

The Moving Landscape: Perspectives on Place
Emily Goughary

Academic Director: Christina Monson
School for International Training, Nepal
Spring 2008

"Landscapes emerge...

as always living sites that recreate their pasts in different ways,

as continually being renewed."

-Arturo Escobar

Acknowledgements

I would like to give great thanks to my travel partner, Donji Bahadur Gurung, who accompanied me on every step of my journey. Though sometimes we had Nepali/English communication difficulties, he provided endless laughter and smiles which are possibly the best means of communication. I would also like to thank my Program Advisor Chrisji Monson for helping me to find and use my inner passions regarding field-based research. And lastly I will thank my aamaa, Bhutmaya, whom I lived with through the course of my research in Barpak. Some of the most important information I acquired was from her, not necessarily for my research project but for life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| The Moving Landscape in the Global Age..... | 5 |
| Understanding Terms..... | 6 |
| Methodology..... | 8 |
| Research Findings..... | 10 |
| Perceptions of Perceptions..... | 10 |
| Human to Environment..... | 11 |
| Human to Human..... | 12 |
| Human to Development..... | 13 |
| Barpaki Perceptions on Modernity..... | 14 |
| Place-Based Knowledge..... | 15 |
| Food..... | 15 |
| Water..... | 15 |
| Shelter..... | 16 |
| The Moving Landscape..... | 17 |
| Migration..... | 18 |
| Educational..... | 18 |
| Economic..... | 19 |
| Future of Migration..... | 20 |
| Development Projects..... | 21 |
| Education and Multimedia..... | 23 |
| Contact with Westerners..... | 24 |
| Postmodernity..... | 25 |
| Conclusions..... | 26 |
| Bibliography..... | 30 |

Introduction

The discourses of place, identity, and modernity have been thoroughly nuanced in development literature, though perhaps not through the lens that I am proposing to view them. My aim in conducting research on identity of place and by what processes they might be constructed is to examine the cultural knowledge and perception by which places are rendered meaningful. An important aspect of this type of research includes observing what processes of place and of the world outside a place influence the construction of the perceptions of modernity or progress. The nature of this research demands that it be done on a place-based scale, or in my case, on the Barpak-Village-of-the-Gorkha-District-based scale. This particular type of ethnographic study is becoming increasingly important as even the most isolated of local places are connecting with the global sphere, thus breaking down the barriers of each into what has been termed the 'glocal' (Escobar 2001, 156). This paper will expand upon the inescapable question of present cultural times: In what ways does the interaction between spatial spheres influence the ways in which people engage with place, the ways in which cultures change, and the ways in which people construct perceptions about themselves and others in the world?

The last 50 years of development fever have constructed the ways in which people perceive their realities; both their place in the world and their selves in their places. The very origin of the consciousness behind development sprouted from President Truman in 1949 when he deemed some countries 'underdeveloped' and in need of help. The definition of underdeveloped hence created, as Gustavo

Esteva states in his discussion of 'development,' the extent to which things are considered "real, concrete, quantifiable, identifiable; a phenomenon whose origin and modalities can be the subject of investigation" (Sachs 2001, 11). This is exactly the point of my investigation: to identify and attempt to understand the complexities of the moving landscape in the village of Barpak which have become, for many villages, the reified Nepali village.

The Moving Landscape in the Global Age

The principle dynamics of culture and economy have been significantly altered by unprecedented global processes thus creating new spatial concepts and metaphors of mobility including deterritorialization, displacement, migration, traveling, and nomadology” (Escobar 2001, 141). As a result of the marginalization of isolated villages from these global processes, internal social and cultural structures have had to be created and recreated in an attempt to keep up. Migration and tourism - attempts at keeping up with global changes – both shift people to and away from certain landscapes. It can be said that deterritorialization, or the "transcendence of specific territorial boundaries and identities of ethnic groups, secretarian movements, and political formations" is one of the central forces of the modern world (Appadurai 1991, 23). In the midst of fast-paced change, people who inhabit places all over the world “continue to construct some sort of boundaries around their places, however permeable, and to be grounded in local socio-natural practices, no matter how changing and hybridizing those grounds and practices turn out to be” (Escobar 2001, 147).

