

BAD FAITH AND CHECKLIST TOURISM:

A SARTREAN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This project offers a unique contribution to the scholarship on Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of bad faith by providing a sustained exploration of bad faith in the context of contemporary tourism. More specifically, I explore the bad faith of what I call "checklist tourism," which defines the tourist trip as a rapid succession of visits from one "must-see" site to the next, snapping photos and collecting souvenirs along the way. I argue that checklist tourism offers a safe and comfortable structure for travel that protects tourists against Sartrean anguish—that is, the experience of alienation, fear, freedom, and responsibility—that travel can sometimes evoke.

This analysis contributes to the literature on bad faith in three main ways. First, I provide an extended analysis of the Sartrean spirit of seriousness, highlighting part of this concept that has thus far been underdeveloped in the scholarship. I argue that checklist tourism manifests the spirit of seriousness, which accepts the obligation of "must-see" sites and belief in the transcendent value of the material objects seen on the tour. Second, I explore the embodied bad faith of the possession and appropriation of the material world (rather than studying the possession of people, as most scholars have done), arguing that the tourist attempts to appropriate tourist sites through bodily engagement with them. Third, I develop a theory of play as authenticity, and I offer a systematic investigation of it as a rejection of the ontological bad faith project to be self-identical (i.e. to be God), and a reflective conversion to self-recovery. I then explore the character of the "post-tourist," which has been developing in the tourism literature and which

represents a way of touring that rejects the seriousness of the “must-see” sites in favor of an attitude of levity, spontaneity, and playfulness.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Let each one refer to his own experience.”¹

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1943

Jean-Paul Sartre is a philosopher who is today sometimes considered dramatic, pessimistic, or passé, yet his concepts have appeared in countless philosophical essays, literary texts, plays, lectures, conferences, and conversations. Sartre has always been not only a philosopher of the European Academy, but also a playwright, novelist, and political activist, plugged in to the social and cultural happenings of his time. The themes of his work speak not only to his cultural milieu, but also to the experiences of the human condition, and one only need to sit in on any undergraduate course on Sartre’s work to know that these themes continue to resonate with those who study them. In particular, Sartre’s concept of bad faith as an attempt at the evasion of human freedom surprises, challenges, awakens, offends, and sometimes elicits vehement anger, if not lively discussion, from those both inside and outside the academy. A large body of scholarly work is devoted to understanding and interpreting Sartre’s complex and controversial concept of bad faith. This project seeks to contribute to this scholarship, but in a unique way. I study bad faith through a sustained exploration of a contemporary cultural

¹ Jean-Paul, Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 358.

phenomenon: tourism. Investigating bad faith in the context of this contemporary phenomenon provides a unique lens through which to identify and ameliorate weaknesses and gaps in the literature both on bad faith and on tourism, and offers a vision of each that provides new insights.

I take my cue from Sartre, one of whose notable gifts is the exploration of dense philosophical concepts through the investigation of concrete examples from his everyday experiences. Sartre explores and explains bad faith, ontological structures of consciousness, self-reflection, human freedom, and a variety of other fundamental philosophical issues through a phenomenological investigation of ordinary occurrences, events, and people: a waiter, a woman on a date, a homosexual, counting cigarettes, playing tennis, hiking mountains, writing a book, waiting for a friend in a café. His exploration of his own bad faith in his autobiography, *The Words*, in his sometimes-confessional *War Diaries*, and through the characters in his novels and plays, “not only suggests the ubiquity of bad faith in Sartre’s worldview but also shows that, for Sartre, bad faith is a deeply existential, not simply academic concern.”² Indeed, for Sartre, and for many who study his work, bad faith strikes a chord as a profoundly personal lived experience.

This is, for me, part of the appeal of taking bad faith as an object of study. I sympathize with Robert Solomon who laments, “In an age when philosophers have finally become professionals instead of street-corner kibitzers, I stubbornly believe that philosophy ought to speak to ordinary, intelligent people about personal worries,

² Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), xv.

reflections, and experiences. It's embarrassing to be so out of style."³ Indeed, although many professional philosophers speak about fundamental issues of human experience as though they are removed from all human experience whatsoever, I am loathe to forget that our most profound philosophical questions arise from passionate encounters with ourselves in light of our own lived experiences. One of the great virtues of Sartre's existential philosophy is that he maintains this intimate connection with human experience.

In this spirit, I wish to explore Sartre's concept of bad faith through a sustained study of contemporary tourism, which might be considered a mundane contemporary social and cultural phenomenon. Before the work of tourism scholars over the last fifty years, much of the academic community had long perceived tourism as an activity of leisure and banal excess, unworthy of academic study. Tourism first gained interest and popularity as a field of academic scholarship in the late 1960s and 1970s, but even then was accorded low academic prestige.⁴ Yet, over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. In 2008, international tourist arrivals reached 922 million and are expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020. Tourism exports account for as much as 30% of the world's exports of commercial services and 6% of overall exports of goods and services.⁵ Increasingly, tourism destinations include developing and pre-

³ Robert C. Solomon, *From Hegel to Existentialism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), vii.

⁴ The first English-speaking journal devoted to the study of tourism, *The Annals of Tourist Research* appeared in 1973, the first session devoted to tourism at an important international conference was in 1974, and the first international forum devoted to the academic study of tourism, *The International Academy for the Study of Tourism*, was founded only in 1986. See Erik Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism: Diversity and Change* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004), 1.

⁵ World Tourism Organization, "Tourism Highlights: 2009 Edition," <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/highlights.htm>.

industrial nations as well as traditional destinations in North America and Western Europe. As the tourism industry has grown, the scholarship surrounding its sociological, cultural, and historical influence and importance has grown in kind. Much of the existing literature on tourism has been produced by sociologists, anthropologists, and scholars within museum studies, cultural studies, or material studies, but to this date, has received virtually no systematic and focused contribution from a philosopher. As such, philosophers have overlooked the cultural and philosophical impact of one of the biggest international industries of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Although Sartre does not avoid this charge, he was a globetrotter and self-reflective traveler. Over the course of his life, he traveled to New York, Havana, Peking, Moscow; the Middle East, Latin America; Spain, and Italy, among other destinations. In fact, he wrote 500 pages, though never finished, of a book that was to be entitled *Queen Albemarle and the Last Tourist*, in which, according to Simone de Beauvoir, “[Sartre] gave a capricious description of Italy, its present structure, its history and its countryside, and also meditated on what it means to be a tourist.”⁶ Indeed, throughout his corpus—from *Nausea*, to his essays on Cuba, to his reflections on visiting the United States—Sartre struggles with the complexities of travel. In his lengthy biography of Sartre, Bernard-Henri Lévy muses about Sartre’s gift of travel writing:

And I am convinced, be it said in passing, that the day when the ideology of tourism is finally brought to book, the day when people finally acknowledge the obscenity of a discourse and a practice which, on the pretext of the right to exoticism and difference, offer a paltry folklore which diminishes at one and the same time the traveler and his or her host, and offers, in place of those original situations which were the passion of real travelers, landscapes whose picture-postcard aspect has a novelty value of zero—I am convinced that Sartre, the

⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, trans. Peter Green (Paragon House Publishers, 1992), 199.

homing pigeon, will on that day be recognized as a master...Sartre versus mass tourism!⁷

Indeed, upon reading Sartre's works, one may speculate that *Queen Albemarle and the Last Tourist* would have provided, in his own literary way, a sophisticated criticism of mass tourism.

This project is not an attempt to provide this criticism of tourism that Sartre never published, nor is it to make a guess at the contents of this unfinished work. I see *Queen Albemarle* merely as evidence of the appropriateness of tourism as a fruitful lens through which to study Sartre and vice versa. Indeed, a key commitment of this project is that the context of contemporary tourism and the experiences of the contemporary tourist offer rich ground in which to explore the key phenomenological and existential issues with which Sartre is concerned, specifically, anguish, freedom, and bad faith.

In travel, more than at home, one has the potential to be confronted with strange and alien customs, foods, norms and values; to feel distance from one's familiar and comfortable social roles and expectations; to experience oneself as a stranger in a strange land; to embark in radical self-reflection; to experience one's existence in a new way. And yet, an entire commercial tourism industry and infrastructure has emerged, much of which is explicitly designed to "protect" tourists from the discomfort of this potentially existentially harrowing experience. Tourists sign up *en masse* for guided tours on air-conditioned busses, in which tourists are carted from one "must-see" site to the next on a high-speed circuit through their city, country, or continent of choice. I call this type of tourism "checklist tourism," for it is propelled by a mental or physical list of sites to

⁷ Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Sartre: The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 20.

which tourists travel, and which they “check off” upon visiting. I begin this investigation with the intuition that there is some element of bad faith in this systematic way of traveling. Thus, the question that drives this study is: In what ways does the contemporary checklist tourist manifest Sartrean bad faith?

This project makes several achievements. First, it has led me to identify and fill some key gaps in the scholarship on bad faith. I enter the debate on bad faith by reviewing some key debates concerning some of its ontological and epistemological challenges. In Chapter 2, I argue, against some influential critics (namely Arthur Danto and Anthony Manser), that anguish is not simply an ontological structure of prereflective consciousness, but a reflective and felt experience, what Sartre calls an *affective* consciousness. The interpretation of anguish as feeling is necessary if we are to understand the feelings of alienation, fear, freedom, and responsibility that travel can sometimes evoke, and, conversely, the comfort and safety offered by the tourism industry. Thus, viewing Sartre’s concepts through the context of tourism, we are able to draw out a conception of anguish that is useful for understanding not only the structure of human consciousness, but also the full affective richness of a particular lived human experience. Those critics who wish to interpret anguish as only an ontological structure of consciousness underappreciate this aspect of Sartre’s work.

Similarly, I provide an interpretation of bad faith that accounts for the epistemological difficulties involved in “self-deception.” Indeed, the possibility of self-deception is a problem that has troubled philosophers in a variety of historical and contemporary traditions. A phenomenological observation of our experience tells us that people often seem to deceive themselves, though there is clearly an epistemological

difficulty in understanding how one is able to believe both truth and non-truth about a situation or about oneself. Sartrean bad faith is one particular kind of solution to this problem, though scholars have interpreted the epistemological maneuvering of Sartre's solution in a variety of different ways. I review these interpretations and offer a view that is both internally coherent and consistent with Sartre's text in *Being and Nothingness*. Such an interpretation is necessary to establish if we are to understand how a tourist is able to deceive herself about the destinations she visits and her role as a tourist. Again, this question has resulted in a clarification and deepening of understanding of Sartre's work.

Chapter 3, I explore the relationship of the individual tourist to her situation—that is her culture, gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, birthplace, and past. Tourism is, of course, a socially and culturally situated phenomenon. If bad faith is to be an appropriate model of analysis for the contemporary tourist, there must be some dimension of bad faith that accounts for the influence of these social structures. The task of Chapter 3 is to demonstrate, against a variety of critics, that bad faith is necessarily situated. Many scholars have accused Sartre treating human consciousness as abstract, ephemeral, and without social and cultural context. However, I provide an argument that Sartre's views of both human freedom and bad faith are necessarily grounded in situation, for it is in, against, and through her situation that the tourist chooses either to exist in bad faith or to affirm her human freedom.

After establishing these foundational interpretations of bad faith, I am then able to explore in detail a variety of aspects of bad faith that are useful for understanding the behaviors of the checklist tourist, but which have received little attention in the existing

scholarship. First, underrepresented in scholarship on bad faith is a critical investigation of the “spirit of seriousness.” Sartre discusses and alludes to seriousness throughout his early works, particularly in *Being and Nothingness* and *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Many of the characters in Sartre’s plays, novels, and biographies can also be described as “serious.” The Self-Taught Man, the bourgeoisie of Bouville, and Roquentin himself, are all serious characters of Sartre’s *Nausea*; Pablo Ibbieta of *The Wall* is a serious revolutionary, until he learns to see the absurdity and contingency of life; Sartre’s biography of Gustave Flaubert explores the seriousness of this writer and his time (indeed, the title of this biography, *The Family Idiot*, reflects this theme). Given the ubiquitous presence of this theme throughout Sartre’s corpus, it is surprising how few scholars have explored it in detail.

Furthermore, in seeking to understand the compulsion of tourists toward the “must-see” sites of tourist package, I discover that, of the scholars who do study Sartrean seriousness, none of them explores in depth the materiality of seriousness. Sartre defines the spirit of seriousness in two ways: first, as the belief in transcendent values, and second, as the belief in the material substantiation of these values. Most scholars focus primarily on the first half of this definition, offering very little attention to second part. Thus, in Chapter 4, I explore how the spirit of seriousness compels tourists to believe in the “must-see” value of material tourist sites. In this way, the concrete attractions of paintings, sculptures, buildings, memorials, museums, ruins, and natural wonders are thought to represent and even embody the transcendent values of art, beauty, liberty, exotica, genius, innovation, and progress. I show how this belief in the material substantiation of values is perpetuated by the tourism industry and explains tourists’

compulsion to visit them. In so doing, I provide an interpretation of the spirit of seriousness that had previously been undeveloped.

Second, my study of the behaviors and motivations of the contemporary tourist leads me to develop and understand Sartre's notion of the embodied nature of the possession and appropriation of material objects, and the how this endeavor is in bad faith. The tourist, I argue in Chapter 5, seeks to possess and appropriate the "must-see" tourist sites through an embodied engagement with these sites and with the souvenirs that come to represent them. The tourist wants to be there, near the site, close enough to touch it, and in so doing comes to feel a kind of bad faith ownership of and identification with the site. Virtually no work has been done to explore Sartre's ideas on appropriation and possession as they are in relation to material objects and landscapes. Although much scholarship explores the possessive nature of human relationships⁸—the lovers attempt to possess one another in their sado-masochistic relationship, claims Sartre—no scholars have deeply explored Sartre's ideas on how and why we come to possess objects, and how this possession is in bad faith. Ralph Netzky briefly discusses possession and appropriation in their relation to Sartre's notion of play,⁹ and Joseph Catalano briefly explains Sartre's comments on these concepts as a matter of course in his *Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness,"*¹⁰ yet, I have found not a single article that takes as its central issue Sartre's views of appropriation and possession of material

⁸ Katherine J. Morris, "Introduction: Sartre on the Body," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, 1-24 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Phyllis Sutton Morris, "Some Patterns of Identification and Otherness," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, 148-160 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Gregory McCulloch, *Using Sartre* (London: Routledge, 1994); Arthur C Danto, *Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Viking Press, 1975).

⁹ Ralph Netzky, "Playful Freedom: Sartre's Ontology Reappraised," *Philosophy Today*, 18, no. 2 (1974): 125-136.

¹⁰ Joseph Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's being and Nothingness*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

objects as he discusses them in *Being and Nothingness*. Thus, again, my work exploring the bad faith of the contemporary tourist has led me to identify and fill a gap in the scholarship on Sartrean bad faith.

Third, I investigate Sartre's notion of play, which Sartre discusses in the latter pages of *Being and Nothingness* and in his posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*. In Chapter 6, I explore play not only as a theoretical alternative to the spirit of seriousness, but also as a genuine mode of existential authenticity. With the help of the scholarship of those who have studied Sartrean authenticity,¹¹ I offer a systematic investigation of play as a rejection of the ontological bad faith project to be self-identical (i.e. to be God), and a reflective conversion to self-recovery. I argue for this interpretation of play against the few, but influential, interpretations of Sartrean play as a retention of the God-project.¹² Again, I relate my analysis of play as authenticity back into the lived human experiences, through an investigation of how the tourist may play, and thus may escape the bad faith of tourism. I explore the character of the "post-tourist," which been developing in the tourism literature, and which represents a way of touring that rejects the seriousness of the "must-see" sites in favor of an attitude of levity, spontaneity, and playfulness.

A sustained contribution of this project is the exploration of Sartrean bad faith within a concrete social and cultural context, in a particular historical milieu. Rather than

¹¹ In particular, Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith* and Thomas C. Anderson, *Sartre's Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993).

¹² Linda A. Bell, "Loser Wins: The Importance of Play in a Sartrean Ethics of Authenticity," in *Phenomenology in a Pluralistic Context*, edited by William L. McBride and Calvin O. Schrag, 5-13. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983; Linda A. Bell *Sartre's Ethics of Authenticity*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989; Yiwei Zheng, "Sartre on Authenticity," *Sartre Studies International* 8, no. 2 (2002): 127-140.

exploring bad faith in a way that isolates it from the people who live it, I always connect these abstract concepts to the concrete lived experiences of contemporary tourists. Thus, I demonstrate that bad faith is an appropriate and relevant concept for understanding the tourist: a figure that has been called a metaphor for modernity.¹³

My project also contributes largely to the existing literature on tourism, which currently lacks philosophical dimension. The social sciences observe, describe, and theorize patterns of human behavior and the movement of material objects on social scale. However, they do not necessarily explore the relationship of these patterns and movements to the questions or conditions of human existence and experience. Through a sustained analysis of the bad faith of the contemporary tourist, I offer a vision of tourism that illuminates not only the social patterns and behaviors of tourists as a sociological analysis of modernity, but of the existential human condition. My conclusions suggest that travel offers an opportunity to achieve the ethical self-recovery of existential authenticity, but that this opportunity is largely passed by in favor of the bad faith structures of the contemporary mass tourism. In the end, I point to a path that takes advantage of the unique opportunities that travel affords—the opportunity to reflect upon and take responsibility for our human freedom.

¹³ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Ning Wang, *Tourism and Modernity: A Sociological Analysis* (Amsterdam: Pergamon, 2000).

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING BAD FAITH

“[For our analysis, it] is best to choose and to examine one determined attitude which is essential to human reality and which is such that consciousness instead of directing its negation outward turns it toward itself. This attitude, it seems to me is *bad faith* (*mauvaise foi*).”¹⁴

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1943

Sartre’s concept of bad faith is as contentious as it is complex. The scholarship on this topic ranges from casual allusions and misunderstood readings to careful and meticulous interpretations. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to establish and argue for a reading of bad faith that appropriately understands and accounts for the epistemological and ontological difficulties involved in this theory of self-deception.

Phenomenology

The subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* is *A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. Sartre claims to provide a phenomenological analysis that reveals and explores the phenomena of human experiences as a means to illuminate and illustrate this basic human condition. It is through this analysis that Sartre develops his ideas concerning human freedom, anguish, and bad faith. Thus, let us review in Sartre’s phenomenological method his contribution to the lineage from which he comes.

¹⁴ *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956) 87.

Sartre comes to phenomenology through the line of Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl, whose work Sartre studied while in Berlin in 1932.¹⁵ In 1939, Sartre wrote a short essay entitled, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology,” in which Sartre regales Husserl for his insistence on the intentional nature of consciousness. In so doing, Sartre claims, “Husserl has restored to things their horror and their charm.”¹⁶ Brentano and Husserl’s insight is that consciousness is intentional, which means that consciousness is always conscious *of* something, i.e. of phenomena. In his 1900 and 1901 *Logical Investigations* Husserl makes a shift away from Brentano’s work and offers a definitive dimension to his phenomenological method by introducing the idea that the study of consciousness requires a parenthesizing of the “natural attitude” toward the world. In this “phenomenological reduction” or *epoché*, the phenomenologist “brackets” the question of the existence of the external world so that he or she may describe only what is experienced, or what appears without the influence of ontological claims about the world. In so doing, Husserl aims to describe and define the nature of experience itself—or rather, the nature of consciousness as experiencing phenomena. He seeks out the necessary structures of intentional consciousness, attempting to understand what structures are necessary for any experience whatsoever.

Sartre too is a phenomenologist in the tradition of Husserl, though he diverges from Husserl in some important ways. First, Sartre agrees with Husserl that consciousness is intentional, though for Sartre, there is no “self” behind this intentional consciousness. Husserl claims that there exists behind consciousness a “transcendental

¹⁵ There were other lines of phenomenology developed at this time, e.g. that of Hegel, Dilthey, and Peirce, though Sartre’s genealogy is traced through Husserl.

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology,” in *The Phenomenology Reader*, ed. Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (London: Routledge, 2002) 383.

ego” which unifies consciousness, while Sartre criticizes this transcendental ego a substance, and thus Cartesian. In his 1936 *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre denies that there exists a “transcendental *I*,” and claims that the ego is nothing more than “this psychic and psycho-physical *me*.”¹⁷ Sartre claims, “But if the *I* were a necessary structure of consciousness, this opaque *I* would at once be raised to the rank of an absolute. We would then be in the presence of a monad. And this, indeed, is unfortunately the orientation of the new thought of Husserl (see *Cartesianische Meditationen*).”¹⁸ Thus, as we will see, Sartre insists in *Being and Nothingness* that there is no substance or a “self” that lies behind intentional consciousness.

