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The eroticization of tourist destinations. Spaces, actors and imaginaries

Maria Gravari-Barbas, Jean-François Staszak and Nelson Graburn

Translation : Cecily Graburn

Introduction¹

- 1 Are some places erotic or more erotic than others? Can one have more intense or different sexual experiences in certain places, rather than others - including those in our everyday life? And would the supposed erotic character of these places influence tourists' choices and motivate them to visit them? This question seems surprising at first as it implies humanization (how can we ascribe an erotic character to a place, site or tourist destination?) or the essentialization of places. Yet the many examples of places chosen by tourists for their erotic excitement allows us to ask the question in this way.
- 2 Here it is about putting the emphasis on the places which seem to allow, or at least facilitate, different or amplified erotic experiences because they create a space-time which opens up a gap for tourists for freedom, permissiveness, fantasy or deviance that they usually don't allow themselves or which is not usually allowed in the places and moments of their daily lives. It is also about understanding the processes by which this erotic imaginary was produced and what effect in turn it has on the fantasized place.
- 3 These questions are first of all geographic in the sense that they approach the place as a « condition of human experience » (Entrikin, 2003, p. 557) and they inquire about the way in which places, in a touristic sense, influence human experience. These questions are also historical because the eroticism of places comes out of a construction which follows its own rhythm that fits in a sometimes-changing context and an particular chronology, which has a beginning and sometimes an end. They are also anthropological, because they explore the way in which human beings create a real and/or fantastical context based on the libido's relation with certain places in particular. They are also sociological

and political because they are concerned with social relationships and the power dynamics between partners (between tourists and locals, between tourists and other tourists, and between locals in a touristified place) but also between places (the places of their daily lives and of the tourist destination). Finally, they are economic, because the geography of eroticized places and destinations is also an economic geography formed by the flux of the transmitters and receivers of international tourism.

- 4 This special issue on « the eroticization of touristic places » aims to explore how certain places can be created, transformed or endowed by the erotic imaginaries and practices of tourists. Of course, it is not about essentializing the eroticism of places as an invariable and objective fact, but to grasp the modalities (geographic, historic, cultural, economic, etc.) of their eroticization, and to indentify their logic, actors and consequences.
- 5 Eroticization here is defined as the largely indirect process by which certain actors, acting on a preexisting geographical imaginary or creating one from scratch, turn certain destinations into objects of sexual desire or at least privileged places where one can fulfill such desires, which are likely to attract certain tourists to eventually be able to indulge in specific erotic practices.
- 6 One should then avoid speaking of erotic places or the eroticism of places, expressions which allow one to believe that it is about a quality which belongs to them, and instead speak of eroticized places or their eroticization, to put the emphasis on the process at work and the role of certain actors in this process. But it is easy, even practical, to hide, forget or ignore it and to (prefer to) believe that the eroticism of places and their inhabitants comes from their own qualities, as part of a strategy of innocence (Pratt 1992) aiming to relieve tourists of all responsibility or culpability in the matter, or more generally in that of the common tendency to naturalize social facts and essentialize places. For example, in that way, we more readily and easily attribute the eroticism of Tahiti to the nature of the Wahines² than to Loti's novel or Gauguin's paintings.
- 7 Ignorance of the processes at work is not just a strategy: it is a condition of their success. On the one hand, the eroticization of places is based on fantasies (exotic stereotypes) which would see their erotic efficacy compromised if the actors concerned were aware of their imaginary nature. Tahitian Wahines lose their charm when we lose our illusions in regard to them. On the other hand, this imaginary functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The erotic expectations of tourists lead (i) tourists to adopt an overtly sexual attitude and comportment in their destination, which is the object of so many fantasies, (ii) local actors to consider creating commercial opportunities likely to satisfy these clients who have money, (iii) and to a series of choices which end in the formation of a sexscape (Brennan 2004), so well that the place corresponds in the end to exactly what the tourists had in mind! In a sense, the tourists only have to imagine that saucy young women will offer themselves to them in order for something of this order to actually happen, even if the reasons for which these young women offer themselves to tourists are not those which they would like to believe. The dreams of some, which are perhaps the nightmares of others, have sources which tend to achieve their realization.
- 8 We are not talking here of only those destinations which are just favored for sex tourism, where tourists go to to consume sexual possibilities and which are priced, identified and often preorganized. Certainly, tourism is a highly eroticized practice in which commercial sex and sexual leisure become more and more advertized and practiced (Frohlick, 2016). Yet, in contrary to sex tourism destinations which connect tourists « consumers » with locals « providers » [even if the researchers (Brennan, 2004) have

shown that this relationship is much more complex than one first imagines] the erotic destinations suggest a « erotic serendipity » which concerns first of all the practices and imaginaries of the tourists themselves. It also has to do with the places where one goes with one's own partner because one believes that the erotic, romantic, sexual or libertine experience will be different. An *eros* of a place is also implied between the place visited and the tourist, male or female, who visits it.

Figure 1: Sex tourism- erotic tourism



Illustration of the authors following Prat Forga (2010)

- 9 This introductory chapter is organized in three parts:
- The first part analyzes the erotic character of certain places. This one can be approached as a range of « fifty shades of grey », between the « romantic » places (Pruitt, LaFont, 1995) where couples go for their honeymoon or anniversary; places where we go with a partner to enjoy different experiences from our everyday ones; and sex tourism places where some are offering specific practices (Ryan, Kinder, 1996; Jeffreys, S. 2003) and where the tourist is searching principally for paid sexual relations with new partners.
 - The second part turns to the tourist imaginaries of places. The range is also important here between the imaginary of romantic places, capitalizing on the emotive charge of places (by literary figures like the lovers of Verona or historical figures like Casanova in Venice) and the imaginaries of sex tourism places.
 - Finally, the third part focuses on the process of eroticization of places as it is introduced by the local actors, by *ad hoc* marketing campaigns or by the creation and promotion of erotic tourist products. This part explores the question of historical heritage (wars, colonization) and the way in which it has produced, in an assumed way or not, the erotic character of places.

1-Erotic tourist destinations?

Passion and hatred, love and domination of tourist destinations

- 10 Tourism maintains a multi-prong relationship with eroticism.

