lastly a sense of place indicates the “subjective and emotional attachment people have to place” (Cresswell, 2004:7). In this way place does not merely refer to a geographical space but also the meanings we situate within it. Supporting this argument Casey (1996: 23) suggests that “places gather things in their midst”. These “things” include experiences, histories, languages, and even thoughts which all contribute to the creation of meaning attached to place.

Barkly East is a place as location, locale and ‘in sense’. Barkly East is also a town, a place with everyday life, people, houses, homes, shops, churches, schools, bars, roads, problems, laughter, hopes and dreams, and history. And, like many other places also many other things, possibly too many to mention. But, as Hastrup (1998:6) convincingly notes one cannot truly know this place (for Hastrup a town in Iceland, for me, Barkly East) without being there, without learning the everyday practical knowledge of this place (Relph, 1976), without walking the streets (de Certeau, 1984), without drawing the maps myself (Smith, 2003), or going up, down and around the hills myself (Gray, 1999). For Barkly

East residents, everyday life in this town infuses the town, farms, roads and hills with meaning and so these locations or spaces become practised places.

Place related to identity and belonging:

Augé (1995: 44) talks about the inconsistency of places to remain the same. Phenomena, that he argues are connected to “recent actuality” such as urban migrations, the arrival of new populations and the spread of industrial cultures, all contribute to this changeability of place. Yet despite this influence and subsequent unpredictability a “fantasy” has been maintained and perpetuated. This “fantasy” Augé (1995: 44) argues is one where “society is anchored since time immemorial” and consistently intact. While Barkly East cannot compare with Augé’s cities and their industrial culture some parallels can be drawn. In Barkly East there is a belief that the place (Barkly East) has not changed since the first measuring of the farms took place. There is an attitude that the society that embodies the “soil” knows everything there is to know about it! Who belongs where is not a question; rather it is an acknowledgement of place, which in turn is supported through narratives about origins and therefore I would argue, also belonging⁴³. Augé (1995: 44) argues that “all the inhabitants have to do is recognize themselves in it [the place and society] when the occasion arises” in order to have a sense of ‘being in place’. In the same way, residents (by choice for the white residents and by default everyone else) of Barkly East, by physically being there, know ‘their place’, and how to behave. Race (in terms of racially dividing structures and attitudes), as well as social hierarchy (especially with respect to the ownership of land and accumulation of wealth) plays an important role in this ‘knowing of one’s place’ as it divides this society on many levels. Lastly this also includes a gender division on many levels of everyday life which has been nurtured by both men and women.

Augé’s (1995: 44) argument that being in a place, and being able to reconstruct a narrative with oneself as character in this place, predisposes you to knowledge

⁴³ This is obviously also strongly linked to memory and landscape as discussed in Chapter Six

about that place. This argument therefore also foregrounds the necessity of me being in Barkly East and spending time there. The significance of my being in Barkly East, a geographical space infused with meaning, shows the value of the emic analysis in anthropological study by highlighting the intersection between anthropologist (and the world she moves in) and the people she studies (and their world which she enters). Allow me to relay some everyday experiences to illustrate how place and knowledge is linked as well as that without this knowledge, consequences of one's actions may be unexpected.

Coming from Johannesburg and “a very liberal university”, as I was constantly reminded⁴⁴, I had to accept that the way in which I conduct everyday activities could and eventually would not be the same as at home – a common phenomena experienced by anthropologists involved in research (Watson, 1999; Okely, 1996). Driving to the local township to meet with possible informants was met with gasps of horror and disbelief by many of my white informants. Driving with one of my key respondents around town and into the farming districts caused one particular neighbour to offer me disinfectant room freshener for my car to “*get rid of that smell, you know!*” On another occasion when my sister⁴⁵ and I attended a local braai, my sister (unmarried at the age of twenty six) was treated to a very interesting discussion on the qualities of a married woman and how a large part of her duty as married woman was to have children and raise them well. Without thinking about the consequences to my research, my sister retorted that having gone to university and having had that experience she would council any young woman to study first and only much later consider having children, with or without a husband. Looks of disapproval and pity flew across the room as it was obvious that one, this view did not sit well with these particular matriarchs, and two, my sister obviously does not like men.

⁴⁴ While I am certainly not the first (or last) person from Johannesburg to visit Barkly East, my presence (and research interests) there was met with a certain amount of interest and curiosity by the residents.

⁴⁵ My sister joined me for a weekend during the first few weeks of my research.

These are some of the everyday events that shaped life in Barkly East for me, yet at the same time it gave me some crucial insight into the community I was living in. I also discovered that one of the ways in which to understand the underlying political and social hierarchy in Barkly East is to examine the use, ownership and division of land. Land in Barkly East is a wonderful metaphor for understanding divisions in this community as it not only carries meaning, but also because it is such a sought after commodity. In the section that follows I focus on race and how through the use, ownership and division of a place or piece of land⁴⁶ the particular distinctions in this community are exemplified. In Chapter Five I follow the same format, only I focus on how distinctions are created through gender and land. One may argue that gender and race are two broad categories; however, these two categories are significant due to their pervasive impact on everyday life and interaction, therefore their prominent position in this thesis.

RACE AND PLACE

South Africa's Historical Context

South Africa's history has been marred by continuous struggle for land (Luck, 2003; Roodt, 2003; De Wet, 1997). June of 1913 saw the emergence of a piece of government policy (Natives Land Act - Act No. 27 of 1913), which planted the seeds of a paternalistic attitude toward land possession in South Africa. However, the struggle for land in South Africa started much earlier. Ross (1986: 72) notes that for the Colonial Empire in the Cape Colony to establish itself during the 1800s it required a general and wide scale forcible removal of African population from the land, this included the Khoisan, Griqua and especially Xhosa in the Eastern Cape. Toward the end of the 19th century South African land law

⁴⁶ Here I use place and a piece of land interchangeably, where place refers to a geographical location and land. The reason for this is that 'land' in Barkly East refers to a vast amount of land primarily in relation to farming activities. If you have a 'place' (be it house or shop etc) in town, you arguably also own land but not to the same degree as a farmer does for example. It is important to note that owning a place in town or land to farm, both falls under the larger anthropological understanding of Place as location, locale and sense of place (Agnew, 1987).

was also influenced by British land law through reception clauses⁴⁷. What these reception clauses meant was that any amendments that were implemented in terms of the pre-existing Roman-Dutch law would automatically also change in the countries included in the reception laws with no attempt made to tailor it to the pre-existing land laws in the colony to which it now applied. McAuslan (2000: 79) explains that as a consequence law in South Africa at the time was an imposed law “geared to supporting the carving out of large estates from African occupied land”. These early law practices therefore became the basis from which the Apartheid government could later build a policy through which they could dispossess Blacks from any land owned.

In 1913 the South African government implemented the Natives Land Act (Act No. 27 of 1913) through which the majority of black South Africans were dispossessed of their land. The 1913 Land Act was also known to black South Africans as the "the law of dispossession" (Harsch, 1986: 10). The Act facilitated two main objectives concerning the ownership of land. Firstly, the Act institutionalised exclusive white ownership of land outside of the demarcated 'native' areas, which added up to approximately 90% of the premium farming and mining land in South Africa. Secondly, the Act was the first instrument to be used on a universalised scale to turn black farmers into wage labourers (Mbongwa, 1994: 223).

In 1950 the South African government implemented two policies which contributed extensively to the racial politics of land. The Population Registration Act (No 30 of 1950) which provided for the classification of all South Africans into racial groups, such as 'White', 'Bantu', 'Coloured' and 'Indian', and the Group Areas Act which brought into effect 'race zoning' in South Africa (Budlender & Latsky, 1991: 115). This piece of legislation was phrased tremendously

⁴⁷ McAuslan (2000) explains these reception laws/clauses as follows: These clauses specified that throughout English speaking colonial Africa, at a specified date the common law as practiced and applied in England as well as all its subsequent revisions will also apply to any colonized countries named in the reception clause.

imprecise and crude to the effect that the racial groupings it described were totally bizarre, making racial distinctions according to the curl of one's hair and the size of one's lips (Ebr.-Vally, 2001; Reddy, 2001; Boonzaier, 1988; West, 1988).

Another Act that supported racial segregation through the use of land was the Group Areas Act no 41 of 1950, through which the South African government demarcated the entire country into race sectors which were allocated for the exclusive occupation by the designated racial groups. The Act hereby made it compulsory for people to live in an area designated for the group under which they were classified. The result was mass uprooting of people (who were mostly black), and the wholesale destruction of communities like District Six and Sophiatown (TRC, 1998: 6). Consequently, thousands of people were re-settled into various townships which were located on the outskirts of the cities where they lived with minimal resources and in fear of being chased off the land. The Group Areas Act also supported influx controls implemented by the government as the majority of the black population were “relocated” to resettlement camps in the *Bantustans*⁴⁸ (Roodt, 2003; Ebr.-Vally, 2001). This also brought about a number of consequences regarding the establishment of ethnicity and ethnic groups within South Africa⁴⁹.

The racial policies of the Apartheid government caused enormous heartache and poverty across South Africa. It was only in 1994 with the first democratic elections that these injustices began to be addressed. In an attempt to address the phenomenon of a landless majority in South Africa, the government has

⁴⁸ The Group Areas Act no 41 of 1950 had to effect the creation of the Bantustans. This was later followed by a series of acts (The Promotion of Self Government Act no 46 of 1959; The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act no 26 of 1970; The Bantu Homeland Constitution Act no 21 of 1971 which eventually created the homelands that were supposed to be self-sustaining and autonomous.

⁴⁹ See Sharp (1988) and Vail (1989) for a comprehensive discussion of this phenomenon.

implemented many land restitution and redistribution schemes⁵⁰. These initiatives started with the Interim Constitution Act no 200 of 1993, which “provided a Constitutional guarantee for restitution in more detail than the final Constitution” (Roodt, 2003: 6). In 1994 after the first democratic elections in South Africa, the first law to be passed was the Restitution of Land Rights Act no 22 of 1994 (Adams, Sibanda & Turner, 2000: 142). The Restitution of Land Rights Act established a process by which people who believe they have a reasonable claim to land (i.e. largely land from which they were forcibly removed during Apartheid) could lodge their claim. This claim will then be investigated by the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, and if found valid, would be put to the Land Claims Court (also established by the Act) (Turner & Ibsen, 2000: 11).

While this has been an ongoing and complex process, the government has been criticised for being too slow and not addressing the “real” issues (Roth, 2002; Claassens, 2000; Lahiff, 2000; De Wet, 1997). For example one of the major obstacles has been preventing farmers from illegally evicting farm labourers from their land⁵¹ (Aliber *et al*, 2005: 87 & 88). Another obstacle has been the enormous financial cost to the government of the land restitution programme. Lastly, and one of the biggest concerns laid at the door of government has been the position of women and their land rights, especially in relation to patriarchal land rights and systems of inheritance in South Africa⁵² (Yngstrom, 2002; Hillhorst, 2000; De Wet, 1997; Meer, 1997; Marcus *et al*, 1996).

⁵⁰ The South African Land Reform programme includes Restitution, Redistribution and Land Tenure reform.

⁵¹ Key Tenure Legislation brought into practice by the South African Government to address land tenure reform is the Land Reform (Land Tenure) Act no 3 of 1996 (basic protection of land rights of labour tenants on privately owned farms), Communal Property Association Act no 28 of 1996 (a legislative means through which a group of people can acquire and hold land in common), Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act 31 of 1996 (mechanism to safeguard the rights of people living on land but does so without formal documentary rights), Extension of Security of Tenure Act no 62 of 1997 (generally provides security and protection of people living on privately owned land from random eviction), Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act no 94 of 1998 (deals with the management of the right to control land communally) (Lahiff, 2000: 2).

⁵² More on gender and land in Chapter Five.

Recently in the leisure section of the Mail & Guardian (2005), journalist Mark Weinberg talks about a contemporary photographic exhibition by South African photographers about the lives of the rural poor, as well as issues of land ownership and subsistence farming. In this multi-page spread under the section titled “A Land Scarred by Apartheid” he quotes Ms Khohlela⁵³ of the Landless Peoples Movement saying the following:

“We don’t want to buy land. We have no money. We don’t want to have to buy land because the land is ours. We are not refugees in this country. We were born and bred in this country. We are full citizens of South Africa”

Ms Kholela’s statement leads me to take my argument one step further. Firstly, one has to acknowledge that there is a historical legacy of unequal opportunity to land that has to be rectified and is being addressed by the government. Secondly, people see land as a means to survive economically. Thirdly, and this is where this argument diverges from the everyday practicalities of life, land in South Africa symbolizes belonging. For many whites, especially Afrikaners, land symbolizes home. One aspect of Afrikaner history that is most noticeable is that the land of South Africa becomes a permanent home to them⁵⁴. Coming to South Africa meant making a new home, a home that is permanent and where your descendents will prosper (Giliomee, 2003). This is in contrast to many British colonial descendants today who still have two passports – who can return “home”. The same also applies to Blacks and their perception of the land. Having land or owning land means permanence and signifies that you belong there. While the apartheid government sought to alienate black South Africans from their land by relegating them to the Bantustans, owning land today establishes a permanence that cannot be taken away! Owning land in South Africa symbolises therefore that you are also South African. Thornton’s (1994)

⁵³ Name as used in the article

⁵⁴ Evidence in the many poems and songs written about the land.

argument supports this, and he notes that this has been one of the keys in the conflict between “Whites” and “Blacks”. Thornton (1994: 12) explains that:

“The terms of this conflict are direct and simple – too simple. The most powerfully problematic issue in South Africa is the perplexing logic of identity that lies behind this. It is a country in which two nations both call themselves by the same name, Africans/Afrikaans, yet see each other alternatively as mortal enemies and sons of the same soil. They compete not just for land, but for autochthony, the transcendent moral right to be of the land”.

The idea of land in South Africa therefore also inhabits an ideological space in the minds of South Africans that has to do with ideas of permanence and belonging, but is divided and established according race.

As a part of the wider historical and political context in South Africa, Barkly East shares in the Apartheid legacy of unequal rights and political oppression. Being mainly an agricultural farming district, the area and its current inhabitants find themselves amidst the current land redistribution trends of the government. But in Barkly East these government initiatives have not had any real impact yet. While no people were forcibly removed (for instance Sophia Town and District Six) from land in the Barkly East district, white ownership of these lands never ceased. Continuous white ownership of these farms was made easier by the implementation of prohibitions on black ownership, as well as government subsidies which went exclusively toward 'white farms'.

Race and Place in Barkly East

In Barkly East race still clearly divides the community of residents. Despite a new democratic government and the abolishment of Apartheid, racial segregation is still an underlying current in Barkly East. One of the telling factors is that cross racial friendship groups do not exist. For example:

“There are no personal relations across racial lines! Each group keeps to themselves, have their own friends, and have their own places that they go to!”

Local Preacher

“I am nice to them [blacks] but this does not mean I have to be friends with them. We are not the same – we don’t have the same friends!”

Jolene, Farmer’s Wife

“They [whites] aren’t human – they do not treat us nice – we are not friends we are nothing to each other”.

Focus Group with Black Women

Another telling factor is the way people perceive one another and even talk about each other. Two cases in particular come to mind – both of former mayors of the community. These two examples are also significant since the characters are personalities of considerable importance in their communities, and yet they receive no such respect from the opposite community. For example:

The “Cabbage Head”

This former mayor of Barkly East is still a prominent member of the white community recently bought a big piece of land inside of town. On this piece of land he has planted a vast amount of cabbages. Despite the fact that his time as mayor of the town came to an end about ten years ago, he still holds a considerable amount of authority amongst the white residents. Black residents however have taken to calling him “*cabbage head*”. One, because he plants so many cabbages and two, because they feel he has used his position as a white, former mayor to obtain the rights to farm within the borders of the town.

The “Common Black”

This former mayor recently bought a house in the so-called “good” part of town. It is not a big house, yet it is big enough for him and his family. He became mayor after the abolishment of Apartheid and since his term in office has ended, he has been working as a Development Officer for the local municipality and is a respected member of the black community. Meeting some white farmers for a lunch after my interview with him, they commented that “*he is just a common black who thinks he is white coming to buy a*

house in the white part of town”, but I did not have to worry because he is “one of those good blacks”.

These examples speak to a differentiation between the two communities according to racial lines and imagined characteristics. Both these communities have a general idea about the other. On an individual level there are the exceptions, for example a farmer who has donated one of his farms to his labourers to make sure they have land to farm on in future. However, these examples are few and far between – generally there is a perception on the side of the black residents that all white farmers are racist and cannot be trusted, while on the side of the white residents the perception is that all black people are “stupid” and cannot be trusted.

