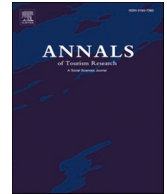




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## Exploring bad faith in tourism

Duncan Light, Lorraine Brown\*

Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Bournemouth University, UK

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## ABSTRACT

Previous applications of existential philosophy to tourism have focused on the work of Martin Heidegger but have neglected the contribution of Jean-Paul Sartre. This paper examines the relevance of Sartre's concept of 'bad faith' to tourism. Bad faith is a way of living based on inauthenticity, self-deception, and disregard for the Other. The paper explores the manifestation of bad faith in three contemporary scenarios: flying and its implications for climate change; conforming to the expectations of other people through social media engagements; and sex tourism. It argues that bad faith - compromising and denying individual freedom - underpins many tourism practices. The paper ends by considering future opportunities for using Sartre's philosophy to understand tourist experiences.

## Introduction

This paper develops a link between tourism and the concept of 'bad faith', proposed by the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980). Sartre contended that when we are in bad faith (*mauvaise foi*) we are knowingly lying to ourselves, and we experience feelings of uneasiness about this attitude. Sartre states that, within the constraints of their situation, people are free to choose their 'project', their way of living, with full consciousness of and responsibility for their choices. He is emphatic that this excludes choices that oppress or consciously exploit others. Sartre articulates many facets of bad faith that a person adopts in everyday life in order to evade an uncomfortable truth. Bad faith is "a project of disguise" (2003 [1943], p.76), an attempt to "flee from myself, to escape myself" (2003 [1943], p.80). Bad faith is an attitude that can be adopted in any situation, whether at home or away.

Since bad faith is commonplace (Stevenson, 1983) it is unsurprising that it might also be present in tourism. While tourism may catalyse existential authenticity and good faith, we show in this paper how tourism can conversely create a situation where tourists may knowingly adopt certain behaviours that make them feel uneasy because they are misaligned with their self-ascribed values and priorities. Within the home environment, people may attempt to live authentically in good faith. However, it may be more challenging to maintain congruence with their life priorities during travel, and choices may be made that conflict with an individual's 'project'. Tourism may present a range of choices with which some tourists may struggle. As Mkono (2020, p. 3) observes, "most of us must contend with ambiguous and often antagonistic multiple identities and roles". Actions that leave a sense of bad faith may have consequences for enjoyment of the holiday. On the other hand, tourists may adopt behaviours whose negative consequences for others they either ignore or deny to themselves – a further manifestation of bad faith.

This paper is situated in a growing body of research which explores the connections between existentialist philosophy and tourism. Most of this work has drawn on the work of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). In particular, there has been considerable attention to the relationships between tourism and existential authenticity (for example, Brown, 2013; Canavan, 2018; Kirillova & Lehto, 2015;

\* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University, UK.  
E-mail address: [lbrown@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:lbrown@bournemouth.ac.uk) (L. Brown).

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Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017a; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Rickly-Boyd, 2012, 2013a; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Wang, 1999). A range of other aspects of Heidegger's thought have also received attention from tourism scholars including issues such as dwelling (Pons, 2003), alienation (Rickly-Boyd, 2013b; Vidon & Rickly, 2018; Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, & Buzinde, 2014); the *Spielraum* (literally translated as play space) (Brown, 2013), existential anxiety (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017b), and *gegnet* ("abiding expanse") (Light & Brown, 2020).

However, for all his prominence as an existentialist philosopher, Sartre has attracted much less attention than Heidegger within tourism research. Instead there has been only sporadic use of Sartrean philosophy to understand tourism (and Sartre's ideas are frequently employed in conjunction with Heidegger's). For instance, Brown (2013) draws on both Heidegger and Sartre to explore the role of tourism as a catalyst for existential authenticity, focusing on the link between anguish and the avoidance of freedom. McDonald and Wilson (2013) similarly make use of Sartre's thought to consider issues of authenticity and relations with others within volunteer tourism. Canavan (2018) also utilises Sartre's ideas of freedom and responsibility to explore the interplay between existential avoidance and authenticity among backpackers. In a later paper (Canavan, 2019) he mobilises ideas of anguish and alienation to highlight the connections between travel in literature and existential alienation, avoidance and authenticity. Kirillova and Lehto (2015) underpin their five-phase model of the vacation cycle with, among others', Sartre's and Heidegger's notions of anxiety and authenticity. Similarly, Kirillova et al. (2017a) use the same notions to explore the transformative power of tourist experiences.

Sartre's concept of bad faith has attracted little attention among tourism researchers, beyond occasional references to the concept (for example, Brown, 2013; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Mkono, 2020; Rickly-Boyd, 2013b). Perhaps the most detailed application of Sartre's ideas to tourism was published in a philosophy journal (LaSusa, 2013) and is consequently little-known by tourism scholars. Indeed, LaSusa begins by noting the scarcity of Sartrean analysis of tourism. She argues that tourism and travel create possibilities to escape anguish and bad faith associated with home and everyday life (mirroring the extensive body of tourism research that examines travel as a way of searching for existential authenticity). However, the sense of obligation to visit certain places and sights when travelling acts as a constraint on individual freedom of choice, meaning that many tourists live in bad faith. In acquiescing to demands and obligations to visit "must see" sights the tourist evades "the potential anguish of the freedom of travel" (p.41). While undoubtedly revealing, this analysis is limited to a particular type of tourism and tourists, namely "checklist tourism" (p.33) and the imperative (predominantly among mass tourists) to see as many iconic sights as possible in a short space of time. As such, it is aligned with a long tradition of scholarship which argues that mass tourism is about rather superficial experiences. Nevertheless, LaSusa shows the potential for examining bad faith in tourism.

