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Les espaces naturels protégés sont-ils nécessaires ?

Activating interactive landscape : recent diversification in the kenyan wildlife tourism industryen

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Rothschild's giraffe,
Shaba National
Park, Kenya (photo:
E. Calas, april
2009).

Activating interactive landscape: recent diversification in the kenyan wildlife tourism industry

Bernard Calas¹

Résumé/Abstract

Le paysage "interactif" ou la récente diversification du tourisme animalier au Kenya

Depuis une vingtaine d'années, sous l'impulsion du paradigme écosystémique devenue hégémonique, la demande de tourisme animalier a beaucoup évolué vers une forme hybride mêlant des caractéristiques du tourisme de safari et du tourisme sportif. Ce papier s'intéresse à la façon dont cette transformation affecte l'industrie du tourisme animalier kenyan. Se démarquant des caractéristiques classiques du safari animalier qui consiste à regarder et à photographier les « Big Five » depuis une voiture, cette tendance récente greffe l'immersion dans la brousse et les activités d'extérieurs aux destinations classiques. Cette greffe est parfois si réussie que c'est ainsi un véritable paysage interactif qui est ainsi construit par les acteurs de la chorégraphie animalière.

For the last 20 years under the growing influence of the ecosystem paradigm, the demand for wilderness tourism has been greatly transformed. This paper deals with the way this transformation impacts on the Kenyan wildlife tourism industry. Departing from the classical safari format which mainly consists of sighting and snapping the Big Five animals from an automobile, the major changes are leaving the car, and the opening up of facilities. This trend tends to graft "bush immersion" and "adventure" activities onto classic safariland destinations. In some places it does it so that a true "interactive landscape" is built in such a way that the contents of the safari experience are radically changed, bringing about a shift from sightseeing to tactilization, moving from mere passive experience to a kind of touristic empowerment.

Mots clés/Key-words

Tourisme de nature, tourisme animalier, safari, Afrique, Kenya, parcs nationaux, réserves privées, tactilisation.

Wilderness tourism, wildlife tourism, safari, Africa, Kenya, national parks, conservancies, tactilization.

Introduction

According to some scholars (Richards, 2000) Africa only offers flawed outmoded touristic destinations and products: like safaris and beach resorts stays. Some are saying that this continent would have missed important tourism transformations of the global industry recorded by the end of the XXth century. Is this general statement already outdated because it was written at the end of the "lost decades" of the African development or still valid when one speaks of the "rising Africa"? Looking at Kenya as a case study, new products and new ways of consuming nature and wildlife departing from the classical safari will be highlighted. This paper aims at showing that changes have occurred. When it is true that most of the tourists are still buying in products from the "thematic era", more operators proposed stays which clearly show that Kenya has

not been spared by "the era of diversification" (Butler, 2004). I want to put light on new ways of consuming nature and wildlife. But "Most academic analysis of tourism or safari in East Africa employ a management or development prospective ... rather than a tourism studies approach..." (Hays, 2012) ; on the contrary I would like to adopt a tourism studies approach.

"Urry (1990)'s "tourist gaze" has provided a marking point... However, the limited appearance of the sensuous engagement between the body and the world in the tourist gaze (and in Tourism Studies' broader focus on the visual encapsulated by the term 'sightseeing') was quickly noted" (Crouch D. & Desforges L., 2003). Therefore researchers have since "moved away from the tourist gaze, toward a more corporeal, bodily experience of travel" (Jamal et alii, 2003). Borrowing from Goffmann's sociology,

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ACTIVITIES	LOCATION (Cf. map)	MEDIATORS	SETTING
Family walks in NP	TSAVO NP MZIMA SPRINGS	KWS ranger	NARROW AND ENCLAVIC
Rock climbing	TSAVO NP LUGARD'S FALL	KWS ranger	
Bush Ridding	HELLS GATE NP	Local business	
One day trekking	LONGONOT NP	Local business	
	NGONG NP		
Horse riding	OL DONYO SABUK NP	Private ranger	
Canoeing in the mangrove	SANGARE CONSERVANCY	Local business & biologist	
Bird walking	TANA DELTA	Private ranger	
Baboon walking	NAIVASHA	Scientists	
Bush breakfast	MAGADI CONSERVANCY	Biologists	
Wildlife tracking	SABUK CONSERVANCY	Private guides	WIDE HETEROGENEOUS
Sitatunga tracking	AMBOSELI CONSERVANC	Private guide	
Chimps rhino sanctuaries visit	SAIWA SWAMP NP	KWS guide	
Walking	SWEETWATERS CAMP	Ecologist	
Wild camping and « Glamping »	SEKKER HILLS	Ethnologist	
Balloonning	SHABA NR	Tour operator	
Mountainering &	MASAI MARA NR	Local guides and porters	
Cave	MOUNT KENYA NP	Autonomy	
«Wilderness» experiences	MOUNT ELGON NP		
	MERU & KORA NP		
	MATTHEWS RANGE		
	SOUTH TURKANA AREA		
	BARINGO BOGORIA LAKE		

table 1 : Visited National Parks and Game Reserves.

