

Maasai on the Lawn: Tourist Realism in East Africa

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Mayers Ranch is a tourist attraction near Nairobi, privately owned by the Mayers, a British ex-colonial family who are now Kenyan citizens. The site features Maasai “tribal” dancing followed by tea and scones on the Mayers’ lawn.¹ We will argue that the site enacts a colonial drama of the savage/pastoral Maasai and the genteel British, playing upon the explicit contrast between the wild and the civilized so prevalent in colonial discourse and sustained in East African tourism. The master narrative of tribal resistance and colonial containment is performed daily at Mayers Ranch for an international audience of tourists and visitors, reproducing in the postcolonial era a story that emerged at the turn of the century, early in the colonial period (Knowles and Collett 1989). The Maasai at Mayers Ranch make their living by performing the “noble savage” in a carefully and collaboratively constructed ethnographic present. A key to the success of Mayers Ranch is its ability to produce what we are calling tourist realism, an effect closely linked to the ultimate tourist commodity—experience.

Tourism gives tribalism and colonialism a second life by bringing them back as representations of themselves and circulating them within an economy of performance. Mass tourism routinely recycles dying industries, dead sites, past colonial relations, and abandoned ethnographic tropes to produce industrial parks, living historical villages, and enactments like Mayers Ranch. Catering to the “imagination of others” (Waller 1993:301), mass tourism stages fantasy not only within hermetic theme parks located anywhere, but also within geographically specific historical sites and life worlds—and blurs the distinctions among them. What Renato Rosaldo calls “imperialist nostalgia” (1989) is not just a sentiment. It is also a scenario for tourist productions—itineraries, environments, and performances—and the marketing of them.

Anthropology has responded to the growing importance of tourism by exploring everything from the uneasy historical relation between travel writing and ethnographic discourse to studies of the industry itself and its local impacts.² Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976) continues to inform the analysis of tourist sites some twenty years after it was written. Both "a sociology of leisure" and "an ethnography of modernity," a project MacCannell sees himself sharing with tourists themselves, this volume frames the crisis of modernity, as seen through tourism, in terms of authenticity. While we do not share this concern, we do admire MacCannell's analysis of the "semiotic of attraction" and hope to extend its possibilities in our analysis of one site, Mayers Ranch, as a tourist production. We ask: What is being produced here and how? How did the site arise historically? How is it staged, who has artistic control, and how does the performance develop in space and time? How is the production organized in social and economic terms, and who gets what from the event? As the Maasai and Samburu, the tourists, and the Mayers do not experience the site in the same way, we ask, what does the event say and what does it mean to its varied producers and audiences? We argue that close attention to the tourist production itself—to the performance—holds clues to the nature of Mayers Ranch as a tourist commodity and to its success within Kenya's tourism industry.

I

International tourism draws travelers from affluent capitalist democracies to virtually all parts of the world. In the recreational geography of tourism, hard currency from those with the money and leisure to undertake such trips flows through international corporations to local sites, many of them now dependent on income from tourism as a major part of their gross national product (Sinclair et al. 1992). As the number of tourists increases to Third World countries, the income from foreign visitors becomes a mainstay of the local economies. In Kenya, for example, there were 5000 tourists in 1958, 110,200 in 1963, 352,200 in 1981, and 676,900 in 1988, so that tourism has become second only to coffee and tea as a producer of Kenya's foreign exchange. In Kenya in 1988, tourism receipts were 410 million dollars, and three-fourths of the tourists were from Europe and North America (Harrison 1992).

II

Tourism at Mayers Ranch performs a paradox. It sells Maasai pastoralism as pristine and independent but depends for the production of this idealization on Maasai adaptability and interdependence. East African pastoralism never has existed in isolation. Its very survival depends upon maintaining relationships with farmers, hunters, and others in a regional ecosystem (Spear and Waller 1993). Since the Eastern Nilotic ancestors of the Maa-speaking peoples from the Sudan border migrated through the Rift Valley into what is now Kenya and Tanzania, the Maasai have survived by adaptation (Spear and Waller 1993). At the

end of the 19th century, the Rift world was in disarray, herds were decimated by rinderpest and pleuropneumonia, human populations fell to smallpox, droughts devastated the economy, and British and German troops arrived. The pastoral Maasai survived by taking up agriculture and by moving in with other tribes. During the colonial period, many Maasai returned to pastoralism, which had a revival under the British. The colonial government established reserves for the Maasai, a solution to a long-standing conflict over the control of land. The British needed land for the colonial settlers, a pressure that has continued after independence in 1963 to the present day, as the Kenyan government has taken land for farms, ranches, and game preserves. Some Maasai have become farmers and ranchers, some have received an education and have moved to the cities, and some have become part of the modern capitalist economy of Kenya, but many others have remained pastoralists, a Maasai ideal.³

In Kenyan cultural politics, the Maasai are the quintessential pastoralists and the *moran* (junior warriors) are the quintessential Maasai.⁴ State efforts to weaken Maasai autonomy focus on diminishing the age-grade system and the institution of moranism, a policy that brings Maasai youths into full Maasai adulthood and keeps them out of Kenyan schools. In recent years, the state has insisted that Maasai attend school. Many Maasai parents protest that the integrity of their way of life is being threatened. It is not the only threat, because pastoralism itself is increasingly difficult to sustain in the face of drought, disease, overgrazing, and other pressures on land by an expanding population and a tourist industry built upon game parks. Ironically, it is the contested institution of the moran—and specifically the activities of moran in their village, the *manyatta*—that is performed at Mayers Ranch.

Mayers Ranch is built on the close fit between the requirements of a tourist production and the performance culture of Maasai youth. Living together in a manyatta, the morans at Mayers perform an idealized colonial construction of themselves. What is featured at Mayers is the bravery of the Maasai warrior, the glorification of youth and maleness, Maasai as the "Lords of East Africa," cattle raids, lion hunting, male circumcision, the diet of raw foods (milk and blood), the primitive Maasai, the "natural man," and the affinity between tribesmen and wildlife.

III

Framed by the big game hunt or by the biblical Garden, situated before the Fall or after the Apocalypse, created by God in six days or through billions of years of evolution, untamed wilderness or transplanted lawn, nature is the star in East African tourism—raw, wild, untouched, given. But nature is a cultural construction, as the formulaic descriptions of generic scenes, animals, and peoples in East African travel brochures make clear. As Adorno states, "Natural beauty is an ideological notion because it offers mediatedness in the guise of immediacy" (1984:101). East African landscape has long been coded in ways that remove it from human agency. Hence we have the recurrent trope of the Kenyan

landscape being untouched and its contrast with the power of the Mayers' garden to make the African desert bloom—with British flowers.

Four nature thematics structure East African tourism and inform our analysis of Mayers Ranch. *Safari*, as the big game hunter's encounter with the Dark Continent, is the model for tours and the iconographic source for tourist amenities and gear. Safari is coded in terms of the hunt, a wilderness inhabited by quarry, the violence of manly sport, and taxidermic trophies of its success. Tourists wearing khaki are delivered to Mayers by companies named for one kind of safari or another. The *Garden of Eden* is the destination of a voyage to the dawn of creation itself, where "our primitive ancestors," who have not yet eaten of the tree of knowledge that is "modern civilization," can be found. Characterizations of the Maasai as shepherds whose flocks live in harmony with their predators also evoke the peaceable kingdom of Isaiah 11. The *gorilla safari* models the tourist as the naturalist and appeals directly to evolutionist notions of the origins of man from ape. Female primatologists assist tourists armed with weapons of vision—binoculars and cameras. Tours of *European gardens*, usually on the grounds of grand homes, are testaments to cultivation, which is to say, civilization. The lawn at Mayers Ranch, lush and green in an arid landscape, is to be read in this context.

IV

The ultimate destination, the one beyond which it is not possible to go, is the gorilla safari—the new frontier in the Darwinian universe of evolving forms. In these tours, safari coalesces with the Garden of Eden and Adam is a gorilla. Recalling the moment of first encounter, novelist Janice McIlvaine McClary describes in the travel section of the Sunday *New York Times* how she tramped through the jungle in Zaire to stalk the mountain gorilla:

It was an unforgettable moment. Somehow the gorilla symbolized what is left of the wilderness, of a world belonging to the animals, free and unbridled by men and materialism. To see the greatest of the great apes at close range was to see a glimpse of Eden, of the world as it once was, without computers or condominiums, schedules and the draining sense of time. [1985:37]

What McClary actually saw through the leaves was an ape, and what she read into the experience was all the Western intellectual baggage about a return to origins, primitiveness, and what we once were—unspoiled, unpolluted, uncomplicated. The imagery suggests that we have exhausted the metaphoric potentiality of primitive man and must recede even further to the irreducible ape. The glimpse of Eden, of course, was not there in the Zairean forest, but in McClary's head. Her account tells us more about the subject, McClary, than about the object, the gorillas.

Her note in the article that there are fewer than 400 mountain gorillas left in the world and none in captivity adds a sense of loss and urgency to her quest for the unspoiled vanishing primitive. She describes her local guide, John, as "mission-taught and mountain-knowledgeable," and just before seeing the go-

rillas, she writes that John, "as if sniffing the wind, like the leader of a herd scenting water . . . said we would soon come upon a group" (McClary 1985:37). In McClary's Western reading, the local guide, animal-like, mediates mission and mountain, culture and nature.

McClary did not just come upon the gorillas by accident. She joined a very expensive "gorilla safari," one of several organized adventure tours recently promoted by the tourist industry as the ultimate travel experience for those who can afford to go off the beaten track. The mountain gorillas, like the game parks of Africa, are a tourist event—framed, labeled, and sold. A subsequent note in the *New York Times* travel section explained:

At a height of more than 9000 feet, on heavily forested African mountainside . . . live two families of the last of the world's mountain gorillas. They are typical of their species—with one exception. Over the years these animals have been habituated to visits by humans. . . . Each day the gorilla families move from feeding area to feeding area, and a group of tourists . . . is taken to see them. . . . Guides accompanying the visitors use a gorilla sound, similar to a clearing of the throat, to let the animals know that friends are approaching. That established, the group may move to within a few feet of the animals (and) take pictures. [*New York Times* 1985:3]

Rather than McClary's glimpse of Eden, of unspoiled origins, what we actually have are tourist gorillas. Some of the young gorillas may never have known any other environment than one in which the friendly tourists came, every day, to peer at them through the leaves. The tour group has become, as it were, part of the ecosystem of the forest. The article concludes by noting that from New York the price of the gorilla safari is \$4230 per person, double occupancy.