Stacy Lee Pigg in her literature: "Inventing Social Categories Through Place," attempts at a definition of development that is quite in line with the background of my project in stating that it is a "process of social transformation ("modernization;" "empowerment") that is brought about by specific programs, projects, policies such as maternal health, the building of hydroelectric plants, or "meeting basic needs" (Pigg 1992, 496). Under the motivation, organization, migration and other shifts in processes of the landscape in order to meet the needs of village people, I have found that the Barpak village has changed not only in form and vegetation, but in the mindsets of who the people are and what place in the local and global world they constitute. Within these processes lies the key to understanding the unique and varied villages of Nepal, where in terms of development, no panacea exists. Thus, these processes are extremely important to not only visualize but to understand in order to recognize the villager definition of modernity that fits with their values and engagements with place.

Understanding Terms

Presently it is important to define the ways in which I understand and use the technical terms of place, identity, the ideology of modernization, and what it means to be place-based. The construction of place, as stated by Arturo Escobar in his article "Culture Sits in Places," presents that, "Place is constituted by sedimented social structures and cultural practices." (Escobar 2001, 143) In using this definition, it is also important to note that social structures and cultural practices are ever-changing, especially in the face of globalization,

marginalization and migration in Nepal in this day and age, therefore the ideas surrounding place and landscape will always be moving. It is also important to understand place, in the context I will be using it, as "more an event than a thing... characterized by openness rather than by a unitary self-identity" (Escobar 2001, 148).

Identity, to create a definition of my own, is the constructed image of the self, conjured by the self. Since one's environment, including social and cultural structures and norms, and economic and political forces greatly affect the ways in which identity is constructed, identity changes as place changes.

The term "place-based" is used to recognize the uniqueness and plurality of cultures in specific places in ecological, social, and political terms. This also means "working on the assumption that a place is not just the intersection of two lines on a map, but a concentration of meaningful human activity which gives it a distinct quality, a distinct aura" (Sachs 1992, 111). Much of the last 50 years of development history have ignored place-based concepts and instead the "space-trained eyes of the West" have deemed many cultures in a position of backwardness that should be organized by universally applicable developmental solutions (Sachs 1992, 111). In actuality, as this paper will demonstrate, the villages of Nepal are constructed of various interpretations of significance, value and progress and thus, cannot nor should not be formed to fit a homogeneous structure of how life should be lived. The distinction between universalism and localism (or place-based) is an important one for this research. The distinction

between the two in present-day Nepal illuminates the tension between universalism and diversity that must be addressed at this junction in time.

And finally, to define an ideology of modernization I will look to Stacy Lee Pigg's definition from her article "Inventing Social Categories Through Place," as: "the representation of society through an implicit scale of social progress" (Pigg 1992, 499). In reference to my project, the social progress that Pigg refers to becomes something that works towards balancing the traditional with the modern.

Methodology

Because the perceptions of place and meaning are often embedded in local knowledge, expressions, or languages that outsiders, like myself, cannot immediately understand, I had planned to provide artistic materials by which the villagers would be able to participate in artistic expressions to evoke a more universal and insightful means of understanding their ideas surrounding place, identity, and modernization. I quickly learned that art is symbol of leisure and that I, a westerner, can comfortably express myself and my place in the world by means of art. However, to villagers in Barpak, who have limited text books let alone art materials as well as little experience or exposure to art as a means of expressing themselves, art was a very foreign concept. Without a considerably strengthened knowledge base of Barpaki or Nepali language as well as more time in a given research area, interpreting perspectives on place is a difficult aspect of culture to observe. Therefore, I decided to expand my research to not only trying to understand the perception of place of a Barpaki villager, but to examine the

moving, shifting, and evolving processes of the Barpaki landscape; the very processes that are creating and constructing whatever perception of place people have in reference to influences of their local village, the national, and the global spheres.