One of the ways in which place or land tells us about race division in Barkly East is through ownership. As previously mentioned, land in Barkly East is predominantly in the hands of white farmers. Since the establishment of the town they have owned and farmed this district with the labour of mostly black farm workers. In some cases farm-worker and farm-owner share a history of the same piece of land; however this is where it ends. To illustrate this racial disparity that exists in the ownership of a place or piece of land, I look at two cases. The first is that of Uncle Siswana and Oom Johan. Uncle Siswana is a farm labourer who has been evicted from the farm on which he worked for over twenty years and Oom Johan is a farmer whose family has owned their farm for more than one hundred and twenty five years. The second example is of the different assumptions about the town and the local township. Both of these examples will show how through the ownership of a particular place or piece of land, racial differentiation is typified.

Uncle Siswana’s quest for land

I arrived at the agreed upon location where I am supposed to pick Uncle Siswana up. Bongis is with me. He arrives with his three sons – they all want a lift to the

farm. Fearful of whether everyone will fit into the car (with some effort we do), Uncle Siswana, John, Sam, Reginald, Bongi and myself set off out of town. Uncle Siswana is giving directions. *Go left at the big tree. Follow the fence and then turn right at the fork in the road* – there are no road names or signs on farm roads in Barkly East⁵⁵. Uncle Siswana explains to me that these 17 kilometres takes him five hours to walk, he adds that he has done so many a time.

“Usually, or if you are lucky, a farmer will pick you up – give you a ride into town. These days I am not so lucky. Farmers know me now because of the land thing and ignore me on the road! They think I am a trouble maker!”

Uncle Siswana was born on the 11th October 1934 in Mount Fletcher in the former Transkei. Today he is an old man but still remembers why he came to Barkly East initially. He came to work. Uncle Siswana still lives in Barkly East with his wife, twelve children and forty-seven grand children.

When we arrive Uncle Siswana introduces me to his wife. I am taken to one of the old run down buildings where a small woman wrapped in a dirty red checked cloth comes to greet me. She cannot speak English and Uncle Siswana has to translate. She clasps her hands together and curtsies to me – *how can I stop her?* She offers me one of three seats in the house, Uncle Siswana, and his oldest son John takes the other two seats. I am offered tea – it is very bitter but I feel obliged to drink it out of respect to Uncle Siswana’s hospitality. After we have finished our tea and made polite conversation, Uncle Siswana takes me outside and, while showing me his fat sheep, he tells me his story.

“I have been working on this farm for more than say 30 years. The farmer has been good to me – he gives me some cattle and sheep. But since he sold the farm [to a Danish investor] he has stopped liking me. We must go he says. That man does not want you on the farm – you can not let your animals walk here anymore. He says I must sell my

⁵⁵ Knowing where to go means you know the landscape – you have been here long enough to know!

animals to him. But how? How does it work? If I sell him my animals will there not be the same? He is not doing right! Where must I go?"



Image 4.1 Uncle Siswana's house.

Uncle Siswana's little farm labourer's hut is in stark contrast to the large farm house about 500 meters away, now standing empty (see Images 4.1 and 4.2). The labourer's hut has no electricity or running water. It is cold, dark and small. The farm house is big and spacious with a lush garden around it. This is a typical arrangement of buildings on a South African farm (Msimanga, 2000; and Trac, 1988). Since the original owner moved out Uncle Siswana has made sure that everything stays secure and in good order. The new Danish owner who Uncle Siswana has never met remains an enigma. After several enquiries made by myself, no-one seemed to know who he is or when he intends to move in. Uncle Siswana approached one of the local municipality Development Officers for assistance after he heard an advertisement on the radio for the Department of Land Affairs.



Image 4.2 The farmhouse that belongs to the Danish owner of the farm Uncle Siswana currently resides on⁵⁶.

Since Uncle Siswana's official objection was lodged attitudes toward him have changed considerably. The previous farm owner with whom he had good relations has cut off all electricity to Uncle Siswana's house arguing (according to Uncle Siswana) that he is now staying illegally on the farm. Other white farmers do not want to employ him or his sons because "*they are trouble makers*". When asked about Uncle Siswana's situation, farmers noted that they cannot trust Uncle Siswana not to lay claim to their land. This anxiety exhibited by the farmers points to a growing fear amongst farmers that their land will be annexed by the government (see Chapter Seven for more detail). Another interesting result from all of this is that other farm labourers have stopped speaking to Uncle Siswana and do not want to be seen with him as they are worried "*people will get the wrong idea*". Employment in Barkly East is scarce and farm labourers

⁵⁶ This photo was taken from afar due to electric fencing prohibiting one from going nearer to the house.

do not want the stigma of “trouble-maker” impeding their chances of finding employment. This concern is significant and illustrates the extent of control farmers have over not only employment opportunities but also social relations between labourers. Unlike many other South Africans who want the land where they feel their ancestors reside, Uncle Siswana does not. He wants the land so that he can farm. He also does not want the whole farm; he merely wants enough of it to make a living. To be able to remain where he is, and has been for the past thirty years.

Uncle Siswana’s story is significant for two main reasons. It is the typical South African story of a black person who is striving to obtain some land in order to make a living within the context of South Africa’s Apartheid legacy. And, it tells us a lot about hierarchy in this community and issues around land and race. Taking into account that there already exists a hierarchical division amongst white farmers in relation to who owns land and who manages land (i.e. the farm managers), Uncle Siswana’s request is seen as irrational. White farmers generally commented that he (Uncle Siswana) does not need land and that he would not know what to do with it. This is a very paternalistic and offensive generalisation. The general gist of this argument is that he cannot own land because he does not know what to do with it. He does not know what to do with it because he is black. And therefore, blacks who aspire to own land do not know their place!

This is an argument made on different levels. Firstly there is no getting away from the fact that it is a basic racist stereotype of the “stupid blacks”. Secondly it is a preservation tactic in order to keep the land for yourself and your descendants. Thirdly, and arguably one motivation that makes a big impact on the attitude of the farmers is that “success stories” of black farmers do not reach them, and if they do, it is not necessarily something repeated (to farm workers). The reason for this is that most of the time they do not want to know. It serves

their purpose to believe that black farmers will make a failure of the farms they receive from the land redistribution process. It is thus easier to legitimise their own claims to land if they convince themselves, and those who listen, that Blacks do not deserve land because they will be unsuccessful in anyway.

“I work with these people everyday – they just don’t have the same way of doing things. I think it is because they don’t have the same knowledge as us but also because they farm just for themselves. I travel a lot and I see where these people farm and 80% of them are failures. Either they use the wrong feed for the animals or they let them graze the same piece of land over and over again”. Ray, farmer.

One of the examples the farmers in Barkly East hold as “*typical*” example of this is a local piece of land donated by the municipality to the township community. This piece of land is approximately 1200 hectare (the size of a small farm in Barkly East) and is situated next to the township. Here people who live in the township and own cattle (where their cattle do not graze on a farmer’s land⁵⁷) can register to use a piece of the land for a set number of cattle. While a good idea initially it generally has been disastrous because of bad farming practises, for example overgrazing, as well as poor management from the municipality. It is obvious the piece of land is not big enough and the municipality has attempted to buy land in the adjacent areas. Oom Johan Naudé, a local white farmer whose farm is adjacent to the municipal piece of land argues that he was quite willing to sell his land, the way in which the municipal representative handled the matter made him change his mind.

In the next section I reproduce sections out of Oom Johan’s interview. His comments addresses a variety of issues I have discussed in this chapter, in particular the racial relation between farmer and labourer, also his willingness to sell his land but the inability of the municipality to close the deal satisfactorily and lastly an important insight into a farmers’ viewpoint of the land reform

⁵⁷ Often labourers can let their cattle graze with the farm owners cattle at no cost to the labourer.

programme. My aim here to juxtapose the two accounts as both their accounts illustrates the complexity of land as well as race relations here.

Oom Johan Naudé tells his story

“This land has been in our family for more than 125 years. I was born here and my grandfather bought this land for three pounds a hectare. In the 1800’s he paid 3 pounds a morgen not a hectare. A morgen is smaller than a hectare. He farmed at this place, while my father was busy studying medicine, but he became very ill, and his one brother was in Argentina and the other brother was more interested in Gymkana, so he (my dad) had to give up his medical studies to come and farm.

I was born here and I have been farming since the age of 15, 16. At this place, and here we reside. The land on which I farm is 1400 hectares, and I have a piece of land in New England which is about 1600 hectares – I bought this second piece of land later. I bought it in 1972. And to change now at my age is impossible. If I wanted to go and work somewhere, 65 years old – no maybe I will sweep to streets or put in petrol (in cars) but my colour isn’t right to put petrol (in cars).

The land is actually inherited land with land tenure rights – this specific farm will go to my eldest son, he is a pharmacist in Empangeni en he does reasonably well for himself there and I do not believe that he will ever come (here). The second son who farmed on the land I had bought, did not leave as a result of a farming decision – he and his wife got divorced and it was a very unpleasant situation and he felt that Barkly is too small for both of them and he left and he got married again. His father in law has a big car business in Humansdorp and he got involved with that. As a result I do not know whether he will come back to farming – I mean the land will probably be sold one day, but for the land bordering the town area there are no buyers.

The government sent someone to negotiate with me - they were interested in buying the place – but the one I negotiated with was absolutely ignorant, he knew nothing about farming. He came here and made some statements which will eventually incense a man. Then I said to him that the land is no longer for sale and they want to pay me an eighth of what the land is worth, which is not acceptable. I then said to him that they should not come and see me again because I am not interested.

I have no objection to it if, like it is written in the constitution, there is a willing seller and a willing buyer. If it happens, even with this land, I would be willing to help them and to teach them how to farm.

What I have already started doing with my own workers, I have already tried to do for them – when I do work like inoculation against disease I tell them why it is done, how it is done and why it should be done every year and you have to remember when you did it – but apparently it blows in on one side and out on the other! But I am willing if we agree on a good price; I will still be willing to help.

In Barkly East it will work if there is only one farmer per piece of land. And that a whole settlement does not establish itself on that farm because the instant there is an influx of brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts there will also be a lawless element which creeps in. But as long as there is one farmer with his family which farms on a piece of land it will work. But an influx – once they start up a small location, it will not work.

Karen, no it will not work, to have two bulls on in one kraal. It never works – even when my son came to farm it was difficult because he wanted to take decisions and I had the experience – and he wanted to make decisions impulsively – eventually we got along fine after I gave him a piece of land to farm and I had my piece, then he came back to me and asked my advice and it worked well.

But now to cut off a piece of my farm and to say ok fine this one can farm here now, then it will happen as I have previously said, an influx of people on that piece of land and then you sit with something you had not wanted. They should rather buy the whole piece of land, they must take it and then continue (on it) but then it has to be one farmer per piece of land and if that piece is too big, divide it but have one farmer per piece of land”.

Oom Johan argues that he has made peace with the fact that his sons do not want to come and farm and that the land which has been in his family for more than 125 years will have to be sold. It is clear however that the thought of the land being sold still causes him a degree of heartache when he showed me his farm.

What is significant is the fact that Oom Johan was willing to sell his land to the municipality to be incorporated in their piece of communal land. Unfortunately

the person the municipality sent clearly did not understand the politics involved. Apartheid legacy and racial politics aside, to facilitate the process of land reform the government (and in this case the Barkly East municipality) has to learn to negotiate the complexities involved. My research amongst the farmers in Barkly East has revealed certain factors that have to be considered in the land reform process:

- i) Farmers do want money. Yes, farmers do want money for their farms. Many expressed the view that they agree with land reform so long as there is a “willing buyer/willing seller scenario and that the land is sold at its market value. Farmers in Barkly East feel that they have invested many years of hard work and money, and to expect them to sell the farm at an eighth of the farm’s market value, as in the case of Oom Johan, is unacceptable
- ii) Farmers want to be treated with a level of decency and respect. Not taking away from the fact that the majority of them are racially very conservative, they are still people who want to be treated with a degree of respect. One of the things Oom Johan was told was that he [Oom Johan] has been profiting from the farm while people in the township was starving and it was time that he must give back to the community. The man also appeared to know very little about farming and what is needed for a farm to function properly. Oom Johan felt humiliated and insulted and as a result refused any more dealings with the Municipality.
- iii) Farmers would rather sell the whole farm than a part of it. Farmers do not like to see farms divided because then they become smaller and more difficult to survive on.

- iv) Farmers argue that there can only be one farmer per piece of land. Many farmers argue that there can only be “*one boss*”. One person must make the decisions on a farm otherwise disputes erupt. Different farming practises in particular causes a lot of disputes, Oom Johan and his son is a good example where age and perceived amount of experience plays a role.

- v) Lastly, a change in the attitude of the farmers regarding race relations and politics will not happen overnight. It is not only unreasonable but also imprudent to expect a person who has been a certain way his whole life to change his attitudes in an instant. In the same way Luck (2003) argues that one cannot instantly expect farm labourers who have been subservient to farmers their whole lives to suddenly stand up in an open forum between farmers and labourers and debate land issues. These people, on both sides, have been programmed a certain way and have acted accordingly their whole lives. To expect anything less of them, or to be unprepared for their attitudes and responses is negligent and foolish.

From these five points it is clear that there is more to the situation than meets the eye. There is an obvious mistrust between the parties which is exacerbated by misunderstandings that leads to a stalemate rather than a solution. Both parties are empowered to a degree and may use tactics to swing the situation in their favour, for example playing the victim; either as abused farm worker or caring farmer, who is hard done by; is a common ploy. What has to be recognised is that both of these groups also come with their own agenda's that they do not always voice. For example, Oom Johan might not readily acknowledge to a Development Officer that his sons aren't interested in farming the land after him (something he did acknowledge to me), partly because he mistrusts the Development Officer, and partly because it will put him in a lesser bargaining position. Uncle Siswana on the other hand might not want to divulge that he

really does not care where he farms as long as he has a piece of land to farm. It serves Uncle Siswana's purpose to lay claim to this particular piece of land due to current government legislation regarding land tenure.

One can argue that the tactics employed by Uncle Siswana and Oom Johan are tactics for survival, for Oom Johan to make a reasonable profit in order to 'survive' in retirement, and for Uncle Siswana, to be able to survive today and in the future for his family. Consequently their tactics then also serve to support any narratives of belonging they may hold regarding land in Barkly East, by reaffirming their claim to ownership of land in Barkly East.

CATEGORISATION ACCORDING TO PLACE

So far I have argued that place and race in Barkly East are closely connected, especially when it comes to owning land. In addition I want to argue that people are categorised according to place in other ways as well. In particular there are two other categories according to which people are organised and labelled, namely gender⁵⁸ and economic standing. While I am separating these categories, one has to realise that these three are closely connected and they inform one another in everyday life in Barkly East, and so also culminates for many in identifying who they are in terms of those around them. In the next section I will draw on my previous research in Barkly East on the status that is derived from owning a farm in the white community to explain categorisation of economic standing in through place. The status derived from ownership of a farm is taken further in the perceived spatial organisation of the town and township and how this can influence personal identity within, and in terms of the community.

⁵⁸ Spatial organization of gender according to land will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Of town and township

In Nortje (1999) I argued that farmers and especially their wives acquire a degree of social capital by owning a farm. It was clear that women whose husbands own, rather than merely manage the farm, see themselves as having better social status. This type of accumulation of social status according to ownership of land is indicative of the importance of wealth in Barkly East. Ownership of land then becomes a status symbol. In the same manner the town and township has acquired the same type of social and wealth indicators.



Image 4.3 A house in the 'black' part of the township.

The local township in Barkly East is situated to the north western side of the town. As with other small towns in South Africa, the township was built in response to a growing demand for housing for the black labourers who do not work on the farms. Today the township however is also divided into two sections called the Coloured Township (the newer section) and the Black Township (the older section). The racial connotation to the differentiation refers to the racial

segregation as instituted during Apartheid. While the township is no longer strictly for coloureds and blacks respectively, and the town for whites, there are still vestiges of racially hierarchical system working according to place; let me illustrate. Table 4.1 is an analysis of perceptions of the town and township by respondents⁵⁹.