In both Zaire and Rwanda, gorilla tourism has become such a successful multimillion dollar enterprise that efforts to expand it include domesticating additional gorilla groups. Jean Kahekwa, a guide in Kahuzi-Biega National Park, was reported in the *New York Times* as saying, "We're trying to get two other gorilla families accustomed to people," so as to handle more tourists (Greenhouse 1988:15). If this trend continues, one wonders if eventually the entire species of mountain gorilla, man's nearest primate relative, may become incorporated into our Western capitalist system of international tourism, domesticated and co-opted to appear appropriately "wild" and "natural."

V

In contrast with the gorilla safari and animal watching more generally, Mayers Ranch is a side trip rather than the main event within East African tourism. Mayers Ranch is located only 30 miles from Nairobi, and most of the groups opt for a half-day excursion, returning to Nairobi in the late afternoon. Independent travelers may rent a car or arrange transportation with a tour company. UTC, the local Hertz agency, dispatches a minibus to Mayers Ranch each

day at 2:00 p.m., arriving in time for the 3:30 p.m. performance. There is only one performance a day.

The tropes of East African tourism discourse pervade promotional descriptions of Mayers Ranch, which foreground the completeness of the excursion. In a matter of a few hours, tourists will experience a panoramic view of the Great Rift Valley, a "Maasai Tour," and tea on the lawn of a British colonial homestead, as advertised in this brochure for the tour company, H.A.T.S:

This afternoon we visit Mayers Ranch. Leaving Nairobi, past hundreds of colorful farmholdings, the road emerges from a belt of forest to reveal the most magnificent valley in the world. The Great Rift Valley. . . . We wind our way to the base of the Valley . . . before proceeding to Mayer's [*sic*] Ranch where we are treated to an awesome display of traditional Masai dancing. You will be able to watch, from close-up, the legendary Masai enact warlike scenes from their past. These warriors are noted for being able to leap high into the air from a standing position. The experience is truly a photographer's delight. After English Tea on the lawn of the Ranch house we return to Nairobi.

In such tourist discourse, landscape is staged from a distance. This is the idiom of the commanding view. Animals and people, however, are best watched "close-up," a term that evokes the rangefinder on a gun pointed at a target, as well as the camera. Indeed, by billing the excursion, and especially the proximity to the Maasai, as "a photographer's delight," the brochure reads like a plan for a camera shoot, complete with pans and zooms, long and close shots—one more indication of how profoundly the camera structures the tourist experience. The thrill in being so close to wildness is located here in animals and people, more than in landscape: the "legendary" Maasai "enact warlike scenes," perform "awesome" dances, and "leap high into the air from a standing position." Concluding with English tea on the lawn of the ranch house, the description supplies the missing term in the wild-civilized polarity and makes explicit the principle of contrast that structures East African tourism more generally—the assurance that the wild will be experienced under the most civilized of circumstances and their surreal juxtaposition enjoyed in its own right.

Tour companies historicize the experience of visiting Mayers Ranch in various ways. Maupintour evokes the period before Kenyan independence: "The colonial days are remembered and local tribal villages are visited." Trava-coa casts Kenya's history in terms of its tourist amenities: "Only sixty years ago, Nairobi was a camping station for settlers and traders trekking westward to new lands and adventure." In contrast, Njambi Tours, owned by a Kenyan African (Belle Njambi), makes no mention whatever of the Mayers, no word of what other accounts call their "privately owned country estate," no hint of tea and lawn and colonial days, or for that matter the Great Rift Valley prospect. Rather, Njambi Tours, which bills the excursion to Mayers Ranch strictly as a "Masai Tour," refers to the "proud past" reenacted in the warriors' dances: "Visit a Masai Manyatta (homestead) where you can see young warriors (Moran), performing their tribal dances which re-inact [*sic*] their proud past. Extremely good

looking, classically athletic, they dye their tall bodies with ochre clay and fat, wearing only a red cloak tied to one shoulder."

VI

Early in the 20th century, Cyril and Hazel Mayers, a British family in Kenya, were pioneers in establishing sugar and coffee plantations. They later established a cattle ranch that grew to almost 100 thousand acres. Their latest land acquisition, in 1947, was 6000 choice acres in the Kedong Valley. Fed by a natural spring, an eternal source of fresh water in the semiarid environment, this paradise-in-the-desert became their homestead. The Mayers explain that the government encouraged British and European farmers and ranchers to settle the Kedong Valley during colonial times. Their presence was a way of driving a wedge between the upland Kikuyu and the Maasai in the Rift Valley, who, the Mayers reported, were at war with each other.

In the early 1960s, as they realized that Kenya would achieve independence and sever the colonial relationship, the Mayers decided to sell off their land. The problem was not simply the postindependence squatters, with whom the settlers who remained usually developed a working relationship. More threatening were the "walk-ons," Kenyan families who simply appropriated the settlers' land, on the not-unreasonable basis that the land had formerly been appropriated from them, the Africans, by the British. Since independence, all the other European settlers have left the Kedong valley. The Mayers are the only Europeans remaining.

Reluctant to sell their homestead, the Mayers kept 250 of the 6000 acres in the Kedong Valley, including the house and the natural spring. This exceptional property, close to Nairobi, is tucked away in its own ecological niche in the Rift Valley. Invisible from the main highway, its lush green vegetation comes as a surprise at the end of the dirt road leading to their home.

The problem became, however, how to make a living on 250 acres in independent Kenya. Cyril Mayers was not in good health, the ranch had been drastically reduced in size, and the hilly land that remained was only partially arable. Around 1968, Hazel Mayers, with English garden tours in mind, thought of opening their homestead to visitors in order to generate additional income. There, in the classic setting of the escarpment, where giraffe and zebra could be seen from the road leading to the property, guests could have tea on the rolling lawn and stroll along the banks of a reflecting pond fed by a spring and shaded by a giant fig tree. Luxuriant flower beds of asters, zinnias, daisies, chrysanthemums, hibiscus, and other blooms were set off by majestic views of the vast escarpment as far as the eye could see. A staff of eight gardeners, who watered morning and evening, kept the garden green and blooming the year round.

The tour operators were unenthusiastic. Why would European tourists come to Kenya to visit an English garden, however beautiful? They could do that at home. Not to be daunted, Hazel Mayers turned to another major resource, the Maasai, who had for decades served as herders on their cattle ranch and were now unemployed. The ranch was adjacent to the Maasai reserve. Hazel

approached a group of Maasai elders from Ewaso Kedong and explained her idea. She would have them construct on the Mayers' homestead a Maasai man-yatta, a settlement for Maasai junior warriors, one of the Maasai age-sets, as well as traditional dwellings for their female relatives on an adjacent piece of ground. For one hour a day during the tourist season, the warriors would sing and dance for the tourists. Before leaving, the visitors would be served tea on the lush lawn and chat with the Mayers. Executed with discretion and panache, the project became a great success. Combining the wild and the civilized, the site sets itself apart from many other stops on the itinerary by its tasteful and personal style, its small scale, and its fastidious attention to detail. Visitors feel like exclusive guests in the private homes of both the Maasai and the Mayers. Hazel's daughter-in-law Jane Mayers, who now manages the operation, says the entire project was Hazel's inspiration and that "it's what kept us going."

The Maasai and the Mayers, tribalism and colonialism. What an unlikely pairing in a postindependence Kenya that was to see the end of colonial rule and the creation of a new nation. Of tribalism and colonialism, Jane Mayers says, "They are anachronisms, but one is privileged to be part of it." The tourists, she points out, come to Kenya for a very short time, and where else could they see, close up, authentic Maasai and a gorgeous colonial garden. She asks, "How long can it last?"

It could last a long time. John Mayers, Hazel's son and Jane's husband, now runs a flower export business on the ranch,⁵ based on irrigation from the natural spring, and may expand into vegetables. They maintain a small vegetable garden for their own consumption. Their two children, ages 13 and 11, attend St. Andrews boarding school. As John noted, his family has been in Kenya for four generations. His grandfather arrived from England; his father, Cyril, built up the land and the businesses. It is "remarkable," says John, that his two children are going to St. Andrews, the same school from which he graduated. After all, he notes, in his grandfather's day people said that the British cannot last, and here the Mayers have lasted for four generations.

VII

John and Jane Mayers migrated from Kenya to South Africa, but in 1979, after Cyril suffered a massive stroke, they were called back to the homestead to take over the operation. At that time, they found the farm run down, there were no locks on the doors, and things had to be put in order. John devoted himself to building up the farm and developing the irrigation system. Jane took charge of the tourist side; Hazel had already been operating the tourist business for about ten years. Jane tried to increase business by making the rounds of tour agencies in Nairobi. "chatting it up." The Mayers do not advertise for tourists because that would place them in direct competition with the tour operators, on whom they depend. The tour business and the farm now produce approximately the same amount of income.

John speaks of having two labor camps on the ranch, or two sets of employees on the payroll, about fifty Maasai and Samburu who perform for tourists,

and about fifty farm laborers (Kikuyu, Luyia, Kipsigis, Tariki, Turkana, and Tugen, among others). The exact number of farm employees fluctuates with the seasonal nature of the flower export business. The tourist attraction operates for ten months a year, which the Mayers speak of as a season, and then closes down for the two rainy months. The tourist high season starts at the end of December and peaks in January and February.