I went to two different schools in the village and worked with classes of students ages 7-10 and 15-18 and had them draw pictures of their ideas, likes, and dislikes about village life and city life. I asked the older students, who were by far much more reluctant to draw images of each place, to accompany their pictures with a written passage about their opinions about village and city environment and lifestyle in order to gain more in depth insights into their ideas of the advantages and disadvantages of what it means to be a part of each place. Upon return to Kathmandu and with the translation help of Lajuji, I analyzed the written opinions that students had written.

Since I had no translator during my time in Barpak, formal interviews were rendered near to impossible to conduct. I did, however, use my Nepali language skills with some help from Donji, in order to conduct several informal interviews and chats with local villagers, teachers, and children. I gained much perspective on villagers' perceptions of place from the drawings, passages, and interviews and chats. Furthermore, I decided to expand my research lens to incorporate the processes of the Barpaki landscape that have an influence on the way in which these perceptions of place are constructed. This, I did by way of asking questions to villagers, noting historical and recent changes, and observing village life.

Research findings

According to Arturo Escobar, there are two ways that places are constructed:

1. the more generally cultural construction of place- “how places are endowed with meaning and the constitution of identities, subjectivities, difference and antagonism, following phenomenological, interpretivist, and constructivist paradigms,” and
2. the production of place by capital and global forces (Escobar 2001, 152).

My research yielded what has come to be my perception of Barpaki villager’s perceptions of place based on interviews, chats, and drawings done by students. Because this information includes the significances awarded to the village environment as well as to the local knowledge of the environment, it fits Escobar’s general cultural construction of place. My analysis of these perceptions-looking at the processes by which they might be formed- will fit Escobar’s place-making process of the production of place through the capital and global forces.

The cultural production of place has been present throughout the history of civilization. Through “laborious daily practices of being, knowing, and doing the communities have been actively constructing their socionatural worlds for several centuries, even if in the midst of other forces” (Escobar 2001, 160).

Perceptions of Perceptions

As landscapes do in visual art, "traditions of perception and perspective, as well as variations in the situation of the observer, may affect the process and

product of representation" (Appadurai 1991, 22). It is important to note that the perceptions of place that I plan to disclose are specifically based on my perception and understanding of the information that I received through class 2 and class 10's artistic expressions and written passages, chats, and interviews with villagers.

From most accounts I learned that though the villagers understand that there are incredible hardships that come with living in the village, the rewards are much greater. I have placed the villager's perceptions of place into the three most prominent topics areas: the human to environment relationship, the human to human relationship, and the human to development relationship.

HUMAN TO ENVIRONMENT

The environment was one of the major advantages that I noted. Basic needs such as food and water come from the villagers' own land. Because of this, many expressed that their bodies are strong and healthy from eating natural and nutritious food as well as getting exercise by working in the fields and carrying loads. The villagers pride themselves on their self-sufficiency in terms of not needing to depend on technoscience or modern materials because of their proficient use of their own environment. Even in terms of health, some villagers remarked in their ability to use medicinal herbs to treat some ailments in order to survive. They commented endlessly on the natural beauty that the mountains held, the various resources available in the green jungle surrounding the village, and the strength of the environment due to the good rainfall and climate. Partial understanding of the significance attributed to the natural environment came from the villager's perceptions of city environment. Many described village

environment as being highly polluted from factories and industries that cause smoke and dust which leads to respiration problems. Also, in the city because of traffic there is noise pollution. They remarked that the drinking water is often unavailable, dirty, and impure. And because of overpopulation, housing and street areas are crowded which lead to an abundance of garbage, sewage, and filth.