- 11 To begin with, the personification of many tourist locations, whether it is latent or apparent to the tourists or actors in tourism, sets up a metaphorical amorous relation between the places and the tourists. Sometimes the tourist destination (and in particular the city) is feminized; « she » is taken by the tourist in relationship of gendered domination. The tourist visit is compared to a penetration of a territory (Sanoussi, this issue). The description of landscapes, their landforms, curves and shapes, often appears as an analogy to the female body. This personification of places is in most of the cases heterosexual and is principally geared toward the white male heterosexual public (Pritchard et Morgan, 2000). In this way, the publicity campaign for the British Virgin Islands is based on allusions to virginity and sexual possession, encouraging the tourists to discover a « *territory of virgin holidays* » (Pritchard et Morgan, 2000, p. 894-895); the « representations of scenery are based on gendered power relations which characterize the societies » (Pritchard et Morgan, 2000, p. 126). Feminized places are sometimes compared to prey, taken by the hordes of tourists, like hunters, without their consent. As Trask (1991: 28) says in the case of Hawaii, the island « *like a lovely woman, is there for the taking. Those with only a little money get a brief encounter, those with a lot of money, like the Japanese, get more* ».
- 12 Tourism can also be compared to the prostitution of places – or the prostitution of the culture of places (Graburn 1983, Trask, 1991), through the commercial opening of the places to the non-resident public. As Sanoussi (this issue) has written in regards to Tangier, tourist places « *belong to the whole world* ». In the case of Venice, Gault (2014) recalls the change that took place in the representation of the city: how it turned from fascination with a city of prostitutes to the denunciation of the prostituted city: « *The city which experienced secular prostitution is today deserted by the prostitutes (relegated to the periphery (...)) or made invisible in the form of leeting escort girls in the wake of stars and jetsetters. Nevertheless, a certain connection was made in Venice between « mass prostitution » and mass tourism, with the aid of successive representations which created myths and helped give them life, so well that that analogies can be tempted when one brings up the phenomena and their relations to Venice* ».
- 13 If this relationship between place and tourism is supposedly a consenting one because it is based on a commercial relationship (tourists pay to buy the city), it nonetheless implies a set of forces creating an unbalanced relationship which privileges the wants and desires of the tourist-payer to the detriment of the places themselves. These two metaphors of rape and of prostitution of places signifies the sexualized relationship between places and tourists and contribute to the creation of an imaginary of domination of places by the tourism industry. They indicate more globally that places are required to suffer for tourism – whether due to the excessive numbers of tourists or the concessions that the place must make to receive them. But occasionally, in an inverted relationship, the tourist spot, like a flirtatious woman, is supposed to try to seduce the tourist. In this way, the campaign *Barcelone posa't guapa* (1993) presents the city of Barcelona as a woman making herself up to receive her visitors.
- 14 But, in the inverse of the metaphor of love and possession of a tourist place by those who love or abuse it, tourist places may themselves be the objects of a veritable passion on the part of tourists, who find themselves overwhelmed by their emotions. The Stendhal³ syndrome denotes a passionate and partly pathological relationship between certain tourists and the place they visit. Stendhal described what he felt after he visited the Santa Croce Church in Florence: « I arrived at the point of emotion where I felt heavenly

sensations from all the arts and the passionate sentiments. As I left the Santa Croce, my heart was pounding, I was exhausted, and as I walked I was afraid I was going to fall down» (Stendhal, 1826). This syndrome and the more or less serious forms of breakdown which are associated with it have been observed in destinations which generate high expectations, such as India (we talk about « India-philes » [Airault 2000]), Paris or Jerusalem.

About the erotic character of tourist places

- 15 The erotic character of tourist places can be examined from a micro and macro angle. Certain places (cities like Paris, Venice, Rome or Bangkok, islands such as Ibiza or Tahiti) have a romantic, erotic or sexual connotation. In other cities, such as Amsterdam, the red-light districts polarize the erotic character of the place. Certain types of environments, like the beach (Coëffé, 2016) or seaside and hot spring resorts (Férérol, this issue), are characterized by an erotic permissiveness. In a more general way, this is also true in certain regional contexts where the geographical contours are more difficult to define: the Orient, the Tropics, the South, islands or the Latin Countries... (Sanoussi, Fuentes Vega, this issue) can be perceived – clearly from the outside – as erotic. Finally, the erotic character of places is linked to certain eras such as Tangier under the French protectorate (Sanoussi, this issue), Paris in the Belle Époque (Montmartre, the bohemians, the Moulin Rouge) or during the German occupation (Gordon, this issue) or again, on the basis of a cyclical timeframe, Venice or Rio during carnival. Conversely, a destination can lose its erotic potential. In the 19th century, Andalusian-loving visitors were seduced by the Spain of Mérimée or Bizet's *Carmen*; Moorish-lovers were fascinated with Algeria; this is less the case now. This is also strongly linked to the evolution of the tourist imaginaries and to the realities of the destination countries.
- 16 Far from being watertight, these spatial-temporal scales overlap and produce « moments of touristic places » (MIT, 2003) with a particular erotic charge: the crazy years at the hot springs resort (Férérol, this issue), the city at a moment of change in its history (Sanoussi, this issue) or a particular urban district during the war (Gordon, this issue) in which different erotic practices are authorized, sometimes established or ritualized, – permissive or even « deviant ».
- 17 Even though the number of tourist destinations which offer « erotic » tours as « package deals » may be relatively limited (so that Evans *et al* [2000 : 538], could state in a reductive way, that « *Erotic tours occur mainly in two general locations; Southeast Asia and the Caribbean; to a lesser extent erotic tours also occur in the Netherlands* »), the erotic character of places is protean and concerns a multitude of places on the planet, reflecting the diversity of tourist gazes and imaginaries about them.

Erotic cities, between romance and sexualization

- 18 Cities embody those places which are not only the most popular in the global tourism industry, but are also loved for their erotic character. In the case of Venice, the tourism industry creates and reproduces the erotic imaginary of the city, claiming that « *since the myth's infancy, she is the city of love, seduction, and sensuality* »⁴. The imaginary of the « festival in Venice » and its erotic dimension makes Venice a « woman-city ».⁵ The tourism industry presents Venice as, « *the naughty libertine* », « romantic », day and night. It

pretends to follow « the traces of historical evidence of the erotic Venetian tradition through anecdotes, legends, popular culture and erotic Venetian poetry »⁶. Lazzarotti labels Venice as an « aphrodisiac » places, with a singular « effect of place »: « love which takes place in Venice cannot be compared to any other love which would take place, or which had taken place elsewhere » (Lazzarotti, 2011). As he defines it, the effect of Venice is not just sentimental, because « being a pair in Venice gives a couple a recognition and a unique social visibility (...) in which others see me in the way in which I like to be seen » (idem). In this dynamic, their presence in Venice can bring lovers a remarkable, *stricto sensu*, existential surplus.