The Mayers have a sliding scale for the cost of admission. The tour company pays the Mayers 50 Kenyan shillings per adult, but the tourists never know this, as the money is paid by the bus driver directly to a member of the Mayers' staff. Those on a packaged tour pay for everything in advance in the currency of the country of origin. Individual tourists who make their own arrangements with UTC or with one of the other Nairobi agents pay 240 shillings for round-trip transportation, with driver, including the price of admission. Those visitors who come in their own cars pay 55 shillings per person, but the cost is only 50 shillings for a resident. Based upon 1984 exchange rates, 50 Kenyan shillings is approximately U.S. \$3.60.⁶ The Mayers do not offer discounts to large tour groups, but they do give the tour operators complimentary tickets.

The distinction in the cost of admission, however slight, between visitors (tourists) and residents (Kenyans) is indicative of the role of the Mayers for expatriate Europeans, mainly members of the British community in Kenya. They come to Mayers Ranch on weekends, usually Sundays, especially if they have overseas guests. But they also visit on their own. They typically remark, according to Jane, that "the Maasai are interesting, but the garden is lovely." Some are friends of the Mayers. Jane says that they may not even bother to go down to watch the Maasai performance, preferring to stay on the lawn and visit with the Mayers.

Expatriate visits to Mayers Ranch is one reason for higher weekend attendance, as many as 150 admissions during the high season. International airline schedules—the arrival of an Air France or British Airways flight—can also swell attendance figures, which vary by day of the week and time of the year. On average, 50 to 60 tourists will come on a weekday during the high season. On February 7, 1984, for example, there were 70 guests, a good day, but on February 8, there were only 40.

The Maasai and Samburu on the payroll receive a daily rate, paid weekly. If a performance is scheduled on any given day, then the performers are paid, even if only two tourists come. We were not told what the wage rate is, but Jane did explain that the performers receive less than the farm laborers because they work fewer hours, and in any case rural wages are not comparable to wages in Nairobi. Although the farm workers receive a higher daily rate, the performers do better financially because they receive food from the Mayers, they sell handi-crafts, and they are given tips by the tourists. Let us consider each source of income in turn.

The Maasai and the Samburu performers receive one measure of ground maize and one pint of milk per day. They may purchase additional milk from the Mayers for one shilling a pint. The Mayers have eight Holstein cows, which

produce enough milk for their own consumption, for sale to their employees, and for the tourists to mix with their tea or coffee. The Mayers report that they make no profit on the sale of milk.

The traditional diet of the pastoral Maasai consists of milk, meat, and blood, although they also consume grains.⁷ The warriors in the manyatta will slaughter about ten sheep or goats a week to provide meat for the 23 Maasai warriors and 16 Samburu warriors. The meat is grilled or mixed with herbs in a stew. Because initiated women are not allowed to observe the junior warriors eating meat, the warriors slaughter and eat the meat in their all-male age group. Jane tells of the time that a foreign professional photographer came to Mayers Ranch to photograph Maasai drinking blood from their cattle. After the blood letting, the Maasai refused to drink the blood on the grounds that women were present. After the women left the scene, they repeated the procedure. Jane reports, however, that the Maasai will eat meat and drink blood in front of her.

After the performance, the women sell beadwork and handicrafts to the tourists, and the men sell spears that they have made—for 70 shillings each. The sale of crafts is a Maasai-Samburu concession, and the Mayers take no cut. The Maasai and Samburu do not sell the spears that they ordinarily carry, but make special tourist spears that can be taken apart so tourists can pack them in a suitcase and take them home on the airplane. The Maasai do not do the metalwork; instead they purchase the metal tips from Kikuyu dealers who come to Mayers Ranch. The Maasai and Samburu women who sell to the tourists are female relatives of the warriors, their mothers or sisters, who live apart from the manyatta in one of three Maasai villages. The women keep the entire proceeds from their own sales. The beads are imported from Czechoslovakia to make jewelry and other handicrafts, but this is not a new pattern. Maasai beadwork has been sought by travelers and tourists at least since the late 19th century (Klumpp n.d.).

Photography, a central part of the Mayers scene, provides another source of income for the Maasai. The tourists usually do not pay for the candid photographs, the kind that they take most often, but if the tourists ask the Maasai to pose for a group picture that includes members of the tour group or the tourist's family, then the Maasai may receive a tip, usually paid in Kenyan shillings.

The Maasai and the Samburu put much of the income they derive from the tourist operation into the purchase of more livestock, usually cattle, sheep, and goats. The cattle are slaughtered on ceremonial occasions; the sheep and goats are everyday fare. The Mayers have set aside land on their homestead where Maasai may keep some livestock, and they also allow Maasai herds access to the homestead's relatively abundant water supply. Most of the Maasai herds, however, are located in their home area, on the reserve. While the Samburu keep no livestock on the Mayers' property—the Samburu district is too far away—they still use their income to increase their herds.

VIII

Mayers Ranch is based on the performance culture of Maasai moran, junior warriors. The moran are traditionally segregated in their own manyatta, where they spend their time grooming, dancing, tending their herds, and learning what they need to know to function as adult male Maasai. As the Mayers discovered, the performance culture of the junior warriors is easily adapted to tourism—with important consequences for the Maasai.

Hazel began the tourist business with 12 Maasai junior warriors. They later brought their mothers and uninitiated sisters to do their washing and cooking (with the exception of meat). The junior warriors also brought their young uninitiated brothers, who were primarily responsible for herding. In accordance with traditional Maasai practice, the women and the young boys did not live in the manyatta itself, the exclusive domain of the warriors, but in an adjacent village.

According to Hazel, the Maasai were very uncomfortable at first and the women, who were shy, accepted Mayers Ranch only very gradually. The Mayers needed to gain their trust. Hazel reports that the Maasai had to learn, for example, that photographs would not kill them. Once, a film company proposed to shoot the Maasai, providing an additional source of income for all parties. They set up a sound system with portable speakers in the women's village, about a mile from the ranch. Hazel recalls that when "loud American voices" suddenly emanated from speakers, the women "scattered like birds."

One day, according to Hazel, a band of about fifteen Samburu came to the ranch, moving in formation and singing away. The lead Samburu, she said, was a sight. He had on starched khaki shorts, bright blue socks, and army boots, but he was a fantastic leader. Some of the Maasai had intermarried with the Samburu and that particular group of Samburu were coming to visit their relatives. When they asked if they could dance with the group at Mayers Ranch, Hazel told them that they were welcome to join the performance and that they would be put on the payroll on the condition that the Maasai accepted them and they could get along together. Hazel felt that their dancing was really very good and that they enhanced the total performance by creating an interesting counterpoint to the Maasai dancing. The Samburu warriors joined the Maasai. The men moved into the manyatta and the women into the villages, which were eventually built closer to the manyatta and incorporated into the performance. In the performances that we witnessed, the Maasai danced first, then the Samburu, but the two groups could be distinguished not only by their clothing, hairstyles, body painting, and ornaments, but also by their dance forms. The Samburu and Maasai did not merge into one troupe; they maintained separate group identities.

Each season the Mayers hire several new Maasai performers from the reserve to supplement those who come back every year, the "holdovers." The performers in January 1984 ranked in age from about 13 to 26. The longest any of them had stayed at Mayers was 12 years. In the case of Maasai performers who are children of herders who used to work on the Mayers' cattle ranch, the relationship to the Mayers extends across two generations. Several dancers were in

their first season. Some performers thus circulate through the troupe, but at the core of the troupe there are a group of dancers who have been with Mayers for a long time.

Of the 23 Maasai performers, 13 are junior warriors and 10 are senior warriors. There are also Maasai elders on the payroll, although the elders neither dance nor stay in the manyatta. Some direct the flow of tourist traffic before the performance, and others cluster in front of Maasai houses when tourists stroll through the village before the performance. Of the 16 Samburu warriors, 3 are married. The married men sleep in the village with their wives at night, and during the day they go down to the manyatta with the warriors. Some of the Maasai senior warriors are also married. Except for the half dozen preadolescent girls who dance, all the performers are male.

As the age-grade system and the manyatta are so central to Mayers Ranch, we quote from the handout the Mayers distribute to the tourists:

Among the Masai soldiering is not just a chosen profession. It is an inevitable—and proud—stage in the life of every male. A young boy spends his early years herding his father's flocks, in solitude and with unquestioning obedience. His great day arrives when the chief priest (laibon) of the Kekonyeke tribe, one of the sixteen Masai tribes and the one to which these moran belong, decides that there are a sufficient number of adolescent boys clamouring to become young men. The laibon declares the circumcision period to be open and all boys over the age of fourteen, perhaps slightly younger, leave their families, gather into groups and march off to establish their manyattas. There they live by themselves for approximately eight years, learning their tribal traditions, songs and dances and oral history: practicing, of necessity, the basic rules of self-government; organizing lion hunts; and defending the tribal lands, livestock and people. In the old days they raided the herds of others also.

As a new circumcision period is declared, the entire age-grade system moves up a notch; the young boys become junior warriors, the junior warriors become senior warriors, the senior warriors become junior elders, the junior elders become senior elders, and the senior elders retire. The circumcision period remains open for several years.

Not mentioned in the Mayers' handout is that Maasai boys have the option of going to Kenyan government schools or that some Maasai do not enter the age-grade system and never become junior warriors. Instead, the handout stresses the warrior role: the junior warriors hunt lions; they are soldiers; and the manyatta is an "army barracks." The handout does not mention the expectation that the moran would roam about, serving as a communication system on the reserve. Or that they were expected to perform difficult tasks for the elders, escort women over long distances between kraal camps, report on pasture conditions, search for lost cattle, and during the dry season, bring cattle to water when it would be too difficult for the herdsboys to do it themselves. The handout is correct, however, about the centrality of the age-set system to Maasai social structure.⁸ An age-set is a corporate group with its own local leader and an area of pasture land usually reserved for its exclusive use.

The junior warriors follow special rules. They cannot drink milk alone but only in the company of their age peers. As already mentioned, they cannot eat meat that has been seen by an initiated woman, nor are they allowed to marry or engage in sexual activity with initiated women. Their mothers are not permitted to have sex with members of their sons' age-set, although some do (Galaty 1983). Moran may have sex with uninitiated girls, that is, girls who have not yet had the subincision ceremony. Moran do not cut their hair but wear it in a braid and treat it with fat and red ocher. When a man becomes a senior warrior, he cuts and shaves his hair, has rights to initiated women, and can marry.