HUMAN TO HUMAN

In terms of the human to human relationship in the village, the connection is strong. The majority of the people whom I talked to or read passages by agree that village life is happy and enjoyable because of the closeness of human relation. The unity between fellow villagers leads to a general feeling of comfort, satisfaction, and a strong sense of community. Villagers noted that they help each other with problems and share in happiness and sorrow together. And they work with each other, helping each other with house projects or even collective construction projects like that of the new health post which I observed while in the village. The very fact that the villagers inhabit the same place, admire the same beauty of the environment, and share in hardships together is significant. “It is there that one is tied into a web of social bonds where one recognizes and is recognized by others...(where) people share a particular vantage point and that language, habits and outlook combine to constitute a particular style of being in the world” (Sachs 1992, 111). Again, some insights about the nature of the human relationship in the village were put in perspective by their accounts of people in the city. In some opinions people in the city are not friendly because of overpopulation which leads to the loss of value for other humans. Also they said

that there are thieves and bad people in the city meaning that people cannot walk everywhere they want to whenever they want to; they have to be scared and careful. One student even stated that though villagers may be poor in terms of money, they are rich in heart.

HUMAN TO DEVELOPMENT

One student remarked that village life was good but not yet transformed into modern life. It is in this way that many villager's viewed their place in terms of development; lacking. Many feel that not all basic human need have been fulfilled yet because technologies are still unknown to the village, as well as the skills that accompany them. Working the land in order to survive ensures a difficult, laborious life. Villagers work day and night and still feel that they cannot fulfill some basic needs. In the face of development in other towns of cities, villagers see themselves as living in the past or in the traditional. Development in the city, one student said, is the ray of light that removes the darkness and makes the city the center of civilization. The fact that several villagers alluded to village life as being in darkness denotes their feeling of lacking something that will revolutionize the way that they live their lives. Because of the facility of transport, city dwellers have no need to carry loads on their backs or walk everywhere they need to go. And because of the facility of communication, people can know the world through the information that is available to them on the internet without ever leaving a room. City dwellers do not have to work their environment all day long in order to survive; city inhabitants have the option to place education as a priority over work. Similarly,

technologies such as machines offer the opportunity to lessen physical work load and give extra time to pursue other work or have leisure time. Noting that technologies have the ability to shrink time and space, facilities such as health care are quickly available to places of larger development in the event of an emergency, whereas in the village it takes days to get to a hospital leaving many people to die untimely deaths. The piece of information about untimely deaths relates to villagers' knowledge that better facilities are available to people outside the village. And of course, the fact that most men leave the village in order to obtain jobs and make money for the future or that students leave the village to get better schooling leads villagers to view themselves as lacking economic and educational opportunities.

BARPAKI PERCEPTIONS OF MODERNITY

In terms of Barpak being transformed into the modern life, I acquired an interesting ideology of modernization from Pradeep Gurung. In terms of development projects, he believes that the village needs better education and health care facilities in order to become self-sufficient (Gurung interview). It is important to note that other ideologies that I observed, like Pradeep's, has nothing to do with becoming more like a city or other outside place but instead places significance on maintaining the great relationships to the environment and to other humans that already exist in Barpak. In this light, modernity falls somewhere between traditional methods of living and the developments that are necessary to provide a life of self-sufficiency, happiness, and living in the light.

Place-Based Knowledge

Place-based knowledge of the Barpak village includes knowing where things come from, how nature works, and the organic processes of village life. The knowledge that I observed dealt mostly with the survival aspects of food, water and shelter. Since the villagers have learn the ways of the land from very young age and the fact that during the daytime everyday, most villagers are out doing work with the natural resources, they gain place-based knowledge by being and working in their place.

FOOD

Processes on the land that require the local knowledge regarding food include the means of cooking (collecting and burning firewood), planning meals according to seasonal foods and nutrition, planting and cultivating the land, harvesting crops, knowledge of edible jungle vegetation, seasonal weather and crop rotation. The village has traditionally grown wheat, buckwheat, millet, and lentil vegetation as well as vegetables such as potatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, spinach greens, garlic and onions. Rice is grown at lower elevations where it is easier to irrigate fields. In the last 60 years however, corn was introduced as a planting crop into the village which required local knowledge to expand to incorporate its growing needs, season and nutritious value.