- 19 Gault (2014) establishes the connection, indeed the complementarity « between a certain historical singularity of prostitution in Venice and the touristic myth of Venice as a « city of love », where we come to get married, to spend our honeymoon or to give our pledge of faithful and unique love, even while Venice was the city of wantonness and eroticism » (Gault, 2014). The author highlights the way in which Venice wove prostitution into « the hidden weft » of its history⁷ in constructing its own tourist myth. The ambivalence of this imaginary is well illustrated by the David Lean film comedy (*Holidays in Venice*, 1955). Katherine Hepburn plays the role of an American tourist who is so enthusiastic and naïve that her imaginary and her expectations allow her to be seduced at the same time by the charm of the city and by one of its inhabitants. She ends up by falling for his advances, deeply touched by his romanticism, to finally discover to her great horror that he was a married man and father!
- 20 However, Venice is mostly missing from the surveys of most erotic cities presented by web sites and blogs such as: « *The 8 most erotic destinations in the world* », the « *Top 10 sexy destinations* », the « *20 Strictly-For-Adults destinations* » or the « *25 Sexiest Vacation Destinations on Earth* ». These lists trace a polarized urban geography around certain European, American and Asian metropolises (Table N°1). In this selection - which is only valuable for its ability to show case stereotypic discussions of the places - the romantic character of Venice or Rome fades in comparison with attractions of an erotic character offered by « *the most sexy* » cities.
- 21 Only Paris seems able to play this double role of the most romantic city and the sexiest city in the world. Though Bangkok is also a destination identified with sex tourism, that is not true for cities like Atlanta which are more often seen as business destination. The sexual character of cities oscillates in this way between visions of paid, accessible and/or legal sex, and the « attractions » (shows, cabarets, red light districts, urban beaches, etc.) where the erotic consumption stays mostly visual. Visits to red light districts, like those of Amsterdam (Chapuis 2016, Aalbers and Sabat 2012) or Bangkok (Prideaux et al, 2004; Roux, 2011) don't necessarily proceed from sex tourism, in the sense that most of their visitors did not go there to engage in paid sex. Many chose Thailand or Amsterdam for other reasons, and roam the streets of De Wallen or Patpong happy just to observe what's happening from a purely voyeuristic perspective in which the sex workers (staged in shop windows in Amsterdam), the soliciting and the interplay with the clients constitute a spectacle. Visits to these districts are recommended by the most serious guides, organized in the case of Amsterdam by the municipal authorities; the crowds of tourists found there makes the visit even more banal, the presence of some seems to authorize and exonerate that of the others. Nevertheless, the place is erotic because sexual practices are authorized and visible which are forbidden or invisible elsewhere.

Beaches of desire and erotic paradises

- 22 Andriotis (2010) uses the term « *erotic oasis* » for places « *rallying sexual settings which provide individuals with opportunities to gather and pursue mutually desired sexual interactions* ». Beaches in particular present themselves as erotic places *par excellence*: « *Beaches, as spatially specialized spaces of freedom and non-regulation, allow users to temporarily suspend conventional norms through the expression of social practices and relations* » Andriotis (2010)⁸.
- 23 In surveys of erotic destinations on blogs and Internet pages (Table2), beaches and exotic islands occupy an important place. Islands are microcosms each having their own « look », their own erotic or sexual specialization. Places for *honeymooners* (such as the Seychelles) are few, compared with islands that have an array of permissive areas (bars, clubs, nudist beaches).
- 24 The geography of erotic tourist destinations as they appear in blogs and Internet sites seems to be regionally polarised (concentrated in certain regions of the world and nearly absent in others: for example in Africa, only in island territories such as Cape Verde or the Seychelles). It is also largely a geography of erotic imaginaries depending only partly on an erotic and sexual « possibilities ». The « exotic » character of certain places (beaches with coconut trees), « scanty clothing » and « *joie de vivre* » (the reputation of Reunion island for example) seems to represent in itself an erotic call toward these places, confirming in this way the erotic-exotic association established by Staszak (2008).
- 25 This geography is significantly different from that of sex tourism destinations. Staszak (2012), citing the work of Brennan (2004) recalls the three principal characteristics of these « *sexscapes* ». « *They are located in developing countries but the clientele come from rich countries; the sexual consumption is paid for through prostitution; there are strong inequalities between the clients and the sellers in terms of « race », gender, class, nationality* ». The geography of erotic tourist destinations on the contrary includes mainly European and North American destinations. In the Western erotic destinations, the second and third characteristics may be present, but the choice of destinations by the tourists appear much more complex.

2-Erotic imaginaries of place, in the formation of tourist destinations

- 26 Tourist imaginaries can be defined as spatial imaginaries (a system of representations socially and culturally pertinent to the comprehension of a geographical object) [Staszak, 2012]) which refers to the potential of a place as a tourist destination (Gravari-Barbas, Graburn, 2012). Tourist imaginaries represent a specific part of the vision of the world of individuals or social groups, concerning places other than those of their principal residence or referring to contexts where certain types of leisure activities could take place (Gravari-Barbas, Graburn, idem). As Staszak states (2012) « *applied to sex tourism, it concerns the country of origin as much as the country of destination, and is about three elements, which are susceptible to be constructed and perceived differently: the body, the encounter and the framework – notably the landscape – in which it takes place* ».
- 27 The erotic imaginary of tourist places is not universal: that of Western countries in regards to the destinations of their desires is not necessarily shared by the inhabitants of

those places, except when these stereotypes become internalized by those who are the targets of them. Even if the principal destinations of sex tourism are easily identifiable today, the « geography » of erotic destinations is in flux, as much as the tourist imaginaries which they refer to.

- 28 This erotic imaginary, as polysemic and fragmented as it is, constitutes today one of the principal engines of the globalized tourism industry (Evans *et al*, 2000). In order to understand contemporary tourist phenomena, it is interesting to identify and to characterize the imaginary of places which are considered as erotic by different categories of tourists.

Romance tourism and sex tourism.

- 29 The tourist imaginary of places is closely linked to the romantic quest for an erotic affair. Many works which deal more specifically with female tourists cite their proposal to the effect of the place: « Beautiful scenery acts as a powerful aphrodisiac for the women seeking romance » (Belliveau, 2006 : 99). The work of Wickens (1994, 1999, 2000), for example, emphasizes that female travelers to Greece looked for and attained degrees of intimacy with lovers which they did not usually find in their daily lives (cited in Trauer and Ryan, 2005). Pruitt and LaFont (1995) studied romantic tourism in Jamaica, where the female tourists established relations with the men of the region, which sometimes, but not necessarily, included sexual intimacy. Their study shows that the indirect financial support is more important than immediate payment⁹. Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001) suggest that for North American and European women who travel to the Dominican Republic, the term « consensual love relationships » best describes the tourist-local interaction (cited in Theobald, 2012). The authors report that « *more women were motivated by romance and more men were motivated by the sexual aspect* ». For Bauer and McKercher (2003) tourism and trips can be a unique facilitator of sexual relations, but it can, in certain cases, as far as marriage and the foundation of a new life in the place visited (Loloum, 2018).
- 30 According to Selänniemi, (2003, cited in Theobald, 2012) anonymity, sensory stimulation, reduced social control and new potential partners all have the effect of expanding the range of encounters between people of the same and opposite sex. In many cases, the relationships are brief and well-defined financially (Opperman, 1998; Truong, 1990). Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001) have described in detail the way in which these tourist relations are managed in their study of Dominican beach boys. The beach boys indicated that they never ask directly for an exact sum of money as sex workers often do. Instead they use different strategies indicating their lack of money to pay for drinks, admission to discothèques or taking taxis. Cohen (1982) noted almost identical strategies in earlier studies on Thai women and Western men, Zinovieff (1991) identified similar operating maneuvers in Greece (1991), and Bras and Dahles (1999) identified groups of Indonesian men who « work » the tourists as resources to exploit in Yogyakarta.
- 31 After the fall of the Soviet Union, its ally and former dependant nation, Cuba, was left to rely on its own meagre resources, mainly the export of sugar which Russia had previously subsidized by paying above the world price. This unexpected shock of the 1990s, called the Special Period, led to an immediate effort to replace sugar with tourism. As tourism grew, the emphasis broadened from solidarity, cultural and staid tropical luxury tourism, and combined with more permissive privatization, opened up a field of entrepreneurship