A second important paper (and, to date, the only detailed analysis of bad faith by tourism scholars) is by Wassler and Kirillova (2019). They develop Sartre's ideas in a novel way in a study of the 'local gaze' in destinations; that is, how tourists are gazed upon by local people. They implicitly make use of Sartre's concept of the "the look" (Sartre, 2003, p.276) through which the human subject becomes an object in the eyes of others. In a part of their analysis they argue that, in some instances, tourists enjoy the experience of being gazed upon and self-consciously adopt a "tourist-esque" stance, "through which the tourist conforms to the expectations of his/her onlookers" (p.124). Interpreted from a Sartrean perspective this is an instance of tourists taking a position of bad faith by voluntarily subduing their individual freedom and authenticity, and choosing to conform to the expectations of others. In this way, such tourists temporarily become what Sartre termed a 'being-for-others', that is, an object to be gazed upon. However, in other cases tourists can resist the objectifying gaze of the local community and seek to take control of their own self-image and become a 'being-for-itself'.

Overall, then, the issue of bad faith in tourism is under-explored and, while LaSusa (2013) and Wassler and Kirillova (2019) have both made important contributions, both papers do so in the context of very specific tourist practices. Therefore, in this paper we seek to build on these contributions and explore in detail the nature of bad faith within tourism. We do so from a position of genuine interest in, and commitment to, Sartre's thought, and a recognition of what it has to offer in understanding tourism.

Our discussion is grounded in a detailed reading of Sartre's landmark text *Being and Nothingness* (originally published in 1943, first published in English in 1957) which set out his existentialist philosophy (all page numbers in the subsequent discussion refer to the 2003 edition). We begin by discussing the object, passive status of what Sartre calls the "In-itself" and the dynamic, self-choosing properties of the "For-itself". We then explore the link between the For-itself, freedom and choice. This is followed by a discussion of the ways in which bad faith manifests as a denial of freedom. We then consider the presence of, and recognition of, the subjectivity and freedom of the Other. The main part of the paper then examines three scenarios in which bad faith may manifest itself among tourists: flying behaviour; smartphones and social media engagement; and sex tourism. Any discussion of bad faith in tourism inevitably overlaps with issues of tourism ethics, a topic that has generated a considerable research literature. However, due to reasons of space and our wish to develop a detailed analysis of bad faith, we do not work through the ethical implications of bad faith (although this is a rich field for future research).

## Sartre and bad faith

### *The for-itself and freedom*

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre highlights the difference between the In-itself (*en-soi*), an object that is solid, passive, inert and without consciousness, and the For-itself (*pour-soi*), which is fluid, dynamic, self-realising and free. Sartre therefore distinguishes two types of reality: being an object of consciousness and consciousness itself. The object of consciousness exists as an In-itself in an independent and non-relational way. The For-itself has freedom to act, within its facticity, that is, within the constraints of the environment.

The For-itself is associated by Sartre with freedom: “freedom is actually one with the being of the For-itself” (p.475). With freedom comes choice, which is synonymous with the consciousness of the For-itself: “one must be conscious in order to choose...choice and consciousness are one and the same thing” (p.484). Choice is liberating: “to be is to choose oneself” (p.463). However, the companion of choice is anguish, which results from the realisation that we can perpetually modify our choices; nothing is fixed or certain: “we are perpetually engaged in our choice and perpetually conscious of the fact that we ourselves can abruptly invert this choice” (p.486). Sartre states that the multitude of choices facing us (and the different life direction carried by each one) provoke anguish, as well as the understanding that we alone are the “incontestable author” (p.554) of our choices. Nobody else can be held responsible for the choices we make: “I choose myself from day to day.. I am without excuse” (p.555). Anguish also results from the recognition that the individual may take the wrong course of action.

### *The flight from freedom into bad faith*

Having ascertained that the For-itself has choice, Sartre argues that denial of its freedom constitutes bad faith: it is “an inner disintegration in the heart of being” (p.93). Bad faith is a “flight before anguish, an effort at distraction” (p.44), resulting from the responsibility associated with choice. However, a flight from freedom is ultimately impossible because of the unavoidable fact that a conscious being cannot deny its own status as a For-itself: it is trying “to flee what it cannot flee, to flee what it is” (p.93). Refusing to acknowledge one’s own freedom is a choice made by an individual even if they prefer to deny their responsibility for this approach to life. As Sartre (2007, p. 23) stated, “the first effect of existentialism is to make every man conscious of what he is, and to make him solely responsible for his own existence”.

Living in bad faith is described by Sartre as lying to oneself. There is always an uncomfortable sense that a project of bad faith is being adopted. The freedom of the For-itself is a pre-condition for the project of bad faith which denies it. Sartre makes the individual responsible for the transformation of the For-itself into an In-itself. There may be a periodic uneasiness, and a person living in bad faith may experience “abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith.” (p.73). The only way to escape self-deception is through authenticity, that is, choosing a way of living which reveals the existence of the For-itself as both factual and transcendent.

