

**The “Park” as Racial Practice:  
Constructing Whiteness on Safari in Tanzania**

Cassie M. Hays

*Abstract*

Popular imaginings of Tanzania’s Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area are founded on the idea of wilderness preserved, but this conception of the “park” is based in colonial-era race-thinking. Rather than simply a colonial-era manifestation of an apparently universal conservationist ideal, Serengeti and Ngorongoro are instead racial projects that embody the historical and ongoing processes of racial formation. The creation of Serengeti and Ngorongoro enabled a racialization of nature, a process begun by the British and re-inscribed via safari ever since. Recognizing this racialization of nature has larger implications for not only the treatment and perception of those in the Global South, the racialized ‘other’ to the Global North, but for the realities of white privilege and constructions of whiteness, as well.

*Keywords*

Tanzania; national park; safari; whiteness; racialization

*Introduction*

Serengeti. Amboseli. Maasai Mara. Ngorongoro. The very names of these East African protected areas conjure notions of international wildlife conservation, charismatic megafauna, and red-cloth clad Maasai for many in the global north. Wealthy tourists from the US and Europe, and increasingly from East Asia (NBS Tanzania, 2017), envision fantastical safaris through the Tanzanian savannah that stem from decades of media representations in

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literature, film, and television (Hays, 2009). These popular imaginings are founded, at least in part, on the idea of wildness preserved (Cronon, 1995). The "park" appears to enclose nature via inviolable borders, allowing visitors to approach the wild and untamed—whether animal or human—on safari.

Tanzania's Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area are often viewed by visiting tourists as encapsulating the wild. Yet they are not only reflective of the urge to construct and define nature, but exemplars of race-thinking. Maasai in Tanzania, who have historically lived in and around Serengeti and Ngorongoro, are characterized and perceived as possessing 'traditional' lifestyles that allow them to live 'in harmony' with nature (<http://www.ngorongorocrater.org/people.html> accessed 19 January 2018). Part of this ideology stems from the idea of the racial other as wild, as part of the natural world: race as somehow 'natural' (Hannaford, 1996). Yet conserving 'wild' nature is as much about people and their lives and lifestyles as it is about other forms of life and wildness. The idea of wilderness should therefore be seen as not simply socially constructed (Cronon, 1995), but as tethered to notions of race; conservation practices, like the creation of protected areas and nature tourism, can imbue nature with racial difference. Recognizing this 'racialization' (Barot and Bird, 2001) of nature has larger implications for not only the treatment and perception of those in the Global South, the racialized 'other' to the Global North, but for the realities of white privilege and constructions of whiteness, as well.

Rather than simply a colonial-era manifestation of an apparently universal conservationist ideal, Serengeti and Ngorongoro are instead racial projects that embody the historical and ongoing processes of racial formation (Omi and Winant, 1994: 56-57) in Tanzania. According to Omi and Winant's (1994) analysis of the United States, 'a racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines' (56).

Expanding this analysis to Tanzania, if the “park” is a kind of representative as well as redistributive racial project, then safari is one of the mechanisms by which its racializing processes are maintained—via the privileged traversal of the borders and boundaries surrounding Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Not only do “park” and safari reify a particular version of black African ‘primitivity,’ but they solidify white power and privilege. I therefore argue that both “park” and safari have facilitated and continue to enable the performance of colonial and contemporary whiteness.

To position this argument, I will first provide a review of relevant literature. To that end, I will focus first on competing notions of wildlife conservation and the “park” ideal, which will provide a basis from which to argue that Serengeti and Ngorongoro are both racial projects. Next, I will provide more detail about the history of race thinking, critical race theory, and racial formations. Finally, I will review the literature on colonialism and whiteness, pointing towards a potential gap in research that draws together African colonialism, wildlife conservation, and the racial formation of both blackness and whiteness in sub-Saharan Africa. Following the literature review is an historical overview of the creation of German and British colonial Tanganyika, its independence in 1961, and its establishment as Tanzania in 1964. A brief history of Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area will also be provided. After having provided an historical backdrop for understanding the location(s) of this study, I will provide a brief synopsis of the research sites and methodology.

Building on the analysis of ethnographic, interview, and content analysis data, I argue that the “park” is a racial project that has persisted since the earliest racial formations of the British colonial era. I will seek to first establish the ways in which Ngorongoro and Serengeti produce Maasainess, as emblematic of a primitive, quintessential ‘Africanness,’ during the time of British colonial control and today. Because identity is an oft-negotiated and varied

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positioning (Hodgson, 2011), Maasai continue to be simultaneously resistant to and complicit

in this racial project. And though they are the most obvious participants in the racial formations produced by Serengeti and Ngorongoro, the establishment and maintenance of these protected areas—particularly through safari tourism—also results in the exclusion of non-Maasai Tanzanians (and, in Serengeti, Maasai as well). The two protected areas are, in many ways, default white spaces of power and privilege. The second prong of the argument therefore revolves around the ways in which whiteness has been produced via the “park” during the British colonial and contemporary eras. Maasai residents, and Tanzanians more generally, also participate (perhaps unintentionally) in the creation of a white tourist ideal, which furthers the racial project of the “park.”

I then conclude by recognizing the ways in which protected areas in Tanzania originate in British colonial racial projects that perpetuate race-thinking today—and therefore particular expressions of whiteness—through the neocolonial practices of safari. Instead of focusing solely on British colonial representations and contemporary tourist and safari worker behavior, I briefly signal the mechanisms by which local Maasai residents have participated in (and often challenged) this racialization of nature. Recognizing these ‘pluriversal’ and local meanings and imaginaries is necessary for decolonizing knowledge of the “park” (Grosfoguel 2007, 212; Mignolo 2007, 497). The decolonization of knowledge about Tanzania and conservation values residents’ perspectives; decolonial studies strive to rearticulate persistent colonial knowledge and power structures from the perspective of the formerly colonized. While not all scholars of decoloniality are necessarily *from* the global south, they are certainly *writing from* that perspective (Mignolo 2007, 462; see also Bhattacharya and Larson, 2014; Konik, forthcoming). To argue that nature has been racialized in Tanzania, however, I first turn to a review of the literature on the social

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construction of nature and neoliberal conservation; race critical theory and racial formations;  
and whiteness and colonialism.