they urged for a performance turn in the tourism research. They took the idea further, stating that “*nature and landscape [are] “the Other” with which visitors interact*” (p. 145 our underlining). Unfortunately the actual content of this interaction is not really illustrated. As Hays (2012) rightly said, “*tourism as a connected rhizomic entity based on process and performance allows the privileging of all participants*”. Focusing on Tanzania she states that “*Safari ... orders the landscape in its movement across it*” thus creating place and nature... She further argues that “*place and nature, human and non-human are fashioned in safari’s movement across the landscape*”. This very clear and certainly interesting statement seems however to separate landscape from place and nature themselves but also humans, making them different entities. Although underlining the outstanding importance of the “*automobility*” I feel Hays forgets some recent innovations. Thus facing the critics that “*Existing tourist theory purports to explain tourist behaviour in relation to « mass tourism» leaving the contemporary adventure scene under researched although studies are emerging*” (Beedie, 2003, p. 154). Taking as a starting point the necessity to understand all types of practices, I shall focus on alternative safaris which offer different experiences by using other mobilities. Indeed this paper follows the social science pragmatic turn which encourages researchers to look at more closely at the materiality of social realities, of actions, of narratives, etc. It is urgent for researchers to carry out studies on actors’ own experiences and to draw attention on accurate and micro scale observations of contextualised actions.

Based on the “drive, snap and nap” triptych, the classic safari mainly turns around sighting and snapping the Big Five (lion, elephant, buffalo, rhino and leopard), thus belonging to the “thematic era” (Butler, 2004). Hays (2012) shows how “automobility” is central.

Actually this “traditional” safari and metonymical bio-centered tourism are not outdated since most of the 1.1 million international tourists (Government of Kenya, KNBS, 2011, p. 227) still land in Kenya with in mind the strong desire to tick these animals off their safari list. The safari experience clearly belongs to the mass tourism industry. It still consists of the main Kenyan wilderness experience. The average tourist stay is slightly less than two weeks long, of which half is spend along beaches in coastal resorts and half in protected areas aboard minibuses to view wildlife. 40 public protected areas, national, local, public or private, enclose more than 10% of the national surface area.

Besides the national archipelago of public protected areas and since 30 years, new protected private areas have been registered; most of them are private or community conservancies. In some places like the Laikipia Plateau they assemble the majority of the protected areas and attract more than 100 000 tourists a year (Graham, 2013). A huge diversification in the tourist offer and demand has happened. However hegemonic, the safari model still stands, it is now qualified by alternative practices and diversified behaviours. New wilderness consumption practices have arisen which are meant to be light-years away from mass tourism. Butler’s (2004) “era of diversity” has found its way to Kenyan bush.

My argument is that although most authors have underlines interaction, they did not completely and explicitly go to the conclusion that it entitles to take further the idea of an “interactive landscape”. The diversification increases visitor’s possibilities to such an extent that he/she is an active part of the touristscape and increase the number and kind of stakeholders which interact with/in/through/for wilderness, thus melting into an interactive landscape.

However they are now competed by a wide range of smaller, lighter, newer accommodation facilities which are not only widely open on the wilderness but are much more integrated in the bush. These facilities are mostly made of light materials, often one of the bedroom's wall is missing and the dining room consists of an overlooking-the-bush- terrace. As an operator's website proudly puts forward *Today, in the pursuit of an intimate and exclusive experience with nature, our camps are pitched in the most secluded and*

Choreography car in the Masai Mara Game Reserve, Kenya (photo: E. Calas, april 2009). At the bottom, Moran rhino accompanied by his guardian, Sweetwater Camp, on the plateau of Laikipia, (photo: E. Calas, april 2008).

beautiful areas, offering ultimate privacy and total luxury (Unlimited safari) ¹.

Whereas most of the mass tourism period lodges gaze long distance savanna stretches only to in turn being highly visible from afar, most of the new facilities are hidden in woods, bushes, along rivers. Their sight ranges are shorter. The late modernity ecotourism (Jamal, 2003) fashion has not spared Kenya as it can be seen through these newly built up facilities. Many private campsites, from the basic to the well-equipped have been opened for the two last decades. Luxury camps with fully equipped tents address the "glamping" fashion. Some of these luxury camps are even temporary, closing during the rainy season only leaving toilets behind. Putting forward ecological reasons such as lighter footprint, managers do in fact adapt to both green ideology and economic pressure. Some very exclusive operators even offer everyday change. *"The true essence of safari is only discovered through full immersion in the wilderness. This is how safari started over a century ago, with the freedom to decide each day as it dawned."* These tented facilities now side small ecolodges or *bandas*, which though using harder materials follow the "local mania" in fashion with designers, architects, operators and tourists using mud and wattle and *makuti* (cocopalm) as their main building materials.

Such developments have reached peaks in and especially around already famous tourist areas. For example since 1990 the Masai Mara ecosystem - meaning the National Reserve and its neighboring plains - has more than doubled its accommodation facilities, reaching more than 4000 beds. This tremendous increase is mainly due to light structures outside the National Reserve itself but within the neighboring Game Reserve and surrounding group ranches. This development has also been happening in far remote and less popular places such as the Magadi area (Calas, forthcoming), the Matthew's Range or the Sekker Hills (Huchon, 2005) or even the Laikipia plateau where they facilitate tourism.