Sartre offers many examples and aspects of bad faith. One concerns a woman on a date who denies to herself that the man she is with is trying to seduce her, in order to delay a difficult decision. Another example is the man who distances himself from his past in order to evade reproaching himself: “bad faith ... apprehends me positively as courageous when I am not so” (p.91). There is also the well-known example of the café waiter who over-identifies with his role to such a degree that he discards the burden of his freedom as a For-itself. A further example is adopting a passive stance to life, as manifested in the person who complains that they cannot do anything about their situation. Sartre states that a person is never identical with their current state; rather they are responsible for sustaining it. Similarly, somebody with a fatalistic attitude about themselves or their situation is trying to flee their responsibility for choosing to remain in a certain way. Another manifestation of bad faith is when a person avoids their freedom by devoting themselves excessively to others.

### *Bad faith and the other*

Bad faith is not just revealed in the denial of one’s own freedom but also that of the Other whose existence Sartre introduces through his discussion of “the Look”. It is through the Look that the For-itself apprehends that they are not alone and that the Other has the power to objectify them. They become aware of the Other’s freedom and subjectivity: “the apprehension of my being outside myself, for the Other.” (p.297). There is a realisation that the Other is free: “in experiencing the look, in experiencing myself as an unrevealed object-ness, I experience the inapprehensible subjectivity of the Other directly and with my being. At the same time I experience the Other’s infinite freedom.” (p.294). Bad faith involves acting to deny the Other’s freedom or pretending to oneself that the Other is an object, an In-itself. Sartre evocatively illustrates the powerful impact of the Look on the For-itself through the example of someone peeping through a keyhole, completely absorbed in what they are doing until they hear a floorboard creaking behind them. They become aware of themselves as an object of the Other’s look, and they experience shame:

Here I am bent over the keyhole; suddenly I hear a footstep. I shudder as a wave of shame sweeps over me. Somebody has seen me. I straighten up. My eyes run over the deserted corridor. It was a false alarm. I breathe a sigh of relief. ...Far from disappearing with my first alarm, the Other is present everywhere, below me, above me, in the neighbouring rooms. (pp.300–301).

The perceived judgement of the Other results in a sense of shame even when the Other is absent: “it is only probable that the Other is looking at me...the look becomes probable because I can constantly believe that I am looked at without being so.” (p.299). For some, the judgement of the Other in their objectified state is strong: “fear is the discovery of my being-as-object on the occasion of the appearance of another object in my perceptive field” (p.312).

Sartre illustrates how bad faith manifests itself in the treatment of the Other when indifference and blindness act to deny their subjectivity and freedom: “I practice a sort of factual solipsism; others are those forms which pass by in the street...I scarcely notice them; I act as if I were alone in the world.” (p.402). Sartre gives examples of people we ignore: the ticket-collector, the waiter, passers-by. By ignoring the Other’s subjectivity, the For-itself is reassured and at ease in its own sense of importance.

### **Bad faith in tourism practice**

Having set out Sartre’s ideas about consciousness, freedom and bad faith we now examine three scenarios which illustrate bad faith

within tourism practice. These examples are intended to be illustrative and illuminatory in examining three central aspects of Sartre's conception of bad faith: guilt and denial; obligation and conformity; and the freedom of the other. However, we do not claim that these examples are exhaustive, and there are many other aspects of bad faith in tourism that await investigation. While our discussion may, at times, appear critical of the behaviour of leisure tourists, we are keen to emphasise that we do not intend to be judgemental. As Brown (2013) observes in her discussion of the avoidance of freedom, it is fully understandable (and commonplace) that people may seek to avoid unpalatable truths. Furthermore, individuals face complex choices in everyday life and when on holiday; while they have to take responsibility for those choices, their decisions on how to act are not always straightforward. As Sartre (1947) acknowledged, the attempt to lead an authentic life is in constant negotiation. Similarly, Heidegger (1962) noted that people are always in danger of 'falling' into inauthenticity and must constantly bring themselves back to an honest appraisal of their situation.

#### *Guilt and denial: flying to a holiday destination*

When mass tourism took off in the 1960s and 1970s few leisure tourists gave any thought to the environmental consequences of flying. At this stage the nascent environmental movement had little impact in highlighting the issue of climate change. Furthermore, the contribution of aviation to anthropogenic climate change was relatively limited, due to both the restricted scale of aviation and the dominance of other sources of atmospheric pollution. Tourists could enjoy the freedom to fly, without feeling uncomfortable about their impact on the environment. Until relatively recently tourists remained largely unaware of the environmental consequences of their decision to fly. For example, studies in the early 2000s revealed little awareness of how tourism in general (and aviation in particular) contributed to climate change (Becken, 2004; Gössling & Peeters, 2007).

Today the situation is very different. Aviation has expanded dramatically, driven by the liberalisation of air travel, the emergence of low-cost airlines, and rapidly increasing demand in emerging economies (Scott, Hall, & Gössling, 2012). The total number of passengers flying is forecast to increase from 3.5 billion in 2015 to 7 billion in 2034 (International Air Transport Association, 2016). Moreover, the contribution of aviation to the emission of greenhouse gases is steadily increasing. In 1992 aviation was responsible for 2.4% of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1999). However, such emissions have increased dramatically and aviation is forecast to account for between 15% and 40% of total global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 (Higham, Cohen, & Cavaliere, 2014). Furthermore, awareness of the contribution of aviation to climate change has increased dramatically. This has produced the "flyer's dilemma" (Cohen, Higham, & Cavaliere, 2011; Higham et al., 2014): the recognition that, while flying offers numerous personal benefits, such choices also have significant environmental consequences. Flying is increasingly becoming a moral dilemma for some air travellers.