WATER

Water resource knowledge takes into account the fact that water comes from the high himals near the border of Tibet that lie to the north of the village,

monsoon and other climate season changes, and the collection of water. Water used to be gathered from streams that took over 30 minutes to walk to and 30 minutes carrying water back to the village until the informal village development group saved up money to install water taps throughout the village (Ghale interview). Also, just over 20 years ago, Barpak's Ashoka Fellow Bir Bahadur Ghale mobilized technicians from the Bhalabu Yantra Shala in Kathmandu, bought a plot of land on his own, and applied for government loans (Pandey 2004 online). With little help from villagers, who at that time offered little support of the then almost 20 year-old, Bir Bahadur established a micro hydro power project that has expanded to provide electricity to 5 districts (Pandey 2004, online). The significance and local knowledge of water changed at that time from just being important for their drinking and cooking necessities to having the ability to run a mill, use electric tools, or work by light in the village. The local knowledge that Bir Bahadur had of the water supply coupled with his studies and observations of a hydropower construction project, leading to saving from cutting mass amounts of trees to use for light in villager's homes and also the erasure of buying and burning kerosene on the 1.2 liters per day scale that the villagers were on before the hydropower project (Pandey 2004, online).

SHELTER

The gathering and use of natural resources also falls into the local knowledge behind shelter. Since most material would need to be carried up to Barpak from other villages or towns, the villagers make the most of natural resources available to them. The jungle provides them with wood used for constructing buildings and

making furniture. Stones, used for rooftops, pathways through the village and hillside, outdoor sitting areas and stone walls, are manually gathered, cut and carried down to the village from the hillsides. To stay warm in the winter months, women spin sheep wool and weave wool blankets on giant looms. Due to the increase of the collection and use of wood from the forest (because of the increasing village population) the villagers established a forestry committee (Ghale interview). They are in charge of regulating the amount of trees cut by each family, the restriction of cutting around sacred areas, and the implementation of a fine system for cutting large trees. One student also remarked that they had tree replanting days in the village making sure not to use up all the surrounding resources.

The Moving Landscape

As noted in the field work findings above, the village landscape to Nepalese includes their "home, community, and the very circumstances of daily life" (Pigg 1992, 492). It is through these circumstances that the villagers of Barpak form their perspective of place. In a more expansive view, these are the circumstances by which a "cosmopolitan localism" forms, or "seeks to amplify the richness of a place while keeping in mind the rights of a multi-faceted world." (Sachs 1992, 113) The processes of the multi-faceted world in terms of globalism can be understood through the physical flows of people, cultural flows, information flows, flows of capital, and the flows of ideas. Using the information that I

gained towards what Barpaki villagers' perception of place is, I look at these underlying global processes that aid in further formation of these perceptions.

Migration

Migration away from a place denotes that that place is missing some entity. In the Barpak case-study, education and economic opportunities are the driving forces of migration. As Pigg states, "93 percent of the population is rural and the urban population is growing at a rate of 10.7 percent per annum" (Pigg 1992, 494). Given this statistic it is difficult not to speculate that the landscape of Nepali villages will continue to move and change at a fast pace. What does this mean for the cultural and traditional processes that make up the village as a place?

EDUCATIONAL

Many people of the village had divulged to me that the government school is lacking in academic materials, teachers, and good teaching techniques. My observations of the school were in accordance with villager's remarks. For some villagers, this school is unacceptable, and for those of them who can afford sending their children to school in Gorkha or in Kathmandu, they do. This is an example of Barpaki migration which creates an exchange of ideas, traditions, and ideologies; students carry these with them away from the village and bring back new ones concerning the life outside the village. The returning things and ideas that I observed from people and children who had studied outside of Barpak included non-traditional Barpaki clothing, knowledge of technologies such as

hydro-power, as well as a heightened respect for the cleanliness of the village environment.