### *Conservation, Race and Colonialism*

The concept of the national park is borrowed from the US, originally (Jones, 2012; Worster 1973)—not only the idea of a federally owned and managed resource, but the importance of restricting land use while at the same time encouraging the (occasional) picturesque presence of local, native, one-time inhabitants (Bramwell, 1989; Spence, 1999). At the time, it was a sacrosanct type of protected area (Harper and White, 2012), and at its final demarcation Serengeti did not permit human habitation or resource use (Gissibl, 2012). According to the IUCN's contemporary classification system, however, a national park is a 'category II' protected area that permits complementary scientific and recreational usage while explicitly managing wildlife and promoting ecological and species conservation; national parks today also 'take into account the needs of indigenous people and local communities' (<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-areas-categories/category-ii-national-park>, accessed 18 January 2018). For the purposes of this paper, I use the term "park" in quotation marks to signal its symbolism and theoretical implications, but it is important to note that the Serengeti is a 'national park,' while Ngorongoro is a 'conservation area' that permits multiple land use as well as human habitation (a 'category VI' protected area, according to the IUCN). Both fall under the broader category of protected area and will therefore be referred to as such throughout the paper.

Though not universally applied, particularly in colonial Africa (Ford 2012), the Western-style national park (Wöbse 2012) holds at its core the concepts of conservation (Brockington, 2002; Igoe, Neeves and Brockington, 2010; Gissibl, Höhler and Kupper,

2012a; Spence, 1999) and consumption (Brockington and Duffy, 2010; Brockington and Duffy, 2011; Brockington, Duffy and Igoe, 2008; Büscher, 2016; Büscher and Igoe, 2013; Büscher, Dressler and Fletcher, 2014; Gardner, 2016; Igoe and Croucher, 2007; Igoe, Neves and Brockington 2010; Lekan, 2011). Conservation is often based in a notion of preserving nature in a raw, unchanged state, of seeing the land- or sea-scape as wild and untamable (Kirchhoff and Vicenzotti, 2014; Walley, 2004). At the same time, conservationists have often recognized a need to preserve in order to prevent damage, destruction, or change wrought by humans (Kjekshus, 1977; Mackenzie, 1988; Wöbse, 2012). On the one hand, then, is the ideal of an untouched wilderness (Glacken, 1967; Worster, 1973; 1985), while on the other, the acknowledgement that that very nature either has been or is in danger of being 'touched' by rapacious human hands (Gardner, 2017). Both necessitate a particular construction of nature that views it as a wilderness that should be beyond humanity and culture (Cronon, 1995). But of course, this is very much a human invention, the park a human intervention on the landscape (Gissibl, Höhler and Kupper, 2012b; Neumann, 1995; Spence, 1999).

If the establishment of national parks in regions formerly inhabited by native peoples—the Native American West (Jones, 2012) and East African 'Maasailand' (Gissibl, 2012; Homewood, Kristjanson and Trench, 2009; Lekan, 2011) to name two—is founded on the very creation of wilderness rather than simply its preservation, it also relies on a particular construction of human nature. While there is occasional acknowledgement of the effects of British and European safari hunting on the wildlife of Northern Tanzania, local inhabitants are just as readily, if not more frequently, blamed for decreases in animal numbers and habitat degradation (Steinhart 2006). It becomes clear that the park helps to construct not only an idea of wild external nature, but one of wild internal nature—both of which are, apparently, in need of intervention and control.

Building on Cronon (1992; 1995), Williams (1980) and others (Castree and Braun, 1998; Igoe, Neves and Brockington, 2010; Neumann, 1995; Neumann, 1998; Shetler, 2007; van der Windt, 2012), I therefore argue that nature as it is confined and 'conserved' in Tanzania is as much about people as it is about other life (Gissibl, 2012). The invention of the national park and its growing popularity during the ongoing, imperial advancement in the American West and the closing of the frontier (Jones, 2012; Spence, 1999; Worster, 1973) and elsewhere in the world (Ford, 2012; Harper and White, 2012), particularly in colonial Tanzania (Garland 2008), shows us that the valuable natures to be preserved were mostly landscapes inhabited by non-whites<sup>1</sup>. Constructing non-white or 'native' nature(s) as more real, more wild, in turn constructs white nature(s) as more elevated, more civilized (Hughes, 2006; Suzuki, 2017). The history of the national park, and the very notion of wild nature(s) with which it was bound up, are tied to race—thus we recognize that the protected area is and *always has been* a racialized space (Finney, 2014; Gissibl, 2012; Hughes, 2010; Suzuki, 2017; Taylor, 2016).

Though much has been written about the ways in which race has been structured through relationships to nature and thereby naturalized (and unquestioned) (Conklin, 1997; Moore, Kosak and Pandian, 2003; Steinhart, 2006), I argue that we must also examine the inverse. But relatively little has been written about the ways in which nature has been racialized (Brahinsky, Sasser and Minkoff-Zern, 2014; Gissibl, 2012; Hays, 2015; Taylor, 2016). Most studies explicitly focused on race and African natures focus on settler colonies with relatively high white populations (Hughes 2006; Steyn 2001; Suzuki 2017), thereby implicitly ignoring the insidious effects of racializing discourse via other forms of colonial enterprise, like tourism (Bruner, 2001; Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994). Sociological studies of race and nature or environment have tended towards examinations of

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<sup>1</sup> This description of the national park should not be confused with the English 'park,' which was bound more closely to notions of class than to ideas of race.

environmental justice (Khan, 2002; Mohai, Pellow and Roberts 2009; Pellow and Brehm, 2013; Ruiters, 2002; Sundberg, 2008) or the racialization of space in, for example, US ghettos (Massey and Denton, 1998) or apartheid South Africa (Posel, 1991). Advocates of environmental justice study the unequal distribution of risk by race and class, and its negative effects on the life course of minorities and people of color. At the same time, certain spaces facilitate the articulation of racial difference—and facilitate, therefore, racial discrimination. Yet these analyses often stop short of recognizing the ways in which nature is constructed through race (Brahinsky, Sasser and Minkoff-Zern, 2014; Hays, 2015). Both social scientific perspectives on race and environment also tend towards a focus on racial or ethnic minorities, whether the research occurs in the US (Finney, 2014; Mohai, Pellow and Roberts, 2009; Pellow and Brehm, 2013) or beyond (Khan, 2002; Ruiters, 2002; Sundberg, 2008).

The concept of race has expanded grotesquely since its earliest usage during the expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Spain and the conquest of the Americas at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Frederickson, 2002). Spanish imperialism, together with the transatlantic slave trade, enabled the global expansion of race-thinking; race was utilized as a mechanism for controlling local populations and establishing apparently impenetrable hierarchies that could excuse slavery and violence astounding in their audacity and savagery (Frederickson, 2002; Stannard, 1993).

At the tail end of the European imperial project in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, during the era of African independence, the UNESCO Statements encapsulate the contemporary shift in scholarly thinking about race in the global North (UNESCO, 1969). In 1950, race, according to the United Nations, was a natural, biological category that, though real, was often misused and misconstrued; by 1967, race was recognized to be largely socially constructed and utilized as a mechanism of discrimination (UNESCO, 1969). Contemporary scholars of race understand that part of these race-based hierarchies of power was the relegation of certain

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peoples to the bottom of the order, closer to animals and therefore closer to nature

(Frederickson, 2002; Stoler, 1995). Much late-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> scholarly research on race, while recognizing that it is indeed socially constructed, has focused on the life course and structural manifestations (Massey and Denton, 1998; Omi and Winant, 1994) or the varied theoretical ramifications of seeing race as a shifting category of classification (Duster, 2001; Hall, 1996).

