The Chinese Safari: A New Tourist Gaze in Kenya's Tourism Industry

By

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Abstract:

As Chinese investment partnerships intensify across Sub-Saharan Africa, more and more Chinese tourists are visiting the continent. Very little is known, however, about the environmental and social consequences of Chinese tourism expansion. This thesis explores how the semiotics of the wildlife safari in Kenya are restructured under the Chinese tourist gaze. Using participant observation, interviews, and surveys collected in Kenya during the summer of 2016, I examine how Chinese tourists introduce novel cultural dimensions to the safari, while at the same time interacting with old power structures that have long existed in Kenya. I use the conceptual framework of political ecology to examine these interactions as embedded within numerous intersecting layers of cultural, political, and historical dynamics. I argue that the recent influx of Chinese clients into the safari market has been leading to conflicts over the semiotics—that is, the representations and interpretations—of the tourism experience. I further argue that the Chinese tourist gaze is reinterpreting the Kenyan safari as a set of culturally dependent touristic objects known as "scenic spots" (景点 *jingdian*). This thesis sheds light on a little-studied aspect of China-Africa relations as a new, Chinese-influenced tourism paradigm gains prominence around the world.

**Keywords*:* *Semiotics, tourism, wildlife, China, Kenya, political ecology*

Abbreviations:

ADS: Approved Destination Status
NGO: Non-governmental organization
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
KCTT: Kenya China Travel and Tours Limited
CCTV: China Central Television

Acknowledgements:

Contents:

INTRODUCTION:

It was peak tourist season at Keekorok Lodge, a luxury hotel in Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve. On the evening of August 8th 2016, the dining room was packed with guests noisily chatting and jostling each other to fill their plates at the buffet. Harried waiters rushed back and forth to the kitchen clearing dishes and refreshing supplies. Suddenly, somewhere within the crowd, an argument broke out. A man pulled out a knife and stabbed a woman and her husband, while their two young children looked on in horror. Pandemonium erupted in the dining room. The terrified guests tried to flee, while the kitchen staff rushed to restrain the man. The woman died on the scene, and her husband was airlifted to a hospital in Nairobi. The assailant was later identified as a professional safari guide from China who had been working in Kenya for many years. The victims were Chinese tourists traveling with a different tour company. Media reports stated that the argument was caused by a disagreement over seating arrangements in the overcrowded dining room. In a statement to the press, a Kenyan police commander expressed his bewilderment and shock: "This is a place where you go to relax with the family and leave the stress behind" (Gettleman 2016).

When I first heard the news, I was living in the nearby town of Sekenani, Narok County, conducting research on Chinese tourism in Kenya. News of the murder traveled fast within the close-knit community of Chinese tour guides I had befriended. They felt angry and saddened, but they did not share the Kenyan police commander's sense of shock. To my surprise, many

of them even empathized with the murderer and seemed to defend his actions. One Chinese tour guide insisted that there had been more to the story, that the tourists had goaded the guide with offensive language and were physically pushing and hitting him until his temper snapped. Another guide compared the victims to her own rude and demanding clients who had been pushing her to the brink of anger and exasperation every day. Another had met the accused several times and swore that "he wasn't a bad man."

Were it not for these reactions, it might be tempting to write off the event as an isolated incident. Instead, these reactions suggest that the Keekorok incident may have emerged from a complex pattern of conflict underlying the Chinese tourism industry in Kenya. It calls to mind the numerous smaller-scale conflicts I witnessed while living in Sekenani: Kenyan drivers yelling at Chinese guides, heated exchanges between tour leaders and hotel staff, angry guests, offended locals, and tourists of different nationalities glaring at each other from neighboring land rovers.

These conflicts are embedded within numerous intersecting layers of cultural, political, and historical dynamics. These new Chinese arrivals introduce novel cultural dimensions to the safari, while at the same time interacting with old power structures that have long existed in Kenya. Conflicts arise over differing interpretations of natural resources, differing cultural expectations, and differing subjective experiences.

I argue that the recent influx of Chinese clients into the safari market has been leading to conflicts over the semiotics—that is, the representations

and interpretations—of the tourism experience. I further argue that the Chinese tourist gaze is reinterpreting the Kenyan safari as a set of culturally dependent touristic objects known as "scenic spots" (景点 *jingdian*). This thesis focuses on one of the largest and most salient of these touristic objects: the wildebeest crossing the Mara River.

This project grew from my desire to expand beyond my background in Chinese studies and probe into an area of environmental conflict. I ask: How are Chinese tourists interpreting and interacting with the longstanding tradition of the African safari? How is the Chinese tourist gaze shaping Kenya's wildlife tourism industry?

While many scholars are exploring the political, financial, and infrastructural aspects of Africa-China relations—e.g. Brautigam 2009, Mohan and Tan-Mullins 2009, Mung 2008—scarce attention has been paid to the environmental and social consequences of Chinese ventures in Africa. Little is known about Chinese wildlife tourism in Africa, and there is little research on the implications of this burgeoning industry for nature conservation. In this thesis research, I seek to understand how the recent influx of Chinese tourists alters the physical, social and experiential understanding of people and nature in and around protected areas. Through the Chinese safari in Kenya, I examine how new clients interact with old forms of economic activity within Africa, and the potential consequences for the future of the industry. By exploring this new and little studied aspect of

global wildlife tourism, I shed light on how human expectations and interpretations of nature can shape physical landscapes.

This chapter outlines the theoretical and historical frameworks that guide my project. After a description of my methods, I describe the historical background of wildlife-related tourism in both Kenya and China, setting the scene for the new phenomenon of the Chinese safari. Next, I introduce the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guide my analysis of the Chinese safari. In the following chapter, I delve more deeply into the Chinese tourist gaze and the creation of a new scenic spot around the annual wildebeest migration.

Methods:

My data comes from two and half months spent in Kenya during the summer of 2016, focused on urban Nairobi—the transit point for most international tourists—and Maasai Mara National Reserve. This exploratory study is inspired by grounded theory, where data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and iteratively throughout the research timeframe (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Given the complex sociocultural dynamics of the Chinese safari, and given its relative lack of previous study, this method approaches the subject without preconceived hypotheses and thus minimizes bias.

My primary data collection method was participant observation. I joined three separate safari tours consisting of Chinese tourists. The first was a 48-hour Maasai Mara tour, leaving from Nairobi. This group did not have a

guide, and used the varying English abilities of the tour group members to communicate with the driver. I joined the second group for a 48-hour period within their longer tour, during which we took game drives within Maasai Mara. This group had a Chinese tour guide (导游 *daoyou*) based in Nairobi, as well as a separate tour leader (领队 *lingdui*)[1] who traveled with the group from China. The third group was also in Kenya for a longer trip, and I joined them for a one-day game drive in Maasai Mara. This group had a Kenya-based Chinese tour guide (*daoyou*).

In all three groups, I rode in the safari vehicle, listening to the conversation and occasionally engaging, typing notes in my smartphone. This follows the methodology of Bowen (2001) in his semi-covert participant observation of a tour group. Bowen describes "immersion and resurfacing" within the participant observation, which enables him to "make a contribution to the experience commensurate with that of other participants—whilst retaining a more objective overview" (p.54). After briefly explaining to the members of each tour group that I was a graduate student studying tourism, I tried to minimize my influence on the content and atmosphere of the tour. I engaged in informal dialogue with the tourists and guides, but avoided steering the conversation topics myself or calling attention to my own research.

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[1] Many Chinese tour groups had both a tour guide and a separate tour leader. The tour guide was usually a long-term resident of Kenya, employed by a Kenya-based agency. The tour leader was usually employed by a China-based agency, and traveled from China to Kenya together with the group. See p. 35 for more.

In addition to participant observation, I also conducted ten unstructured and semi-structured interviews with both Kenyan and Chinese tourism professionals. These included: the Kenyan owner of a small tourist lodge, two Maasai tour guides, a former Kenyan tour guide who spoke fluent Chinese, a current Kenyan tour guide who spoke fluent Chinese, three Chinese tour guides (with varying degrees of professional training and English ability), a Chinese manager of a tour agency in Nairobi, and a Chinese activist involved with expat community issues in Nairobi. Several of these interview participants preferred to engage in casual conversations and declined to be recorded, resulting in the unstructured and informal nature of the resulting interviews. The interviews were conducted in English, Mandarin Chinese, or a mix of the two, depending on interviewee preference.

Finally, I also surveyed 89 tourists staying at a Chinese-owned lodge located just outside Maasai Mara National Reserve. I administered the survey during moments of downtime, such as when tourists were waiting in the lobby for their group to assemble, or relaxing in the dining room after dinner. I only surveyed tourists who identified themselves to be from Mainland China (eliminating Mandarin-speakers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore or other places). The survey follows Packer et al. (2014) in assessing how tourists perceive wildlife in terms of ecology and aesthetics, and attitudes such as respect, pity and fear. Questions asked for tourists' favorite animals in Kenya, reasons for picking those animals, and questions assessing tourists' agreement or disagreement with various statements about wildlife conservation and

tourism issues. The survey also assessed details of the tourists' trips and their basic demographic information. The survey was originally written in English, translated into Mandarin Chinese, and checked by two native Chinese speakers. See Appendix 1 for the survey form and a summary of the results.

In addition to the above sources, I also draw from casual conversations and text messages conducted with respondents in Kenya, as well as written tourism promotional materials, videos available online, and scholarly literature on semiotics, conservation, East African and Chinese tourism, and theories of the tourist gaze.

Historical Background

A Brief History of Tourism in Kenya

Wildlife-related tourism has a long history in East Africa, beginning with early colonial European hunting traditions. For many Westerners, the word "Africa" conjures images of giraffes and elephants in a grassy landscape dotted with acacia trees, with no humans in sight. Animals like lions and gazelles are beloved in Western popular culture due to movies such as Disney's *The Lion King*, or BBC's documentary series *Big Cat Diary*. The international narratives surrounding wildlife have played integral roles in the formation and development of Kenya as a nation.

To colonial-era hunters, shooting game was a gentlemanly sport, through which the wealthy elite could prove their gentility and masculine courage (Mackenzie 1988). Subsistence hunting by black Kenyan peoples,

meanwhile, was vilified as "poaching," since it often utilized traps, poison, and other weapons deemed "unsportsmanlike" by the white elite (Mackenzie 1988). Certain wildlife species were considered valuable and afforded extra protections. Elephants and rhinoceros, for instance, were considered "royal game" and protected under an additional licensing fee besides the required game-hunting license (Steinhart 1989). So-called "vermin" species, including hyenas and bush pigs, could be shot on sight without any regulation at all. At different points throughout history, zebras and even lions have been classified as vermin.