Another difference between Husserl and Sartre concerns the aims of their projects. We can see their diversion in Sartre’s subtitle: “A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology,” which, for Husserl, would be a contradiction in terms, for part of Husserl’s definition of phenomenology is that it brackets ontological questions. How, then, does Sartre claim to write a phenomenological essay on ontology? Robert Solomon offers help for understanding Sartre’s understanding of and contribution to phenomenology:

According to the variations of phenomenology advanced by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, ‘consciousness’ is not to be interpreted primarily as a *knowing* consciousness but as an acting, ‘willing,’ deciding consciousness. It is not those experiences relating to knowing and reasoning that are the paradigm to be examined but rather the experiences of doing, participating, and choosing.¹⁹

Thus, for these existentialist phenomenologists, the primary question of phenomenology concerns the meaning of the experiences of being human. They are attempting to outline the necessary features of anything for it to be a human being. “The ability to think and to

¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Octagon Books, 1957) 36.

¹⁸ Sartre, *Transcendence of the Ego*, 42.

¹⁹ Solomon, Robert C. *From Hegel to Existentialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 160.

know is, as would be expected, one such set of features, but not the most significant. Equally important human characteristics, according to the existentialists, are man's abilities to act, to plan, to use language, to evaluate, and perhaps most important of all, to ask who he is and what he ought to *do*.”²⁰ Thus, the object of Sartre's investigations is the *being* of humans and his method is the analysis of the patterns of consciousness, behaviors, beliefs, and values of humans. In this way, Sartre's investigation is phenomenological in method and ontological in content.

Significantly, this means that Sartre rejects the “phenomenological reduction” that Husserl requires for any phenomenological study. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre claims:

The concrete can be only the synthetic totality of which consciousness, like the phenomenon, constitutes only moments. The concrete is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls ‘being-in-the-world.’ We deliberately are being with the abstract if we question ‘experience’ as Kant does, inquiring into the conditions of its possibility—or if we effect a phenomenological reduction like Husserl, who would reduce the world to the state of the noema-correlate consciousness. But we will no more succeed in restoring the concrete by the summation or organization of the elements which we have abstracted from it than Spinoza can reach substance by the infinite summation of its modes.²¹

Sartre argues that Husserl goes too far in his reduction, removing consciousness from its daily engagement in the world and falling into mere idealism.²² This is not to say that Sartre abandons phenomenology or attempts to make unrealistic claims about the nature of the external world. Instead, he agrees, “What determines the being of the appearance

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *BN*, 34.

²² Sartre states, “Why not push the idea to its limit and say that the being of the appearance is it is appearing? This is simply a way of choosing new words to clothe the old ‘*Esse est percipi*’ [‘To be is to be perceived’] of Berkeley. And it is in fact just what Husserl and his followers are doing when, after having effected the phenomenological reduction, they treat the noema as *unreal* and declare that its *esse* is *percipi*. It seems the famous formula of Berkeley can not satisfy us.” (*BN*, 9-10) The fairness and appropriateness of Sartre's criticism is a debate for another project.

is the fact that it appears. And since we have restricted reality to the phenomenon, we can say of the phenomenon that it *is* as it *appears*.” However, Sartre is concerned not only with the *knowing* subject, but with the subject that is situated and engaged in the world.²³

Freedom

Sartre’s unique contributions to and understanding of the phenomenological tradition lead him to a vision of consciousness that takes as its foundation human freedom. For Sartre, the basic condition of human being—namely, freedom—is the foundation for the possibility of bad faith. Often, scholars discuss anguish and bad faith primarily or even solely in terms of their epistemological challenges—i.e. to what extent is one aware of anguish and bad faith? How is it possible to deceive oneself or lie to oneself?—but it is important to remember, as Matt Eschleman notes, “Sartre’s analysis includes not only epistemic elements, but also reveals that the roots of this issue are existential and indicate something about our ambiguous being.”²⁴

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre claims that there are two primary modes of being: “being for-itself,” which describes human consciousness, and “being in-itself,” which describes the non-conscious world. Sartre characterizes being-in-itself as a sort of self-identical plenum that cannot be positively characterized in any way except that it *is*, it exists. “It is an immanence which can not realize itself, an affirmation which can not

²³ Sartre scholar Hazel Barnes confirms, “Sartre, of course, cannot follow this procedure [of the *epoché*] since his task is to examine consciousness in-the-world.” (*BN*, 802)

²⁴ Matthew Eschleman, “The Mislplaced Chapter on Bad Faith, Or Reading *Being and Nothingness* in Reverse,” *Sartre Studies International* 14, no. 2 (Dec. 2008): 17.

affirm itself, an activity which can not act, because it is glued to itself.”²⁵ Being-in-itself is fully identical with itself; there are no gaps, no lack, and no absence in being. “It is full positivity.”²⁶ As such, being is beyond motion, activity, and becoming. Transition and change require that being is no longer what it once was and that it will be what it is not yet. These are qualities that require negation or absence, which have no place in being.²⁷ Being-in-itself is also beyond necessity and contingency, for necessity can apply only to propositions—not to existents—and contingency requires the recognition and denial of possibilities, which, again have no place in being. Thus, “uncreated, without reason for being, with out any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity.”²⁸

Human consciousness, or, as Sartre calls it, being-for-itself, interprets and makes meaning of this self-identical plenum of being. The reason humans are able to do so is that the fundamental structure of human consciousness is “nothingness.” That is, according to Sartre, human consciousness is not a substance or a being, but is instead non-being, nothingness. “Man is the being through whom nothingness comes to the world.”²⁹ As such, humans are able to introduce lack, absence, activity, creation, affirmation, and negation into being. This nothingness is the condition for all becoming, denial, affirmation, satisfaction, destruction, creation, and meaning—because we introduce nothingness, we can interpret the world. In addition, human beings have no fixed essence or human nature—no *a priori* given set of qualities or characteristics.

²⁵ *BN*, 27.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 29.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ *BN*, 29.

²⁹ *BN*, 59.

Thus, human being is characterized by a radical freedom to understand and interpret the meaning of being, both of itself and of the in-itself.

We can now understand why Sartre calls the being of human consciousness “being-for-itself”; in human consciousness, being becomes a question *for itself*. The future of human being is not given; instead the preposition “for” in for-itself points to a projection, a future that is not-yet present. The being of the for-itself has no substance—thus it is never in conflict with the in-itself—but instead, it is always in question. This suggests that any attempt to claim that one has a particular fixed essence—I am adventurous, worldly, an American, a foreigner, a traveler, a tourist—is, as we will see, a kind of self-deception.

Human beings are characterized by both being-in-itself and being-for-itself: We are both the reality in which we are situated—what Sartre calls our “facticity”—and the nothingness that characterizes our consciousness—or, more succinctly, our freedom or “transcendence.” Because we can never fully be either freedom or facticity, we have the unstable reality of, in Sartre’s awkward formulation, “a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is.”³⁰ In other words, we humans *are* transcendence, freedom, nothingness, and we *are* our facticity, our past, and our situation, but we are *not* these to the point of being objectified or fixed, the way an inkwell is an inkwell. Sartre is indebted to Heidegger for this word “facticity” as opposed to “factuality” or “factness.” Sartre’s philosophical predecessor defines factuality in reference to the brute facts of the material world, while “the concept of ‘facticity’ implies that an entity ‘within-the-world’ has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its

³⁰ *BN*, 100.

‘destiny’ with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world.”³¹ In other words, facticity has already been taken up by the freedom of human existence. Humans must wrestle with and make meaning of their facticity in a way that an inkwell need not and cannot understand its factuality.

Thus, we can never be fully determined by our facticity: our race, gender, ethnicity, country, family, religion, or class of origin. Our past is also our facticity, for we cannot undo past events, actions, or behaviors. However, we can never look to the past to definitively tell us what to do. Because of our freedom, we can always reinterpret the meanings of our pasts and our situations, and we can always choose to think or behave differently in the future. Thus, we are separated from our past. Similarly, our future is not predestined. Our plans to be or do a certain thing can always be revised or aborted, separating us from our futures. In the present, we cannot catch ourselves at any moment for we are not the in-itself (a thing), but the for-itself, always projecting toward something from which we are separated, and thus, again, we are separated from ourselves. Thus, in each moment we are separated from ourselves in our past, future, and present. Sartre calls this separation of the self from itself a temporal *ekstasis*, from the Greek, meaning “displacement from oneself” or “withdrawal of the soul from the body.” This separation means that we can never be self-identical and that our being is always in question; we are free.

These modes of being make up the ontological foundation for Sartre’s concepts of anguish and bad faith. Both are connected to his insistence on freedom as the

³¹ Martin Heidegger *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper, 1962) 82.

fundamental human structure and his analysis of the human condition as being aware of and denying this freedom.

Anguish

The awareness of this freedom results in what Sartre calls “anguish,” for in anguish we realize that we are completely responsible for ourselves.³² He claims, “it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself.”³³ In other words, anguish results when one has a reflective awareness of one’s freedom.

Sartre discusses anguish in two ways. First, he claims that that we have anguish with respect to our own (lack of) being, that is, our freedom—as we are related to our past and our futures. Sartre does not give this kind of anguish a particular name, though we may call it “temporal anguish.” Second, we have anguish with respect to the values that we hold as central to our desired identity, our projects, and our possibilities, which he calls “ethical anguish.”³⁴

³² Sartre borrows and develops the concept of *angst* or anxiety from Søren Kierkegaard, who in his 1844 publication, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically-Oriented Reflection on the Dogmatic Problem of Original Sin*, writes that anxiety is “the dizziness of freedom.” Sartre borrows several images and examples from Kierkegaard, including the example of a man walking on a precipice with anxiety—or as Sartre calls it, anguish—about the possibility of throwing himself to his death. Additionally, in his *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre states, “Anguish is evident even when it conceals itself. This is the anguish that Kierkegaard called the anguish of Abraham” (*Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy*. Ed. Todd May (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997) 104). Sartre refers to Kierkegaard’s writing about the Biblical story of Abraham in his *Fear and Trembling*.

³³ *BN*, 65.

³⁴ *BN*, 77.

I experience temporal anguish when I realize that my past does not determine, albeit situating, me, and my future is not predestined: the choice is always mine to make. Sartre uses the example of a person who is walking on a treacherous precipice to illustrate anguish in the face of the future. If I am walking on a dangerous high cliff, I may experience fear of falling to my death. Fear differs from anguish in that I fear disagreeable external forces which may act upon me as an object in the world—i.e. a rock may fall on my head, I may be robbed, I may get sick. Fear is based upon my facticity: I fear illness, accident, loss of property or loved ones, and any other external circumstances that I may not wish to endure, but over which I do not have control. Anguish, however, arises when I am confronted with my own freedom. When walking on the dangerous cliff, I realize that I may or may not choose to act in such a way that will help prevent what I fear. That is, I may move carefully and cautiously along the cliff, staying close to the inside wall, or I may choose to be careless, to run wildly, or even to throw myself to my death.³⁵ If I am cautious, I am so for the sake of my future being; I wish to endure into the future, and a relationship exists between my present being and my future being. However, Sartre claims that “a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I *am* not the self which I will be.”³⁶ Nothingness is the being of human beings, which means that what we have been does not determine what we will be. Of course, once the past has occurred, we must own it and realize that it does affect us in our facticity. Perhaps we will have a great number of reasons that stem from the past to want to choose one possibility over another, but the choice remains free. We are separated from our future selves by time and by nothingness, and the recognition of this separation causes anguish.

³⁵ Ibid, 67-69.

³⁶ Ibid, 68.

As Sartre says, “anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future in the mode of not-being.”³⁷

Similarly, we may experience anguish with respect to the past. Sartre offers the example of a gambler who has resolved to quit gambling, but whose resolution dissolves the moment he sees the gaming table. Yesterday he saw the situation clearly and decided that he must quit for fear of financial ruin and the disappointment of his friends and family. His promise to quit seemed like a real barrier between himself and his vice. Yet today, he realizes that, in fact, *nothing* prevents him from gambling, and that he must remake his resolution yet again, now and for every moment forever into the future. “What the gambler apprehends at this instant is again the permanent rupture in determinism; it is nothingness which separates him from himself.”³⁸ Again, it is the awareness of our own human freedom that is the structure of anguish.

In ethical anguish, I realize that it is I, not the external world, who decides to adhere to or reject all the rules, values, and mandates that I received from my situated environment, my facticity, or my past. In these moments, I realize that *I* am the one that confers upon the alarm clock the power to summon me out of bed or the sign to keep me off the grass. When the alarm rings, I could choose not to get up and go to work. I could refuse my daily enterprises; I could refuse life altogether.³⁹ In these moments I realize that *I*—and not the world—am a source of values, and that I direct my actions in accordance with these values. This awareness of my freedom puts me in a state of anguish.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 70.

³⁹ Ibid, 76.

Anguish as a concept is not without controversy. One first question concerning anguish is to what extent, if any, we ought to understand anguish as a “feeling” or felt experience—or if we ought to understand it only as a structure of our being. Sartre claims that we attempt to avoid anguish—that “our essential and immediate behavior with respect to anguish is flight”⁴⁰—but he does not explicitly discuss it as a certain kind of feeling, at least not in *Being and Nothingness*. However, in his 1940 work, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, Sartre briefly gives anguish as an example of a type of feeling. For Sartre, feelings are not *states*, but are consciousnesses, and like all consciousness, they must be intentional—that is, directed toward an object. Sartre states:

There do not exist affective *states*, which is to say inert contents that are carried by the stream of consciousness and are sometimes fixed, by chance of contiguity, to the representations. Reflection delivers us affective *consciousnesses*. Joy, anguish, melancholy are consciousnesses: all consciousness is consciousness of something. In a word, feelings have special intentionalities, they represent a way—among others—of transcending.⁴¹

Thus, it is not incompatible to say that, for Sartre, anguish is *both* a feeling *and* a structure of our being: it is *affective consciousness*. As affective consciousness, anguish is a reflective way of relating to and apprehending the world. In particular, anguish apprehends the world as alien, threatening, and contingent.

Peter Caws interprets anguish as an affective experience, claiming that “anguish, or dread, describes a spectrum of human feelings, running from mere unease to terror, whose principle ingredients are uncertainty, loneliness, and responsibility.”⁴² Indeed,

⁴⁰ Ibid, 78.

⁴¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2004), 68-69.

⁴² Peter Caws, *Sartre*, ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 70.

Sartre’s vivid and harrowing examples— a gambler struggling in his attempt to reform, a hiker on the edge of a precipice— may lead us to understand anguish as a certain kind of felt experience. Furthermore, Sartre uses emotionally charged words and phrases throughout his discussion as anguish, such as “horror,” “anxiety,” “the void which encircles us,”⁴³ “I am alone and naked,”⁴⁴ and claims that in anguish, my possibilities have a “threatening character.”⁴⁵ Indeed, Caws’s reading of Sartre’s use of the word “anguish” with its everyday connotation of the word as a feeling of dread, desperation, and uncertainty is reasonable, given Sartre’s language. However, we must emphasize that, for Sartre these affective consciousnesses are just that; they are not emotional *states*, but affective consciousness directed toward an alien and threatening world.

Arthur Danto—who wrote one of the earliest analyses on Sartre in the Anglo-American analytic tradition— understands anguish in a much more technical sense, and in so doing loses the richness of anguish as an affective experience. Danto claims, “Anguish, as Sartre employs the concept, is the *reflective* consciousness of freedom. If it is a feeling at all, it has nothing to do with the sort of agony or apprehension we may have when we are afraid or desperate or anxious—if only because these, as is consistent with Sartre’s philosophy of mind, are objects of consciousness rather than ways of being conscious.”⁴⁶ Danto goes on to argue that Sartre’s choice of examples is due to his being a “literary artist,” who “has the taste of a teller of adventurous tales, and relishes the sort

⁴³ *BN*, 78.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 70.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 80.

⁴⁶ Arthur C Danto, *Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), 70. It is true that Sartre enjoyed reading and writing adventure novels in his youth. In a 1970 interview he says, “All of my novels were about *cape et épée*—you know swashbucklers.” See John Gerassi *Talking with Sartre: Conversations and Debates* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) 23.

of suspense we find in comic strips,”⁴⁷ and claims, “what or whether I write a moment hence, what or whether I eat an hour from now, exemplify the same structure though they hardly involve the same feelings. Even so, anguish describes my apprehension of this rather banal fact about time and choice.”⁴⁸

Danto thus interprets Sartre as making a rather technical use of the word “anguish,” as denying its colloquial meaning and referring only to the structure of our being—our prereflective consciousness of our freedom. If this is what Sartre means, then Danto infers that anguish would be our constant way of being. “I must always be conscious of freedom if consciousness is free, hence always be in anguish if this is what anguish comes to, even if it is a matter of taking a second *croissant* or lying down to snooze.”⁴⁹ This suggests that anguish is meant to have little, if any, particular kind of experienced feeling; instead it has “reference to the whole of human existence and not just to dark episodes which may or may not come up in it.”⁵⁰

Sartre, however, explicitly contradicts Danto’s interpretation: “Someone will say, freedom has just been defined as a permanent structure of the human being; if anguish manifests it, then anguish ought to be a permanent state of my affectivity. But, on the contrary, it is completely exceptional.”⁵¹ Sartre claims that we are usually engaged in the world, and thus, it is possible for us to attempt to avoid anguish through certain patterns of behavior, which he will come to call bad faith. It is only through conscious reflection

⁴⁷ Ibid, 72.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 73.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 74.

⁵¹ BN, 73.

on the responsibility we have for ourselves due to our freedom that anguish is experienced.

Danto forsakes Sartre's affective language and examples, not to mention his explicit statements about the rare and temporary nature of anguish, in an attempt to provide internal consistency for what Danto interprets as the theory's cognitive structure. That is, Danto interprets anguish as prereflective rather than reflective consciousness, in spite of Sartre's explicit claims to the contrary.⁵² What's more, Danto's criticisms patronize Sartre—who was not only a literary artist but a professionally trained philosopher—and the language of the phenomenological and existentialist traditions, which as Robert Solomon has pointed out, have strived to correct an overemphasis on straight theory and arguments and to emphasize felt and lived human experiences in all their intensity and complexity.⁵³ Thus, although, as scholars, we are indebted to Danto for his careful analytic analysis of Sartre's work, in this case, Danto misses key insights of the human experience afforded by Sartre's phenomenological and literary sources.

Anthony Manser offers an interpretation related to Danto's when he says, "Anguish, like nausea, is a logical category, not an empirical one; it is not a contingent element of the psyche."⁵⁴ For Manser, anguish is the necessary condition for the possibility of bad faith; without anguish, bad faith is not possible. Manser further implies that anguish is not experienced as any particular kind of feeling, and notes that Sartre himself denies that he ever felt anguish. Manser cites an interview with Sartre in which

⁵² Danto, 70.

⁵³ Robert C. Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 67.

⁵⁴ Anthony Manser, "A New Look at Bad Faith," in *Sartre: An Investigation of some Major Themes*, ed. by Simon Glynn (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987), 57.

Sartre explicitly says as much: “I never experienced anguish. It’s one of the key notions of philosophy from 1930 to 1940. It too came from Heidegger, it’s one of the notions we used all the time, but for me they corresponded to nothing.”⁵⁵

Sartre’s claim that he himself never experienced anguish is surprising, given the clarity and persuasiveness of his examples. Even if Sartre himself never found himself walking a narrow cliff or attempting to quit a bad habit, at least his example of an anguished writer who must choose to continue writing in the face of the possibility of abandoning his project must have hit close to home. In fact, in his autobiography, *The Words*, Sartre describes several moments of anguish he experienced during his youth. For example, Sartre claims “At the age of thirty, I executed the masterstroke of writing in *Nausea*—quite sincerely, believe me—about the bitter unjustified existence of my fellowmen and of exonerating my own. I was Roquentin; I used him to show, without complacency, the texture of my life.”⁵⁶ So, how are we to read Sartre’s statement? Does this mean, as Manser reads it, that anguish only describes the structure of human consciousness and is not actually a felt experience? Or is it perhaps that anguish is such a rare kind of (affective) experience, so consistently veiled by bad faith—as Sartre claims in *Being and Nothingness*—that he himself never felt it. Or perhaps, instead, Sartre had changed his views on anguish by the time this interview was given, in the last year of his life. It is my inclination to accept the last of these possible explanations, for the evolution of Sartre’s thought led him to revise his understanding of the limitations and experience of freedom as he was introduced to and influenced by Marxism.

⁵⁵ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10-16th March, 1980, p. 56 cited in Manser, 57.

⁵⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre. *The Words: The Autobiography of Jean-Paul Sartre*. Trans. Bernard Frechtman. (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 251.

