

**WHICH STORIES DO WE TELL ? HERITAGE TOURISM IN THE EASTERN CAPE.**

**By**

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**Abstract**

In the last decade, tourism has been touted as a vehicle for economic and social empowerment. While this has led to a number of innovative developments which have facilitated community access to new revenue streams, it has nevertheless raised a number of problems. Of particular concern is the way in which heritage development seems increasingly to be driven or subverted by tourism imperatives. This is evidenced in the many instances in which communities have been able to access funding for the development of infrastructure and facilities by linking these to a sustainable, marketable heritage or cultural tourism product. While this may have had some positive benefits, it has also created new challenges.

In this paper, I examine ways in which the Eastern Cape's "rich diversity of cultural and heritage attractions"<sup>1</sup> has been represented, packaged and marketed to visitors, and consider the implications of this for the ongoing presentation of history, culture and society, and the future research and preservation of the province's heritage resources.

Through an examination of information and images in tourism brochures, maps, websites and related marketing materials; tour itineraries; products made available for sale to visitors; and the ways in which public and private sector initiatives identify, prioritise, develop, make accessible and interpret heritage sites and destinations, I hope to lay bare the narrative that is presented to visitors. The paper concludes by considering the consequences of the development and popularisation of a marketable narrative and asks: are these really the stories we wish to tell?

*Why am I ignorant of the drama of the battles that were fought, unable to talk about the strategic brilliance of generalship, the tactical skills of the majors and the captains, and the courage of the foot soldiers, as I can about those who fought at Stalingrad, and El*

*Alamein and the Allied landings on the European coast, to contribute to the destruction of Nazism!*

*Where should we build a monument to pay tribute to those who fought to defend our independence! If the British colonel Graham, who gave his name to Grahamstown, was a merciless butcher of the Africans whom he helped to subjugate, why should I accept that an important university town of our country should be named after him!*

*Why did the African poet of the Eastern Cape speak of the mountain of Hoho! Where is it, so that I can see it and understand why it awed this artisan of beautiful words! And why did my grandfather fight on the side of the colonial army, when he was such a man of courage! Or perhaps he was what the learned call a pragmatist! Where did those who lived bury him!*

*I will wander further and away from the Eastern Cape, perhaps with a million questions in my head, without answers. These will be questions about my shared past with the British and German people.*

From the Address by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, at the Official Opening of Indaba 2003.

## Introduction

There are a number of definitions of heritage tourism. The most succinct of these are “travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present”<sup>1</sup> and “immersion or exposure to authentic, high quality experiences rooted in unique, indigenous culture, heritage, landscapes or sense of place of a given local area.”<sup>2</sup> Implicit in these definitions are the assumptions that heritage resources – including sites of significance, stories, history, customs and traditions – can be packaged, marketed and presented for the information and enjoyment of visitors, and that supply should follow demand. What is not implicit is how the host community is expected to benefit from this commodification of heritage. There are two commonly held positions on this. Firstly, that heritage resources can be developed into marketable products that will bring meaningful social and economic benefits for host communities<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, that the development of heritage resources for the tourism market will focus attention on the worth of these resources, encourage the preservation and protection of these and provide the funding to make this possible.<sup>4</sup>

While the issue of who benefits from heritage tourism, and how, is problematic, I believe a more critical set of questions revolves around who makes the decisions about what will be developed, packaged and marketed, what imperatives inform these decisions, and how these impact on heritage practice and the way in which heritage is presented and represented.

Perhaps the first question to address is that of why it appears that heritage development is increasingly driven by tourism imperatives. In South Africa, in the last decade, tourism has been touted as a vehicle for economic and social empowerment, and heritage tourism has been identified as a key tourism growth area.<sup>5</sup> The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa<sup>6</sup> clearly articulates government’s tourism agenda: “Our vision is to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, so that it will contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of life of every South African. As a lead sector within the national economic strategy, a globally competitive tourism industry will be a major force in the reconstruction and development efforts of the government.”<sup>7</sup> This means, effectively, that government will invest in tourism because it expects social-economic returns.

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<sup>1</sup> National Trust for Historic preservation [http://www.nthp.org/heritage\\_tourism/index.html](http://www.nthp.org/heritage_tourism/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> Utah Division of State History <http://history.utah.gov/httoolkit/g1.html>

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: *A Transformation Strategy for the South African Tourism Industry*, 2001. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, *National Responsible Tourism Guidelines for South Africa*, 2002. World Travel & Tourism Council: *South Africa: The Impact of Travel & Tourism on Jobs and the Economy*, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example arguments raised in 1 and 2, above and ICOMOS, *International Cultural Tourism Charter: Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance*, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> See 3, above.

<sup>6</sup> *The Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa*, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, May 1966.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* p 21

How does this impact on heritage development? Firstly, and bluntly, tourism is seen as a national priority and a key driver of the economy; heritage is not. Resources to support all aspects of tourism development are readily available; the same does not apply to heritage. On a structural level, it is pertinent to note that tourism development and promotion are lead by a strong national department working in partnership with well-resourced provincial tourism authorities; dedicated and enthusiastic, though often not adequately resourced, local agencies; strong professional and industry-based organisations; and private sector stakeholders. This is definitely not the case with heritage. This has lead to an anomalous situation where funding for heritage-related projects is increasingly made available through tourism institutions and agencies, and where tourism bodies have taken the lead in initiating heritage-related development. It is, surely, a matter of concern to the heritage community that the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), rather than the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), has initiated a process to develop a cultural resources management strategy. This anomaly is further evidenced in the many instances in which communities have been able to access funding for the development of infrastructure and facilities by linking these to a sustainable, marketable heritage or cultural tourism product. DEAT has, for example, funded a significant number of heritage projects<sup>8</sup> via the Poverty Relief Programme. This programme rests on a triangle of interdependent goals: growing tourism market share and investment, protecting and conserving South Africa's environment, and building the nation. In accordance with these goals, DEAT prioritises projects that provide critical infrastructure for tourism: roads, information centres, museums, art galleries, craft stalls, cultural villages, accommodation, walking paths, food outlets, etc.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, if tourism development and promotion is seen as a national priority, then those agencies of government tasked with delivering on this issue will pursue their responsibility aggressively. South African Tourism (SA Tourism), the organisation mandated by government to market South Africa internationally, has taken a decision to become “a customer-focused organisation which organises itself to win against what the customer wants. Thus the strategy on which SA Tourism will begin to build for sustainable growth in international tourism will be based on demand, rather than solely on what we have to offer, or what we as South Africans believe foreign tourists will like.”<sup>10</sup> This shift to market-driven tourism and thus, I argue, market-driven heritage tourism development has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in the way in which all tourism products, including those involving heritage components, are developed, and packaged and marketed.