Beside this upper class panel, businessmen have also set up backpackers facilities following the same trend toward lightness and openness: *bandas*, cabins, camping sites, huts are now offered. At last, communities mainly in pastoral areas propose accommodations which strand from the smoky and dusty "cultural manyatta" to the fully furnished and serviced luxury countryside lodge with well trained and traditionally dressed staff. In these tourists do feel the bush way of life in a more direct way they have ever done.

B- Beyond "automobility": "take a walk on the wild side"

The first expression of these new practices in wilderness tourism is that more and more often tourists may now disembark off their minibus or their 4X4. Whereas during classical safaris tourists are shut into their open-roof minibus for long lasting game drives

(sometimes very much clearly called "vehicule based game viewing") only to disembark within their hotel's enclosure for resting, they may now be allowed and invited to alight at some specific places and sometimes vanguard deeper into the bush. Of course most of tourists still do walk only within the safe and calm realms of their hotels' garden, however for now some twenty years or so, new consumption patterns of the bush have swiftly emerged. They are mainly based on walking.

Tourists venture in the bush in order to experience a new moving metric leading to a "total immersion". Most often they are just granted some walking permission, but more and more operators also offer trekking or even riding extension: horses, camels, bike ridings become more common. Ballooning (Masai Mara), paragliding (Iten-Komarock or Elemanteita), rafting (Tana River), rock climbing (Hells Gate) are other on the rise outdoor activities which participate in the "era of diversification" (Butler, 2004) but also contribute to the deepening of the wilderness immersion.

Sometimes what was an exemption or done on the sly (almost a "*perruquage*" in De Certeau's words) is in some cases now fully formalized and organized. For example, Mont Longonot ascent (2 900 m. a.s.l. starting at 1 800 m. a.s.l.) or Ngong hills way (10 km) are nowadays secluded in two protected areas. For long these walks were "reserved" to courageous and unconscious risk-taking walkers because of robbers and gangsters who were roaming around. Kenya Wildlife Service -the national public conservation body- now secures and protect these areas to open them to walking, riding, running. On the same note, it is now possible to camp in Shaba National Reserve provided that armed rangers protect the visitors against wildlife, robbers and poachers. No need to be a KWS accountant to understand that behind security reasons (in an almost Foucauldian sense), this formalization is partly profit oriented since areas' managers get a token out of every entrance. This development has importantly impacted the diversification of the tourism offer. This diversification also sometimes happened in public national parks. For example in the long time cars-only-Masai Mara National Reserve, walking areas have recently been opened.

Such softer mobilities produce new "scapes" (Urry, 2000) such as car free trails, tracks and roads. Climbing paths (Hells gate), trekking trails (Mont Kenya or Cherangani hills), steep side walking paths or gorge slippery ways (Hells gate), sandy (Suguta valley), stony (Matthew's Range) and muddy roads, white waters stretches (Tana river) are now highly looked for as tourist assets. But less adventurous facilities like walking trails (Mzima springs or Lugard's falls in Tsavos, Hippo pool in Nairobi National Park or Masai Mara) suitable to families have also been designed. As a consequence, parking areas, viewpoints, hot-spots (such as crossings along the Mara River during the August-September Great Migration or geysers in Bogoria), trails, quiet birding spots have multiplied.

The overall result of such an evolution is that space is more and more navigated and wilderness turned into wild. Obviously this diversification stretches into

1. Unlimited Safari Horse web site. Unlimited Safari is a riding safari operator. Tony Church runs it. Son of a protestant pastor, former policeman in Rhodesia, he settled back in Kenya where he now owns Longonot Game Ranch (32 000 hectares) and former Ernest Hemingway's wife Martha Gellhorn's house: Longonot Ranch House.

space savanna's frequentation by tourists. Whereas in classical safaris game drives are strictly restricted to day time between 6am and 7pm with a long afternoon rest, some operators now offer services which extend to night or meals time. These last ones give tourists the opportunity to experience an off-the-wall experience. Operators' staff members cater everything for the guests to be at ease under acacia trees. Bush breakfast in view of wild animals is a must, whether after a balloon ride or a walk. Don't such "activities" relate savanna to a dining room therefore transforming it into a home, in an almost Heideggerian perspective?

C- From "tourist gaze" to "adventure" engagement

The "car alighting" activities tremendously participates in the construction of an experience which reconciles some classic safari features, the possibility to see animals –though preferably no cats nor elephants- in their environment, with adventure activities' features: the possibility to move around in the middle of nature. The wilderness immersion is interwoven with bush walking and other more sports mobilities (cycling, riding, rafting, gliding, hiking, running, etc.) and with bush resting. *"Here guests can enjoy an all-encompassing nature experience that includes gentle walks, fishing, biking, bush breakfasts or lunch besides day or game drives"* (Malewa Wildlife Lodge website).

The diversification of activities falls into the contemporary global hybridization trends. On the main of the inland Africa touristic experience, operators graft a wide variety of outdoors but also cultural, emotional, natural, scientific and even humanitarian activities! Collateral activities renew the safari experience to such an extent that it is considered as different products. Biking, running, paragliding, rafting, are more common. This participates into *« the current sport culturalisation of nature where the whole world becomes a training territory »* (Augustin, 2002).