for individual Cubans and households. In the (informal) economy tourists were allowed to stay in private homes for the first time and prostitution was said to have flourished as never before (rumoured to have been condoned by the national government), providing much needed income for the underemployed. Tourist numbers increased tenfold and a new breed of younger more exploratory tourists came to take advantage of the opportunity for “authentic” relationships with ordinary Cubans, avoiding the formal role of following paid guides and eating and staying in government run hotels (Simoni 2015, 2016). For these, mostly European male tourists, the Cuban *mulatta* (dark/mixed race) women loomed in their imaginary as particularly desirable, and for foreign women, Cuban men were sought after companions. The informal economy developed *jineterismo*, a form of personal entrepreneurship wherein the Cubans were able to make friends with the tourists through informal encounters, gaining access to expensive or forbidden places, financial support and, for some, long term partnerships or even an invitation back to the tourist’s country. The tourists were seeking authentic friendships without being exploited, and the Cubans were seeking financial/material support under the guise of authenticity.

- 32 There is a general tendency in research analyzing the erotic encounter between tourists and locals in different terms according to their gender: when the tourists are men and the natives are women, the sexual dimension is highlighted; in the opposite case, they often emphasize the importance of romance. Many testimonials collected from both sex workers and tourists point in this direction. These « romance » tourists were looking for and sometimes were able to establish more lasting relationships, even at a long distance or by returning several times to the same place to reunite with their partners, or by inviting them to immigrate to their country of residence (Pruitt and La Fonte 1995).
- 33 One should be careful not to attribute these results to an imagined feminine and masculine nature, but more to socially constructed, internalized and essentialized gender norms, as much by men as by women, and without a doubt by the researchers themselves, who risk reproducing a stereotypical and reductive vision of feminine and masculine sexuality. Other research shows indeed that certain Western men also look for a sentimental experience (*a GFE, girlfriend experience*) with indigenous sex workers, in which the performances also relate to the emotion, and that certain Western women are perfectly satisfied by the sexual performances of the indigenous men, about which they develop fantasies which do not at all include a romantic dimension.

Historically anchored imaginaries of places

- 34 The erotic imaginary of places crystalizes a group of stereotypes which seem to have the capacity to recur with little change over time. For Mykonos, the homosexual character of place is supposed to be based in antiquity: « *Here we respect Greek antiquity: to be gay is almost a sign of refinement* »¹⁰. History would explain the erotic and permissive character of Berlin: it was the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) (Gordon, 2008; Smith, Fisher, Mennel, 2010; Smith, 2014) which « *launched a certain hedonism in Berlin* »¹¹. In New Orleans, it was « *the prostitutes of the Salpêtrière prison* »¹² linked to the history of the foundation of the city which explains the erotic ambiance of the city. As for Tokyo, it is said that « *the deep and complex history of eroticism in Japan starting in the Edo period (1600-1868)* »¹³ was the origin of the erotic character of the city.

- 35 The Grand Tour, of which one of the principal motivations of the trip was the sexual education of young aristocrats (Pop, 2014), created or revived its own erotic imaginaries of European destinations. In a pre-Victorian context of glorification of libertine sex by Casanova in Venice and the erotic frescoes of Raphael, the Grand Tour was like a vast peregrination in the erotic places of Europe¹⁴. So right from the start, tourism was also seen as an opportunity allowing one to do elsewhere what was hardly tolerated at home.
- 36 In Paris, so emblematic of an erotic destination, the imaginary of a naughty and libertine place was formed at the very beginnings of tourism. Erotic possibilities were constituted since the end of the 18th century. A guide to prostitutes from 1883 lists the most select brothels in the capital, the famous Chabonais¹⁵. This book of pleasures is a private guide which lists the most visible courtesans of the capital, each with their name, address, mini-biography, write-up of their charms and erotic specialities.
- 37 The geographic imaginaries of places (Bédard et al., 2012) mark the destinations in a promising way. The documentary *Legendary Sin Cities*¹⁶ highlights the mechanisms which allowed certain cities to become a magnet for lost souls and refugees of the world. Rejecting the limits of tolerance and freedom, they defined the social, political and sexual culture of the 20th century, such as the Paris of the 1920s, Berlin of the 1920s and 30s, and Shanghai of the 1930s. But imaginaries are also living and evolving. The comparison of the imaginaries of Paris and Berlin, as they appear in the analysis of blogs and specialized contemporary sites is instructive: in Paris, naughty and libertine romance; in Berlin, latex, fetishism and sado-masochism. Since the end of the 19th century, Berlin developed such a reputation for sexual license that it was known by the name of « whore of Babylon » (Smith, 2014). Since the 1930s, Moreck (1931) published *Ein Führer durch das lasterhafte Berlin* (A guide to depraved Berlin) which shows the Berliners behind the scenes. This imaginary remains cogent today and characterizes the specialized sites and guides.

Table 1: The places and the erotic imaginaries of « the most sexy » tourist cities according to blogs

17

Place	Designated places	Verbal comments about the place
Paris	<p>Museum of eroticism, the Moulin Rouge, the Lido and the Crazy Horse (1).</p> <p>The French Cancan, the Folies Bergères, the Moulin Rouge ; grand striptease clubs like the Secret Square or chic and reputable swingers clubs like les Chandelles in the 2nd arrondissement (2)</p> <p>Museum of eroticism (permanent exhibition of contemporary and historic erotic art, such as a collection of rare documents, photos and related drawings of brothels from the end of the 19th century to 1946).</p> <p>Place Pigalle (Here you'll find strip clubs, sex shops, and the French sexy cabarets) (5)</p>	<p>« City of Love »; Paris's living and flourishing debauchery » (1).</p> <p>Paris has made a tradition of itself being sexy!</p> <p>Paris is magic... (2)</p> <p>The City of Love (3)</p> <p>There can be no sexy without sex—at least when you spell it out—so let's venture to the side of Paris where getting your freak on is the norm (5)</p>