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<sup>8</sup> These include the Hector Petersen Museum, Alexandra Tourism Development Project, Moruleng Heritage Centre,

<sup>9</sup> See *DEAT's Poverty Relief Programmes and how they work*, [http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/PovRelief/poverty\\_relief\\_230520031.html#poverty\\_relief](http://www.environment.gov.za/ProjProg/PovRelief/poverty_relief_230520031.html#poverty_relief)

<sup>10</sup> South African Tourism, *Tourism Growth Strategy*, May 2002, p 4.

But heritage is not a product to be packaged and sold according to market demands. Heritage has to do with nurturing and articulating community identity and pride, with celebrating values, beliefs, customs and achievements, with telling the stories of our lives or about the events or circumstances which have shaped the meaning of our lives and the way we understand ourselves, as individuals, as communities and as a nation. Heritage is also about passing on the things we consider important to future generations. It is about wanting them to know, appreciate and value the lives that we, and those before us, have lived. This includes everything from the battles we have won and lost to the ideals and values in which we believe; from the symbols which carry our identity to our most cherished or anguished moments; from sites of significance to the way we express ourselves through speech, art, literature, music and sport – anything, in fact, that we hold dear and want to write into the future as a legacy.<sup>11</sup> And, because we draw our heritage from the past, it is always intimately related to history, to the particular set of stories we choose to tell about the past because they have some importance and convey the values we cherish. The question is, are these the stories potential visitors access through the information and images provided by marketing agents, the narratives and destinations packaged by tour companies, and the exhibitions and programmes developed by museums and other institutions, or is another set of narratives being constructed for the tourist market?

### **Selling the Stories**

Early travellers relied on the accounts of those who had gone before them to provide information about, and descriptions of, places to be visited. These often eccentric and highly subjective accounts entertained and enthralled and set the framework through which travellers viewed their intended destinations. Contemporary travellers have access to a wider and often more bewildering variety of information. In this section of the paper, I examine ways in which the Eastern Cape's "rich diversity of cultural and heritage attractions"<sup>12</sup> is represented, packaged and marketed to visitors via information available on the World Wide Web, tourist brochures and related publications.

It is important to note from the outset that tourism marketing, through government structures at least, is a tightly controlled and orchestrated activity. The Constitution of South Africa defines tourism development as a shared competency. The roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government, national, provincial and local, are detailed in a number of documents<sup>13</sup>. In terms of these, and in relation to international tourism marketing and promotion, SA Tourism is responsible for generically marketing South Africa within international tourist markets, while provincial tourism authorities and local

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<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to my colleague, Emile Maurice, for this description.

<sup>12</sup> Eastern Cape Tourism, *Explorer Map, South Africa, Eastern Cape*, undated.

<sup>13</sup> See Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism*, 1996; *Institutional Guidelines for Public Sector Tourism Development and Promotion in South Africa*, 1999. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism; *Memorandum of Agreement between the South African Tourism Board and Provincial Tourism Authorities*, 2003 for further details of the roles, responsibilities and relationships between the three tiers of government in relation to tourism development and promotion.

authorities are responsible for the exposure of relevant products within the framework of the national strategy. Provincial tourism authorities are primarily responsible for domestic marketing strategies and the active involvement of local tourism authorities in the development and implementation of these is encouraged.

SA Tourism markets South Africa internationally, within the context of government's Brand South Africa initiative, run under the auspices of the International Marketing Council. It is engaged in a process to redefine and refine the tourism brand in a customer-focused fashion to ensure "alignment between who we are as a destination, and the needs and desires of the key audiences for that brand".<sup>14</sup> In accordance with this process, SA Tourism has identified four key market segments: the "*Luxury in Africa*" (older, independent and wealthy travellers); "*Value for Money in Africa*" (the mass tourism market); "*Africa as Hip*" (younger, unencumbered visitors in search of adventure, luxury, entertainment, culture and authentic experiences at competitive prices); and "*South Africa for Business and Entertainment*" (in search of a "developed, accessible and world-class location") brand audiences.<sup>15</sup> SA Tourism has developed, and is implementing, tourism growth and marketing strategies that inform the way in which the organisation positions the brand, and advertises and communicates with the travel industry and potential visitors in each of the key market segments.

How does this impact on the way in which the Eastern Cape is presented, packaged and promoted to tourists? Let's imagine peering over the shoulder of someone, far away, accessing information about South Africa via the World Wide Web. Our potential visitor, accessing the SA Tourism website<sup>16</sup> and wishing to learn more about South Africa, is informed in the opening paragraph of the "About South Africa" page that "In South Africa, one finds the world's strangest and most dramatic landscapes, a unique wealth of animal and plant life, a treasure of gold, diamonds and other minerals, and a kaleidoscope of fascinating cultures." Two paragraphs further, he or she read that "Although South Africans come from many cultural traditions, they belong to one nation, a dynamic blend of age-old customs and modern ways, building a new South African society to create a better life for all."<sup>17</sup> Moving through the site to an overview of the unique selling points of each province,<sup>18</sup> the Eastern Cape is described: "Fantastic game, wonderful cultural destinations and a range of adventure activities, including South Africa's only ski resort, offer you something a little out of the ordinary, while beautiful beaches, great golf courses and attractive towns will ensure you can relax to the max." A click on the link to the Eastern Cape page<sup>19</sup> offers our potential visitor a more detailed description of the province's attractions. While these appear to relate largely to the natural landscape, he or she also learns that, "the architecture of

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<sup>14</sup> South African Tourism, *Tourism Growth Strategy*, May 2002, p 26.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pp27-28.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net/index.cfm?SitePageID=355>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net/index.cfm?SitePageID=69>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net/index.cfm?SitePageID=257&ProvinceID=3>

many of the cities and towns reflects the rich heritage of the people”<sup>20</sup>. Looking for further clues to the meaning of this rather odd statement, our potential visitor is informed that: “The capital is Bisho. Other important towns in the province include Uitenhage, which has important motor vehicle-manufacturing and related industries; King William's Town, rich in early settler and military history; Grahamstown, also known as the City of Saints because of its more than 40 churches; Graaff-Reinet, with its interesting collection of historic buildings; Cradock, the hub of the Central Karoo; Stutterheim, the forestry centre of the province; Aliwal North, famous for its hot sulphur springs; and Port St Johns, the largest town on the Wild Coast.”<sup>21</sup>

The “must see” attractions listed on this site include a number of natural and adventure tourism destinations, as well as the Nelson Mandela Museum, The Grahamstown National Arts Festival, Hole in the Wall and the Owl House.<sup>22</sup>

