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21st Century Landscape Sustainability, Development and Transformations: Geographical Perceptions

Giovanni Messina, Bresena Kopliku (Eds)

13. Cruising to the poles: narratives and representation of “last chance tourism”

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Abstract

Despite the setback that cruise tourism suffered between 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more recent years have seen an important recovery in this tourism sector. For over a decade, alongside the typical cruise offer, the possibility of going on a cruise to the poles has increasingly established itself. Currently, some cruise companies propose this type of route as a form of “last chance tourism”: visit the Arctic and Antarctica environment and live an experience represented and perceived as difficult to repeat considering the rapid changes that these regions of the planet are undergoing. This chapter aims to reflect on this dynamic from the point of view of cultural geography by analyzing some online products, such as advertisements texts on the website of one of the companies offering various cruises to the poles, the Ponant Cruise Line. Indeed, through the analysis of these narratives it is possible to reconstruct the symbolic imagery on which the cruise offer at the poles is based: a typical example of “last chance tourism”. In particular, the study focuses on the way in which marketing rhetoric combines economic

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and tourist needs with the sustainability needs of travel, tourists, and ships, making it attractive to visit natural environments and anthropic landscapes already subject to potentially disastrous climate changes. Furthermore, reconstructing narratives and representations of cruise tourism at the poles allows us to reflect on the way in which the fragility of natural and anthropic environments that are still extreme in many ways is perceived.

Keywords:

Geography – Cruise Tourism – Poles – Arctic and Antartica – Last Chance Tourism - Cultural Geography – Sustainability and Landscapes – Narratives



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