These distinctions among species—arbitrary, from an ecological point of view—have had lasting conservation repercussions today. Among Africa's most successful tourist attractions are those that contain the "Big Five," the most prized targets for hunters and photographers alike: buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, leopard, and lion. These charismatic species attract large-scale conservation donors and bring in the tourists who are so vital to Kenya's economy. Ecologically, the use of these flagship species can have large conservation benefits, since they raise awareness and encourage biodiversity protection throughout the ecosystem as a whole (Sergio 2006). The privileging of some species over others also creates problems, however. The emphasis on protecting lions, for example, has led to conflict between rangers and pastoralists, many of whom regard lions as a threat to their livelihoods (Bulte 2005). Meanwhile, many species outside the Big Five receive little international attention and are currently threatened by extinction—for

example, African wild dogs, pangolins, and, increasingly, giraffes (IUCN 2016 a., b., c.).

Rather than *preserving* nature in its original state, conservation in Kenya has thus been a process of *producing* nature in a specifically Euro-American image (Neumann 2003). Local pastoralists and their livestock were an unwelcome presence within what the Westerners perceived to be pristine wilderness (Butt 2012, Akama 2011). Conflicting perceptions of nature have led to systemic conflict and violence between local people and conservation officials over the course of Kenyan history. However, these conflicts are obscured beneath the narratives of unspoiled Africa that are continually reproduced and reinforced by the safari industry.

Today, tourism in Kenya is a vital fixture of the economy, accounting for over 10% of GDP (Udoto 2012). Since the establishment of Kenya's first national park in 1946, Nairobi National Park, the economic incentives of wildlife tourism have led to the creation of 23 national parks, 28 national reserves, 4 marine national parks, 5 marine national reserves, and 4 national sanctuaries. Currently, over 10% of land in Kenya has been set aside for conservation (Akama 2011).

Since the colonial era, most visitors to Kenya have come from the United Kingdom, United States, and other industrialized nations of the Global North. Although this remains true today, tourist origins are becoming more diverse, expanding to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In 2016, 48,000

Chinese tourists visited Kenya. This puts China in fifth place among source countries for tourists (after the US, the UK, India and Uganda) (Thome 2017).

In Kenya, as in many countries around the world, the rapidly growing number of Chinese tourists has become a source of wonder, as well as a source of anxiety and conflict (see, for example, Jin 2014, Taylor 2014, and Samuel 2012). In order to understand the conflicts surrounding Chinese tourists abroad, it is necessary to examine the cultural context of tourism in China. The following section examines the history and political implications of China's sudden appearance into the global tourism market, to contextualize the new phenomenon of Chinese safari tourism in Kenya.

A Brief History of Tourism in China

Since the 1978 economic reforms in China under Deng Xiaoping, Chinese tourism has rapidly grown in all three sectors of the industry: domestic tourism, international arrivals, and outbound tourism. From non-existence in the first half of the 20th century, today domestic tourism contributes nearly 10% of China's total GDP (Turner 2015). In 2010, Chinese people took an estimated 164 million domestic trips, and over 55 million foreigners arrived for an overnight stay (Statista n.d.). In 2013, Chinese tourists traveled to international destinations over 98 million times (World Bank 2016).

Throughout this rapid development, the China National Tourism Administration has tightly planned and controlled all sectors of the tourism

industry, both domestic and international. This centralized control serves several purposes, including, at least ostensibly: balancing economic growth with conservation of the natural or cultural resources that inspire tourism in the first place; promoting consistency and quality through regulation; and asserting political power by manipulating what tourists are able to see and experience (Du Cros et al. 2005, Li et al. 2010, Yang 2011).

Outbound tourism, too, serves a political purpose. By controlling what tourists see and experience within various international communities, the Chinese government asserts soft power to project a certain image of China and Chinese people. China's Approved Destination Status (ADS) system, unique among world nations, maintains tight control over the outbound tourism industry. Only countries with ADS are allowed to promote tour agencies and services in China, and Chinese tour companies are only allowed to do business with ADS countries. Currently, over 170 countries have been granted ADS (China Outbound Tourism Market 2015). Kenya was granted ADS in 2004. Individual Chinese travelers without a tour group may apply for passports and visas to visit non-ADS countries, but the paperwork is subject to Chinese approval and not always granted (Li 2005). Nevertheless, this loophole indicates that the ADS scheme is as much about China asserting soft power over other countries as about truly controlling the whereabouts of its own citizens.

This power manifests on two levels. The first is in upper-level diplomatic relations. Chinese tour groups constitute a substantial portion of

tourism revenue in many countries around the world, thus allowing China to wield ADS as a bargaining tool.[2]

Second, beyond formal diplomacy, Chinese outbound tourism also represents a decentralized form of soft power, initiated by self-governing tourists acting as individuals. Most discussions of Chinese soft power—that is to say, cultural and economic influence rather than military might (Nye 1990)—focus on formalized structures like humanitarian aid, Confucius Institutes, Chinese volunteer corps in Africa, and university scholarships for foreigners in China (Brautigam 2009).

Despite being relatively unstructured, however, tourism too can spread soft power. Tourists are never sent explicitly by the government abroad to spread a certain message, but when China's middle and upper classes travel and spend their money in foreign countries, they project an image of China as being wealthy, successful, and worldly. Politically, some argue that this showcasing of wealth undermines democratic ideologies championed by the Global North, thereby demonstrating to developing countries in Africa and elsewhere that democratic governance is not the only path to prosperity (e.g. Jenkins 2010, Brautigam 2009). Over time, this subtle restructuring of

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[2] ADS negotiations with Canada, for example, dragged on for several years after the Canadian government criticized China's human rights record and hosted a meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2007 (Tse 2013). Canada's ADS was finally granted in 2009, long after every other major developed nation. Chinese tourism to Canada has expanded rapidly ever since (Nevin 2010), demonstrating how ADS can function like a softer version of the economic boycott or sanction.

expectations can undermine the hegemonic Western worldviews that have dominated among Global South countries for centuries.

At the grassroots level, Chinese citizens have asserted their own power in smoothing China's image in foreign countries. Recently, Chinese tourists have made the news for exhibiting embarrassing behavior abroad, such as spitting on the street, cutting in lines, and throwing temper tantrums on airplanes (Kuhn 2015). Although such incidents seem common among new-money travelers of any nationality leaving rural homes for the first time—consider stereotypes of boorish American tourists from a few years ago (Peregrine 2014)—ordinary Chinese citizens have taken it upon themselves to shame and denounce their fellow countrymen acting rudely abroad. After a Chinese teenager posted a picture of his name scratched into a 3500-year-old sculpture in Egypt, Chinese netizens unleashed a torrent of outrage, tracking the teenager down within just one day and forcing his family to make a public apology (Wong 2013).

The Chinese people are thus exercising their power on social media to police outbound tourist behavior, circumventing formal government structures to ensure a positive image of China abroad. As Foucault explains, government power does not come directly from the state, but rather emerges through the autonomous decisions of individuals, sometimes working through state institutions (Jeffreys 2009). In this case, individuals are enacting a soft power agenda through a desire, both collective and personal, to restructure the impacts of the tourist gaze.

Theoretical Approach:

To study tourism is to study how places—landscapes, cities, monuments—communicate meaning to outsiders who have paid to experience that place. Tourism thus consists of carefully constructed signs, each communicating something essential and deliberate about the touristic object. I therefore analyze tourism through the theoretical framework of semiotics. To focus purely on the semiotics of the Chinese safari, however, would neglect and erase the complex historical and political conditions that have resulted in Kenya's present-day tourism industry. I therefore use a conceptual framework of political ecology to contextualize my study of the Chinese safari. The following sections describe my twofold theoretical approach, beginning with political ecology and continuing with semiotic theory.

Political Ecology:

Paul Robbins (2012) defines political ecology not as "a theory or a method" (p. 85), but as a "community of practice" and a "quality of text" (p. 86). Defining the elusive quality of political ecology research begins with an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of politics, culture, and ecological systems at many scales, from the local to the global. As Robbins explains, political ecology is "predicated on the assumption that any tug on the strands of the global web of human-environment linkages reverberates throughout the system as a whole" (p.13).

For my present study of the Chinese safari in Kenya, I follow Arturo

Escobar (1998) in interpreting wildlife biodiversity conservation to be a

"historically produced discourse" (p.54) that "does not exist in an absolute

sense" (p.55). Looking through this political ecological lens has meant

refusing to isolate the environmental phenomenon of the East African wildlife

migration from the region's long political and cultural history. It has meant

locating the Chinese safari within the larger context of foreign tourism to

Kenya, while retaining the industry's linkages to cultural traditions within

China.

I further follow Peluso and Watts (2001) in viewing violent conflict

not as the direct result of social or environmental "triggers," but rather as

"complex social practices" that must be understood through examination of

how such practices are "discussed, represented, circulated, coded and

deployed" (p. 27). From the small-scale arguments between tourists and

guides, to the murder of the tourist at Keekorok, all the way to the systemic

violence of displacement in East Africa, I therefore approach conflict within

the Chinese safari tourism industry not as discrete events, but rather as the

products of numerous intersecting histories, ecologies, and environmental

practices.

Semiotics:

Semiotics refers to the study of signs—that is, "how meanings are

made and how reality is represented" through anything that stands for

something else (Chandler 2001). Signs can include words, images, objects, or any other means of communication, representation, or symbolism. Every sign consists of both a signifier and a signified concept; for example, an "open" sign on a door signifies to the viewer that the shop is open for business. The sign is the "signifier," and the interpretation that the shop is open for business is the "signified" (Chandler 2001). The same "open" sign might have a differently understood meaning in a different context; likewise, many different types of signs could also be used to connote the meaning of "openness." Signs can be tightly linked to their signified meaning, as with an icon (such as a picture of a lion, indicating a lion) or an index (such as dark clouds, which indicate rain)—or they can be completely arbitrary, as in linguistic signs (e.g. the phonetic utterance "rain," which has no direct correspondence to the physical phenomenon of rain) (Port 2004).

Signs are not discrete objects; they exist within complex "sign systems," in which many signs are "bundled" together to create meaning (Arzarello et al. 2008). Signs are continually created, altered, and reproduced through a process termed semiosis (Queiroz and El-Hani 2006), an emergent process by which meaning is made through changing and interacting signs over time. This meaning cannot be analyzed as the direct product of any singular sign, but rather emerges holistically through the semiotic system.

Semiotics have fundamentally shaped the East African safari industry over time. Animals, landscapes, and other imagery have implied specific meanings in the minds of European and American travelers throughout

history—and very different meanings in the minds of local peoples. The conflicts that persist in many of Kenya's protected areas today—illegal herding, attacks on landowners, and armed clashes between rangers and pastoralists (e.g. Butt 2012, Akama 2011)—trace their origins to the early nineteenth century, when the African hunting expedition became a prestigious status symbol among elite adventures from Europe and America. After independence, signs of colonialism—unpeopled landscapes, traditionally-clothed locals, and luxurious tourist lodges—still persist, giving "tribalism and colonialism a second life" (Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994).