Thus, we must conclude, that anguish, as an affective consciousness, is both part of the structure of consciousness and a felt experience. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, Sartre's interest is in illuminating the ambiguous nature of human being, and anguish is one way of doing so. However, I think it is useful to "distinguish *feeling anguish* from *being subject to anguish*," as Gregory McCulloch suggests.⁵⁷ I believe that McCulloch correctly interprets Sartre when he says, "According to Sartre, we are subject to anguish as we go about our daily affairs, even if we do not always feel it."⁵⁸

Indeed, one may, in fact, feel a fleeting, transitory "flare up" of anguish. Sartre's choice of examples cannot be simply dismissed as the musings of a literary writer, for they are, indeed, captivating, persuasive, and seem to correspond to real human experiences. Anyone who has ever made a resolution that she struggles to keep, or wonders if he should get a different job, or has the sudden realization as the subway train pulls into the station that it would be so easy to leap in front of it, knows the experience that Sartre describes, and it is often a *feeling*, as Sartre would say, an *affective consciousness*. In fact, it seems that sometimes anguish is here and gone in a flash, like a bubbling up from its latent place in our daily lives, when we are suddenly conscious of our freedom. The strength and endurance of the feeling is often related to the extent that we consider these possibilities real and viable for us—the more we realize that it *is* possible for us to break our promise to ourselves, to abandon one's career and start another, to jump in front of the subway train, the more intense the experience of anguish.

⁵⁷ Gregory McCulloch, *Using Sartre* (London: Routledge, 1994), 47.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Perhaps, to some extent, Danto is right when he says, “It is rather an elitist and philosophical feeling,”⁵⁹ for indeed, the conscious consideration of new possibilities for oneself may require a certain amount of material comfort and wealth. However, I would suggest that the experience of anguish is a real lived-experience—in addition to a revelation about the basic structure of the being of humans—but that it only happens occasionally because there is the possibility of avoiding it in bad faith. As Joseph Catalano puts it, “Freedom and nothingness are rather the very nature of consciousness that allows it always to question itself. Consequently, this very freedom and nothingness must itself always be *in question*. Thus there is both the permanent possibility of becoming aware, in anguish, of this nothingness and the constant possibility of avoiding this awareness.”⁶⁰ In fact, the fact that anguish is an affective consciousness, a feeling, constitutes part of its conditioning of bad faith. Recall that “our essential and immediate behavior with respect to anguish is flight”⁶¹ into bad faith. If anguish lacked an uncomfortable affective dimension, why would we want to flee it?

What’s more, the experiences of travel and tourism offer us further reason for understanding anguish as an *affective* consciousness. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, the freedom, uncertainty, novelty, and intensity of travel elicit a flare-up of certain feelings of alienation, dread, discomfort, which we then attempt to flee in favor of more comfortable patterns and roles. In other words, in travel, I experience anguish and flee it in bad faith. For now, let us move on to Sartre’s next concept that will be investigated here, namely the concept of bad faith.

⁵⁹ Danto, 74.

⁶⁰ Joseph Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's being and Nothingness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 72.

⁶¹ *BN*, 78.

Bad Faith

Sartre claims that if I recognize my freedom, I can never claim to know fully who I am; I can never be in a state of absolute rest. I am conscious of my responsibility for myself, and I may feel the existential anxiety of anguish. Most of the time, we wish to escape this freedom and become full, unified, or self-identical; in Sartre's words, we desire to be the in-itself-for-itself. Because we don't like the feeling of never quite knowing who we are—of constantly having to choose ourselves—we desire to be a given, an essence, a particular state which is no longer in question. However, as Lewis Gordon notes, “as a being whose possibilities are constantly presented to me *for me*, I can never *be* in any statelike condition. My condition of comfort must be a form of denial, ironically, a form of ‘comfortable untruth.’ Taking refuge in comfort, I flee confronting myself, I flee anguish.”⁶² This flight from anguish into “comfortable untruth” is bad faith.

Bad faith involves a kind of self-deception or “lie to oneself,” for I am “convincing” myself of this comfortable untruth: the denial of my freedom.⁶³ However,

⁶² Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995), 14.

⁶³ Catalano suggests that bad faith and self-deception are not necessarily synonymous. He states, “the term ‘bad faith’ is the more Sartrean term, and it appears to be more general than the term ‘self-deception.’ The way the chapter unfolds self-deception is used to explain how bad faith can occur, but the possibility exists that some forms of bad faith are not self-deception,” and Catalano points to Sartre's *Saint Genet* to show how this may occur. However, he goes on to say, “I think, however, that it is safe to claim that, in the chapter on bad faith, there is a practical identity of bad faith with self-deception” (Joseph, Catalano, “Successfully Lying to Oneself: A Sartrean Perspective,” in *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics*, (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 128). In this text, I will use bad faith and self-

Sartre claims that this lie to oneself differs from the usual notion of lying. The ordinary understanding of a lie is that one person—the deceiver—has some information that he or she misrepresents or withholds and of which another person—the deceived—is unaware or ignorant. This structure, Sartre claims, is untenable within the unity of a single person, for it would require a duality of consciousness: one consciousness (or a level of consciousness), that is in full possession of the truth and that is deliberately deceiving and one consciousness (or level of consciousness), that is ignorant and is being deceived. “Bad faith on the contrary implies in essence the unity of a *single* consciousness.”⁶⁴

Sartre holds that consciousness is transparent through and through. Because consciousness is characterized by nothingness, and because consciousness is intentional—that is, it must be conscious *of* something—it is open, transparent, unified, and non-substantive. Though he does claim that consciousness may be thetic (reflective) or non-thetic (prereflective), he rejects the Freudian notion of an opaque (except through the use of psychotherapy, which claims to gain access to it), unconscious. Thus, the lie of bad faith does not mean that one level of consciousness might have knowledge of the truth while another remains ignorant. Instead, bad faith involves the exploitation of the structure of my being and the nature of belief, so that I may maintain belief in this comfortable untruth. As Caws states, “In some sense or other [bad faith] knows this belief to be mistaken, and it knows that it knows this, so that holding the belief does

deception to mean the same thing, recognizing that each term emphasizes different aspects of the phenomenon.

⁶⁴ *BN*, 59.

involve the maintenance of the deception.”⁶⁵ Thus, although bad faith involves a kind of lie to oneself, it is a knowing lie, a lie that is maintained.

Eschleman usefully delineates three main lines along which Sartre analyzes bad faith. The first involves forms of self-objectification, attempting to make oneself into an object. The second involves epistemic issues of accepting beliefs based on insufficient or unpersuasive evidence. The third involves normative questions like belief in objective or transcendent values, what Sartre calls the “spirit of seriousness.” As Eschleman claims, the first two lines sometime overlap, for “all cases of self-objectification involve epistemic issues. However, all of the epistemic cases do not seem to require an act of self-objectification for them to be possible, at least not directly.”⁶⁶ Thus, the questions concerning the possibility of bad faith are also multi-faceted. I will consider them where appropriate.

Line 1: Making Oneself into an Object

Let us turn to the first line of analysis of bad faith: the attempt to make oneself into an object. Caws gives a succinct description of this type of self-deception; it is, as he says, a lie about our own being: “In bad faith we do not necessarily misrepresent to ourselves the object state of affairs, nor even necessarily our situation—it is our own being that we dissemble, and this in two ways: by denying the fact that it is in question, and by attributing to it fixed properties. Both are comforting strategies, the first avoiding

⁶⁵ Caws, 75.

⁶⁶ Eschleman, “Misplaced Chapter on Bad Faith,” ft. 8.

distress and the second providing stability.”⁶⁷ In other words, I lie to myself about my own being as fundamentally free, pretending instead that I am fundamentally fixed. I do this dissembling by selectively inverting the two aspects of my being—my facticity and my transcendence—wherever it is convenient. Remember that human beings are both born into a situation in the world—the aspect of our being that Sartre calls our facticity—and wholly free to interpret this situation, however we so chose—which is, as Sartre says, our transcendence. “We have to deal with human reality as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is.”⁶⁸ In bad faith, one attempts to take advantage of this ambiguous human nature, and seeks to invert or collapse one’s facticity and transcendence.

I claim, for example, that I am a writer. I believe my passion and ability to write represent who I really am. I want to believe that this desire is my facticity, my essence, yet I can choose to have the goal of becoming a writer and choose whether or and how to pursue this goal. Let’s say, however, that I fear that I will not actually make it as a writer—that I will be rejected from publishers, that I will not have enough success to support myself financially with my writing, that my book will be no good. Yet, I do not wish to give up the conception of myself as a writer because I enjoy the image of myself as scholarly, creative, and intelligent. To pay the bills, I have a job as a desk clerk, to which I devote most of my time, and thus, I spend virtually no time on my writing. I claim that I have not achieved my dream of writing a book because I am unable to find time, because other people and things in my life—my spouse, my children, my boss—have made demands of me that I could not possibly refuse, because my research has been

⁶⁷ Caws, 76.

⁶⁸ *BN*, 100.

slowed indefinitely by a lag in paperwork, etc. I convince myself that I am an object, devoid of freedom, that is simply determined by the circumstantial events of the world. I ignore the fact that I am free to choose or to abandon my project of writing the book at any moment; that I may equally choose to abandon the projects and subsequent demands of my family and job; and that I am free to redirect my research or proceed without the paperwork. Instead, I take my projects as given—as a function of my being “a writer”—rather than as chosen, and claim that my failures are due to events beyond my control, even though such events will be an issue for most anyone who desires to write a book. In this way, I can maintain the belief that my being the frustrated expression of a particular state or essence, rather than a nothingness which I must continuously choose. I am in bad faith.

Sartre’s example of a waiter in the café demonstrates how this desire to be fully a certain kind of person or essence is manifested in a slightly different way. In the previous example of bad faith, I imagine myself to be essentially a writer *in spite* of a complete lack of action of writing; in the example of the waiter, the waiter imagines himself to be essentially a waiter *because* he enacts the duties of a waiter. Imagine, Sartre says, a waiter moves in a mechanical manner as though he is attempting to play at being the ideal role of the waiter in a café. “His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes towards the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer.”⁶⁹ He attempts to fully realize the role of being a waiter, to become it completely. However, “the waiter in the café can not be immediately

⁶⁹ *BN*, 101.

a café waiter in the sense that this inkwell *is* an inkwell, or the glass is a glass.”⁷⁰ That is to say that the waiter is still a free human consciousness, a transcendence as well as facticity. The waiter is not being in-itself but still also being-for-itself. Yet, in some sense he is a waiter, as opposed to a teacher or a diplomat, for he fulfills the duties and obligations and is afforded the rights of being a waiter. “But if I [as the waiter] am one, this can not be in the mode of being-in-itself. I am a waiter in the mode of *being what I am not*.”⁷¹ The waiter that believes himself to be pure facticity—to have fully realized the role of waiter-hood, in the sense that an inkwell is fully an inkwell—is in bad faith, for he ignores his transcendence and his freedom to reinterpret his role as a waiter or to change his profession completely. Thus, again, the waiter allows himself to be convinced that he is fully and wholly a waiter, even though he knows that this is not true.

Likewise, I am in bad faith if I attempt to ignore or deny my circumstance altogether—to deny my gender, my race, my abusive parent, etc.—attempting to replace my facticity with transcendence. As a white person who benefits from a racist society, if I ignore the social privileges of my whiteness, claiming that I only think of myself and others as abstract, disembodied people—that I am “colorblind” and do not think of myself as white—I am in bad faith. I do not wish to recognize the privileges of my whiteness that are dependent upon the social oppression of people of color, and thus deny this whiteness altogether. I claim that my life’s achievements are a function of my extreme intelligence, hard work, tenacity, and talent, ignoring the social goods—such as my high quality education, my acceptance into positions of authority, etc.—I have

⁷⁰ Ibid, 102.

⁷¹ Ibid, 103.

received by virtue of my social privilege. I attempt to posit the facticity of my white, socially advantaged identity as a transcendence.

Sartre's example of a woman on a date illustrates this aspect of bad faith. This woman knows that her date harbors sexual desire for her—and perhaps even she for him—but, “she does not quite know what she wants. She is profoundly aware of the desire which she inspires, but the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her. Yet she would find no charm in a respect which would be only respect.”⁷² She attempts to interpret his sexual advances as mere respectful and sincere admiration of her freedom. The man then demands an immediate decision by holding her hand. The woman now knows that her actions will reveal her intentions: “To leave her hand there is to consent in herself to flirt, to engage herself. To withdraw it is to break the troubled and unstable harmony which gives the hour its charm.”⁷³ Thus, the woman, rather than making the decision required of her in this moment, leaves her hand there, but “does not notice” that she has done so:

She draws her companion up to the most lofty regions of sentimental speculation; she speaks of Life, of her life, she shows herself in her essential aspect—a personality, a consciousness. And during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished; the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion—neither consenting nor resisting a thing.⁷⁴

In this way, the woman is trading her facticity for transcendence. She is attempting to transcend her body, her gender, and the sexual desire that it inspires, and become only a transcendent being who is able to read whatever she so desires into this interaction with

⁷² Ibid, 97.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

her date. At the same time, she is treating her body, which is the locus of her unique human perspective, as a mere object, rather than the embodiment of her consciousness.⁷⁵

Thus, when I am in bad faith, I want my freedom and my facticity to collapse so that I may become the in-itself-for-itself. I want my image of myself to be identical with who I in fact am. This attempt to realize oneself as fully oneself is among the fundamental projects of bad faith. I want to become a writer in the mode of the in-itself; that is, I wish to become wholly and completely a writer, to never question that role, to never feel disconnected from it. I imagine that a true writer *is* a writer—that is her being. She is never filled with doubts or anxiety of her ability and willingness to abandon her writing; she does not wonder if she might be more suited to be a social worker or a musician; she does not question the efficacy of her research. She does not imagine that she has any other unfulfilled possibilities. That full, unquestioning being is what I wish to be.

Sartre claims that the only conscious being that could be this self-identical fullness is an imagined ideal of God. “In other words, a being which would be its own foundation could not suffer the slightest discrepancy between what it is and what it conceives, for it would produce itself in conformance with its comprehension of being and could conceive only of what it is.”⁷⁶ Thus, for Sartre, God is an imagined ideal of the consciousness that is the foundation of its own being. Yet, we human beings are not the foundations of our own being. We cannot be fully realized, for we are the being that is both what it is not and is not what it is. We still desire, however, to be the in-itself-for-itself; we desire to be God.

⁷⁵ I will discuss this further in Chapter 5.

⁷⁶ *BN*, 127.

As I've stated already, much of the criticism of bad faith involves concerns about the epistemic issues of how one is able to deceive oneself. However, there are some scholars whose interpretations of Sartre's ontological concerns about self-objectification lead them to interesting or even mistaken conclusions concerning the nature of bad faith. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, for example, has interpreted Sartre as claiming that self-deception in this kind of self-objectification is logically impossible. Her conclusion stems from her misinterpretation of Sartre's notion of transcendence or radical freedom, for she reads Sartre as claiming, "all self-predication is self-deceptive, masking a purely arbitrary choice as an explicable discovery," and thus she concludes, "if everything one says about oneself is constitutive of a choice rather than a description, questions of truth and validity cannot arise at all. Self-deception, in the narrower sense that we have been speaking of it, disappears altogether."⁷⁷ It is true that Sartre claims that we have no *essential* characteristics, for we are pure freedom or nothingness; however, this does not mean that we have no characteristics whatsoever. It seems that Rorty ignores Sartre's claims that facticity is also a constitutive element of the ambiguous condition of one's being, for Sartre says of the waiter in the café, "There is no doubt the I *am* in a sense a café waiter—otherwise could I not just as well call myself a diplomat or a reporter?"⁷⁸ Sartre's claim is *not* that "all self-predication is self-deceptive," but that *all predication that claims a certain fundamental and necessary essence* is self-deceptive. Indeed, refusing to acknowledge that one's behavior, actions, or words fulfill or exhibit a certain social role or characteristic—a waiter, a flirt, a homosexual, or a coward—is just as much in bad faith as full identifying one's essence with these characteristics.

⁷⁷ Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, "Belief and Self-Deception," *Inquiry* 15: 398.

⁷⁸ *BN*, 103.

Thus, our response to Rorty highlights an important element of bad faith: it is the willful confusion of contingent characteristics based on one's actions and reflections—what Sartre would call the ego—with some sort of essential self. Catalano illuminates this distinction nicely:

At each moment, the original upsurge of consciousness, the primitive, or first, intention of a way of life, is, for Sartre, ontologically separated from the reflected, or derived, ego (that is, my idea and whole perception of myself as a certain kind of person) by an ontological nothingness. But then consciousness tries to flee this very nihilation by attempting to take refuge in the very god it has created: *it hypothesizes that the pre-reflective self arises from the reflective self, that our actions come from a determined nature.*⁷⁹

Bad faith confuses the ego-self with an imagined essential self. Rorty's mistake is that she assumes that *all* self-predication is the predication of this imagined essential self. Thus, it is not necessarily the case that bad faith is impossible on these grounds.

Line 2: Assenting to Non-Persuasive Evidence

Let us turn now to the second line of analysis along which Sartre explores bad faith: epistemological issues concerning the nature of belief and evidence for specific beliefs. It is along this line of reasoning that we may explore how it is possible to lie to oneself, given a single transparent and unified consciousness. Again, this issue concerns to what extent we are aware of this self-deception, and further, to what extent we are aware of what we are deceiving ourselves about, namely our own freedom (in other words, to what extent we are in anguish). Sartre claims, "I flee [anguish] in order not to know, but I can not avoid knowing that I am fleeing; and the flight from anguish is only a

⁷⁹ Catalano, *Commentary*, 75.

mode of becoming conscious of anguish.”⁸⁰ Thus, Sartre recognizes that, because consciousness is unified, we must know that we are fleeing anguish in bad faith. Arthur Danto understands that this is logically necessary, but questions the possibility: “one can be self-deceived under the form of bad faith only if one knows already that one is free. But one may not know this, not even if it is the truth and not even if one in fact is prereflectively aware that one is.”⁸¹ Again, we see Danto’s concern about the relationship between reflective and prereflective consciousness. Are we both aware and not aware of this lie to oneself, and if so, how? Is this self-deception in the relationship between reflective and prereflective consciousness or is it wholly reflective or wholly prereflective? What’s more, what is needed to qualify something as self-deception? For it is possible, Danto claims, for some philosophers to believe in psychological determinism and for them simply to be wrong, rather than self-deceived.⁸²

Danto is not the only scholar who has been concerned with these questions. Leslie Stevenson attempts to resolve this issue by claiming that bad faith is “reflectively denying what one is pre-reflectively aware is true.”⁸³ In other words, one reflectively denies her freedom, of which she is prereflectively aware. This denial can take on two forms: in the first, one is doing some action, and thus has reflective consciousness of it,

⁸⁰ *BN*, 83.

⁸¹ Danto, 78.

⁸² Danto, 78. I would venture to say that Sartre would likely disagree with Danto on this, specifically because Danto has used the example of determinism. It may be that someone has a mistaken belief about oneself, for example, that she is of German descent but is actually of French descent, without this mistaken belief constituting self-deception or bad faith. However, Sartre would likely characterize any belief that denies one’s freedom as bad faith, if only because freedom is, according to Sartre, the fundamental structure of the being of humans.

⁸³ Leslie Stevenson, “Sartre on Bad Faith,” *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* 58(1983): 258.

but reflectively denies that she is doing it.⁸⁴ For example, the woman on a date leaves her hand in the hand of her companion, but reflectively denies that she is doing so. It is not enough, Stevenson claims, simply to have a pre-reflective awareness that one is doing something; one must explicitly deny this action on a reflective level in order for this to constitute bad faith. The second form of this reflective denial is the denial of one's freedom, such as the waiter who believes himself to be wholly a waiter.⁸⁵

Stevenson believes that this reflective denial is needed in order to make bad faith logically defensible, but Sartre does not claim that one denies one's pre-reflective awareness. In fact, this explicit denial of one's actions or one's freedom seems like a very great epistemological leap for one to make. In essence, one must hold contradictory views—that one is and is not doing something, or that one is and is not free—though Stevenson attempts to avoid outright conflict by maintaining that one view is reflective and the other is pre-reflective.

Jeffery Gordon rightly points out that this distinction that Stevenson attempts to maintain is untenable, even within Stevenson's own analysis. Gordon provides two possible senses of pre-reflective consciousness. He claims that it is either the "hard view," that pre-reflective consciousness is removed from reflective consciousness, a "deeply submerged domain of awareness, accessible only with great difficulty to reflective consciousness," or the "soft view," that is a sort of peripheral awareness, easily accessible to reflective consciousness.⁸⁶ Gordon claims that the hard view cannot work in Stevenson's account because one needs to know something in order to explicitly deny it,

⁸⁴ Ibid, 257.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jeffrey Gordon, "Bad Faith: A Dilemma," *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* 60(1985): 258.

and if it is too far removed from consciousness, this is not possible. What's more, this hard view of prereflective consciousness sounds very much like the Freudian unconscious, which Sartre explicitly rejects. The soft view also fails, however, because "the reflective act of *denying* my involvement calls altogether too much attention to it to allow it to remain pre-reflective. The moment I say, 'I am not counting cigarettes,' my pre-reflective awareness of doing so would be transformed instantly to reflective awareness."⁸⁷ Furthermore, Gordon points out the implausible epistemic leap of both doing and denying a single action: "If I am pre-reflectively aware of an engagement in this soft sense of 'pre-reflective', it seems simply preposterous to say that I can at the same time credibly deny to myself my involvement in this activity."⁸⁸ Gordon's criticisms are appropriate, thus requiring a different way of understanding the self-deception of bad faith.