Berlin	<p>Cafés, bars and private catered clubs for gay men, transvestites, lesbians and sadomasochists; all sorts of sex and fetish establishments like the Kit Kat Club (1)</p> <p>The 1001 fetish clubs of the city (2)</p> <p>The Gargoyle bar (a dungeon nightclub in the city dedicated to people who fantasize about knockin' boots in the Middle Ages) (5)</p>	<p>Theater of all that relates to decadence, the subversive, the creative and the uninhibited (1).</p> <p>Leather, vinyl, and broad jokes are on the menu (2)</p> <p>Don't shy away from Berlin if you're not apart of the freak nasty fetish circuit, though, pretty much all attitudes towards sex are welcome here, so enjoy as much or as little as you desire (5)</p>
Amsterdam	<p>The Red Light District; The Erotic Museum; Sex Shows, sex coffee shops et sex extravagances (1).</p> <p>The Red Light District (2)</p> <p>The hot district, many burlesque shows of the city, the Sex Museum (3)</p> <p>De Wallen, the biggest Red Light District in Amsterdam (5).</p> <p>De Wallen, Singelgebied, and Ruysdaelkade streets (take a peek at the sex workers advertising their services legally) (5).</p>	<p>The legalization of prostitution, Amsterdam offers shows and theater about sex (2)</p> <p>Amsterdam is also a romantic city just like Venice (1)</p> <p>Famous for its hot district (and its lax laws on the use of marijuana) and this free-thinking spirit applies to couples visiting in search of inspiration (3)</p>
Budapest		<p>Outdoor hot spring baths, steamy environment, sensual ambiance (2)</p> <p>There aren't many things more sensual than getting undressed with a bunch of strangers and enjoying the steam of a natural bath all while being surrounded by some of Europe's most elaborate architecture (5).</p>
New Orleans	Sex shops (2).	The « Babylon » of the South.
Atlanta	Erotic trapeze shows. The famous Frolicon. The parties of Studio Eris (4).	<p>You can never run out of naughty things to do when in Atlanta (4).</p> <p>An « intimate dungeon and event space » (4)</p> <p>It isn't called the Dirty South for nothing. It's the city « where the players play » where they love the strippers, and the word « thick » can be well received. Atlanta is a city that has a certain kind of... magic (5)</p>

Las Vegas	The main street, the casino shows, the sensuality of the ultra flexible dancers of Cirque du Soleil, the cabarets (2).	The city of all vices (2) It's called «Sin City» for a reason. Try and knock out a few of the seven deadly sins while you're there. May we suggest starting with lust and greed? (5)
Cartagena des Indes	Tropical beaches; Plaza de los Coches where the prostitutes entertain men at an unbeatable price (1).	Marine paradise of ephemeral pleasures (1).
Rio de Janeiro	.	An atmosphere of night parties, music, and an energy that is often called « sexual » (2). Think 'sexy city' and you instantly think of Rio de Janeiro (6).
Bangkok	GoGo bars and Ladyboy shows, from intimate massage cabins to raves that last all night Khao Sanh Road District (5).	The Thai have no qualms about being sexually liberal. Go-go clubs are everywhere and if you have aches and pains in certain special spots, someone at one of the many massage parlours may be able to get those kinks out for you (5).
Shanghai	The « Bridge of Lovers »; Hotel Manoir (a special hotel transformed in the 1930s and famous for its orgies). Numerous brothels disguised as karaoke bars (1).	« Paris of the East » (1).
Tokyo	Love hotels, with erotic theme rooms and with accessories (1). Tokyo's Kabukicho area (5). Naughty clubs and Love Hotels (2).	The phenomenon of <i>Geishas</i> ; Japan also known for its innocent schoolgirl and its Buru-Sera fetish industry (1) The Japanese are known for their imagination overflowing with fetishism and fantasies (2)

Chart No 2: The erotic imaginaries of « the most sexy » touristic spots and islands through blogs¹⁸

Places	Designated places	Verbal comments about the place
Saint Tropez	The famous Plage de Tahiti (5)	The party pavilion of the super rich (4) If it's sexy enough for the world's hottest celebs, then it's no doubt one sexy travel hot spot (5)
Cap D'Agde	13 swingers clubs (4). The world's only nudist city (4)	Wonderful weeks of sunbathing and sex; swinging clubs thronged by cosmopolitan libertines (4)

Negril, Jamaica	Resort Hedonism II (4)	At this all-inclusive resort for nudists and the prudes who love them, be prepared to see a lot of private parts, participate in fantasy and fetish nights (5)
Mykonos	Numerous clubs on the island. One of the most beautiful beaches (2).	An island where it's good to give free rein to your desires, whether you're hetero or homo (2). Mykonos, also referred to as an adult's playground, is a place in the Mediterranean where the sexy and sophisticated cosmopolitan crowd flock to when they need some R & R (5).
Reunion Island	Beaches, sometimes coconut trees... (2)	Even in the opinion of its inhabitants, a certain quasi sexual energy exists: scanty clothing, a joie de vivre, a certain open-mindedness, a mixing marked with Indian, Asian, and French influences (2)

The gendered imaginaries of places

- 38 The erotic imaginaries of places, as they are shown in blogs and Internet sites, trace a geography at once hetero and homo-normative. Since the beginnings of tourism and the Grand Tour, the Mediterranean became « *the central theme in homoerotic writing and art from the 1750s to the 1950s and this encouraged generations of homosexual men from less hospitable northern countries to travel South in search of sexual expression and a sense of identity* » (Aldrich 1993: 145). Southern Europe and later, North Africa, have become the promised land for Western homosexuals (Boone, 1995). In this way Tangier constitutes itself as a « sanctuary » of homoerotic culture (Boone, 1995: 100; Waitt et Markwell, 2006: 51; Sanoussi, this issue). The British orientalist and explorer Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) puts forth the same hypothesis of the existence of ageographical « sodadic » zone which includes the north and the south of the Mediterranean, in which homosexuality (called « pederasty » by Burton) is spread and celebrated among the indigenous inhabitants. Nevertheless, according to Aldrich (1993: 145) « *the myth of the homoerotic Mediterranean began to lose its potency* » in the 20th century, which is no doubt related to the development of new gay destinations outside of Europe. If Mykonos, Sitges and Ibiza remain recognized gay destinations, « *a new culture, that of gay urban America, triumphed over the old Mediterranean in the 1970s* » (Holcomb et Luongo, 1996) around Western gay-friendly destinations (San Francisco, Tel Aviv, Sidney, Paris, Berlin) in which the attractiveness is not based on the eroticization of the indigenous people but on the permissiveness of an urban culture and the presence of a gay community.

An eroticizing imaginary of the inhabitant

- 39 Elsewhere Graburn (1983) has suggested that in the early stages of development of tourism to the "III World," very often newly decolonized countries with poor economies and few export industries, it was often suggested that tourism was easily implemented as it required little advanced technical investment or a highly trained labour force. The attractions were already in place; they had nothing to sell but the beauty of their

landscape and their youth; these fresh unsullied resources were illustrated in advertizing and made available to the wealthier tourists from the developed world.