Various recent studies have explored the attitudes of leisure tourists towards the consequences of their decision to fly. These have argued that flying produces anxiety, ambivalence and even anguish among some leisure tourists. Some feel guilty about taking flights (Cohen et al., 2011; Higham, Reis, & Cohen, 2016) since they are aware that their actions contribute to climate change. Yet they are able to suppress their guilt to justify their continued use of air travel (Higham et al., 2014). As Cohen & Higham (2011, 330) noted "air travellers may struggle with their consciences over CO2 emissions, but ultimately sweep the guilt aside". In other cases, flyers reported denial of their own responsibility in contributing to climate change (Gössling, Hanna, Higham, Cohen, & Hopkins, 2019; Higham et al., 2014) and a belief that responsibility for addressing the problem lay with other parties, particularly governments (Cohen et al., 2011; Hares, Dickinson, & Wilkes, 2010). A related response was simply to ignore the issue of climate change altogether when flying (Higham et al., 2014; Higham et al., 2016).

Continuing to fly while aware of the environmental impacts is often interpreted from a psychological perspective with reference to the attitude-behaviour gap (Cohen et al., 2011; Higham et al., 2016). It can also be seen as a manifestation of bad faith, as "a lie to oneself" (Sartre, 1943, p.71). Tourists who choose to fly despite knowing the negative consequences for the environment can be seen to be evading their own freedom, their personal responsibility. They are perhaps concealing from themselves an uncomfortable truth in order to avoid making an inconvenient choice: "the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth" (p.72).

Indeed, many fliers appear to feel uneasy about their actions. This is illustrated in the comment of a flyer interviewed by Higham et al. (2014): "It's awful, isn't it? You feel guilty but you justify it to yourself in some respect" (p.471). Similarly, an interviewee in a study by Cohen et al. (2011, p.1082) stated: "I'm still going to want to go to Australia every year. I guess there's a certain sense of guilt there but I kind of ignore that because I know that this is my leisure trip, this is my holiday and I want to go on that holiday". Such feelings of guilt reflect the uneasiness that Sartre describes as the companion to bad faith. This guilt does not allow people to believe the lie they tell themselves. It illustrates what Sartre identified as a tenet of bad faith: "a certain art of forming contradictory concepts" (p.79). This can be seen to be reflected in those individuals who adopt pro-environmental behaviour in their everyday lives but are prepared to suspend their environmental concerns when taking a holiday (see Higham et al., 2014; Higham et al., 2016; see also Mkono, 2020).

Furthermore, many studies have established that few fliers are willing to change their behaviour and fly less often (Cohen et al., 2011; Cohen & Higham, 2011; Hares et al., 2010; Randles & Mander, 2009). For example, an interviewee cited in Higham et al. (2014) stated: "So I guess I'm conscious of it [climate change] but I'm not really prepared to do anything about it" (p.468). This participant is honest about their decision, their unwillingness to take action that is personally inconveniencing. However, to continue to fly while recognising the environmental consequences is an exercise in bad faith because they are fleeing their capacity to use their freedom with responsibility, not just for themselves, but for the global community. Those who look to governments to take action may also be indicating an attitude of bad faith because it represents an avoidance of agency in order to permit an ongoing use of air travel for reasons of convenience. This passive attitude negates responsibility for change, undermining widespread calls for people to reduce the number of flights they take (Gössling et al., 2019). While Sartre acknowledged that freedom is circumscribed by facticity (external

constraints), this does not imply that the individual has no opportunity to make choices within that situation. Sartre (1943) states that all choices are situated and all situations involve choice. Furthermore, ignoring the consequences of flying despite abundant scientific evidence can be seen as a choice that people make because it allows them to avoid change.

A pressing question is whether it is possible for a tourist to fly in good faith. A strategy commonly advertised is carbon offsetting whereby the flier pays for something (usually the planting of trees) that removes from the atmosphere the carbon dioxide generated by their flight. This may allow the flier to claim that their individual flights are carbon neutral without needing to change their established behaviour. Offsetting may be mere ‘virtue posturing’, and therefore a form of bad faith (Mkono, 2020). However, if a flier believes that offsetting their individual flight can reduce environmental damage then this can be an attempt to live in good faith. At the same time, a flier may be aware that most other people do not offset their flights: indeed, rates of offsetting are extremely low, ranging from 2 to 10% (Ritchie, Sie, Gössling, & Dwyer, 2020).

People are confronted with complex situations both in the home environment and when travelling. Their decision as to how to act may be fraught with anxiety, particularly if they are aware, as Sartre (1943) insists, that only they are responsible for their choices. For example, a tourist may want to take his or her family on the holiday of a lifetime and may be prepared to offset the carbon emissions in order to take this holiday without guilt. They may recognise their individual act of offsetting will do little to limit global climate change. Nevertheless, this is a way to seek to fly in good faith even if, of itself, it will make little difference to global greenhouse gas emissions. Sartre consistently argued that people can only be judged by their actions: their prevarications will not be taken into account. Indeed, choice and responsibility are central to Sartre’s development of the idea of “*engagement*” (commitment) (De Beauvoir, 1963), which demanded that people take responsibility for ensuring that their actions are beneficial in some way to the common good.

