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Introduction: What the Pandemic Does to Tourism, What Tourism Does to the Pandemic

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- 1 Since the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused countless victims and unprecedented upheavals on a global scale, including a large number of restrictions on mobility, particularly international mobility. Depending on the media and the tourism sectors concerned, the pandemic is considered a one-off crisis or a structural catastrophe. For others, it is an opportunity for a “refoundation”, opening a possible tourism “revolution”. It is then a question of asking for whom, about what, and in which places, it is a question of crisis, catastrophe, rebirth or resistance? Devoted to the relations between the pandemic and tourism, defined, according to the articles, as an industry, as a cultural practice and/or as a collective imaginary, this issue is organized around a double question: what is the pandemic doing to tourism? What is tourism to with the pandemic?
- 2 Disaster, crisis and dependence? Faced with the magnitude of the pandemic, many borders are closed in 2020. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has announced a sharp decrease in international arrivals for 2020: -70% worldwide and up to -90% in some countries. These restrictions are presented as catastrophic for the tourism industry. However, the measurement of the effects of the pandemic on tourism remains dependent on the indicators used: international transport and commercial accommodation. So what is a disaster? It can be defined as the sudden appearance of a harmful change: a natural disaster, an attack, the appearance and spread of a virus. To perceive an event as a disaster does not imply to live it as such (Revet, 2007). Disaster is to be distinguished from crisis (Glaesser, 2016). The latter is part of a longer temporality, and can be revealed more than provoked by a disaster. Depending on the point of view of the tourism phenomenon, the pandemic understood as a disaster can be perceived as the trigger of a tourism crisis, or as the revelation of the fact that tourism is a crisis - of modernity in particular.

- 3 Most actors in the tourism economy do not present the pandemic as a catastrophe but as a temporary crisis, to be overcome in order to return to the previous situation as quickly as possible. This is also the case for some tourists in a hurry to get back to the rhythm of their international vacations. The discourse of the crisis is therefore part of the thread of events that, for a century, have interrupted or slowed down international tourism. Some events are recent and well-remembered. This is the case of other pandemics such as SARS in Asia, natural disasters such as the tsunami in Southeast Asia, terrorist attacks, or social revolts perceived as risks for the tourist order, such as the Arab revolutions or the French Yellow Vest movement. In their article "Tourism and Global Health Crises in History", Yves-Marie Evanno and Johan Vincent look at a longer time frame and trace the forgotten history of several health crises and their management. Faced with health risks, the 19th century question is that of the "respectability" (or unhealthiness) of territories. At the beginning of the 20th century, the question of the health (or illness) of tourists, possible vectors of contamination, took over. In 2020, it is in this line that international policies of border closure and very local manifestations of hostility to tourists or secondary residents, in short: to foreigners in the territory, are in place. However, these signs of hostility towards tourists are not commonplace, as Anne Doquet reveals in her article "Tourism and 'Coronization' in Mali: Visitors Safe from Rumors". Indeed, while the pandemic has brought down the tourism economy worldwide, it has had a smaller impact on tourism in Mali, where the sector collapsed, in a context of crisis and war, well before the arrival of the pandemic. But where tourism and the coronavirus have in fact had little to do with each other, they have come together in the extension of grievances against the former colonial power that they have caused. In Mali, the accusations of neo-colonialism, elsewhere made about tourism, point to France as much for its military interventions as for its fight against the pandemic. In these denunciatory discourses, tourism is presented as the victim of the neo-colonial system that created it.
- 4 Whether it is SARS, the Malian crisis or the cordon sanitaire set up in 1834 by the county of Nice, these precedents are circumscribed in time and/or space, with no notable repercussions on global mobilities. However, with the coronavirus pandemic, the whole of humanity is affected, at least in terms of its relationship to the world. A multitude of images of cities or sites deserted by humans are circulating, transforming the most familiar tourist spaces into strange post-apocalyptic landscapes, post-catastrophe. But these images also tell of another life that is starting again. This is what Prosper Wanner shows us in his article "Observation of a Venice in Lockdown". Among the first cities in Europe to be in lockdown, Venice is experiencing a unique moment of "non-tourism" in 2020. Places, people and narratives (re)become visible: nature, *mendicanti* (beggars), *pendolari* (commuters) and public space. The effects of over-tourism having disappeared, this off-tourism will make manifest some of the issues of Venice's strong dependence on tourism, which had not been discussed much until then: the land market, price discrimination, and tourist intermediation. Prosper Wanner questions this dependence on tourism using the ambivalent notion of *pharmakon*, borrowed from the philosopher Bernard Stiegler (2007): at once remedy, poison and scapegoat.