SECTION	LOCATION	RATING	HOW SECURE IS IT?	WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?	TYPES OF DWELLINGS	WHO LIVES THERE?
White part of town	Furthest from the township	Good	Safe	Well kept – clean	Houses	Whites and well-to-do blacks
↓						
Black part of town	Borders the township	Better than in township	Be cautious	Old and new (can be run down) - reasonably clean	Houses/flats/ semi-detached house	Upper middle class blacks and lower class/ poor whites
↓						
Coloured township	North West of town	Undesirable	Unsafe for whites to go to in the evening	New but basic - looks dirty	Houses/flats/semi-detached house/ shacks	Middleclass blacks and coloureds
↓						
Black township	West of town	Bad	Unsafe for all	Older and run down - very dirty	Shacks/semi permanent dwellings	Mainly poorer blacks and coloureds

Table 4.1 Perceptions of residents in Barkly East of the town and township.

Location refers to where the particular part of town/township is located in proximity to the other areas. *Rating* refers to whether respondents thought it was

⁵⁹ This information was not established from a survey; rather it was gleaned from various interviews, over time, during my research.

good or bad overall to stay in that particular area. For example “... *you don't want to stay in that part of town* [black part of town] – *it is next to the township!*” ‘*How secure is it?*’ refers to the assumptions about security in that area, for example respondents commented that you might be less likely to get murdered in your sleep in the white part of town versus the township. ‘*What does it look like?*’ communicates the perceptions of whether they think the people who live there firstly, have the means to keep the place in an orderly fashion, i.e. “... *it must not look like a scrap yard*” and secondly, whether or not they have enough morality to keep it clean. For example, “... *at least they are good people – they keep it neat and clean*”. ‘*Types of Dwelling*’ makes reference to whether you live in a house, flat, shack etc. Inherent in these distinctions are also hierarchy as a house means more prestige than a flat, or a flat more than a shack for example. Lastly, ‘*Who lives there?*’ relates to the perceptions of class and race according to the different areas.

From the table (Table 4.1) I have constructed it is clear that people perceive a hierarchy in the spatial organisation of the town and township. For example, staying in the so-called “white part of town” is more preferable than any other part; however staying in town in general is again superior to the township. While the township is divided according to racial categories those categories don't apply anymore. Rather it is a spatial distinction today identifying economic and social hierarchy. For example:

“I don't stay in that part of the township [black part]. I have a job and my husband is a teacher. You can come to my place and see. I have a garden and it is clean. We are not like those – our children can play in the streets – I don't have to worry!”

Emeline, a resident in the Coloured Township.

Since 1994 the town's demographics has also changed. “*Upper class blacks*” have moved into certain parts of town, for example teachers and development officers from the municipality. This however does not sit well with some of the white residents as they see this as a sign of the town taking a turn for the worse.

Their comments also reflect racial hierarchy and exclusion in terms of place. For example, where previously the town was kept only for whites, the slow but systematic influx of black people bring the reality of the “New South Africa” closer to home. Let me illustrate:

“Yes, there are some blacks in the street behind us. They are not very loud but we don’t like it. These ones are ok, but who’s to say what will come next? Why do they want to stay here in any case? They just want to be white you know! They want to have what we have! At least we are still in the good part of town you know – but I don’t know how long that will last!”

Harry, a resident in the “white part of town”.

Harry’s comment is indicative of the attitude of many Whites in town who still feel aggrieved over the transition to democracy in 1994. He equates the “good part of town” with white people staying there. Harry’s comments also show how he associates black people who want to stay in town as aspiring to be white. This attitude points to a definite perception of hierarchy between white and black. Linked are also ideas around, morality, decency, good neighbourliness and also race and wealth. Binary opposition is therefore created between white and black; good and bad; moral and immoral; decent and indecent; and, rich and poor. Town and township as place therefore not only embodies and orders these oppositions in everyday life; but also categorises those who belong because they are wanted as neighbours and those who are not wanted because they do not fit ‘the profile’. In so-doing narratives of belonging in Barkly East also invests in acceptance within place and community.

CONCLUSION

Casey (1996: 25) speaks of the hold that places have. He argues that places have a particular hold on what is presented. It holds together in a specific order, so that we can remember it, and it tells us of landscape, occupants within its boundaries, events, hierarchy and, very importantly, it tells us of memories and thoughts. “Gathering gives place a staying power, allowing us to return to it

again and again as the same place” (Casey: 1996: 26). Place thus makes provision for the resident as well as the anthropologist because it creates boundaries and thus knowledge of places for individuals. For the anthropologist it also is a medium to understand the community, or at least the ‘place’ from which they are talking, thus helping the anthropologist to place the individual within his place and the larger collection of places.

This chapter has shown that whether you live in town, the township or on a farm, your location does not only place you geographically, it also places you within a racial, social and economic hierarchy through which you are labelled and accordingly judged by its residents. The fact that Barkly East is such a small community relatively removed from other communities contributes to not only a highly pervasive sense of placement of people, but also a need to do so. This need is driven by a sense for *an other* as way of establishing yourself in terms of, and in opposition to, this *other*. Therefore, by assessing your status largely through where you live or what property you own also allows for no real flexibility in the negotiation of identity in Barkly East. Lastly, this chapter illustrates through the use of examples how narratives of belonging become part of everyday processes such as land claims and spatial organisation.

Chapter Five that follows links to the idea of place, in particular gendered space and place. In much the same way as race and economic hierarchy, there is a gendered division of land in Barkly East that I explore through the medium of farm land vs. gardens.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN, LAND AND GARDENING

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa women, especially black women, in comparison to men have limited possibility to own and farm land. In theory men and women are supposed to have equal access to land. In reality women have far less chances of doing so. This gender inequality mainly stems from the distribution of land and gendered division of space. Shirley Ardener (1993: 3) argues that “once space has been bounded and shaped it is no longer merely a neutral background: it exerts its own influence”. Ardener (1993: 3) therefore argues that a space does not stay neutral but that it is through our interactions with and within this space that it exerts influence over- and gains meaning from people. It is therefore important to ask questions such as who shapes space. What are the interactions that give meaning to space? And, more particular to Barkly East, how do perceptions of race and gender influence feelings of belonging with regard to a particular space such as a farm or garden, or even Barkly East as a whole?

This chapter is a discussion of spatial politics in two parts. Firstly, I examine how land as space is gendered. For example, in Barkly East, farms in particular are gendered spaces where farms belong to the man, and the houses and gardens are ‘given’ to the wives. Here issues such as progeniture, hereditary tenure and ownership of land become essential points of discussion. Closely associated to these issues are the way in which the farm as gendered space is constructed and kept in tact by society through ideals of morality and virtue of womanhood in terms of homemaking. I therefore argue that gender inequality with regards to the appropriation of space and distribution of land is found in the spatial organisation of spaces such as farms in Barkly East.

Secondly, this chapter shows how spaces such as gardens are not only gendered spaces but has also become an important cultural and economic space. The garden as aesthetic manifestation signifies the expression of social identity for one part of the community, while for another, economic dependency. I therefore explore the centrality of the garden within South Africa and examine how space is gendered to indicate not only functionality but also beauty.

THE USE OF SPACE

De Certeau, (1984: 117) argues that “space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities”. In essence De Certeau argues that we use and construct space everyday of our lives through our actions and relations to it. Evidence of this can be found in our everyday speech. Without thinking about it we use phrases such as ‘workspace’, ‘personal space’, ‘living space’, and even the word ‘space’ to redefine personal relationships, for example one partner may ask another for ‘space’ in a relationship. By noting the allocation of space given to particular people, the politics behind the use of space becomes clearer. The allocation of office space is a prime example, where an executive may get a big office with lots of room, the secretary will occupy only a small cubicle. The allocation of space, as well as the use of space, therefore often translates into power, very much the same way that the size of a person’s home and car can indicate status (Wood, 1994: 160).

Wood (1994: 160) argues that society uses space as a primary means of designating privilege and importance as shown in the private spheres of work and personal space respectively. Access to space however, and the way the space is ordered in a formal manner, additionally illustrates this argument. The political use of access to space in South Africa during Apartheid indicate this, as privilege (and in this case status and equality) was perpetuated through access to space being prohibited for the majority of the population according to race, for

example the Group Areas Act no 41 of 1950⁶⁰. Race however is not the only way in which space is shaped; gender can also have a significant impact upon the way that spaces are shaped.

A gendered use of space

Distribution of space, as in the case of South Africa, where the division of land was according to race, highlights the fact that such a division can and do have far reaching consequences. Space however is not only directed according to race. Anthropologists have shown that gender plays a significant role in the organisation of space (Low & Zúñiga, 2003; Elliston, 2000; McDowell & Sharp, 1997; Massey, 1993). In particular, Spain (1992: 3) argues that “throughout history and across cultures, the architectural and geographic spatial arrangements have reinforced status differences between women and men”. For example, the interaction of males and females can inform space in a particular way, or men and women might be associated with certain spaces, be it at home or in a community (Pellow, 2003). Gender has therefore played an important part in the way space is directed in our society today, as it confers importance and privilege.

Sometimes space is segregated according to gender in such a way that women’s access to knowledge is reduced, and in return enforces a ‘lower’ status for women in relation to that of men. In so doing, these gendered spaces eliminate women from gaining particular knowledge while at the same time is used by men to “reproduce power and knowledge” (Spain, 1992: 3). While the genderedness of space may differ, the perception of it may also differ according to gender. Massey (1994: 186) gives an example of herself as a teen visiting an art gallery with two male friends to explain how this occurs:

⁶⁰ See Chapter Four for more detail. In Chapter Four I argue that in South Africa land as space has been shaped primarily by perceptions of race and this has been echoed in Barkly East as well.

“. . . I felt objectified. This was a space that clearly let me know something, and something ignominious, about what High Culture thought was my place in society. The effect on me of being in that space/place was quite different from the effect it had on my male friends . . . spaces and places and our senses of them are gendered through and through . . . and this gendering of space and place both reflect and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live”. (Massey, 1994: 186)

Massey's (1994) example shows how a space such as an art gallery, with its depictions of nude models and paintings, had a negative effect upon the female teen, while no such negativity was experienced by the male teens. As Massey (1994: 187) argues, the space was structured in such a way that it proved to be inviting to the male viewer rather than the female. It also shows how the genderedness of a space may be established by attributing either male or female 'feelings' to it.

Gendered space does not only exist in the public sphere, it is also prevalent in the domestic sphere of everyday living. Examining the spatial ordering of the familial home reveals many such spaces where gendering does occur. Spain (1992: 83) argues that the spatial context within which work is executed, for example, duties performed in a formal or informal environment should be regarded as an important subsidiary, i.e. personal space versus communal space. This is significant as the spatial and functional relationships men and women have with space may differ due to the fact that they use space in different ways and at different times (Lamphere, 1993: 63).

Feminists such as Rosaldo (1974: 23) have argued that it is because of the delineation between the domestic and public spheres, and the deliberate association of women to the domestic sphere, where the basis for women's subordination can be found. Here the domestic sphere is put in direct opposition to that of the public sphere. Women, Rosaldo (1974: 24) argues, are distinctly associated with this sphere primarily because of their socially prescribed role as

mothers. This is supported by Ortner's (1974) arguments regarding women as seen as closer to nature and men to culture where stereotypical roles such as motherhood become "natural" conditions for women to be in. Following from Rosaldo (1974) and Ortner (1974) men are seen to be in the public sphere which is equated with culture and rational thinking, while women are relegated to the domestic sphere which is equated with nature and emotions. And in this way this organisation of space through gender expresses social hierarchy between genders. Ardener (1993: 9) argues that while there are other differentiating aspects to society, such as class and ethnicity where hierarchy is expressed through space and its relationship to power, gender is foremost where men mostly dominate women. Gender thus plays an important part in the way space is directed in many societies as it also confers importance and privilege in a way that women's access to knowledge is reduced, which in turn reinforces a lower status for women to that of men (Spain, 1992: 3).

A well known example of the way in which space is ordered, is Pierre Bourdieu's (2003 [1973]) discussion of the Berber house. Bourdieu examines Algerian architecture and cosmology which he ties to the organisation of gendered spaces inside the house as well as outside the house. For example:

"The low and dark part of the house is also opposed to the high part as the feminine is to the masculine: beside the fact that the division of work between the sexes, which is based upon the same principle of division as the organisation of space, entrusts to the woman the responsibility of most objects which belong to the dark part of the house – water transport and the carrying of wood and manure, for instance – the opposition between the upper part and the lower part reproduces within the space of the house the opposition set up between the inside and the outside" (Bourdieu, 2003: 133).

In the *Berber House* example, women are associated with the darker, hidden and lower parts of the house that are connected with life (child birth) and death. This is in contrast to the areas associated with males that are the lighter, warm and the upper areas of the house (Low & Zúñiga, 2003: 9). Here Bourdieu (2003:

133) introduces the idea of domestic sphere versus public sphere in which gender is divided according to space and labour. Lamphere (1993: 63) for example argues that the spatial and functional relationships men and women have with space may differ, and therefore the delineation between domestic and public spheres. Within this delineation the domestic sphere is linked to women and the types of work they arguably do, for example domestic work, food preparation, rearing of children etc. The public sphere is in contrast linked to men and their labour (mostly outside of the house – in post industrial communities in the workplace). Booth (1999) illustrates this with her discussion of the reconstruction of Sicilian towns that were damaged in the 1968 earthquake.

“In the past, women were generally restricted to domestic space of the home and the adjacent courtyard, while men were free to enter the public space of the street and the café, the centre of local economics and politics” (Booth, 1999: 133).

In a typical Sicilian settlement, Booth suggests (1999:135) women would avoid streets and shops and send their men to do the shopping as they viewed these areas as “male areas”. It was only on summer evenings or during religious festivals that women would for example go down to the promenade, but they were always chaperoned by their children or familial men. In this way not only the house, but also the town becomes a gendered space.

In the following section I look at how land in South Africa, and more particularly Barkly East, becomes a gendered space through which power relationships and hierarchy are exemplified.

Land as gendered space in South Africa

Land in South Africa is a prime example of how a space attributes meaning as well as how space can be gendered. In terms of land in South Africa it is not necessarily the movement within space, or from place to place that comes to mind, rather it is the access to ownership of land that becomes paramount here.

The power derived from owning land by patriarchal systems in particular has influenced women's access to land and their ability to survive both socially and economically (Yngstrom, 2002; Ngubane, 1999; Cross, 1999; Walker, 1998; Cross & Friedman, 1997; Meer, 1997; Small, 1997; Thorp, 1997). Certainly the most prominent example of this is women's lack of access to and ownership of land, which is ironic considering the legacy of land dispossession left by Apartheid.

Walker (1998: 15) argues that there are three key constraints to gender equality in relation to access to land. The first constraint is the lack of capacity on the part of the government. A part of this problem is the current legal status of women in South Africa, for example in 2000 the Commission on Gender Equality pointed out that:

“Despite Constitutional guarantees of equality for all persons, glaring incongruities exist within the law whereby certain women continue to be denied full legal status and the capacity to enter into contracts, litigate and to own property and to acquire credit. Not only is this contrary to Section 9 of the constitution ... but it also serves to perpetuate women's legal and social inequality in South Africa”, (Commission on Gender Equality, 2000).

Govender-Van Wyk (1999: 66) notes that one of the stumbling blocks for the government has been that “gender is still an annexure, something that implementers find cumbersome”. Often it is easier to solve the bigger problem such as land reform in general rather than focussing on smaller but equally important ones such as women's access to land. This point is reiterated by Hargreaves (1999: 42) as she argues that land reform targets the “historically disadvantaged” group which is primarily identified by race but which includes differentiations of class and gender. Race is therefore the primary means by which land reform is organised; this however causes concerns around gender and class to be overlooked. It is thus important to note that it is often easier to legislate equality than to implement it. Hence, one can talk about politicised

equality and social inequalities. One of the main reasons for this reoccurring problem is that despite government's attempts at educating its policy implementers, courses organised for these purposes are usually very poorly attended by the staff, in particular male staff (Govender-Van Wyk, 1999: 67).

A second key constraint to gender equality in the process of land reform is the strength of patriarchal attitudes (Walker 1998: 15). This is in fact one of the biggest constraints in this process of equality of land reform because of the pervasive nature of systems of progeniture and patriarchy. The argument has mainly been that women do not need land if their husband's, chiefs, kings, or any other male family member owns or holds land (personally or in trust) (Hilhorst, 2000; Small, 1997). "Especially in rural areas – their [women's] rights, status and representation is overwhelmingly mediated by their relationship to men – whether they fall within the traditional authorities system, live in black owned freehold areas or live and work in commercial agriculture" (Marcus *et al*, 1996: 91). Thorp (1997: 36) argues that in Zulu attitudes towards land, there is no such thing as property in land, here land belongs to the king and simultaneously to the nation. From the king land would then be distributed by the *amakosi*⁶¹ to the people in their charge. In this process land is distributed to the heads of the household (mostly male) and control of the land then resides with these men. For a woman to own land within this structure is therefore very difficult. Another example by Govender-Van Wyk (1999: 66) shows how women from two projects (Makuleke and Mashashane), while actively participating in the election process of the executive committee, were excluded from the actual decision making process as this was considered a "male preserve". It is also through this process, Hilhorst (2000:181) argues women's land claims are evaluated, and so-doing becomes "secondary rights".