What are the images that stay in our potential visitor’s mind on leaving this site? The banner at the top of the SA Tourism website contains three distinctly different images, a long uninhabited mountain landscape, a close-up of a piece of red beadwork and the SA Tourism logo – a circular section of the national flag. These are repeated in various configurations on each of the pages on this site. Images on the “About South Africa” page are similar; another unpopulated natural landscape, the red beads and three smaller images of a leopard, a harbour scene, and the view from the top of a mountain. Two of these images show people. In the harbour scene, miniscule specks, which must be people, appear between the boats and bright umbrellas. In the mountaintop scene, two white tourists are viewed, as if from higher above, as small spectators in a majestic landscape. The “provinces”<sup>23</sup> page, which includes a single image and introductory paragraph summarising the “distinct characteristics” of each of the country’s nine provinces, retains the mountain landscape and bead banner. The image representing the Eastern Cape is of Bashee Point, an almost unidentifiable landmass in a sea and cloudscape. The Eastern Cape page includes the same image and an additional two, Hole in the Wall and Cape St Francis, all eerily unpopulated. Collectively these images depict a timeless, serene natural environment unaffected by human habitation. Certainly there is little to support the information about people and cities contained in the text!

In light of the above it is interesting to note that SATOUR (now SA Tourism) previously focused its attention on nature and eco-based tourism, metaphorically airbrushing uncomfortable reminders of human habitation from the landscape in the 1990’s. In recent years the focus has shifted to “responsible tourism”<sup>24</sup> and heritage tourism which, because they involve engagement with communities, have become ideal vehicles for advancing the image of a new nation-state basking in the glow of “rainbowism”.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.southafrica.net/index.cfm?SitePageID=69>

<sup>24</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, *National Responsible Tourism*

With what impression is our potential visitor left? Possibly confused, or maybe interested to find out more, our potential visitor accesses the website of Eastern Cape Tourism, the provincial authority charged with marketing and promoting the province.<sup>25</sup> Greeted with a “flash” presentation, he or she is invited to experience Hole in the Wall, the Valley of Desolation, Baviaanskloof, the Nelson Mandela Museum, Addo Elephant Park, “all in one region”.<sup>26</sup> The banner alongside invites viewers to “Come to the Eastern Cape and enjoy South Africa’s finest beaches where dolphins play in warm waters, game reserves teem with wildlife, people greet you with a story and a smile, and the holiday adventure of a lifetime unfolds before you. Explore the Eastern Cape and experience the best that South Africa has to offer! Naturally ...”<sup>27</sup> The notion of the area as an “experience” is further entrenched in the links to four distinctly different kinds of experiences: nature and wildlife; holiday and leisure; culture and history; and adventure and sport, all detailed on the site.

The culture and history page succinctly indicates a number of key issues that frame the tourism narrative. “The Eastern Cape and its people have a rich and varied cultural history. The diverse and friendly population has many stories to tell and places to show and all visitors are welcome. Come and meet the tribes of the Eastern Cape, home to some of South Africa’s greatest heroes like Nelson Mandela (who currently resides in the Eastern Cape) and Thabo Mbeki (South Africa’s current president and leader of the ANC). Rich artistic and musical traditions from just a small part of the rich tapestry that is the Eastern Cape.”<sup>28</sup> Links on this page invite the user to experience: Mandela, Museums, Freedom Struggle, Myths and Legends and Eastern Cape Heroes<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately most of these links are not operational and our potential visitor is only able to access the information about Mandela and Museums.

What goes through our potential visitor’s mind as he or she sits reflecting on the information presented on these sites? What are the images impressed upon him or her? Images on this site give a slightly more varied sense of the province, although the initial impression, gained through the “flash” presentation, remains that of a pristine natural landscape. The presentation moves through images of an aloe, a seascape showing Hole in the Wall, a mountaintop view into the Valley of Desolation, a cultivated landscape representing Baviaanskloof, and the first visual indication of human habitation – a whitewashed colonial farm building. The presentation ends with an iconic human face, that of Nelson Mandela. The banner at the top of this page invites users to “choose an experience”. Images of horse-riders on a beach (holiday), an elephant (nature), a windsurfer on the sea (sport), a rural landscape with brightly painted grass-roofed huts (culture and history) and an almost indecipherable view of a highway through a built environment (cities) are used as buttons, enabling users to access more detailed

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*Guidelines for South Africa*, 13 May 2002

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ectourism.co.za>

<sup>26</sup> These attractions are also included on the SA Tourism website referred to earlier, see 10, above.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.ectourism.co.za>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.ectourism.co.za/culture\\_top.htm](http://www.ectourism.co.za/culture_top.htm)

<sup>29</sup> At the time of writing, August 2003, only the Mandela and Museums links had been “populated” with information and content and visitors are invited to submit queries or contributions to Eastern Cape Tourism.

information about these experiences. As in the SA Tourism website, the landscape appears unpopulated. The picture, literally and figuratively, changes when users enter the “culture and history” page, dominated by a large image of Nelson Mandela. Images of, or related to, Mandela dominate the five buttons used to access further information, including a portrait of Mandela (Mandela), a view of the Bunga Building, which houses the Nelson Mandela Museum (Museums), and Mandela graffiti (Freedom Struggle). The rural landscape previously described leads users to information about Myths and Legends, and a smiling President Thabo Mbeki to the page on Eastern Cape Heroes.

Like the website pamphlets and other publications<sup>30</sup> distributed by Eastern Cape Tourism consistently encourage visitors to “experience”, “explore” and “discover” the “diverse natural, cultural and historical riches that make up the complete South African experience”.<sup>31</sup> Visual information in these publications is more varied than that provided on the websites. It includes a range of images of picturesque 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial buildings; happy looking locals, generally wearing traditional dress, and equally happy looking visitors enjoying a range of activities; a white woman tourist photographing the landscape; as well as the standard images of a pristine natural environment.

While national and provincial tourism authorities market the Eastern Cape generically, local government tourism departments focus more closely on the attractions and amenities in the areas under their jurisdiction. Our potential visitor will find that Tourism Buffalo City’s website includes detailed information on “things to see and do in East London”.<sup>32</sup> Arts, culture and heritage attractions listed on this page include: cultural villages, museums and historic buildings. A separate page<sup>33</sup> lists information about township, city, cultural and liberation tours, without providing information about the itineraries of these. Perhaps the most useful page on this site is the one that deals with history and culture<sup>34</sup>, presenting visitors with the first apparently substantive information on the area. Of particular relevance are the key themes that make up the narrative. Broadly speaking, these relate to: the fossil heritage and links to early humankind; the Khoisan; the movement of Bantu-speaking people into and through the area in pre-colonial times; the area as a contact zone between black and white; the Frontier Wars; the virtual destruction of the Xhosa nation; the Anglo-Boer War (sic), the role of missionaries; the origins of the province’s educational institutions and the subsequent emergence of black intellectuals; apartheid and resistance; “homelands” and liberation, giving our potential visitor a good overview of the dominant narrative.