An unavailable world?

- 5 According to Harmut Rosa, our late capitalist modernity is characterized by the desire to “make the world visible, reachable, controllable, usable” (Rosa, 2020, p. 25). Tourism is the industry of this making available: “it symbolizes, promises and expresses a determined relationship to the world.” (Rosa, 2020, p. 97). The pandemic, or the political and sanitary decisions it causes, suddenly makes the world unavailable. This unavailability reopens the possibility of another relationship to the world, even to another world. This is how we can understand certain calls to reject the pre-pandemic “return to normal”. This is how we could consider that the pandemic allowed tourism – understood as a cultural device – to imagine a revolution in its relation to the world. In fact, many voices calling for other relationships to territories, to guests, to non-humans have simply become more audible. Victor Piganiol’s article shows how Airbnb, a multinational that was already decried before the global health crisis, has had to rethink its operations in the face of a kind of inversion of win/lose relationships, with hosts, “little hands” or city actors regaining control over the firm and demonstrating significant innovative capacities. This inversion of relations is not, however, generalizable, as the consequences of the pandemic have been dramatic in some places for the most exploited and least paid tourist personnel, as Lucie Mezuret’s work on racialized waitresses in New York clearly shows. But do tourists themselves really intend to change? The survey conducted by Frédéric Thomas among international tourists highlights a contradiction between their expressed desire for a tourism that is “more respectful of man and nature” and their intention not to modify their propensity to travel or their behavior once the sanitary restrictions are lifted. However, some forms of tourism seem to be gaining in popularity. Often invisible and little considered until the pandemic, popular vacations, so-called “domestic” and/or “proximity” tourism, for example, have received new media and institutional attention. In their article “Tourism Crisis and Vacation Resistance”, Gael Chareyron, Saskia Cousin and Sébastien Jacquot examine the discrepancy between the discourse on the “death of travel” and the reality in France of a summer season in 2020 that was just as busy, if not more so than in previous years. They show that popular vacation practices have resisted more than they have changed. In this context, the notion of differential valence borrowed from Françoise Héritier (2017) allows them to apprehend the current inversion of values respectively associated with international and domestic tourism. Examining the “Reconfiguration of High-intensity Tourism Practices in Times of Pandemic”, Dominique Lapointe and Luc Renaud look at how the maritime region of Eastern Quebec has become a popular destination for Quebecers looking for beach destinations. They reveal that the pandemic has brought about the realization of practices previously restricted to the tourist imagination, while at the same time bringing about the emergence of new, unexpected practices. Far from considering holidaymakers or territories as victims of the health situation, these two texts are interested in what they do despite or with the context - its constraints, but also the “imaginaries” opened by a certain unavailability of the ordinary tourist world. This need for imagination is also at work in the travel blogs examined by Eugénie Pereira Couttolenc in her article “Being Travel Influencers and Maintaining the Desire to Travel during the Pandemic Onset”. She analyzes the discourses of eight popular bloggers dealing with the theme of travel on the web before and during the pandemic. She shows how these bloggers develop new strategies to capture the public while

maintaining in their productions signs of what the author calls, following Jean-Didier Urbain (2011), “L’envie du monde”. The practices, narratives and imaginaries of tourism reconfigured, reinvented or revalued in the context of the pandemic remind us of the need to move away from the impact paradigm (Doquet, 2010) and reinvent research. Based on four survey experiences during a pandemic, the scientific column “Conducting Ethnographic Research during a Pandemic” by Thomas Apchain, Alix Boirot, Clara Malbos, and Prosper Wanner opens up a few avenues in this direction. If, in the summer of 2021, the commercial sector seems especially concerned with reoccupying territories and landscapes, the possible futures of travel, change of scenery, idleness, but also research, remain multiple.

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