The third constraint to gender equality in the process of land reform which Walker (1998: 15) notes is the absence of strong lobbying by groups, especially

⁶¹ Tribal chiefs

women's groups for the equality of women's land rights in the rural areas. One of the key objectives is to take gender equality out of the academic theorizing and into practise. The only way to achieve this is through women's participation and strong social movements. Once again this process is limited by constraints such as women's willingness and their ability (whether or not they are allowed socially) to lobby.

In the next section I show how farms in Barkly East (white owned) are divided and distributed according to gender, as well as the consequences of such a division. Women are seen as less permanent to the land as they do not inherit land themselves and only live on the land their husbands, fathers or brothers own.

DIVISION OF FARMS IN BARKLY EAST ACCORDING TO GENDER

When examining gender equality specifically in relation to access to land, white women in South Africa also fall into the category. While white women's plight is nowhere near that of their black counterparts in South Africa, in *their* lives their differential access to land does make a difference. Not a lot has been written on this subject, and this is the case primarily because it is viewed as the domain of the privileged – and indeed in Barkly East it is. However in comparison to their white male counterparts there are severe discrepancies.

Land in Barkly East passes from father to son, this is mainly so that the family name remains connected to a particular farm (progeniture). Progeniture is embedded in socio-cultural traditions which establish a girl's or woman's status in community through their attachment to a male relative. For example, girls in Barkly East generally do not inherit land from their parents; this I have been told is because girls will marry and their husbands will have their own land and so there is no need for girls to inherit land. In some more wealthy families girls can inherit money up to R1 million, this is however not common practise. But, while this is a substantial amount of money it does not match the cost of a farm with its

buildings, machinery and livestock their brothers will inherit. Therefore patriarchal ideas in Barkly East on who should inherit land and why, are still pervasive today.

On occasion a girl might inherit land, this is however very rare especially if there are sons who can inherit. One such example in Barkly East is that of Jennifer, who, in a way, both accepts the system but has managed to rise above it.

Jennifer is one of the few white women who owns and manages her own farm. Jennifer's family is the sixth generation of Williams' living in Barkly East on the same original farm, and she still regards family as the most important thing in her life. Jennifer is the middle child of three, and has an elder sister and a younger brother. Like her siblings she went to school in Barkly East, but after she completed her schooling she went to study agriculture at a university. Before she could complete her studies however, her father became critically ill and she returned to the farm. Her brother was, at the time, doing duty in the army and she had to stand in for her brother as manager on the farm. When her father died Jennifer did not inherit as much of the land as her brother. She and her sister both inherited a very small piece of land which was inferior to the land left to her brother and it was too small to be farmed on its own. When I asked her how she felt about the situation she said that:

"The worth of the land we each received is not the same, but that is because he is the only son. I think it is right, I don't have a problem with it, when you think about it – he is still the man. I can help him and give him advice but he is still in charge"

Clearly old stereotypes concerning the primacy of male inheritance still exists and is enforced in rural places such as Barkly East. After Jennifer got married she remained in Barkly East, and with the financial help of her husband was able to buy another piece of land to farm, as a result she is one of the only female farmers in the district.

Black women in Barkly East are even more disenfranchised than their white counterparts. This thesis has already established that ownership of land in Barkly East resides in the hands of white residents. Because of this disproportionate access to land according to race, black women have even less of a chance to own land. Their position is further aggravated by their ability to secure a job on a farm. Securing employment on a farm is very precarious and relies on two factors. One, her labour is linked to that of her spouse or partner. Two, closely related to one, her labour is linked to her spouse or husband's relationship with the farmer. In Barkly East it is common practise that permanent employees of the farmer have access to a house on the farm, and their wives are given a job in and around the house. This means it is very difficult for a single black woman on her own, to obtain employment on a farm in any occupation other than in the home sphere. She also cannot choose what kind work she would like to do as circumstance decides for her, for example:

"Me and Samson has been married for say ten years. He is working there at Mr James' place. Now I have to work there too. Before I was working for Ms Martha there on the other farm – I was working in the house. Samson he drink too much and fight with Mr Piet [Martha's husband] and we go. Now here I have to work in the garden. There is no job for me to do in the house, there are two others working there so I have to work in the garden – it is not as nice as the house" Lydia, a "garden girl".

Unfortunately for Lydia, the wife of the farmer Samson works for already has two ladies who work for her in the house. This means she has been relegated to the garden. At her previous job she was one of the senior ladies working for Martha and her job was in the house, now having to work in the garden is seen as a demotion.

The examples of white and black women in Barkly East show how women's positionality in relation to land and employment often relies on patriarchal attitudes and systems. In the following section I will show how gender division of land links women to notions of domesticity, which in turn once again supports

and legitimises systems of progeniture. In so-doing the proverbial 'vicious circle' in which women's inequality is institutionalised and socialised, is created, legitimised and supported.

Gender division of farms in Barkly East linked to homemaking

Another dimension to the gendered division of land/space in Barkly East is how women on the farms, as well as their labour are generally seen to be concerned with homemaking (Nortje, 1999). In general a farm in Barkly East ranges between 1500 to 2000 hectares. Of this the house and garden comprises approximately 1 acre⁶². This is just about 2% of the total land. Often a farmer will own more than one farm, however only the farm house on the main farm will be used. This makes the percentage ratio even less. Within this set-up the farm land usually falls into the sphere of the man and the house and garden into the sphere of the woman.

In this regard one can argue that the layout of the farm is gendered. The home and the garden 'belong' to the wife, while the rest of the farm and the running of it remains the husband's responsibility. For example, Leonie's husband, Frans feels that "giving" his wife the garden, gives her something to do.

"Ag I gave her the garden – it gives her something to do. I don't have time for things like that. I work from early the morning, before six and come home for lunch at say one. Then I go out again, I have to check up on the boys⁶³ [black male farm labourers] and make sure everything is right. I don't have time to still work in the garden. She can decide – every now and then I give her some boys and they can dig the holes and so on."
Frans, a farmer.

Frans's comment reinforces the attitude that women are not to be concerned with the actual running of the farm; these important activities are 'for males only'. Making a home and keeping the garden beautiful is the job of the woman. Once

⁶² 1 hectare = 2.47 acres

⁶³ This is a racist and derogatory name given to black males and used during the Apartheid era.

again the debate pertaining to the domestic-public dichotomy enters the discussion. As a part of the public sphere the farm embodies the husband's concern with the greater more important realities of life, hence his elevated position in the household and community (Nortje, 1999). The wife on the other hand is merely concerned with the aesthetic and homely. Her problems do not weigh as heavily on her shoulders than those of her husband's.

Jane Adams (2004; 1993; 1991) who does research on the position of women on farms in Illinois, America, notes how perceptions of women on farms in Illinois changed from hardworking producers to that of unproductive consumers. Adams (1991:2) argues that despite women's equal contribution to the labour force on farms, policy-makers insisted on excluding women's contributions from their calculations definitions of for example "work" and "gainful employment".

"Despite the inability of statisticians to find ways to enumerate women's unwaged labour, farm men, including working age sons, were considered as gainfully employed if they worked on their own farm, while farm women were rarely if ever so considered" (Adams, 1991:3).

These attitudes Adams (2004; 1993; 1991) argues stems mainly from a "Calvinist" tradition where a women's worth is measured in terms of her family and homemaking abilities rather than her contribution to the labour force, and a shift to modernised and mechanized farming practises.

As with their counterparts in Illinois, America, women in Barkly East's role remains within the sphere of homemaking, primarily due to their positioning as part of the domestic sphere. Women on farms in Barkly East face some of the same issues as their worth is often also measured in the homes they keep (Nortje, 1999). On the one hand home has to do with the actual keeping and decorating of the house. On the other hand, home also has to do with family, husband and children and your ability as mother, wife and nurturer to take care of them. For example, having children in Barkly East and being perceived as a

good mother is of considerable importance. Diane Richardson (1993: 75) argues that this is because “having children brings status; it is the principle way in which a woman becomes socially recognised as being a “real” woman”. This is supported by social and religious perceptions of what makes a “good woman”. For example:

“First of all when I look at a woman, I want to know what kind of family person she is. How important does she consider her children to be? Does she put her own pleasure in front of that of her children and her family?” Antoinette, wife and mother

“The Bible teaches us that the man is the head of the house, just like Christ is the head of the church. It also tells us that a good woman is selfless and works for her family and her community. This gives women lovely direction in their lives and shows them the path they must follow. We have good women and not so good women in Barkly East, just like any other place. But mostly the women here know how to look after their men and families. I taught my daughter myself how to cook, and do needlework.” Celeste, widow and mother

“Men know what do to and women know what to do. What will happen if I suddenly decide to muck about in her [wife’s] kitchen? What do I know about nappies and bottles?” Colin, husband and father

Despite such attitudes and ideas as shown above, women do other work, normally reserved for them but not really acknowledged as significant. Many women serve as bookkeepers to the farm business, manage the staff and generally becomes the farmer’s PA. Wives of less affluent farmers might find work in town as secretaries, teachers etc. The difference is that they are judged by women and men alike according to their homemaking abilities. This role of homemaker in the community is supported by institutions such as the Vroue Landbou Vereeniging⁶⁴ (Women’s Agricultural Society), School and Church committees, Farmer’s Association and even the local Free Mason’s.

⁶⁴ Also known by the acronym, VLV. This is an agricultural society for women who live mostly in the rural sectors of South Africa. They do however have some branches in the big cities as well.

The VLV serves as educational tool for women regarding everything from child rearing practises, flower arranging, needlework and candle making. Committees organised by the Churches and School usually involves women having to bake, knit and the general organisation of fund raising events. The local school for example holds an annual School Dinner, where mothers from grade one pupils get the opportunity to host the dinner. As part of your duty you must decorate a table, organise food and invite guests to your table. The table which is judged best gets a prize. At the Farmer's Association very few women actually attend, only Jennifer for example, women otherwise organise the food and drink for the organisation. In the same way, the wife of the Free Mason whose turn it is to host the meeting has to organise the food and drink there. Men in these endeavours merely have to attend; women always do the cooking, selling, decorating and organising. All of these activities are structured in a way that reflects their activities in the home.

It is because of institutionalised and socialised roles for women in Barkly East, that when it comes to the division of farms they are relegated to the domestic, the house or garden. This section shows that women, not only in Barkly East, but in other parts of the world such as America, are relegated to the sphere of the home by virtue of their gender. In Barkly East a gendered division of space as found in relation to farms also have an important impact upon the way that women create narratives of belonging. Here we see how women, through systems of patriarchy and progeniture are not only geographically separated from the land but also ideologically. The argument that women (and men) are socialised into is that, because women are closer to the home and family (in comparison to men who own land) they have lesser feelings of belonging and attachment to it. This is however not the case. Female residents argue that they, despite their small chance of actually owning land, feel as connected to the land as men. For example:

“This may not be the farm I grew up on, but I still love Barkly East. This is my home and this is where I belong” Elsie, farmer’s wife

HOW DOES MY GARDEN GROW IN BARKLY EAST?

The first white settlers in Barkly East were of British descent and looked toward creating a “home away from home” by establishing places similar to what they had known in Britain. In Barkly East the legacy of a former colonial empire is clearly visible when you read the names of the various farms and areas Barkly East Reporter, 1973: 15). New England, Rhodes and Clifford are some of the areas while Scottish farm names such as Glengyle, Pitlochry, Lochlin, Killoch, were named by the first European settlers in the district. One of the favourite stories told by the residents is that of one of Joseph Orpen’s⁶⁵ direct descendents, a stately old dame who, until her death, oversaw the raising of the Union Jack every morning at first light in their front garden.

Many residents argue that one of the ways through which a sense of the “homeland” was created was through the establishment of gardens that emulated those in Britain. For example I was told that gardens were ordered in a specific way and had vast expanses of grass, roses in particular were also planted. Today Barkly East has numerous lush gardens some of which could rival parks and we see that the yearning to create something familiar has changed today into a desire for prestige. By making use of popular gardening magazines, satellite television and the Internet, popular trends have replaced historical significance.

At the same time, while one section of the community looks toward the aesthetic value of their gardens, another looks toward the economic value. Black women have only recently in South African history been allowed to own land. This however is still marred by various “traditional concerns” regarding land

⁶⁵ Joseph Millard Orpen arrived in the district of what is today known as Barkly East in 1864. He was given the task of measuring out the first farms in the district.

ownership⁶⁶. In Barkly East a small number of women have been given the opportunity to own pieces of land. These pieces of land are gardens of subsistence where potatoes are planted instead of roses, and economic value is sought instead of beauty.

In the next section I will look at some ethnographic examples of women, both white and black and their gardens.

Gardens of Beauty and Prestige

Gardens in Barkly East are “Garden & Home”⁶⁷ gardens. Months of planning goes into the perfect flower bed. Magazines bought in Bloemfontein are carefully searched for the feature that will give the garden just that extra special appeal (see for example Image 5.1). And if you are lucky the phone lines are up and running and you can order the Anneline Kriel⁶⁸ or Marike de Klerk⁶⁹ rose in time for spring! An almost unlimited supply of water and labour makes it easier for these gardeners to set up these tropes of beauty.

Lynette’s garden is beautifully lush with shrubs and trees overhanging the many rose bushes in the garden. Her rose bushes actually look like rose trees their stems are so thick. She says she has a special formula for her rose bushes that she developed. She started planting them when she had her second child about eleven years ago and they have just grown and grown. Her garden has many twists and turns with rows of Helleborus, Daffodils, and Tulips that line paths between huge oak trees. One has to be careful which plants you plant as the severe cold in winter with its snow can kill plants within the first week of winter.

⁶⁶ As discussed earlier in this chapter.

⁶⁷ One of South Africa’s foremost gardening magazines. Various Barkly East gardens have been featured in the magazine.

⁶⁸ Former South African beauty queen and Miss World.

⁶⁹ Former first lady and wife of former South African President F.W. de Klerk.

Here and there is a secret bench or a water feature, it is not merely a garden it is a discovery of foliage, flowers and colours.



Image 5.1 A Sun-dial in a secluded corner of the garden.

Lynette's garden is one of the biggest garden's in the area and the garden club often visits her garden for their meetings. But, Lynette's husband does not own his own farm; rather he is the manager on someone else's farm. Not owning one's own farm is not as prestigious and Lynette feels this keenly.

“Ja, he does not own his own farm. It should not make a difference but it does. These women whose husbands have their own farm they think they are something! If they see you don't have money they think you are nothing. Money, just like that, money. I think it is very important in Barkly East. If you have money you are there. If you are a farm manager's wife you are just going to be on the same level as a farm manager's wife. For them it is not about Oh you are nice, or you can bake a lovely cake or you have a great child, stuff that! If you have money and own your own farm you are in!”

One of the ways in which Lynette can acquire status is through her garden through which she can 'buy' her way into Barkly East society. Other women recognise her ability to produce a beautiful garden and this gives her a certain amount of status.

For Lynette and other ladies like herself it is a way to rise above their inferior status in the chain of land owners and land managers. But even for women whose husbands do own their own farms, gardens are a source of prestige and in many ways serves to establish their permanence and position in the community. Keeping a neat and aesthetically beautiful garden is also linked to the kind of woman you are, whether you embrace the duties of motherhood and family, whether you are socially and community minded, as well as moral and virtuous - both are important attributes to have for women in Barkly East (Nortje, 1999).

While in Barkly East I had the opportunity to meet with Ashley, a woman who holds that she does not care about prestige and status in the community and beautiful gardens. *"It is not that I don't like beautiful gardens or appreciate the effort one puts into it – it just isn't important to me!"* says Ashley. She has in fact acquired a reputation as a hippie and many people believe that she and her husband Greg smoke Marijuana and party all the time. Ashley has two children one is in school and the other is still too young to attend.