For the purposes of this study, I follow the race critical theories of Stuart Hall in perceiving the 'discursive' nature of race as a 'floating signifier.' Because race functions like a language, it is constantly constructed and performed—often through what Omi and Winant (1994) term the 'racial project,' which is an 'interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines' (56). These 'historically situated projects' lead to 'racial formation,' the 'sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed' (55). As I will argue below, the 'racial project' of the "park" is part of larger processes of racial formation that construct and enliven both 'Maasai-ness' and whiteness. Racialization, according to Barot and Bird (2001), is a cultural 'process or change' that 'constructs bodies and psyches' (614); I would argue that nature is itself racialized through "park" and safari.

The establishment of the "park," particularly the ongoing existence of Ngorongoro Conservation Area, relies on the position that race is something that non-whites 'have' and whites do not (Frankenberg, 2001), which ignores the fact of white as a racial category and whiteness as a racial identity. This is belied by the dearth of research on the ways in which colonialism, writ large, is not simply a 'sociohistorical process' of blackness (Conklin, 1997; Stoler, 1995; Fanon, 1967) but of whiteness, as well. Studies of whiteness have focused on the construction of whiteness through the idea of the working class (Roediger, 2007); the

hidden attributes of race-based privilege (Perry, 2001); the experience of whiteness as an 'unmarked' category (Frankenberg, 2001); the reality of race, and whiteness more specifically, as continually changing shape and form, from solid to ethereal (Duster, 2001; Hall, 1996). Whiteness has primarily been studied in the African context at sites of enduring colonial or imperial presence, and actual white residential populations, like Zimbabwe or South Africa (Hughes, 2006; Mlambo, 2010; Moore, 2006; Ramphela and McDowell, 1991; Suzuki 2017). Suzuki (2017) and Hughes (2006) both focus on the ways in which whites in Zimbabwe construct their identities through the land and its wildlife—and the ways in which conservation areas are representative of both white identity and a particular white 'aesthetic.' Though there is only a relatively small white population in Tanzania, it is the racial project of safari through which whiteness is projected and performed on a national and international level. Through the historical, archival, ethnographic and interview data gathered below, I assert that the practice of safari exposes the racial underpinnings of the colonial and contemporary park.

### *Historical background*

British 'exploration' of East Africa began in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the travels of John Hanning Speke (1861, Lake Victoria), David Livingstone (1866, Lake Tanganyika), and Henry Morton Stanley (1871, Lake Tanganyika). The Berlin conference of 1884 began the European 'Scramble for Africa,' and by the turn of the century, the area now known as Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda had been designated German East Africa (Ilfie, 1979). The German East African Company began its operations in 1887, and in 1890, the Germans and the British signed a treaty that extended and solidified the 1886 boundary between German East Africa (which later became Tanganyika, then Tanzania) and British East Africa (which later became Kenya) (Austen, 1968: 19-30).

The 'Scramble for Africa,' together with the increasing presence of European missionaries, German and British farmers, and colonial power structures, led to successive outbreaks of Rinderpest in the region in the 1880s and 1890s (Sobania, 1993: 116; Waller, 1993: 227). The latter epidemic, coupled with a smallpox outbreak, locust infestation (Fosbrooke, 1972: 160; Shetler, 2007: 135-166) and 'intersectional conflicts...temporarily destroyed the cattle economy.... [and] [t]he social fabric which rested upon it was rent apart;' remaining Maasai took 'refuge with surrounding populations of cultivators and hunters' (Waller, 1993:227). The ecosystem, inhabited by Maasai people since the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Sutton, 1993), therefore appeared relatively unpopulated to German settlers and the German colonial government at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> (see Homewood and Rodgers, 2004).

Serengeti and Ngorongoro were originally treated as a single protected area by the German and subsequently British colonial governments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Austen, 1968; Gwassa, 1969; Herne, 1981; Iliffe, 1979). In the 1890s the Germans designated the Serengeti-Ngorongoro ecosystem an official hunting reserve and granted farming rights to the Ngorongoro Crater (Herne, 1981), which the British maintained when Tanganyika became a British 'Mandated Territory' in 1919 (Fosbrooke, 1972; Iliffe, 1979: 246-7) under indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996) following World War I (Kimambo and Temu, 1969). Though the Game Preservation Ordinance of 1921 established a hunting licensing system (TNA 19038 (1), 120-26), by the 1930s, rampant and illegal European 'shooting parties' (TNA 18872 (1), 7) caused hunting to be further restricted—and eventually outlawed—in much of what is now Serengeti National Park (Fosbrooke, 1972).

The territory's first National Park, the Serengeti, was created after the International Convention for the Protection of Flora and Fauna of Africa concluded in 1933; much discussion about the definition and boundaries of Serengeti ensued before the official

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declaration of the protected area in 1940, according to the *Report of the Serengeti Committee*

*of Enquiry* (1957). Though Tanganyika became a United Nations Trust territory in 1947 (Lohrmann, 2007), the British colonial Tanganyikan government, as well as the non-governmental Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire (SPFE) were instrumental in Serengeti's creation. Following the end of the second world war and the appointment of a Board of Trustees, the boundaries of the protected area—which included both present-day Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area—were officially proclaimed in 1951.

The forced evictions of resident Maasai families from the Crater around this time led to a national and international outcry about human rights. Eventually, however, a compromise that divided the landscape in two convinced Maasai leaders to sign away their grazing rights and move to the area of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) (Fosbrooke, 1972: 199-200). The NCA was inaugurated in 1959, shortly before independence in 1961, and it remains a multiple land-use conservation area, in which Maasai communities are expected to maintain 'traditional' (pastoral) ways of life alongside a handful of Ndorobo and Hadza semi-nomadic residents. Serengeti is a more typical contemporary national park; human residence is not officially permitted, though there is an extensive tourism and scientific infrastructure that is maintained year-round. In 1979, Ngorongoro was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in 1982 Biosphere Reserve; approximately 27% of Tanzania is today under government control as a protected area.

In Tanzania, the history of the national park has historically been tied closely to tourism, and therefore to safari (Hays, 2015). As I will demonstrate below, the race-based discourse surrounding the establishment of Tanganyika's protected areas during the British colonial period essentialized and objectified Maasai residents' behavior and identity in and around Serengeti and Ngorongoro. This has been perpetuated through British colonial and

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contemporary safari practices, as well as the actions of the Tanzanian government and the

Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, Ngorongoro’s governing body. At the same time, both the establishment of these two protected areas and the practice of safari—whether hunting or photographic—are productive of, and exercises in, whiteness.