Even before the dramatic drop in air travel caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was apparent that the unchecked expansion of aviation may have been at a point of change. A phenomenon known as *flygskam* (flight shame) had appeared in Sweden where various people in the public eye (most notably Greta Thunberg) had renounced flying. This had spread beyond Sweden: a 2019 survey reported that one in five people in four countries had reduced the number of flights taken, with some renouncing flying altogether (BBC, 2019). This raises the possibility that social pressures will mean that fliers could no longer ignore or deny the consequences of their behaviour. In other words, flight shaming may have emerged as a new social norm (Gössling et al., 2019), driven by peer pressure, and setting itself up against individual desire. This may constitute a change in the nature of the facticity that influences and constrains the freedom of the For-itself, creating new possibilities and making it harder for people to evade their responsibility. One could argue that yielding to the social pressure of flight shaming might in fact serve as an example of bad faith, as the tourist feels pressurised into adhering to the norms imposed by a certain subsection of society. However, it is likely that only those who feel some guilt about flying respond to flight-shaming: in this respect, they are avoiding their accountability, and flight shaming encourages them into good faith. Furthermore, Sartre was adamant that with freedom comes responsibility, so that it is not acceptable to argue that an individual can follow their own needs without considering the consequences of their actions.

Indeed, the notion of shame is important in Sartre’s discussion of the influence of the Other on the For-itself: “I am ashamed of myself before the Other...the Other is not the object of the shame; the object is my act or my situation in the world.” (p.296). The look from the Other (and the judgement implied) offers a glimpse of the For-itself in their eyes: “the Other teaches me who I am.” (p.298). Perceived judgement of the Other can feel ever-present and it can result in a sense of shame and in a change in behaviour, therefore acting as a regulating force. When trying to mobilise a change in flying behaviour, this understanding can be used to increase social pressure on individuals.

#### *Obligation and conformity: tourism, social media and smartphones*

There is little dispute that social media has transformed the very essence of tourism (Sigala, 2019) through providing “new channels for the production and circulation of meaning in tourism experiences and imaginations” (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014, p.47). In particular, social media allows individuals to immediately connect and share holiday experiences with an observing online audience. But for young people in particular, social media is also used in highly strategic ways for impression management and self-presentation, in order to project identities, enhance self-esteem, and win respect and affirmation (Lo & McKercher, 2015; Lyu, 2016; Sedera, Lokuge, Atapattu, & Gretzel, 2017; Sigala, 2019). At the same time, many individuals take inspiration from the holiday experiences of others with whom they are connected, so that social media is an increasingly important influence on holiday choice (Sedera et al., 2017).

The corollary of social media is photography. Social media networks such as Instagram and Facebook allow the immediate sharing of holiday photographs on an unprecedented scale: Facebook has over two billion users, while Instagram has over a billion users (mostly aged under 35) who upload 95 million photographs each day (Smith, 2019). These networks allow tourists to be simultaneously actors within, and online narrators of, their holidays (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016). Holiday photography is undertaken strategically with a future online audience in mind (Lo & McKercher, 2015). Furthermore, photographs viewed online increasingly shape the holiday motivations of others. One indication of this is a 2019 survey of 2000 British adults which reported that 55% of respondents had booked holidays based on images viewed on Instagram (Wright, 2019). Similarly, a 2017 survey of 1001 Americans reported that 46% of Generation Y and 45% of Millennials chose a holiday based on what they had seen on Instagram (Expedia Media Solutions, 2017; see also Sigala, 2019).

One practice - the selfie - now dominates tourist photography among young people. As Dinhopl & Gretzel (2016, p.131) argue “the camera is now not only more pointed at the self than before, but often pointed at the self by the self”. Consequently, it is tourists themselves - rather than destinations - that are increasingly the principal focus of tourist photography. This has given rise to the “intratourist gaze” (ibid, p.132) as tourists gaze upon other tourists on social media. Some tourists visit a destination specifically to reproduce for themselves photographs (particularly selfies) previously viewed on social media (see Sigala, 2019). The extraordinary



growth of the selfie leads some to suggest that the tourist experience is increasingly orientated around narcissism and exhibitionism (Canavan, 2017; Siegel & Wang, 2019). However, as the selfie has become commonplace, some young tourists compete to produce ever more extraordinary images in order to generate attention on social media (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016).

There are many aspects of such behaviour that can be interpreted as bad faith. LaSusa argues that senses of obligation which underpin many tourism practices act as constraints on individual agency and freedom, resulting in bad faith. Sartre states that freedom brings a liberating “choice of myself in the world and by the same token it is a discovery of the world” (p.483). However, freedom of choice is voluntarily curtailed by a self-imposed obligation to follow the lead of others. It is, in other words, a choice to deny individual freedom. This choice has been amplified to an extraordinary extent by the smartphone/social media combination.