Ashley invited me for the weekend to her house to celebrate her husband's birthday with them. When some of my other respondents found out I was going to Ashley's, I was charged with a mission. The assignment was to find out what it looked like inside the house. What kind of food do they eat? Can she cook? One even went so far as to ask whether they had curtains in front of the windows. I could not understand their curiosity and it all seemed strange to me. Usually these women know everything there is to know about one another, yet here was an exception to the rule.

I eventually found out that the farm Ashley and Greg lives on used to belong to another prominent family in the district. It seems that after Ashley and Greg moved in a lot of things changed, including the upkeep of the garden. One respondent noted that:

“That garden used to be beautiful. One of the best in the district! When you drove past you could see that good people live here. You should see that garden now. I mean it does not look bad But it is just there. She does nothing to it – it just lies there! I wonder what her house looks like – it must be a mess!”

Ashley actually cut the size of the garden in half; she argues that her family does not use such a big space and that it also uses less water and labour that way. In addition she does not have the time to spend hours planning and laying out the garden. What has in fact transpired here is that the previous lady of the house kept her garden in an immaculate condition, the envy of the entire Garden Club. Her attributes as homemaker, mother and wife were never brought in question! Now Ashley has moved in, the garden as symbol of her abilities to care for her family has not only been cut in half, it is left unattended for long periods of time. In the eyes of these women, Ashley’s deteriorating garden signals her inability as a woman to care for her children.

One of the ways through which gardening has become a formalised activity for the ladies has been through the *Garden Club*. The club was initially organised for women on the farms but today women from both the town and the farms belong to the club. Many women who do not belong to the club argue that it is merely a way for women to parade their wealth and to gain “points”. The *Garden Club* is not exclusively for women, however, any men who attend are scrutinised by the community regarding their masculinity and sexual preference (Nortje, 1999). Once again the perception of a gendered space emerges. Here it is manifested through the questioning of not only the masculinity but also sexuality of any men that attend. The fact that they own gardens is thus not questioned, what is questioned is whether they are ‘real’ men, because ‘real’ men do not

garden; only women do. This gendered perspective is carried through to which of the labourers are allowed to work in the garden. Adult male labourers are not allowed to work in the garden on a full time basis. Rather, if a wife wants manual labour to be done in her garden⁷⁰, she may ask her husband to 'lend' her some of his labourers to assist her. Femininity thus becomes a prerequisite for gardening. This is illustrated through the general 'ownership' of the garden, the female or black male labour used for the cultivation of the garden, and the fact that no "real"⁷¹ knowledge or expertise is needed.

I have seen many beautiful gardens in Barkly East owned by proud women who, through their meticulous gardening, have cemented their position in their community as good wives and mothers. But there are also other women and other gardens to be considered here. These I call the gardens of subsistence.

Gardens of Subsistence

It was hot and we had been walking for about a half an hour. In the distance I saw Pumi and Nomsa waiting for me. I was invited to help them cultivate their garden for the afternoon. It was dry and dusty and absolutely no shade. I have never been a very good gardener and I wondered whether it would make a difference. Pumi and Nomsa seemed sure that I would be a help rather than a distraction! (Field Diary Entry)

Pumi is 35 years old. She was married for a few years but her husband left her and her three children. She has a shack in the 'black township', it is small and very cold in winter, but "*at least it is somewhere to stay*". She has been looking for a job for a few years now, working here and there but nothing permanent. It has been particularly difficult for her to keep a job and having to look after her children as she moved to the district to be with her husband. She has no other family here and has to rely on neighbours to help keep an eye on her children.

⁷⁰ White women generally do not do the manual labour in their garden's themselves. Black labourers are instead employed at minimal wage to do the manual labour and weeding.

⁷¹ 'Real' knowledge refers to knowledge that is of greater importance to the survival of the farm. For example, how to plant a rose bush is of much lesser value and importance than to know what feed to grow for the sheep.

“He left after the third child was three. I never saw him. Now I work and feed the children. I struggle a lot. I can work hard, I know how to clean a house and cook but people don’t want your children there, what can I do?”

Nomsa also lives in the township with her mother (retired), husband who does not work and two of her four children. She also has found it difficult to find work. She can do the work, Nomsa tells me but there is just no work available! Nomsa is not happy in her relationship with her husband and see sees him as a drain on the resources rather than a help. Divorce however is unheard of especially as she is Catholic.

“He sits at home and drinks. I told my daughter to check first before taking a man, I mean – look at my husband. He, yes, he does not work at the moment he had a job but made trouble there at the furniture place and they fired him. I work hard and have children to look after. It is difficult I can tell you!”

	Black African Women
No income	3.6
R 1 – R 400	42.0
R 401 - R 800	17.0
R 801 - R 1600	11.7
R 1601 - R 3200	14.0
R 3201 - R 6400	9.0
R 6401 - R 12800	2.2
R 12801 - R 25600	0.2
R 25601 - R 51200	0.0
R 51201 - R 102400	0.1
R 102401 - R 204800	0.0
R 204801 or more	0.0

Table 5.1 Level of income of Black African women in the Senqu LM (Census, 2001)

The 2001 Population Census indicates that the majority of “Black African” women in the Senqu district are either unemployed or are not economically active. This means that 87.7% of all “Black African” women in the district cannot contribute to the household income. Table 5.1 also shows that 58.8% of these women earn

less than the national minimum wage. This is an alarming statistic especially in a community where majority of the households in the township are female headed.



Image 5.2 Pumi on a piece of land recently donated for a garden of subsistence

Pumi and Nomsa fall into this category of women who have been unable to find jobs and provide an income for the family. As a result they applied to the municipality for a piece of land where they could plant some vegetables to support themselves. The municipality however was unable to help as their resources are limited. A self-help scheme was organised by a group of unemployed women with the help of the local Social Services division. A farmer from the district donated a piece of land outside of town which these women can use communally for planting vegetables and other crops such as potatoes. This

is not an ideal situation for Nomsa and Pumi. The amount of vegetables they can generate can never compare to the large output of farms, and yet they argue *“it is better than nothing”*.

Pumi and Nomsa are gardeners; however their gardens are not merely for aesthetic value like their white counterparts'. Rather, they have gardens of subsistence where roses are replaced by potatoes and grass lawn with crops. Gardens of beauty and gardens of subsistence make an interesting comparison. This comparison highlights two important themes in this chapter. Firstly, a gender division of land and space exists which is linked to notions of beauty for women, rather than economic value and attributes. Secondly, this comparison highlights the continuous disenfranchisement of black women in Barkly East, as well as their dire economic position.

CONCLUSION

The everyday practise of gardening in Barkly East link women to broader systems of inequality that operates at both national and international level. In South Africa black women have been part of a landless majority up to and until the 'new democracy', and despite numerous government interventions many women still struggle to own and inherit land. Internationally women experience inequality and suppression many ways but in particular through the gendered use and division of space. Attitudes towards women's "place" in communities are often linked to the home and domesticity and this has had an effect on ideas about the worth of so-called women's work world wide.

Barkly East illustrates not only how gender division of space link women irrevocably to domesticity but also to an inferior position with regard to notions of belonging. The premise that women do not want or need land, or even feel connected to the land is a strong one. This erroneous presumption is however supported by systems of progeniture and patriarchy that are systematically

carried over from generation to generation through a process of communal socialisation.

Lastly, there is also a clear disjuncture between the two types of gardens described in this chapter. These two modes of garden cultivation by the women of Barkly East however tell us something more than just their differing tastes in flora. For white women gardens are beautiful and inform their sense of status and prestige within their community. For black women gardens are cultivated for subsistence purposes only.

CHAPTER SIX

MEMORY AND LANDSCAPE IN BARKLY EAST

Yhi brings Life to the World *-An Aboriginal dreamtime creation myth-*

In the beginning the world lay quiet, in utter darkness. There was no vegetation, no living or moving thing on the bare bones of the mountains. No wind blew across the peaks. There was no sound to break the silence. The world was not dead.

It was asleep, waiting for the soft touch of life and light. Undead things lay asleep in icy caverns in the mountains. Somewhere in the immensity of space Yhi stirred in her sleep waiting for the whisper of Baiame, the Great Spirit to come to her.

Then the whisper came, the whisper that woke the world. Sleep fell away from the goddess like a garment falling to her feet. Her eyes opened and the darkness was dispelled by their shining. There were coruscations of light in her body. The endless night fled. The Nullarbor plain was bathed in a radiance that revealed its sterile wastes.

Yhi floated down to earth and began a pilgrimage that took her far to the west, to the east, to north and south. Where her feet rested on the ground, there the earth leaped in ecstasy. Grass, shrubs, trees and flowers sprang from it, lifting themselves toward the radiant source of light.

Yhi's tracks crossed and recrossed until the whole world was clothed in vegetation.

(Reed, 1999)

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Aborigines are one of the best examples to show the extent to which people becomes “part” of the land, and in return, the land a part of them. For example, today when the Aborigines retell the story of Yhi and how her tracks clothed the world in vegetation, it is not just a story of creation, it is also a way in which land becomes a conduit through which wo/man and goddess is connected. Walking the pathways and caring for the sites connects current day Australian Aborigines to a mythical time in history which opens a channel to knowledge and guidance from the ancestors. The connection between a people and a piece of land is supported through ways of remembering and retelling of narratives of origin and belonging.

In this chapter I argue that memory and landscape in Barkly East works together to create a different perceptions of belonging and heritage for both black and white residents. Perceptions of belonging are integrally linked to memory. In

Barkly East people remember differently as they have different memories of places and spaces.

This chapter therefore examines the connection between memory and landscape. Coupled with memory and landscape are ideas about sacredness, not necessarily in terms of religion or ancestral worship such as the case of the Aborigines, but rather in relation to identity and belonging through notions and perceptions about land. The chapter starts by looking at memory and the way in which it works to place individuals not only in a familiar “place” but also to create and establish identity and notions around belonging. The second part of the chapter focuses on landscape, and examines its ability, in much the same way as memory, to root individuals to a particular place by informing their sense of self, community and heritage.

WHAT IS MEMORY AND HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND ITS SIGNIFICANCE?

Memory and the process of remembering have significance in life. People often think of memories as a recreation of a significant event. Memory is so much more however. It is with us every day in everything we do. Because of it we know what we like and dislike, and more simply we know our way home. In this way memory also creates stability and consistency for patterns of everyday life.

We constantly place our bodies within and in relation to memories. Nettleton and Watson (1998: 2) argue that one thing is for certain, we all have a body. I would argue that closely connected to our bodies we find memories. The point really is that without bodies one cannot have memories, whether it is to produce our memories or whether we place ourselves within a particular place through our memories. Sometimes it is like going to a long awaited event, a concert, exam or even a wedding for example. You cannot remember what happened exactly but you know you were there, a song, a smell or a feeling might trigger a vague recollection, a sense of being there. But memory works also on another level, a level of nostalgia for example where feelings of longing become paramount in the

process of remembering. Nostalgia is often linked to positive recollections of how things were and a longing to recapture those times. Memory is also closely linked to history and heritage where our bodies were not necessarily at a particular place or moment but where we imagine our bodies being or bodies of our ancestors being there.

Memory should also be placed alongside forgetting. Why do some people choose to forget rather than to remember? Why is so much emphasis placed on remembering, especially in relation to self, community and identity?

What is memory and how does it work?

Scientific knowledge regarding the actual physiological process of memory and storing of memories is at once sketchy and complex (Eckhert, 1988: 219). Trying to understand the process of remembering on the physiological level requires one to delve into the neurophysiological mechanisms of complex behaviour (Eckhert, 1988: 219), in other words learning and memory. In an attempt by this *social* scientist, who has difficulty keeping her amygdalas and hippocampuses⁷² straight, to gain some 'scientific' understanding of this subject I turned to the Babette Rothschild's (a psychotherapist) explanation of memory.

According to Rothschild (2000: 26-27) a piece of information, perceived from internal and external environments, has to go through three steps to become a memory, these steps are: 1) encoding, 2) storage and 3) retrieval. In this process all senses are needed to form a picture of the world perceived, which the brain will then process and store as "thoughts, emotions, images, sensations and behavioural impulses" (Rothschild, 2000: 26).

Social scientists on the other hand, for many reasons have chosen only to focus on the fact that we have memory and so have tried to understand it through its

⁷² The Hippocampus and Amygdala are two of the principle regions in the human brain thought to be involved in the consolidation and storage of memory (Curtis & Barnes, 1989: 894).

manifestations, and have commonly described it as layers of Rothschild's (2000: 26) thoughts, emotions, images, sensations and behavioural impulses. Henri Bergson (2004) writes in 1906 that memory is never just one image, it is an image or representation, upon image or representation, upon image or representation. It is a layer of memories all within its own time or date and space, but it is never alone. Bender (2001: 4) supports this idea by arguing that "memory is not the true record of past events but a kind of text that is worked upon in the creation of meaning. Identities are continually crafted and re-crafted out of memory, rather than by the fixed course of real events". But it is not only personal identity that is influenced by memory. Memory is also linked to other key factors. These factors include for example issues around embodiment, conceptualisation of community as well as questions regarding authenticity, representation, and truth and belonging, all of which I hope to touch on during this chapter. It is also because of these factors involved in memory formation, that this subject has become so important in Anthropology today.

Broadly defined I would argue that a memory is a recreation of a certain event, person, place or time (even feeling or emotion) by a particular person or group. Memories are therefore, embodied, subjective, filtered, individual and collective. Lastly memory is linked to our sense of self (who we are as individuals); heritage (our sense of rootedness within community and history); history (legitimate accounts of the past) and landscape (the recognition of the link between heritage and place). In order to illustrate my point here I will refer to various current day examples that exemplify these characteristics in the following section.

Memory: Filtered and Subjective, Individual and Collective

To illustrate how memories are filtered and subjective, individual and collective and therefore also embodied I use the iconic presence of District Six. Etched in the minds of various people across different cultures and races, District Six, both in South Africa and internationally, holds a special place in history. Often compared to other inner-city areas such as the Left Bank (Rive Gauche) in Paris,

the East End in London and the Bronx in New York, District Six not only became renowned for its cosmopolitan mix of residents but also for the forced removal of its residents of close to 66 000 people by the Apartheid government in a period of fourteen years from, 1966- 1981. Situated close to the inner city of Cape Town, it was both 'eyesore' for the Apartheid government's legislative policies⁷³, as well as coveted prime land near the city centre (Coombes, 2003: p118).

The representation of this place that no longer exists, except in the minds of people today, has come under scrutiny. The District Six Museum in particular for example has been both praised for its multi faceted representation of the community, as well as accused of representing the history of this place as a coloured one⁷⁴. To illustrate, Ralo (2000: 152) argues that the inability of institutions such as the District Six Museum to remind people that District Six was a "multiracial place", has impacted upon the way in which claimants in the restitution process of District Six were accommodated and received restitution. Ralo's (2000) main argument stems from the fact that black District Six residents were the first to be removed after which coloureds followed. These various groups were also not removed to the same place, for example the black residents were relocated to places such as Langa and Gugulethu while their Coloured counterparts were relocated to Mitchells Plain and the Cape Flats. The fact that District Six embodies a more pronounced so-called coloured identity today is clear as Soudien (2001: 117) also notes that "... the district has been used to legitimize coloured claims for place within the South African order". This has also caused many black former residents to feel betrayed; it is as if their contribution is being forgotten.

It is evident therefore that perceptions of a District Six community have changed, not only over time but also in relation to the purpose the perceptions then, and

⁷³ The Group Areas Act no 41 of 1950 required people of different races, as defined by the Apartheid government, to live in separate geographically defined areas.

⁷⁴ As opposed to black or even multi-racial one.

recollections now, serve. During the forced removals a perception of one community against the government prevailed. For example: "The District has come to embody a collective memory of home, family, neighbourliness, and above all community" (Swanson & Harries, 2001: 62). At the same time, memories of District Six are clearly filtered and subjective the recreation is already examined, thought about, discussed and shaped according a particular person or community and their specific context.

District Six is also remembered with much fondness and nostalgia of the good rather than the bad. For example, Swanson and Harries (2001: 72) quote one of their respondents as saying:

"The gangs did not interfere with people from Hanover Street. They fight on each other. But not with decent people, no! They drank and smoke dagga, but they did not interfere with good people"

Swanson and Harries (2001:71-73) note however that these recollections of gangs as being "gentlemen gangs" is in fact a distortion. The gangs were in fact not peaceful and harmonious; rather crime and violence were rife and became part of everyday life.