### *Research Methodology*

This paper is built on archival, cartographic, ethnographic, and interview data gathered between 2003 and 2014. During this time, I consulted and analyzed British colonial-era governmental and non-governmental statements about Tanganyikan law and policy, meeting minutes, and correspondence about land tenure, wildlife, and the creation of Serengeti and Ngorongoro at the Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam and the British National Archives in Kew, London; post-Independence governmental documents about wildlife policy, Ngorongoro, and Serengeti were examined at the archives in Tanzania. Articles and advertisements about safari in Kenya, Tanzania, or East Africa published in the *New York Times* and *National Geographic* between 1900 and 2000 were also examined. In addition to written and news archives, contemporary tourism maps sold and distributed in Tanzania, together with historical maps from the Yale University Library Map Collection, were collected and analyzed via visual content analysis.

The archival and cartographic research complements multi-sited ethnographic research conducted between 2003 and 2006 at tourist hot-spots in the Northern Tanzanian tourist town of Arusha; as an assistant to the reservations department in the prominent, Tanzanian-owned ‘Adventure Safaris’ (a pseudonym) tour company in Arusha, where I helped to conduct pre- and post-safari briefings with Tanzanian reservation agents, Tanzanian driver-guides, and international tourists; at souvenir shops, camps and hotels along the route to Ngorongoro Conservation Area, especially in Karatu and Mto wa Mbu; and at tourist

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camps, hotels, Maasai tourism bomas (villages), and on game drives in Ngorongoro

Conservation Area and Serengeti National Park. Finally, formal and informal semi-structured interviews were conducted during that time with safari company driver-guides; Adventure Safari employees; international tourists at Adventure Safaris, Serengeti, and Ngorongoro; Maasai cultural boma residents in Ngorongoro; cultural tourism and safari hunting operators based in Arusha; souvenir shop proprietors along the route from Arusha to Ngorongoro; and tourism and protected area officials in Arusha and Ngorongoro.

Latent content analysis of the written, visual, and cartographic documents produced data about competing and complementary discourses surrounding land, wildlife, conservation, and protected area formation, as well as Maasai activities, representation, and "identity." Field notes from participant observation, as well as interview notes and transcripts, were submitted to a rigorous, iterative process of coding and memoing (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995) to develop conceptual categories and analytical themes. Field and interview notes have also been coded multiple times in an effort to ensure thematic validity and analytical reliability.

#### *"Park" as Racial Project: Producing Maasai-ness*

Though scholars agree that Maasai people have, at various times, practiced not only pastoralism but agriculture and hunting and gathering, Maasai have often been 'viewed as prototypical pastoralists, secure in their own exclusive ethnicity' (Spear, 1993: 2). This is partly due to their 'military dominance' of Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya, but also the 'cultural arrogance' of some pastoral Maasai towards other Maa-speakers who practice agriculture or more sedentary lifestyles (Spear, 1993: 120). As Hodgson points out (1999; 2004; see also 2011), pastoral Maasai have often been seen as more 'traditional,' a group whose pastoral identity is bound tightly with 'pastoralism as a purely masculine endeavor'

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(1999: 122). Maasai men may conceive of 'being Maasai' as 'being a pastoralist and a

warrior' (122), a kind of cultural 'positioning' in which a group 'draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning' (Li, 2000: 151 in Hodgson, 2011: 5). At the same time, local as well as national governments, both colonial and postcolonial, have tended to exploit these representations to their own ends—a mechanism by which the landscapes of Serengeti and Ngorongoro have become racialized.

The construction of Maasai identity through the designation of Tanzania's protected areas began under British colonial control, after Serengeti's initial establishment as a 'national park' at the 1933 Convention. Maasai people were permitted to remain in the area of Serengeti and Ngorongoro for several decades following the creation of the protected area. Though human habitation was not generally permitted within the confines of a national park, Game Warden Battye was 'of the opinion that the presence of Masai [*sic*] in game areas [was] not of detriment to the game, as a general rule' in 1931 (Note on Major Hingston's Report, TNA 19038 (1), 60-66). PC Hignell of Central Province explained to Colonial Secretariat G.F. Sayers in 1931 that this was because 'Masai live[d] naturally amongst the game,' neither cultivating the land nor hunting the wildlife (TNA 19038 (1), 249-251). Nearly a decade after the 1933 convention, a national park was officially gazetted, in 1940, encompassing both the region of Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater. The 1940 legislation officially restricted Maasai residence in the park (Fosbrooke, 1972: 195), though 'those born there or with 'traditional rights'' were exempted (Homewood and Rodgers, 2004: 70).

Throughout the 1940s, representatives of the Tanganyikan colonial government asserted that Maasai residents, along with their livestock herds and related grazing and watering needs, were problematic for the wildlife and habitat of the Serengeti-Ngorongoro ecosystem and would eventually need to be removed (TNA 24979). Yet at the higher levels of colonial authority, Maasai continued to be seen as part of the natural landscape and

important for tourism. In 1949 the Governor's Deputy claimed, for example, in a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the 'residence of Masai within the...plains area [was] no menace to the game and undoubtedly add[ed] an attraction' for tourists to the area (PRO 847/41/2, No. 38). The Acting Chief Secretary concurred, in an August 1951 letter to the Trustee of the National Park, observing that 'there is no doubt that the Masai are a *most interesting feature* of the Crater,' especially to 'American visitors to the Park' (TNA 24979, 415; emphasis added). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, then, Maasai residents living in and around the Serengeti-Ngorongoro ecosystem were objectified as natural conservationists by members of the British colonial government; they were an 'attraction,' a 'feature' for safari tourists from abroad. Maasai identity was being solidified and essentialized concurrent with the establishment of the Serengeti.

Despite contentions that 'the Masai [*sic*] and the game can live together in harmony' (Russell, G. 1950. Draft report concerning the final boundaries of a National Park in the Serengeti Area. TNA 24979 (3)), their ultimate expulsion from the national park came not long after park boundaries were first officially proclaimed in 1951; according to the 1933 Convention, human habitation was not to be permitted. Some Maasai residents protested these developments by openly defying park laws, starting fires within park boundaries (Neumann 1995, 159), and writing more formal letters to the government (Hodgson, 2000); the government responded by singlehandedly creating a Maasai 'bill of rights' to address their claims and concerns. It asserted that 'the Park [was] to be reserved as a natural habitat both for game and *human beings in their primitive state*' (TN Arusha Regional File G1/6, Accession No. 69, quoted in Neumann 1995, 160; emphasis added). Serengeti National Park Trustee Keith Caldwell reiterated this perspective in a 1953 letter to Board of Trustees Chair Leechman. He claimed that 'the pastoralists are normally no detriment to a National Park, but,' he added, 'all agriculturalists are a menace and I would like to see it laid down that

inhabitants of the Park must follow their *normal vocation of pastoralists*' (TNA 24979 (5),

688; emphasis added). Numerous cultivating households—a land use practice at odds with perceptions of 'primitive,' nomadic, pastoralist Maasai—were therefore evicted from Ngorongoro and Empakaai Craters in 1954 (Fosbrooke 1972, 197). The official identity and lifestyle that the British government expected area Maasai to inhabit by the 1950s was not only that of a feature or attraction, but one of pastoralist primitivity living a sort of pre-civilized, natural lifestyle.