More or less physical and sometimes ultimate activities are offered. Up to 56 different activities are claimed to be offered by the Laikipia plateau operators! From the picnic in the bush to thematic walks (around Baringo and Naivasha lakes some parks or reserves boast about their more than 200 bird species). Some walks follow the wild tracks, other look for human activities, many are aiming at traditional medical uses and biological knowledge. *« Whether it's a visit to the pre-historic archeological site, a local school, a water project or feeding a baby rhino, there are plenty of activities that will peak your interest for a behind the scenes look at the conservancy operations. »* Isn't this a way to join in the post-modern zapping culture?

Actually these are not completely new forms of nature or wildlife tourism; one rather can understand them as dissemination of former very high class and aristocratic bush practices. Walking, game tracking were very much in vogue among colonial settlers. Hunting safaris relied heavily on such alighting and walking experiences. But in Kenya they have been outlawed in 1977. This said it is not only hunting ban which has pushed in that evolution: Tanzania still authorized very exclusive and expensive hunting safaris

and nonetheless experiments the very same trends than Kenya towards diversification. *« More than a radical transformation, this is a recomposition and also the development of a system of complex interactions. Based on motor situations which bear similarities with sports gestures, this recomposition plays on a diversity of areas »* (Augustin, 2002).

This diversification stretches from adventure tourism to development tourism. However I propose to call these experiences "Adventure". It contributes to an increasing interactivity between the environment and tourists which directly leads to the fabric of an "interactive landscape". What is this interactivity made of?

First it turns around opening the tourist "capacitation" in order for him/her to be part of the ecosystem as an agent. Secondly, it turns around his/her embedment into a wider eco-political power game.

II- Interactivity and embodiment

A- From sightseeing to "tactilization": widening sensuous experimentation

On a clear early morning, on the Laikipia plateau, my Eurexpat tourist family is ready for a bush walk. Two guides sides. The older wears a kaki army like uniform when the younger carries a gun and wears traditional Samburu clothes. The first acts as a guide, the second as a scout and a bodyguard. The family is shown around plants and proposed to smell and touch sometimes even sometimes chew leaves, taste bark, suck sap. The guide gives information about local properties, uses and danger of plants. For example, the Neem tree also called "the miraculous healing tree" is as usual one of the inescapable stops during such a bush walk. During the walks we are also shown the whistling thorn tree and its symbiotic ants. The guide points out tracks, draws our attention to bird calls, stops under a huge tree to point at a resting grey owl. Droppings are of special interests as they differ from one species to another and give an idea of the intensive night life and biodiversity of the place. Hyenas, cats, antelopes, girafes, zebras, buffaloes, elephants if not seen are around since they left these evidences. Their diet preferences and territories are mentioned and contextualized with soils, drainages patterns, topography, seasons, biotic chains, etc. The guide provides local names for trees, rocks, landmarks, etc. This is time for "petits récits" (small narratives); bits and pieces of knowledge are transmitted, only to be forgotten soon, leaving us with the feeling of a meaningful and enchanted world only known to the scientists, the locals or the residents. Time goes and the outcome of the walk is not so much to catch a glimpse at specific animals than to feel the wilderness. Suddenly two herds of elephants are roaming closely around. Surprise, delight, stress and nervousness rushed and mixed in an unclear and unmatched way. The guide and scout are not much disturbed. They recommend to speak normally –neither silencing nor shouting- and not to hide in order to keep contact with the elephants and not to surprise them in any manner by unusual behaviour. The herds are not much disturbed and go

Elephant alone in Meru National Park, Kenya (photo: E. Calas, January 2010).

on grazing at their usual pace, even though or rather because they were made aware of us. Meanwhile the guide and the scout give us a lot of information about this particular herd of elephants, displaying a special knowledge of its members. Finally they navigate us back to the camp with much skilled advices and reassuring speeches and encouragements.

What does this trivial story mean?

Allowing surprises and flexibility makes the landscape interactive. Another walk in the Sekker hills gave us the opportunity to successively meet with a gold-digger, a honey gatherer, shepherds and finally pupils and teachers of a primary school. Those were unexpected features of a bird walk, more flexible and providing a wider experience than a game drive (excepted when the driver stacks his minibus in the mud). More generally speaking, fed by TV documentaries, tourism brochures and travel magazines, future tourists build up expectations which the unpredictable weather, always elusive animals can either deceived or satisfied. "[often] tourists operate from position of insecurity" (Williams, 2009, p. 20). This uncertainty is an important component of the interactive landscape. It is already part of the safari experience but one of the reasons why tourists appreciate "interactive safaris" or "adventure" is that they feel they participate in writing the script: the encounter is in the making and its outcome is not written yet nor it is predictable 100%. There is an achievement in the performance everybody plays and a sense of spontaneity in the animals' behaviours and agency. It looks very much like real life, real interaction, not an already written and well organized play. The script turns animals into unpredictable thus interactive game partners. Wildlife's "good faith", freedom and agency cannot be denied. Animals and tourists interpret each other's movement. The way wildlife behaves act as a powerful vector in the ... scene (Baticle, 2013).

One additional argument toward making "interactivity" the hallmark of the "adventure" landscape is that this engagement is risky and may become dangerous. Tourists may sometimes be put at risk and even been wounded or killed. For example, in December 2012, 7 walkers were swept away by a flash flood in Hells Gate NP; every year, mountaineers fall down deadly in Mount Kenya and trekkers are killed by furious elephants; Lake Naivasha's hippos, Hells Gate or Bogoria buffalos can be dangerous game partners. Baboons can rob picnics and bite as hard as dogs. Indeed the risk varies and the fear is sometimes even a fantasy but it always instils or diffuses interactivity in the landscape which of course becomes an agent of the adventure. Listening at the smallest noise, staring at the smallest bush to guess whether it hides an animal turns the landscape into an agent.