It is clear that memory in District Six is selective and purposeful rather than random and without direction. Soudien (2001) summarises what is happening here nicely when he argues that in District Six memory is produced by those remembering in the face of an official memory of fact and arrogance as perpetuated by the Apartheid government which was used to legitimise the forced removals. Rather Soudien (2001: 118) argues, ". . . of deep significance is the extent to which District Sixers have been able to retain control of their own modes of description and to be able to *speak* themselves". Evidently therefore claiming, or maybe in the case of District Six reclaiming, as well as forming

memories are strongly linked to ideas around identity, heritage and belonging⁷⁵. Land thus acquires meaning because people give it meaning.

Memory in Barkly East is also clearly subjective and filtered, while at the same time works it to create and enforce well defined distinctions between groups within community of residents of this area. I believe there is an important difference between the memories of Barkly East residents and how these people understand and live within its borders today through their memories. It is very clear that the majority of whites live in a Barkly East of prior to 1994 and even before that. The former Barkly East, especially during the late 1970s, was a place of opulence, government grants, cheap labour and easy living for the most of the white farmers. Even the white people who lived in town had it arguably easier, the administrative and clerical posts available (not very many) according to apartheid regulation were kept for white people only – a common phenomenon in South Africa during Apartheid and supported by Apartheid laws⁷⁶ This is in striking contrast to their black counterparts who under strict apartheid laws could only occupy certain positions in the job market. With the 1913 Land Act still in operation (including all its adjectives) black South Africans could not own land and as a result one of the few options open to them was to work as labourers on these farms. This was the case in Barkly East as well.

THE SWEET WITH THE BITTER: REMEMBERING BARKLY EAST

As with the dual history in Barkly East (as discussed in Chapter Three), memory also works on a dual continuum here. One side strongly linked to the land, a

⁷⁵ These issues are closely linked to concepts of space and place (already discussed in Chapter Four) and also landscape, a discussion of which is to follow later in this chapter.

⁷⁶ Some of the acts that made job reservation possible in South Africa were: The Mines and Works Act of 1911: It reserved certain skilled work on the mines for Whites. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924: It allowed for industrial councils, where trade unions could negotiate with employers. But it excluded Black Africans from membership of trade unions, and as a result from industrial councils. The Wages Act of 1925: It set compulsory minimum wages for white workers in unskilled jobs. The Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926: Also known as the Colour Bar Act. It excluded Africans and Indians from skilled work. It provided certificates of competency for trades in the mines which could be issued only to Whites and 'Coloureds' in certain occupations.

sense of landscape and the way of life it brought. The other side without land with, as this research has revealed, an unwillingness on the part of the black residents to remember themselves in relation to the land. The following section will show how the memories and the stories constructed by various residents of Barkly East inform this argument of a dual memory continuum.

I am looking at two examples of people and how they remember Barkly East. My first example is that of Otto Brown and his wife Sue. Both of them were born and brought up in Barkly East. The Browns are a prominent family in the white community of Barkly East and have occupied this position in the community for several generations. Again with so many other couples the husband's family has a longer history in Barkly East (result of more women than men marrying into the community), yet nevertheless both feel that Barkly East is "*in their blood*". My other example is that of Pastor Mushonga. Pastor Mushonga, like Otto Brown, is also a prominent member of the black and coloured community. In fact he is regarded as one of the leaders in this community and he is the minister of one of the largest churches in the district. I have chosen these two examples for a number of reasons: they are both prominent members of their communities. And, both have grown up in the district and both have very distinct feelings toward the place and its people. Furthermore, these two examples contrast each other in that for Otto Brown Barkly East has been a place of comfort, heritage and memory. For Pastor Mushonga, it has been none of these things – the fact that he lives in Barkly East is purely functional and professional.

The Sweet

"It is important to remember where we come from – this will also tell us where we are going. I want to know that my father and his father before him walked here – farmed here. It gives you a sense of who you are. I have many memories – happy memories of staying here – of working hard. Being a farmer is not all moonshine and roses. You have to work hard, especially today! I also want my children to remember – to have a connection to the land, to the history of this place" Otto Brown, farmer

Otto's sentimentality to the land is quite interesting (but not unique) especially in light of the fact that it does not look like his only son will come and farm. Otto and Sue have two children, a son and a daughter. Their daughter is married to the only son of another prominent family in the district and they also farm in Barkly East. Otto and Sue have one granddaughter from this match. Their son however has spent some time in London and has recently obtained his licence for flying light passenger aircrafts. He caused quite stir one weekend when he flew a few people down from Johannesburg to Barkly East for the weekend. He has not married yet but brought a girlfriend from Johannesburg on this weekend and caused yet another stir – this time among the local, 'available' beauties.

Otto is a very typical farmer in the sense that he is attached to his farm and the place of his ancestors. He finds meaning imprinted on the landscape and remembers his heritage by walking the pathways of his father and his ancestors. His son however does not share his father's attachment to the farm and does not want to inherit the farm. This may point to a generation gap between father and son. It may also point to changing times and attitudes in South Africa regarding farming and farming practices. Chapter Seven goes into more detail on this subject.

The Bitter

Pastor Mushonga in contrast to Otto Brown argues that he feels no connection whatsoever to the land. Pastor Mushonga grew up in Barkly East where his mother and father, and his grand parents on his father's side were all farm labourers. His mother's family comes from a village quite near to the border between South Africa and Lesotho. Pastor Mushonga is the eldest of five children, three brothers and two sisters. After completing school in Barkly East he went to Queenstown and Port Elizabeth for his training in the ministry. Once he finished his training he accepted a post as a junior pastor in a small town in the Northern Cape. Pastor Mushonga argues that he would not have returned to

Barkly East if it had not been for God's guidance. When pressed as to his reason why not, he said:

"Barkly East is not a happy place for me. There is no work here – the people suffer here. It is difficult. I had to go away but I was glad – if you are black and you stay here there is no real hope for you to become anything else than another farm labourer. God chose for me to come back and this is my calling – I am back here to help the people of this place."

As with so many of the other residents I ask Pastor Mushonga if he has any particular childhood memories of Barkly East that connects him to this place. He argues that there is no such thing for him! This is not a place that he wishes to remember as it was then, and he argues that the land has no significance for him and for other black people here.

"Land is important so that people can eat – my history and memory is not in this land – I have nothing to do with this land. People [black] here do not own land – but they need the land to eat! This land does not tell who I am today!"

In both these cases I am using one particular person's story to show a larger feeling or attitude. While Pastor Mushonga and Otto's stories are the only ones told here, they are by no means alone in their views. On more than one occasion white residents would be able to recollect some story out of their past or their family. For example, one old lady retold the story of herself, her husband and brother when they were children running to the river to go and swim. She was barefoot and the little stones in the road dug into the soles of her feet and she could not keep up with the others. Her husband (then only a friend) turned around and gave her a 'piggy-back' ride to the edge of the water. She knew then, there next to the water, that this is the man she is going to marry – and did. This however was hardly ever the case with black residents I interviewed. Often my requests were met with negativity and a shaking of the head. Requests for stories about the land regularly ended up in directions of where the cattle and other livestock can graze, or the roads one has to travel and the amount of time it takes to travel these roads into town. I am not however suggesting in any way

that memories of Barkly East for these two groups should be similar. Rather, I am arguing that the difference in these memories illustrates two different world views. In much the same way as my previous discussion on gardens of beauty and subsistence, the difference of these memories point to a particular way of remembering today. For Whites it is nostalgia and 'a looking back'; for Blacks it is linked to function and a looking 'toward the future'.

The bitter nature of memories for Blacks in Barkly East today, of them in this place and on this land, is significant. This is in contrast to other examples in South Africa where land is part of both an 'African' and 'European'⁷⁷ heritage, and where both groups have distinct recollections and memories of themselves in terms of the land (Field & Bunn, 2000; Thornton, 2000; Beinart *et al*, 1986). For example, Thornton (2000: 140) argues that there is a "relativity" that has to be applied to the landscapes of South Africa when trying to understand the significance people attach to it.

"Whether one sees an African or European landscape, that is, whether one sees patterns of bush and 'village' settlements of African systems of land and power, or whether one sees 'farms' and measured boundaries of European systems of land and power, depends on one's perspective" (Thornton, 2000: 140)

In fact, one also has to acknowledge that both these landscapes exist, it depends from which point of view you are looking. The reason why this is possible, Thornton (2000: 140) argues is because there is a difference to the "fundamental systems of power". Both, 'African' and 'European' views of the landscape is constructed through permanence i.e. land or ground is always there, positive, a sort of solid foundation to build lives on, as well as distinctly imagined through history. In Barkly East however this does not extend to all groups. Here the black residents do not want to be linked to this place because it is a reminder of a past filled with suffering. While only a few actually verbalised this, Pastor

⁷⁷ Here I use Thornton's (2000) distinctions where 'African' refers to black, and 'European' to white South Africans.

Mushonga's exclamation that this is not where his ancestors live, is telling. Another respondent said that *"Here we are poor, we don't have time to remember, what I remember is that I am hungry and my children are hungry"*.

These bitter memories of the land should also be seen in context of South African history, in particular Apartheid. For white residents their connection to the land has been largely more positive, in the sense that the land was given to their ancestors by a Colonial government, they were able to own and farm land throughout, and this opportunity has caused many to become very wealthy especially during the 1950s and 1960s. In contrast, black residents could never own land, only work it. As a consequence the "permanence" Thornton (2000) speaks about becomes lost when you have to move every so many years due to employment responsibilities. This is not different to the rest of South Africa, except that here the black residents choose (both consciously and unconsciously) not to be related to this land because in essence this will also mean a recollection and connection to a history of landlessness, poverty, and submission. Memory of land in Barkly East becomes, like landscape in the rest of South Africa, contested.

Amadiume & An-Na'im (2000: 5) argue that "memory is an interdependent process of remembering and forgetting". In support of this line of reasoning, I would like to argue that by remembering the bitter, as in the case of black residents in Barkly East, does not exclude them from having memories of Barkly East at all. Rather, the choice is possibly just not to speak about it! This is against the South African model for dealing with the past. Here I obviously refer to the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa⁷⁸. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission have argued that South Africa should see the opportunity to remember, and through remembering heal, as a positive process. Soyinka (2000) questions this notion by asking how far into the past memory

⁷⁸ The process of reconciliation as implemented by the TRC has been widely contested. Despite this, it has had a marked impact upon South African society.

should reach? Soyinka (2000: 21) also tries to answer this question by arguing the following:

“The answer that springs spontaneously to mind is that memory is not governed by the statute of limitations, and that collective memory especially is the very warp and weft of the tapestry of history that makes up society. Unravel and jettison a thread from that tapestry and society itself may become undone at the seams. And yet the opposite is also true. Cling too passionately to those threads in the fabric, even to the designs they have spun out of events, and society may lose itself in the labyrinths of the past. Then like the millipede that stopped to count the number of filaments that propelled it, we find that we have lost the will or the ability to walk again”

Soyinka here argues for a delicate balance between the acts of remembering and forgetting. Remembering may very well bring closure such as in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation commission; however this might not always be the case.

The next section looks at how landscape for white residents, through the process of memory, has become an integral part to their identity and sense of belonging in Barkly East.

LANDSCAPE AND SACREDNESS

The idea of landscape initially in Anthropology emerged simply as a “framing convention” (Hirsch, 1995: 1). This idea of landscape merely requires the ethnographer to refer to landscape in terms of it being a canvas on which more important images are drawn. A second landscape however also exists which can only be discovered through understanding local practice of it by means of the anthropological enterprise of fieldwork, participant observation and ethnographic description. This second landscape tells us about the emotion, connections, meanings and values people ascribe to it. Bender (1993: 3) argues that landscapes are polysemic. Interpretations of landscape and its meaning are directly related to time, place and historical conditions. The reason for this is that

people constantly “engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it” (Bender, 1993: 3). Landscape therefore becomes part of the routine of everyday life while at the same time creates ties of belonging and meaning.

Landscape (geographical imaginings, representations and places) as a concern both for the study of anthropology and memory, is essential also for my research. People live in Barkly East, a place known for its breathtaking yet inaccessible landscape, as well as a place in which generations of residents have lived, worked and died. Closely linked to ideas around space and place, landscape informs notions of belonging, and especially in conjunction with memory, creates and supports feelings and beliefs about heritage and community. Steward and Strathern (2003:1) argue that landscape becomes a system of codification for history and so one can argue that remembering the landscape means remembering who you are and where you belong. Coupled with these notions are the individual or community and their ability, as Bender (1993: 1) notes, to create the landscape. In the next section I will look at how links between memory and landscape are created and held in tact. Closely related to this, I will examine Steward and Strathern’s (2003: 2) notion that it is through landscape that communities are constructed through the marrying of memory and place. Lastly I would like to explain through selected examples how landscape and memory informs ideas about belonging and heritage.

Land Becomes Sacred

In this section I examine how landscapes, and in particular the landscape of Barkly East, become sacred⁷⁹ and hold meaning. Landscape not unlike communal systems of self identification such as kinship, co-residency, economic situation and religion serve as an integral part of a person’s sense of who they are, where they come from and most importantly where they belong. By attaching meaning to places of significance specific sites become sacred. This

⁷⁹ Sacred not necessarily meaning religious (but could), rather as something dedicated to as a memorial and which gathers meaning and significance in its midst.

process takes place across the globe, however differs from culture to culture. Hubert, (1994:5) argues that it has been a battle for many indigenous people such as the Aboriginal people of Australia, Native Americans, Maori, Saami and Inuit, to name only a few, to retain and keep sacred their sites (Arnold, 2001; Morphy, 1993; Hiatt, 1990). This is in comparison to westerners who, according to Hubert (1994: 13) struggle to understand the connection between specific places (other than building such as churches, museums etc.) and sacredness. Hubert (1994: 12-14) creates a link between the West's inability to fully grasp this connection between sacred and site, and the influence of the Christian religious tradition on the West. A sense for the sacred by Christian believers is interlocked with religious activity and therefore also the buildings these embody. In other societies this is not necessarily the case as the 'sacred' is not confined to one particular sphere of life, i.e. religion and may therefore infiltrate other areas.

For the Australian Aborigine, as well as other aboriginals, landscape becomes sacred in and through their connection to their ancestors by means of the land on which they live and perform their rituals⁸⁰ (Arhem, 1998; Strang, 1997; Hirsch and O'Hanlon, 1995; Morphy, 1995; Carmicheal, 1994). Strang (1997: 238) argues for example, when talking about the bond between the Australian Aborigine through their Dreamtime sequence and the land, that "these beliefs frame the landscape as a creative medium for all social and spatial organisation and spatio-temporal control". In Aborigine creation myths the ancestral beings walked the earth, hunted and lived in the same places as the people do today. The history and experience of being there becomes one that is shared through the land.

"The land, taken as a whole, was the land over which ancestral beings hunted and gathered, and every aspect of the landscape can be thought to have connotations of the ancestral beings – the scents and sounds and flavours of the land today are the scents and sounds and flavours that they too experienced" (Morphy, 1995: 188).

⁸⁰ For South African examples of this take a look at Barnard, 2001; Thornton, 2000; Hammond-Tooke, 1975.

Except for a very small museum, white residents in Barkly East root their identity to the land and former generations who lived in the same place and who farmed the same farm. To illustrate, in much the same way (yet without the religious/sacred factor) as the Aboriginal Dreamtime example, the presence of previous generations are experienced in day-to-day living by means of the place and the land in Barkly East. This is however different to one specific pool, tree or site where ancestors reside, here in Barkly East it is the idea of the land as a whole that becomes sacred. For example: “*I am a part of this place*”, “*Barkly East is in my blood*”; and “*I belong to this place*”. This connectedness between land, identity and belonging is demonstrated in the following two entries from my field and personal journal respectively. Lastly I also include the story of Barry Jones for whom re-creating the original family farm has become his legacy.