Following the protests and an international outcry (Homewood and Rodgers, 2004: 71), the colonial government formed the Serengeti Committee of Enquiry in 1956. Composed of two colonial officials and one Tanzanian chief, it was commissioned to study the issues of protected area formation and Maasai land alienation in greater depth. Their 1957 report conceived of a 'conservation unit' in the region of Ngorongoro Crater that would permit limited human habitation and multiple land use—which further solidified the perspective of primitivism promulgated in the earlier 'bill of rights'—while denying any rights to Serengeti National Park. In a change of position, the government, for the first time, consulted with Maasai on park and conservation unit boundaries, and they officially 'renounced' their 'ancient grazing rights' in the western Serengeti in 1957 (*Daily Telegraph*. 19<sup>th</sup> August 1957. 'Man versus Beast in East Africa.' PRO 847/64 1957, 80). The government document, signed by 12 Maasai elders, agreed that residents would remove their dwellings and relocate their pastures to the area of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) (Fosbrooke, 1972: 199-200), which was officially inaugurated in 1959 (Kijazi, 1994; Ndolezi et al, N.D.). The importance of Maasai people as a 'primitive' tourist attraction alongside wildlife, articulated by members of the colonial government in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, was enshrined by the establishment of the NCA. The space of both Serengeti and Ngorongoro—and who could live there, and how—was thereby racialized by this blatant reification of a particular version of

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Maasai identity, a 'representation' that 'redistribute[d] resources along particular racial lines'

(Omi and Winant, 1994: 56).

The essentialized vision of Maasai identity as primitive and pastoral, promulgated by the British colonial government, has remained largely intact. Though the first management plan, of 1960, put human interests above conservation and allowed limited 'small scale cultivation at the discretion' of the NCA Authority (NCAA) (Homewood and Rodgers 2004: 71), the post-Independence establishment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) in 1970 'emphasised [*sic*] conservation at the expense of human interests' (73). This was followed by the 1975 Conservation Ordinance that officially prohibited cultivation in the NCA. Between 1986 and 1989 the NCAA even 'hunted out and destroyed' small-scale agricultural sites; in 1987, 666 resident Maasai were arrested for cultivation (Makacha and Ole Sayalel, 1987 cited in Homewood and Rodgers, 2004: 74). Apparently even gardening was incompatible not only with the conservation-focused goals of the NCAA in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but with the pastoral ideal exemplified by the 'primitive' Maasai residents whom the NCAA sought to preserve as featured attractions alongside the wildlife.

The colonial perspective of Maasai people as a tourist 'attraction' living in a 'primitive state,' 'in harmony' with their surroundings, has persisted into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Akama, 1999; Akama, 2002; Hodgson, 2011). In Ngorongoro Conservation Area, tourists visit Maasai cultural bomas, view singing and dancing performances, purchase goods for sale, and snap photographs of these apparently 'primitive' residents. During ethnographic fieldwork in 2006, tourists expressed a variety of perspectives about their encounters with Maasai residents in Tanzania and Kenya. Thematic analysis of field notes reveals that comments were based either in an objectification of Maasai people via the camera or tourist gaze, or in a characterization of Maasai and their lifestyles as animalistic and therefore closer

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to nature. Non-Maasai Tanzanians affiliated with the tourism industry and the NCAA also

caricatured Maasai people as (a)kin to wildlife.

On July 16, 2006, an overcast, chilly day, I encountered two German men during their visit to Seneto cultural boma, located just south of the Seneto Gate to Ngorongoro Crater and set up by the NCAA to enable the Maasai to benefit, financially, from the tourism trade (and, not inconsequentially, to keep them confined to bomas rather than hawking wares and selling their photographs on the side of the road). The homes of Seneto, much like those found in a "traditional" Maasai boma, were circular and composed of mud and dung, with a large fence of vertical branches and brambles surrounding the encampment. At the center rose another enclosure for the boma's livestock, around which were arrayed roughly-hewn stick tables on which souvenirs for sale had been arranged. After having paid a fee to enter the boma, photograph its inhabitants, and perhaps purchase a souvenir, the two morning visitors delightedly watched the young Maasai men's singing and dancing performance.

The first man to alight from the vehicle, the shorter of the two, wielded a large telephoto camera and took an abundance of photographs. When he approached and asked what I was doing at the boma, I told him a bit about my research on the northern Tanzanian protected areas and area Maasai. He confided that he found the residents 'picturesque,' and then returned to his photography. Maasai people were, to him, much like the game he would soon be viewing in either Ngorongoro Crater or Serengeti: part of the landscape. The photographic gaze objectified the subject, distancing viewer from viewed. At Simba public campsite that same month, a young girl traveling with her family told me excitedly that she'd found Maasai people to be 'very colorful' and 'fun to look at.' These safari tourists viewed Maasai residents of the NCA as vibrant material attributes of the safari experience, a fun and picturesque people to be viewed and photographed, objectified by the tourist gaze and the camera lens. Maasai people seemed to exist, at least in part, for tourists' amusement and

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viewing pleasure. A specific version of Maasai-ness has been encapsulated by the cultural

boma, a place to be seen and photographed and, through word and camera, reified.

Other visitors tended to objectify Maasai Tanzanians in a more negative light.

According to several of the tour company representatives and driver-guides whom I interviewed in Arusha and the NCA, some tourists would tell them that they came to Africa to see animals, not people, and thus would refuse to visit any cultural tourism sites. Others, they told me, might not want to see Maasai in Tanzania if they'd been in Kenya and visited Maasai people there. Several interviews with tourists confirmed this latter perspective. For example, during a pre-safari briefing with Adventure Safaris (AS), one group that had traveled from Kenya expressed disgust at having to see 'more of those Maasai' during their visit to Ngorongoro. Such language clearly distances viewer from viewed, the disenchantment and disdain apparent.