The handout—as well as our account—uses the language of ethnography to describe the Maasai age-set system. This almost clinical approach to recording symbols of masculinity—warfare and hunting, fierceness and bravery, hair decorations and sexual behavior—is cast in the third person and refers to the normative practices of "the" Maasai. There are warriors and elders, initiated and uninitiated, a village and a manyatta, and a strict separation of men and women in many spheres of life. But this manner of speaking is deceptive. In the conduct of daily life and in the actual operation of Mayers, there have emerged forms of organization and practices that are unique to Mayers Ranch and unlike anything recorded in ethnographies of Maasai culture. We might say that a new Maasai-and-Samburu-dancing-for-tourists-at-Mayers culture has evolved from the interaction of the Maasai with the Mayers and the tourists, tour agents, film crews, travel writers, and anthropologists. The attempt in the handout to compare Mayers Ranch with a hypothetical original—the suggestion that what tourists see at Mayers *is* the original—misses the mark, but not because of any question of "authenticity."

The structure and ideology of the moran are ideal for the Mayers' purposes. The Mayers have utilized a culturally appropriate complex that both fits the Maasai life cycle and also meets the expectations of the tourists. The junior warrior stage is a life phase in which the Maasai are unmarried, leave their home villages, and go off by themselves for exploring and learning. Why not go to Mayers Ranch? The Mayers provide a plot of ground for the Maasai livestock and good access to water, and they even hire crews to construct and repair the manyatta. The dances that the moran perform for tourists are indeed the same dances that they perform for themselves in the manyatta. Of course there are crucial differences. At Mayers, the Maasai dance for tourists in the afternoon, when the light is good; for themselves they perform their dances in the evening. At Mayers, the Maasai perform every day, seven days a week, for the entire season; for themselves, they dance on ceremonial occasions and whenever they feel like it. At Mayers, the dances are commercial and are theater; on the reserve some dances are reserved for sacred rituals, but at times the moran also dance just for the fun of it.

There are many other differences, of course, primarily that the manyatta at Mayers was constructed for a tourist performance, but two paradoxes stand out. First, the Maasai have become resident nomads. In contrast with the pastoral Maasai, who are seminomadic, Maasai who work at Mayers return to a fixed

place every year and stay there for ten months. Second, the discrete period of seclusion during which junior warriors prepare for adulthood has become the time when they display themselves to tourists. Segregated within Maasai society, they are exposed to tourists. Even in Maasai society, however, the moran are on display and are very concerned with their appearance, with their hair and body decorations, with their good looks, and their skill in dancing. Galaty writes that the moran enjoy the "favor and attention of society" (1983:368), but the Mayers Maasai performers have placed themselves in the position of receiving the favor and attention of two societies, simultaneously. They have become warrior performers. They are liminal but on stage. While learning to be themselves, they are asked to participate in a representation of themselves, for others.

One of the major predicaments is that so many of the traditional activities of the Maasai are now against the law. And it is precisely those illegal activities that are most appealing to tourists and that are featured at Mayers. The British banned, unsuccessfully, the practices of the moran in 1921, and the Kenyan government has laws against lion hunting, cattle raiding, and clitoridectomies. Even the length of time that one can be a moran is regulated by the Kenyan government, as the age system is thought to hinder development. What the government condemns is celebrated in tourism. Indeed, tourism is a safe place for practices that are contested in other spheres, for in tourism they function in a privileged representational economy.

We asked eight Maasai if they had ever killed a lion. Four replied yes, two no, one said that he went on a lion hunt but they never found a lion, and the last replied that he did find a lion but the lion ran away. But among these eight moran were some who had been to the Kenyan government school. One man had gone to school at the age of five, remained in school for seven years, and then in his words, "went to work at Mayers." He did not reply that he became a junior warrior. He said that he went to work. Mayers is where he is employed.

IX

We now turn to an examination of how tourists move through Mayers Ranch and experience the site. There are, of course, many kinds of tourists (Cohen 1974), but those we observed at Mayers were mostly on packaged tours. They were middle class or professional, older, and many were retired. Tourist discourse denigrates tourism and tourists. Not only cultural critics, but also tourists themselves are quick to condemn the ersatz and exploitative aspects of the industry and the naivete of "other" tourists. Those we met at Mayers were intelligent and adventuresome. They wanted to learn about the world, and although they realized the limitations of the mass tour, they lacked the knowledge, expertise, time, money, or inclination to make the necessary travel arrangements themselves. Further, rather than to travel on their own, many preferred the security of the group and the companionship of others. Many of the tourists had been on group tours before to other areas of the world, and they considered themselves to be experienced travelers. Nevertheless, they spent less than two hours at Mayers Ranch, and it was simply one site on a long itinerary. Their

sources of information were also limited. No complete description of Mayers Ranch exists, to our knowledge. The tourists had a brief description from the tour agency brochures, they received a one-sheet handout at Mayers, which some did not have the time to read on site, and they received explanations from their own tour leaders and from the Mayers' guides. The general theme of Mayers, the wild and the civilized, was, however, a well-established framework for their East African experience and was coded into even the briefest of descriptions of Mayers Ranch. The tourists knew in advance that they were about to see Maasai dancing and a colonial garden.

Mayers Ranch operates in the mode of tourist pastoral (Clifford 1986; Empson 1950; Williams 1973). The traveler starts from home, or court, or a familiar place, and goes on a journey to the wilderness, to a dream world, to an island, to the desert, to the Garden of Eden, to a place that is rural, simpler, primeval, and then the traveler returns, transformed. The Maasai, themselves pastoralists, and Mayers Ranch, with its bucolic gardens, offer the tourist pastoral in a distinctively East African idiom: the colonial order staged as a peaceable kingdom in the safe representational space of a tourist production.

Immersed in a total environment, tourists move through the site in order to experience it. This is *experience theater*, an imaginary space into which tourists enter and through which they negotiate a physical and conceptual path. Mayers Ranch and tourism more generally are built on environmental and improvisational principles; they are in large measure unscripted ensemble performances. There is at work here a performance epistemology that places a premium on experience—visceral, kinesthetic, haptic, intimate—and a performance pedagogy more akin to the nascent medium of virtual reality than to older models of learning. Immersed in an experiential situation, tourists actively engage the site and those in it. The virtual world that they are experiencing "pushes back." There are several ways in which the site produces this effect, which we call *tourism realism* and which we distinguish from *authenticity*, the term that has dominated much critical writing about tourism.

X

The tour buses leave the main highway from Nairobi and turn off on a dirt road at a crude sign that says simply "Mayers," a black, hand-painted scrawl on a small, white beat-up panel. After a short descent into the Rift Valley, past land that appears to be uninhabited, they soon arrive at the Mayers' parking lot, which is adjacent to the main house. There they discover other tour buses in the lot and are met by a representative of what Jane refers to as the "European staff." In early 1984, there were three members of the staff; two were British, Dan and Fiona, and one American, Gail. All three were young, in their midtwenties, attractive, personable, and informally dressed. One of the staff greets the tour bus, collects the price of admission, distributes the modest handout describing the Maasai and giving a history of the ranch, and suggests that the tourists wander on the lawn until the performance begins. At 3:30 p.m. everyone is recalled from the lawn and told to return to their vehicles. They drive, caravan-style, down to



Figure 1
Maasai elder.

the first Maasai village, a journey that takes only a few minutes, where they are greeted by a tall Maasai elder who directs traffic. The elder wears an enormous feathered headdress, and carries a spear and a club, which he uses to point the drivers of the automobiles to the parking area. At the same time, he poses for pictures (Figure 1).⁹

As the tourists pour out of their vehicles, cameras ready, they confront a Maasai woman seated at the thornbush entrance to the village, surrounded by eight to ten Maasai children all under the age of five and dressed in red robes. It is an exceedingly photogenic scene. The background is uncluttered, the light is perfect, and it is as if the tourists were traveling in the bush and just happened to come upon a charming domestic scene. Of course, it is not entirely clear why a Maasai woman would surround herself with such a group of children, precisely at 3:30 in the afternoon, at the entrance to a village—every day. It is also remarkable that the children just sit there, posing, and do not run around. But it makes an interesting photograph, and it is an exemplary example of how Mayers is set up, as a series of tableaux vivant, designed for a live photographic encounter.



Figure 2
Prepubescent girls.

As the tourists enter the village, they see a semicircle of a half dozen Maasai dwellings—twig armature covered with dung and mud to form a low, rounded dome with one small entrance. Some of the houses are open for tourist inspection; others are locked. Maasai women are seated or standing by the side of the houses, posing for pictures. Some women have children on their backs, but there are no crawling babies, no livestock, and very few of the flies so common in other Maasai villages. In the center of the clearing, the tourists gravitate to three charming Maasai girls, approximately eight to ten years old, bare to the waist, with red ocher markings decorating their backs, and wearing an abundance of beaded bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and other head ornaments. The girls pose willingly for the army of cameras (Figure 2).

The tourists enter a second adjacent village, where the scene is repeated, and then move down to the manyatta in a procession led by the European staff, Maasai elders, the Maasai women, and occasionally Hazel or Jane. There are no signs, microphones, uniforms, or badges—none of the markers familiar at other tourist sites, such as Bomas of Kenya, the national ethnographic park. The staff, who serve now as tour guides, mingle with the guests, make comments, answer questions, and provide brief explanations, but it is all very informal. As there are three staff members, each can chat with a small group, or even one person. There are no formal remarks addressed to the group as a whole.