The Semiotics of Chinese Tourism in Kenya

Tourism represents an ideal lens through which to understand semiotics, since "the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself" (Culler 1981). Our everyday lives are filled with signs, most of which we interpret automatically or subconsciously. When we are playing the part of the tourist, however, signs become more apparent. Tourists everywhere "are engaged in semiotic projects, reading cities, landscapes, and cultures as sign systems" (Culler 1981). When colonial hunters entered the East African savannah, they saw a landscape mediated by their own preconceived ideals. The lions and leopards signified prized trophies, not threats to anyone's livestock; the vast landscape signified a wilderness waiting to be conquered, not a site of violent displacement. These culturally dependent meanings

interpreted from the landscape have had lasting repercussions throughout the physical and social landscape of East Africa.

Today, when tourists from varied ethnic and national backgrounds arrive in Kenya, they carry their culturally dependent expectations with them. What do Chinese tourists see when they enter the East African savannah? What do the signs of the safari signify to them? What implications might these new significations carry for local communities, for wildlife populations, and for the tourism industry as a whole? The following chapter explores these questions through a case study of Kenya's most popular wildlife destination, Maasai Mara National Reserve, focusing especially on the annual wildebeest migration. This single touristic object is just one example among many of how signs shape the physical landscape in Kenya.

THE SCENIC SPOT: A CASE STUDY FROM MAASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE

The Great Migration in East Africa is one of the most spectacular ecological phenomena in the world, attracting tourists from every continent (e.g. Jackman 2015). Every year, millions of herbivores migrate north with the rains from Tanzania into southern Kenya. Most spectacular of all are the vast herds of wildebeests, stretching across the savannah as far as the eye can see. I was bouncing along in a land cruiser with a Chinese tour group on a game drive through the Maasai Mara. My companions, a family of four from Xiamen, were understandably excited to see the wildebeests. The father pointed excitedly out the window: "Wildebeests crossing the river!" A moment later, he commented again: "They must be preparing to go to the river." When a small group of them started running, he exclaimed: "They've finished eating, so they're going to cross the river!" We were nowhere near a river—so why did he keep referencing it?

The link between wildebeests and water was a frequent connection made by the Chinese tourists I interacted with. They were referring to one of the most popular tourist sights in Maasai Mara National Reserve, the Mara River, where wildebeests and other animals can be observed splashing and swimming across the water during the migration season. Sometimes they fall prey to waiting crocodiles. Although tourists from all over the world hope to

glimpse the crossing, this sight has gained a particular cachet among tourists from China.

The migration has become couched in Chinese characteristics, promoted by TV specials in China, and reinforced by social media culture. I argue that this process is indicative of a larger trend in Chinese international tourism, in which the Chinese tourist gaze is altering the meanings of landscapes and objects to accord with Chinese notions of belonging to a common heritage.

In this chapter, I first examine the semiotics of tourism, and how these are manifested within Chinese culture and the tradition of tourism in China. I then deconstruct the wildebeest crossing as a touristic object, investigating how the physical mode of the safari and other converging factors combine to create a Chinese-style tourist attraction in Kenya. This uniquely Chinese conception of the tourist attraction, universally understood within China, is perceived as foreign and even offensive when it is transplanted abroad. Cultural isolation is continually reinforced through a persistent lack of communication between Chinese tourists and the non-Chinese with whom they interact. I emphasize how cultural perceptions can shape productions and interpretations of nature, leading to real, physical consequences. More awareness must be created around how different cultures understand and produce landscapes, in order to ensure a just and sustainable safari tourism industry moving forward.

The Tourist Gaze

Before examining the meaning of the wildebeest crossing the river among Chinese tourists, it is important to first clarify how "tourism" is understood. John Urry defines tourism as "a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regular and organized work" (1990 p. 2). To be a tourist is to take leave of everyday life for a defined period of time, and to view a place through the self-conscious eyes of an outsider. During the early 20th century, the philosopher Walter Benjamin described the particular role of the "flâneur" as a modern, urban wanderer who strolls anonymously through the city streets. As a detached spectator, this character exists in a liminal state, outside everyday life but still interacting with it. Urry calls the flâneur the "forerunner of the twentieth century tourist" (1990 p.127). He formulates a theory of the "tourist gaze" that builds on Benjamin's flâneur to examine the deliberate, planned nature of the modern vacation.

The "tourist gaze" is separate from ordinary ways of viewing the world. Filled with expectation, excitement, and a lack of everyday time pressures, the tourist travels through a new landscape continuously searching for affirmation of preconceived "signs." Culler (1981) describes tourists as exemplary semioticians, "reading cities, landscapes, and cultures as sign systems." For instance, when a tourist sees the Eiffel Tower, this signifies "Paris," and by extension, "Frenchness" (Urry 1990). Likewise, when a tourist sees a giraffe in the sunset or a lion chasing a gazelle, these images are recognized as signs of "wild Africa." Urry claims that:

"Much of what is appreciated is not directly experienced reality but representations, particularly through the medium of photography. What people 'gaze upon' are ideal representations of the view in question, that they internalize from [various media]" (1990 p. 78).

Similar to the role of linguistic signs such as words, touristic signs such as those described above can be arbitrary or nearly arbitrary. A touristic sign does not exist as an object of tourism until it has been constructed to be so, and imbued with meaning that is culturally comprehensible to the tourist. MacCannell (1973) notes, for example, that tourists are fascinated by opportunities to glimpse "backstage," such as the daily life of a local family, behind the curtain of a performance, or inside a working factory; to allow tourists to enter these spaces, however, the venue must be equipped and prepared for visitors. Therefore, the "authenticity" that tourists seek is inherently problematic. Tourists only see what the host nation is prepared to show them; meanwhile, true authenticity often passes by unnoticed, since it lacks distinct markers of the destination. As Culler (1981 p.137) explains:

"The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence not authentic in the sense of unspoiled."

A tourist's interest in the giraffe in the sunset, for example, is mediated by his or her familiarity with similar scenes in photographs and nature documentaries about Africa. The tourist encounters thousands of authentic sights during a trip, for example, to Kenya—roads, buildings, shops, cars, and people—but most of these pass unnoticed. Only familiar images of wildlife, in

this case, are recognized and appreciated as "authentic." Meanwhile, there is

nothing objectively noteworthy about the semiotics of wildlife compared to

the semiotics of roads and buildings; a Maasai herdsman might walk past

giraffes and gazelles every day without a second thought.[3]

The marked images of the safari—giraffes, elephants, wild landscapes,

and exotic people—are continually produced and reproduced through what

Igoe (2010) terms the "spectacle" of the African safari, whereby aesthetic

"fragments" of the place "are rendered into a timeless whole" in order to

benefit tour companies, conservation organizations, and other cogs within the

neoliberal capitalist system (p. 386). The tourist gaze thus both shapes, and is

shaped by, larger political and economic forces.

The Chinese tourists I interacted with in Kenya during the course of

this thesis research often made explicit reference to the fact that they were

viewing marked signs. One amateur photographer was excited to capture a

gazelle in an especially "classic" (标准 *biaozhun*) pose. An old man in the

hotel was amazed at how closely the savannah landscape matched his

expectations. Another man was disappointed that the view of the Rift Valley

from the road was not as dramatic as what he had seen on TV. These

comments are typical of the universal tourist gaze as defined by Urry. They

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[3] This is not to say, however, that Kenyans do not also engage in wildlife tourism. Many urban Kenyans go on safari for vacation, and many local people will still get excited to see wildlife up close. I once rode in a van with a Kenyan hotel manager and several of his employees and friends, including Maasai people. We happened upon a whole family of elephants standing right next to the road. Everybody whipped out their phones to take pictures, regardless of nationality or ethnic group—such is the power of the "spectacular" imagery of the safari (Igoe 2010).

closely resembled comments I heard from tourists of other nationalities,

including a family of Australians who told me they had been inspired by a

nature documentary to visit Africa. These comments also resembled my own

reactions to the wildlife as a first-time visitor to the Maasai Mara.

At the same time, however, reactions from the Chinese tourists often

suggested the presence of a tourist gaze that was uniquely Chinese. The

conflation of wildebeests and the river represents one such reaction. In the

following section, I explore how the Chinese cultural perspective influences

the construction of touristic objects.

Towards a Chinese Tourist Gaze

If you travel to Maasai Mara during the peak season, every Kenyan

tourism industry worker will tell you how the Chinese tourists are different

from tourists from other countries. They travel in vehicles labeled with

incomprehensible Chinese characters. They refuse to sleep in tented camps.

They insist on having water boilers in their rooms. They wear stilettos and

designer watches in the bush. Most of all, they come in such large numbers

that their presence is always loud, chaotic, and impossible to ignore. As

Chinese outbound tourism has increased,[4] tourism industries around the world

have scrambled to understand and accommodate the influx of new behaviors,

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[4] An estimated 48,000 Chinese tourists visited Kenya in 2016, putting China
in fifth place among source countries for tourists (after US, UK, India and
Uganda) (Thome 2017). Despite representing an increase over previous years,
these numbers failed to support predictions from several years ago that
100,000 Chinese tourists would visit Kenya in 2016 (Suntikul 2016).

tastes, and preferences. In the fields of hospitality and tourism management, much has been made of the observations that Chinese tourists tend to travel in tightly organized groups (Meng 2010), enjoy luxury shopping (Xu and McGehee 2012), and face communication challenges due to poor English ability (ibid).

Urry qualifies his theories of the tourist gaze to note the importance of "historical and sociological variation" (1990 p. 2). No single "gaze" can account for the many personal experiences, opinions, cultural histories and preconceived expectations that tourists from all over the world carry with them when they travel. This can result in people from different social, economic, or cultural backgrounds viewing the same sight—e.g. wildlife in Africa—through slightly different lenses. In semiotic terms, the signifiers might remain the same, but the signified is dynamic and culturally dependent.

Many scholars argue that cultural differences fundamentally shape how Chinese travelers approach the tourism experience. Fung Mei Sarah Li (2008) analyzes Chinese domestic tourism through her own emic understanding of the culture as a member of the Chinese diaspora. Li places the Chinese touristic mindset within a larger understanding of *zhonghua wenhua*, which she translates as "Chinese common knowledge." This body of common knowledge includes history, folklore, poetry, art, and literature that are recognized by Chinese people throughout China and the Chinese-speaking world at large. According to Li, domestic tourism within China developed largely as a way for people to reaffirm or "re-anchor" their common identity

by visiting the same sights that have inspired famous poems and works of art over the course of history. These sights are known in China as "scenic spots" (*jingdian*), which connote bounded zones with explicitly communicated historical, cultural, or aesthetic value (Nyiri 2009).

The Scenic Spot

The scenic spot traces its history to the travel journals of sixteenth-century artists and poets, who visited an established canon of sites in their journeys. Each site was associated with specific and well-established symbolic meaning, including historical and poetic references, ideal times and seasons for viewing, and the ideal mood of the viewer. The artist would create an identifiable image or poem about the site based upon these established criteria, rather than based on the artist's original interpretation (Nyiri 2009).