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<sup>30</sup> Other Eastern Cape Tourism maps and pamphlets available from tourism information points at the time of writing include: *Explorer Map, South Africa, Eastern Cape*, undated. *Roadmap, Eastern Cape*, undated, *The Friendly N6*, undated, *The Wild Coast*, undated, *Eastern Cape, Western Region*, undated, *Eastern Cape: Wild Coasts, Sunshine Coast, Country Routes*, 2002/2003.

<sup>31</sup> Eastern Cape Tourism, *6 Great routes. 6 Million great experiences*, undated.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.tourismbuffalocity.co.za/thingstosee.htm>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.tourismbuffalocity.co.za/tours.htm>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.tourismbuffalocity.co.za/history.htm>

Images on the Tourism Buffalo City site are limited – the same banner is used on each of the site’s many pages. This collage includes: a lighthouse, a zebra, a swimmer and a shipwreck, and a small image of two Xhosa people outside huts, partially obscured by the feet of two large mountaineers. For once, the natural landscape does not dominate the imagery, though the choice of white people at leisure is consistent with other materials reviewed in this paper.

The Nelson Mandela Bay website’s “Long Ago” page makes reference to Khoisan history, British Settlers, the area’s importance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial centre and the settlement by “European, Cape Malay and immigrant communities”. The “Historical Heritage” page<sup>35</sup> informs users that, “Nelson Mandela Bay bears the rich legacy of a city in an area which saw the first meetings of Khoisan, British, Dutch, German and Xhosa people. As the landing place of the 1820 Settlers, it boasts some of the finest architectural attractions in South Africa.” This legacy is then described in relation to a selection of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings and monuments in the area. Interestingly, the “Culture” page<sup>36</sup> boasts that: “It is in this region that the visitor is fully exposed to the cultural heritage of the Xhosa nation”, although this is not featured in the pages dealing more broadly with history and heritage.

Images on these pages support and illustrate the content described above. The “Long Ago” and “Historical Heritage” pages include the same selection of images of a variety of buildings and monuments, while the “Culture” page shows images of Xhosa people, a rock painting and the Horse Memorial. Our potential visitor might well wonder why it is that history and culture are somehow different and racially defined.

Moving to the next large town represented on the web, our potential visitor enters the Grahamstown website<sup>37</sup> and learns that “Grahamstown's unique atmosphere is a result of its long and varied history,” a history that appears to have begun in 1812 and to relate almost exclusively to the advent of the Settlers and activities in which they and their immediate descendants were involved. This view is reinforced by the structures described in the “Historical Attractions”<sup>38</sup> page. Images on these pages include a collage of people and various elements of the natural and built environment, a compilation our potential visitor now takes for granted as being representative of the area. Clicking on the link to “Frontier Country”<sup>39</sup> our potential visitor appears to be entering new territory altogether – unfortunately this impression does not last. The opening sentences: “Three powerful nations shaped today's Republic of South Africa: the British, the Xhosa and the Afrikaner. It was in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa that they first made contact over 200 years ago,” sets the scene for the information contained on this page. The final sentences in the introduction: “Now no longer the scene of conflict and strife, Frontier Country remains spectacularly beautiful. In its natural state, it is one of the most diverse regions on earth. Much of the

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<sup>35</sup> [http://www.tourismpe.co.za/historical\\_heritage.asp](http://www.tourismpe.co.za/historical_heritage.asp)

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.tourismpe.co.za/culture.asp>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.grahamstown.co.za/>

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.grahamstown.co.za/historical\\_attractions.asp](http://www.grahamstown.co.za/historical_attractions.asp)

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.grahamstown.co.za/frontier\\_country.html](http://www.grahamstown.co.za/frontier_country.html)

pristine indigenous flora and fauna is still very accessible, making for breath-taking views, experiences and memories,” confirm both the narrative and the image of the Eastern Cape that have been presented to our potential visitor. The narrative detailed under “History and Culture” on this page covers the region’s history from the earliest times: “The Eastern Cape Province can boast to be the cradle of human culture,” but seems to peter out after the Frontier Wars.

While it would have been interesting to review all other related sites on the web, this was not possible. It must be noted, however, that only a handful of the smaller towns (including Cradock, Middelburg, Stutterheim, St Francis, Bedford, Burgersdorp, Hamburg, Graaff-Reinet and Molteno) have tourism-related websites.

But what of the other choices offered to our potential visitor? How does he or she decide which province, if any, to visit? Those concerned with marketing always keep a close eye on the opposition, checking to see how their brands are positioned in relation to potential competitors. Eastern Cape Tourism appears to have identified the province’s unique selling point as a destination to “experience” and its logo reflects a mixture of the various natural and cultural elements of that experience. A neighbouring province, Kwa Zulu-Natal, has chosen a different route. This province, in a very effective and well co-ordinated campaign, is focusing on Zulu culture as its unique selling point. The logo of the Kwa Zulu-Natal Tourism Authority incorporates the words “Kingdom of the Zulu” and an image of a Zulu warrior carrying an assegai and holding a large shield. Print campaigns carry the slogan “Wozani. Our Kingdom Calls.”<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, it has been noted that the province lacks specific and meaningful tourism products to underpin this branding.<sup>41</sup> The slogan of another neighbouring province, the Western Cape, “escape to the Cape *now*”<sup>42</sup> supports a campaign based on the region’s diversity of natural and cultural attractions. Moving further afield, North West Province sells itself as “South Africa’s Heritage Destination”<sup>43</sup> focusing on both the cultural and natural heritage of the area. Gauteng Tourism Authority, by contrast, focuses on the urban culture of the cities and on Gauteng’s position as a primary destination for business travellers. Limpopo Province markets itself as “The Treasure Chest”<sup>44</sup>, although this is never fully explained.

The marketing campaigns that underpin and inform the end products such as websites, maps and brochures examined above, are based on a particular understanding of the existing and potential market. The SA Tourism Index Quarterly Reports<sup>45</sup> provide a detailed analysis based on international arrival statistics and departure surveys. Information on international visitors to the Eastern Cape in 2002 extracted from these tells us that an average 8% of international tourists visit the Eastern Cape. Of these,

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<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Sawbona, May 2003, p 17.

<sup>41</sup> King Shaka District Municipality, *Tourism Business Plan, Proposed Cultural and Heritage Tourism Route*, 2001.