The tourists enter through a narrow thornbush opening onto the manyatta. On the right are seven Maasai dwellings in a row against a backdrop of lush green trees; on the left, rows of logs arranged as seating for the tourists form a rudimentary amphitheater (Figure 3). Between the seating and Maasai dwellings is a large open area, the performance space. There, Maasai warriors—torsos wrapped in red cotton, hair braided, and bodies decorated with red ocher—

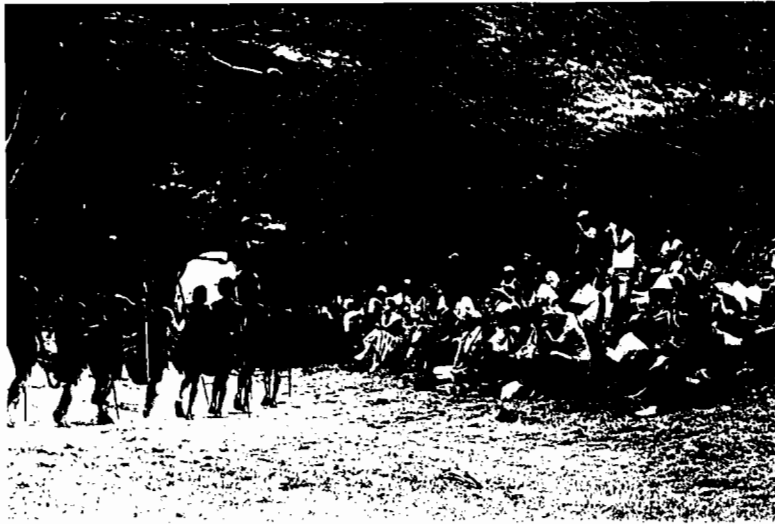


Figure 3
Dancing for tourists.

dance to their own singing and jump straight up into the air, a signature movement. In the "wings," the Samburu, torsos wrapped with red and white cotton cloth, wait their turn to perform. Three girls are joined by three others, and together they form a line facing the warriors with whom they dance. The guides explain that the warriors are allowed to have sex only with uninitiated girls, which gives to this performance a provocative and erotic turn. At one point, the dancing stops and groups of Maasai youths pair up for a stylized athletic display in which they throw sisal stalks at each other and deflect them with decorated shields. The three guides, mingling with the tourists, explain that stalks are an effective weapon for disabling the herdsboys during cattle raids. The dancing resumes, and the guests are encouraged to leave their seating and mingle with the dancing warriors. The tourists wander into the performance space, moving close to the Maasai and Samburu performers, examining them in detail, and photographing them from different angles or close up.

As the performance concludes, the women begin setting up shop. They display their handicrafts in front of the manyatta (Figure 4), while the warriors present rows of Maasai and Samburu spears nearby. While some tourists continue to watch or photograph the performers, others purchase souvenirs. The sellers wait until the tourists approach them, and there is no hard sell or hawking, no price tags or signs, no booths or stalls—just goods arranged in an orderly fashion on a blanket on the ground by the woman who presumably made the items and is selling them. At about 4:30 p.m. the dancing stops, the women bundle up their wares, and everyone leaves together.

But the "performance" is not over. The tourists return to their vehicles and are driven to the Mayers' place, where they find garden furniture awaiting them



Figure 4
Handicrafts for sale.

on the lawn. Standing behind a long table piled with pikelets, cookies, and scones are two Kenyans—not Maasai or Samburu or fierce warriors, but more likely Kikuyu. Their uniform is not red cloth and ochre body paint, but the white chef's hat and apron of domestic servants whose job it is to pour the tea and coffee in an idyllic, even romantic, tableau devoid of any hint of aggression or sexuality. The European staff have set up a table to sell postcards and picture books about the Maasai and the Samburu who are absent from this white social space except as reproduced in the quintessential genres of tourist representation—postcards and guidebooks. Jane and Hazel circulate among their guests, welcoming them, volunteering information about the Maasai or Kenya or Africa or themselves with utter charm. There are even two scottish terriers, the family pets, on the lawn.

XI

Mayers Ranch, like East African tourism more generally, is built on a series of binaries. The two terms alternate for a varied itinerary, or one term is

suppressed in the interest of total immersion in the tourist real, or the two are juxtaposed to produce the tourist surreal:

culture	nature
Mayers	Maasai
civilized	wild
European	African
white	black
green lawn	brown earth
cultivated garden	wild vegetation
fertile	arid
agricultural	pastoral

Although Mayers Ranch is open to different readings, the converging interpretation of the guides, the brochures, and the tour literature becomes authoritative. That interpretation is built on the theme of tribal resistance and the Maasai as the exemplar of fierce independence. The Mayers' brochure emphasizes Maasai conservatism: the Maasai "cling tenaciously to their traditional way of life" and are "very reluctant to adapt to modern ways." In their review of colonialist writings, Knowles and Collett mention "constant references in the literature to the Maasai as 'unchanged,' 'museum pieces,' 'obstinately conservative' and 'anachronistic in modern society'" (1989:449).

The guides stress Maasai resistance. The British tried to change them, and the Kenyan government has tried to change them, but the Maasai have fought back. They have resisted both the colonial government and the modern state. They are cultural minimalists who refuse to be trapped by our modern consumerism and materialism. They will not capitulate. The few fighting against the many, they are a Kenyan David against a Western Goliath. They are willing to pay the price of doing without our modern technological apparatus for a more natural, purer, simpler existence. They are the indestructible Maasai. They are self-reliant and value their own traditions above the seductions of corrupting civilization. The Maasai are true to themselves and refuse to buckle under. This is how the guides at Mayers Ranch present the Maasai to the tourists.

If anyone doubts this interpretation, say the guides, one only has to look at the Maasai. They are obviously proud, and there are no modern objects to be seen anywhere: no plastics, no metal cooking pots, no radios, not even a Japanese digital watch. While the staff celebrates tribal resistance in the most explicit terms, they also hint at a theme that works at the unconscious level—that is, wildness and bestiality, with aggressive and sexual overtones. As represented at Mayers Ranch, the Maasai are warriors; they carry spears and clubs; they enact warlike scenes; they hunt lions and raid for cattle. They embody the potential for violence, at least in fantasy, and the potential for unleashing powerful primitive forces, including the erotic—as coded in the virility of Maasai youth coming of age in the manyatta and the clitoridectomies, which are repre-

sented in authoritative tourist accounts as a containment of the sexual desire of Maasai women.

Mayers Ranch is an adventure. It is exciting. It is similar to the excitement of the safari game run in the parks, where one never knows when an elephant could upset the minibus, or a rhino could charge, or a lion could turn. It is dangerous to get out of the bus in the game parks, a temptation for tourists who see animals so used to their presence that they lie passively, as if bored, with yet another caravan of tourists. In Nairobi, tourists are advised never to take a picture of the Maasai without asking permission, the implication being that the Maasai, too, could revert to savagery, that it is not safe to come too close.

XII

From the safety of a van or a seat in a performance space or protected by the tour group, tourists mediate their immediate experience with technologies of seeing: still and moving cameras. Photographic visualization is a key sensory mode in East African tourism, as in tourism more generally, and Mayers Ranch itself is staged as if for a photographic shoot. We have asked ourselves why photography is so prominent, and we seek insights beyond the truism that tourists take photographs to make a record of their trip and to show that they were there. We have no firm answers but are intrigued by Mulvey, who follows Freud in associating scopophilia, looking as a source of pleasure, "with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (1989:16). The key word for us is *controlling*. The tourists control the wild through photography and derive a pleasurable, even libidinous, excitement from photographing the Maasai. One goes on a photo safari, substituting camera for gun, shoots a picture, captures an image. To speculate further, photography is an aggressive act, at least in the context of international tourism, where it is a means of dominating the object (Barthes 1981; Sontag 1973). The tourists make the Maasai safe for their own purposes by enclosing them within the white borders of a photograph or within a video frame and by reducing them to two dimensions, all by sophisticated Western technology. We suggest that at one extreme is obsessive voyeurism, a perversion, but at the more normal end is tourism, an engagement with the exotic Other, utilizing photography as the medium for fixing the sexualized images. We are on the level of unconscious processes, for if tourists became aware of this, they would probably feel embarrassed.

If this analysis is correct, Mayers Ranch plays with Western fantasies about the savage. To make the Other into an object is to distance oneself, and to allow fantasy to operate. Mayers is like a silent film, without dialogue, without a complex narrative structure, but with a story told through a succession of images, cinematic style. In moving through Mayers, the tourists return from their experience in the manyatta, from their confrontation with the primordial, to the Mayers' verdant lawn, to a sea of white faces, to a cultivated and familiar place, to tea and cookies, with a sense of relief. The blacks are servants again, in their proper place, and the Mayers, their British hosts, are in firm control. The Maasai

may be wild but the Mayers have contained them, at least temporarily, until the next performance, when tourists will again visit them in their "native habitat."

The master paradigm of Mayers Ranch is the unresolved tension between tribal resistance and colonial containment. Mayers Ranch not only is a tourist performance but also recuperates an historical drama. The Mayers, as representatives of the colonial British, are benign, paternalistic, gracious; they are and able to make the desert bloom and live in harmony with indigenous peoples. They are informed about native ways; indeed, they can be counted upon to preserve those ways more effectively than the natives themselves, let alone the state. They reproduce a discredited colonial order (Wallace 1981), an Africa well (if not better) off under the British, a version of history in the Mayers' own interest.

When the British annexed the East African Protectorate (now Kenya), they saw themselves as introducing the "gifts of civilization" (Knowles and Collett 1989:436), as domesticating the backward "natives" to bring them from untamed nature into the realm of culture. From the early 1900s, the British saw the Maasai as warlike, militaristic, primitive, and as "natural man," who drank blood and other raw foods and who rejected cultivated plant food (Knowles and Collett 1989:435). As pastoral nomads only interested in cattle and warfare, the Maasai, the British felt, had seized more land than they needed. This colonial characterization was at best simplistic and inaccurate, because the Maasai were not instinctively warlike, they did consume grains, and they had always established peaceful trading relations with farming and hunter-gatherer societies. What the British saw as excess land, the Maasai saw as provisions for times of drought. Regardless of the historical accuracy of the colonial image (see Spear and Waller 1993), the important point for us is that this old colonial narrative is precisely what is enacted at Mayers Ranch.