The appeal of scenic spots has continued into the modern tourism industry, perpetuated by tourism literature and guidebooks that delineate essential spots in each destination. When the visitor reaches a delineated spot, it will usually be marked with a placard, an explanation of the historical references and symbolic meaning, and a large crowd of tourists jostling each other for pictures. Sometimes, there is an explicit marking of where one must stand to capture the perfect, iconic photograph from just the right angle.

In the city of Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang Province, for example, tourists visit West Lake in the center of the city and seek out ten

specifically marked "Scenic Spots." These are known in Chinese as the Ten

Scenes of West Lake, or 西湖十景 (*Xihu shi jing*). Each spot commemorates a

folk story or cultural event that has been immortalized through generations of

artistic representations. For example, one spot called Lingering Snow on

Broken Bridge (*Duan Qiao Can Xue*), invites the viewer to remember a

Chinese folk story about lovers meeting on the bridge, and to recall the

hundreds of famous poems, paintings and other works throughout history

inspired by this exact scene. All ten spots around West Lake are marked with

explicit plaques explaining the significance of the sight (fig. 1):

Fig. 1: Clearly marked scenic spots in Hangzhou tell the viewer exactly why the site is significant. The Chinese text mentions the "Legend of the White Snake," thus referencing the body of Chinese common knowledge. (Images' source: Baidu)

The concept of the touristic sign is therefore very clearly and explicitly defined within Chinese tourism. It would be misleading, however, to limit the meaning of these touristic signs to ancient poetry and art. The body of Chinese cultural knowledge is not a closed canon; it is constantly evolving and expanding as new meanings are produced and new "scenic spots" are constructed.

Besides traditional history and arts, tourist attractions in China can evoke common recognition of everything from patriotism (e.g. Mao Zedong's hometown) and natural resources (e.g. pandas in Sichuan), to American movies (e.g. Disney World in Shanghai) and Chinese internet meme culture (e.g. alpaca farms[5]). It is tempting to essentialize Chinese culture as wholly unique, when in reality the boundaries separating Chinese culture from other cultures are permeable and dynamic. Growing cosmopolitanism has resulted in more and more knowledge of foreign countries and of English, as well as familiarity with cultural tropes from the US and beyond. In addition, tourism objects are indivisible from their wider political contexts, reflecting complex power dynamics extending far beyond the gaze of the tourists themselves.

In the following example, I briefly explore how the construction of the Chinese tourist site is an ongoing process that embodies multiple converging forces. This short case study will provide context for my later discussion of

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[5] Alpacas are a reference to an internet joke originally created to avoid online censorship. The Chinese curse "càonǐmā" is normally censored online, so users will type the similar-sounding phrase "cǎonímǎ" instead, which literally means "grass-mud-horse." Commonly depicted as an alpaca, this creature has become a cultural phenomenon among Chinese youth, spurring an entire industry of alpaca-themed merchandise and alpaca petting zoos (Kirk 2012).

the wildebeest migration in Kenya, and how the safari is constructed under the

Chinese tourist gaze.

Example: Jiuzhaigou National Park

Jiuzhaigou, a scenic valley located in Sichuan Province in southwest China, has been constructed as a tourist attraction through a combination of political agendas, natural beauty, and Western-style environmental narratives.

I traveled to Jiuzhaigou as a tourist in early 2015, accompanied by a close Chinese friend and several of her work acquaintances. Knowing little about the area, I was excited just to wander freely and explore the valley's natural beauty. My companions, however, had another agenda. They insisted on visiting a set list of famous sites that they remembered learning about in their primary school textbooks. These sites all had poetic names—"Five-Flower Lake" and "Five-Color Pond"—and they were each marked clearly with a placard and surrounded by hundreds of tourists taking photos. Since these sites were located far apart, we had to rush from place to place, taking the bus to avoid exhaustion. At the time, I was frustrated; I would have preferred to walk on foot, and I would have preferred to avoid the crowds. Two years later, however, as I witnessed the chaos of the Chinese safari in Kenya, I began to see Jiuzhaigou as a perfect illustration of the powerful narrative of the Chinese Scenic Spot, a touristic ideal wrapped up in layers of cultural identity and state power.

The poetic sites my friends were so determined to see relied on traditional Chinese cultural tropes to convey their value. The primary school

textbook passages they mentioned[6] describe Jiuzhaigou as 诗情画意 *shiqing*

huayi—poetic and artistic—thus likening the natural site to traditional, human-produced aesthetics (for more details on the nature-culture dichotomy in Chinese culture, see "Background" chapter) (Jiuzhaigou Lesson Original Text 2017). The text makes liberal use of additional four-character phrases to describe the physical features of the area, referencing the poetic language of Classical Chinese texts.[7] In line with Li (2008), my friends were hoping to reaffirm their Chinese heritage by visiting a place with familiar cultural significance. Rather than feeling frustrated by the large crowds, they were happy simply to witness these famous sites, even if that required sharing their experience with large numbers of other like-minded Chinese.

What makes Jiuzhaigou unique, compared to other attractions like West Lake in Hangzhou, is that the site's cultural significance was only constructed very recently. Unlike West Lake, Jiuzhaigou has *not* been extolled by poets and artists throughout the centuries. In fact, the area was largely unknown within mainstream Han culture until 1975, and did not open for tourism until 1984 (Park Information). During this period, Deng Xiaoping was urging investment into tourism as a political tool to encourage economic reform (Sofield and Li 2011). In 2000, China launched its Western Development Strategy, which sought to bring economic growth and political stability to China's poor and ethnically diverse western provinces (Tian 2004). Government-approved textbooks began to market Jiuzhaigou as a traditional scenic spot, and soon Jiuzhaigou was propelled into the national consciousness as a culturally relevant site for Han tourists to visit.

At the same time, a Western-style conservation ethic was also rising within China, as evidenced by the formation of numerous environmental groups and the creation of protected areas (Gao 2013). In Jiuzhaigou, this ethic is reflected in widespread use of the terms "green" (*lüse*) and "eco-tourism" (*shengtai lüyou*) in promotional materials, including the "green" buses that we rode inside the park from scenic spot to scenic spot, powered by natural gas.

These political and cultural processes have real repercussions for the local people of Jiuzhaigou. Local Tibetan herders were required to abandon their traditional livelihoods and switch to tourism, in order to fulfill legal requirements to conserve biodiversity inside the park (Urgenson et al. 2014). Over time, the physical landscape of the valley was altered as the grazelands were forested. Traditional Tibetan homes and villages were preserved and renovated to serve tourists' needs, selling souvenirs and food. Over time, Tibetans have reported a decline in cultural memory of the area (Urgenson et

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[6] Chinese textbooks are highly standardized across the country, and I was able to verify these passages in multiple online sources. However, I cannot be sure that my adult friends had read the exact same texts back when they were in school.

[7] For example: 雪峰插云 *xuefeng chayun* (snowy peaks pierce the clouds) etc.

al. 2014). One might argue that by losing their historical identity, the local Tibetans have succumbed to a government agenda of Han hegemony (Norbu 1995). The codified, bounded nature of the Chinese Scenic Spot allows the government to dictate exactly which meanings are conveyed through Jiuzhaigou, and which meanings are excluded. Sites like Five-Color Pond represent aesthetic beauty and ecological harmony; they carry no traces of Tibetan religious freedom or political autonomy. Over time, these simultaneous physical, political, and cultural processes continually reinforce each other to produce the scenery that my Chinese friends were so excited to see with their own eyes.

It is my contention that the Chinese tourist gaze might therefore be summarized as an appeal to a common cultural identity bounded up in the Scenic Spot, reflecting state power dynamics and influencing the physical realities of the landscape. When the Chinese tourist gaze is turned upon a foreign country, traditional Chinese-style Scenic Spots would be expected to emerge, much like Jiuzhaigou emerged during the late 20th century. In the foreign context, however, the Scenic Spot is not constructed from scratch; rather, the Chinese tourist gaze interacts with preexisting meanings constructed by tourists from other places.

In Kenya, Chinese travellers are entering a tourism market saturated with meanings, cultures and politics from all over the world. When tourists from China gaze across the famous Mara landscape, they are seeing the culmination of centuries of Maasai pastoralism, European conservation ethics, British hunting culture, American ideals of masculinity, Kenyan land use laws, and thousands of photographs, books, movies, and nature documentaries created by wildlife-watchers from around the world. The Chinese tourist gaze adds another layer of meaning to this already crowded landscape. Like

31

everything that came before it, this new layer has real, physical repercussions for the people who have lived in the Mara for generations, as well as for the future of the safari tourism industry.

The following sections explore how Chinese tourists are interacting with the safari in Kenya, producing new understandings of the animals in this crowded landscape through the lens of the Chinese-style scenic spot.

Chinese perceptions of safari encounters: Media

Most Chinese tourists first encounter Africa the same way other tourists do: through photography, television and movies. Many of the tourists I spoke to compared their experiences to images they had been exposed to before. The man quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the one who automatically associated wildebeests with the river, referred to a nature program on TV:

> "You know what I think of when I see wildebeests: them crossing the river, with crocodiles, it's all very cruel. Like on 'Animal World' and those other programs about the African savannah."

Another tourist from Xinjiang made the same connection: he described his game drive experience as "very lucky," since he was able to see the wildebeests crossing the river, but he "regretted" that he hadn't seen a wildebeest attacked by a crocodile. He then seamlessly transitioned into an animated, impassioned description of the crocodile attacks he had seen on TV before, in which the crocodile tore a wildebeest to pieces in the water.

Tourism experts I spoke to confirmed the importance of television in shaping tourists' expectations. The Chinese manager of a tour agency explained that every year, China's state-owned television broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) airs a special feature on the wildebeest migration. This serves as an "advertisement" for Kenya. A Chinese-speaking Kenyan guide verified that CCTV programs play an important role in educating most of his tourists about Africa. A Chinese owner of a self-described ecotourism agency mentioned the existence of yearly specials promoting the migration, emphasizing that these were joint efforts by the Chinese and Kenyan governments. The tour agency Kenya China Travel and Tours Ltd. (KCTT) also mentions the documentary series "Animal World" by name on its website, within an article about the Maasai Mara (Maasai Mara National Reserve 2009).

These television programs, tour agency websites, and other promotional materials emphasize the wildebeest crossing the river above all other sightseeing goals, elevating this event as *the* necessary tourist experience in Kenya.

In the documentary series "Animal World" (动物世界 *Dongwu Shijie*), a 2016 episode focusing on wildebeests spends over half its 30-minute running time showing close-up footage from strategically hidden cameras of crocodiles attacking the wildebeests. These violent, graphic clips are overlaid with intense synthesized music and interspersed throughout the episode,

interrupting footage showing the life cycles of the wildebeests including grazing, mating, nursing, and other behaviors (Jiaoma Lixian Ji Xia 2016).