Many young people are highly conscious of how they are seen by others online. Social media are dominated by constant comparison with others, particularly peers (Siegel & Wang, 2019; Sigala, 2019). For some young women in particular, social media leads to self-objectification through the gaze of others (Lyu, 2016). Such behaviour embodies Sartre’s statement that “The Other is always present to me” (p.304): some people may live with a constant awareness of how they are seen and judged. Through their social media activity, young tourists do not avoid the Look of the Other. Instead it is invited: they seek out their “being as an object for a subject” (p.304). They desire to be gazed upon and to be objectified. There are conditions to this solicitation, however. The Look that objectifies the For-itself is sought only if the desired objectification takes place. The For-itself in this case aims to control the gaze through careful management of the impression made on the Other. Sartre stated: “If someone looks at me, I am conscious of being an object.” (p.295). This awareness in the tourist using social media is pronounced, and there is a desire to influence the way that they are looked at.

Furthermore, some young tourists increasingly aspire to match the holiday experiences or unique selfies of others viewed online. Various studies have reported that constant reference to the social media posts of others leads to (benign) envy (Sigala, 2019). Such envy and self-comparisons mean that holidays might be structured and curtailed through reference to what others have chosen before them. In so doing, people may limit their own choices. Sartre stated that bad faith involves an attempt to “constitute myself as being what I am not” (p.91). The result of constant comparison with others means that they are not the tourist they may want to be if they were not so consumed by their continual awareness of the presence of the Other.

These ways of behaving can indicate bad faith in three ways. Firstly, the judgement of the Other cannot be completely controlled, since the Other is “a free, conscious subject” (p.295). This can be tormenting, and for this reason Sartre put the now-famous words into the mouth of a character in one of his plays: “hell is other people” (Sartre, 1944). Secondly, by objectifying themselves in the Other’s eyes, people undermine their own freedom as a For-itself, being too willing to subject themselves to the judgement of the Other, and allowing their behaviour to be modified accordingly. Thirdly, they may put forward a version of themselves that is inaccurate, a disguise. Like the waiter in the café, their behaviour may be just “a representation for others” (p.83) (see also Wassler & Kirillova, 2019).

Self-comparison with online others can also lead to anxiety. Avid social media users crave recognition in the form of likes, shares and positive feedback (Lo & McKercher, 2015; Lyu, 2016; Sedera et al., 2017). Indeed, satisfaction with a holiday is increasingly evaluated not in terms of an enjoyable experience, but through the reaction of an online audience (Sigala, 2019). Sartre notes that the felt presence of the Other can be pronounced; a person can be tormented by thoughts of what the Other thinks of them: “I am possessed by the Other” (p.386). Failure to receive affirmation can lead to disappointment or envy. As Sartre postulated, people live constantly subject to the judgement of the Other who is a “threat to the order and arrangement of your whole world... Your world is suddenly haunted by the Other’s values, over which you have no control” (p.124).

#### *Bad faith and the freedom of the other: sex tourism*

Sex tourism is an emotive and widely-debated phenomenon, which has attracted considerable attention within tourism studies. Reliable data about the extent of sex tourism are lacking (Carr, 2016) and stereotypes and generalisations abound. For example, the typical sex tourist is usually considered to be a relatively affluent man from a developed country travelling to the developing world to purchase sex from local women driven into the sex industry through poverty. In reality, sex tourism is more complicated and nuanced (ibid).

For a start the importance of sex within travel motives can vary considerably (Carr, 2016; O’Connell Davidson, 1996; Oppermann, 1999). Furthermore, sex tourism is not exclusively undertaken by men since women also travel for the purpose of obtaining sex in a destination (Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001; Weichselbaumer, 2012). Neither is sex tourism always an appropriate term: both men and women may travel in search of a relationship and romance, rather than simply purchasing sex (Garrick, 2005; Padilla, 2007; Bishop & Limmer, 2018). So too may sex workers seek a relationship with their clients as a means of economic advancement (Brennan, 2001; Omondi & Ryan, 2020). Finally, not all women who work in the sex tourism industry are driven by poverty and, for some, it is a freely-chosen form of work (Omondi & Ryan, 2017, 2020; Rivers-Moore, 2010).

Leaving aside the broader moral questions raised by sex tourism, it can be argued that bad faith may underpin the practice in numerous ways. There are many instances – most notably the “Macho Lad” identified by O’Connell Davidson (2000) – in which the sex tourist treats the sex worker as an object or commodity (Garrick, 2005). In particular tourists frequently dehumanise sex workers, treating them as “an inexpensive commodity to be easily purchased, consumed and disposed of” (Garrick, 2005, p.501). Sex tourism is often unpinning by a desire for women who are submissive and subordinate in order to authenticate hegemonic masculinities (Bishop & Limmer, 2018). Moreover, as various authors have pointed out, such desires are frequently underpinned by racist stereotypes of exotic otherness (Brennan, 2001; Garrick, 2005; O’Connell Davidson, 1996). Furthermore, Garrick (2005) argues that some western men seek sex tourism because they are discomfited by western women’s expectations of gender equality. Sex tourism can thus be seen as a form of flight from the freedom that Western women have embraced.

Sex tourism epitomises what Sartre terms the treatment of “Other-as-object”. The objectification of the Other involves “possession of the other’s flesh...treating the Other as an instrument” (p.421), as though the sex worker does not exist as a For-itself. The Other is a “subject-totality” (p.317), and treating the Other as an In-itself is a form of bad faith. It is a kind of arrogance, involving the affirmation of one’s own freedom while denying that of the Other. However, Sartre states that the Other can only be “a qualified object for me only to the extent that I can be one for him” (p.319). Therefore, the project to objectify the Other is essentially doomed. In specific reference to sexual intimacy, Sartre refers to a desire to “strip the body of its movements as of its clothing and to make it exist as pure flesh” (p.411). However, the Other cannot be treated in good faith as an object: “we cannot perceive the Other’s body as flesh, as if it were an isolated object...that is true only for a corpse” (p.367). Indeed, the futility of the project is underlined by Sartre, as “only the dead can be perpetually objects without ever becoming subjects” (p.321).