I propose an alternative, which has been offered by quite a few Sartre scholars, and for which there is a good deal of support in the text of *Being and Nothingness*.⁸⁹ Rather than understanding bad faith as the reflective denial of what one is prereflectively aware is true, we ought to take seriously the term *mauvaise foi* itself, to remember that bad faith involves "faith" or belief in something, not simply the denial of something. Both Michael Hymers and Ronald Santoni point to the importance of Sartre's notion of bad faith as the "ideal lie," that is, a lie of which one allows oneself to be fully

⁸⁷ Ibid, 261.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ronald Santoni, Peter Caws, Michael Hymers, and Joseph Catalano are a few of the most influential scholars who offer this interpretation.

convinced.⁹⁰ In order for this ideal lie to be possible, one needs the content of the lie to be at least remotely plausible, and the explicit denial of something that is clearly the case is a rather far reach. Instead, the content of this ideal lie of bad faith is what Michael Hymers calls a “half-truth.” It is not an outright denial of the evidence at hand, but a belief that another set of circumstances is true. For example, the woman in the café need not reflectively deny that she has left her hand in that of her companion; “she need merely *assert* to herself that another state of affairs is true, a state of affairs which is in some sense ambiguous with regard to her hand remaining where it is.”⁹¹ Rather than reflectively denying that her companion has made a sexual advance, she instead asserts something like, “It is only during such moments as these, when two people sincerely communicate, that we attain our humanity!”⁹²

This interpretation of bad faith leads us to understand more completely the “faith” of bad faith. Bad *faith* is so-called because it is a decision to be fully persuaded that I am a certain way or other, even when there is not enough evidence, or non-persuasive evidence, to justify this conclusion. It is important, then, to emphasize the creative and positive nature of this process, rather than viewing bad faith as only denial or rejection of certain beliefs, or the simple simultaneous maintenance of conflicting sets of beliefs. As Caws states, “[Bad faith] involves a claim to be what I am not—not just not being a coward, for example, but constituting myself as courageous and taking pride in this fact.

⁹⁰ Hymers, Michael, “Bad Faith,” *Philosophy: The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* 64(1989): 397; Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 32.

⁹¹ Hymers, 400.

⁹² *Ibid.*

It is positive beliefs of this sort about oneself that constitute the ‘faith’ of bad faith.”⁹³

Thus, the woman in the café sees herself as a respectable, intellectual person who is engaged in contemplative conversation with her companion; and the aspiring writer sees herself as a creative and hard-working person who is meant to write.

This attitude that assents to non-persuasive evidence exploits the nature of belief or faith in general. In bad faith, I tell myself that there is never enough evidence to be fully persuaded of any belief—that there may always be a new piece of evidence to change or discount a belief. Therefore, I allow myself to believe things for which there is a lack of critical evidence. Thus, the project of bad faith is itself in bad faith, for it rests on the commitment that belief is never fully justified, and thus convinces itself that non-persuasive evidence is enough to be convincing. As Sartre says, bad faith “stands forth in the firm resolution *not to demand too much*, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths. This original project of bad faith is a decision in bad faith on the nature of faith.”⁹⁴ Thus, again, bad faith is itself a project in bad faith. Joseph Catalano succinctly states this process: “A belief emerges that has no necessary relation to any specific evidence. This belief attempts to bridge the gap between itself and a critical belief by viewing the ideal of belief to be an impossible achievement.”⁹⁵ Thus, one feels justified to be content with inadequate evidence concerning one’s being.

Does this assent to non-persuasive evidence answer the question of how one may successfully lie to oneself? What about the awareness of the true state of affairs: that I

⁹³ Caws, 80.

⁹⁴ *BN*, 113.

⁹⁵ Catalano, “Successfully Lying,” 146.

am behaving cowardly, or that I am engaged in sexual flirtation? How is one unified consciousness able to maintain that it both knows and does not know the truth of the matter? Santoni argues that Sartre is able to claim that bad faith is a lie to oneself, but only in a qualified sense of lying to oneself. As Santoni points out, part of the exploitation of the nature of belief is accepting that one can never fully believe what one believes. Sartre states, “It is precisely as the acceptance of not believing what it believes that it is bad faith.”⁹⁶ Thus, Santoni suggests that this “not believing what one believes” actually means not *fully* believing what one believes about oneself. Santoni claims, “‘lying to oneself’ turns out to have the modified sense of the acceptance of not being *fulfillingly* persuaded even when one is ‘persuaded.’”⁹⁷ Bad faith is “like a game of ‘pretend’ which consciousness plays with itself in respect to persuasion and belief.”⁹⁸ Santoni notes, however, that this interpretation of bad faith contradicts Sartre’s claim that bad faith is an “ideal lie” for this acceptance of insufficient evidence is a lie in a rather weak sense of the word: it is a lie that only half-persuades, rather than fully persuades. “Either there is an inconsistency here, or Sartre, without having specifically expressed it, has altered his approach to ‘half-persuasion’ while developing his account of bad faith.”⁹⁹

In spite of this inconsistency, I believe that Santoni is correct in his interpretation of Sartre. In fact, given the problems with either prereflective or reflective denial of the state of affairs that I discussed above, I can see no other way in which the self-deception of bad faith is plausible.

⁹⁶ *BN*, 115.

⁹⁷ Santoni, 43.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 45.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

We should remember, in addition, that, like anguish, Sartre does not consider bad faith to be a “state” because indeed, human reality can never *be* one particular state or other. Instead, we must think of bad faith as a constant effort or ongoing *project*. Sartre explains:

One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a *state*. But consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith.¹⁰⁰

Thus, bad faith is chosen as a project of the pre-reflective consciousness. One does not realize and reflect upon his or her project of bad faith as such, for then the project would collapse under his or her gaze. Bad faith, then, is a psychic structure that is precarious and, as Sartre says, “metastable”: it must continuously be reaffirmed and remade. Thus, one must continuously choose to maintain this self-deception. This is not to say, however, that bad faith does not have its own kind of inertia. Sartre claims that, “one *puts oneself* in bad faith as one goes to sleep and one is in bad faith as one dreams.”¹⁰¹ It is not always easy to rouse oneself from one’s dreams. More explicitly, Sartre claims, “even though the existence of bad faith is very precarious, and though it belongs to the kind of psychic structures which we might call *metastable*, it presents nonetheless an autonomous and durable form.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *BN*, 89.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 113.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 90.

Line 3: The Spirit of Seriousness

The third line along which Sartre analyzes bad faith is the belief in transcendent or objective values, which Sartre refers to as the “spirit of seriousness.” I will reserve discussion of this line of analysis for Chapter 4, in which I will directly show how the spirit of seriousness guides the actions and motivations of the checklist tourist.

Sincerity

One might believe that the opposite of bad faith is sincerity. Consider Sartre’s example of a man who denies that his homosexual acts defines him as “a homosexual.” He is in bad faith because he acknowledges all the facts and evidence of his situation—of the patterns of behavior that define a homosexual, and that he himself is participating in these behaviors—yet he refuses to draw the conclusion that this evidence imposes and persuades himself instead that he is wholly transcendence. He insists that his freedom places him above and beyond mere labels. In some sense, this man is correct, for humans can never be fully defined by patterns of behavior, just as the waiter cannot be fully determined as a waiter. However, Sartre claims that the homosexual who denies his homosexuality, while still aware of his homosexual acts, equivocates with the meaning of the word “to be.” He claims that he is not a homosexual in the sense that the table is not a glass; yet he refuses to recognize that he is a being that, in some sense, *is* what it is not. This man would cease to be in bad faith “if he declares to himself, ‘To the extent that a pattern of conduct is defined as the conduct of a paederast and the extent that I have

adopted this conduct, I am a paederast. But to the extent that human reality can not be finally defined by patterns of conduct, I am not one.’”¹⁰³ Instead, however, the homosexual claims only transcendence in the face of his facticity and, treating his transcendence as a thing with which he can fully identify, sees facticity in the face of his transcendence.¹⁰⁴

Suppose, however, this homosexual has a friend who is terribly annoyed at his refusal to declare himself a homosexual. This friend, whom Sartre calls the “champion of sincerity,” wants the homosexual simply to come out with it and admit that he is, in fact, a homosexual, but he assumes that his homosexuality has an ontological dimension. Sartre points out that the champion of sincerity is also in bad faith. In demanding that the homosexual be sincere, the champion of sincerity wants the homosexual to turn his freedom into a thing. That is, the homosexual admits to his being a homosexual, which both objectifies his own being and distances himself from this object as the one who does the objectifying. “Thus the essential structure of sincerity does not differ from bad faith since the sincere man constitutes himself as what he is *in order not to be it*.”¹⁰⁵ The champion of sincerity also allows himself to be convinced that his friend is a homosexual, in the sense that the inkwell is an inkwell. In short, he makes the same mistake that Rorty made when she conflates a predicative claim with a claim of identity.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 108.

¹⁰⁴ We might also note that this example becomes complicated because Sartre seems to interchangeably use the words “homosexual” and “paederast.” A homosexual male is one who engages in sexual activity with other males; if this activity is with other adult males, rather than with children, then it is not pederasty. Is this because Sartre himself does not acknowledge the difference, possibly due to a socially accepted equivocation of the two? Or, perhaps, Sartre is purposefully making the further point that a sincere admission remains in bad faith because the homosexual may continue to avoid the issue at hand. If the homosexual focuses on his status as pederast, he is able to avoid a dimension of homosexuality as sex with other adult men.

¹⁰⁵ BN, 109.

Thus, he too is in bad faith, for he ignores the truth that no person can ever accurately be identified as a thing. We do not want to say that any claim to own up to our activities and behaviors is in bad faith, indeed, but Sartre's claim is bad faith sincerity attempts to objectify freedom.

We experience this sincerity not only for others but also for ourselves. We claim that we will introspect and, thus, discover and become our true selves. Yet, this goal of sincerity already assumes that we have a true nature, that we are essentially one sort of thing over another. We identify and confirm our undesirable characteristics, drives, and motivations, simply so we can distance ourselves from them. The person who wishes to distance herself from her behavioral patterns of alcoholism utters, "I am an alcoholic." Yet this utterance must be made over and over, for one can never fully be an alcoholic in the mode of the in-itself, in the way a stapler is a stapler, the way that sincerity (in Sartre's specific use of the word), aims for. If this were so, bad faith would not even be possible. Instead, "Total, constant sincerity as a constant effort to adhere to oneself is by nature a constant effort to dissociate oneself from oneself."¹⁰⁶

Thus, we must remember throughout our discussion that sincerity is not the overcoming of bad faith, but a mode of it. The overcoming of bad faith is something that has been much discussed in the community of scholars who study Sartre. In an enigmatic and tantalizing footnote, Sartre suggests the possibility of a "self-recovery" that he calls "authenticity," but states, "the description of which has no place here."¹⁰⁷ Sartre's discussions of "pure reflection" and "play" within *Being and Nothingness* also offer clues to this notion of authenticity. Many scholars have sought out other references to

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ *BN*, 116, ft nt 9.

authenticity in Sartre's *War Diaries, Anti-Semite and the Jew*, and his posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*, and many have offered responsible and well-argued interpretations of this elusive Sartrean interpretation of the concept.¹⁰⁸ I examine authenticity and its role in tourism and souvenir collection in the final chapter of this project. I simply wish to note here that the possibility of an authentic alternative to bad faith is often implicit in Sartre's discussion of bad faith, and this possibility may help guide us in how to understand bad faith better. For example, are we to think of bad faith as something that pervades human life or as something from which we can, if even occasionally, escape?

Weak and Strong Bad Faith

This issue of the pervasiveness of bad faith—much like the pervasiveness of anguish—has troubled scholars. Caws notes that Sartre himself seems to be ambivalent on the issue. “On the one hand he regards bad faith as a feature that is ‘essential to human reality’, on the other he assumes a frankly moralizing tone in condemning its products.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, at times Sartre seems to claim that bad faith is an inevitable part of the human condition, and yet, at others, he seems to suggest that bad faith is a flawed mode of being, and makes mention of “good faith” or “authenticity” as alternatives ways of being. At one point he claims “[bad faith] can even be the normal aspect of life for a very great number of people. A person can *live* in bad faith, which does not mean that he

¹⁰⁸ For some especially illuminating work see Ronald Santoni's *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* and Joseph Catalano's *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics*.

¹⁰⁹ Caws, 80.

does not have abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith, but which implies a constant and particular style of life.”¹¹⁰

Catalano and other Sartre scholars have attempted to make sense of this ambivalence by distinguishing between weak and strong notions of bad faith. According to Catalano, bad faith is “weak” in the sense that it pervades the human experience:

Bad faith is seen in this view as a necessary aspect of the human condition, specifically, as the unsuccessful way in which we all must cope with our freedom by assuming roles in society. Given this weak sense of bad faith, good faith seems to be at best, a momentary awakening, a fleeting glimpse of the futile character of our condition, a glimpse that never fully and never for very long escapes the conditions of bad faith itself.¹¹¹

Bad faith in this “weak” sense, then, reflects the way that we must all be in bad faith to some extent or another, because we all struggle with the anguish of our freedom. Lewis Gordon gives more emphasis to the social dimension in his characterization of weak bad faith, calling it “institutional bad faith.” This weak form of bad faith denotes the expression of bad faith in a group context. It is a kind of group deception and group denial of freedom—present within social structures and institutions—in which the individual can hide. “We call it a weak form of bad faith simply because it expresses itself in the system of beliefs manifested by people in their everyday activities, their folkways and mores, and because such a system’s maintenance and perpetuation depend on a collectivity of choices that may or may not be efforts to hide from responsibility.”¹¹²

We may say that institutional bad faith is a form of weak bad faith because it is an essential structure of the human condition. A person living within a society dominated

¹¹⁰ *BN*, 90.

¹¹¹ Joseph Catalano, “Good and Bad Faith: Weak and Strong Notions,” in *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics*, (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 99-100.

¹¹² Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995), 47.

by bad faith—such as one that essentializes any of its members according to their race, gender, religion, etc.—will become socialized to accept this bad faith as reality itself. Because we are social beings—beings-for-others—and must inhabit social roles, it is inevitable that we exist in bad faith, in this weak sense of the term.

“Strong” bad faith, for both of these scholars, refers to the *individual* choice to take up this bad faith project. As Gordon states, “‘Strong’ bad faith is strong precisely because the decision to hide behind the array of bad social beliefs is the responsibility of not only the collective of individuals, but also each individual.”¹¹³ It seems that when Sartre uses his moralizing tone with respect to bad faith, he has in mind this strong sense of the term. Indeed, Sartre’s notion of existential psychoanalysis, which is meant to reveal and uncover the fundamental projects of bad faith, is intended to be done on the level of the individual.

Understanding the relationship between weak or institutional bad faith and strong or individual bad faith is important when considering the bad faith of the contemporary tourist as souvenir collector, for both the tourism and souvenir industries are large social, political, and economic institutions. What is the relationship between the tourist and the tourism industry and how should we investigate bad faith in this context? These are issues that I will explore in Chapter 3.

¹¹³ Ibid, 48.

Uncovering Bad Faith

If we wish to analyze bad faith within an individual, we must uncover bad faith decisions as they operate at different levels. Lewis Gordon summarizes these levels of analysis this way: the first level is the primitive ontological project to be God: to be the in-itself-for-itself. This is the most basic level of bad faith. The second level of analysis requires the work of what Sartre calls “existential psychoanalysis,” in which the analyst attempts to determine how this choice “to be” is manifested in one’s life. It is my “fundamental choice.” “It is rooted in the situation of consciousness in the flesh and a social world.”¹¹⁴ So, suppose that my desire to be a being with an essence is expressed as a commitment to a belief in a Christian God who is the creator of the universe and who is an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent being who has created me with a particular purpose and essence. My fundamental choice is to be a Christian. This belief allows for the further maintenance of my belief in God who has created me for a specific reason, as a person with a particular essence. Thus, my bad faith acceptance of the non-persuasive evidence of a biblical verse allows me to maintain my bad faith belief in myself as the in-itself-for-itself that I desire to be. My attendance of Bible study groups, my choice of a Christian spouse, my decision to remain sexually abstinent until married—or, more complexly, my failure to remain sexually abstinent and my self-deception about the status of my virginity—are all specific decisions that are expressions of my fundamental choice: the third level of analysis. Thus, although the fundamental project of bad faith is to be the in-itself-for-itself, this project may be expressed in a variety of diverse ways in

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 61.

diverse situations. Thus, even the seemingly most banal or trivial situations and behaviors—such as collecting tchotchkes on family vacation—can reveal deep-seated philosophical projects.

The purpose of the following chapters is not to perform this existential psychoanalysis on any particular tourist or group of tourists, but instead to explore the viability and relevance of bad faith as a concept for understanding the contemporary tourist. In the chapters that follow, I will explore different aspects of bad faith in the context of this contemporary phenomenon. These aspects include the spirit of seriousness; the body and bad faith; and play. This work will enrich our understanding both of bad faith as a concept and of tourism as a contemporary phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3

THE TOURIST IN SITUATION

“I am never free except *in situation*.”¹¹⁵

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1943

In this chapter, I wish to look at the relationship between the individual tourist and the tourism industry with respect to bad faith. This project aims at an analysis of the bad faith of the contemporary tourist and takes the individual's experiences of anguish and bad faith as its point of departure. However, much of the existing literature in tourism studies analyzes the patterns of behavior of groups of people from an external, third person, sociological perspective, taking account of the context of social, cultural, and historical structures of these groups. Although Sartre devotes much of *Being and Nothingness* to describing the human experience on an individual level, he also claims that an individual is always in a situation. Thus, our analysis will benefit from a critical review of the situation of the tourist, for it is in relationship to her situation—the tourism industry that conditions her travel and her demographic position—that the individual tourist chooses either the affirmation of her freedom or bad faith. Indeed, Sartre himself states, “I am never free except *in situation*.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, exploring the relationship between the individual perspective of the tourist and the sociological perspective of tourists and the tourism industry will raise important questions about the appropriateness

¹¹⁵ *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 653.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

of bad faith for understanding a person situated in a particular location of existing social, cultural, and historical structures. Thus, in this chapter, I wish to explore the relationship between the phenomenological and the sociological approaches to this contemporary phenomenon, identify some of the weaknesses of the existing sociological literature on tourism, and argue for an interpretation of bad faith that takes seriously the inextricable connection between the individual and her situation.

“Whether the situation is ontological, historical, global, or regional, freedom is, for Sartre, always ‘situated,’ and never independent of a situation.”¹¹⁷ Sartre defines the situation as such: “We shall use the term *situation* for the contingency of freedom in the *plenum* of being of the world inasmuch as this *datum*, which is there only *in order not to constrain* freedom, is revealed to this freedom only as *already illuminated* by the end which freedom chooses.”¹¹⁸ The situation is thus the contingency of freedom—that is, facticity—which does not constrain freedom, but of which one chooses the meaning. It is against this background situation that the individual emerges and asserts her freedom. Indeed, throughout his analysis in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre discusses the various ways that human freedom or human consciousness is situated in the world. First, as we discussed in the previous chapter, consciousness is intentional or relational, meaning that one is always conscious *of* something: consciousness does not exist independently of the objects of consciousness.¹¹⁹ Second, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, consciousness is embodied, and this body is a locus of experience and perception. Sartre discusses this issue at length in his section on the body in Part III of *Being and Nothingness*. Third, as I

¹¹⁷ Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 101.

¹¹⁸ *BN*, 626

¹¹⁹ Sartre adopts this view of consciousness from Husserl.

will also discuss in Chapter 5, Sartre claims that through our relations to others we experience our own being. For example, I understand the limits of my own freedom because of the look of the Other, and it is through my feeling of shame or pride in the eyes of the Other that I experience her free consciousness. Thus, although Sartre's phenomenological approach begins from the first-person perspective—he says, “in truth, the *cogito* must be our point of departure”—it avoids the Cartesian traps of idealism or solipsism, not because questions about the external world are bracketed, but because Sartre's phenomenological analysis sees consciousness as intentional, embodied, in relation to others, and not a thing or substance.

As I will explore later in this chapter, some critics have argued that some elements of Sartre's theoretical framework of *Being and Nothingness*—namely, the fundamental project—ignore or reject the necessity of the situation as a condition for one's freedom, and present human freedom as overly abstract, existing independently of history and culture. I will investigate these issues in more detail later on. For now, let us consider the dominant methodology of the existing sociological literature on tourism and explore the empirical situation of the tourism industry in which the tourist finds herself.