Alongside Maasai objectification was tourists' and tourism workers' characterization of Maasai people and lifestyles as a form of animalesque entertainment. At Seneto—a few days after my conversation with the German tourists—a large, converted lorry "Overlander" arrived with more than a dozen European visitors aboard. After observing their boma visit, I interviewed a Dutch tourist who was elated by his experience, declaring that the boma was 'a beautiful circus.' At Irkeepusi cultural boma, near the eastern Lamala Gate entrance to the crater, a British man on a late August safari with his teenage daughter admitted that he thought it was 'a bit of a human zoo.' Finally, a development worker in the country for a USAID conference told me during an impromptu interview at Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge on the crater rim that she found the cultural boma she'd briefly visited on safari to be like a 'Maasai theme park.' Comparing a cultural boma to a circus, zoo, or theme park relies on an understanding of Maasai people as positioned not only for the purpose of tourist amusement, but existing at the crossroads of a human-animal interface, closer to the natural world.

Though some of these tourists are, perhaps, post-tourists who recognize the inauthenticity of their destination(s), they are still on safari, perpetuating this particular production of Maasai-ness.

Both tourists and tourism workers articulated parallels between Maasai people and the wildlife of Ngorongoro and Serengeti. A tourist to Irkeepusi boma, a middle-aged British woman traveling with her family and staying at the nearby Sopa Lodge, declared her physical discomfort with the whole experience. 'I don't really like it...too many flies!' she exclaimed. The setting was, she seemed to be intimating, a bit *too* close to nature for her tastes. Non-Maasai Tanzanians involved in the safari industry went as far as to liken Maasai to the wildlife itself. My ethnographic research with Adventure Safaris (AS) as a volunteer office worker regularly involved trips to pre- and post-safari briefings, where reservations agents reviewed itineraries and received feedback from tourists. On the road in Arusha, returning to the AS headquarters after one such briefing, two young men—one dressed in a Maasai shuka, the other not—waited to cross the road. The first young man dashed in front of the van and the other almost followed, stopping at the last minute. Leo, who was driving the van, braked and muttered something in Swahili about how it was like being in the Serengeti; the two reservations agents laughed. Joseph turned to me and explained in English that 'some people are saying that the Maasai here are just like the wildebeest, in the Serengeti, when they cross the road: always following one after the other, not looking but just following.' To these Tanzanian workers—most of whom had never visited the protected areas they described to tourists—Maasai were exotic, like the wildlife.

I heard similar perspectives expressed by non-Maasai Tanzanian driver-guides in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, as well. One warm August day at Irkeepusi, a tourist told me that his driver-guide, Abou, had told him that the Maasai men were like lions: they were 'very lazy,' and the women 'did all the work.' A few days later, at Seneto, I had a lengthy

conversation with a tour group's driver-guide while his clients visited a Maasai home and perused the souvenirs for sale. During our conversation, the driver-guide explained that the Maasai 'were different than other people,' describing their circumcision ceremonies and the fact that the men took multiple wives. 'They are like the impala,' he declared, referring to the male animal's habit of attracting harems of females during breeding season, a comparison I'd heard before. Taken together, these ethnographic examples expose a pervasive perspective among tourism workers that relegates Maasai people to the level of wildlife, whether wildebeest, lion or impala.

In parallel with tourists' ideas and the opinions expressed by safari company employees, the Tanzanian government and UNESCO—much like the colonial government of years past—also see the Maasai as deeply connected to nature. The official NCAA stance, articulated on their 2018 website, claims that the '42,200 Maasai pastoralists' living in the NCA maintain a 'traditional way of life [that] allow[s] them to live in harmony with the wildlife and the environment' (<http://www.ngorongorocrater.org/people.html> accessed 19 January 2018). UNESCO concurs with this perspective, explaining that in Ngorongoro 'wildlife coexist[s] with semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists practicing traditional livestock grazing' (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39> accessed 19 January 2018). Not only the perspective, but the very phrasing—the 'traditional' Maasai living 'in harmony' with nature—has remained virtually unchanged for more than fifty years, since the height of British colonial domination.

The treatment of Maasai people as objectified scenery, as closer to nature and wildlife, persists among tourists to Tanzania. Safari company employees seem to go a step further, likening Maasai to the very animals among whom they appear to live. And finally, the contemporary government continues to view—and therefore, to treat—Maasai living in Ngorongoro as existing in symbiosis with their natural surroundings. These perspectives

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parallel those promulgated by the British colonial government, reflecting the ways in which the landscape of Ngorongoro and Serengeti, the space of the “park,” has been and continues to be racialized.

*“Park” as Racial Project: Producing Whiteness*

Concurrent with the production of this particular, primitivistic Maasai identity was the subtle perpetuation of colonial racial ideologies of whiteness, embedded with a capitalistic tenor of conquer and consume. Reading the above archival record through this lens, we find that the 1933 statement about Serengeti Maasai living ‘naturally amongst the game’ (To CS from PC Hignell, TNA 19038 (1), 249-251) is not simply about Maasai-ness, but an implicit juxtaposition between primitive ‘natives’ living in nature and civilized colonials dwelling in Dar. The reification of Maasai in 1949 as an ‘attraction’ (To Secretary of State for the Colonies, from Governor’s Deputy, PRO 847/41/2, No. 38) objectifies Maasai bodies and livelihoods; they are still, in 1951, a ‘most interesting feature of the Crater’ that should be preserved for ‘American visitors to the Park’ (Acting CS to NP Trustee, August 1951, TNA 24979, 415). Depicting Maasai residents as living harmoniously in nature, ready for tourists’ easy consumption, denigrates an entire ethnic group while simultaneously civilizing the identities of those who would do the viewing—European colonials or American tourists, members of a wealthy (mostly) white leisure class, on safari.

The word ‘safari’ was first introduced to the American public in 1860 (Simpson and Weiner, 1989), and safari tourism was elemental to the earliest imaginings of a national park in northern Tanzania. Part of the impetus for establishing a park in the region of Serengeti was the 1933 International Convention for the Protection of Flora and Fauna of Africa, which describes a national park as ‘set aside,’ in part, ‘for the benefit, advantage, and enjoyment of the general public’ (TNA 24979 (1), 8-12). The ‘general public’ of the 1930s were not the

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colonized, but colonial residents or visitors from abroad on elite hunting and photographic

safaris: those who could afford the extensive costs of obtaining equipment, stocking supplies, and hiring guides and porters. Roosevelt's 1909-10 safari to Kenya and Tanganyika had by then popularized the safari, solidifying the motif of the Great White Hunter as he sought (ostensibly) to collect specimens for the Smithsonian (Haraway, 1989; Steinhart, 2006: 113-137). The cinematographic exploits of Martin and Osa Johnson in the 1920s and 1930s had further glorified the safari and the safari hunter, but brought the camera into the picture, heralding a gradual shift from hunting to photographic safaris.

