

A conference organized by EIREST, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne-Pantheon, TSWG,
Univ. of California at Berkeley and the Geography Dept. of the Univ. of Geneva

IMAGINING TOURISTS AND TOURISM

Fiction, practices and representations

Paris, June 19th – June 22nd, 2024



The conference aims to explore the links between tourism and fiction, and more precisely to consider tourism and tourists as fictions. It is part of a series of conferences organized since 2011 by researchers from the Universities of Geneva, Panthéon-Sorbonne and Berkeley to explore the links between tourism and the imaginary. The first four meetings had evoked how tourism mobilized imaginaries specific to destination countries, their landscapes, their cultures and their inhabitants. The fifth conference will focus on the imaginary that applies to tourists themselves.

Imaginary tourists

We will examine how the various actors of tourism, as well as the places and practices of tourism, appear in works of fiction. Literature, cinema, theater, song, advertising, etc., stage tourist configurations, which are sometimes at the very heart of these fictions.

Fictional tourists include those invented by the inhabitants of the destination countries, the actors of tourism, but also the tourists themselves. Stereotypes, fantasies and preconceived ideas contribute to drawing up portraits of tourists who, although imaginary, are actors in the

tourism process. We will also ask the question of how researchers, particularly in tourism studies, imagine tourism and tourists.

How is tourism represented? Do these representations have consequences on tourism practices?

Imagining tourists

We propose to analyze forms of tourism that proceed from the imaginary in the sense that they involve tourists traveling in their minds, as armchair tourists. We are thinking of the very recent forms of virtual tourism, but also of older devices which, through text (novels or travelogues), maps, images or complex scenographic forms (panoramas), allow travel without actually going to the destination. How does this imaginary tourism work? What are its connections with actual tourist practices?

Tourist playing with imagination

We intend to consider how, why and to what extent tourists can engage in fiction, playing certain roles or characters (cosplay), telling stories, imagining situations, dressing up as a native, getting into the skin of locals, taking on a role proposed by a place of visit or accommodation (such as staying in hotel which is a former prison), etc. Tourists sometimes have to pretend, and mobilize the tools and contents of fiction to achieve their experience, like visitors to theme parks who emotionally embrace the heroes of their favorite cartoons. More generally, tourists have to suspend their disbelief and engage in fiction whenever they are confronted with staged authenticity. Thinking in terms of *contents tourism* engages one to pay more attention to the creativity of tourists and to the content of the narrative worlds they refer to (rather than on the media, as with film induced tourism, for example).

We welcome papers coming from social sciences, history, comparative literature, visual studies, film studies, etc., but the purpose of the conference is to participate in tourism studies by proposing new insights into tourism, tourists and the imaginary.

Registration fees

The registration fee will cover the opening reception and dinner, and lunches and between-session coffee and snacks. The **Registration fee for student presenters without full time employment will be 0€ and for academics and professionals it will be 200€**. Some support for accommodations or travel may be available for needy students.

Submission Procedure

Please send **abstracts (approx. 500 words)** and a **one-page CV** to Maria Gravari-Barbas (maria.gravari-barbas@wanadoo.fr), Nelson Graburn (graburn@berkeley.edu) and Jean-François Staszak (Jean-Francois.Staszak@unige.ch) **by November 30th, 2023**, in English or French. We will notify contributors of acceptance by **January 2024**.

Organizing Committee

- Nelson Graburn, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley
- Maria Gravari-Barbas, Tourism Studies (IREST, EIREST), Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
- Jean-François Staszak, Department of Geography, Geneva University

Conference Schedule

Wednesday, June 19th, Reception, Opening Banquet, Plenary Address

Thursday, June 20th, Concurrent Sessions, morning and afternoon

Friday, June 21st, Concurrent Sessions, morning and afternoon

Evening: Closing Reception

Saturday, June 22nd, Post-conference excursion