ECONOMIC

For the village of Barpak, Pigg's statistic is quite relevant, for the majority of men between 18 and 35 and sometimes as young as 12, leave the village in order to find work in other places (Gurung interview). A high percentage of those men who do leave the village during this period of their lives marry before they leave, and thus, they almost always return to the village to settle (Gurung interview). The reasons for leaving the village are purely economic; in order to have enough money to provide for the future of a family they must seek work outside the village. The village was historically self-sufficient, given its geographic location to larger civilizations, and only recently- in the trail of opening national and international markets- have they shifted to capitalist based economics. During 67 year-old Ras Bahadur Ghale's lifetime, the village went from having one vegetable stand to having several tens of stores selling material items and food stuffs in the village (Ghale interview). He has also seen the rise of a family-established furniture-making business, a paper mill, and grain mills in the last half century. Though there are capitalist ventures such as these sprouting up, they are scarce, small, and slow; not nearly sufficient for the majority of families to make money off of. Hence, the migratory effect of the moving landscape.

All of the men (above the age of 30) that I talked to had different stories of where their search for a job led them: to join the British Army, to work for a Japanese golfing enterprise in Malaysia, to enlist in the Indian Army, to do

industrial and mechanical labor in Singapore. After spending anywhere from 5-15 years away, they all returned to the village, inevitably bringing along stories, souvenirs, habits, religions, opinions and ideas about other cities, countries, and cultures. This process of leaving and returning creates a transnational culture in an isolated village and in turn, is continuously changing the ways in which villagers perceive themselves, their place, and others.

FUTURE OF MIGRATION

The people of the village who were leaving and thus bringing back these materials and experiences were all men. This means that it is the men who have outside networks, contacts, opportunities, and interactions which may explain why the women of the village still wear traditional Barpaki dress in the village while men wear non traditional clothing. My friend Khanchi, anxious to get an opportunity to leave the village, offered to carry my bag down to the village where the bus would pick me up and came to Gorkha and Kathmandu with me in search of work. Many other mothers of the village asked me to make friends with their daughters so that I might take them back to the city or to America with me. In the future, it is possible that migration will incorporate more women leaving the village if the desire for outside opportunities continues to strengthen among them.

There is also a chance that migration of Barpakis away from the village in the future will be augmented unless various factors change. The population of Barpak is increasing at a fast pace (Ghale and Gurung interviews). This means that there will be more people looking for ways to make an income outside of

Barpak. Indeed, unless the development projects that are required to meet people's needs (as expressed by Pradeep: sexual education to stabilize population, stronger education and health services) are met, the Barpak landscape will continue to include people moving matters (Gurung interview).

Development Projects

"For Nepal, development- rather than the residues and scars of imperialism- is the overt link between it and the West" (Pigg 1992, 498). In fact, Nepalis define their relationship to other towns, cities, and parts of the world through the term *bikas*, or development (Pigg 1992, 498). In truth, due to the lack of government funding and support of development projects in the village of Barpak, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) have come to play a large role in the area. Development projects such as the health post and the government school have received partial funds from the government and supplemental aid from organizations such as USAID and Save the Children (Gurung interview). Other projects such as the installment of water taps in the village and the new renovation of the hydroelectric project came entirely from outside aid organizations of UK AID, the Kadoori Project, and ICMOD (Gurung interview). The Christian Church was founded by a Christian-based NGO. This amount of involvement with people from outside the village, largely from the West, it is inevitable that outsiders' ideals of progress and modernity have been imposed upon the village by the projects themselves. As stated by Arturo Escobar in his discourse on planning,

"Social planning has not shaped only social structures and institutions, but also the way in which people experience life and construct themselves as subject" (Sachs 1992, 133). On a universal planning scale, one that is presumably advisable to all underdeveloped societies, "planning inevitably requires the normalization and standardization of reality, which in turn entails injustice and the erasure of difference and diversity" (Sachs 1992, 134). These are precisely the reasons in which the place-based processes become imperative in development discourse; "diversity holds the potential for innovation and opens the way for creative, non-linear solutions" (Sachs 1992, 112).

Additionally, development projects in their nature threaten to create superiority and inferiority hierarchies based on an outside actor having the power, means, and will to help those who seemingly cannot help themselves. This may be the reason that people define places as having "much bikas, little bikas, and no bikas" (Pigg 1992, 499). The 80 year old woman that I lived with, Bhutmaya Ghale, would invariably juxtapose any and all materials, work, or ideas of her own life to that of my life in America stating things (translated from Nepali) such as: "The food in America is plentiful and delicious. The food here is limited and no good," or "People in America have time to study and do art. The people of this village are always doing laborious work." To some extent, groups and communities are always constructed in terms of how it is different from the 'other' or what it is opposed to (Birch 2001, 4).