Our reading of Mayers Ranch aligns the Mayers with the Maasai in a quiet rebellion against the Kenyan government. When the Mayers reconstitute and celebrate colonialism, even if only in a tourist performance, they are resisting the efforts of modern Kenya to establish a new independent nation. Many Maasai, for their part, refuse to abandon pastoralism, if they can help it, or to conform to a European dress code or to submit to state-mandated educational institutions, or to end a whole range of cultural practices that the state opposes. The Mayers and the Maasai join forces in an anachronistic performance that resists the new political tide and offers the tourists a nostalgic return to a bygone era. They coproduce this site for tourists—each for their own reasons and with their own understandings.

Where is the Africa that rebelled, the independence movements and the Mau Mau in East Africa? The British gave up their colonial empire and withdrew. Powerful forces erupted, new states were constituted, and Africans regained control. One can see the power of local loyalties in the stance and demeanor of the Maasai, here and elsewhere in Kenyan society. It may not be the only site of such resistance, but it is the one most celebrated in Kenyan tourism. Tribal resistance and colonial containment is enacted in every performance, and

if our analysis is on the mark, within every tourist. The British could not contain Kenya, the Mayers cannot contain the Maasai, and we all struggle to contain the dark forces within. The tension is never resolved, which is what generates the excitement and—outside the tourist representations of a peaceable kingdom—bloody violence.

The success of the tourism industry depends on a stable government and guarantees of personal safety. This industry responds instantaneously to political instability with massive cancellations of organized tour groups that simply book their vacations elsewhere. There are therefore strong financial incentives for protecting the image that tourism sells. The issue is not about making the image conform to the Kenyan world that tourists do not experience. Rather, conditions in Kenya must be stable and peaceful if the industry itself is to function. Mayers Ranch offers tourists an image of the stability of the colonial order, in which Europeans like themselves are in charge, and everything about the site speaks to their entrepreneurship, managerial abilities, affluence, and good taste.

Mayers Ranch offers itself to tourists as a host to guests, a trope found in tourist discourse more generally, and takes great pains to present the site as simply a place where two households, the Mayers and the Maasai, live. The effect depends on the achievement of an aura of realism, the simulation of realism—total immersion of all the senses in a seamless environment—with a calculated suppression of performance markers. The tourists are made to feel that they are watching the Mayers and the Maasai in their natural state, not that they are watching artful theater. Even when tourists detect markers of the staging, even if they ask, "Are the Mayers and the Maasai for real?," all is not lost. The uncertainty and ambiguity, never fully resolved, add to the intrigue of the site and the complicity of the tourists with the producers of the site, for a willing suspension of disbelief is necessary precisely at such moments.

Jane wants the Maasai to "look smart," and she fears that without her efforts the Maasai would "quickly disintegrate into a shabby lot." She assumes a curatorial role, and in a sense she edits the Maasai, for she maintains rigorous control of the production. She does not permit the Maasai to wear their digital watches, T-shirts, or football socks, and all radios, Walkmen, metal containers, plastics, aluminum cans, and mass-produced kitchen equipment must be locked away and hidden from the tourist view. Jane supplies the red ocher and insists that the Maasai decorate their bodies and their hair, which morans would do in any case, but to a standard that she helps set. The performers must wear their earrings and the correct shoes, leather sandals for the Maasai and rubber-tire sandals for the Samburu. The Maasai cloth must be solid red, not the red and white fabric that the Maasai frequently wear when not on the job. The sellers are not permitted to display elephant-hair bracelets or Kikuyu carvings; all the objects sold must be Maasai or Samburu—a condition not enforced at Bomas of Kenya, for example. No cows are allowed in the village or the manyatta, for as Hazel explained, tourists may want the real Maasai but they do not want to step into cow patties. And the cows would attract more flies. Some livestock are permitted outside the residential compounds, but they are strategically placed for visual

impact. The Maasai are not to touch the tourists, which they might otherwise be inclined to do, or to hassle them in any way or to crowd them or intrude upon their personal space. There must be enough savagery to be credible but not so much as to frighten the tourists. In the performance and in tourist discourse, the Maasai are wild savages, but in their personal relations with the tourists, the Maasai are professionals. They are cooperative and composed, and they pose for pictures, which is part of the contract between the Mayers, the Maasai, and the tourists.

Mayers Ranch is a skillful production designed to achieve tourist realism. Nothing about the performance is slick or high-tech, in contrast with the official government site, Bomas of Kenya, which features choreographed performances by a professional ensemble in a state-of-the-art amphitheater. At Mayers there are no trash cans, uniformed guides, formal lectures, or announcements over a public-address microphone system. No signs are located on the property except for the worn signpost on the main road, and there is no printed program but only a modest handout.

The language of the handout is especially interesting because it is so different from the exaggerated language of the tourist brochure. We quote again from the handout:

Since they move with the grazing and water, the Masai are semi-nomadic. Matters affecting the camp as a unit are settled by the elders in that camp; matters affecting a locality (perhaps several dozen camps) are settled by spokesmen of each camp meeting together. Only rarely does the whole tribe act as a unit and then primarily to regulate the graduation of the age-grades. The sixteen Masai tribes have no mechanism of interaction as such, but the fact that the age-grades cut across all of them . . . provides a modicum of functional unity.

What we have here is ethnographers' talk, and those of us in the discipline will recognize the language as derived from British social anthropology. It is not just that tourist discourse and ethnographic discourse merge, but that the Mayers have appropriated the language of the masters of the realist genre, the ethnographers (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988)! A tourist event is presented as ethnography, and when performed in the round as a total immersion experience, it is the ultimate case of ethnographic realism. The authority of ethnography is used to authenticate a tourist production that shares its realist effects. Indeed, Hazel tells us that their handout was written for them by an anthropologist.

The aim is to build the interpretation of the performance into the production, so as to eliminate the metacommunication that is the stock in trade of tourist productions. It is as if they understood, as native producers of tourism, the process of site sacralization delineated by Dean MacCannell (1976) and then systematically eliminated markers and explanatory devices—for even as these markers help to define and elevate the site, to authenticate it and make it authoritative, to structure the way it is viewed and experienced, they also work against the effect of tourist realism. At Mayers Ranch, performance and interpretation are folded into one another and every effort is made not to pry them apart any

more than necessary. For this reason, tourists are encouraged to wander in the total environment, to mingle, to chat, to interact with each other and their hosts, to socialize, and to proceed with candor and spontaneity through the seamless space of the tourist imaginary. The opportunities for closeup candid photography are predicated on catching people unaware, when they are presumably acting naturally. The *candid*, a species of the spontaneous, enhances the effect of realism (Trinh 1985).

This approach to the site also requires the suppression of markers of the commercial nature of the transaction. On packaged tours, the entrance fee is paid by the bus drivers on behalf of the tourists, so that there is no money exchanged between the tourists and the Mayers. The first time that we visited Mayers, the European staff introduced themselves as friends of the family, when actually they are paid employees unrelated to the Mayers. It was a ploy. If you are a guest in someone's home, even as in this case, a paying guest, it softens the commercialism and enhances the naturalism.

Of course, the construction of realism and control of the production does not mean that the Maasai are not "real" or that the performance is a hoax. Actually, Mayers Ranch is an excellent tourist performance, one of the best we have seen. The tourists thoroughly enjoyed it, and we certainly looked forward to our repeated visits to Mayers. Our intention is to distinguish realism, as achieved in this tourist performance, from authenticity, which we see as a problem of authentication—who has the power to determine what will count as authentic? The preoccupation with authenticity is a symptom of doubt, a preoccupation with the relationship of what is given to something that is posited as prior. Authenticity speaks in the language of copies and originals, the spurious and the genuine.

Tourist realism is better understood in relation to virtuality and its effects. At Mayers, these effects are achieved through theatrical conventions understood by the visitors. The performance must be short, preferably no more than one hour, fast moving, readily comprehensible, and hopefully, framed for photography (which operates as a surrogate proscenium)—and with opportunities to purchase souvenirs. The site itself should be safe, accessible, and clean, and the performance must be regularly scheduled and reliably performed so that groups can book space and plan itineraries well in advance. Given that tourists, like museum visitors, will not stand in one place very long to watch a performance, seating of some kind—here the arrangement of logs on a slope—is a concession to comfort requirements. Hazel and Jane are well aware of tourist expectations. They strive to achieve informality and relaxed naturalness.

XIII

How much control does Jane actually have over the Maasai? Jane sees herself as "preserving" the Maasai and says, "We encourage them to be Maasai." She tells the performers that, if they do not appear Maasai enough, then the tour operators will not bring the tourists. If a Maasai has a "tatty" loin cloth, then Jane will tell him to buy a new one. If he says that he does not have the money,

Jane will offer to withhold a week's paycheck so that he will have the money. The performers are expected to keep the area clean, and to help in picking up trash, including the tourists' empty film boxes. If a child's face is dirty, Jane will tell the mother to take the child to the river and wash his face. At the time that we were conducting our interviews, Jane reported that within the past six months one elder and one warrior had been dismissed and told to leave the property.

While the Mayers and the Maasai have a reciprocal working relationship, it is not always an easy one. John Mayers woke up at 3:00 a.m. one morning to find Maasai cattle grazing on his front lawn. He was so incensed that he drove the cattle up the road and into the forest, forcing the Maasai to spend hours rounding up their livestock. But the next morning, in defiance, the cattle were placed on the front lawn again. This matter was eventually settled, but others are not. Once a Maasai got drunk and came out during a performance wearing a Burberry raincoat. Despite Jane's efforts to fire him, that Maasai is still living on the ranch. Jane suspected one Maasai woman of dishonesty and later caught her "making eyes" at the European men; she was simply dismissed. There was also a Samburu warrior who could not jump but who just stamped his foot. When Jane went to speak to him, she learned that he had a wound that prevented him from jumping, and so she decided that there was nothing she could do. If she tried to dismiss him, Jane felt that all of the Samburu would be very offended. Instead, she has stated that he will not return to work next season. When Jane is not sure of her grounds, she goes to the elders and says, we have a problem here, and she solicits their advice.