The Sociological Analysis of Tourism

This phenomenological approach through which Sartre explores bad faith differs from the sociological approaches that characterize much of the literature in the tourism industry. In his now canonical 1976 text, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, sociologist Dean MacCannell was among the first scholars to take tourism as an

object of study. His method, he claims, is to do “an ethnography of modernity,” and like an ethnographer who studies and speaks with the local indigenous people in an attempt to piece together an image of a place or culture, MacCannell “undertook to follow the tourists, sometimes joining their groups, sometimes watching them from afar through writings by, for and about them.”¹²⁰ Thus, from MacCannell and the social scientists who have followed his course of study, we gain the benefit of both quantitative and qualitative empirical data, (though mostly the latter), about the activities, behaviors, media influences, economic exchanges, etc. of actual living tourists. These data are then categorized, interpreted, and constructed into coherent narratives.

Much of the existing tourism literature is grounded heavily in the Marxist tradition, followed through the lineage of Thorstein Veblen, who published *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899. Indeed, for most tourist scholars, tourism speaks to the relationship between work and leisure and how the latter reveals the structure of social class, capitalism, and modernity. John Urry, Graham Dann, Jost Krippendorf, and others consider tourism to be a paradigmatic expression of modernity. MacCannell claims, “‘The tourist’ is one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general...Our first apprehension of modern civilization, it seems to me, emerges in the mind of the tourist.”¹²¹ Urry states, “To be a tourist is one of the characteristics of the modern experience.”¹²² Ning Wang has devoted an entire book to exploring the relationship between tourism and modernity called, simply, *Tourism and Modernity*. Graham M.S.

¹²⁰ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 4.

¹²¹ Ibid, 1.

¹²² John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 4.

Dann has called the tourist “a metaphor of the social world.”¹²³ Tazim Jamal and Steve Hill claim that tourism is a “metaphor for a changing bio-political world in which (post)modernity, capitalism and globalization furnish complex meanings to authenticity and the authentic in everyday life.”¹²⁴ Thus, the foremost concern in the tourism literature does not aim to answer phenomenological questions about how tourism manifests basic human characteristics, but seeks to understand how tourism reveals the social and economic structures of a particular historical epoch.

Let us turn, now, to some of the definitions and dominant narratives that appear in the existing literature on tourism that will help us further understand the “situation” of the tourist. This task will allow for two things: First, it will give a sense of the world in which the tourist must exercise her freedom or, conversely, the world into which the tourist escapes, in a variety of ways, in bad faith. Second, it will provide an opportunity to reflect on and criticize some of the weaknesses or assumptions of this sociological literature, and demonstrate where a phenomenological investigation can offer depth and clarity.

Definition of the Tourist

Tourism is a mode of travel that differs from travel for refuge, employment opportunities, missionary work, political diplomacy, warfare, etc., although sometimes

¹²³ Graham M. S. Dann, “The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World,” in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann, 1-18 (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002).

¹²⁴ Tazim Jamal and Steve Hill, “The Home and the World: (Post)touristic Spaces of (In)authenticity?” in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann, (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002), 103.

some of these aims overlap with tourist travel. The etymological root of the word “tourism” is “tour” or “tower,” which means a turning around or a revolution. Thus, a tour is literally a circuitous trip that ends where it began. The word tourism refers now both to the activity of touring and industry that provides the infrastructure for this travel. In 1800, Samuel Pegge was among the first to provide a loose definition of the word “tourist” when he said, “A Traveller is now-a-days called a Tour-*ist*.”¹²⁵ Today, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a tourist as “one who travels for pleasure or culture, visiting a number of places for their objects of interest, scenery, or the like.”¹²⁶

There now exists a fairly large body of literature on the topic tourism and tourist travel, which first became the object of academic interest and study in the 1960s and 1970s. Several scholars have offered conceptual definitions of the tourist, each of which emphasizes a different aspect of the experience of touring. In his 1974 article “Who is a Tourist? A Conceptual Clarification,” Erik Cohen attempts to give a comprehensive definition: “A ‘tourist’ is a voluntary, temporary traveler, traveling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round-trip.”¹²⁷ Valene Smith’s widely accepted definition of a tourist is rather similar to Cohen’s: “a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change.”¹²⁸ Both of these definitions emphasize that a tourist is a temporary and voluntary traveler—which I will not dispute—and both suggest

¹²⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary Online* s.v. “Tourist,” http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.temple.edu/cgi/entry/50255230?query_type=word&queryword=tour&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=5r9P-QuY7ae-4541&result_place=1 (accessed May 31, 2010).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Erik Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism: Diversity and Change* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004), 23.

¹²⁸ Valene L. Smith, “Introduction” in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 2nd Edition, edited by Valene L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 2.

that the tourist does this travel for the purpose of change and novelty. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will argue that although the desire for change and novelty may be at play in motivating the tourist's travels, there also exist deeper, more existentially significant motivations for such travels, such as the desire for a sense of a fixed identity, transcendent values, and the appropriation of material objects. Smith's and Cohen's definitions may offer adequate working definitions of the tourist, but they lack deeper philosophical and phenomenological dimensions that I hope to illuminate throughout the course of this study.

F.W. Ogilvie, one of the first to offer a comprehensive analysis of the tourist, gives a slightly different and more economically centered definition of a tourist. In a 1932 encyclopedia entry he says that the term tourist, "is now used in the social sciences...to describe any person whose movements fulfill two conditions: first that the absence from home is relatively short, and second, that money spent during absence is money derived from home and not earned in the places visited."¹²⁹ Like Cohen and Smith, Ogilvie includes the temporary nature of tourist travel, but speaks not at all to the motivations or aims of the tourist. Instead, the tourist is defined in purely economic terms—again, one can see the strong Marxist influence—and, as Cohen points out, Ogilvie has defined the tourist as a consumer, not a producer. This last point about the tourists more as consumer rather than produce will be important for my analysis, though I will explore the deeper phenomenological impact this has on the experience of the tourist, rather than what it might say about the class or capitalist structures of the modern tourist economy.

¹²⁹ F.W. Ogilvie, "Tourist Traffic." In *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), 661.

It is important to recognize, as many of the scholars in tourism studies do, that there are many types of tourist travel and many motivations, expectations, desires, and experiences that differ from one tourist trip to the next. Tourists travel to diverse destinations and engage in a wide range of activities. For example, tourist trips may be primarily spent: lounging on the beach and luxuriating in seaside resorts; hiking through the wilderness or backpacking the Grand Canyon; gambling at a casino and cheering at spectacular shows; riding through an amusement park and swimming in pools; snapping photos on a jungle safari and bartering with local vendors; wandering through museums and visiting historical sites; and more.¹³⁰ Clearly, each type of travel comes with its own appeal, and a thorough phenomenological exploration of each one is enough material to fill volumes. Furthermore, there is a wide demographic range of contemporary tourists, from a variety of geographic, cultural, and social positions.

Valene Smith has created a typology of different kinds of tourism that will provide a groundwork against which I will define the particular type of tourism that I will be exploring in this project. Among Smith's types of tourism are: "ethnic tourism," which is marketed in terms of "the 'quaint' customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples"; "cultural tourism" which "include the 'picturesque' or 'local color,' a vestige of a vanishing life-style that lies within human memory with its 'old style' houses, homespun fabrics, horse or ox-drawn carts and plows, and hand rather than machine-made crafts"; historical tourism that "stresses the glories of the Past—i.e. Rome, Egypt,

¹³⁰ Some studies that consider the different types of tourism and the activities involved include: Erik Cohen "Who is a Tourist? A Conceptual Clarification," *Contemporary Tourism*; L. Loker and R. Perdue, "A benefit-based segmentation of a nonresident summer travel market," *Journal of Travel Research*, 31, no. 1 (1992): 30–35; M. Uysal and C. Jurowski, "Testing the push and pull factors," *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21 no. 4 (1994): 844–846; H. Oh, M. Uysal, and P. Weaver, "Product bundles and market segments based on travel motivations: A canonical correlation approach," *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 14 no. 2 (1995): 123–137.

and the Inca”; environmental tourism that attracts tourists to remote and alien scenes; and recreational tourism that involves “sand, sea, and sex.”¹³¹

Smith’s list is not exhaustive, and indeed, in more recent years new times of tourism have sprung up and received attention from a variety of scholars: “Eco-tourism” seeks to bring tourists to pristine and remote places in a way that attempts to leave little or no ecological impact, all the while aiming to educate tourists about sustainability and ecological health.¹³² “Disaster tourism,” “dark tourism,” or “black spot tourism” brings tourists to places of death and disaster, such as the death camps and Auschwitz; the killing fields of Cambodia; the death sites of celebrities such the forecourt of the Dakota Building in New York where John Lennon was murdered or the book depository in Dallas where John F. Kennedy was assassinated; and more, recently, the bus tours through the lower ninth world of New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.¹³³ “Voluntourism” is tourist travel in which tourists step out of their roles as sole consumers and offer their time and skills to serve causes and projects in other parts of the world as a central aspect of their travel.¹³⁴ In “virtual tourism” or “cyber-tourism”

¹³¹ Smith, “Introduction,” 4-5.

¹³² For studies on ecotourism see Martha Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* Second ed. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2008); Peter M. Burns and Andrew Holden, *Tourism: A New Perspective* (London: Prentice Hall, 1995); R. Buckley, “Research Note, a framework for ecotourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21 no. 3 (1994): 661–669; D. Barkin, “Eco tourism for sustainable regional development,” *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5 (2002): 245–253; Valene L. Smith “Sustainability” *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*, edited by Valene L. Smith and Maryann Brent, 187-200 (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2001).

¹³³ Chris Rojek, “Fatal Attractions,” in *Ways of Escape* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993), 136-172; Chris Rojek, “Indexing, Dragging and the Social Construction of Tourist Sites,” in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, edited by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997), 62-63; John Lennon and Malcolm Foley *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London: Thomson, 2006).

¹³⁴ For studies of volunteer tourism see Stephen Wearing, “Re-centering the Self in Volunteer Tourism” *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann, 237-262 (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002); Voluntourism <http://www.voluntourism.org/>; WWOOFing is a new term for travelers who connect with organic farmer on

the tourist never leaves the comfort of her desk chair and “tours” through the internet, viewing images and media representations of far-away places.¹³⁵

The Checklist Tourist

As I suggest above, a phenomenological analysis of each of these various kinds of tourism could produce enough pages to fill volumes. Thus, for the purposes of my analysis of bad faith in the tourist, I will focus on one particular kind of tourism, which exemplifies an approach to tourism that seems particularly designed to avoid the possibility of existential anguish, and which will offer a rich and illuminating lens through which to explore the concept of bad faith. I call the object of my analysis “checklist tourism.”

Checklist tourism is about the need to see and “check off” particular sites from one’s list and to provide evidence—in the form of photos and souvenirs—that one has done so. Lin Yutang describes what he calls a type of “false travel” in his classic text *The Importance of Living*, though he depicts the interests and activities of the checklist tourist nicely:

the World Wide Organization of Organic Farms (<http://www.woof.org/>). WWOOFers donate time and labour in exchange for free room and board at farms around the world. Note that voluntourism violates Ogilvie’s definition of the tourist, and thus, for him, such travelers should not be considered tourists, but perhaps international volunteers instead.

¹³⁵ Studies of cyber or virtual tourism include Bruce Prideaux, “The Cybertourist,” in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002) 317-339; Valene Smith “Tourism Issues of the 21st Century,” in *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*, edited by Valene L. Smith and Maryann Brent (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2001), 348. This too, seems to violate one of the key elements of the existing definitions of the tourist, which is that tourists vacate their homes, presumably for a physical, rather than psychical, absence from home.

The second kind of false travel is travel for conversation, in order that one may talk about it afterwards...The tourists are so busy with their cameras that they have no time to look at the places or themselves...As these historical places become places to be talked about afterwards instead of places to be looked at, it is natural that the more places one visits, the richer the memory will be, and the more places there will be to talk about. This urge for learning and scholarship therefore impels the tourist to cover as many points as possible in a day. He has in his hand a program of places to visit, and as he comes to a place, he checks it off with a pencil on the program. I suspect such travelers are trying to be efficient even on their holiday.¹³⁶

The checklist tourist travels with a mental or physical list of sites to see and uses this list a guide by which to plan her trip and measure its success. The checklist tourist tends to travel largely through the infrastructure of the mass tourism industry. Erik Cohen calls these “conventional” tourists. He says, “conventional tourists’ experience little direct exposure to strangeness, and travel primarily within the familiarity of their environmental bubble. The bubble provides them with security and protection: hotels have safes and security officers, tourist shops guarantee the genuineness of their wares. Conventional tourists are thus little exposed to danger.”¹³⁷ The checklist tourist, in addition to traveling in the infrastructure of conventional tourism, often moves quickly from one site to the next, covering as much ground as possible, seeing as many sites on the list as possible, in any given trip. The encounter with any one site last only long enough so that the tourist can later say, “I’ve been there.”

“Checklist tourism,” is similar to what scholars in the tourism literature call “sightseeing” tourism. Distinguishing between sightseers and vacationers, Cohen argues:

The sightseer travels primarily to visit “attractions”—unique features of a country or a locality, which differentiate it from others, and the sight or experience of which gratifies the visitor, such as old towns archeological sites, natural sights, artistic treasures, etc. The vacationer is more oriented towards facilities and

¹³⁶ Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living*, (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1937), 330.

¹³⁷ Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism*, 183.

amenities such as good accommodation and food, pleasant beaches, sun, mountain air, opportunities for sports and amusement.¹³⁸

The defining characteristic of the sightseer trip, according to Cohen, is the visitation of pre-determined sites or attractions. Indeed, this is also true of the checklist tourist. However, I use the term “checklist tourism” throughout my project, rather than “sightseeing,” to emphasize the hold that the checklist has over the tourist’s definition of a successful trip.

The quintessential or conventional checklist tourist is most often engaged in what Smith calls “historical tourism,” where sites tend to be “must-see” historical icons and located either in or accessible to large cities. In historical tourism, “an institutionalized tourist industry, or ‘tourist culture,’ usually exists to cater to a stream of visitors, and host-guest contacts are often impersonal and detached, and primarily economic rather than social.”¹³⁹ The broader concept of sightseeing or historical tourism may include an interest in the content or meaning of a particular site, learning about its history or importance. However, checklist tourism is sufficiently satisfied with the site that is, by and large, removed from its context or meaning. The result is a desire to move quickly from site to site, giving little concern to content or context of the sites themselves, and gaining satisfaction from the superficial encounter with the site.

This encounter, we should note, may not always be visual. Checklist tourism—and even sightseeing, in spite of its name—does not only involve, and sometimes does not even emphasize, the sense of sight: items on one’s checklist might also include experiences that emphasize other senses, such as kissing the Blarney Stone, hearing the

¹³⁸ Ibid, 33.

¹³⁹ Smith, *Hosts and Guests*, 5.

bells of Notre Dame, or eating Greek baklava. The important thing for the checklist tourist, however, is achieving the goal of seeing, hearing, tasting, or touching a particular thing enough to say that she's done so, and then moving on to the next.

Indeed, it seems that the tourism industry organizes travel around checklists. Guidebooks and tourism websites often amount to little more than a list of places to see, stay, eat, and what to think about each of these places when there. *The New York Times* best-seller, *1000 Places to See Before You Die: A Travelers Life List* in the ultimate travel checklist, sending would-be travelers to remote natural wonders in the far corners of the globe as well as typical “must-see” sites of any mass tourist. (Indeed, the title of this book already harkens to some key existentialist themes.) This book certainly reaches the extreme of globetrotting travel guides, though we may also point to the slightly smaller scope titles: *1000 Places to See in the U.S. and Canada Before You Die*;¹⁴⁰ *Frommer's 500 Places to See Before They Disappear*;¹⁴¹ *50 Amazing Things You Must See & Do in the Smoky Mountains: The Ultimate Outdoor Adventure Guide*;¹⁴² *The Traveler's Atlas: Europe: A Guide to the Places You Must See in Your Lifetime*;¹⁴³ and the “Must-See Guides” series, which has a titles on locations all over the world: from *Must-See: Chicago* to *Must-See: New Zealand*.

Additionally, a large sector of the travel and tourism industry is devoted to catering to checklist tourists because these travelers comprise a large portion of the

¹⁴⁰ Patricia Schultz, *1000 Places to See in the U.S. and Canada Before You Die* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2007).

¹⁴¹ Holly Hues and Larry West, *Frommer's 500 Places to See Before They Disappear* (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2009).

¹⁴² Richard Bernabe and Jerry Greer, *50 Amazing Things You Must See & Do in the Smoky Mountains: The Ultimate Outdoor Adventure Guide* (Mountain Trail Press, 2010).

¹⁴³ Mike Gerrard, *The Traveler's Atlas: Europe: A Guide to the Places You Must See in Your Lifetime* (London: Quarto, 2009).

world's tourism industry. A variety of social scientists and market researchers have found that that seeing historical and cultural sites is among the top motivations for tourist travel, over the motivations of relaxation, education, adventure, or change of climate.¹⁴⁴ As MacCannell suggests in the 1998 epilogue of *The Tourist*, in the years since 1976 when he first published his book, the tourism industry has increasingly structured itself so as to promote checklist tourism:

Every 'destination' is increasingly commodified, packaged, and marketed. It is possible to make travel and hotel arrangements for any destination from any place on earth. There is equally a drive to try to break the connection between sightseeing and the specificity of place, to contain sightseeing as generic entertainment and manufactured fantasy that can be delivered to any place.¹⁴⁵

The checklist tourist often travels through the well-established and pre-packaged tours to the must-see sites.

Not all tourists, of course, are checklist tourists. There are plenty of people who have little interest in one destination over another: one seaside resort is as good as the next. Additionally, even checklist tourists may have a variety of concurrent motivations for travel. One may argue that depicting checklist tourists as one-dimensional caricatures whose sole purpose for travel is to check sites off a list does not accurately represent the complexity of human psychology and behavior or the activities of tourist travel. I agree. I do not wish to give the impression that checklist tourists do not have any additional motivations for travel or that they unwaveringly adhere to a certain set of scripted behaviors. Tourists often have many aims and goal for their trips—yet the activity of

¹⁴⁴ H. Bansal and H. A. Eiselt, "Exploratory research of tourist motivations and planning," *Tourism Management*, 25, no. 3 (June 2004): 387-396; Kozak and Metin, "Comparative analysis of tourist motivations by nationality and destinations" *Tourism Management* 23, no. 3 (June 2002): 221-232; Samuel Seongseop Kima and Bruce Prideaux "Marketing implications arising from a comparative study of international pleasure tourist motivations and other travel-related characteristics of visitors to Korea" *Tourism Management* 26, no. 3 (June 2005): 347-357.

¹⁴⁵ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 195.

traveling according to a checklist is, for many, at least one of these aims. However, even if the pure checklist tourist—one who has no other goals or aims for a trip—does not exist, there are elements or aspects of the checklist tourist to be found in many contemporary tourists, in particular, in middle class American tourists.

Perhaps the checklist tourist is a caricature; nevertheless, she is a recognizable character in the American popular culture. For example, Chevy Chase's character in the *National Lampoon* series of family vacations insists on traveling to the must-see sites of the fictional Wally World, (based on Disneyland), and the a variety of European classics, such as the Eiffel Tower and the leaning Tower of Pisa, in spite of a series of circumstantial disasters, (allowing, of course, for ensuing hilarity). The neurotic Danny Tanner, (played by Bob Saget), in the 1980s and 90s family show "Full House" literally travels through the family's vacation to Hawaii with a clipboard in hand to ensure that the family achieves all of their desired must-see places and activities. As the family arrives at the airport and wants to scatter in various directions, Danny rounds them up and insists, "I have carefully scheduled every minute of every day with everyone's activity. It's all right here on my clipboard of fun. Ladies and gentleman, let the vacation...[looking at his watch]...BEGIN!"

The caricatured image of the checklist tourist not only appears in American popular culture, but also in the body of tourism scholarship. Maxine Feifer offers a character sketch of a range of "typical" tourists at various points throughout tourism's history. The characters in the chapter titled "The Tourist Explosion," which chronicles the tourists of the middle and late twentieth century massive tourism movement, are

“Homer” and his wife “Mabel.” These characters fit rather closely to the checklist mode of tourist travel. Feifer describes Homer this way:

He is, significantly, only a cartoon character, so he has only one unforgettable line: staggering off the bus in yet another quaintly imposing *grande place*, he has no way to identify where he is except by dazedly scrutinizing his itinerary— blinking, he utters the familiar caption, “If it’s Tuesday, this must be Belgium.” Borne aloft on a gargantuan infrastructure, target of the world’s biggest growth industry, “complete consumer” (since he only brings money *in* to foreign countries, and he has to buy everything he needs from the natives [Ogilivie!]), universally “distasteful” but every marketer’s favourite dish, he’s simply and starkly the tourist. Everybody has been one, nobody wants to be called one.¹⁴⁶

Although Feifer recognizes, as I do, that the checklist tourist is a kind of cartoon character, it is also the case that “everybody has been one.” For the next thirty-five pages, Feifer describes the activities, behaviors, desires, and dreams of Homer and Mabel, and her insights resonate with the experiences, patterns, and expectations of real people in this particular contemporary historical epoch. That is, although this caricature of the checklist tourist is in fact just a caricature, it does not follow that an analysis of the checklist tourist will not yield rich insights into the bad faith patterns of a larger demographic of real individuals who see certain elements of the checklist tourist’s behaviors in themselves.