This interactive landscape is also strongly based on a tactile decentring. It does not only rely on sightseeing, other senses like smell, hearing, touching, tasting are also experienced. To add upon what has already been written about the Laikipia walk, a visit to Ol Pajeta put tourists in contact with a rhino in such a manner that they were able to stroke it! Indeed it resembles an urban zoo experience but, taking place

in the animal's "right setting", i.e. the savanna. It also participates both into safari's diversification and the tactilization of people's experience. Carolan (2007) opposes a Foucauldian tyrannical sight to others more de Certeauian senses like smell and touching which he finds to have decentring qualities because "in the act of seeing, one remains oneself; in the act of smelling, one dissolves" (Press & Minta quoted by Carolan, p. 1271). "*Tactile space privileges all senses equally. Through this individuals are allowed to experience and know the world through both distal [representational] and proximal [non representational] forms of thinking*" (Carolan, 2007, p. 1265). Therefore "adventure" greatly reduces the epistemic distance between TV watchers and the African savanna tourists. "*Modern technology has ... helped create ... distant encounters with the natural world (e.g. the TV, photographs)*" (Carolan, 2007 p. 1267). Indeed, tourists always refer and pay their debt to TV documentaries, but all the same regret the distance they felt in front of their TV not to be able to feel more about wildlife and their actual environment. The TV watcher's frustration of being limited to only sightseeing and the highly valued, marketed and nurtured expectation to experience well beyond this are strong if not first drivers for traveling long distance to Kenya. This is valid with safari but even more with "adventure": a tourist operator's website explains that the clients may "*appreciate quietly the savanna's sounds and smells*" (African Latitude). Nevertheless the concept of "tactile space" seems too rigid and fixist. Being the outcome of an ongoing fleeting frequentation, we should rather speak of a "tactilized space" and of a "tactilization" process.

To sum up, at the grass root level, this "tactilization", the flexibility of the walk and the uncertainty of the encounters activate interactive landscape. But in addition the interactivity of the landscape is also built through a range of interactions between human actors which makes it relational, dialogic and politics.

B- The mediators: from drivers to "choreoguiders"

Instead of "aliens" and rather anonymous drivers who mainly rely on radio calls or mouth to ears whisperings to drive tourists from one hot spot to another –e.g. from coping lions to hunting cheetahs– interactive landscape's experience requires a "choreoguide" not only to guide tourists in the bush but also to initiate her/him to navigate the savannah. The guide teaches movements, good and bad practices and behaviours, to tell the visitors what to see, where to gaze at, what to do, what to avoid, etc. Not only does the guide explain the wild and landscapes, names place, points at trees but he also contextualizes the wildlife and the stage when *matatu* drivers just drive tourists "across the landscape" to the wildlife. In addition the "choreoguide" initiate to good wilderness practices: how to walk silently, against the wind, in the sun, how to rehydrate, find his way in the bush, etc. The respective aims of the classical safari and the "adventure" engagement somehow differ: when the first aims at a spectacular short lived sight –build up around animals' performance– the second, although wildlife interferes in, has a motion, an active performance as its own end.

Many different social types mediate the “adventure” engagement. Great differences are seen between the small teen boy who begs for coins and somehow exert a blackmail influence on tourists for keeping away supposed thieves and robbers and the trained, skilled, worldwide known guide of Saiwa Swamp National Park or ornithological expert of Sabuk conservancy on Laikipia plateau. Some guides are even worldwide invited to lecture and promote “their” protected area. The trapped poor teenager who sees tourists as an unexpected opportunity does not share much with these “glocal” wildlife stars straddling cultural borders, technical limits and national boundaries. But beyond this heterogeneity which reflects and increases socio-spatial stratifications both on the tourists and the locals sides, the fact is that these mediators are more and more in demand with the tourists who are hungry for more relational and dialogic experiences. The significance of these wilderness mediators is very consistent with the “participatory mania” and community involvement preoccupation which both are central concerns to the nowadays conservationists and developmentalists. These new practices have spread to the tourism industry and have been adopted by operators with as much easiness as the border and limits between the economic and academic spheres are becoming more porous and less impervious.

C- “Les arts de faire”

Compared to cars and minibuses, the softer modes of locomotion, like walking, riding, rafting, etc. share openness and slowness. In choosing these transport modes, tourists feel more autonomous. Does it not catch up with de Certeau's view? De Certeau highlights the walker figure as a freeman (« *Pratiques d'espaces* »). He underlines « *les phénomènes d'appropriation créative de l'espace [urbain] par les [citadins] humains ... que traduit la notion d'« invention »* ». For the walker, the urban setting works as a constraint-resource which she/he has to do with and adapt to: the city itself results from this “art de *faire*”. De Certeau postulates some open scopes for making decisions and for free initiatives facing unplanned and unexpected situations. The same applies to walkers into wilderness where *Individuals physically negotiate their surroundings in an embodied way*. It echoes with Geroges Pérec's statement: « *Vivre, c'est passer d'un espace à l'autre en essayant, le plus possible, de ne pas se cogner* » (Pérec, 1974, p. 13-14). Using wilderness as a transactional means or a tiers-actor, this relational interactivity empowers tourists by initiating them to the basic wilderness “arts de faire” (De Certeau, 1990). The « *adventure* » experience starts with tourists empowerment by helping them solve some very practical and trivial problems: how to navigate in the wilderness? How to speak with locals? How to read animal tracks? How to leave nothing but footprint? What to do in case of a dangerous encounter with lions, elephants, buffaloes, rhinos, hippos? By actively participating into the landscape tourists undergo a capacity building session which enhances their capacitation to navigate in the wilderness, and increases their engagement with the landscape making it even more interactive. It starts a cumulative process.