The Maasai manipulate the Mayers and use their traditions to their own advantage. Sometimes the Maasai come with a request for help, knowing in advance that John and Jane are not prepared to give it, but then the Maasai say, "You are my father and my mother now." The Maasai also, on occasion, remind Jane that whites are privileged, and she comes to feel morally responsible. As a general rule the Mayers do not give loans to the Maasai, but they had recently loaned one Maasai 200 shillings and another 300 shillings. The two went off and defaulted on the loans; so Jane went to the elders and the Maasai agreed to be responsible for their debts. On another occasion, a Maasai raped a fellow tribesman's wife and was fined by the elders for the offense. The warrior went to the Mayers to ask for the money to buy sheep and goats to pay the fine, but the Mayers refused, on the grounds that he had done an offense to his own people and so he should take care of it himself. Another time, the Mayers found that their driver's daughter needed an operation; so they arranged it, made a loan to the driver, and even made a donation to the hospital, without the driver's knowledge.

The Mayers' relationship with the Maasai is a complex one, and we do not presume to have done more than to suggest some of the complexities. But some things are clear. Jane likes the Maasai, has a good relationship with them, tries to be fair, and feels that at times she has to discipline them. Hazel and Jane do feel that the Maasai are sometimes "like children" and are "not far removed from

the bush," with all that this implies about a maternalistic attitude. However, Hazel explained that the Maasai always respected the British, because the Maasai felt that the British were brave, that they were pioneers in a new country, and that they had a straightforward way of thinking. The Maasai, Hazel feels, have similar characteristics, and so in her view the two peoples share basic character traits. In any case, the Maasai and the Samburu do have functioning indigenous social organizations, and the Mayers respect and work through them. Jane does control the performance, in part because she is the employer but also because the Maasai have come to identify their interests with the interests of the Mayers, in order to keep the business going. At the end of one of our interviews, knowing that we were American anthropologists writing about tourism, the Maasai asked us to "send more tourists."

XIV

At the end of the season, the Maasai say that it is time to "close the picture." Both the Mayers and the Maasai speak of the performance as "the picture." It is a remarkable phrase. Those who are in the picture include the Maasai and Samburu warriors, the elders, and the women who have parts in the performance and who dress up and pose, including the six prepubescent girls, as well as Jane, Hazel, the European staff, and the two servants who pour tea on the lawn. The farm laborers, the domestic servants, and the Maasai living in the third village are clearly not in the performance. There is, however, an interesting problematic about the role of others, including the foreman, the bus drivers, and the anthropologists.

The Mayers have hired a foreman to serve as a middleman between themselves and the Maasai. The foreman deals with the Maasai on a daily basis. He records the names of those who are present at each performance, so that their paychecks may be calculated accurately, and he informs the Mayers if there are any problems. The foreman himself is neither a Maasai nor a Samburu; he is a Marigoli from Lake Victoria. He is more knowledgeable about the performers than the Mayers, who are the producers and artistic directors. The foreman plays the role of stage manager, operating somewhat behind the scenes. One time we asked Hazel for the tribal affiliations of the six young girls, and she did not know; so she asked the foreman. He replied that three were Maasai and three were Samburu. Another time we saw a group of people on the top of a hill overlooking the manyatta, and we asked who they were. Hazel went to the foreman who replied that they were visitors, friends of the Maasai—Africans, but not in the picture. They were a silent audience, and we were never clear if they were watching the Maasai dancers or the tourists. If the latter, then they were an audience to an audience, watching the watchers. In any case the foreman is physically present during the performance, but he is not part of the performance. From the tourist perspective, he is structurally invisible. He is not in the picture.

The bus drivers are known to the tourists as they provide the transportation to and from Nairobi. They have no role in the performance. They are like ushers in a theater, but in many ways they are structural anomalies. The European staff

say that the bus drivers are surly and provocative. Fiona reports that they will say, "Hey, white woman," and also that they try to cheat on the number of tourists in their bus. For example, they may claim, she explained, that there are only five tourists, and offer to pay 250 shillings, when actually there are six tourists, so that they can pocket the extra 50 shillings. This conflict occurs among persons occupying two structurally marginal positions, the European staff and the bus drivers.

One day when returning from the manyatta to the lawn after a performance, we went by the back way, past the servants' quarters, and came across five or six drivers having tea. We took one photograph, having our cameras ready after the performance, and then moved around to get a better view. One of the drivers said, "Don't you ask before you take pictures?" "Sorry," we replied, "but may we take your picture?" "No," he said; so we put our cameras away and left. The interaction may be indicative of our own presumption, but it also comments on the difficult role of the drivers. They are black Kenyans from Nairobi well-dressed in European clothes, that is, shirts, dress pants, and shoes. We were behaving toward them as if they were "natives," appropriate objects for our camera—as if they were in the picture and part of the deal. We had confused them for Maasai, in effect, and we had also touched the boundaries of the picture, the line between actuality and virtuality. It is significant that although the drivers have tea they are not invited to the Mayers' lawn and they are not served cookies. The serving woman who brings them tea explained to us that only "English people" get tea on the lawn.

Regarding the position of the anthropologists, they are clearly not in the picture and their role is quite problematic. They present special problems for the Mayers. In many respects they are like tourists, but anthropologists keep coming back and asking questions. We did explain our mission honestly, and we did seem to have been accepted, but Jane never gave us permission to visit the manyatta or the villages except during performance time or in her presence, even though Maasai and Samburu had invited us there. This severely restricted our ability to gather information directly from the Maasai and the Samburu, which limits our study. The European staff had invited us for supper, but Jane, who knew when we had been invited, said that it was a bad day for us to come, thus preventing us from having supper with the staff. And at one point in our research, actually near the time that we were preparing to leave, Jane suggested that it would be best if we finished our study. Since Jane informed us by letter, written to one of us (EMB), we do not feel that it would be violating a confidence to reproduce the letter here, especially as it gives some understanding of our relationship.

P.O. Box 43298
Nairobi
10th February, 1984

Dear Ed:

Many thanks for your note and the book for Hazel. She was not here to receive it this afternoon but I'm sure she'll be delighted with it.

Thank you so much for inviting us to dinner but we, unfortunately, have a prior engagement for tomorrow evening. For the same reason I will not be able to spend time with you tomorrow chatting to the Maasai after hours.

I suggest Tuesday, 14th would be a good day for you to come. If you came for the normal performance we could stay down in the manyatta for an hour or so afterwards. I think you should be prepared to finalize your researches next Tuesday. I do feel I cannot continually impose on the privacy of the Maasai, which is one of the things that I have guaranteed them I would protect. Although they are agreeable, it is to please me and I do not like to take advantage of them. The next two weeks also will be fairly busy for me as I will have guests staying and children home from school for half-term.

I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday. Perhaps we can finalize the dinner date at that time.

I'm sorry tomorrow is not convenient.

Sincerely,
Jane

It is a lovely letter. We realize that they are running a business, that time is limited, and that we never did offer to pay for the information received. In fact, after our first visit to the ranch, Jane refused to accept the 50 shillings per person admission fee for subsequent visits, even though we volunteered it. And we certainly ate our share of cookies. The times that we were there, the Mayers invariably were gracious and patiently answered our questions. On Tuesday, the last day we were at Mayers, we had a very productive session with the Maasai (in the presence of Jane), after which we were invited by Jane and John for gin and tonic at their house. Nevertheless, again, we had approached the limits of the picture. Being allowed in the manyatta in the morning to photograph the Maasai with their Western clothes and modern objects would have been equivalent to being given permission to photograph Joan Collins without her makeup. Even worse, it would have confused performance time with real life and would have dissolved the frames so essential to maintaining Mayers Ranch as a life space.

The problem is that the Mayers and the Maasai are in the performance, on stage, for a few hours a day, but they also live there. It is their home. When they are in the picture, their homes become a stage, but when the tourists leave, the stage becomes a home again. They must be able to distinguish between tourist time and life time. If they cannot delineate the frame that puts them in or out of the picture, then they confront the Batesonian paradox of not being able to distinguish between a nip and a bite, or play and a real fight. If Gregory Bateson is correct (1972), the effect of such confusion is schizophrenic.

Imagine a troupe of Broadway actors who live in a theater. Not just for fun but they really live there, sleep there, and cook there. At 8 each evening an audience comes, pays admission, and the actors put on *Death of a Salesman*. After the show, the audience leaves, but the performers remain. From the audience perspective, it makes no difference if the actors live at home and come to the theater every evening or if the actors live on stage. All the audience knows is that from 8 to 10 p.m. they watch the show. But from the actors' point of view the distinction is critical, for at the very least they must know when to put on their costumes, start speaking their lines, and stop treating each other as housemates.

Of course, it would not matter if one of the actors really was Willy Loman or only believed himself to be, because the role is scripted into the play and does not require either condition. Here the analogy with Mayers Ranch breaks down, because the Mayers are the Mayers and the Maasai are the Maasai and tourists come expecting to meet those who really live at the site. But then again the Maasai of Mayers Ranch and the stage Mayers are "in the picture" for only part of the day and part of the year. Who are they and where are they the rest of the time?

Dancing in a Burberry raincoat during a performance, having anthropologists in the manyatta, or taking photographs of the bus drivers are acts that violate frames and blur boundaries. If farm laborers were to dance in the performance, if bus drivers were to be on the lawn, or if the Maasai were to have tea with the tourists and talk to them in English or to graze the cows on the lawn, then the "picture" would be operating on different principles, not in a realist mode so much as a surrealist one—that is, a mode predicated on jarring juxtapositions following the logic of dreams. Mayers Ranch might even be a more interesting place. It would certainly be a very different place than it is now. As for its commercial success, the tourist surreal generally preserves the comfort of the tourist in his encounter with the wild. It is about minibuses on the savannah. Not Maasai on the lawn.

Mayers Ranch as it now exists is not only framed, like the proscenium stage or cinema screen, as a picture. It is also reproduced as a picture (Benjamin 1969). Not just amateurs, but professional photographers, film crews, sound technicians, and writers come to Mayers to photograph and record the Maasai, because it is such a convenient setting. It is easy to make arrangements with the Mayers to do the work, the Maasai are cooperative, and the scenic locale is already organized as a picture. All of the postcards and the photo books sold by the staff at Mayers, and in many bookstores in Kenya and around the world, consist of photographs taken at Mayers Ranch. We find this quite startling. This live event of the Maasai for tourist consumption becomes mechanically reproduced as a representation of all Maasai. The Maasai of Mayers Ranch have become canonized as *the* Maasai. They are an icon of East Africa, reproduced infinitely on postcards, in books, and in the illustrations of travel brochures. The Maasai at Mayers come to stand not only for all Maasai but for African tribesmen, for the primitive.