After the Second World War, and the related lull in international leisure travel, tourism to East Africa began to increase significantly. Annual numbers of visitors to Tanganyika (later Tanzania) soared between 1956 and 1972, 'from four hundred to fifty-two thousand' (Shetler, 2007: 211), at the very time the boundaries of Ngorongoro and Serengeti were becoming finalized and normalized. The 1950s also saw the proliferation of numerous 'safari films' in Hollywood, of which *King Solomon's Mines*, *The African Queen*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *Mogambo*, and *Hatari!* are the most popular examples. The 1959 wildlife documentary *Serengeti Shall Not Die* (Lekan, 2011) heralded a growing interest in nature documentaries, as well, many of which have since featured Serengeti or Ngorongoro. The representation of East Africa has been increasingly mediated (rather than conveyed mostly via museum collections), and shooting with a gun has given way to shooting with a camera on safari. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tourists come to Tanzania equipped not simply with cameras, but with highly mobile devices like smartphones and tablets that allow them to take digital images and transmit their representations—with or without personal narrative—through social media networks online.

From early *New York Times* reports on East African safaris (1924a; 1924b; 1926; 1927) to the dozens of safari memoirs by mostly male (e.g. Barnes, 1923; Begg, 1955;

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Chapman, 1908; Claiborne, 1970; Dracopoli, 1914; Gillespie, 1939; Hollander, 1978;

Heyman, 1985; Simon, 1962; Theroux, 2002) travelers published throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the characteristics of the safari tourist become clear (Bull, 1988; Cameron, 1990; Hammond and Jablow, 1970). In the visual imagery of public culture, the safari hunter is Ernest Hemingway and Denys Finch-Hatton, the white, hyper-masculine film stars of *Mogambo* (1953) and *Hatari!* (1962) and *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996). Twentieth century safari 'adventurers' thus appear to be mostly male and white; upper to upper-middle class; usually American, European, or colonial; the occasional aspiring hunter, serious photographer, career writer or professional scientist. Through their words and images and even bodies, safari is portrayed as an iterative act of claiming the landscape and its inhabitants by shooting with gun and camera, by taking away trophies and photographs. Visitors' relatively easy traversal of protected area boundaries solidifies them, inadvertently emphasizing the differences between those who have ready access and those who do not—political borderlines that are indeed also colorlines.

These boundaries are articulated, at least in part, through the bodies of Maasai residents in the NCA. The 1970 establishment of the MNRT, the 1975 Conservation Ordinance, and the destruction, prohibition, and removal of cultivating households in the NCA from the 1980s (Homewood and Rodgers, 2004) to the present (TNRF 2011) has reified Maasai identity—while at the same time perpetuating a static notion of safari tourists' desires and expectations. In continuing a British colonial ideology in the NCA that hoped to keep Maasai residents 'in their primitive state' (TN Arusha Regional File G1/6, Accession No. 69, quoted in Neumann 1995: 160), living 'in harmony' with nature (TNA 24979 (3), Russell 1950; <http://www.ngorongorocrater.org/people.html> accessed 19 January 2018), the post-Independence Tanzanian government has allowed the racializing practice of safari to continue. Maasai in Ngorongoro and nearby Serengeti have continued to be the foil against

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which the mostly white tourists’ wealth, civilization, and distance from nature could be

measured.

Ethnographic observations and interviews during the tourism season in 2006 confirm the overwhelming whiteness of contemporary safari tourism; though assignation of race is clearly a complicated endeavor (especially in the eyes of the beholder), I met tourists who appeared to be non-white only a handful of times. In 2016, international tourism to Tanzania exceeded one million visitors (Mugarula, 2017), with more than 80% of those visiting the Tanzanian mainland for ‘leisure and holiday’ coming from the US (22.7%), UK (18.9%), Germany (14.4%), Italy (6.6%), Spain (6.5%), Australia (6.0%), or France (5.9%)—countries whose populations are majority white, and in which whites are disproportionately wealthy (NBS Tanzania, 2017: 15). Safari can cost thousands of USD per individual given the rising costs of international air travel, accommodations, protected area entrance fees, and hiring a safari outfitting company. The whiteness of safari is also engrained in Maasai residents’ apparent preference for Americans—white Americans in particular. Through analysis of interviews and ethnographic observations with Maasai workers at the cultural bomas of Ngorongoro, two themes emerged: that of pro-white prejudice, and that of white or American power and privilege.

After a morning spent observing visitors staying at the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge, on the rim of the Crater, I found myself bumping down the unpaved road towards Seneto to visit Koinet (a pseudonym), then-chairman of the tourism ‘village.’ Much later, on that same July day, I would encounter the German tourists described above. I asked him, on arrival, if I’d missed any visitors to the boma. How was business today? He replied in Kiswahili that they’d had 3 or 4 cars of Americans, but black Americans. I looked at him with surprise and dawning distaste. He didn’t like black Americans, he explained, because unlike the white Americans they never wanted to buy anything or give any money to the boma school. In his

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eyes, skin color was linked to wealth, economic behavior, and therefore to overall worth and

value. Koinet's anti-black racism was accompanied by pro-white sentiment—he disdained black visitors because they seemed cheap, preferring whites because they spent money.

This casual racism was validated on two more occasions. A month later, in August, I interviewed the village chairman of Nasinya cultural tourism boma, located on the road between Olduvai Gorge and Serengeti. In our discussion of tourist preferences in souvenirs, he pointed out that the English liked bracelets, Americans preferred necklaces, and Chinese tourists generally didn't want to buy anything because "they didn't like the prices." If Chinese visitors purchased anything, according to one of the Maasai guides at Irkeepusi, they just bought what they thought "looked nice, what they wanted," regardless of "cultural significance." Americans, on the other hand, always "liked to ask lots of questions about culture" and buy items that were "*ya zamani*," or culturally/historically significant. In all three cases, Maasai tourism workers in Ngorongoro show a clear preference for white American tourists—and English and Americans more generally—over black Americans or Chinese visitors.

The preference for white over black Americans also became clear in a rather odd interaction I had early in my research at Seneto. Killing time between tour group visits, I found myself showing photographs of my home, family and friends to residents of the boma.

'Standing there, one of the young male performers asked me why there were people in the US who were black like them, black like Africans. I explained that they were from Africa but the western part, that they were originally brought to the US hundreds of years ago as slaves to work in the farms and plantations....he asked if they had been there for so long, why weren't they white like other Americans?'

Though a discussion about forced procreation, intermarriage and evolution ensued, I was struck by the conversation, particularly given the preference the Seneto village chairman had

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expressed for white Americans just two days earlier. This young man seemed to think that

black Americans should have become white by now—and that they should, perhaps, *want* to become white, whether physically or in terms of perceived behavior and lifestyle. Implicit in this discussion was the perspective of the US as a white country, in which non-white ‘others’ were mis/displaced interlopers.