Indeed, thanks to this “adventure” engagement, tourists test their familiarity with the bush, their mastery of the bush skills, tricks and crafts. There are rapidly taught the way to silently or noisily walk depending if the aim is to surprise or to warn wildlife, to address the wind, to follow the tracks (with the sun in front), to scout the game, to find water, to avoid wounds and problems, etc. The results is that they sometimes suddenly dare hoping/dreaming/fantasizing about competing/being hunters, ethnographers, game trackers or locals. More than often tourists adopt the professional photograph persona as a model to compare to and compete with. Back at the camps, they argue about their camera, their lens and their pictures. They elaborate on their daily experience and discuss about the difficulties of the full engagement with nature. Finally the outcome of this performative script is that the “adventure” becomes the “hero” of his/her own life. “*Sightseeing helps modern individuals and societies define who they are and what matters in life...()*” “*Tourism... offers opportunities to explore different identities, to take on “new roles” but most forms of tourism are fashioned by culturally coded escape attempts*” (Edensor, 2001).

Ultimately “adventure” engagement may shift towards involvement and even provide some users with a sense of care and commitment which extends to ecological, environmental even humanitarian concerns. In some Kenya's conservancies, well-off customers become regular guests, coming back to the very same place on a regular basis, sometimes even contributing as volunteers or fund raisers bridging the gaps between fun, pleasure, knowledge and moral purposes. After such experience some have even given up brilliant professional career in the West to invest in the bush and become conservancy owners or managers. One can clearly understand the self-reunification process which is at play in such an experience.

Indeed, “adventure” may work as a relocation experience which may provide an avenue to interpret it as an *expérience de la complétude au cours de laquelle l'être fragmenté se réunit, se recentre par décentrement tactile et profite du ré-enchantement né de la de-sécularisation holistique et de la mise en cohérence des connaissances distales and proximales pour redéfinir son humanité*.

From tourists' stories it appears that for some the outcome of such experiences redefines their humanity towards a kind of “humanity” (Estebanez et alii, 2013).

III- By nature interactive: embedded ecopolitics

However since « *Les arts de faire naissent... au carrefour de l'intention d'un individu et de la dynamique du jeu combiné des différentes dimensions sociétales* » (Lussault M., 2000, p. 19) it is now time to introduce politics into « *interactive landscape* ». As Dodier clearly stated « *L'un des enjeux qui se présentent aujourd'hui aux sciences sociales est de réintroduire... les pouvoirs au cœur d'une théorie non-*

réductionniste des sociétés pluralistes » (Dodier, 2005, p. 27).

“...Touristic spaces [are] performative spaces where visitor and the Other (e.g. the destination's habitants, Nature and the natural landscape) *interact*” but as Jamal and alii correctly add this interaction takes place “within a complex matrix of rational-disciplinary relations” (Jamal, 2003). “A tripartite power structure of tourists, locals and brokers ... creates a dynamic flexibility” (Williams, 2009, p. 20). It is this interactive political matrix which I now would like to briefly outline.

A- The interactive fabric of the tourist-scape as an heterotopia

The contemporary diversification process widens the “touristscape” as to now encompass modern national parks and includes private conservancies and semi publics clubs at the same time as to consolidate an heterotopia (Foucault, 1984).

There are many examples that demonstrate how much tourism activities are a profitable alternative to ranching and that keeping large tracks of bush spaces out of clearance can be even more profitable than working it. Tourism incomes could be as four times as high as those from ranching (Elliott & Mwangi, 1997). “Advenature” tourism success and especially high profitability encourage landowners to protect large parts of their land as “unspoiled wilderness”. In places where post Independance settlement schemes have not abolished the colonial land structure and land use, touristification through wilderness protection provide a very profitable reconversion. On the Laikipia plateau, in some Rift valley areas around Elementeita, Naivasha, Ol Kalou, even in Southern Rift, large ranches/estates have been turned and are still turned, all or parts, into conservancies. Similarly pastoral communities began to protect some of their communal pastoral land as wilderness, sometimes with KWS and neighbouring private landowners' logistic, financial support and expertise (Waithaka, 2006). Besides private ranches, more and more pastoral communities convert some of their territories in conservation areas and conservancies. Actually most of the time, these pastoral communities grant part of their commons to operators who built accommodations, infrastructures, hire trained staff, train local people to basic cleric tasks, market and brand the destination. Mainly located in arid and semi arid lands they have reserved large tracks of their pasture for wildlife conservation. Both landowners and pastoral communities increasingly intervene in the landscape management or put in other words, they increasingly loudly claim their full responsibility for the wilderness fabric.