Of course, much has changed in the tourism industry in the last ten or twenty years. The internet has revolutionized travel marketing, planning, destinations, and structures. A growing global market has homogenized and even further commodified travel destinations so that one is now just as likely to see a McDonald’s in Athens, Hong Kong, or Istanbul as in St. Louis or San Francisco. The would-be tourist can now see the *Mona Lisa* or the Great Wall with just a few strokes of a keyboard. I do not wish to

¹⁴⁶ Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 219.

argue that checklist tourism is the only or even the most prevalent mode of tourist travel today, but only that the urge to travel as see something for oneself just to be able to say “I was there,” plays some significant role in this tourist travel. Furthermore, the checklist urge and its accompanying behavior is a well-focused lens for examining the certain aspects of bad faith that have not been given adequate attention in the existing scholarship on bad faith.

A Brief History of Tourism

The checklist tourist, of course, did not appear fully formed as soon as the Second War ended but developed from a long history of tourist travel. In fact, there exists some element of the checklist traveler at various points throughout history.¹⁴⁷

In the Medieval era was the religious pilgrimage to visit holy lands and temples, or to see what were claimed to be holy relics, such as the decapitated skull of John the Baptist or the robe of Christ. Notice that even these extremely early forms of tourism have their own versions of “must-see” sites that now characterize checklist tourism. Some of these sites even provided documents, confirming one’s visitation of the site and

¹⁴⁷ For histories of tourism see: Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present*; Peter M. Burns and Andrew Holden, *Tourism: A New Perspective*, 32-35; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 4-6; Stephen Wearing, “Re-centering the Self in Volunteer Tourism”; R. Lambert, *Grand Tour: A Journey in the Tracks of the Age of Aristocracy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935).

the remission from purgatory awarded for doing so.¹⁴⁸ Religious pilgrims came from all social classes, and often devoted a year or more of time and all their accumulated savings for this rare form of travel.¹⁴⁹ Travel was rather slow and expensive, however, and available only to those who were not tied to the land. By the 13th and 14th centuries, pilgrimage and the amenities thereof—including travel hospices, indulgence books, and travel routes—was a mass phenomenon. “On the eve of the Protestant Reformation and of the Renaissance, pilgrimage was more popular than ever; but the pious motivation was now tinged with more worldly impulses: culture and pleasure—tourism in fact.”¹⁵⁰

By the 18th century, the Grand Tour, (a precursor to the contemporary checklist tour), was considered a rite of passage and cultural education for the young English nobleman who was looking to take his place among the social elite. Wealthy young aristocrats, usually just finishing a classical education at Oxford or Cambridge, would travel to the cultural and artistic epicenters in Italy and France to experience firsthand the paintings, sculpture, architecture, music, and other artistic creations of the Renaissance. Again, these young men were motivated to travel so that they may see certain widely acclaimed artistic or cultural wonders, the “must-see” sites of their day.

The invention of the railroad in the 19th century revolutionized travel, and tourism with it. Suddenly, extensive travel no longer required huge amounts of money and leisure time, for “a factory worker could now travel anywhere as quickly, and essentially,

¹⁴⁸ Michael Houlihan, “Souvenirs with Soul: 800 Years of Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela,” in *Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*, edited by Michael Hitchcock and Ken Teague (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 24.

¹⁴⁹ Feifer, 30.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

as comfortably as a duke.”¹⁵¹ Additionally, with the first wave of Victorian feminism, an increasing number of young women insisted on traveling abroad and exploring the world on their own, and the new technology of rail travel made this possible. In response to this social change, an entrepreneur by the name of Thomas Cook developed what might be considered the foundation of the modern checklist tourism industry. He organized group tours—including hotel reservations, meals, and guided stops at points of interest—which were meant to offer a layer of protection and security to vulnerable single women who had ventured out on their own.¹⁵² This birth of modern tourism solidified and institutionalized checklist tourism as a mainstream mode of tourist travel.

During the post-World-War-II economic boom in the West, especially in the United States, tourism and tourist travel reached new heights. An emerging middle class with expendable income and increased leisure time, an infrastructure of automobile and air travel, as well as a capitalist consumer culture in which people increasingly identified with choices of consumption, allowed the tourist industry to flourish. Travel agencies created a variety of pre-packed tours to fulfill any type of travel inclination: exotic safaris, culture and history tours, decadent beach resorts, wilderness hiking and camping adventures, cruises, etc. In the last twenty years, the proliferation of the Internet has greatly influenced the tourist industry as well. Would-be travelers can now book their own flights, hotels, and excursions on-line, even further customizing their consumer choices and expressing their individualism. Some have argued that the dawn of the checklist tourist has already come and gone—that in the age of the internet and the ubiquity of images of the “must-see” sites, the tourist no longer feels the need to leave

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 176.

¹⁵² Ibid, 167 ff.

home to see the sites. It may be true the height of the checklist tourist was in the few decades after the end of World War II and before the mass advent of the internet. However, as I will argue in Chapter 5, there are still more and more people who participate in tourism each year, most of these tourists continue visit the nations in Europe and North America, and the industry surrounding the must-see sites in Europe and North America continues to grow. In Chapter 5, I offer an existentialist account of why tourists may still feel the need to be in the physical presence of the sites themselves.

For some, the history of tourism demonstrates the growth and development of the quest of self-discovery through “a complex and arduous search for an Absolute Other.”¹⁵³ MacCannell sees this search being taken on by increasing percentages of the population: “What begins as the proper activity of a *hero* (Alexander the Great) develops into the goal of a socially organized *group* (the Crusaders), into the mark of status of an entire social *class* (the Grand Tour of the British ‘gentleman’), eventually becoming *universal experience* (the tourist).”¹⁵⁴ As mentioned above, most of those writing about tourism see the tourist as the quintessential man of modernity; we moderns all share a quest into the world in search of the Other. Perhaps, however, as I’ve suggested, tourism as always historically been, at least in part, about going to see the must-see wonders of the world.

¹⁵³ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 5.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 5. MacCannell’s use of the words “universal experience” here are contentious to say the least. We might charitably interpret him as meaning that the experience of tourism is universal for the large majority of those who live industrialized nations, but clearly, not every member of the world’s population has the resources, disposable income, and infrastructure that conditions tourism.

Modern Man's Search for the Authentic

MacCannell's interpretation of the history of tourism brings us to an important analysis of the dominant narrative that has emerged from this scholarship on tourism about the structure of tourism in modernity. In short, this narrative claims: the tourist by and large feels alienated from his or her work-a-day world at home, and thus leaves home searching for a sense of connection, spiritual fulfillment, rejuvenation, and/or authentic "reality" elsewhere. MacCannell claims, "Modern Man is losing his attachments to the work bench, the neighborhood, the town, the family, which he once called 'his own' but, at the same time, he is developing an interest in the 'real life' of others."¹⁵⁵ Erik Cohen argues that modern tourists feel their life at home lacks what he calls a "centre"—that is, a spiritually or personally fulfilling source of meaning—which they seek elsewhere. Krippendorf similarly and simply states, "People go away because they no longer feel happy where they are—where they work, where they live."¹⁵⁶ He argues that tourists seek escape and rejuvenation, so that they may return to endure another year of alienating work. Maxine Feifer makes a similar point, emphasizing the middle class status of the tourist, when she says, "all he is trying to do is to find something of value in the wide world that makes it worth working forty-nine weeks a year."¹⁵⁷ This premise that the contemporary tourist is fundamentally alienated and unsatisfied at home underlies most of the tourism literature.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 91.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Feifer, 218.

These sociological analyses offer some important insights on the conditions of the contemporary tourist, and they give us some sense of the “situation” of the tourist. Indeed, many of the conditions needed for the rise and development of tourism are conditions of modernity: affordable modes of mass transportation to a wide a variety of global destinations; an affluent middle class with discretionary income and sufficient leisure time; and a capitalist consumer-culture in which members of society identify themselves through consumer choices, specifically choices of leisure and entertainment; etc. However, this dominant narrative has some internal weaknesses and lacks important phenomenological dimensions. I will discuss two major criticisms of this dominant narrative in the existing tourism literature. The first is based on a lack of clarity and philosophical depth with respect to the notion of “authenticity” or “real lives” of others that tourists supposedly seek. The second concern the inability of this narrative to adequately account for the object of my study: the checklist tourist.

Weakness One: An Unclear Conception of Authenticity

First, most of these scholars provide analyses of tourism that are based on an uncritical acceptance some primary assumptions. For example, the “real life,” “center,” or the “authenticity” that so many tourists supposedly seek is a concept that is rather vague. As Tazim Jamal and Steve Hill rightly point out in their article, “The Home and the World: (Post)touristic Spaces of (In)authenticity?” the concept of authenticity is very ambiguous throughout the tourism literature, due in part to scholars “(i) using the term without clarifying whether it is the object or experience that is the source of the

authenticity; and (ii) a lack of philosophical clarity with respect to its underlying assumptions and attributes.”¹⁵⁸

MacCannell, for example, offers a vague definition of authenticity that seems to be equated with the old, pre-modern, pre-industrial way of life as for he says, “Genuine structure is composed of the values and material culture manifest in the ‘true’ sights. These true sights, real French country homes, actual Dutch towns, the Temple of the Moon at Teotihuacán, the Swiss Alps, are also the source of the spurious elements which are detached from and are mere copies or reminders of the genuine.”¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, he claims that touristic experiences can be judged on a continuum from encounters with authentic “back regions”—in which tourists may “see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives”¹⁶⁰—to the “front regions,” some of which have been staged to look like authentic back regions. He suggests that the tourists’ desire for the authentic is thwarted by this “spurious structure” of tourism, which provides “staged authenticities” and hides the “real life” “back regions” from tourists’ eyes. Yet MacCannell is never critically scrutinizes this romantic notion of the “real lives” of others, and often seems to take this idea of authenticity as an objective given. However, MacCannell’s narrative so heavily depends on this notion of the authentic that his work has inspired a tradition of tourism scholarship that has authenticity as one of its central concerns.¹⁶¹

MacCannell’s approach to authenticity is what Jamal and Hill refer to as “objective authenticity,” one of the three types of authenticity they discuss in an attempt

¹⁵⁸ Jamal and Hill, “Home and the World,” 77-78. Jamal and Hill offer a useful table which presents a comprehensive list of the contributions toward an understanding of authenticity found in tourism scholarship.

¹⁵⁹ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 155.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁶¹ Jamal and Hill offer a useful table which presents a comprehensive list of the contributions toward an understanding of authenticity found in tourism scholarship. Table 5.1.

to offer some clarity to the existing literature on the topic. These three types are: objective, constructed, and personal. Although these three types offer some clarity on the many different connotations of the word authenticity at work in tourism literature, it too has its problems. First, as Wang points out, objective and constructivist ideas of authenticity are object-centered, measured by the authenticity of the object, while what he calls “existential authenticity” and what Jamal and Hill call “personal authenticity” is action or experience-centered, meaning that it is defined by the experiences of the tourist. These two emphases are often conflated and muddled in the literature.¹⁶² Second, and most important for our analysis, the “personal,” “existential,” or “ontological” authenticity outlined by these authors, including Wang, are vaguely informed by philosophers, though a variety of philosophical views are often lumped together and/or misrepresented, losing their philosophical richness and depth.¹⁶³ Of course, we cannot demand that social scientists become experts in philosophy, though if they are using philosophical concepts, they ought to do so accurately. As a philosopher, I see it as an opportunity to restore the depth and richness to at least one of these philosophical views (namely Sartre’s view), where possible. Let us look briefly at each of the three kinds of authenticity outlined by Jamal, Hill, and Wang, and then offer a more in-depth look at some of the remaining weaknesses of this conceptual schema.

According to Jamal and Hill, objective authenticity assumes a realist or positivist approach to authenticity, and sees it as some sort of objective quality that is a real fixed property of an object or an event. Although this objective notion of authenticity is often

¹⁶² Ning Wang, *Tourism and Modernity: A Sociological Analysis* (Amsterdam: Pergamon, 2000), 48.

¹⁶³ Wang, for example draws on scholars from Marx to Freud to Heidegger to Camus for his analysis of “existential authenticity” though does not give due depth to any of them.

based on romantic, exotic, and often racist and sexist notions of the Other, it seems to be among the most commonly held by tourists themselves. In an empirical study, Littrell *et al.* asked tourists of their own understanding of authenticity and found that most respondents “tend to take an objectivist view of authenticity, citing such factors as handmade appearance, high quality workmanship, functionality, illustration of cultural and historical ties, written documentation of authenticity, production techniques, time and location of production, and other primarily objective criteria.”¹⁶⁴ MacCannell and his predecessor Boorstin are two influential examples of scholarly work that hold this objectivist view.

A more sophisticated understanding of authenticity is Jamal and Hill’s second kind of authenticity: constructed authenticity. Constructed authenticity assumes a postmodern social constructionism approach to the concept, and sees the meaning of authenticity as negotiated and emergent, defined by political stakeholders and “mediated by ideological and technological forces.”¹⁶⁵ In Jamal and Hill’s words, for the scholars who view it this way, “authenticity may be grounded in an ontology and epistemology of social constructionism or constructivism, subject to ideological, political and cultural contests, so that authenticity is not a quality of objects themselves, but one that is ascribed to them, often by those with the authority to do so.”¹⁶⁶ This version of authenticity certainly problematizes the realist view of objective authenticity, though the content of the word “authentic” still remains somewhat indefinite and mysterious, and it is unclear to what extent tourists themselves hold this view of constructed authenticity.

¹⁶⁴ Jamal and Hill, “Home and the World,” 85.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

Ning Wang sees constructed tourism on a continuum with postmodern views of authenticity, though claims that the latter far are more radical than the former.¹⁶⁷ Citing Umberto Eco, Jean Baudrillard, and Alan Ritzer and George Liska, Wang claims that for these postmodernists, authenticity is dead; all that remains are the simulacra, the aesthetic, the “hyperreal,” in Eco’s words. While constructivists still attempt to rescue the term authenticity by revising its meaning, the postmodernists give up on authenticity—claiming that the line between the real and the simulated is blurred beyond recognition—and, in Wang’s eyes, these postmodernists thus “justify inauthenticity in tourist space.”¹⁶⁸

Yet, if authenticity is dead, those selling travel don’t know it. Much of the media of the tourism industry remains dependent on a vision of reality that sells visions of the “historic,” the “genuine,” the “authentic,” even if the sites themselves are recreations and replicas. Disney’s popular Epcot theme park, for example, offers tourists an opportunity to travel through a “World Showcase” comprised of pavilions designed to hearken to eleven countries at various times in history. The official Disney website says this of the “Morocco” pavilion: “A realistic Koutoubia Minaret leads the way into this faraway land of traditional belly dancers, intricate Moroccan architecture and swirling mosaics made by native craftsmen.”¹⁶⁹ Similar rhetoric may be found at the Medieval Times entertainment park,¹⁷⁰ the reenactments at Independence Hall and the Constitution Center

¹⁶⁷ Wang, *Tourism and Modernity*, 56.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Walt Disney World “Morocco Pavilion”

<http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/parks/epcot/attractions/morocco-pavilion/>

¹⁷⁰ Medieval Times, “Privileged royal guests are transported to faraway lands including a romantic snowy rendezvous in the woods and an authentic medieval tournament for the Battle of Champions.”

<http://www.medievaltimes.com/chicago/abouttheshow.aspx>.

in Philadelphia, and the Florida Renaissance Festival, where you are “Suspended between Myth and History.”¹⁷¹

The third type of authenticity outlined by these authors—called “personal,” “existential,” or “ontological” authenticity—is of the most interest for this project. As mentioned above, the first two types of authenticity are object-centered while this third type is action or experience based. Jamal, Hill, and Wang each define personal authenticity in reference to the personal experience and psychological or emotional states of the tourist. Personal authenticity is defined not by the status of object, but by the feeling the tourist has of its genuineness. Thus, a tourist may have an “authentic” experience of a replica of the *Mona Lisa*, if the context in which the painting is placed is close enough to the context of the Louvre where the original hangs.¹⁷² In discussing “personal authenticity” these social scientists claim that their approach is phenomenological and grounded in performance theory, though the definition of phenomenology that these scholars are using is somewhat vague, and seem to reflect little more than a concern for personal experience. Similarly, these scholars will often use the terms “existential” and “Being” without offering clear or specific definitions of these terms. For example: “In search of experiences which are existentially authentic, tourists are preoccupied with an *existential state of Being*, activated by certain touristic pursuits.”¹⁷³

In his analysis of “existential authenticity,” Wang emphasizes this idea that the mode of “Being” that tourists wish to reach is both nostalgic and romantic:

¹⁷¹ Florida Renaissance Festival, <http://www.ren-fest.com/miami-home.asp>.

¹⁷² Jamal and Hill, “Home and the World,” 90.

¹⁷³ Wang, *Tourism and Modernity*, 57.

because it emphasizes naturalness, sentiments, and feelings in response to the increasing self-constraints of reason and rationality in modernity. Therefore, in contrast to everyday roles, the tourist role is linked to this ideal of authenticity. Tourism is thus regarded as a simpler, freer, more spontaneous, more authentic or less serious, less utilitarian, and romantic lifestyle which enables tourists to keep a distance from, or transcend, their daily lives...[People] are seeking their authentic selves with the aid of tourist activities or toured objects.¹⁷⁴

For Wang, existential authenticity refers to the feeling the tourist has of being in touch with her “authentic self,” which supposedly is exemplified by feelings of simplicity, innocence, spontaneity, and freedom from the constraints and limitations of modern everyday life. This definition of the authentic self seems rather far afield from the concepts of many of the philosophers, (such as Heidegger and Foucault), that Wang refers to in his analysis.

For the purposes of this project, we may, of course, say that Sartre would outright reject this notion of an “authentic self” that has any kind of predetermined characteristics whatsoever. Indeed, the notion that tourism will put tourists in touch with their simpler, more innocent, less rational, less “modern” selves smacks of bad faith. However, as I will argue in Chapter 4, I believe that there is some weight to Wang’s claim that tourism separates the tourist from her daily life and places her in a “liminal zone” which may provoke some existential change. “In such a liminal zone, persons keep a distance from social constraints (prescriptions, obligations, work ethic, etc.) and invert, suspend, or alter routine order and norms.”¹⁷⁵ However, I will suggest that this separation from daily life does not necessarily put the tourist in touch with her “authentic self” but instead may evoke existential anguish, a reflective awareness of the responsibility of one’s freedom. True, this anguish is related to the possibility of what Sartre calls a “radical conversion”

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 59.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 60.

to authenticity, so it may be possible that travel can open a space for a more authentic way of living, though this vision of authenticity may look rather different than the one that Wang proposes. In Chapter 6, I will look more closely at Sartre's own notion of authenticity and explore the possibility of an authentic form of tourism.

Weakness Two: Inappropriate for understanding the checklist tourist

A second weakness of the dominant narrative of the existing tourism literature is that it does not appropriately account for the motivations, desires, and behaviors of the checklist tourist in particular. MacCannell et. al.'s proposal that tourists travel because they are seeking escape from their alienated middle-class modern lives and wish to find fulfillment abroad explains tourist travel to pre-industrial, "pre-modern" cultures, or even to the rest, relaxation, and supposed rejuvenation afforded by seaside resorts, as Krippendorf argues, but not necessarily for the behaviors and practices of the checklist tourist.

If travel is simply about escaping the alienation of home in search of fun and diversion, as Krippendorf purports, then why would tourists go sightseeing at all? Why wouldn't all tourist trips consist only of sport, amusement, beach lounging and tropical drinks? The argument might be made that checklist tourism is simply another kind of diversion, and fulfills the same desires as does sunbathing. Sigfried Kracauer alludes to this when he calls sightseeing an expression of the "cult of distraction."¹⁷⁶ However, this argument does not seem to account for the drive behind checklist tourism for a couple of

¹⁷⁶ Siegfried Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces," in *The Mass Ornament*, trans. Thomas L. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1995).

reasons: First, as MacCannell implies, there are plenty of people who want to see certain specific sites and feel let down or that the trip has been wasted in part if the site is not visited. Checklist tourism is primarily driven by the desire to check attractions off one's list, not primarily about the desire for sport and amusement. Second, it is debatable how much "fun" checklist tourism actually involves. As any indignant child on a family sightseeing trip knows, much of the time it involves heavy crowds; less than luxurious means of travel (i.e. tour buses, though touring companies attempt to ameliorate this as much as possible); and lots of standing around, listening to tour guides, and snapping photos.