Another form of bad faith among sex tourists involves the abuses of both their own freedom and that of the sex workers they use. This is something that is underpinned by the inequalities in power and wealth between them. One example is choosing not to use condoms (Bishop & Limmer, 2018; Manieri, Svensson, & Stafström, 2013) thereby potentially endangering their own health and that of the sex workers. This can be seen as indifference to the Other, another form of bad faith: “I brush against people as I brush against a wall...I do not even imagine that they can look at me...those people are functions” (p.402). Indeed Bishop & Limmer identified that sex tourists were not bothered about being labelled as ‘bad’ and more concerned to perform their masculinity as “tough, virile and fearless” (p.282). Sartre states that the most extreme manifestation of bad faith through the denial of the Other’s freedom is exemplified in sadism: The sadist’s goal is “to incarnate the Other through violence”. The overlap with prostitution is clear in that many sex workers are subjected to sadistic treatment by their clients, sometimes resulting in severe injury (Du Mont & McGregor, 2004).

However, some sex tourists may feel deeply uncomfortable about their actions and motives, representing another form of bad faith. From a review of the literature, Garrick (2005) highlights the “White Knight”, a figure who feels guilt about their actions and does not wish to be associated with the label of ‘sex tourist’. Such men may seek to excuse their behaviour on the grounds they contract with fewer women for sex, and may demonstrate sympathy and compassion for sex workers. They may also seek to justify their behaviour on the grounds that the payment offered for sex contributes to the well-being of the sex worker. In so doing, the White Knight seeks redemption by regarding himself as “Provider and Saviour” (ibid, p.504). However, the attempt to flee from the truth of the transactional situation they enter is fruitless. As Sartre stated, “it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. That which affects us with bad faith must be conscious of its bad faith.” (p.72). There will be frequent reminders of the inadequacy of the situation, “a perpetual feeling of lack and of uneasiness” (p.403).

This uneasiness may be accompanied by feelings of shame. Sartre argues that “shame is by nature recognition. I recognise that I am as the Other sees me... shame is shame of oneself before the Other” (246). The White Knight recognises both the morally dubious nature of his actions and also his self-deception in attempting to justify his behaviour. Sartre argued that there is “a primary reaction to shame, and it is already a reaction of flight and of bad faith” (p.314). The White Knight is lying to himself, convincing nobody. He will also be aware that, in the eyes of the sex worker, he is just another client and that she is unlikely to differentiate between his supposedly more enlightened attitudes and those of other clients.

The Look is important here. When the sex tourist becomes aware of the judgement of the sex worker, his ruse may fall apart: “one look on the part of the other is sufficient to make all these schemes collapse and to make me experience once more the transfiguration of the Other” (p.320). They may become aware that they are viewed with indifference or even disdain; their efforts to control the way they are perceived become perhaps fruitless. They may “apprehend the Other as free” (p.374), and be resigned to accepting this.

However, some sex tourists (both male and female) do not seek just sex but also connection, companionship and even romance from the sex workers they encounter (e.g. Bishop & Limmer, 2018; Brennan, 2001; Herold et al., 2001; Omondi & Ryan, 2017; Oppermann, 1999; Weichselbaumer, 2012). Some are lonely at home and are seeking affection that is missing in their lives (Omondi & Ryan, 2017). Others may seek a reinforcement of their desirability (Garrick, 2005), particularly if they feel disempowered or rejected in their home country (Bishop & Limmer, 2018). Others may seek a compliant potential partner whom they can control and mould to suit their desires (Brennan, 2001). Their objectification of the Other in this case is paramount: “my constant concern is to contain the Other within his objectivity, and my relations with the other-as-object are essentially made up of ruses designed to make him remain an object.” (Sartre, p.320). However, this is a fragile stance as the freedom of the Other cannot be denied indefinitely: “each of my free conducts engages me in a new environment where the very stuff of my being is the unpredictable freedom of another” (p.286).

Some tourists enter into a short-term but exclusive relationship with a sex worker during their time abroad, even referring to the woman as their girlfriend (Bishop & Limmer, 2018). This may meet the tourist’s need for affection and companionship but it could be seen to be characterised by bad faith. These are fantasy relationships that the tourist is well aware are not sincere or meaningful (see Bishop & Limmer, 2018). The tourist knows that, once they have returned home, the sex worker will transact with other clients. Sartre stated that “the liar is in complete possession of the truth he is hiding.” (p.48). The sex tourist in such situations probably knows that they are lying to themselves but they make this choice in order to meet their desire for companionship or romance in the short-term, leaving their long-term desires unfulfilled. Ironically, they are telling themselves that the Other, the sex worker, is using their freedom as a For-itself to choose to be with them for romantic rather than financial reasons. It is portrayed as a free choice, concealing the real motivation for the sex worker’s decision.