This evolution has been especially strong on the Laikipia plateau. When at the beginning of the 80's, only one accommodation could be found on the far western end of the plateau, there are now more than 40 facilities on there. All together these facilities now offer 1106 beds. The rather low ratio beds/facilities indicates the small size of the facilities which targets upper-class economic niche. Between 1996 and 2002, the number of visitors went up from 6 000 to 60 000! According to Graham, 100 000 people are

visiting the plateau each year (Graham, 2013) and 20 million US dollars of income are yearly generated by tourist activities. 1 300 employees work for the sector and earn as much as 3 million USD! Local expenses for tourists add another 2 million USD. At last, operators, managers, etc. redistribute 3.5 million \$ in development projects like schools, murram roads, dispensaries, scholarships, etc. for the communities. Tourist operators do supplement Post-Structural Adjustment Programs' states and religious/charitable institutions in their welfare assignment. Finally 5 million USD are invested in conservation projects. More than 50% of all that money is said to come from tourists. Managed by the LWF it is used as a leverage for more fundraising with international NGOs, rich sponsors: mainly American foundations, US or UK universities (Graham). No need to be Marx to understand that this helps postcolonial land tenure legacy's resilience. Laikipia and Naivasha areas are among these Kenyan postcolonial strongholds (Calas, 2013).

“In order to function as a “touristscape” (Edensor 2009), [a place] needs boundaries...Models (e.g. miniatures) can maintain their function and meaning as long as they have well-defined boundaries that separate them from reality” (Regi, 2013, p. 105).

“In face of increasing rationalization human beings seek to create areas of their lives where other possibilities can be formed, which are governed by other rules, where they can experience some autonomy, some reanchantment” (Heywood, 1994, p. 183). There is no better definition of protected areas and one can really understand how much it fits in with Foucault's heterotopia (Foucault, 1984).

B- “Genesis II”² : intergenerating nature, wildlife and wilderness

Wildlife management involves a great deal of biological interactivity man/nature. Wildlife pockets' future depends on the renewal of their genetic heritage which in turn is partly linked to connectivity between different protected areas and more generally on openness of wild habitat. Conservation stakeholders bet on two strategies to target this purpose.

First of all, to avoid consanguinity, small protected areas' managers heavily rely on planned wildlife exchanges between different areas. Vets anaesthetize animals, which are drove or even sometimes flown from wildlife “overpopulated” places to other less densely populated areas. This creates wild animals' market and turns wildlife into commodities and protected areas into manmade landscapes. Secondly, protected areas managers tend to cooperate in order to build wide open systems of ecosystems by assembling coalescent and adjacent protected areas in one piece. This open wilderness allows herds, packs, groups of wild animals to move and operate their seasonal migrations beyond properties boundaries.

Indeed stakeholders use both strategies: animal exchanges and protected areas coalescence. Now offering 3 650 km² for wildlife conservation, Laikipia

2. Genesis II Re-creation of nature, Jean Baptiste Erecca & Laurent Frapat, France 5.

plateau is said to be one of the two only sustainable ecosystems in Kenya, only to be compared with the Tsavos National Parks. It shelters half of the Kenyan rhinos, 15% of its lions (and may be the only stable non declining packs in the country), half of the Kenyan elephants and one of the biggest wild dogs population in the world. The same happens on a smaller scale around Naivasha and Nakuru where conversions to conservation of old ranches or of wildlife protected areas are on the increase: Hell's gate (1984) and Longonot (1999) are now KWS National Parks; more and more private former "white highlands" ranches are now turned into conservancies: Crater Lake sanctuary, Longonot gate are now turn into profit making wilderness. However there, unlike on the Laikipia plateau and because of greater urbanisation and more intense agricultural land use, this trend comes with an enclosure process, at the property level.

On a larger national scale the general outcome of this process is to extend the area under protection. This contradicts the commonplace statement which outspokenly warns about the shrinking African wilderness. In a paradoxical way it can be stated that more people means more (protected) wilderness, in parks as well as conservancies. In most parts of the country, these newly set up private conservancies are working as buffer zones for National Parks and Reserves. On the Laikipia plateau however, they complement the national protected areas system, filling a wide spatial gap³. There recent times have seen a closer cooperation between KWS and private landowners on the Plateau. Build upon historical social proximity, this cooperation has been resilient over time because of the shared interests and benefits of the two partners: the KWS extending conservation concerns and practices beyond its territories, thus putting into practice its strategy "Parks beyond parks"; landowners and communities legitimating their stronghold and threatened land tenure. However reducing this cooperation to its mere functional aspects would be wrong thought. On the contrary it is strongly buttressed to an intermingled nationalist naturalist ethos which shapes this sociological "small world" (Zimmermann, 2002). « Associated with neo-liberalism this discourse brings natural areas into the network of global capital markets through scientific management, resource use and conservation... » write Jamal and alii. (p. 154). It would be an error to consider these landowners or community leaders as isolated and the protected areas as isolated islands. They obviously depart from the big international tourist firms which dominated the modern tourism industry but landowners as well as pastoral communities now network on a global scale in order to brand, market, promote and finally sell their wilderness assets. The internet revolution has not spared these apparently remote areas which are sold with great profitability. Although apparently isolated they belong to commercial networks with which they interact on very regular and frequent basis.