Account One: Field Journal Entry

Audrey [Barkly East housewife] takes me through her house pointing out the furniture and ornaments that have been in the family for more than seven generations. No-one has been allowed to get rid of, replace or move the ornaments or furniture. The house is a mixture of old wooden furniture [smells like lavender polish], thick carpets on wooden floors and floral curtains over the windows – it feels old. She draws my attention to the paintings on the walls of the generations gone by. She turns around and says that nothing has changed. It is the same house, same furniture and same people who, through this place and the current generation, continue to live here. “*It feels that they look on me everyday – we all live here!*”

Account Two: Personal Journal Entry (Post-Fieldwork)

Suzan called from Barkly East. One of my respondents, Henry de Villiers has died. Ostensibly he had gone up to his *bergplaas*⁸¹ the morning and had not returned – but

⁸¹ Mountain Farm (translation). Many of these farmers have a *bergplaas*. These are the farms where it is really difficult to farm due to excessively high peaks and rugged terrain. As a result these farms have some of the most beautiful scenery in the district.

when people realized this it was too dark to go to the farm as the landscape is very hazardous. They only found him the following morning. He was lying some distance away from his *bakkie* - they think he had a heart attack. Striking though - they found him lying in a patch of mountain Arum lilies and Hydrangeas – flowers not often seen in Barkly East. The women will use those flowers for the decoration of his casket and grave. No one knew why he went to the *bergplaas*, [mostly a place for aesthetic value only]. From the top vantage point of his farm you can see far into the distance with the hills and peaks of Barkly Easy that surrounds you. His death here on his most beautiful farm is significant to all – he loved this place and maybe Henry knew on some level that his time had come – maybe he wanted to be connected to the land for one last time.

Account Three: The Story of Uncle Barry

Uncle Barry sits in his lounge looking wistful. His wife Emily, who does not want to be called *tannie* (aunt)⁸² corrects him every now and then on the history of their family in the district. The house is a typical Barkly East farm house – with many rooms, a big kitchen and two or three lounges. We have been placed in the formal lounge and as is custom, I have been offered a cup of tea.

Barry Jones was born in 1937 and has been a resident in Barkly East for all of his 68 years. His family has owned the same stretch of land since 1868 (the earliest date that he can pinpoint) but through the generations pieces have been sold and the original family farm today consists of approximately six farms of differing sizes. Uncle Barry, as he asks most people to call him, is the only brother of three who has remained in the Barkly East district and still farms today with his youngest son Johnny. One of the reasons for this he says is the fact that he married a “Barkly girl!” This is a common joke farmers in this district make to

⁸² Uncle Basil is actually Afrikaans but because he married an English girl they raised their children English and the home language is English.

hide their own sentimental feelings toward their land. In this way he places the focus of sentimentality on the shoulders of his wife rather than himself⁸³.

Q: Why did you decide to stay in Barkly East while your brothers moved away?

Barry: Because I am stupid! No, no – no I am not a ‘trekvoël’⁸⁴ – I stayed here through thick and thin – just as I had no choice but to stay with my wife, so also had I no choice but to stay with my farm!

Uncle Barry went to school in Barkly East until standard six (grade eight today) and then was sent to a boarding school in Wellington. His wife Emily was also born and bred in Barkly East, and while her family has not been in the district as long as Uncle Barry’s, Barkly East has seen at least four generations of her family. Emily also grew up in Barkly East on a farm quite near to where she is currently living. It gives her however great pain to see new people in her old house as she believes that these ‘imposters’ do not take proper care of the place.

Emily: “They come from the city you see, they don’t know how to take care of the farm!”

Uncle Barry and Emily have four children all of whom went to school outside of Barkly East. The two daughters both went to *Unisi*, a prominent English school for girls in Bloemfontein. Their eldest son went to an agricultural school in Tweespruit while their youngest son went to *Grey College*, a prominent Afrikaans and English school for boys in Bloemfontein. Their eldest son Jack died young in a motorcar accident, which caused a great deal of pain in the family. This also changed Johnny’s life considerably. Johnny turns 33 this year and has not yet found a wife. For Uncle Barry this is quite serious as he not only wants his family name to continue, but he also wants a male heir to whom he can pass his legacy on to, i.e. the family farm.

⁸³ There are prominent perceptions of what is womanly or manly roles in Barkly East. Being sentimental for example, is not revered as a masculine attribute in Barkly East. Chapter Five illustrates this in more detail.

⁸⁴ A ‘trekvoël’ is an Afrikaans name for someone who moves around a lot from place to place. The direct translation would be: *migrant bird*

Barry: Because I love this land – I am a – sentimental person – I wanted the land back. And now my son does not have a wife – and now I do not even know – bloody hell- if the family name will stay here!

Land owned in Barkly East, memories forged in Barkly East and identity lived in Barkly East are all closely linked for Uncle Barry. His family has been living on this land for many generations and he sees himself as part of this legacy of Joneses, who lived, worked and died here. For both Uncle Barry and Emily there is no other place, who they are as individuals, residents, lovers, parents etc. are all linked to this very particular place. And it is because of these very strong ties to the land and his heritage that Uncle Barry has decided that the one thing he can do to contribute to his family's legacy is too try and put the original family farm together. He has managed to acquire three out of the six farms, and while these farms are by no means easy to come by or afford, Uncle Barry feels it is his duty.

Q: What does it mean to you to be able to put the original farm back together?

Basil: I told the old man [the previous owner of one of the farms Uncle Barry bought] I will give him my left hand – I will give him anything – he must just sell this thing to me! I will tell you – I now have so much debt – and if tomorrow or tonight if I win the Lotto – I will buy another farm – I will pay my debt – and if I cannot pay everything – it does not matter – I will pay the rest later – but I will buy another farm!

Q: But what does it feel like to own such a big piece of land?

Basil: You know I must tell you – when I bought that “bergplaas” we built a road to the highest peak – we go through the highest peak – then we drive with a four wheel drive bakkie – the first time I went was with a horse but that is years ago – but I have bought in the meantime a four wheel tractor – and when I reached that peak I stopped – I froze – I could not go forward or backward I probably sat there for an hour because if you look this side it is down there, if you look behind you it is down there – I had such a wonderful feeling – I felt like a bird flying in the air – I just this thought this is me, this is where I belong – I just thought bugger you bank manager – no-one can find me here!

It's just – I think just a feeling that is born in you know. I just think it's born in me. That I have this love for the farm – for the town – for the district – it's just a love.

Ideas about belonging and identity are part and parcel of life in this place and on this land. This process is a phenomenological experience through which place and landscape is experienced and meaning is codified in the landscape through everyday life (Lovell, 1998; Hastrup & Olwig, 1997; Lippard, 1997; Schama, 1995; Tilley, 1994). For Audrey it is the fact that seven generations worth of ancestors and kin have lived in the same place. For Suzan and Henry's friends and family, Henry's death on the *bergplaas* is significant and reestablishes his identity in terms of the land that he loved. The recollection of Henry's death is told in such a way that his dying on the *bergplaas* in between the flowers was a conscious one, a final choice made to connect him to the land. Uncle Barry's story is another good example of how meaning and identity is rooted in land. It is important for Uncle Barry to be able to continue his family's legacy. He speaks of a love of this place and district, and this love is not located within the riches farming here could possibly bring him rather it is for the landscape and the sense of identity and belonging this landscape embodies.

The idea that you belong somewhere is a powerful one and even more so when this feeling is embodied in the landscape. Lovell (1998: 1) supports this idea and argues that belonging and locality are markers of identity and it is through these accounts of how loyalty to such places are "created, perpetuated and modified" that one can truly understand how identity, both collective and individual, is created and sustained.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us re-examine Rothschild's (2000) notion of memory once more. She argues that we encode, store and retrieve information. And in this process we form an image of the world around us by means of "thoughts, emotions, images, sensations and behavioural impulses" (Rothschild, 2000: 26).

For one section of the residents memories are linked to land and become a way of understanding who they are in terms of the land as well as their forefathers and foremothers on the land. How they think about themselves is therefore intricately linked to living on the land.

I have often been told by white residents that there is no other place like Barkly East. *“Sure we have our differences but I could never leave here! This place is in my blood. I am this place!”* This powerful positive sentiment however has to be juxtaposed against an equally negative one from black residents. Clearly for them this does not exist. The inability or unwillingness of this section of residents to remember should be understood in relation to their historical legacy of not owning land for the better half of the 20th century, of unequal access to not only land but all resources as well as a current quest for survival by working the land.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTO THE FUTURE

“Things are changing. They have changed - we have just been the lucky ones I think. Maybe unlucky. We won’t be left like this, I can tell you now. There is no money left and the government can’t or won’t give us because we’re boere. The farmers are struggling, the township is also growing and no jobs and how is everyone supposed to survive? I don’t know what will happen here!”

James, a dairy and raspberry farmer.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis shows how Barkly East and its residents are steeped in a history created and supported for one particular group. As a result, life as they know it has to a degree been preserved. Nevertheless things are changing, however slowly it may seem in Barkly East. South Africa is now more than ten years into its democracy and much has changed. Removed, small rural places such as Barkly East are increasingly experiencing the movement toward change kick-started by the government through its legislative processes, especially with regard to land distribution and the rights of farm workers. In this chapter I consider the impact of growing change on the community of Barkly East.

There are two major changes occurring in Barkly East that are of interest here. Firstly, the town is looking to revive itself, and through this revival hopefully create more employment opportunities, be it through tourism or merely evoking pride of one’s town. The second front where change seems inevitable is farming practices. Much has been done with regard to government initiatives to change the work environment and circumstances for farm labourers, however in relation to the actual attitudes and feelings of farmers regarding this change, much more needs to be done.

To shed light on this growing move towards change I firstly examine two of the ‘revival projects’ in the town, the *Federation of Projects* and the *Barkly East and Rhodes Tourism Association* (BERTA). Both of the projects have been met with

mixed reaction, predominantly negative. It is important to try and understand why in a town, clearly in need of both social and economic revival, resident sentiments are against (overtly and covertly) the successful implementation and operation of them. Secondly I consider a *Barkly East Farmers Association* meeting that dealt with issues of change and the 'modern' farmer.

REVIVAL COMES FROM WITHIN

Today residents in Barkly East find themselves constantly challenged to change. It is no longer acceptable to live as if nothing has changed in the country. While many still cling to those outdated ideologies, the government is slowly but very surely trying to implement change. Changing ones way of life is however more complex than merely doing something different. Change will bring a whole new way of life, a new way of doing and most importantly thinking. On both sides of the Barkly East divide change seems inevitable yet it cannot happen overnight lest it be unsuccessful. In Barkly East the messengers of change are mostly twofold. Firstly, religious leaders on both sides are preaching for a reassessment of attitudes and letting go of prejudices. A large part of this also has to do with self upliftment where people are encouraged to start changing things themselves rather than have someone else or the government implement change (socially and economically). One such example is the *Body of Christ Church*, a local charismatic church attended mostly by black township residents and farm labourers. I would like to relate one of the sermons from the *Body of Christ Church* to illustrate my argument. The sermon went as follows:

Pastor Nkomo started by saying that the Lord conveyed to him the key to the revival of Barkly East. The problem with Barkly East is that everyone is waiting for the revival to come from the Lord. They are *waiting*. This revival should not just come from above; rather it should come from within the church and community as well. In order for the Pastor to convey this message successfully he split it into two parts.

Part one: Everyone has a well of water (opportunity) within themselves that has been given to them by the Holy Spirit. This is something that is personal and that you need to keep to yourself and not share.

Part one is the first part of the message in which Pastor Nkomo encouraged people to believe and because of their beliefs they would receive the spiritual sustenance they need. More importantly they do not have to share this with anyone. This message is very insightful as the Pastor is astute and knows his congregation. *“People from this church are not rich and they need all the help they can get as employment is scarce and those who do have jobs struggle to sustain a reasonable level of living”⁸⁵*. This message thus conveys a sense of personal wealth and opportunity that cannot be taken away by anyone and that does not need to be shared either.

Part two: The Bible speaks of the Last Days. During these days there will be an outpouring of spirit that will wash over all like a river. This outpouring would come from within the ranks of the believers (those who already believe). This means that those who do not yet believe will be overcome by the spirit from the others.

Once again Pastor Nkomo utilises knowledge of the community to bring his point home. Ownership of resources like land, and in this example water, is of great consequence in this community. Here he uses a river, a resource that can belong to everyone and that is not owned by any one person. *“The metaphor of the river tells people that if they want a revival in their community [spiritually and economically] it has to come from them. They are the river if they stand together”*. By using the idea of the well which is personal (people must still take care of themselves and that they will be provided for), and the river which

⁸⁵ After the sermon I had a chance to speak to Pastor Nkomo about the message of his sermon on that day

belongs to everyone (now that they are taken care of and are provided for), they should not be afraid to help others.

One of the outcomes from sentiments such as these has been a group called *The Federation of Projects*. The main goal for the *Federation of Projects* is to implement programmes to revive the town and community. *“We want to solve some of the major problems, to get business and citizens working together and to have a working committee that has these issues at heart – a committee that is representative of all the people in the area”*. While these are beneficial ideas, in reality this project has already failed in many respects. It is mostly townsfolk who attend these meetings and those who do attend already hold public positions such as teachers and religious leaders. Many of the town residents of Barkly East I spoke to did not even know that this project existed and farmers even less. Another obstacle to the success of this project is the fact that it is always the same people who end up heading projects such as these, for example religious leaders or other similar personalities. There is a growing dissatisfaction among the ranks of these people as they feel the ‘common’ person should do more to be involved. For example:

“The people really do not care. I am serving on three committees - try to keep the streets clean, feeding the hungry and educating unemployed women. Do I really need to waste my time listening to the same old people with the same old ideas? No I tell you! Where are the farmers? Why don't they put in more into the community? But they are first to complain when there are people begging on the streets or when shops close! Oh yes, it is always the same old people and you know we do not have enough money. The government just does not have the money to give us and now we have to do it ourselves!” Betty, retired teacher

“I tell you, people just don't realise that things are different! We have to work for what we want! If we want better shops or education or whatever we have to do it – we have to bring the people here! This isn't 1980 anymore – this new government do not care if you are white or black – every one is the same and no-one has money. The sooner they realise it the better” Dave, current teacher

“Many black people think that now with the new government everything is going to be great. They can sit back and the money is going to roll in. Well surprise – now you even have to work harder than before – you have to work for everything you get! You cannot expect the government to give you everything! Get off your ass and work!” Corrie, Municipality Officer

It is clear that there is dissatisfaction on two levels here. One, many white residents do not see the need for their involvement and do not realise or care that there is no longer the funding from government to sustain small economies like Barkly East. Secondly, they suspect that many black residents feel they are owed a living by government, and that these people do not realise or care that the government cannot change things overnight. *“The government does not have the resources to dish out money at will. People in the township must realise this!”*

The *Federation of Projects* have had some success in the form of various food gardens and two other projects namely, *Qhubeka*⁸⁶ *Sewing Project* and the *Sinenjongo Beading Project*. Both of these projects are geared towards women who are unemployed. These two projects are typical examples of income diversification projects employed by poor, rural based women in Africa (Ellis, 2000: 55-75). The *Qhubeka Sewing Project* (see Image 7.1) can support about three to four women. There are a limited number of women it can sustain due to the small market⁸⁷ for such services in this area. A two roomed workspace in town has been donated by the *Federation of Projects* where they do all their sewing which includes alterations, garments and curtaining. The *Sinenjongo Beading Project* supports about five to six women; however women come and go as they find temporary employment elsewhere which pays much better and more regularly. The *Sinenjongo Beading Project* is situated on the main road of the

⁸⁶ One of the participants explained this to mean “To go on!”.

⁸⁷ There is a small market for outsourcing sewing as many white women sew themselves and most black women cannot afford such services.

town in one room attached to the local Social Services office. The space is limited and their wares are mostly displayed in the room. The beading ladies can usually be found outside on a small patch of grass under a tree.



Image 7.1 Ntombekaya, one of the seamstresses at the *Qhubeka Sewing Project*, displays her handiwork.

While these two projects can help *some* women Table 7.1 shows that there is a very high unemployment rate for Black African women in the region. As a result these two projects are unfortunately not enough to curb the ever increasing rise in unemployment. Both of these projects are limited to the Barkly East and Rhodes district. Any alternative business should ideally come from tourists which in turn place pressure on the town itself to draw more tourists.

	Black African		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Employed	16.5	12.3	36.9	28.5	100.0	100.0	80.4	48.8
Unemployed	20.3	17.5	34.7	26.2	0.0	0.0	2.9	4.0
Not economically active	63.3	70.2	28.4	45.2	0.0	0.0	16.8	47.2

Table 7.1 Level (%) of unemployment across race and gender, Senqu LM (Census 2001)

A second wave of economic and social upliftment has come in the form of tourism. The *Barkly East and Rhodes Tourism Association* (BERTA) has been working closely with other tourism associations to improve tourism in the region. BERTA has put Barkly East on the tourist map by incorporating it into the *Maloti Route* where it advertises trout fishing, San rock paintings and dinosaur footprints as a part of its attraction. Yet despite these ventures Barkly East does not have much different to offer the tourist than its neighbours Rhodes, Lady Grey, Ugie and Elliot. The biggest attraction for tourists in the area however is the *Tiffindell Ski Resort*. The ski resort is situated high up in the mountains and approximately 80 kilometres away from the town. While the ski resort is a viable tourist attraction for the area it is not only Barkly East that can claim business from it. Yet, there are numerous guesthouses in town and at least five in the nearby farming district that have opened their doors to ski resort tourists. Business generated from guest houses do however not support the poorer people in Barkly East and residents of middle to high income groups gain more benefit. Ideally more pro-poor tourism is needed to support the growing economic need of the town, however to get this on par, the town needs to bring the tourists into the borders of the town.