Similarly, in its online article "Maasai Mara National Reserve," KCTT devotes half the page to the migration. It describes the migration as even more "famous" (著名 *zhuming*) than the lion, focusing in particular detail on the same grisly attack that the tourist above was so disappointed to have missed:

> "You can see hundreds of thousands of wildebeests moving in succession, crossing the Mara river away from the pooled blood of the crocodiles' open mouths...lions and crocodiles follow the sound to begin their fruitful hunting."[8]

In addition, a printed brochure and itinerary for a Chinese travel agency called Youya (left behind at the hotel I worked at) promotes "the world's most spectacular wildlife migration!"[9] It promises travelers that they can "gaze with their own eyes upon the legendary 'Crossing of the Mara River.'"[10] (Fig. 2)

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[8] Original text in Chinese: 可以看到成千上万匹角马前赴后继，从鳄鱼张开的血盆大口中横渡马拉河......狮子、鳄鱼循声而至，开始收获丰硕的猎杀。

[9] Original text in Chinese: 世界上最壮观的野生动物大迁徙！

[10] Original text in Chinese: 去接眼目睹传说中的"马拉河之渡"
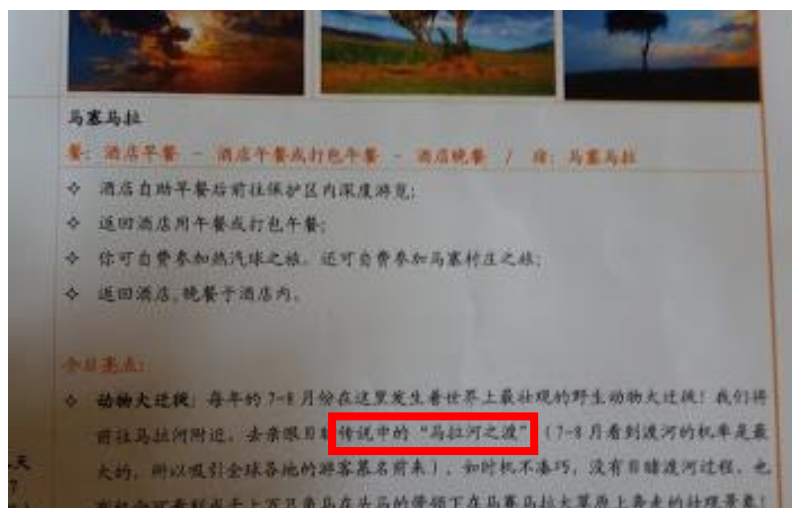
Fig. 2. Snapshot of a Chinese travel company brochure. The outlined text, "传说中的'马拉河之渡,'" (legendary 'Crossing of the Mara River') demonstrates how the wildebeest crossing is portrayed as a scenic spot.

This specific use of language suggests that beyond merely promoting the event of the river crossing, these promotional publications are appealing to a sense of unified cultural identity among their Chinese audiences. By using the word "legendary" (传说中 *chuanshuo zhong*), the brochure alludes to a canon of folklore much like the body of art and literature extolling the scenery of Hangzhou's West Lake. The Youya brochure assumes the reader's familiarity with these so-called legends, inviting the reader to recall any prior knowledge of the wildebeest migration from photos, movies, or other sources. By putting "Crossing of the Mara River" (马拉河之渡 *mala he zhi du*) in quotation marks, this pamphlet portrays the phrase as if it were a set idiomatic expression. Indeed, it repeats this exact phrase twice within the brochure, both with quotation marks. This usage references the similar linguistic structure of scenic spots around China, which tend to have poetic names symbolic of more

than their surface aesthetics. Examples include "Lingering Snow on Broken Bridge (断桥残雪 *duan qiao can xue*) at West Lake, or "Five-Flower Lake" (五花海 *wu hua hai*) at Jiuzhaigou. When reading the phrase "Crossing of the Mara River," a Chinese reader would be encouraged to visit this specific sight in order to partake in a culturally important experience. Due to the projected importance of the wildebeest crossing as a fully bounded tourism object, viewing it would effectively achieve what Li (2008) terms a "re-anchoring" within the shared body of Chinese common knowledge.

Similarly, KCTT's article on the Maasai Mara National Reserve is filed under a subheading called, "Introduction to Kenya's Classic <u>Tourist Scenic Spots</u>" (肯尼亚经典旅游景点介绍 *Kenniya jingdian lüyou jingdian jieshao).* This implies that a set list of attractions are considered to be "classic," to the exclusion of other areas in Kenya. Besides Maasai Mara, this relatively extensive list comprised twenty-four attractions, including Amboseli, Naivasha, Lake Turkana, Mombasa, the Giraffe Centre in Nairobi, and many others. Whether or not such a list exists or is truly agreed upon is dubious; whether or not there really is a body of "legends" surrounding the wildebeest crossing is virtually irrelevant.

As Zhang (2004) explains in an article about traditional Scenic Spots in China, "the authenticity of the historical and geographical values of the 'composite scenery' might be questionable; its cultural meaning is, however, undeniable." As more and more tourists are exposed to the language of the bounded scenic spot, the wildebeest crossing becomes defined in those terms.

Over time, the promotional "legends" become real legends and the canon of "classic" sights becomes widely acknowledged. Just as Jiuzhaigou has gradually gained a reputation as a legitimate tourist attraction over the last three decades, the wildebeest crossing could, over time, gain the prestige of a traditional Chinese-style scenic spot within the Chinese cultural imaginary. I argue that this has begun to happen already, as evidenced by the ways in which tourists reference the language used in the tourism promotional materials discussed above.

Chinese perceptions of safari encounters: in the field

When Chinese safari tourists see wildlife firsthand, they mirror the language they have heard before. Whenever the tourists I accompanied on game drives saw a wildebeest just grazing or walking close to the hotel, they would make the connection to the crossing. This happened with the tourist quoted at the beginning of this chapter, who assumed that the wildebeest "must be going to the river." This happened with many others as well. One child told me "the migration" was his second-favorite *animal* (after lions), echoing an emphasis on the event itself, rather than on the individual wildebeests or other constituent animals. In fact, some tourists seemed unsure what a wildebeest really was. One asked, "what kind of cow is that?" And when I replied that it was a wildebeest, the whole group lit up in recognition. "Oh, so they must have started migrating," one of them immediately stated.

This particular tour group experienced a similar reaction at the Mara River, which we visited in early July, a few weeks before the peak migration. When the driver asked if wanted to stay for a minute by the Mara River, the group was visibly excited. "We want to go to the river to see the animals cross from Tanzania!"

Both the wildebeests and the river had been reduced to abstract concepts, holding no meaning for the tourists except as they related to the migration. Throughout my time in Kenya, I heard the phrase *jiaoma guohe* (角马过河, wildebeest crossing the river) so many times, it began to sound like a *chengyu*, or a traditional Chinese four-character idiom. I began abbreviating it in my notes as "JMGH." A scenic spot was being formed.

The Broader Semiotic Landscape

The wildebeests crossing the river represent just one of the many ways that the Chinese tourist gaze is reordering and reinterpreting signs within the landscape. Harmony (和谐 *hexie*), for example, an important concept within what Li (2008) calls "Chinese cultural knowledge," came up frequently in my exchanges with tourists. One older tourist stated that he preferred Amboseli National Park[11] to Maasai Mara, since the former "had both mountains and

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[11] Amboseli National Park is another popular tourist destination in Kenya. Located east of Maasai Mara, Amboseli contains permanent wetlands, as well as spectacular views of Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain.

water" (有山有水 *you shan you shui*). These two elements, mountains and

water, unite to form the Chinese word for landscape, 山水 *shanshui*. These

two components are considered essential to the aesthetic harmony of nature,

as epitomized within the highly stylized traditional genre of *shanshui* painting.

(Xu et al. 2014). The flat grassland of the Maasai Mara lacks this visual

harmony, and this particular tourist therefore considered it less "pretty" (漂亮

piaoliang) compared to Amboseli.

Similarly, several tourists remarked on the perceived harmony

between Kenyan people (especially Maasai) and nature. One remarked that

Kenyans have strong "environmental awareness" (环境意识 *huanjing yishi*),

and another marveled how Kenyans were clearly better at wildlife

conservation than Chinese. A survey participant wrote in the comment section

that he wished all "humans and animals would get along in harmony." These

statements reference the fundamental Confucian and Taoist dictum that

"humans and nature are one" (天人合一 *tian ren he yi*), and the widespread

belief that modern China, with its heavy industries and capitalist culture, is

failing to uphold this ideal (Xu et al. 2014).

These references to the concept of harmony echo language commonly

used within tourism media and literature: the tourism website for KCTT

describes Maasai Mara as a place where "humans get along in harmony with

nature and with animals."[12] The website of another Chinese tour agency based in Nairobi, Longren, similarly promises readers that they can experience "the joy of wildlife and humans coexisting in harmony."[13] The repetition of the word "harmony" contributes to how tourists view the Mara landscape. They incorporate similar language into their own descriptions of what they see.

In another example of semiotic reinterpretation within the safari, every Chinese tour group I joined connected vultures—a common sight on the savannah—with the Tibetan ritual of "sky burial" (天葬 *tianzang*). Sky burial is a type of ritualistic burial, distinct to Tibetan culture, in which the body of a venerated Buddhist monk is left outdoors and allowed to return to the sky by way of vultures (Gesang 2014). To the (Han)[14] Chinese tourists, this ritual is grotesque, exotic, mysterious, and awe-inspiring. While I, an American, was focused on the action of the birds themselves, the Chinese groups introduced a distinctly cultural interpretation to the natural phenomenon of vultures eating a wildebeest in the savannah.

Why do these new interpretations matter? Just as tourism has influenced the physical and cultural landscapes of Jiuzhaigou, Chinese tourists in the Maasai Mara do not exist in a vacuum. Their movements through the savannah interact with a long political history, leaving physical marks on the

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[12] Original text in Chinese: 在这里， 人与自然、人与动物和谐相处
[13] Original text in Chinese: 野生动物与人类和谐共存的乐趣
[14] Although I did not ask for respondents' ethnic affiliations, it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority were Han: the Han ethnic group accounts for over 92% of China's population, and between 95 and 99% of Shanghai, Beijing, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Zhejiang provinces, where most of my respondents were from (See Appendix A).

people, places, and animals they encounter. In the next sections, I outline the physical mode of the Chinese safari in Kenya and examine the political implications of these structures.

The Physical Safari:

The Chinese safari in Kenya operates within the infrastructural boundaries created centuries ago by early British colonists hoping to witness the African "wild." Tourists (of all nationalities) are whisked from the Nairobi airport directly into the countryside, usually with less than a day to spend in the capital city. Contact with Kenyans is limited, preserving the myth of the unpopulated wilderness. This seclusion serves to insulate and reinforce any culture-specific interpretations of the safari experience, including the "Scenic Spot" mentality among the Chinese.