Education and Multimedia

There are many visual and audio forces that accompany the perception of place as well as the promotion of the ideals of modernity and progress that reach even the most isolated of places. As presented by Arjun Appadurai, "The importance of the media is not so much as direct sources of new images and scenarios for life possibilities, but as semiotic diacritics of great power, which also inflect social contact with the metropolitan world facilitated by other channels" (Appadurai 1991, 26). Audiovisual provides contact with what is going on in Nepal in terms of news as well as what is considered "popular" in terms of music, art, clothing, fashion in other parts of the world.

In the Barpak case-study, I found the media channels of educational textbooks, radio, and television to be the largest actors concerning the audiovisual. As Pigg underscores, it is through these channels that "images coalesce into the typical, generic village, turning all the villages of rural Nepal into the village" (Pigg 1992, 491). Multimedia affects the way that Nepalis define themselves and also affects the way that generalizations and national identities are formed. In this light, multimedia can be international and universalizing. School textbooks for example, which are distributed by the national government, give visual images of Nepali village life as well as the Nepali national identity- both constructed images- may form students' ideas about their own village in the face of the national and international as well as notions of normality, healthy, and progress. Pigg expands, "School books do not invent this theory of society, but they

propagate it and legitimate it" (Pigg 1992, 502). School texts thus give an authoritative quality to what they present. The Nepali village is reified into something generalizable, something that "comes to seem ever more concrete because it is ever more knowable" (Pigg 1992, 504). This generalizable village life may be seen in the many pictures that students drew for my project. Almost all village life drawings of the 7-10 year old students included their house, flowers, a tree, and perhaps an animal or person. Whether the similarities and homogeneities of the pictures have to do with the lack of detailed artistic skill or the copying of others' ideas about village life remains to be known.

Both the government school and the private school of Barpak stress the importance of the English language, deeming it important for opportunity outside of the village. It is interesting to think that the government would fund for students to learn another country's language instead of funding for the students to learn their own native tongue in school. The very fact that English is promoted instead of the native tongue forms a superiority aspect of English, relating it to success, progress and opportunity of other cultures.

Contact with Westerners

The villager's contact with Westerners comes in the form of trekker/tourist, development/aid worker, or anthropologist/student. Barpak's geographic location leads to the consumption of its food, clothing, and beauty by outsiders because it lies on what has become a low-key trekking circuit. Though not nearly as popular as the Anapurna Range or Khumbu circuits the geographic location of Barpak

attracts other people, particularly westerners, to experience the environment, terrain, and culture of Barpak.

Walking along the narrow paths of the village, I encountered several villagers with illnesses and ailments including tooth pain, hurting eyes, and strange stomach sores. Just by recognizing the fact that I was a Westerner, the people would ask me to give them medicine, and often did not believe me when I said I did not have any to give. Knowledge and rumor of the wealth of Western countries could with the possible contact with previous foreigners who did have medicine had formed many villagers' perceptions and presumptions that all Westerners have medicine to give. Westerners give new impressions of cultural habits, language, religion, clothing, etc. It must also be noted the foreigners who do visit Barpak take their experiences back to their home where they create a transnational tradition inclusion in their own lives. The SIT student, who conducted research in the previous semester, the fall of 2007, had emailed me shortly before I left for Barpak saying that she wished she had been born there and that she was still trying to integrate aspects of Barpaki life into her own in the United States. This is just another example of the local being globalized and the global being localized.

Postmodernity

The global age in which all of these processes are occurring can now be understood as postmodernity. "Postmodernity- understood as global technological change, as well as ways of thinking about the world- has swept

peoples, nations and localized communities into a new globalized world where it is extremely difficult to maintain any economic or even sociocultural autonomy and in the process has altered many categories of thought” (Birch 2001, 45). It also includes a reaction against the notions associated with modernity that material developments are necessarily fitting, progressive, or beneficial for all people and places.