- 40 In all cases, tourism is an embodied practice. It's a performance of the body, in a tourist place and in interaction with other bodies. As Frohlick and Johnston (2011: 1093) recall « *Bodies are always more than simply sexed and gendered bodies. Bodily difference such as age, ethnicity, nationality, and abilities and relations of power such as colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy also determine who we are, what we do, and how we are represented* ».
- 41 Vincent Coëffé (2014) shows the way in which the local inhabitants of Hawaii are eroticized through the figure of the *beachboy* and the *hula girl*. He cites the Hawaii Travel Bureau (HTB) which, in 1929, solicits the imaginary of the visitor in evoking the tanned skin of the local inhabitants: « *The Hawaiians with bronzed skin will show you how to balance yourself on surf boards running at high speed [...] You'll shiver just looking at them from the elegant lanai¹⁹ of your hotel* » (Desmond 1999: 125, Coëffé, 2014).
- 42 It has been suggested by Schien (2000) and others that the ethnic minority peoples of China are "feminized" in relation to the majority Han Chinese people. In tourist performances they are represented primarily by (young) women and some of ethnic groups are the objects of wide spread sexual fantasies by Han men (Graburn 2015).
- 43 The eroticization of inhabitants is not just reserved for sex tourism. It also concerns « romance » tourism as in the case of women who go to Jamaica partly due to the imaginary of the *Rastaman*. But isn't the whole tourist sector concerned, at least for destinations where the indigenous body, in its beauty and its nudity, is seen as a scenic resource? So, couples who go to Tahiti for their honeymoon or their anniversary, who constitute the most important segment of tourists in Polynesia, do not seem *a priori* concerned either with the local prostitution (in any case reduced) nor by the eroticization of the *Wahines*. However, the choice of this destination and the imaginary of Tahiti as an island of love very much adheres to the myth of the beauty and availability of the Tahitian women, whose supposed qualities reflect on Polynesia and constitute a large part of its attractiveness « *the sexually saturated figure of the Polynesian woman, connect the bounty and beauty of their islands with the beauty and sexuality of their bodies* » (Jolly, 1997, p. 100, quoted in Frohlick and Johnston, 2011: 1093).
- 44 Staszak (2012) agrees: « *The exotic body fascinates. Many sex tourists declare themselves dazzled by exotic beauty, described in racial terms: the color and the texture of the skin (many tourists insist on this point), the softness, the hairiness (or rather its absence), bodily odor, the silhouette, the shape of primary or secondary sexual organs, etc., are appreciated as different from those of Western women* ». Pritchard and Morgan (2005), have shown that the tourist magazines have the tendency to represent Asian and Eurasian women in a stereotyped way as being exotic and hyper-feminine women. The advertisements and tourist brochures which sell Tahiti as a tourist destination never fail to put pictures of young, undressed and comely *vahinés* in front. Lisa Grotenhuis (this issue), shows the way in which the exotic imaginary of exoticized and eroticized Oriental women is used to promote a cigarette which evokes dreams, hallucinations and sexual practices.
- 45 The touristic eroticization of inhabitants of a destination often mobilise an imaginary which comes from deep in the colonial culture, particularly the tourists are often inhabitants of these former metropolises and their destination is a former colony. Without the tourists even being aware of it, the categories and the racial stereotypes put in place centuries ago have a profound affect on their representations, expectations and

even their comportment. As much as the imaginary stems from the established power dynamics, it is in the *sexscapes* (Brennan 2005) that there remains a continuity between colonial prostitution and sex tourism. Staszak (2015) shows that visits to the hidden quartier in Casablanca in the 1920s live on in an indifferentiated fashion from colonial prostitution to today's tourism.

An imaginary eroticizing tourists

- 46 In certain cases, the erotic character of the destination is linked more to encounters with other tourists than to the tourist spot itself. For a long time, resort places, in particular those of Club Med, were known for their permissiveness even if sexual promiscuity was not really prevalent there (to the point of drawing mockery, as in the successful film *Les Bronzés (The Tanned Ones)*, P. Leconte, 1978). American students' *spring break* destinations, like Florida, are erotic because of what these tourists do there amongst themselves more than their rapport with the locals. Most of the destinations for gay tourism do not promise meetings between the tourists and indigenous people, but meetings between the tourists, as is clearly shown in the development of gay cruises.
- 47 In a place like Cap d'Agde, the erotic imaginary is that of tourists who occupy the nudist resorts. The naturist district, a recent creation (1970), is a little city under municipal management, with chalets, large apartment buildings, hotels, camp sites, all sorts of commerce, restaurants, bars, beach, private parking lots, gardens and promenades, pharmacies, supermarkets, post offices, emergency services, places of prayer, all accompanied by a discreet but efficient network of private security guards and police (Prat Forga 2010). It is a hermetically sealed enclosure, well-marked, surrounded by a wall, the sea and a little port, with crossing barriers and entry cards: in sum, a banal place. The strong eroticization of the place is essentially linked to the presence of tourists from around the world and the assertive libertinism which is practiced there, notably around swinging activities, based on the temporary exchange of two or more partners, homosexual or heterosexual.
- 48 In contemporary Cuba, a destination with a strong erotic imaginary for younger tourists (Simoni 2015), the dominant heterosexual imaginary is supplemented by the availability of homosexual contacts, especially for wealthier, but not necessarily younger, European men. The Cuban *pingueros*²⁰ usually play the passive role for the insertive male tourists, but the majority are themselves heterosexuals who find this a way of making « easy money ».
- 49 At *Hedonism II* in Negril, which is the prototype for *all-inclusive resorts* in Jamaica, the tourists are both the principal attractions and the creators of the erotic imaginary of the place: « Check your inhibitions at the door. At *Hedonism II*, there are few rules and no limits. Just complete freedom to do what you want, when you want, with whomever you want »²¹ (SuperClubs 1997: 47). Hawkings (1999: p. 97) mentions a couple of tourists from San Francisco, who were in their 30s at the time, who had been coming to Negril for more than ten years essentially to look at other tourists. In this reversal of the situation, the objects of curiosity, and possibly desire, are the tourists: « Guests sunbathing on rafts and on the beach were themselves a tourist attraction for boatloads of Jamaicans swooping in close to shore for a view of the naked foreigners » (Hawkings, 1999: 96-97).
- 50 These practices of eroticizing the tourists thanks to the gaze of other tourists create an atmosphere of sexual liberty and transgression in these enclaves (tourist spots, islands,

nudist districts, hot spring resorts [Férérol, this issue]). They produce « spaces of erotic performance », where the eroticization is due in large part to the way in which the tourists take center stage in these liminal places. According to Edensor (2000), *«internalized rules and habitual routines embodying notions of "appropriate" disposition (...) influence tourists' behavior. (...) practices concerning what to photograph, how to gaze, how to modulate the voice, and what to wear are often subject to self-monitoring and the disciplinary gaze of the group»*. In the naturist city of Cap d'Agde, erotic performances, including sexually permissive practices in public spaces, produce an erotic imaginary where the tourists are both the consumers and the producers.