Meanwhile, some sex workers may attempt to deceive their clients (Brennan, 2001; Omondi & Ryan, 2017, 2020) by professing love for them and a desire for a meaningful long-term relationship in order to escape the circumstances of their lives, their facticity, and possibly emigrating to a richer country. Such a strategy may be particularly effective with older tourists who seek romance and a relationship rather than simply sex. Such deception may be interpreted as a form of bad faith in that it is based on misleading and therefore denying choice to the Other (the tourist). Of course, the tourist may be well aware of this deception (Brennan, 2001) but be willing to go along with it for the desired relationship. Ultimately, there is a shared desired outcome that can only be achieved through

mutual bad faith. Both parties are in possession of the truth that they knowingly hide from themselves.

## Conclusion

This paper has made a distinctive contribution to the growing body of literature which has engaged with existentialist philosophy as a lens through which to better understand tourist practices. For all the interest in the implications of existentialism for tourism, most researchers have drawn on the work of Heidegger rather than that of Sartre. In particular, there has been only fleeting and sporadic engagement with the Sartrean concept of bad faith in order to understand tourist practices. This paper has sought to advance debate through a detailed examination of how bad faith – a tenet of Sartre's thought - may be manifest within contemporary tourism. It is grounded in a detailed reading of Sartre's seminal work published in 1943, *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre's philosophy is centred on issues of consciousness, individual freedom, bad faith, relations with others, and responsibility.

Bad faith is a commonplace part of the human condition and for this reason can be identified in many contemporary tourism practices. We have used three case studies to explore how bad faith may form part of the tourist's experience. First, bad faith can be used to explore people's feelings about flying to their holiday destination. Those people who are aware of the negative environmental impacts of flying but are unwilling to change their behaviour may experience guilt, an urge towards denial, and a wish for others to take responsibility for addressing the issue. But at the same time, some travellers are aware of the consequences of their actions and seek to fly in good faith through offsetting their carbon emissions. These are complicated and sometimes messy choices in which each individual flier has to weigh up (and take responsibility for) their own desires and actions. The recent phenomenon of flight shame also confronts those travellers who are aware of the environmental consequences of flying, so that some seek to live in good faith by avoiding flying altogether.

Second, in the case of social media usage, a preoccupation among many young tourists with the way they are seen and judged by others online can be seen, in various ways, as a manifestation of bad faith. Among social-media preoccupied tourists, the experience of the holiday may be structured around presentation to, and reception by, an online audience. Such a concern with self-objectification and submitting to the judgement of the online (and often unknown) Other can be viewed as a negation of personal freedom and agency. Some young tourists may present a fabricated and inauthentic version of both themselves and their holiday experience that is, like Sartre's waiter, a form of disguise. In some cases, such a careful (and sometimes obsessive) concern with image management can have deleterious consequences for self-esteem. Third, in the case of sex tourism, it is the Other, the sex worker, who may be objectified, either through disregard or mistreatment. Bad faith can also be manifested in a desire on the part of the sex tourist to be seen more favourably than other clients, and sometimes to be treated as though they are in a relationship.

This paper has investigated just some aspects of bad faith within tourism and we are well aware that the examples we have used are not exhaustive. There are many more aspects of bad faith which could be explored in more detail by future researchers. A starting point would be to examine the ways in which bad faith is present within many commonplace or everyday tourism scenarios. There is an established body of research into authenticity in tourism, particularly focused on how travel practices can be a means to search for existential authenticity. But there has been much less attention to *inauthenticity* within tourism, and bad faith offers a lens through which to examine how tourists might (knowingly or unknowingly) live or behave inauthentically when travelling.

Second, future research might focus in detail on the choices and dilemmas that tourists face when confronted with complex choices in a holiday setting. They might seek to live in good faith as a tourist but at the same time struggle to do so. Once again, researchers could explore good and bad faith within commonplace or mundane tourist practices. This would complement existing research which has examined how tourists seek authenticity (and living in good faith) through 'exceptional' activities (such as rock climbing, or round-the-world backpacking) which often take place in unusual or exceptional places. Such work might also align with a broader research strand which focuses on ethical choices made (and faced) by tourists.

A third direction for further research might explore the ways in which tourists interact with others when on holiday, and the manifestations of bad faith in these interactions, in particular regard to how the Other is apprehended and how the self is presented to the Other. Examples include: tourist attitudes to services workers; tourists' interactions with local people; interactions with and attitudes towards other tourists; the attitudes of service workers towards their role (developing Sartre's waiter example further) and towards guests.

Furthermore, there are broader aspects of Sartre's work which await exploration in the context of tourism. For example, sustainable tourism researchers could underpin their arguments with reference to Sartre's linkages between freedom, responsibility and commitment. Examinations of interactions between tourists (and between hosts and tourists) could be strengthened using Sartre's writings on the Other, the Look and shame (following the example of Wassler & Kirillova, 2019). Research on variety and novelty in tourism consumption could utilise Sartre's perspective on the anguish that results from the varying choices that face the For-itself. Finally, the culture shock experienced by some tourists in an unfamiliar destination can be explored with reference to the dauntingly 'abrupt awakening' (p.73) to freedom.

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**Duncan Light** is Senior Lecturer in Tourism in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Bournemouth University, UK. He has research interests in heritage tourism and the relationships between tourism and (national) identities. He is the author of *The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (Ashgate, 2012).

**Lorraine Brown** (corresponding author) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality at Bournemouth University. Her research interests include international education, identity and travel, literary tourism and culture contact.