Conclusions

I have attempted to present the constructions of place by villagers of Barpak, Nepal in this fast-paced age the global transport of goods, ideas, and perceptions of individual realities that are ever-changing. At this particular time- the spring of 2008- there are several reasons why it is important to imagine, describe, and understand the "Nepali village" as more than a static homogeneous landscape. The elections that have just finished (with the Maoists coming out in the lead) are an important step in Nepal’s political future because the Constituent Assembly has the rare opportunity to write a new constitution for Nepal. This is significant in terms of what will become the interpretation of a national Nepali identity, a Nepali village identity as well as the involvement in governmental decisions and support of Nepali villages bearing in mind the uniqueness of each. With continued NGO and INGO development involvement in planning, ideals of progress and modernity, understanding the processes and differences of Nepali villages is essential, especially as the villages of Nepal are moving towards a glocal experience.

With movement towards a glocal world, the balance between historical tradition and modernization should be analyzed in terms of development discourse on a place-based scale in order to understand what the inhabitants of particular places conceptualize progress to be and what locally grounded social visions are present. The movement of landscapes should be studied and understood as Solnit presents, "steps toward a redefinition of what the world is made of... a re-education of the imagination" (Solnit 2007, 3). In order to do so, however, ethnographers, academics, development workers and the like must realize the necessity to re-imagine culture as multi-dimensional, deterritorialized, and transnationally produced in order to capture the construction of place in a specific geographic location.

Though I did not find art to be necessarily universal in terms of two cultures understanding each other, I am interested in continuing along the path of alternative ethnographies which address the landscapes of group identity which Arjun Appadurai terms "ethnoscapes" (Appadurai 1991, 22). Arjun points out, "ethnoscapes" are "no longer familiar anthropological objects, in so far as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spiritually bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous" (Appadurai 1991, 22). The landscapes of the world, even the most remote edges of the world, are increasingly shifting their construction of place and remaking their histories because of transnational actors. It has become pertinent for cultural ethnographies to incorporate a multi-dimensional outlook including the cosmos, evolution of time, deterritorialization and transnational cultural flows. Especially in current

development discourse, “to speak about activating local places, cultures, natures, and knowledge against the imperializing tendencies of space, capitalism and modernity...is a way to move beyond the chronic realism fostered by established modes of analysis” (Escobar 2001,164).

"What a new style of ethnography can do is capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived local experiences [as well as] the role of the imagination in social life" (Appadurai 1991, 25). In fact, the ability to engage in the ontological act of understanding alternative ways of being may allow us, as humans, to transform the ways in which we understand and deal with ourselves and other things. As Escobar believes, “We live at our best when engaged in acts of history-making.” (Escobar 2001, 167). By observing and researching place-based knowledge and outside influence in the case study of Barpak, I have determined that the act of history-making at this time where the traditional and modern are in tension with each other includes what Barpakis perceive as an equilibrium that lies somewhere between maintaining a healthy, natural, beautiful environment of which the people embrace knowledge of and the development of bringing stronger facilities closer to them in order to eliminate migration as a necessary part of the landscape.

Transnational cultural experiences bring about “new remedies and ideologies from outside one’s cultural tradition, offering the opportunity to enrich knowledge of self and others” (Sachs 1992, 11). In line with this thinking, there has been in recent decades a returned look to the organic, the naturally healing, the basic phenomenologies of culture and nature. One may wonder if this comeback is

“related to the perceived deepening of the denaturalization of body and nature brought about by pervasive environmental destruction and new biotechnologies” (Escobar 2001, 152). With this in mind, I would further like to research ethnoscapes, like that of Barpak, in order to determine if there are, indeed, relationships between place-based knowledge and life with the strengthened knowledge of human to human and human to nature while on the other hand, determining the potential correlation between the universalization and globalization of processes with what has come to be termed ‘nature deficit disorder’ and the denaturalization of the human body.

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