<sup>42</sup> <http://capetourism.org/>

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Sawbona, May 2003, p 83.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.tourismboard.org.za/>

<sup>45</sup> These reports are available on <http://www.southafrica.net/index.cfm?SitepageID=223>

the largest percentage are holidaymakers and those visiting friends and relatives: a very small percentage of business travellers is recorded. The most popular attractions are beaches (62.2%) nature reserves (59.2%) township tours (11.3%) and restaurants (10.5%). The largest percentage of visitors comes from Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. Information on domestic tourism, extracted from SA Tourism's Domestic Tourism Surveys,<sup>46</sup> tells us that approximately 14% of domestic trips are made to the Eastern Cape. Of these, the largest percentage are visiting friends and relatives (65%), followed by leisure seekers (20%). Only 5% of domestic visitors to the Eastern Cape are there for business reasons. The coast (Eastern Cape Tourism's Wild Coast and Sunshine Coast regions) is the most popular regional destination, attracting almost 67% of domestic visitors.

### **Packaging the Stories**

Product packaging generally refers to the way in which tourism products, including experiences, accommodation, meals, entertainment and business, are linked into a cohesive experience. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to focus on the ways in which heritage resources, including information, institutions, sites and cultural activities, are packaged through maps, routes and tours to create or convey a particular narrative.

Maps available from tourism organisations in the Eastern Cape in most instances simply show roads and routes and include lists of attractions, but two stand out for the banality of their images. The first<sup>47</sup> is a highly simplified depiction of major routes "annotated" with picture-book renditions of flora, fauna and colonial buildings interspersed amongst a range of customised symbols. Four small figures<sup>48</sup> involved in sporting activity (canoeing, windsurfing, fishing, surfing and hiking) are the only markers of human activity, although the buildings clearly indicate the presence of people with a European heritage.<sup>49</sup> The second, a more detailed roadmap, is bordered by pale pink cartoon characters, human and animal, engaged as before in a variety of sporting activities. In both of these the narrative relates clearly to the Eastern Cape as a "playground" for tourists. A third map<sup>50</sup> conveys a different impression and is clearly intended to give substance to the notion of the province's diversity. This is further reinforced in the opening line of the paragraph on Cultural and Heritage Tourism: "The Eastern Cape is blessed with a rich diversity of cultural and heritage attractions." This publication includes a useful and informative roadmap, descriptions of the province's six tourism routes, and a range of images illustrating the key features of each route. While the natural landscape predominates, the selection of images of people, places, the built environment and animals, is more broadly representative and creates the impression of an area with

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<sup>46</sup> SA Tourism Domestic Survey, 2001 no further surveys have been undertaken to date.

<sup>47</sup> *Eastern Cape Western Region*, and *The Friendly N6*, see 28, above.

<sup>48</sup> These look like white men although it is hard to be sure!

<sup>49</sup> Buildings depicted include a Cape Dutch farmhouse, a cathedral, a Georgian structure and a small country church, with attached graveyard.

<sup>50</sup> See 29, above.

multiple attractions. On closer examination, it appears that all residents are black and all visitors white, a feature that seems to bedevil South African tourism images in general!<sup>51</sup>

Tourism routes are intended to bring together a critical mass, or clustering, of tourism attractions, which can be marketed as a single entity. The concept of routes linking destinations thematically or regionally has been enthusiastically adopted and supported by provincial tourism authorities around the country in anticipation that they will attract large numbers of tourists, thereby encouraging further private sector investment and community based development.

Eastern Cape Tourism has developed a number of themed routes, marketed as ““6 Great routes. 6 Million great experiences.”<sup>52</sup> These are intended to lead visitors to a number of destinations or attractions in clearly defined regions. The routes, unlike many developed in this country, are not based on a clearly defined narrative, they simply lead travellers through a particular environment. These routes are labelled: Tsitsikamma Adventures, Sunshine Coast and Country, Amatola Mountain Escape, Karoo Heartland, Wild Coast and the Friendly N6. While most of these focus on “Adventure and Eco Tourism”, “Cultural and Heritage Tourism” is specifically foregrounded and specific references are made to “Frontier Country, a vibrant melting pot of history and culture”, “Xhosa culture, liberation and early settler history”, the University of Fort Hare, “alma mater of many great African leaders, including Nelson Mandela” and “Bushman Rock Art”.

The Thunga-Thunga Route<sup>53</sup> developed by Open Africa, a registered not for gain organisation established in 1995 with the aim of optimising the synergies between tourism, job creation and conservation, is part of the African Dream project which is intended to link the “splendours of Africa” in a continuous network of tourism routes from the Cape to Cairo.<sup>54</sup> The Thunga-Thunga Route is described as offering “a real taste of Africa in circumstances that don't require the abandonment of modern conveniences.” The Thunga-Thunga Route includes a range of heritage sites and experiences, listing cultural villages, battlefields, mission stations, graves, great places and monuments, other sites of significance and museums.

While the routes described above, unlike theme-based routes found elsewhere<sup>55</sup>, have not been devised to explore a particular narrative, the story implicit in each is constructed through the choice of destinations and advertised activities. The Thunga-Thunga Route corresponds geographically with Eastern Cape

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<sup>51</sup> An informal discussion with a tourism official in another province revealed a concern that SA Tourism tended to show visitors or those at leisure as white and residents or workers as black.

<sup>52</sup> See 29, above.

<sup>53</sup> *Thunga-Thunga Route*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.africandream.com/ZAECTThunga01/popup/popupwindow/map.html>

<sup>55</sup> See for example the *Trail of two cities*, developed by Cape Town Tourism to showcase “some of the projects where people are caring for the environment and for each other” aimed specifically at participants in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Tourism's Wild Coast Route. A comparison with the profiled destinations shows that while the Thunga-Thunga Route depicts an area rich in history, the Wild Coast Route focuses almost entirely on the area's natural attractions. The Thunga-Thunga Route tells the story of human interaction and settlement: "great places" of various traditional leaders, battlefields and villages. The Wild Coast Route tells the story of "uncharted territory" and an "unspoilt" and "untamed" coastline.<sup>56</sup>

The Port Elizabeth Shebeen Route, described as "a fun, action-filled adventure through the life and soul of Africa, the 'Township',"<sup>57</sup> includes shebeens and other attractions, including game reserves, academic institutions, memorials, community projects, and arts and crafts studios. While visitors are told that they have not "experienced Africa until you have been to a Shebeen," a cautionary note at the back of the pamphlet carries safety hints and advises visitors to make use of tour operators! A visit to this idyllic fun-filled township clearly carries a hint of danger. Do we accept this as an expression of concern or, like the warnings not to leave your car in the national parks, does this vicarious sense of danger actually heighten the visitor experience?

"Heritage tourism" has been identified as a vehicle for offering tourists a unique South African "experience". It provides the substance of the tourist's visit and is built upon the authenticity and culture of the South African people"<sup>58</sup> A number of private tour operators have developed thematic tour packages that provide opportunities for visitors to experience the Eastern Cape. It is these, more than any other form of packages, that shape and present the narrative that purports to tell the story of the Eastern Cape to visitors.