- 51 Can we talk of the eroticization of tourists by the local populations, especially those who are the object of a touristic eroticization and are likely to be involved in their own exploitation? Certain tourists constitute sexual targets, because of stereotypes and because of the sexual imaginary about them: sometimes this is true for Western women, known for their sexual availability - in particular if they are young, alone and blonde, and if their comportment or their way of dressing are seen as signs of availability. They can be the object of approaches which turn out to be welcome, but also of stares, suggestive gestures, out of place propositions and real harassment, if not actual sexual violence. In societies which are very prudish and in which sexual relations outside of marriage are strictly prohibited, tourist women constitute a real erotic outlet for a young, male and frustrated population. Likewise, in homophobic societies, sometimes it's with the gay tourists that the men can hope to have sexual relations which are more discreet and less likely to give rise to violent reactions. Paradoxically, the permissiveness which makes certain destinations erotic can also do the same for the tourists.

The eroticization of travel

- 52 To complete this picture of the imaginary, one must mention that touristic eroticization concerns travel itself, regardless of destination. The fact of being far from home, where the norms are different and where we escape the watch of close ones or colleagues, is a moment apart, a « time out of time » which opens up erotic possibilities within oneself. For many reasons, which have been studied by researchers in different disciplines (Ryan et Martin, 2001; Taylor, 2000; Eiser et Ford, 1995), touristic displacement seems to function as an amplifier of the senses. Beaulieu and Lévy (2003) claim that *« the situational disinhibition, tied to a feeling of being a different person during vacation, facilitates the transgression of sexual prohibitions in force in the country of origin »*. It is also linked to the local context: the rules and the laws of the country of destination can (seem to) be more supple, and the distance guarantees the visitors a certain moral impunity if it's not legal: « what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas ».
- 53 Furthermore, the transportation itself constitutes a place and a moment apart, and has its own erotic imaginary, in particular travelling by boat, plane or train. The luxury of long voyages on the Orient Express or transatlantic liners have evoked many fantasies; today, the Mile High Club is made up of those who claim to have had sexual relations in the cabin (or the toilets !) of an airplane.

3-The erotic production of tourist places. Actors and processes.

The eroticization of the destination

- 54 Owsianowska (this issue) analyzes the 2005 promotional campaign *Welcome to Poland* articulated around a masculine-feminine binary trying to positively turn around the cliché images of the country. On one side « *a muscular male in overalls brandishing a suggestive gray pipe at groin level, with a background scene of mountains and waterfalls* » (Rettman, 2005) on the other side « *an attractive nurse* » (Owsianowska, this issue). It's not that Poland stands out as a prime erotic destination in print and digital media. The situation shows the contrast between the destinations which flirt with eroticism and sexuality in their communication (and which are known – or not – as erotic destinations) and those which try to modify an image of a sexual destination which no longer corresponds to the touristic ambitions of places. The tourist actors and the local decision makers thus find themselves at the start of the construction of an erotic destination as well as the deconstruction of a previous inherited and sustained erotic imaginary.

Historical heritages

- 55 The erotic character of places is linked to tourist imaginaries which characterize them, and, upstream, to the actors and practices which produce them, sometimes deliberately. It is dynamic because it evolves over time. It follows times of peace, as well as times of war, colonial or other occupations due to conflicts and wars. Graburn (1983) followed the literature on sex tourism in East Asia where accounts showed that organized groups of Japanese men went overseas for sex tourism, often as a reward from the companies that employed them, to the very same countries that they had invaded during World War II, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand and so on (with the exception of mainland China). Though defeated in the war, they returned and again « invaded » these poorer nations, eventually setting up resistance and shutting down the worst of these practices. One can suggest that such organized sex tourism, like war, is a forcible penetration of the weaker (female) by the stronger (male).
- 56 Similarly, the sex tourism imaginary of Southeast Asia finds its roots in the Vietnam War where R & Rs (Rest and Recreation centers) were set up for American troupes, and it developed into an important sex trade (prostitution, erotic or pornographic shows) (Evans, Forsyth, & Wooddell, 2000; Bryant, Forsyth, 2005) on top of the already flourishing local Thai sex practices (Forshee, Fink and Cate 1999). No less than 700,000 American military personnel went to the R&R in Thailand; their expenditures in the brothels, bars and hotels were estimated at 40% of the Thai export earnings in this period (Clift et Carter 2000). After the Vietnam War, Bangkok's Red Light Districts diversified into other markets (Cohen, 1982; Roux, 2011), including commercial sex circuits for the European and Japanese tourism markets, until new resort centers like Pattaya and Phuket emerged (Prideaux et al, 2004).
- 57 Many campaigns created the promotion of sex tourism in Thailand. The *Thailand Express Sex Tour*, compares Bangkok to a « giant brothel » (Hantrakul, 1988). Thailand is often associated with the sex industry including by many who don't know the country. To

modify or try to evolve this sexual image is difficult, because sex remains a taboo subject in Thai society (Nuttavuthisit, 2007; Bishop et Robinson, 1998). To accept this sexual image, is also to recognize and acknowledge the fact that Thailand is associated with sex and prostitution problems. No marketing campaign financed by the Thai government has exploited its image as a destination for erotic experiences. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on the contrary has to present the country as an exotic destination, emphasizing the cultural diversity of the country, its picturesque beauty, its beaches, its large array of opportunities for shopping, and its culture. However, the image of Thailand as an erotic destination remains fruitful and competes with exoticism as a motivation to travel to Thailand. The anti-prostitution laws were reinforced in 1986, with severe sanctions for the clients, buyers, brothel owners and even the parents of prostitutes, but nowadays this has not led to the cessation of erotic tourism on the industrial level in Thailand (Nuttavuthisit, *idem*).