Chinese safaris follow this same basic structure. Tourists book their trips through tour companies in China, which work in conjunction with Kenya-based agencies operated by Chinese expats. These agencies market exclusively to a Chinese clientele based mostly in China; although open to the general public, they appear intimidating from the outside (fig. 3):

Figure 3: This Chinese tour agency has almost no English signage. Doors and windows are barred, despite being located inside an indoor shopping center (photo is my own).

Most Chinese tourists travel with a pre-arranged group for an "insulated adventure" experience (Schmidt 1979). The group meets either in the airport or in their Nairobi hotel, before quickly departing, often for their first wildlife destination. High-end tourists take domestic flights on tiny, twelve-seater planes; budget tourists travel by land cruiser, mini van, or another sturdy safari vehicle. No matter how they travel, the tourists are accompanied at all times by a tour guide or a private driver (sometimes the same person performs both roles). They visit several protected areas, usually limited to the twenty-four "classic scenic spots" listed on KCTT's website (see above). Most tours also include brief urban excursions within Nairobi, or sometimes to the beaches of Mombasa on the Kenyan coast.

The tour groups stay at all-inclusive lodges at each site, often located inside or just outside the national parks. Guests receive three meals a day in the lodge's common dining room, eating bland, familiar Continental and American-inspired cuisine. They sleep at night in luxury tents with king-sized

beds and full bathrooms. The décor references an old-fashioned safari aesthetic: canvas, khaki, and animal print. Some lodges offer indoor, hotel-style rooms in addition to tents. Many offer pools, spas, and other amenities, but tourists rarely spend time using them; instead, they spend their days going on game drives into the park to watch the wildlife. After a few days in one location, the tour group drives (or flies) onward to the next destination. Small additional excursions punctuate the trip: hot air balloon rides, visits to Maasai villages, souvenir shopping, and animal sanctuaries.

Most mass-market Chinese groups meet with a tour leader (领队 *lingdui*) in China before they depart. Upon arrival, they are met with a tour guide (导游 *daoyou*) from one of Nairobi's tour agencies. Both leaders accompany the travelers throughout their tour. Most of the tour guides are Chinese nationals based in Nairobi, although a small number of guides are Chinese-speaking Kenyans, some of whom double as drivers. Occasionally, Chinese tour groups opt out of a guide altogether and choose to travel alone with the driver. This is especially the case for tourists taking a short vacation while working in Kenya or another African country. Most tour groups, however, use a Chinese guide, who may be either a professional, full-time guide or a part-time, seasonal employee. The latter may lack formal guide training: in a Wechat-interview, a prospective tour guide early in the hiring process by a Chinese tour agency told me she had missed an initial training session, "so they just [told] me to search about Kenya and animals."

Of the three safari tours I joined, the first had no guide at all, relying on basic English to communicate with their Kenyan driver. The second group had a Chinese tour leader as well as a Chinese guide based in Nairobi. The guide had been trained as a nurse, owned a small business in Nairobi, and spoke poor English. The third group had a tour guide, but no separate tour leader. This guide also worked part-time in tourism and possessed limited English skills. In all three cases, very little communication existed to mediate the relationships between tourists and the environment.

This had two results: first, it reinforced Chinese-specific interpretations of the animals and the landscape, which will be discussed in depth later in this chapter. Second, it led to misunderstandings, anger, and conflict with the Kenyan drivers, hotel staff, and other industry workers. These small conflicts—the driver becoming angry with the tourists for smoking and speaking loudly, the tour leader arguing with the tour guide over the itinerary, and the tourists becoming angry over the hotel's limited electricity and hot water—represented a larger pattern of tension and chaos during the overcrowded high season in the Maasai Mara.

Competition and Chaos

These tensions are fueled by the cultural cachet among Chinese tourists surrounding the migration as a "Scenic Spot." As tourists are increasingly exposed to promotional materials, as well as accounts written by fellow tourists in blogs and social media posts, expectations build to create a

competitive atmosphere. The majority of Chinese tourists I encountered were heavy users of social media, continuously contacting friends and family back home through the mobile app WeChat.[15] Additional platforms, such as Weibo and QQ, may have been used as well. Most Chinese guests at the lodge in Maasai Mara asked for the Wi-Fi password immediately upon checking in, and the vast majority of complaints made to the front desk regarded the lack of working Internet. Within this highly interconnected media culture, sharing one's experience as a tourist is an essential part of the safari itself. Thus, the African safari becomes known throughout China as a series of images, phrases, and memes.

The Chinese tour agency brochures and websites often emphasize that seeing the wildebeests crossing the river is a matter of luck: the Youya brochure warns readers that "if you are unlucky and do not witness the process of the crossing itself, you will still have the opportunity to see thousands of wildebeests [grazing]." The KCTT website qualifies its rich descriptions of the crossing by stating: "However, the wildebeests crossing the river is not something that can be seen anywhere; it requires patience and luck." These warnings ostensibly serve to mitigate tourists' disappointment if they fail to witness the crossing. In reality, however, they amplify anticipation

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[15] WeChat (微信 *Weixin*) is immensely popular in China, accounting for one third of the country's mobile app usage (Novet 2017). The messaging app, often compared to WhatsApp, contains numerous features allowing users to share memes and photos, take surveys, exchange money, and even order food in restaurants.

and further increase the status of this particular scenic spot as something rare and valuable.

The Chinese tourists I interacted with were so influenced by this atmosphere of competition that they were willing to camp out by the Mara River for hours in the hope of seeing wildebeests cross over. A tour guide told me about one of her clients who was so determined to see the crossing that he canceled the rest of his pre-booked tour to stay behind in Maasai Mara for a whole week, watching the river. Some of the guests I interacted with were deeply disappointed and even angry if they failed to witness the crossing. One woman canceled her final night at the hotel in Maasai Mara after failing to see the crossing, and after being told she was unlikely to see it the following day. A large, two-vehicle tour group erupted in a loud and lengthy argument after one of the vans witnessed the crossing and the other did not.

Sometimes tourists would voice their disdain for other Chinese tourists they had witnessed becoming angry for failing to see the crossing. One couple spent several minutes debating the stupidity of other tourists who lose their tempers, stating that they, themselves, would never get angry over a natural event that "we cannot determine." This couple might have recognized the uncontrollable nature of the animals' decision to cross the river, but at the same time they still deeply desired to experience it. The issue was never far from their minds, even as they were separating themselves from those who expressed their desires more crudely.

Meanwhile, the geographical and infrastructural limitations of the safari—from the tightly structured itineraries to the all-inclusive resorts—mean that tourists rarely interact with anybody outside their own group, whether Kenyan locals or visitors from other countries. They ride in chartered vehicles and speak with each other in Mandarin. They only spend time outside the car to eat and sleep at the lodge. They almost never leave the lodge property to wander on their own, shop in local villages, or interact with local people. Within this bubble, the wildebeest crossing only continues to gain in reputation and importance. Outside this bubble, meanwhile, external factors—seasonality and international politics—further contribute to the building tension.

Hyper-Seasonality

The safari industry's hyper-seasonality further contributes to this whirlwind atmosphere of competition and high emotions. The high season for international tourism in Kenya takes place during the late summer, roughly between July and October.[16] The peak occurs between late July and late August to coincide with the height of the Great Migration. Chinese tourists

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[16] English-language tourism website tend to list slightly different high seasons: July-October (http://www.naturalhighsafaris.com), June-October (https://www.safaribookings.com), July-September (http://www.africanmeccasafaris.com), July/August-November (http://www.go2africa.com) etc. Importantly, all of these websites clarify that Maasai Mara is worth visiting all year round. Most of these sites also promote a second high season in January and February.

tend to come in large numbers during this two-month period. Limited vacation

time for most Chinese workers might explain this hyper-seasonality, since

China has the fewest number of paid vacation days of any nation in the world

(Chen 2011). In addition, Chinese advertisements, tourism brochures, and

other promotional materials tend to portray only a very narrow tourism season

for Kenya. KCTT advertises "July to September," and the other tourism

brochure advertises "July and August." The hyper-seasonality of Chinese

tourism has political components. As one ethnically Chinese tour operator

explained:

> "[The Kenyan Tourism Bureau] are doing it wrong. They haven't
> introduced all of Kenya to China. They only tell people about two
> things: building the railroad, and the migration. In Chinese they call it
> the Great Animal Migration (动物大迁徙 *Dongwu Da Qianxi)*. So
> Chinese people think that past July and August, there will be no
> animals left! They only come during these two months because they
> have this wrong idea...So I am really trying to tell tourists, DON'T
> come during July and August, go at other times. The number of
> tourists during July and August is causing environmental degradation,
> the number of animals are going down, and we can't find enough
> hotels or cars for everybody."
> These remarks indicate the extent to which tourism is a reflection of

government policy.

By blaming the Kenyan Tourism Bureau, the tour operator references growing

collaboration between the governments of Kenya and China. The Standard

Gauge Railway, a new Chinese-built and funded railway connecting Mombasa

to Nairobi, is a source of national pride for both governments, reflecting a

deep financial partnership that has grown exponentially over the past decades.

Chinese foreign direct investment in Kenya is second only to that of the

United Kingdom, worth approximately $79 billion as of 2012 (Sanghi and

Johnson 2016). Most of this investment is in infrastructure, manufacturing, and communications.

Although tourism receives relatively little funding and attention, it too plays a key role in the Kenyan economy and in China-Kenya relations as a whole. Tourism represents over 10% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product, but has suffered in recent years after the high-profile terrorist attacks at Westgate Mall in 2013 and Garissa University in 2015 (Morris 2015). American and European markets have decreased, leading Kenya to begin actively targeting the Chinese market to fill this gap. This occurs through co-produced wildlife documentaries airing on Chinese television, and events such as a 2015 marketing fair in Beijing that highlighted the Great Migration as a key attraction (Kawira 2015).

Meanwhile, the Chinese government also has an interest in promoting tourism to Kenya. Since the start of the 21st century, China has embraced a "going out" strategy that actively encouraged firms to invest abroad and move operations overseas (Tiezzi 2014). It also encouraged international travel through the Approved Destination Status Program, which streamlines the visa and tour booking process for travelers going to destinations with which China nurtures positive diplomatic relations. As a result of these policies, tourism has boomed: In 2013, Chinese travelers went on 98 million trips abroad. Out of my survey sample of 89 respondents, of those who answered the question, 95% had traveled abroad before their trip to Kenya, and 59% had been to seven or more countries (See Appendix A). Several participants mentioned

49

traveling to Antarctica. One participant claimed to have traveled to nearly

sixty countries.