This theme of American privilege and power also arose in my conversations with a non-Maasai Tanzanian driver-guide for Lion Safaris (a pseudonym). During a late August visit to Seneto, ‘William’ and I discussed the safari industry while his British clients toured the boma and perused items for sale. He said that when he got a group from America—he was planning to go soon to see his brother and his wife in LA, he explained in an aside—he told the other driver-guides at headquarters in Arusha that he had ‘*taifa kubwa*.’ America was (in English) the ‘big country,’ the ‘important country.’ He went on to discuss American spending and largess, much in the way that Koinet had spoken about white Americans. Being American—being a white American—was connected, in these workers’ minds, to (economic) power.

The implicit power of whites and whiteness appeared in one final conversation, in a story one of the cultural tourism workers told me at Longoku boma, located between the crater and Olduvai Gorge, along the Ngorongoro-Serengeti road. During a long discussion about the history of tourism in Ngorongoro, I asked why the young men were responsible for selling goods that had been made mostly by women. Legishon (a pseudonym) explained that the women were afraid because they didn’t know English, or even much Kiswahili. This seemed a likely explanation, especially given the preference for educating boys and the cost of sending children to schools many miles away. But his next statement seemed a bit hyperbolic. ‘In the past,’ he said, the women ‘would hide’ because they were ‘scared of the white people;’ this was true if you went out ‘into the bush even today...If people would see

you they would run away!’ To ‘run away’ from ‘white people,’ to be ‘scared’ and ‘hide,’ is an expression of the perceived power whites hold (and have held) over local Maasai inhabitants, and Maasai women in particular—even if his tale was not actually factual, in a strict sense. Though it seemed an exaggeration, his story was reflective of the ways in which power and control have been and continue to be racialized (and gendered) in the context of safari tourism in Tanzania.

The ethnographic moments discussed in the preceding section can also be re-read as producing whiteness at the same time that they produce Maasai-ness. The objectification in which tourists engage distances viewer from viewed, tourist from Tanzanian. But to objectify and distance is to position oneself in an in-group that has the power to objectify the ‘others’ in the out-group—each group gazes at the other, but the safari tourist comes armed with cars, cameras and cash, emblems of power all. Implicit within such objectification is a racializing discourse that not only frames Maasai identity as living ‘in harmony’ with nature, but that frames the (mostly) white tourists as those who have escaped from nature, no longer living among the wildlife. When tourists talk about the Maasai tourism boma as a ‘circus,’ ‘zoo,’ or ‘theme park’ they successfully dehumanize Maasai residents by likening their residences and livelihoods to animalistic entertainment. At the same time, however, this positions the tourist on the outside of the circus, zoo or theme park, looking in at and consuming Maasai people much as they do the wildlife of Serengeti and Ngorongoro. The framing humanizes the tourist, civilizing her or him while barbarizing Maasai living in Ngorongoro. Both “park” and safari therefore continue to be deeply embedded in racializing discourses that reify and position black Maasai “primitivity” against the “civilizing” instincts of white visitors from abroad.

### *Conclusions*

According to Omi and Winant (1994), a ‘racial project’ is in part a ‘representation’ of ‘racial dynamics’ that ‘reorganize[s]...resources along particular racial lines’ (56); such projects enable ‘racial formation’ in which ‘racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed’ (55). Tracing nearly a century of rhetoric and discourse, from the formal and informal declarations of British colonial officials to the contemporary statements of tourists and Tanzanians, I have argued that the creation of the “park” and the practice of safari are deeply conjoined racial projects. They have enabled a particular racial formation, in which apparent Maasai primitivity, and the identity of Maasai as noble conservationists, is the foil for British colonials’ and tourists’ supposedly civilizing whiteness of “park” and safari.

Yet Maasai have not simply accepted these labels and officially proscribed identities. Maasai residents used fire in the British colonial period, for example, as a form of protest and insurrection (Neumann, 1995). In 1952, the Forest Conservator of Tanganyika acknowledged this, explaining that ‘There is not the slightest doubt that the Masai [sic]—attractive people though they are—take first prize as forest destroyers’ of ‘existing forest reserves’ (TNA 24979 (4), 500a). Clearly not everyone in the British colonial government idealized Maasai people—and at least some Maasai chose to challenge this idealization, as well. Much of the cultivation residents have practiced since the designation of the NCA in the 1950s can also be read through the lens of protest at government restrictions regarding land use and lifestyle (Neumann, 1995). More than fifty years later, in 2006, an NCAA official complained to me about Ngorongoro Maasai practicing agriculture. ‘These people before didn’t farm, they just had cattle,’ he explained, but now they ‘wanted to have shambas [farms]’ and ‘it was causing a lot of problems.’ The NCAA was therefore planning the eviction of these Maasai from the protected area, he confided. Maasai further fomented everyday forms of resistance (Benjaminsen et al, 20013; Scott, 1985) to their official ‘noble conservationist’ racialized

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identity in 2006: by their apparently ‘illegal’ citing of Misyam cultural tourism boma without an environmental assessment; their use of the Ngorongoro-Serengeti road for unapproved commerce; even their use of cell phones in front of tourists—‘modern Maasai!’ quipped one annoyed German visitor at Irkeepusi boma.

By challenging governments’ and tourists’ perceptions of their lifestyles and relationship to the natural world, Maasai residents have helped to expose the racialized nature of these imaginings by confronting their veracity. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is the ongoing practice of safari that, though it facilitates tourists’ performance of whiteness, ironically enables Maasai in Ngorongoro to continually re-inscribe their own meanings onto the landscape of the “park.” It lends them a larger audience, an international platform on which to subvert and frustrate these racial formations and illusions. In recognizing that Maasai attempt to subvert official, racialized identities as well as meanings of Ngorongoro, we can begin to ‘decolonize’ popular understandings of “park” and safari.

To decolonize knowledge about the “park” is to explore the colonial/modern matrix (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000); to privilege ‘pluriversal’ and ‘local’ meanings (Grosfoguel 2007: 212; Mignolo, 2007: 497); to recognize the significance of race-thinking (Grosfoguel, 2007: 217); to emphasize the border spaces of knowledge and practice (Mignolo, 2007: 456); and to write from the standpoint of the global south (Bhattacharya and Larson, 2014; Konik forthcoming). Speaking from these perspectives also helps the racializing projects of “park” and safari to be seen as concerned not only with Maasai identity in Tanzania, but with the larger racial formation of whiteness that has persisted since the British colonial period. The very existence and ongoing presence of protected areas like Serengeti and Ngorongoro, and the ongoing practice of international safari tourism, are evidence of racial projects that continue to solidify Maasai primitivity alongside white privilege. Safari, and its constant re-inscription of protected area boundaries, has developed from a colonial into a neocolonial

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pursuit, one that is an ongoing expression of Northern power—power that is very much

racialized, couched within the language of whiteness.

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