The marketing of erotic destinations

- 58 If the erotic or sexual imaginary of some places was not exactly what was hoped for or anticipated, in many cases it is produced and accompanied by the agents of the tourism industry who use idealized sexual images to sell the place.
- 59 Since the beginnings of tourism, the iconography of certain places plays with the eroticized image of a woman, not only as a personification of a place (a city or seaside resort for instance), but also in an approach highlighting permissiveness which was supposed to characterize these places. This image of a woman (sophisticated, sporty and above all a sunbather) « *should first of all charm the male tourist, the one who has money, making him want to travel to a spot. Who better than a pretty, elegant, scantily-clad sunbather to encourage this desire to be part of this seaside aristocracy ?* » (Pecout et al, 2010, 17).
- 60 The eroticization of places is also the result of the work of marketing specialists who often use idealized sexual images and information to sell destinations. «Sun», «sand» and «sex» are used together to construct an image of a «sun, sand and sex» destination, or individually to describe the characteristics of a destination. Attractive female bodies (and, more and more, male ones) are used in the promotional iconography to create a hedonistic imaginary. The use of images with a sexual connotation to attract tourists is not new. As Prideaux et al say (2004), since the 1920s, a time in which the women's normal swimming suit covered the body from the neck nearly to the knees, the promotional brochures produced by Pan Am for Hawaii showed images of bare breasted native women inviting tourists to visit the island. In his study on the official tourist communication of Hawaii, Goss (1993: 663), identifies the terms : paradise, marginality, liminality, femininity and *aloha* as persistent themes of the discourse of these places. His analysis of the promotional materials of the Hawaiian Visitors' Bureau, showed that these images and the terms « lush, green, luxuriant, rich and fertile » contribute to the establishment of a group of sexualized expectations about the place (Goss, 1993, p. 676, cited in Frohlick, 2011).
- 61 What ultimately seems more interesting to grasp through the analysis of the role of agents in the communication and/or marketing with an erotic and sexual connotation, are the moments of bifurcation: the « demure » destination which becomes naughty, or the other sultry destination which would like to mellow out. These image changes are not always possible or within the reach of all the destinations, because they involve a long

and continuous image strategy. Las Vegas is without doubt here also one of the most interesting examples in its capacity to maintain an image (and a touristic product) with a sexual connotation while showing itself equally as a high-end playground for adults. But the ubiquity of the image has its limits: Las Vegas had to fill in some gaps by very quickly by including the image of being a popular family destination (Gravari-Barbas, 2001).

Conclusion

- 62 The articles assembled in this issue offer varied perspectives on the eroticization of places (spots [Férérol], sites [Vijayakumar], cities [Sanoussi], countries [Owsianowska], larger regional contexts [Grotenhuis, Fuentes Vega]) or more specific periods (Gordon, Férérol). Some are provocative: to speak of tourism, a *fortiori* erotic or sexual, for the German soldiers during the occupation, could hurt (Gordon, this issue). Others, establish stunning routes to speak of the eroticism of certain destinations, as Grotenhuis does (this issue) through the practice of a cigarette, erotic substitute in the mouth of an Oriental woman. Vijayakumar establishes a parallel between the erotic character of the representations of a major world heritage site (Khajuraho, in India) and the local tribal Bedia community the as a source of prostitutes. Sanoussi highlights the evolution of Tangier as a destination, in its relationships with the hetero and homo-oriented imaginary. Férérol presents the subversive character of certain places, in this case hot spring resorts at the beginning of the 20th century, where, in a seemingly impossible but perfectly dramatized framework, erotic transgressions are performed and staged. Fuentes Vega (this issue) deconstructs the myth of the *Latin Lover* as an international imaginaire and shows its almost auto-erotic character, just as Owsianowska shows, in Polands tourist marketing campaigns, the country's erotic gaze is directed towards itself.
- 63 All the articles are in this way characterized by positioning which show the complexity of questions associated with eroticism, tourism and places. They show a multitude of approaches to the titillating eroticization of places for the purpose of marketing of sex tourism. Far from exhausting the question of the way in which tourism interferes with the erotic imaginary of places, or the erotic practices in relation to certain tourist sites, or even the eroticization of places by tourism, the articles offer a set of intersecting situations. Thus, we encourage the reader of this issue to take advantage of this series of texts which, beyond their individual fascination when read separately, offer a kaleidoscopic reading of the eroticization of tourist places.

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NOTES

1. This issue of *Via@ Tourism review*, like that of *Teoros* published in 2018, comes from a colloquium on "The Factory of Places of Desires: Tourist Erotization", organized by the signatories of this introduction in Geneva in June 2015.
2. Or Vahines; the Polynesian word for woman, especially wife or girlfriend.
3. Term after the Italian psychiatrist Graziella Magherini, who practiced at Santa Maria Nuova Hospital, in Florence http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2009/09/01/ces-syndromes-qui-frappent-les-touristes-et-rangers_1234348_3224.html
4. <http://www.tourisminvenice.com/blog/tag/venise-insolite/>
5. Idem
6. <https://www.venise-acqua-vite.com/visites-guidees/venise-en-amoureux>
7. The history of the city, involved for many centuries in large scale overseas and European trade typical of a commercial and enterprising society, would have helped to emerge a kind of uninhibited morality, allowing the city to escape, for several centuries, the usual moralistic oppositions or judgments of the past as of our present (Gault, Idem).
8. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160738310000447>
9. See also the excellent video *The Toured: The Other Side of Tourism in Barbados*. (Wright 1991)
10. *Top 10 des destinations sexy*: <https://www.voyage-insolite.com/2013/01/28/top-10-destinations-villes-sexy-pour-adulte-coquin/>

11. *Les 8 destinations les plus érotiques du monde* [The eight most erotic destinations in the world]: <http://www.edreams.fr/blog/les-destinations-les-plus-erotiques-du-monde/>
12. *idem*
13. *idem*
14. Perrottet (2011) "Stufetta del Bibbiena", a bath room covered in pornographic paintings by Raphaël in 1516.
15. *The Pretty women of Paris. Their Names and Addresses, Qualities and Faults, being a Complete Directory or Guide to Pleasure for Visitors to the Gay City, 1883 (anonymous, edited at the author's expense)*
16. Remerowski Ted, CanellMarrin, (2005) *Legendary Sin Cities*" 1) Berlin - Metropolis of Vice 2) Paris - The Crazy Years 3) Shanghai - Paradise for Adventurers. Documentary, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
17. Sources:(1).*Les 8 destinations les plus érotiques du monde*: <http://www.edreams.fr/blog/les-destinations-les-plus-erotiques-du-monde/> (2).*Top 10 des destinations sexy*: <https://www.voyage-insolite.com/2013/01/28/top-10-destinations-villes-sexy-pour-adulte-coquin/>; (3). *Top 10 des destinations les plus sexy*:<http://selection.readersdigest.ca/voyage/destinations-de-voyage/top-10-des-destinations-les-plus-sexy/view-all/>; (4). *20 Strictly-For-Adults Destinations Around The World You Need To Visit Before You Die*<https://www.scoopwhoop.com/AdultOnly-Travel-Destinations/#.ca7vd0809> (5). *The 25 Sexiest Vacation Destinations on Earth*:<http://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2013/07/the-25-sexiest-vacation-destinations-on-earth/st-tropez> (6) *The 10 sexiest cities in the world* <https://www.wanderlust.co.uk/content/10-sexiest-cities-in-the-world/>
18. Source:*Idem* Table N°1
19. Open veranda, characteristic of hotels in Hawaii.
20. Literally dick [penis] workers, sex workers who service tourists.
21. SuperClubs, 1999, "SuperClubResortstravel brochure".

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