Speirs Tours<sup>59</sup>, a King William's Town-based operation, has developed a comprehensive range of tours offering visitors the opportunity to "experience the natural beauty, preserved ancient cultures, historical drama and romance of the Eastern Cape."<sup>60</sup> Tour packages include Liberation Tour, Frontier Route Tour, Missionary Route Tour, King William's Town Tour, The Maqqomo Tour, The Sandile Tour, The Ndlambe Tour, The Siyolo Tour, Missionary History Tour, and Sandile Cave Tour, as well as more generalised tours of the Eastern Cape. Attractions and destinations listed in these packages include forts and battlefields, monuments and memorials, churches and other historic buildings, educational institutions, museums, gravesites, cultural villages, rural villages, early settler towns, great places, and natural features with cultural associations or significance. Tour participants overnight in towns and villages, cultural villages or Xhosa homesteads, and game reserves. While the tours focus on heritage-related themes, the packages include a diverse range of experiences: game drives, walks, and

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<sup>56</sup> Eastern Cape Tourism, *6 Great routes. 6 Million great experiences*, undated.

<sup>57</sup> Eastern Cape Tourism, *Port Elizabeth Shebeen Route*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>58</sup> The Cluster Consortium, *The South African Tourism Cluster Study*, NEDLAC, 1999, p 33

<sup>59</sup> *Speirs Tours – offering an authentic African experience in sunny South Africa*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.speirstours.co.za>

opportunities to meet and interact with local people, hear their stories, purchase local craft work and experience a “different way of living”<sup>61</sup>. Similar tours are offered by a range of other operators<sup>62</sup>.

A range of Township Tours variously intended to “to experience day to day life in townships”<sup>63</sup> and provide “a richly rewarding colourful experience on one of our tours where you’ll also soak up in the local culture with a visit to one of the local shebeens. Are offered by several tour operators”<sup>64</sup>

Xhosa Culture tours, also offered by several tour operators, offer “exposure to the rich cultural heritage of the Xhosa people in a traditional and rural setting.”<sup>65</sup> These tours generally include discussions with residents and opportunities to sample local cuisine, observe ceremonies, festivities or various forms of entertainment, and purchase local craft work. Village tours offer similar opportunities to “enjoy village hospitality in a relaxed and laid back atmosphere,”<sup>66</sup> “see for yourself how Traditional, Cultural and Historical we are,”<sup>67</sup> and “Experience True Eastern Cape Hospitality, Traditional Food and Entertainment. Explore the true African culture, mingle and exchange with the locals.”<sup>68</sup>

Liberation or Struggle Tours are also offered by several tour operators. The “Walk to Freedom”<sup>69</sup> tour takes visitors from Cape Town to Umtata and includes a range of struggle-related destinations: Robben Island, University of Fort Hare, Steve Biko’s grave and the Nelson Mandela Museum, Others, including the liberation tour offered by Amatola Tours,<sup>70</sup> focus on the Eastern Cape as the birthplace of the struggle for liberation against the apartheid regime. The itinerary includes a visit to the University of Fort Hare (the university library, the ANC archives and the De Beers Art Gallery), the Bisho Legislature, the site and graves of the Bisho Massacre and the grave of Steve Biko.

Essentially, these and other similar tours provide opportunities for tourists to journey safely through “foreign” territory and to encounter “wildlife, the primitive and the modern”, as described extensively and eloquently by Witz, Rassool and Minkley<sup>71</sup> in several papers.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.speirstours.co.za/xhosa-village-tour.htm>

<sup>62</sup> See forexample tours offered by: iThala Tours, Amatola Tours, Xhosa Land Tourism,

<sup>63</sup> Imonti Tours, *Experience the Eastern Cape*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>64</sup> IThala Tourism, *IThala Tourism for a unique township based tourism experience*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Xhosa Land Tourism, undated pamphlet

<sup>67</sup> Phambili Midaka Cultural Association, *See us at Nyililoc*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>68</sup> *Come to Mgwali Village*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>69</sup> Tourism Agencies *Walk to Freedom*, undated pamphlet

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.uyaphi.com/safarisextendedEC.htm>

<sup>71</sup> See, Witz L, Rassool, C and Minkley, G *Repackaging the past for South African Tourism*, Daedalus, Winter 2001. Rassool, C *The Rise of Heritage and the Reconstitution of History in South Africa*, Kronos, 26, 2000. Rassool, C and Witz, L *South Africa: a World in One Country. Moments in International Tourist Encounters with Wildlife, the Primitive and the Modern*, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1994.

An experience of a slightly different nature is the Tour of the Dove<sup>72</sup> a political heritage trail initiated by the Eastern Cape Liberation War Veterans' Association, in conjunction with Buffalo City and the Amathole Museum. The tour takes tourists into the homes of liberation veterans, be they former MK, Apla or other fighters, to hear their stories and discuss their experiences with them. Tourists are able to stay in the homes of the veterans, who will introduce them to communities, take them on hikes and fishing expeditions, and allow them to take part in traditional weddings, funerals and initiations.

The maps, routes and tours described above rely on a particular configuration of heritage tourism products to give substance to a marketable narrative, i.e. one that tells a story or offers an experience that is attractive to visitors and for which they are prepared to pay. What makes the Eastern Cape narrative marketable? Firstly, the Eastern Cape narrative, as played out in these packages, is essentially a good news story. It tells the story of the movement of people in and through the area and their struggles to conquer the natural environment and overcome the competition for resources. It tells of a land where contact, conflict and dispossession have occurred and been resolved in a way has not impacted negatively on the culture and identity of any of the parties, where indigenous people and colonial invaders live side by side in harmony. It tells the story of democracy, how leaders of the struggle emerged and mobilised their people to conquer an unjust system, and of how these former adversaries live together in a modern world. Secondly, it tells a story with which diverse people can identify. It is no accident that the largest groups of international visitors to the region are the Germans and Britons whose ancestors played a role in creating the identity of the area. Thirdly, the narrative is played out in a landscape rich in physical remnants of the events. Visitors in search of an "authentic" experience can explore the full breadth of the cultural, historical and natural significance of sites in an interconnected and interrelated way. Fourthly, the narrative satisfies visitors' needs for a product that is inspirational and emotionally, intellectually and physically satisfying.<sup>73</sup>

### **Telling the Stories**

The packages described above rely on the existence of a range of "products"<sup>74</sup> which can be made available to visitors. In the case of heritage tourism, these products can be defined as sites, exhibitions and other interpretative facilities, collections, stories and experiences which collectively constitute or make manifest the Eastern Cape narrative. If we are to get to the root of this narrative we need to understand who develops these products, and how and why. The answer to these questions is complex

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<sup>72</sup> *The Dove Trail* Sunday Times 18 November 2001

<sup>73</sup> <http://history.utah.gov.httoolkit/g1.html>

<sup>74</sup> Tourism planners use the term products to refer to experiences, activities or sites that are available for consumption by the market. This means that they meet certain criteria. For example, they are accessible, physically to visitors, that they have sufficient and appropriate facilities to accommodate visitor needs and that all support services, in this case, guides, interpretation, communication, information, etc are in place.

and involves an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government, private sector entrepreneurs and communities in relation to heritage and tourism development.

