

## World Tours and Globetrotters: actors, practices and imaginaries

Who goes around the world, how, why, and with what results? This is the question this conference seeks to answer, hypothesizing that tourist tours of the world reflect and/or operate a major mutation in regimes of historicity and geography. Following Magellan's circumnavigation (1519-1521), other navigators and explorers, then scientists, soldiers, diplomats, politicians, merchants, writers, artists and sportsmen and women circumnavigated the globe. Their journeys were part of their work, and few of them embarked on what was still an adventure. At the end of the 1860s, the completion of global transport networks made this easier, and the first tourists were able to travel around the world for pleasure. The world became a tourist attraction that was more than the sum of its parts: it was about experiencing the size and roundness of the planet. The word globetrotter appeared in 1870; in 1872, Thomas Cook offered the first package tours of the world, and Jules Verne published his *Around the World in 80 Days*, a major source of inspiration for globetrotters. Several travelers and journalists, such as Nellie Bly in 1889, went on to attempt to beat Phileas Fogg's record. Others sought adventure and fame by attempting to girdle the globe by car, on foot, by bicycle, by pushing a barrel, or later by sailing solo (Golden Globe Race, 1968). The development of around-the-world tourism was marked by major milestones. In 1909, New York tour operator Clark offered the first round-the-world cruise. In 1947, Pan Am launched the first commercial round-the-world flight service. In the 1970s, the democratization of air travel enabled some young people to backpack around the world. In 2001, Denis Tito paid \$20 million for a trip into space, orbiting the Earth 128 times. In the 2020s, the Covid 19 crisis, the fight against global warming and the fear of "over-tourism" are leading to a reconsideration of the most predatory practices: can we still go around the world for pleasure? From cruisers who cross the oceans on luxury liners to backpackers who set off on adventures with three pennies in their pocket, from round-the-world jet trips in three weeks to quests that last several years, from people who ply the seas in sailboats to those who circumnavigate the planet in tandem, there are many ways and reasons to do - or not? - around the world. But it takes time and money. While going around the world "for real" remains the privilege of a minority, it's easy to go around the world "for fake": by looking at a globe or a planisphere, by reading an account of a circumnavigation or a treatise on geography, by leafing through a book of engravings or photographs, by visiting an international exhibition, and so on. In the wake of the enormous success of Jules Verne's novel, literary, theatrical and cinematographic dramas featuring circumnavigations have proliferated, as have games that allow players to circumnavigate the globe by moving a pawn around a board. The word tour is now within everyone's reach. The experience of those who travel virtually as globedreamers is, of course, different from that of globetrotters. We propose to focus on the following four questions: What is the imaginary world of round-the-world travel? What are the motivations, references, expectations and worldviews of globetrotters? What ideologies do they carry with them, and to what extent do these ideologies determine their circumnavigation? In particular, how does globetrotting fit into the tensions between the celebration of technical progress and that of nature, colonialism and its denunciation, nationalism and universalism, modernity and its critique, capitalism and degrowth? What do travelers learn from their round-the-world experiences? How do they describe their experience, and what do they learn from it? Which word are actually tourists trotting around? What qualifies a trip as a world tour? How does it differ from other tourism practices? What are the key moments, the outstanding experiences, the unmissable stages and the highlights? What worlds do globetrotters ignore? Are all globetrotters touring the same world? What does it mean for the world to have become a tourist attraction? What difference does it make to the world to go around it, or to be able to go around it? How does touring the world affect space-time and the experience of being human on Earth? How does it affect humanity? What means are available to enable globetrotters to tour the world? What infrastructures, facilities, legal regulations, information sources, tourist products, etc. enable globetrotters to operate? How are world tours promoted and sold? How do trains, boats, planes and other modes of transport affect their modalities? What means are available for virtual world tours? If there were a lot of these around 1900 (a

kind of round-the-world mania), what is their place and function today? Who are globetrotters? What is their economic, sociological and cultural profile? What role does distinction play in their practices? How do they fit into the matrix of class, gender and racial domination? What are their countries of origin? How does their profile determine their practices? Can we draw up a typology of globetrotters, and on the basis of what criteria? How are they received in the countries they visit, and how do they interact with local populations? How do they differ from other tourists? How are they represented, from Phileas Fogg to the Harlem Globetrotters? Papers are invited from all disciplines (geography, sociology, ethnology, history, literature, visual studies, law, economics... and, of course, tourism studies) and on all types of world tour, past or present. Papers on non-tourism world tours are welcome if they shed light on globetrotters' practices by way of comparison or counterpoint, whether they travel the world for real or forged. The symposium will take place on June 11-13, 2025 at the University of Geneva and at the Swiss National Museum - Château de Prangins, where the exhibition De Jules Verne aux premiers globetrotters, la manie des tours du monde will be on display. The exhibition is part of the FNRS research program Faire le monde: premiers globetrotters et tours du monde touristiques (1869-1914).

Discipline

Sciences sociales

Date de début

mer, 06/11/2025 - 09:00 - ven, 06/13/2025 - 17:00

Ville

Geneva

Lieu (salle, adresse)

University of Geneva and at the Swiss National Museum - Château de Prangins

Organisé par

EIREST, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, TSWG, Univ. of California at Berkeley and Univ. of Geneva

Geography Department

Informations pratiques

Calendar December 1, 2024: submission of paper proposals (abstract of less than one page and CV of less than one page) December 15, 2024: acceptance decisions are announced January 15, 2025: program announced Contact The symposium is co-organized by Jean-François Staszak (University of Geneva), Nelson Graburn (University of California at Berkeley) and Maria Gravari-Barbas (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne). All correspondence should be addressed to: [aroundtheworld@unige.ch](mailto:aroundtheworld@unige.ch)

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