Most survey participants, however (75%) had never been to Africa

before. Even to experienced travelers, Africa represents a new and mysterious

frontier, which is little understood except through wildlife imagery (Burgman

2015).[17] Wildlife tourism thus represents a window through which the

Chinese upper classes can learn about Kenya, and Africa as a whole. The

Chinese government harnesses wildlife imagery through its yearly television

specials on CCTV. Chinese tourists impressed by their experiences might then

be enticed to invest in African industries. When the tour operator quoted

above mentioned both the railroad and the wildlife migration, he linked

Chinese foreign investment together with the powerful imagery of African

wildlife. Through animals, more and more Chinese people are introduced to

Africa.

A Vicious Cycle

On the ground in Kenya, these factors combine to create a perfect

storm of chaos during the high season in July and August. Hotels are

overbooked, guides and drivers are overworked, and national parks are

overcrowded with tour vehicles. Frequent conflicts erupt between tourists and

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[17] My own findings supported those of Burgman (2015). One young Chinese intern I met in Nairobi described Africa as "mysterious" (*shenmi*). Many of the tourists I spoke to before administering my survey were attracted to Africa simply because it was exotic and they had never been there before; few expressed prior knowledge of the continent beyond what they had seen on TV.

guides, drivers and hotel staff. I witnessed tour leaders yelling at inexperienced Chinese guides, guests complaining about the lack of hotel rooms, drivers yelling at their clients to be quiet and stop smoking, and tour agents yelling at their staff during peak office hours. The most extreme example, of course, was when the Chinese tour guide mentioned in the introduction to this thesis stabbed a Chinese tourist to death in an overcrowded hotel dining room (Gettleman 2016).

The physical factors of the safari combine to insulate the Chinese tourist gaze from outside sources and foreign interpretations of the landscape. This creates a positive feedback loop in which the sight of the wildebeests crossing the river continually increases in value and importance over time. The wildebeests crossing the river become much more than simply a natural phenomenon of wildlife migration. Through the Chinese tourist gaze, this event gains new meaning as a semiotic marker of harmony, unity, and status. When a Chinese tourist witnesses this event, it reinforces a sense of belonging within a common Chinese culture,[18] a culture that includes CCTV documentaries and online travel blogs. Figure 4 illustrates the process through which the wildebeest crossing becomes solidified into a widely recognized, Chinese-style scenic spot:

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[18] This sense of belonging does *not* contradict the competitive and even violent atmosphere of the safari. Rather, I conjecture that this seeming incongruity is a result of Chinese interpersonal relations (关系 *guanxi*), a cultural concept that has been richly explored in the social science literature (for example, see Farh et al. 1998; Kipnis 1997; Fan 2002 etc.).

Feedback Loop

(Politically-motivated?) Promotion of the Crossing — TV, brochures etc.

Intense seasonality leads to conflict

Solidification of the Wildebeest Crossing as a Scenic Spot

Increased desire to see the Crossing

Increased travel to Kenya see the Crossing

Isolation within Chinese social networks

Communication among past and potential travelers —photographs, social media, blogs etc.

Figure 4. Feedback loop through which the scenic spot is produced and reinforced over time.

Thus, as the wildebeest migration gains status and recognition over time, reinforced by media and promotional materials, it becomes codified and marked as a Chinese-style scenic spot. The powerful imagery of the wildebeest crossing the river, combined with the physical constraints of the safari, leads to competition, tension, and conflict.

Within the wider context of the East African safari, these changes merely represent the newest iteration in a long history of tourism in the savannah. Just as British and American hunters produced the Maasai Mara protected area by placing legal protections on wildlife and displacing local herders, so too are modern-day Chinese tourists contributing to the production of a new tourist landscape—a landscape of large lodges and numerous guests, lines of vehicles parked by the river, and a new language being studied by

tourism students throughout Kenya. Over time, it remains to be seen how Kenya's tourism industry will adapt to these new arrivals.

Conclusions

The aim of this research was not to suggest that Chinese tourists significantly differ from tourists of other nationalities, but was rather to probe into and attempt to explain the palpable alarm and discontent within Kenya's safari industry. The results of my fieldwork, however, do suggest that Chinese tourists interpret the African safari experience in ways that subtly differ from the interpretations of their European and American counterparts. Following the traditional "scenic spot" model of tourism within China, Chinese tourists visiting Kenya see the landscape as a series of delineated and clearly bounded touristic objects, chief among which is the wildebeest crossing the river. These delineations are created and reinforced through individual tourist interactions, guides, social media, tour agency promotions, and even international-level government relations. This focused interest on the wildebeest migration and other touristic objects, combined with the large numbers of seasonal travelers in recent years, has shocked Kenya's tourism industry enough to cause alarm among local tourism workers and experts.

When I asked one Kenyan hotel owner what will happen after fifty more years of Chinese tourism, his reply was simple and firm: "The Mara will be dead." Between overcrowding in the park and the Chinese market for illegal wildlife products, he feared that Chinese tourism marked the beginning

of the end of Kenyan wildlife. Many seemed to share this view, and although

Chinese clients still only account for a small percentage of total tourists to

Kenya, these negative perceptions have real implications for the industry. The

Chinese-owned hotel where I conducted my survey, for example, endured a

long legal battle with the county government to gain a construction permit. Its

existence is still a source of anger and annoyance for some local Kenyan

residents, who find the large tents and buildings of "The Chinese Lodge" too

ugly, too big, and too cheap. Many of the Kenyan tour guides I spoke to

relayed anecdotes of their colleagues refusing to work for Chinese tour

agencies or lead groups of Chinese clients, although I did not witness direct

evidence of this. Nevertheless, the negative reputation of many Chinese

tourists is affecting how Kenyan industry workers view their jobs and their

clients.

　　Many people, however, are optimistic about the benefits of

intercultural exchange, education, and understanding that come from Chinese

tourism. I met several Kenyan tour guides who spoke fluent Chinese, as well

as several Chinese tour operators and wildlife conservation activists who

spoke fluent Swahili and English. I met children of all nationalities who were

passionate about science and endangered species conservation, including a

high schooler who knew the Chinese names of every African animal we saw

(many of which her parents did not know), and an elementary-school aged girl

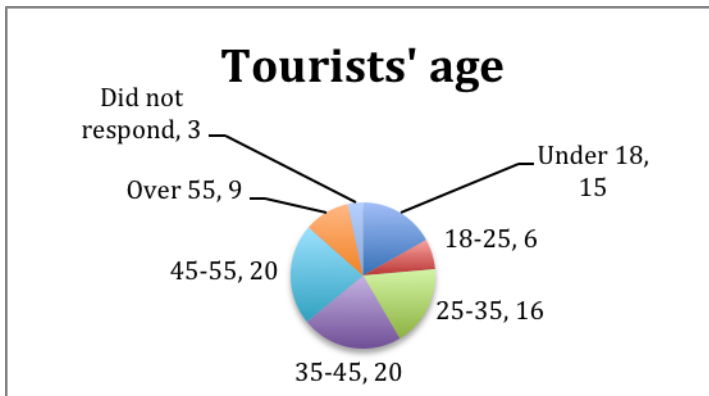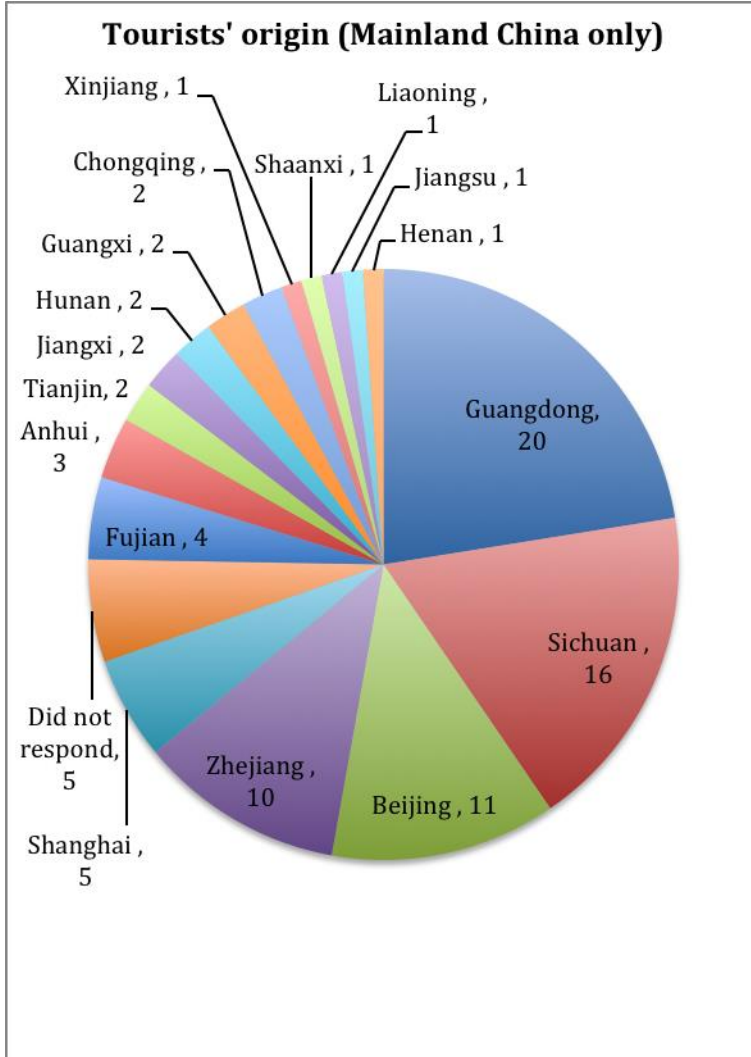who was concerned about the fate of endangered rhinos. These children

demonstrate the flexibility and mutability of tourism semiotics, allowing the viewer to see their own interests reflected back to them on the safari.

From its very beginnings during colonization, the mode of the African safari has served to reinforce whatever semiotic representations are already recognizable to the tourist. Nothing new is encountered. American tourists might be seeking signs of adventure and wildness, and they find it, through the thrill of the hunt. For Chinese tourists, they might be seeking the mysticism of a zebra's Tibetan-style sky burial, or the majestic, TV-famous sight of the wildebeests plunging into the Mara River. They will find what they are looking for, even if their guides and drivers do not understand the appeal of waiting by the river for hours at a time. As Chinese tourist numbers grow in relation to tourists of other nationalities, the safari industry will shift accordingly, continuing to privilege the wildebeest crossing above other sights, and continuing to perpetuate hyper-seasonality, overcrowding, and conflict.

Beyond the wildebeest migration, further research might illuminate additional examples of semiotic reinterpretation by Chinese tourists. Beyond the Maasai Mara, further research into how Chinese people traveling abroad perceive animals and the environment can help us further understand how ideas travel across cultural and geographic boundaries, and the physical repercussions of those ideas. For now, this research has shown that within the larger study of Chinese engagement with Africa, tourism can provide a fascinating lens through which to examine international relations, postcolonial power structures, and conflicts between notions of nature and culture.