This builds up large conservation systems which associate core areas, buffer zones and migration

3. This spatial gap has a history in that there is no national protected areas on the plateau because of the strength and resistance of the postcolonial landowners who opposed and still do forced and legal evictions.

corridors, very much in line with international expertise's prescriptions. However if physically these systems are open, their managements keep on being fragmented. Protected areas are looked after by more and more actors with different status. Each of them concentrates on a small portion of the whole system. This is the local expression of the already well known paradoxical dialectic of globalization which strongly associates both integration and fragmentation, hence requiring discussion places, forums and bargaining meetings places and times. That is why umbrella institutions such as Laikipia Wildlife Forum (The Laikipia Wildlife Foundation associates wildlife conservation stakeholders and helps the operators to promote and lobby their destination on the western markets and with the governments, the international funders and the local and international NGOs), Northern Rangelands Trust, South Rift Association of Land Owners are on the rise all over Kenya, as well as elsewhere in Africa. These institutions have a political role in that being collective bodies they stand as powerful and legitimate interlocutors against other developers and the State. This is part of a continental institutional trend which tends to enhance intermediary bodies as bridging gaps and connecting between civil society and national and international actors. Conservancies and these umbrella bodies contribute to the interactive landscape and accelerate the rediscovery and reintegration of the Kenyan peripheries and above all of the northern and ASAL as national wildlife kingdoms.

Conclusion

To finish with, for the last twenty years, under the growing influence of the ecological, ecosystemic and inclusive paradigm, wilderness demand has been greatly transformed, becoming less metonymic and more holistic. The "interactive landscape" combines wilderness tourism's features and safaris' features. This evolution is mainly due to changing dominant paradigm which pushes operators to diversify their products. The major changes are the alighting off the car, the softening of the motion and opening of the accommodation facilities, the widening of the camera to include, what was for a long time ignored, human life.

However, this dynamic does not mean a homogenization of touristic consumption. Although including some backpackers, customers of this interactive landscape are rich to very rich westerners; in any case they always are well and highly educated people.

No need to be Bourdieu to understand that "*natural areas and eco-tourism serve the needs of the new leisure class*" (Jamal, 2003, p. 151). What does it look like? A somehow selective "cosmopolitization" happens. The taste of the upper middle classe acts as a driving force on subaltern groups. "*Emerging, cosmopolitan middle classes serve as agents of the significant change in Modernity 2, and new forms of tourism offer a growing diversity of specialized travel... Eco-tourism, responsible tourism, heritage tourism... all these constitute alternatives for these late moderns... Indeed they become a dialectical antithesis to the*

The summit of Mount Kenya , which rises to 5 195 m , as seen from Point Lenana , 4 995 m. In the foreground, the Lewis Glacier (photo: B. Calas, february 2008).

Savannah Masai Mara
during the short rainy
season, Kenya (photo:
E. Calas, november
2009).

figure 2 : Grafting «adventure» on kenyan safariland: the fabric of an interactive heterotopia.

mass tourism of modernity.” (Jamal & alii, p. 150) Interactive and moving tourists are affluent Westerners as well as rich Africans. Their engagements with the interactive landscape press on building exclusive places and stages which perpetuate souvenirs from the 1st or the 2nd touristic revolution as well as promote 3rd touristic revolution (Rieucan, 2014). The rising of a

touristic Kenyan middle class does not undermine and rather goes with changes and diversification in the more classical western oriented travel industry. Places like Hells gate or Longonot or Sweetwaters camp welcome a cosmopolitan wealthy public, be they Westerners or Africans. But upper segments like most of the Laikipia's conservancies are clearly exclusively

visites by rich Europeans. This re-evaluates the 3rd tourist revolution which is seeing emerging countries' middle classes seduced by tourism practices. The 3rd touristic revolution period which emerging countries experience is thus full of qualification. In the tourism industry, due to the democratization/marchandisation dialectic, these experiences are now much in demand and more wide spread out and adopted, although still mostly reserved to wealthy and well off people. It is a global dynamic which stems from a kind of "masstigation" of consumption. The "Masstige" concept helps to understand the nowadays paradox of growing mass consumption on one side and increasing socio-economic differentiation on the other. Paradoxically democratization and exclusiveness go hand by hand in the current globalization. The "masstige" idea conveniently accounts for this paradoxal dynamics very in the trends of the contemporary globalization

which associates a general increase in (touristic) consumption and the multiplication of segmented niches which goes with increasing distinctions (Bourdieu, 1979). The inclusiveness/exclusiveness dialectic plays full particularly because it leans on an increasing spatial fragmentation.

"Heroic" tourists, "choreoguiders", operators, protected areas' managers, wildlife but also the whole wilderness are fully part of this "interactive landscape". It is a co-construction and in turn actively contributes to tourist self's construction and identity appreciation. Actually this was already in gestation in the safari experience. But the experience and corporeality of immersion, engagement and collective interactions discloses it in its full strength. This concept could even be extended to other sectors of an everyday ordinary life analysis.

Camping sauvage dans le Shaba National Park, à l'aube (photo: B. Calas, avril 2009).

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Gorge in tuffs, Hell's Gate
National Park, Kenya
(photo: E. Calas, april
2010).

Lioness resting, Masai
Mara (photo: E. Calas,
april 2009).