Similarly, the claim that one travels in search of a more authentic pre-modern lifestyle also does not account very well for the checklist tourist. It is often the case that the attractions of checklist tourism are located in and representative of one's own industrialized capitalist culture. A Western tourist may in fact be seeking a more "authentic" way of life if he or she travels to Nairobi, the Himalayan mountains, rural Ecuador, or Amish country, but may have other motivations if he or she ventures to the "must-see" sites of Independence Hall, the Parthenon, the Sistine Chapel, or the Louvre. These latter sites are exemplary representations of Western modernity, not of pre-modern traditional lifestyles. It is true, of course, that there are also many attractions that hearken to life before industrialized capitalism, such as the Parthenon, the Pyramids of Giza, the Taj Mahal, and the Great Wall. It may be the case that these attractions represent a cultural imagining of pre-modern life in various parts of the world, and tourists may see them with a kind of romanticism and nostalgia for the good old days. Yet, there are

plenty of modern attractions as well, and they are just as likely to go on the list of the checklist tourist as a pre-modern site.

There are, however, some exceptions to the dominant narrative that tourists travel in order to escape modern middle-class alienation. Other theorists, such as George Ritzer and Allan Liska, argue, in contrast, that tourists do not seek separation or disengagement from modern life, but instead are comfortable with the simulacra of modernity. In fact, they point to the increasing number of destinations, such as Disney World, Las Vegas, cruises, shopping malls, and restaurants that attract tourists through their explicit *inauthenticity*, and suggest that tourists seek out these hyper-simulations that promise an extraordinary “ecstasy of experience.” Tourists who are accustomed to the “McDisneyization” of their society desire similar elements in their tourist travel, seeming to want highly predictable, efficient, calculable, and controlled vacations. “Blissfully content with our simulated lives, why should we search for anything but inauthenticity in our leisure-time activities?”¹⁷⁷

Again, however, checklist tourism cannot fully be explained by Ritzer and Liska’s theory that tourists seek out the height of simulacra because it swings too far in the other direction—away from the “real” and toward the simulated. Many of the urges of the checklist tourist are satisfied only when they see or visit “the real thing,” meaning the original must-see site. A replica of the Eiffel Tower in Las Vegas is simply not going to satisfy the checklist tourist’s desire to see the Eiffel Tower. The checklist tourist must, at the very least, believe that she is seeing the “authentic original” in order to be satisfied.

¹⁷⁷ George Ritzer and Allan Liska, “‘McDisneyization’ and ‘Post-Tourism’: Complementary Perspectives on Contemporary Tourism,” *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, edited by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997), 108.

Even if the *Mona Lisa* is temporarily removed from the Louvre for restoration and a facsimile is put up in its place, if the checklist tourist believes that she is in the presence of the actual work of Leonardo's hand, she will likely be satisfied and check the *Mona Lisa* off her list; if not, she will return home disappointed. Therefore, Ritzer and Liska's claim that extreme simulation and simulacra are the fundamental pull of contemporary tourism does not seem to apply to checklist tourism.

The Homogenous Tourist

Another weakness in the sociological literature is the inherent homogenization of the tourist. It is important to note that today's tourist, as envisioned by most theorists, is a member of the industrialized world's middle class. However, "the tourist" is not a monolithic entity devoid of race, gender, ethnicity, age, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, etc. Too often in the history of philosophy and social sciences, the denial or trivialization of these various social positions has resulted in the normalizing of the middle class, straight, white, Protestant male perspective. As mentioned above, MacCannell suggests that the tourist lives a "universal experience," and elsewhere claims, "Social class distinctions are blurred by the universal quest for authentic experience. In sightseeing, all men are equal before the sight. The Emperor of Japan visited the statue of the Little Mermaid in the harbor at Copenhagen, Henry Kissinger visited the Great Wall, Pope Paul visited the Wailing Wall, Jackie Kennedy Onassis visited just about everything."¹⁷⁸ This notion of tourism as the great class leveler

¹⁷⁸ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 146.

reappears throughout the tourism literature. In his 2002 essay, Scott McCabe goes so far as to say, “tourist destinations are now class-neutral; rich and poor alike can all share the same holidays, side by side on the beaches of Mallorca or in the souks of Morocco, since travel is the universal preserve of the classless society.”¹⁷⁹

In one sense, these scholars are correct to point out the fact that travel is now much more democratized and accessible to a greater number and wider range of people than in the past, with less regard to their financial status. Remember that “if we look back at the history of the preindustrial era we find that only a very small percentage of people participated in travel. The vast majority was immobile throughout their lives. Travel in this period meant painful effort, hardships and danger. It was inconvenient, expensive and above all slow.”¹⁸⁰ Today, a much larger percentage of the population living in industrialized nations has the means to travel.

However, I submit that one goes too far to claim that today’s tourists are “class-neutral,” for although modern technologies of travel and convenience have made such destinations accessible to more than just the extremely rich, such travels still require enough financial resources and free time not afforded to the extremely poor. The cost of these resources still has an impact on tourist travel and destinations, as has been made visible when the high cost of gasoline and economic troubles reduces the amount and duration of tourist travel around the world. Conversely, the extraordinarily affluent, who regularly “summer” at the family’s second or third home in Paris, Capri, or Crete¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Scott McCabe, “The Tourist Experience and Everyday Life,” in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002), 71

¹⁸⁰ Zbigniew Mieczkowski, *World Trends in Tourism*, (Peter Lang Pub Inc., 1990), 72.

¹⁸¹ Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983),

would not consider themselves tourists, and certainly not checklist tourists, (though the locals may have a different opinion). This last point demonstrates that the class of the tourist has to do not only with her financial resources, but also her class in the sense of her “pedigree,” tastes, and values. Many of these values often vary from one social group to another, again calling into question the “universal experience” of the tourist.

Furthermore, feminists and race theorists have criticized Marxist theory in general for what they see as an overemphasis on class and a homogenization and marginalization of other significant social markers such as race and gender. Many of those who have contributed to the existing literature on tourism are guilty of the same reductions, grounded in the same Marxist theory. “The tourist” is often characterized the “everyman” and as such is portrayed as speaking for all of modernity. MacCannell is explicit about his choice to study the tourist as a means for better understanding those of his own tribe: the global middle class. He says, “at a time when social science is consolidating its intellectual empire via colonization of primitive people, poor people and ethnic and other minorities, it might seem paradoxically out of the ‘mainstream’ to be studying the leisure activities of a class of people most favored by modernity, the international middle class, the class the social scientists are serving.”¹⁸² Nevertheless, he goes on, “By following tourists, we may be able to arrive at a better understanding of ourselves.”¹⁸³ Such a task may seem like a self-indulgent exercise, but nevertheless needs to be acknowledged.

109.

¹⁸² MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 5.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

Indeed, it may be the case that the social scientists have provided us with a whitewashed abstract notion of “the tourist”: a middle class consumer, without distinguishing characteristics. However, for the purposes of this study, I will accept this abstraction. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, the object of my study is the checklist tourist who is, admittedly, a caricature of sorts. However, it is my hope, as MacCannell says, that perhaps using this caricature as a lens through which to view bad faith will tell us something not only about bad faith, but also about ourselves.

The Homogenous Human

The social sciences have, as we’ve said, offer “the tourist” as an abstraction, in spite of their emphasis on the empirical. Can the same be said of the phenomenologists’ —and more specifically, Sartre’s—view of the “the human”? It cannot go without saying that many critics have argued that Sartre, and his phenomenological tradition, is also guilty of the same demographic myopia that has plagued philosophy and the social sciences for years. Scholars offer a variety of criticisms suggesting that Sartre’s ideas of freedom, anguish, and bad faith, especially in his early work, are too abstract and/or lacking, social, cultural, and historical dimensions. Although it may be the case that Sartre overemphasizes individual consciousness in some areas of his early work, when these areas are contextualized, it becomes clear that Sartre has a concern for the social and historical sphere running throughout his entire corpus, including *Being and Nothingness*.

Some critics have argued that Sartre's concept of bad faith is not well suited for an analysis that seeks to understand the impact of social and historical categories and institutions, such as class, race, gender, capitalism, modernity, etc., on the phenomenological experience of the individual. For example, many feminists have concluded that Sartre's early work in *Being and Nothingness* is "less suited to a feminist reading because of its emphasis on an abstract, existentialist notion of freedom and choice, than are the later works, in which Sartre attenuated this stance to give prominence to the collective aspects of society without abandoning the idea of freedom."¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Sartre himself claimed in a 1970 interview that his early philosophy overemphasized individualism and under-recognized "*la force de choses*" (the power of circumstances). He states:

The other day, I reread a prefatory note of mine to a collection of these plays—*Les Mouches*, *Huis clos*, and others—and was truly scandalized. I had written: "Whatever the circumstances, and wherever the site, a man is always free to choose to be a traitor or not." When I read this, I said to myself: it's incredible, I actually believed that!...I concluded that in any circumstances, there is always a possible choice. Which is false.... However, I understood all this only much later.¹⁸⁵

Sartre claims that his experiences in World War II taught him the weight of and relevance of social circumstances.

Others suggest that, especially in his early writing, Sartre universalizes his own upper/middle class experience. In his analysis of good and bad faith Joseph Catalano claims, "Sartre apparently later realized that his descriptions of freedom in *Being and Nothingness* assumed a certain openness as natural to society when in fact it merely

¹⁸⁴ Marcella Tarozzi Goldsmith, review of *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Paul Sartre*, edited by Julien S. Murphy, *Hypatia* 17, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 226.

¹⁸⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, "An Interview with Sartre," *New York Review of Books*, 14, no. 6 (March 26, 1970) <http://www.nybooks.com.libproxy.temple.edu/articles/archives/1970/mar/26/an-interview-with-sartre/>.

reflected his own relatively comfortable, cosmopolitan life.”¹⁸⁶ It is true that Sartre led a relatively comfortable life. In his autobiography, *The Words*, published in 1964 during Sartre’s late adulthood, Sartre describes how he was adored and revered as a child by the adults in his life. His grandfather, who helped raise him, was a scholar and a writer and taught Sartre a love of language, petitioned for Sartre to attend the best schools, and took Sartre traveling during his youth. Sartre recalls his feelings as a young boy: “It was Paradise. Every morning I woke up dazed with joy, astounded at the unheard-of luck of having been born into the most united family in the finest country in the world. People who were discontented shocked me. What could they complain about?”¹⁸⁷ The hyperbolic tone in Sartre’s language is perhaps to emphasize the naïveté of his early years and the sobering and evolution of his thought as he started to take more account of the impact of social institutions on human experience.

We may also concede that as a phenomenologist through the lineage of Husserl and the European academy, Sartre is operating in a discipline that has historically been conducted by middle-class white men. Such facts may call into question the ability of Western existential phenomenology to define the universal conditions of experience and, in the case of Sartre, the universal conditions of human existence.¹⁸⁸ Thus, just as we must come to terms with the homogenization and abstraction of the tourist within the sociological literature, we must also come to terms with the homogenization and abstraction of the human being within Sartre’s phenomenological tradition.

¹⁸⁶ Joseph Catalano, “Good and Bad Faith: Weak and Strong Notions,” In *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics* (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 109.

¹⁸⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words: The Autobiography of Jean-Paul Sartre*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 34.

¹⁸⁸ This is not to discount the phenomenological traditions in Africa, Asia, and their respective Diasporas. Such traditions may provide a view of humanity that differs from that of the European phenomenological tradition.

Yet, in spite of all of this, Sartre does not give up his view of freedom as a universal human condition. Instead, he claims that his understanding of freedom becomes more sophisticated, more aware of the “the power of circumstances,” but, nevertheless, still involves the free choice to make meaning of these circumstances. In that same 1970 interview, Sartre claims:

After the war came the true experience, that of *society*. But I think it was necessary for me to pass via the myth of heroism first. That is to say, the prewar personage who was more or less Stendhal’s egotistical individualist had to be plunged into circumstances against his will, yet where he still had the power to say yes or no, in order to encounter the inextricable entanglements of the postwar years as a man totally conditioned by his social existence and yet sufficiently capable of decision to reassume all this conditioning and to become responsible for it. For the idea which I have never ceased to develop is that in the end one is always responsible for what is made of one. Even if one can do nothing else besides assume this responsibility. For I believe that a man can always make something out of what is made of him.¹⁸⁹

Thus, although it may be true that some aspects of Sartre’s early work overemphasize individual autonomy, Sartre does not give up his view of freedom.

In his later works, most notably in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre very explicitly began to recognize the role of social structures and the limits they impose on one’s freedom and one’s ability to recognize one’s own bad faith and the possibility for change. However, even in *Being and Nothingness* the social dimension is not absent. In fact, Matt Eschleman has convincingly argued that bad faith as a concept is incoherent without a robust understanding of its social dimension. In order for bad faith to be possible, Eschleman argues, one needs to be able to exploit the limitations of freedom

¹⁸⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, “An Interview with Sartre,” *New York Review of Books*, 14, no. 6 (March 26, 1970) <http://www.nybooks.com.libproxy.temple.edu/articles/archives/1970/mar/26/an-interview-with-sartre/>.

imposed by the Other.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, as *Being and Nothingness* develops, Sartre's depiction of consciousness becomes more and more concrete. If one reads only Part One or Two, one may indeed, find a Sartrean consciousness to be abstract, disembodied, and ahistorical. However, as one continues reading, it becomes more and more clear with each chapter that Sartre considers consciousness to be embodied, in a social world, engaging with material objects and systems of meaning.

Furthermore, there are plenty of scholars who have provided an analysis of social categories through the conceptual framework of bad faith.¹⁹¹ Indeed, it is relatively easy to conclude that structures such as racism, patriarchy, homophobia, etc. are themselves in bad faith.¹⁹² Recall from Chapter 2 that Joseph Catalano and Lewis Gordon have developed the notions of weak or institutional bad faith and strong or individual bad faith, terms that are meant to make sense of Sartre's ambiguous comments on bad faith and to distinguish between bad faith as a kind of institutionalized lifestyle and bad faith as an ethically-charged mode for which the individual is responsible. Indeed, even in his early work, Sartre does not deny that bad faith may exist on a large scale. However, as Hans Grelland rightly points out, "the early Sartrean position with respect to such collective tendencies is that they are the result of a number of individual decisions. For each individual, the strategy of behaving according to a collective tendency is an instance of

¹⁹⁰ Matthew Eschleman, "Bad Faith is Necessarily Social," *Sartre Studies International: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Existentialism and Contemporary Culture* 14, no. 2 (Dec. 2008): 40-47. Lewis Gordon argues this as well in chapter 4 of *Existentialism and Africanity* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁹¹ Frantz Fanon is largely indebted to Sartre in his work on postcolonial and African existentialism, seen clearly in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1952) and *Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963) (for which Sartre wrote the preface). Other works that have made use of bad faith to analyze social oppression are Lewis Gordon's *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995); and a variety of articles compiled in *Race After Sartre: Antiracism, African Existentialism, Postcolonialism*, edited by Jonathan Judaken (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008).

¹⁹² Lewis Gordon argues this claim in *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism*.

bad faith. It is another futile attempt to become an *en-soi*.”¹⁹³ Thus, although Sartre’s emphasis develops from the individual to the collective, he is never ignorant of the limitations of one’s situation in his early work, and never abandons his idea of freedom in his later work.

Nevertheless, there are still those critics who question the relationship between social structures and bad faith, even within the bounds of Sartre’s phenomenological method. In this next section, I would like to explore more deeply the impact of the institution or situation of the individual on her experience of freedom, anguish, and bad faith. I will review some criticisms raised in the existing literature on this topic, attempt to respond to them, and then discuss their bearing on this project.

Exploring the Limits of Bad Faith

Some critics attempt to undermine Sartre’s notion of bad faith by criticizing one of its main assumptions: namely, human freedom. Indeed, the issue of freedom is key in attempting to understand the relationship between an individual and her situation. That is—are we really free or are our choices and attitudes conditioned by our environments, our situations? Perhaps the racism, sexism, or lack of social, political, and personal opportunities of my situation means that I have no option but to have certain beliefs and understandings of the world, even if these beliefs are themselves in bad faith. Furthermore if I am not free to see or do things differently, then to what extent can I be said to be responsible for them, to what extent can I truly be said to be in bad faith?

¹⁹³ Hans Herlof Grelland, *Sartre Studies International* 12, no. 1 (2006): 26.

A variety of different kinds of criticisms have been leveled against Sartre's notion of freedom. Other scholars question the limits of freedom by suggesting that certain psychological responses are not chosen, such as whether or not we find something funny, whether or not we react with physical or mental panic (a fight or flight response), whether or not we are mentally ill, or whether or not we feel sexual attraction to certain people or genders.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, these criticisms raise interesting phenomenological questions about certain aspects of human consciousness, though many of them confuse the *freedom to choose the meaning* of our situation with *the ability to create or control our situation*. For the purposes of this chapter, I would like to focus on an aspect of Sartre's philosophy that many critics have explored in this quest to understand and challenge his notion of freedom: the choice of the fundamental project.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that existentialist psychoanalysis can serve to uncover bad faith operating at various levels. For Sartre, the primary and most basic of these levels is our "fundamental project"—that is, the project to be the in-itself-for-itself, (i.e. God), by claiming a particular essence. We decide, in bad faith, that we have a certain character or calling—coward, writer, sissy, or hero—and our subsequent behaviors and choices are then expressions and affirmations of this fundamental project. Sartre gives the example of a hiker who submits to his fatigue by dropping his backpack and sitting down. He does so because he sees himself as too tired to continue hiking; he has chosen to experience his fatigue as unbearable, even though he could have loved his

¹⁹⁴ The first three of these criticisms are raised by V. J. McGill in "Sartre's Doctrine of Freedom," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 2 (1949), and the last by Gregory McCulloch in *Using Sartre*. London: Routledge, 1994.

fatigue and experienced it as an expression of his achievement and power as his companion—who continues to hike—has done. Thus, the choice to stop is an expression of his certain fundamental understanding of himself as too weak to bear this fatigue; to choose otherwise would require a radical conversion of this fundamental understanding.

As Sartre says:

Thus this possible—to stop—*theoretically* takes on its meaning only in and through the hierarchy of the possibles which I am in terms of the ultimate and initial possible. This does not imply that I *must necessarily* stop but merely that I can refuse to stop only by a radical conversion of my being-in-the-world; that is, by an abrupt metamorphosis of my initial project—*i.e.*, by another choice of myself and my ends.¹⁹⁵

The contentious issue for many critics concerns the degree to which one is able to change one's fundamental project, given that culture, language, other collective social institutions, and our own habitual patterns seem to limit what count as “live possibilities” for our fundamental project.

Both Neil Levy and Gregory McCulloch argue that such a radical conversion of one's fundamental project is problematic. For McCulloch, it may be *logically* possible (in the sense that there is no logical contradiction), for me to imagine giving up my project of being a philosopher and becoming a trapeze artist in a traveling circus, for example, but this possibility is not a “live” possibility for me. I adopt my project of being a philosopher because I believe that it will enable me to fulfill the fundamental project of being the in-itself-for-itself, *i.e.*, the project of being God. To give up the project of being a philosopher would be to alter my understanding of how I may fulfill the fundamental project to be the in-itself-for-itself. “Even though I chose this course [of being a philosopher], and constantly reaffirm it by my local plans and actions, thereby

¹⁹⁵ *BN*, 597-598.

feeling continuing my assent, so that there is no compulsion here—even so, it does not follow that I see the abandonment of my career as a live option, even after reflection.”¹⁹⁶

McCulloch does not explicitly say *why* giving up one’s career is not a live option, though he suggests that in other cases, (such as the taste for a certain sort of spice, or the rejection of the celibate life of a monk), there may be certain biological or chemical factors at play.