In the case of tourism, the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government, the private sector and communities are clearly articulated and in many instances regulated. National tourism policy is underpinned by the principle that tourism should be government led, private sector driven and community-based. In relation to tourism development, and in accordance with the White Paper on Tourism Development and Promotion<sup>75</sup> and the Institutional Guidelines for Public Sector Tourism Development and Promotion in South Africa<sup>76</sup>, the national department DEAT is responsible for establishing a national tourism development programme and developing related guidelines, models, financial mechanisms, training opportunities and pilot projects. Provincial tourism authorities are responsible for identifying tourism opportunities and initiating programmes to develop these, providing an advisory/consultative service, facilitating the promotion and packaging of products, monitoring and implementing training, finances and standards promotion. Local government authorities are responsible for leading tourism development in their areas in consultation with tourism authorities. The private sector is responsible for investing in, developing, maintaining, promoting and marketing tourism products, and are encouraged to facilitate the “involvement of local communities in tourism ventures by, inter alia, establishing partnership tourism ventures with communities.”<sup>77</sup> Both provincial and local government are charged with the task of fulfilling their responsibilities in consultation with local communities and the private sector.

While tourism product development is primarily the domain of communities and the private sector, DEAT has developed guidelines for responsible tourism that provide a framework within which the relationship between these sectors should be negotiated so that resources, including heritage resources, can be developed as sustainable attractions in a manner that protects their authenticity and ensures that communities are involved in and benefit from tourism.<sup>78</sup>

The heritage scenario is more complicated. The Eastern Cape’s “menu” of heritage tourism products include components developed by a number of stakeholders: the national Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), formerly the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), The Eastern Cape Province Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture, local government, the private sector, and communities.

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<sup>75</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism*, 1996

<sup>76</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism *Institutional Guidelines for Public Sector Tourism Development and Promotion in South Africa*, 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism *White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism*, 1996, p 38.

<sup>78</sup> Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, *National Responsible Tourism Guidelines for South Africa*, 2002

While a detailed analysis of the heritage sector does not fall within the scope of this paper, certain issues are germane to an understanding of the way in which the narrative is produced. In recent years, DAC has shifted its emphasis significantly. The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage<sup>79</sup>, tabled in 1996 after a broad consultative process, makes the point that, “countries preserve their heritage and ... In so doing, they declare what has value for them, what they seek to preserve as evidence of their own as well as other's development and achievement.”<sup>80</sup> By 2003, this focus on heritage as having intrinsic value has been reduced to a more utilitarian view. The DAC's current mission statement's only reference to heritage lies in one of its objectives, namely, “to be part of a strategy of branding the Country as a sought after tourism destination, because of its heritage sites, museums and monuments”<sup>81</sup>. This rather alarming sentiment is somewhat tempered by DAC's Heritage Directorate's aim to “ensure equitable development and preservation, conservation, protection, promotion and making known of our collective history, national symbols and heritage.”<sup>82</sup> DAC 's mission is given substance, in the Eastern Cape, through the National Legacy Project and the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

The National Legacy Project, constituted in 1998 within the national Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), by Cabinet, is intended to “define museums, monuments and memorials as change agents to view and speculate on our history”<sup>83</sup>. The Nelson Mandela Museum, spread across three historic sites in Umtata, Mvezo and Qunu, was amongst the first pilot projects to be identified. The Bunga Building in Umtata houses an exhibition of some of the many gifts and awards Nelson Mandela received during his term as president and tells the story of Nelson Mandela's life through extracts from his autobiography “Long Walk to Freedom”<sup>84</sup>, supplemented with explanatory text, images and artefacts. The site of Nelson Mandela's birth in Mvezo is marked by a small interpretative facility. The third component of the museum, the Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre in Qunu, the village in which Mandela was raised, is still under construction but is intended to provide opportunities for young people to learn about “leadership, values, indigenous systems and games”.<sup>85</sup>

All heritage tourism packages make reference to sites of historical and cultural significance. In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act<sup>86</sup> SAHRA is responsible for promoting and coordinating the management of heritage resources at a national level. SAHRA in consultation with the provinces is

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<sup>79</sup> Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p 26.

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.dac.gov.za/about\\_us/top\\_management/mission/mission.htm](http://www.dac.gov.za/about_us/top_management/mission/mission.htm)

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.dac.gov.za/about\\_us/cd\\_heritage/aim.htm](http://www.dac.gov.za/about_us/cd_heritage/aim.htm)

<sup>83</sup> Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, *Draft Document on the National Legacy Project*, 1998, p 1.

<sup>84</sup> Nelson Rohilala Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Macdonald Purnell, Randberg, 1994

<sup>85</sup> *Nelson Mandela Museum*, undated pamphlet.

<sup>86</sup> *National Heritage Resources Act*, Act No 25 1999,

responsible for establishing a system for grading places and objects which form part of the national estate, and which distinguishes at the very least between the following categories: Grade I: Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they are of special national significance; Grade II: Heritage resources which, although forming part of the national estate, can be considered to have special qualities which make them significant within the context of a province or a region; and Grade III: Other heritage resources worthy of conservation.”<sup>87</sup> SAHRA is responsible for the identification and management of Grade I heritage resources, provincial heritage resources authorities are responsible for the identification and management of Grade II heritage resources, and local authorities for the identification and management of Grade III heritage resources. While this system appears appropriate in theory, in practice the negotiation of criteria by which sites are graded and the process by which sites are identified remain contested. SAHRA has recently funded a project by The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) which investigated people's attitudes towards existing heritage sites and museums in Buffalo City and asked them to reflect on the possible declaration of alternative or new heritage sites. The project identified and documented a variety of alternative heritage sites for consideration by SAHRA<sup>88</sup> and the outcome of the process is awaited with interest.

The selection of sites for inclusion on routes and in other packages is thus informed by three interrelated processes. Firstly, the existing list of heritage sites, previously designated as national monuments. These lists reflect the selection processes and criteria of the National Monuments Council<sup>89</sup> including sites such as churches, forts and houses relating to white colonial history. Secondly, sites identified as significant by communities. In many instances these relate to “struggle” or pre-colonial history. Thirdly, sites identified by academic researchers and heritage institutions and made known through ad hoc processes.