XV

An American university student at the performance commented that it was disgusting how the Mayers were exploiting the Maasai. In her view, whites are exploiting blacks by producing black culture for a predominantly white audience. Although the Mayers are now Kenyan citizens, they are British and ex-colonialists. This American liberal reaction selects out for emphasis color and colonialism. The term *exploitation* has different meanings, ranging from the general sense of one group taking advantage of another group, to the more specific Marxist sense of surplus value.

The power relations between the Maasai and the Mayers are clearly unequal. The Mayers can fire the Maasai, who are wage laborers. The question of exploitation in the precise economic sense directs us to the issue of the distribution of profits within the Mayers Ranch community. Is there a truly equitable allocation of the proceeds? We simply do not have enough information to answer this question. There are, however, some economic and political issues for which we do have data.

We began by posing the question of exploitation to Jane. Her response was that the Maasai are free to leave at any time, that no one is holding them, that more Maasai want to work at Mayers than they could possibly employ, that the Maasai are quite well off and have large herds of livestock, that when there is a drought on the reserve the relatives of the Maasai come to join them, and that the Mayers themselves are not getting rich off the operation. That summarizes Jane Mayers's position.

The Maasai view, as they explained to us, is that they, the Maasai, are in it for the money, and that with the income provided by their work at Mayers they are able to increase their herds and maintain their culture. As far as we have been able to determine, the ability to increase their herds and maintain their culture is absolutely essential to the Maasai—it is the most important thing to them and they made that clear to us when we interviewed them. In Kenya, one frequently hears that the Maasai have too many cattle and overgraze, but according to Alan Jacobs (personal communication, September 15, 1986), the Maasai are extremely efficient pastoralists. Cattle are like money in the bank for the Maasai—it is how they save for the future—and it is highly functional because the large number of cattle enables them to survive recurrent droughts.

The Maasai are sophisticated in their ability to negotiate the complex world of Mayers Ranch. We have already seen how they use their traditions to manipulate the Mayers. With regard to the tourists, the Maasai see themselves as having a direct exchange relationship, one that is not mediated or controlled by the Mayers. The Maasai told us that they do dance for the tourists and that the tourists do take their pictures, but the tourists also buy their spears and necklaces; so it is a reciprocal relationship. Out on the reserve, they say, while the tourists take your picture, you have nothing to sell, and so there is no exchange. They presented themselves to us as entrepreneurs with an independent business that they conduct directly with the tourists. Within the framework of Mayers Ranch, they have carved out their own economic niche. The Mayers bring the tourists that enable the Maasai to sell their handicrafts.

During those brief times that the Mayers permitted us to speak with the performers, we found that the Maasai themselves were skilled interviewers and did not hesitate to put us on the spot. After a long session in which the Maasai answered our many questions (Figure 5), we asked them if they wanted to know anything about our culture. The conversation went as follows:

Maasai: In America, do you have female circumcision?
Anthropologist: No.

Maasai: Did you recently stop circumcising girls, or did you never circumcise girls?

Anthropologist: We never did.

Maasai: Then how can you tell the difference between a girl and a woman?

The Maasai also asked if we can have two wives, and when we replied only one wife, they asked why. Circumcision and polygamy are political issues in Kenya. Westerners are usually fascinated by them and tour guides are ready to answer tourists who ask these questions about the Maasai. Here the Maasai turned the tables on us.

When we asked about their hiding material objects from tourist view before the performance and masking their modernity, the Maasai replied that it is what the tourists expect, and anyway, tourists come to Kenya to see Maasai things, not European things. Further, they replied, if they were to wear socks and carry radios, the tourists would not know if they were Maasai or Kikuyu. They added that the Kikuyu had become educated and had lost their traditions. When we asked how that came about, the Maasai explained that during colonial times, when the Europeans came, the Kikuyu were poor and the Maasai were rich. The Maasai had their own food and their own cattle, while the poor Kikuyu had to work for the Europeans, which is why the Kikuyu got educated and why they lost their traditions. The Maasai have kept their traditions, they said.

The Maasai are proud of their culture and willing to defend it. Knowles and Collett write that the Maasai never accepted the superiority of British culture and never used the honorific *bwana* when addressing Europeans (1989:444–445). The Maasai do have a very positive image of themselves, and they chose not to give up their culture to become like the Mayers or the Kikuyu. Nor is the situation in which the Maasai find themselves at Mayers Ranch a unique one in



Figure 5
Interviewing the Maasai.

Maasai history. Pastoralists have always placed themselves within trading networks to obtain metalwork, honey, cloth, and other necessary items (Berntsen 1979; Spear 1981). Those relationships have served the Maasai well in the past during times of disease or severe drought when pastoralism was not feasible; it gave the Maasai not only trade items but also the connections that enabled them to change their economy should that prove necessary. In a sense, the Mayers and the tourists are simply the most recent collaboration in a long line of trading partners.

What do the Mayers get from the tourist operation? We suggested to Jane that the lawn is to the Mayers what the cows are to the Maasai. Jane admitted that English people do admire lawns, and the lawn is costly to maintain, but insisted that most of their profits go toward building up the farm. Tourism supports their farm and enables them to maintain their homestead. Thus, both the Maasai and the Mayers get essentially the same thing from tourism—the ability to maintain a contested, some might say anachronistic and even reactionary, lifestyle in contemporary Kenya, a lifestyle at once signified and subsidized by the tourist production. The Maasai and the Mayers are in business together.

XVI

In the largest sense, the Maasai and the Mayers are merely players in a show written by international tourist discourse. Both are positioned by that discourse and are allocated space within it (Foucault 1970; Lyotard 1979). The Maasai and the Mayers are on display and their culture is for sale, but the lines that they speak are written for them by the real producer of Mayers Ranch, the tourist industry. As mere actors in a much larger drama, the Maasai and the Mayers have to articulate themselves in terms acceptable to international tourism. The story line of the show, the colonial drama of the primitive Maasai and the genteel British, of resistance and containment, of the wild and the civilized, was in place long before the Maasai or the Mayers mounted their production. They did not invent the story that they tell at Mayers Ranch. Tourism is unyielding in its demands. It insists on recidivism, atavism, and anachronism. It insists on true tribesmen and archetypal colonialists. But the Maasai and the Mayers are not powerless pawns. They do not have to perform for tourists. If they choose to do so, however, they must follow the script.

Notes

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1. In the literature, *Maasai* is sometimes spelled with a double *aa* and sometimes, as in *Masai*, with a single *a*. Except where the single *a* has become a proper name, as in “Masai Mara,” we will use the double *aa* spelling derived from the language group Maa, which is current scholarly practice (Spear and Waller 1993). Aside from the Maasai, other Maa-speaking peoples include the Samburu, Njemps, and the Arusha. Both the Maasai and the Samburu perform at Mayers Ranch. In this article we sometimes use the term *Maasai* to refer to both the Maasai and Samburu performers.

2. See Bruner 1993; Clifford 1992; Crick 1989; Grabum and Jafari 1991; Harrison 1992; Hitchcock et al. 1993; Pratt 1992; Smith 1989[1977]; Smith and Eadington 1992.
3. There are hundreds of thousands of Maasai in Kenya; less than a hundred are employed at Mayers Ranch.
4. The Maasai term is *murrān* or *ilmurrān*, but at Mayers they use the term *morān*.
5. Our data about Mayers Ranch was gathered in early 1984; so all references to "now" or "at this time" refer to that period.
6. In February 1984, the exchange rate was U.S. \$1 = 13.78 Kenyan shillings.
7. There are Maa-speaking peoples who are agriculturalists and others who are hunters, despite the popular understanding of the Maasai as dedicated pastoralists. Pastoralism remains an ideal, but economic choices depend on ecological and climatic conditions, and the diet will vary accordingly.
8. Important sources on the Maasai age-set system include Jacobs 1965, Galaty 1977, and Spencer 1988 and 1993.
9. All photographs shown here were taken by the authors. We do not claim that these photos are "scientific" representations or that they are in any sense superior to photographs taken by the tourists.

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Eating Chinese Medicine

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Reading medical anthropology could easily convince one that medicine everywhere is a pretty grim and ghoulish business. Healing technologies of all kinds seem invariably to address suffering and death (why else would we bother to study them?), and the apparently universal relation of “doctor and patient” casts the victim of disease as also a victim of social inequality or of structuring cultural models. In this article I take a slightly different tack, departing from an already well-developed anthropology of the body to propose that medical practice might at times be a source not just of domination but of empowerment, not just of symptom relief but of significant pleasure.

The practice in question is that of traditional Chinese medicine. The “pleasures” that I explore are those of the late 1970s and the 1980s in urban China. In the wake of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which ended in 1976, economic reform was well under way, writing of all kinds was exploding into a hyperactive publishing and academic universe, and free markets were bursting with commodities, while every sort of expertise went up for sale. The bitter divisions produced by 25 years of aggressive political campaigns were neither forgotten nor fully remedied, and the difficulties of competing in a global capitalist market made the future appear as perilous as the past had been bitter. A vocal and paternalistic leadership still blared normative propaganda in every medium, and “the four modernizations” seemed at times to demand as much self-sacrifice and offer as little reward as the march toward true communism had just a few years before.¹ In this climate, people crowded into the urban hospitals and clinics of traditional medicine and ate lots and lots of herbal medicine.

Food, Medicine, and China's 1980s

Once Zhu Ziyue had settled himself in a room [in the bath house, after lunch], he was like an invalid in the hospital, he did nothing whatsoever under his own power. Waiters brought and poured tea, masseurs drew water, he didn't even have to remove his own shoes. Zhu was unwilling to lift a finger because he witlessly preferred to concentrate all his efforts on that stomach of his. He felt that since