Part 1. Demographic Information (n=89)

Tourists' origin (Mainland China only)

Xinjiang , 1
Liaoning , 1
Chongqing , 2
Shaanxi , 1
Jiangsu , 1
Guangxi , 2
Henan , 1
Hunan , 2
Jiangxi , 2
Tianjin, 2
Anhui , 3
Fujian , 4
Guangdong, 20
Sichuan , 16
Did not respond, 5
Zhejiang , 10
Beijing , 11
Shanghai , 5

Tourists' age

Did not respond, 3
Over 55, 9
Under 18, 15
45-55, 20
18-25, 6
25-35, 16
35-45, 20

Tourists' gender

Did not respond, 8
Male, 43
Female, 38

Tourists' education

Did not respond, 5
Junior high or less, 8
High school , 17
Bachelors and above, 46
2 or 3 year college, 13

Part 2. Trip Information (n=89)

Amount of time spent in Maasai Mara National Reserve

- 10+ Days, 1
- 7-10 Days, 4
- Did not respond, 6
- 4-6 Days, 11
- 1-3 Days, 67

Tourists for whom this was their first time leaving China

- Yes, 4
- Did not respond, 3
- No, 82

Number of countries tourists have visited before

Did not respond, 8

1-3 Countries, 15

4-6 Countries, 18

7+ Countries, 48

Tourists visiting Africa for the first time

Did not respond, 9

No, 20

Yes, 60

If no, other African countries visited

Zimbabwe, 1 — Uganda, 1 — Illegible, 1

Zambia, 1

Ethiopia, 1

Madagascar, 1

South Africa, 10

Tanzania, 3

Mauritius, 4

Egypt, 6

Activities participated in on trip

(bar chart, values approximate)

Activity	Value
Wildlife	85
Area	72
Village	41
Local Food	31
Local products	31
Hiking	15
Beach	12
City	11
Hotel	10
Volunteer	9
Wild animal meat	9
Camping	6
Educational	5
Chinese Food	3
Business	2
International brands	0
Other	0

Part 3. Animal Questions (n=89)

Favorite animals listed (respondents pick more than one)

lion 54, leopard 17, zebra 17, wildebeest 15, elephant 15, giraffe 11, cheetah 8, gazelle 5, hippo 4, hyena 4, rhino 4, birds (generic) 4, flamingo 2, warthog 2, carp/fish 1

Reasons for picking favorite animals (respondents pick more than one)

Popular 32, Rare 38, Beautiful 72, Admirable Personality Characteristics 53, Other 15

Average responses to opinion questions* (on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

*Questions have been paraphrased to fit this graph. For full, original wording, please see survey form at the end of this section.

Bar values:
- Preventing animal extinction is important to me: 4.51
- Tourism is contributing to conservation: 3.87
- Human development makes a place more beautiful: 2.14
- I am willing to pay more money during my trip to help conservation: 3.77
- Human activity inside protected areas harms animals: 3.62
- Animals have an inherent right to exist: 4.51
- Human have economic benefits to the local community: 3.83
- Tourism should always provide economic benefits to the local community: 3.11
- Herders should be allowed to graze livestock inside protected areas: 4.25
- People are an inextricable part of nature: 1.49
- It is ok to purchase wildlife products like pangolin scales in some situations: 3.90
- I prefer to view wildlife in a remote location: 2.53
- I prefer to view wildlife in a place with luxury tourism infrastructure: 4.50
- Animals have emotions just like people, so we should protect them: 2.52
- People should be allowed to kill an endangered animal that threatens a village

Survey Questionnaire

问卷调查

谢谢您参与一项关于中国游客与野生动物旅游业的研究。您参与这项研究是完全志愿的，完全匿名的。有任何问题，请通过微信(aek802) 或者电子邮件（aekamins@umich.edu) 跟我联系. 欢迎参加本次答题！

Thank you for participating in this research on Chinese tourists and wildlife tourism. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and anonymous. If you have any questions, please feel free to add me on wechat (aek802) or email me at aekamins@umich.edu. Thank you!

1. 您计划在肯尼亚呆多长时间？

How long do you plan to spend in Kenya?

☐1-3 天 days   ☐10 多天 days＋

☐4-6 天 days   ☐长期顶住 Long-term resident

☐7-10 天 days

2. 您计划在马塞马拉呆多长时间？

How long do you plan to spend in Masai Mara?

☐1-3 天 days   ☐10 多天 days＋

☐4-6 天 days

☐7-10 天 days

3. 这是否您第一次去国外旅游？

Is this your first time traveling outside China?

☐是 Yes ☐否 No

4. 如果选否，您去过多少国家？
If no, how many countries have you visited?

☐1-3 个国家 countries

☐4-6 个国家 countries

☐7＋个国家 countries

5. 这是否您第一次去非洲？

Is this your first time traveling to Africa?

☐是 Yes ☐否 No

6. 如果选否，请填写您去过的非洲国家：
If no, please list other African countries you have visited:

-

-

-

7. 您这次来肯尼亚做过或者打算做哪些活动？（请多选！）
During your trip in Kenya, which activities have you done or plan on doing?

☐生意、投资、开会等关于工作的活动 Business, investment, meetings, or other work-related activities

☐观赏野生动物 Wildlife watching

☐参观自然保护区或者国家公园 Visiting a protected area or national park

☐ 露营 Camping

☐参观乡村风光 Visiting a local village

☐做志愿活动 Participating in volunteer activities

☐参加教育活动 Participating in educational activities

☐参观海滩 Visiting a beach

☐吃地道的肯尼亚菜 Eating authentic local food

☐品尝野生动物肉 Eating wild animal meat

☐吃中国菜 Eating Chinese food

☐买当地特产 Buying local products

☐买国际品牌 Buying international brands

☐爬山 Hiking

☐其他（请说明） Other (please specify):_____

8. 如果您这次在肯尼亚观赏过野生动物或者打算观赏野生动物，您对哪两个物种最有兴趣？（如果不观赏野生动物，请跳到第 **14**）

If you have seen wildlife or plan to see wildlife during your trip in Kenya, which two animal species are you most interested in seeing (if you will not be seeing wildlife, please skip to #14)?

1._____

2._____

9. 您对第一个物种感兴趣主要的原因是什么？（请单选）

What is your primary interest in the first animal species?

☐这个动物很受欢迎，流行文化经常提到它 This animal is very popular, and I often hear about it in popular culture

☐这个动物数量很少，难得一见 There are few of this animal; it's rare

☐这个动物很有美感 This animal is very aesthetically beautiful

☐这个动物拥有令人钦佩的性格特点 This animal has admirable personality characteristics

☐其他 (请说明)
Other:_____

10. 请填写三个词来形容这个动物：

Please list three words you would use to describe this animal:

-

11. 您对第二个物种感兴趣主要的原因是什么？（请单选）

What is your primary interest in the second animal species?

☐这个动物很有美感 This animal is very aesthetically beautiful

☐这个动物拥有令人钦佩的性格特点 This animal has admirable personality characteristics

☐这个动物数量很少，难得一见 There are few of this animal; it's rare

☐这个动物很受欢迎，流行文化经常提到它 This animal is very popular, and I often hear about it in popular culture

☐其他（请说明)
Other:_____

_

12. 请填写三个词来形容这个动物：

Please list three words you would use to describe this animal:

-

-

-

13. 请从一（非常不同意）到五（非常同意）选择您的角度：

On a scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), please select your position:

	非常不同意／Strongly disagree	不同意／Disagree	中立／Neutral	同意／Agree	非常同意／Strongly agree

在自然保护区里面进行人文发展（比如建立桥、喷泉等等）一般会让保护区更美丽。Human development inside a natural protected area (e.g. bridges, fountains) usually makes the area more beautiful.	1	2	3	4	5
在保护区以内发生的任何耕作、放牧等人文活动都会使野生动物受伤。Wild animals are harmed by any farming, grazing, or other human activity inside protected areas.	1	2	3	4	5
动植物无论是否给人类带来利益，都有存在的价值和意义。Animals and plants have an inherent right to exist regardless of their benefits to people.	1	2	3	4	5
旅游业总是应该给当地社区带来经济上的利益。Tourism should always provide	1	2	3	4	5

economic benefits to the local community.					
虽然目前当地牧民的传统土地位于自然保护区内，但是牧民还应该被允许在自然保护区里面放牧。Although local herdsmen's traditional lands are now located inside protected areas, the herdsman should still be allowed to graze cattle there.	1	2	3	4	5
当地社区和人民跟动植物一样是大自然密不可分的一个组成部分。Local communities of people are an inextricable part of nature, just like the plants and animals.	1	2	3	4	5
买穿山甲等野生动物产品当礼物在特别的情况下是合理的。In certain situations it is okay to purchase wildlife products like pangolin scales as gifts.	1	2	3	4	5

我最喜欢去一个特别遥远的，周围没有其他的旅客，没有很多的道路、旅馆、商店等旅游设施的地方去观赏野生动物。I prefer to view wildlife in a very remote place with no tourism infrastructure (few roads, few hotels, no shopping) and no other visitors around me.	1	2	3	4	5
我最喜欢去一个带着高层旅馆、维护良好的道路等高级旅游设施，周围的人比较多的地方去观赏野生动物。I prefer to view wildlife in a place with advanced tourism infrastructure (luxury hotels, numerous shops and restaurants, convenient transportation) and many other visitors around me.	1	2	3	4	5
野生动物跟人一样有思想感情，因此人类需要保	1	2	3	4	5

护动物，防止他们受到伤痛和虐待。 Wild animals have emotions just like people, so humans must protect them from pain and abuse.					
如果有一个濒危野生动物来威胁一个村子，政府应该允许村民杀了动物来防身。If an endangered animal threatens a village, the people should be able to kill the animal on sight for protection.	1	2	3	4	5
避免野生物种的灭绝对我非常重要。Preventing the extinction of wild animal species is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
我当旅客就是在为野生动物保护做贡献。 As a tourist, I am contributing to wildlife conservation.	1	2	3	4	5

请告诉我们您的一些基本信息......

Please tell us a little more about yourself...

14. 您来自中国哪个省？**Which Chinese province are you from?**

_____

—

15. 您住在：

You live in a:

☐大城市 Big city   ☐小城市或者镇 Small city or town   ☐农村 Rural village

16. 年龄：**Age:**

☐18 岁以下   ☐36-45 岁

☐18-25 岁   ☐46-55 岁

☐26-35 岁   ☐56 岁以上

17. 性别：**Sex:** ☐男 male   ☐女 female

18. 您的教育背景是什么？

What is your educational background?

☐初中及中专 Junior   ☐大专 Associates degree
high/technical training
                            ☐本科以上 Bachelors degree and
☐高中 High school   above

19. 您这次旅行有感觉不满意的或者希望下次能改变的吗？请说明：

Please share anything you were dissatisfied with or wish to change about this trip:

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