The Eastern Cape Province Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture is responsible for administering and funding a number of museums including the East London Museum, The Amathole Museum, Bay World (formerly the Port Elizabeth Museum) and The Albany Museum which, through their exhibitions, programmes, research publications and other activities create, interpret and otherwise add value to the Eastern Cape narrative. In addition to these museums, the department has initiated and developed a number of gardens of remembrance to commemorate the lives of leaders and other “community builders”<sup>90</sup> including Oliver Tambo, and is upgrading grave sites, including those of struggle activists and traditional leaders. The department is also responsible for monuments such as the Bisho Massacre Memorial. Projects of this department are not aimed at providing a tourist product, but at ensuring that the people of the Eastern Cape have access to resources and facilities and “preserve and

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid p 19-20

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.ru.ac.za/institutes/iser/research/28.html>

<sup>89</sup> SAHRA's precursor, abolished in 1999 under the provisions of the *National Heritage Resources Act*.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Similo Grootboom, Acting Director, Heritage, Eastern Cape Province Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture,

conserve their cultural and natural heritage through sport and recreation, libraries and archives, arts and culture and museums and heritages resources”<sup>91</sup>.

Local government also plays a role, to a greater or lesser degree, in identifying and developing heritage resources within the areas under their jurisdiction, although this role is often limited because resources such as funding and expertise are limited.<sup>92</sup>

There appears to be a groundswell of community-based heritage initiatives. Often these occur in partnership with heritage or academic institutions. In Buffalo City, for example, the following initiatives have occurred: the East London Museum’s *Playing the Game* exhibition and publication<sup>93</sup>, The Institute of Social and Economic Research’s (ISER’s) “Hidden Histories” project<sup>94</sup>, and the Tour of the Dove<sup>95</sup>, a political heritage trail initiated by the Eastern Cape Liberation War Veterans’ Association, in conjunction with Buffalo City and the Amathole Museum. Other community-based heritage development initiatives include the Eastern Cape Heritage Foundation’s Heroes Park Project.<sup>96</sup>

Local museums and academic institutions in the province are engaged in ongoing research programmes relating to all aspects of the history and culture of the province. Private sector investment in heritage tourism appears to be limited to the development of cultural villages and the delivery of tours.

Heritage tourism products require a place to visit, a story or activity to experience, knowledgeable people with the necessary expertise to interact with visitors, and the infrastructure necessary to accommodate basic visitor needs. This implies a need for information based on sound research, and also for skills training, capacity building, site development, and the establishment of links and partnerships.

While stakeholders in the tourism industry have forged positive working relationships, it has been noted that tourism is highly fragmented in the field of heritage, and that there is little or no co-operation between heritage and tourism organisations and institutions or within various players in the heritage sector. National, provincial and local authorities tend to work in isolation from each other and from other institutions. Information about heritage sites is scattered amongst various institutions and organisations including museums, academic institutions and the South African Heritage Resources Agency. (SAHRA) Community involvement in heritage tourism tends to take place on an ad hoc basis and there are no guidelines or policy frameworks in place to address these. Efforts to promote heritage tourism have been

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<sup>91</sup> [http://www.ecprov.gov.za/department\\_overview.asp?departmentID=8&menuid=208&mainmenuid=21](http://www.ecprov.gov.za/department_overview.asp?departmentID=8&menuid=208&mainmenuid=21)

<sup>92</sup> Buffalo City, for example does not have a budget or a single staff member dedicated to heritage development or promotion..

<sup>93</sup> East London Museum, *Playing the Game*, 2002.

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.ru.ac.za/institutes/iser/research/26.html>

<sup>95</sup> *The Dove Trail* Sunday Times 18 November 2001

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Lesley Anne Forster, Eastern Cape Heritage Foundation, 2003.

highly fragmented.<sup>97</sup> While guidelines for managing tourism at places of heritage significance exist, these are not generally known or applied.<sup>98</sup>

### **Telling the Stories**

As noted above, the tourism narrative relies on the products through which it is presented. But product development, especially in the field of heritage, is not necessarily the domain of the tourism industry. There is clearly a need for heritage tourism products that tell the story of the Eastern Cape. On the one hand, where market demand exists and products are not available, the industry will step in to create these. This is likely to happen on an ad-hoc basis and be undertaken by people whose knowledge is often superficial, whose agenda is to meet a market need and whose motive is profit. On the other hand, heritage and academic institutions, communities and organisations, are engaged in research processes of different kinds aimed at uncovering, exploring and engaging with history and in documenting, presenting and archiving this information in ways which are, or could be, meaningful to residents and visitors.

The current methodology through which heritage tourism products are developed engages a number of academic experts from outside the area to research, analyse and contextualise the informational and cultural/historical material accessed, and then engages technical expertise, also from outside the area, to interpret and communicate this information to visitors and tourists. The resultant products tend to reflect a stereotypical and static Eurocentric worldview which, more often than not, appears somewhat dislocated from the environment and milieu from which it arises. More importantly, communities become passive spectators in the process at best, and the silent subjects of the ‘tourist gaze’ at worst. A more appropriate and dynamic approach actively engages the relevant communities in the process of researching, interpreting and presenting information by linking them to a range of resources within the formal sector. This empowers communities to conduct research of their own, often through oral history interviews, to gather relevant information and then situate it within the broader cultural context of the area. This involves weaving the stories, myths, legends, cultural, social traditions and material culture of the area, both historical and contemporary, into a unique and complex narrative that expresses the heritage and identity in ways that the community can control and benefit from. This approach facilitates awareness and develops a multi-dimensional archive that can be used for a multiplicity of purposes, including informing tourism products and enhancing visitor experience. It also provides a basis for the future empowerment of the communities through training in designing tourism experiences and products. Furthermore it facilitates the documentation and collection of “intangible” indigenous knowledge and resources vested

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<sup>97</sup> The Cluster Consortium, *The South African Tourism Cluster Study*, NEDLAC, 1999, p 88-95.

<sup>98</sup> See *National Heritage Resources Act*, Act No 25 1999, Chapter 5. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, *National Responsible Tourism Guidelines for South Africa*, 2002. International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *International Cultural Tourism Charter*, 1999.

in the area. This enables the development of value-added products for the purposes of job creation and poverty relief, and the spreading of the benefits of tourism development.

At the end of the day the stories of the Eastern Cape will continue to be told to both residents and visitors through the products that bring them into the public domain. The challenge is to bring the forces shaping the stories embedded in these products into a mutually complementary relationship focused on a genuine concern for constructing and presenting these narratives with integrity, and for packaging and marketing them in a way that reflects them meaningfully.

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<sup>i</sup> Eastern Cape Tourism, *Explorer Map, South Africa, Eastern Cape*, undated.