BERTA argues that for tourism to work in Barkly East the residents from the town as well as the farms need to be more involved in projects. Once again however, like with the *Federation of Projects*, there seems to be a lack in interest. Guesthouses open but there is just not enough interest from outside to sustain them. BERTA organises festivals and gatherings and hardly anyone shows up.

After another long unfruitful meeting of BERTA one of my informants who is a member of BERTA said to me: *“What can I do more? I love this place but people seem so disinterested, so involved with their own lives they do not see what is happening right before their eyes. If we do not change the way we do things nothing will remain! And frankly I am tired of trying!”*

It is clear that there is a definite need for many changes in Barkly East. One of which is a need for resident sanctioned and assisted tourism. The thinking behind this argument made by groups such as BERTA and *The Federation of Projects* is supported by studies that have shown that when other economic revenue sources are exhausted, small scale tourism is a definite option (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000, Opperman, 1996). Yet, in Barkly East we see that this kind of change is not seen as favourable and many do not want to get involved. Many residents feel cynical about this move to change. Apart from the strong sentiment to keep outsiders out of the community (see Chapter One), many white residents see it as *“yet another move from government to exploit whites”*. For example:

“What do they do for me? Since they [ANC led government] took over everything went down the drain! Now they want me to give more. If you do something for them [black people] they misuse it – you are wasting your time!” Kobus, town resident

“Why do we [whites] have to do everything, I mean, tell the people who sit around all day and do nothing to work and contribute. But it is our taxes that go to feed them. No. No I am not prepared to work for others who do not want to work for me!” Stella, farmer’s wife

For many black respondents change, such as new tourist ventures, means job creation, and more security in terms of income. For example:

“If more people come I can sell more. It’s more money for me. I don’t have a job and I need the money” Rethabile, Sinenjongo seamstress/beader

“Yes it will mean jobs. We don’t have the job here and everyone needs, you can see, we do not have money” Zanele, unemployed resident

Here the concern is about personal well-being and not necessarily the welfare of the group (a sentiment discouraged by community leaders such as Pastor Nkomo).

This section echoes mainly the need for economic change in the form of tourism and more particularly pro-poor tourism. However it is more than economic change that is needed. The response to tourism ventures such as discussed in this chapter indicates a deeper more complex problem that extends beyond the economic needs of the community. In line with what we saw in the previous chapters the way that change, even economic change, is viewed is largely divided once more between white and black. In both instances everyday life and circumstances will change, for some more than others. It also reveals the feelings of injustice, resentment and victimisation many of the white residents in particular the farmers, feel towards the government. And, it is because of these feelings of injustice that their support for changing the status quo is non-existent.

‘MODERN’ FARMERS

Toward the end of my stay in Barkly East I attended a farmers meeting (see Image 7.2) organised by a local Voermol⁸⁸ agent. There were two speakers at the meeting, one spoke on the health issues of livestock and the other, of more interest to me, on the current problems and issues faced by the ‘modern’ farmer.

This meeting was interesting firstly, because for the first time I saw a number of farmers (all white) together in one place for the sole reason for the betterment of not only their farming capabilities but also their standard of living. It is interesting to note that only three women attended the day: myself, the secretary of the association and, one women farmer. The reason for this is echoed by my

⁸⁸ A company that manufactures feed for livestock.

discussion in Chapter Five where I discuss how women are not seen as close to the land in any way be it inheritance or just working the land. At this farmer's day, everyday farming problems were discussed simultaneously, and with the same relevance to that of change, land redistribution in South Africa and farm invasions and evictions in Zimbabwe.



Image 7.2 Several farmers from Barkly East and the outlying district came for the Farmers Association meeting.

Allistair Patterson, a specialist and researcher in the field of strategic farming practices was one of the speakers at the Farmer's Association meeting. Here he outlined six main areas we have to take into consideration for future successful farming practices in the country. I will give a brief discussion of these points in the section that follows.

- i) *Resistance to change*: Many farmers believe that life as they know it should not change however today farmers are in trouble if they do not change. If farmers do not change the way they think they will not survive in South Africa today. Farmers must ask themselves what is right. And not what they want to be right.

- ii) *Principles for farming in the future*: The world over the stereotype exists that it is only “thick” guys that run agriculture. This generalisation can however no longer be true as competing markets and growing technological input challenge farmers daily to be more strategic in their farming practices. There are ten important attributes that farmers need to be successful today: 1) Negotiation skills (markets are not the same as 20 years ago and farmers need to know how to negotiate prices); 2) Family dynamics (women should be seen as an attribute to the labour of the farm, and the father and son relationship is as important as always); 3) Investment skills; 4) Employee relationships (empowerment is a proven way to get productivity out of people); 5) Evaluate your own viability; 6) Information technology management, 7) Adoption of technology; 8) Communication and leadership skills; 9) Environmental management; 10) Food and safety quality.

- iii) *The responsibility of land ownership*: Owning land is not for “sissies”⁸⁹. Farmers have a responsibility to the land they own. You have to be committed to making a success of the land, if not rather sell to someone who can.

- iv) *Land reform*: Farmers have to look at the realities of land ownership in the country. The majority of farms in the country belong to whites and this is unacceptable. Farmers have to get the “one man: one farm” ratio into their head. If this does not happen South Africa will turn into another Zimbabwe. In order for this to materialize in a way that can be acceptable to current landowners they need to help. Identify people on your own farm who you think might be able to make a go of it on his

⁸⁹ In this context “sissies” referring to men acting like women. In other words men who are not strong and rational, and who have no courage.

own farm. Only farmers really know what is needed to make a successful farm and the government need their help with new emerging black farmers.

- v) *The financial position of farmers today:* Most farmers today are no longer in a viable financial position. Farmers should listen to their bank managers and cut down on expenses. The reality is that there is no longer the same government support for farmers as in the past.
- vi) Principles to remain viable: There are three main ways to stay viable today. 1) Reduce your debt to zero; 2) Reduce your overhead costs; and 3) Spread your overhead costs. Farmers have to look for alternative ways to make their farms viable, for example different types of crops and livestock and tourism ventures.

The above discussion illustrates that there are already many inevitable changes that farmers have to deal with. These are some difficult changes to digest, for example one man per farm is something unheard of for many of these farmers in Barkly East as the land is not just about economic success but also history and heritage (as discussed in Chapter Six). It was also clear to me that the more the conversation steered toward change and the inevitability of change in South Africa particularly with regards to the land issue; the farmers got restless and began chatting amongst themselves. This was obviously a tense and maybe even scary subject for them. I must admit I was surprised to hear these types of subjects being discussed in a setting such as Barkly East. However, by their reaction to what was said, I got the feeling that the farmers did not appreciate the sentiments coming from the speaker, as he, for all intents and purposes, told them that if they do not change with the times they will fail to continue farming successfully.

From my discussions with the farmers attending the meeting and interviews over a six month period I have identified three types of farmers when it comes to dealing with change. *Type 1*: those who are changing with the times – these farmers are limited in their numbers and often ridiculed for their stance. For example “*Ja, he says he wants to work towards growth and sustaining change that will benefit South Africa. I’ll tell you he is too smart for his own good!*” This was a comment from another farmer about Richard Buckley, who gave one of his farms to his foreman and his family. *Type 2*: those farmers who look as if they are in the process of changing their ideas and how they operate, but who still struggle to accept the ‘new reality’. They would periodically lapse into negativity about the situation and yet can also appreciate where many of the government’s policies are coming from. They do not have the courage however to raise these more forward thinking ideas in a public arena. *Type 3*: the conservatives who really do not care who knows how they feel. They see no future and are dead set against any change no matter where it comes from or who will benefit.

There are many farmers in Barkly East who fit into the second type of farmer I discussed above. I believe it is out of this group that the so-called ‘modern farmer’ that Alistair Patterson speaks about, will emerge. This is however not an easy process and is a very lonely road to travel. Nonetheless I believe that for Barkly East to have a viable future, this road has to become the well travelled one.

THE LINK: ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT AND LAND POLICIES

It has become clear to me that many farmers see a connection between the government wanting farmers to change, land redistribution and new economic ventures in town. Many farmers I spoke to in Barkly East see the land policies of the government as more evidence to support their argument that the government want to get rid of all whites and in particular white farmers. This quote from Sarie, a farmer’s wife, illustrates their sentiments:

“After Zim South Africa is next and they [black people] will not stop until they have destroyed everything. Black people hate all white people especially farmers and the government will do nothing to help us – all they want to do is take our land”.

Due to their feelings of victimisation, farmers feel that asking them to support projects for the upliftment of black people is a *“slap in the face!”*

“This is not about making the town better. It was fine like it was before they [black people] came and interfered. Was anyone hungry? No! We took care of everything. The town was great I tell you, great. They just want to take everything we got. It wasn't given to me you know I worked hard, my father worked hard our whole family have worked for what we have today. The government must provide for all their brothers – they are taking all the land anyway – so why do they need me? Jaco, farmer”

This quote moreover illustrates a romanticization of the past and therefore also a justification for keeping things the same. Change is for that reason in direct opposition to the past, where the past is everything that was good and change is everything that is bad.

CONCLUSION

Barkly East currently faces the reality of a growing economic need amongst the majority of its residents. One way to alleviate this need is through projects of upliftment and tourism. Both of these ventures however require community support and initial investment. However, once more the divide between white and black in Barkly East becomes significant as those who have the capacity and resources to realise this change refuses to do so.

What is the reasoning behind farmers not wanting economic upliftment in the town? One thing that many farmers fear is change. We see this in their reaction to being told that they have to change their farming practises and their beliefs regarding land redistribution in the country. For them supporting economic change is also supporting a government who wants to take a way their land.

Change however is not only inevitable in a growing and changing South Africa but also essential for the future success of the country. It seems therefore that not many alternatives are left for these farmers except to find a way of making change work for them as well.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In Barkly East there is a tug of war between those who want things to stay the same and those who need the status quo to change. What also stands out in this community is its duality on many levels of society where it plays itself out both consciously and unconsciously. This duality is also manifested through social and economic relations, and is supported by an unequal access to land. But with transformation, mostly political, many of the cornerstones keeping this duality in place are crumbling and change seems inevitable.

Within this dual community, history and perceptions of one's place in history plays an important role especially for the white residents. Apartheid policies made it easier in many ways to obtain the land they own and to have made the profit they made. With the abolishment of Apartheid and the new democratically elected government most, if not all of those perks disappeared. Not only are they no longer economically supported by government, but their very existence is brought into question. My research shows that in many ways these white residents feel that all they have left to show for their history and heritage is their land. In this manner identity is constructed around land not only cross racially, but also within the white community itself. Men who own land would 'belong' here more so than men who don't own land, or women for example. Black people here generally do not own land and therefore in the minds of white residents do not belong and have no claim to history or heritage.

In Barkly East there is a growing economic need for black residents to own and work their own land. At the moment personal heritage or a connection to land is not a real factor, rather survival for the future is. But I believe that these 'bitter' memories is also a way of establishing themselves outside of a history – a history

initially constructed to keep them out – of which they want no part. However this land means survival today and in the future, where a new history may be born.

CONCLUSIONS

There are four main conclusions this thesis comes to:

One, in Barkly East there are three main elements that contribute to the creation of narratives of belonging. Firstly, history and the perception of history creates strong links between personal and communal identity which in turn reinforces and legitimises their claim to belong. Perception of history is very important in the creation of narratives of belonging because it answers questions such as: Where do I belong? Why do I belong here? And sometimes even more importantly, who does not belong here? Secondly, hierarchy in terms of gender and race plays an important part in this narration. Some residents are more empowered in this process due to either their gender or race. Race however more so than gender since it spans gender as well. And three, the connection to the land that people seem to have plays a definitive role in narratives of belonging. Those who feel they have a heritage in this place also feel a connection to the land. For this reason, land for these people embodies, not only the physical space of 'somewhere to belong to', but becomes an integral ingredient to the act of belonging and even identity formation. The outcome of these three elements is that there is often a distorted perception of history and a clinging to that what was and not what is. Another outcome is that some histories feature more prominently than others in these narratives, yet this does not mean they are not being challenged. Lastly, ownership of land is clearly often equated to feelings of belonging.

Two, in Barkly East the outside world often seems very far removed. People regularly make the mistake that nothing can touch them here and this is primarily due to its geographical location. However, Barkly East is not an island existing in a vacuum and as such has to deal with the world and the reality that this

represents. In this reality history is constantly reinterpreted which points to a general world wide acceptance of change. Another reality they will have to deal with is that the current South African government is intent on limiting and eventually eradicating systems of patriarchy and attitudes of racism that creates inequality and hierarchy in society. In addition, this means that the government can, and will, impose change if they see the need. Lastly, the farmers in Barkly East have to face the fact that the political and economic climate of this country has changed radically, which also points to the inevitability of change. This change for them will mean less government funding for farmers, racial integration on all levels, and farmers, both black and white, owning land.

Three, as much as there is a need for change in small rural places such as Barkly East, it has to come about in a reasonable and methodical manner. One cannot expect people to change their perceptions and attitudes overnight. What one should expect to find is frightened people who are clinging to the security of what they know because they do not (and often do not want to) understand the bigger picture. In light of this I argue for better planning and infrastructure when it comes to dealing with these people. What one should be aiming for is a positive outcome for both parties, eventually getting farmers so far as to feel an obligation towards all new farmers in their district regarding the sharing of knowledge and skills.

Four, for all its hierarchy, gossip and small town politics, small rural communities such as Barkly East survive through community. Life is made bearable through companionship and knowing your neighbour, even if that neighbour is 50 kilometres away. Conversations with residents in Barkly East often led to their questioning me about life in the city and how impersonal it can become. In Barkly East they pride themselves on knowing their neighbour, on knowing when someone is in trouble and helping them. Like a large family they can fight with one another but when there is a communal threat they stand together. The problem is that this mentality excludes black residents because black residents

are seen as a threat and outside or on the periphery of the “community”. Their presence in Barkly East is a threat to the community’s history and heritage. The government is seen as a threat to their community because they are giving black people the opportunity to move into this space. Many forward thinkers believe, and this is also echoed in government policy, that making land available to black families will not only alleviate economic need – which it will – but that it will also help close the divide between dual communities such as in Barkly East. However, I believe and my research shows, that sharing geographical space is not enough to close the divide. Farming and successful farming is as much individual success as communal. On more than one occasion I’ve seen farms failing for reasons beyond mere economics. Farms often fail if one of the spouses is unhappy; farms also fail if its inhabitants keep themselves removed from the community.

It is through community that networks are created to support one another. Conversation on a Friday evening at the local bar illustrates this plainly, where talk may range from sport to the latest grazing technique for livestock. It is through this sharing that knowledge is communicated and pooled, help offered and problems solved. My argument is that this bond is created not because they are forced to talk to one another but because they feel an affinity with one another. I believe that while this might and probably does involve race, until this is extended to include both black and white farmer, until they sit next to one another at the bar, share food in one another’s house, the divide that exists will never be breached.

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The Cultural Institutions Act of 1998

The Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act no 94 of 1998

National Heritage Resources Act of 1999

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire/Vraelys

- 1) Where were you born?/ Waar is u gebore?
- 2) How long have you been staying in Barkly East?/ Vir hoe lank bly u nou in Barkly-Oos?
- 3) Do you live on a farm or in town? / Bly u op 'n plaas of in die dorp?
- 4) How many relatives do you have staying in the district of Barkly East? / Hoeveel familie-lede van u bly daar in die Barkly-Oos distrik?
- 5) How many generations are there of your family in the Barkly East district? / Hoeveel generasies van u familie woon in die Barkly-Oos distrik?
- 6) What do you think are the biggest problems Barkly East faces toady? / Wat dink u is die grootste probleme in Barkly-Oos vandag?
- 7) What do you like most about staying in Barkly East? / Van wat hou u die meeste van om in Barkly-Oos te bly?
- 8) What do you like least about staying in Barkly East? / Van wat hou u die minste van om in Barkly-Oos te bly?