It may be true that one does not take seriously certain options for one’s life. I may consider a career in a traveling circus to be beyond the scope of my live options because I value the opinion of my parents, partner, or larger social network, who might disapprove of such a decision; or because I value a certain level of income or benefits that being a circus performer would not likely afford me; or because I do not want to subject my body to the kind of intense training and discipline that such a career would require. However, these values are all simply criteria by which I make my choice; they too can also be given up or changed. As McCulloch himself admits, possibilities that may not immediately appear as live may become so due to changes in tastes and values.¹⁹⁷

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is perhaps the most well known critic of Sartre’s thought, and some have suggested that his *Phenomenology of Perception* is, at least in part, a response to Sartre.¹⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty suggests, as a criticism of Sartre, that our habitual

¹⁹⁶ McCulloch, *Using Sartre*, 65.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁹⁸ See, for example, Gary Cox, *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2006), 76; John J. Compton, “Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Human Freedom,” in *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Jon Stewart, 175-186 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Jon Stewart “Merleau-Ponty’s Criticisms of Sartre’s Theory of Freedom,” in *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Jon Stewart, 195-216 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Ronald L. Hall, “Freedom: Merleau-Ponty’s Critique of Sartre,” in *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Jon Stewart, 187-196 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). The explicit use of Sartre’s name and the number of direct references to examples, illustrations, and passages of *Being and*

patterns have a certain kind of inertia that close off other possibilities as live possibilities for us, or that act as real limitations or obstacles in our ability to choose otherwise—what Merleau-Ponty called “sedimentation.”¹⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty responds to Sartre’s examples of the hiker who decides he cannot go on and the man with the inferiority complex who wishes to change. Although Merleau-Ponty concedes that one’s choice is made in light of a fundamental project he also states:

But here once more we must recognize a sort of sedimentation of our life: an attitude towards the world, when it has received frequent confirmation, acquires a favoured status for us...Having built our life upon an inferiority complex which has been operative for twenty years, it is not *probable* that we shall change...Generality and probability are not fictions, but phenomena; we must therefore find a phenomenological basis for statistical thought. It belongs necessarily to a being which is fixed, situated and surrounded by things in the world. ‘It is improbable’ that I should at this moment destroy an inferiority complex in which I have been content to live for twenty years.²⁰⁰

Thus, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Sartre for a lack of consideration of the weight, limitations, and obstacles of the past.²⁰¹

Merleau-Ponty’s claim that certain habitual patterns may limit one’s options for a fundamental project or McCulloch’s appeal to biological or chemical factors that do the same would likely be unsatisfying to Sartre, for both biology and the past are types of facticity. Sartre never denies that our facticity is part of our human condition, yet, for Sartre, our facticity can never determine our decisions or causally interact with our

Nothingness, especially in the final chapter of *Phenomenology of Perception* on “Freedom” supports this interpretation.

¹⁹⁹ Katherine J. Morris, *Sartre* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 154.

²⁰⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1945), 441-442.

²⁰¹ For a more thorough analysis of the debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on these issues, see John J. Compton “Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Human Freedom”; Ronald L. Hall “Freedom.” For analyses that are sympathetic to Sartre, see Simone de Beauvoir, “Merleau-Ponty et le pseudo-Sartrisme,” *Les Temps Modernes* 10 (1955): 2072-2122; and Jon Stewart “Merleau-Ponty’s Criticisms of Sartre’s Theory of Freedom.”

consciousness because facticity is the “in-itself.” Thus, even though we may have certain had certain tastes or engaged in certain behaviors in the past, we may always choose differently now and in the future. Nevertheless, anyone who has ever tried to break a habit knows the feeling of the inertia of one’s past choices. Indeed, Sartre arguably does not do enough work in his early philosophical works in explaining this phenomenological experience, though he certainly addresses this issue with his idea of the “practico-inert” in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (which I discuss below).

Another problem for Sartre is the interaction and relationship our fundamental project has with the existing human culture—along with its existing, meaning, significance, and “instrumental-complexes”—into which we are born. Sartre states that this fundamental choice is “*unjustifiable*. This means that we apprehend our choice as not deriving from any prior reality but rather as being about to serve as foundation for the ensemble of significations which constitute reality.”²⁰² Thus, for Sartre, the fundamental choice is the foundation for a meaningful world, not a decision made within one. However, Levy suggests that a choice made prior to the foundation of a meaningful world cannot be considered a free choice. Levy argues, “A free choice is one that selects among alternatives whose significance is understood; one that weighs up the options and assesses them in the light of their significance. A choice that is responsible for all significances cannot, by definition, refer to such pre-existing values. It is, therefore, arbitrary, and not free.”²⁰³ However, Levy seems to confuse a free choice with a rational choice. Indeed, it is possible for one to freely make a choice that lacks rational

²⁰² *BN*, 598.

²⁰³ Neil Levy, *Sartre*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 109.

justification and the careful weighing of known options, (one might say that we do this all the time). Although these choices may not be rational and reflective, they are still free.

Another question for Sartre is: If the fundamental project is the choosing of myself, then what is the status of my personhood when making this choice? That is, the fundamental choice seems to precede our understanding of personhood. Perhaps we could say that this choice is made at the moment of birth, but “how can we speak of someone’s choosing at an age when the very idea of choice, i.e., a choice for which someone might be held responsible, seems inapplicable?”²⁰⁴ Indeed, it seems as though much of our lives do not involve conscious choices at all, but are established by the situation and environment into which we are born, and which continue on a kind of habitual pattern. As McCulloch puts it, “*of course* we do not make an ‘original choice’: we initially just grow into things.”²⁰⁵ It seems, however, that McCulloch misunderstands Sartre’s use of the word “choice.” Of course, indeed, we cannot choose our place, race, gender, family, sexuality, and culture of birth—we cannot choose being born at all. These things are part of our facticity, our situation, which we cannot control. However, we can and must “choose” our situation by taking responsibility for it and choosing its meaning for our lives and our future. This is the meaning of Sartre’s famous phrase, “We are condemned to be free.”

Katherine Morris agrees, suggesting that we should not view the choice of our original fundamental project the way we might usually understand choice, i.e., choosing to do a certain *action*. She says, “whereas ordinarily Sartre equates choice with actions, the choice of fundamental project is not an action; he also calls the project, perhaps more

²⁰⁴ Katherine Morris, *Sartre*, 153.

²⁰⁵ McCulloch, *Using Sartre*, 66.

accurately, a ‘fundamental attitude,’ a way of being-in-the-world.”²⁰⁶ Morris argues, then, questions about when this choice was made are inappropriate because there is no one single action that one chooses. Instead, she likens one’s fundamental project to a certain “style” of living, the way that a painter has a style of painting. Monet cannot be said to know when he made the decision to paint a certain way or why he did so, but he can nevertheless be given praise and responsibility for such style.

Nevertheless, even if we say that the fundamental choice is the choice of a certain kind of style, we must also recognize the relationship of this style to the factual environment into which we are born. Monet’s impressionistic style, though revolutionary, was made possible by his training as an artist; the leisure that he was afforded to devote to painting; the technological advancements in paint, pigment, and canvas; the existing style of painting up to that point; and myriad other factors of his situation. Thus, we may understand Levy’s conclusion that the only way to appropriately understand the choice of the fundamental project is not independent of all values but in relation to the values of our situation, which he claims are the result of “human culture.” Levy says, “By establishing a world of meanings, human cultures lay down the necessary preconditions for us to weigh our options; they bring it about that things matter. They therefore open up lines that we can follow through, while closing off possibilities for us. Yet they do not *determine* our behaviour. They merely open a space in which free action is possible.”²⁰⁷ Thus, for Levy, and I agree, the fundamental project cannot be a choice made in a vacuum, but only in relation to an existing world.

²⁰⁶ K. Morris, *Sartre*, 153.

²⁰⁷ Levy, *Sartre*, 114.

There are some important issues to address if we follow Levy to this conclusion. First, it seems to be in direct tension with Sartre's claims from *Being and Nothingness* that, in anguish, "we apprehend our choice as not deriving from any prior reality but rather as being about to serve as foundation for the ensemble of significations which constitute reality." Indeed, in his early thought, Sartre seems to suggest, at times, that freedom and free choices are made in a historical and cultural vacuum, as the "foundation for a meaningful reality." Thus, Sartre's use of "choice" here must be interpreted as not temporally prior to our situation, but as retroactive—we choose ourselves only in light of our past, which has already come and gone. This choice, he maintains, is free.

As Sartre's philosophical thought developed, he gave increasing attention to the ways in which one's situation may limit or influence one's ability to live authentically or free oneself from bad faith. Indeed, a rather rich analysis of this relationship between the tourist and the tourism industry might be made through appeal to Sartre's work on the dynamics of social groups, which he developed after the influence of Marxism on his philosophical thought, and which he provides at length in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In this work, Sartre reaches a more sophisticated understanding of the potential for one's practical environment—what Sartre schematizes as the "practico-inert"—to interfere with one's freely chosen projects. In the *Critique*, Sartre claims that human consciousness is best understood as "praxis" (human activity in its material context), and the non-conscious in-itself is the inert. Thus, the "practico-inert" is the social world that is both active and sedimented, the result of human decisions which in turn shapes the cultural situation in which we find ourselves. Like the in-itself of *Being and Nothingness*, the practico-inert is inert and cannot *determine* human freedom, but it is the

background against and through which we are free. Nevertheless, “as ‘practico-’ [it] is the sedimentation of previous praxes. Thus speech acts would be examples of praxis but language would be practico-inert; social institutions are practico-inert but the actions they both foster and limit are praxes.”²⁰⁸ This practico-inert is what Levy seems to mean when he says that human choices are made in relation to “human culture,” for such institutions are not transcendent givens, but are the result of previous choices of individuals in their own material context.²⁰⁹

Even in the *Critique*, however, Sartre does not give up his claims from *Being and Nothingness* that humans are ontologically free, and he is careful to distinguish between ontological freedom—that is, the freedom to choose the meaning of one’s situation and one’s ontological projects, which he maintains is the foundational condition of human consciousness—and practical freedom—that is, the freedom to acquire certain goods such as higher wages, freedom from persecution, and the basic needs of food, shelter, safety, etc. Yet, in the *Critique*, Sartre does suggest that one’s practical freedom to achieve certain goods may be limited by the practico-inert because of the entrenchment of previous human praxis, thus allowing for a more complex understanding of the role of social class, gender, race, ethnicity, and other established social, political, religious, and economic institutions, etc. in one’s decision-making.

Are we therefore to take Sartre’s early thought as suffering from a lack of attention to environment, culture, and history? The answer to this question, I believe, is

²⁰⁸ Thomas Flynn, “Jean-Paul Sartre,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sartre/>.

²⁰⁹ It is important to note that values that are given in “human culture” or the practico-inert cannot, for Sartre, be transcendent values. The belief in transcendent values is what Sartre calls the bad faith “spirit of seriousness,” which I will discuss at length in the following chapter.

both yes and no. On the one hand, it is true that the early Sartre does underplay the impact that the situation may have on one's freedom. The developments in his later works can be seen as an attempt to remedy this weakness. However, there the seeds of these later developments are sown in his early works. As early as his *Anti-Semite and the Jew*, first published in 1946, Sartre gives an analysis of the Jew who has internalized the anti-Semitism of his society. Sartre claims that reproaching the Jew for this bad faith self-objectification fails to recognize that the Jew "is condemned to make his choice of himself on the basis of false problems in a false situation."²¹⁰ Ron Santoni nicely states how the concern for one's situation becomes central for Sartre in *Anti-Semite and Jew*: "Almost as a prelude to what he does in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* years later, Sartre seems here to be anticipating his concern for collective responsibility and to be framing the issue of authenticity in the context of 'bad-faith' historical and social institutions in which we inevitably find ourselves participating (for example, historical structures of racism)."²¹¹

Yet, even within *Being and Nothingness* we find hints of Sartre's concern with the impact of the situation on freedom. For example, Sartre gives a sustained analysis of how one is limited by the existing "instrumental-complexes" and by the subjectivity of the Other, by one's "fellowman." Sartre' says:

To live in a world haunted by my fellowman is not only to be able to encounter the Other at every turn of the road; it is also to find myself engaged in a world in which instrumental-complexes can have a meaning which my free project has not first given to them. In means also that in the midst of this world *already* provided with meaning I meet with a meaning which is *mine* and which I have not given to myself, which I discover that I "possess already."²¹²

²¹⁰ *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 133-134.

²¹¹ Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith*, 101.

²¹² *BN*, 654.

Here Sartre reaffirms the aspect of human consciousness that he establishes early on in *Being and Nothingness*: the facticity of being. Our facticity is part of the ambiguous aspect of our being: it is our situation, past, nationality, gender, race, creed, and class. It is through and against this facticity that we express our human freedom. Sartre affirms repeatedly in this section of the text, “I am never free except *in situation*”²¹³ and “It is necessary for us again to stress the undeniable fact that the for-itself can choose itself only beyond certain meanings of which it is not the origin”²¹⁴ and “the freedom of the for-itself is always *engaged*; there is no question here of a freedom which could be undetermined and which would pre-exist its choice.”²¹⁵ The point that Sartre wants to stress here is that, even though at birth we enter a world of culture and language that we have not chosen, we use and transcend these collective techniques in the existence of our freedom.

Thus, we come to the conclusion, after a careful examination of Sartre’s work that, for Sartre, human freedom is *situated* freedom—indeed, it could be no other way. Yet, to say that freedom is situated is not to say that human choices are *determined* by their situation. The situation simply offers a range of possibilities within which one’s choices must be made, and in this sense, one chooses the meaning of one’s situation. Furthermore, it is still the case that one’s world is meaningful in relation to the goals and aims of one’s fundamental project. If I am out hiking and my project is to climb a mountain, I will apprehend and make meaning of my environment in a way that is very different than if my project is to watch birds, or paint the landscape, or experience a

²¹³ *BN*, 653.

²¹⁴ *BN*, 666.

²¹⁵ *BN*, 616.

spiritual renewal, or get in shape. For each of these projects, different elements of my environment will appear as obstacles or as benefits. Thus, we can still claim that an individual is in bad faith if she refuses to acknowledge the extent to which she freely chooses among these possibilities. However, my project of climbing a mountain, or watching birds, or getting in shape did not appear out of thin air—these projects, *qua* projects, only make sense within a situated world. I will make a project out of painting landscapes only if I am in a situation in which paint, canvas, and the tradition of painting are available to me.

To deny the impact of my situation in choosing my fundamental project would also be in bad faith. Sartre is explicit about this point in his posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Imagine, he says, the project of being courageous—such a project only makes sense in a social world. In fact, the project as such is in bad faith because it attempts to see courage as an abstract object quality that one can *be*.

The project of *being* courageous is itself formal and abstract since it does not take into consideration any particular circumstances. What is more, it is itself a kind of mystification since the *quality* of being courageous can be conferred upon one only by others in light of certain forms of behavior; in the end, it is a project of bad faith since one acts in this way in order to confer on oneself the being or quality of an in-itself-for-itself. In a word, it is a matter of acting in such and such a way, in circumstances that cannot be defined in advance, so that Others will hang an *objective* label on you that you will then internalize in the form of an element of your psyche or as an in-itself-for-itself.²¹⁶

Thus, Sartre himself seems to acknowledge that the reason that the fundamental project is in bad faith in the first place is because it does not account for that fact that one exists *in situation*.

²¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 474.

Finally, we must note that we may not always be reflectively aware of the choices that we make and the range of possibilities before us, but that does not mean that we do not choose them or are aware of them, on some level. That is, some of our choices may be prereflective, in the same way that we are prereflectively aware of our freedom. As Katherine Morris points out “most people are not explicitly aware of what their fundamental project is, any more than they are explicitly aware of their own individual style.”²¹⁷ However, Sartre would claim that such awareness is implicit, prereflective. Similarly, we may not be reflectively aware of the full range of possibilities before us. “For example, if I find myself confronted with the choice between two jobs, this is only because I do not (for the moment, at least) question the need for me to have a job at all. In fact, the number of alternatives open to me is much wider than I ever realize. I could choose to take neither job; I could choose to starve, or to commit suicide.”²¹⁸ Indeed, much of the time I are not reflectively aware of other possibilities for my life other than the one I live, but that is not to say that such possibilities do not exist for me, and it is not to say that these possibilities are outside the bounds of my situation. Indeed, the vague, prereflective awareness of these possibilities is the condition for anguish. Sartre himself says that the very fact that our fundamental project is a *choice* means that it is a choice among other possibilities. “The possibility of these other choices is neither made explicit nor posited, but it is live in the feeling of unjustifiability; and it is this which is expressed by the fact of the *absurdity* of my choice and consequently my being.”²¹⁹

²¹⁷ K. Morris, *Sartre*, 153.

²¹⁸ Levy, *Sartre*, 104.

²¹⁹ *BN*, 618.

In order to see the pattern of my life as a pattern, a project in bad faith, chosen among a range of possibilities, I may need the help of existential psychoanalysis...or—as I will suggest in the following chapter—travel. Travel may be another possible way that the tourist becomes reflectively aware of her fundamental project. In this way, travel has the potential to incite anguish, and consequently, certain bad faith patterns and behaviors—i.e., checklist tourism—are taken up so as to avoid this anguish.

The Human Condition in the Modern Era

Finally, let us consider the insights that a bad faith analysis of the contemporary tourist will provide for an enriched understanding of the human condition in the modern era. MacCannell et al. claim that the tourist is quintessentially modern. As I hope will become clear as my analysis continues, I more or less agree with this thesis, yet my reasons for believing so are based on a difference type of analysis. Rather than telling a Marxist tale of the modern man primarily facing economic alienation and consumer capitalism, as the sociologists have done, I wish to tell the story of the human condition in the modern era as a confrontation with and evasion of embodied human freedom, values, and responsibility. As McCulloch suggests “The thoroughly modern person, who knows that God is dead, who knows about the Great War, Hitler, Stalin, Hiroshima, Pol Pot...[sic]—the thoroughly modern person knows that the world is in its essence valueless, and that any meaning it has for us is put there by us.”²²⁰ In the next chapter we

²²⁰ McCulloch, *Using Sartre*, 48.

will explore how the tourist, by virtue of traveling, gains this knowledge of the thoroughly modern person.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANGUISH OF TRAVEL AND THE BAD FAITH OF “MUST-SEE” SITES

“If one goes to Europe, one “must see” Paris; if one goes to Paris, one “must see” Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre; if one goes to the Louvre, one “must see” the Venus de Milo and, of course, the *Mona Lisa*.”²²¹

- Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1976

Sartre claims that we experience anguish when we are reflectively aware of our freedom. As we established in Chapter 2, although we may always be *subject* to anguish—that is, we may be *prereflectively* aware of our freedom—we do not always *feel* anguish because this feeling requires a *reflective* awareness. In Chapter 3 we discussed that this anguish is experienced when one recognizes the contingency of one’s fundamental project. I argued that, in order for it to be a true expression of freedom, the fundamental project must be chosen in relation to a meaningful world; however, this is not to say that the meaning of the world and the meaning of the fundamental project are not mutually constitutive, for we also see the world as meaningful in relation to the fundamental project. Let us turn now to a question of how and why the fundamental project may be challenged or called into question. That is to say: how and why do we experience the feeling of anguish? In this chapter, I will explore how tourist travel may incite existential anguish, and that how the structure of checklist tourism aims, in bad faith, to evade this anguish. I will devote a lengthy discussion to the bad faith spirit of

²²¹ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 43.

seriousness, (the third line along which Sartre analyzes bad faith), which I did not discuss in Chapter 2.

Disruption of the Fundamental Project

Neil Levy finds the question of how and why we call into question the fundamental project problematic. He claims that there would be no possible reason for one to challenge one's fundamental project specifically because one's fundamental project both conditions and is reaffirmed by one's apprehension and understanding of the world:

every one of my perceptions, every one of my experiences, confirms and reinforces my fundamental project. I can never experience a conflict between it and reality, simply because my perception of reality is always filtered through the project. If I experience my rucksack as too heavy, then this is only because it really is, objectively speaking, too heavy. I have no access to it except via this experience of overwhelming weight. Thus my experience confirms the correctness of the interpretation that flows, ultimately, from my fundamental project. The meanings it imposes upon the world form a closed system, into which nothing can intrude that would disturb it.²²²

Levy claims that the fundamental project is inescapable through the freedom of the will alone because all of one's perceptions, behaviors, and desires are completely within the bounds of the fundamental project. This seems to be a reasonable interpretation, for Sartre himself says something very similar. He gives the example of someone whose project is an "inferiority complex." If I project myself as inferior, I see all of my failings only as a reinforcement of my inferiority.

I can be 'freed' from my 'inferiority complex' only by a radical modification of my project which could in no way find its causes and its motives in the prior

²²² Neil Levy, *Sartre*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 107.

project, not even in the suffering and shame which I experience, for the latter are designed expressly to *realize* my project of inferiority. Thus so long as I am 'in' the inferiority complex, I can not even conceive of the possibility of getting out of it.

This passage, indeed, is troubling, for it seems to strip the "inferior person" of autonomy and freedom.

How, then, does anyone ever challenge her fundamental project? Levy suggests that the only way this "closed system" might be interrupted is by "a sudden, inexplicable catastrophe that disrupts our world without our cooperation or consent."²²³ We can imagine the kind of catastrophe that Levy has in mind. Suppose that my primary project involves being an Olympic athlete in gymnastics. In every apprehension of the world, I see this project as constitutive of my essential being. I organize my life such that I may train with world-class coaches in a highly equipped gym several hours a day every day, forgoing romantic relationships, social engagements, and intellectual development in pursuit of the reaffirmation of my project as an Olympic athlete. I value my physical strength, flexibility, and skill in gymnastics above most other elements of my life. Suppose, then, I fall one day during training and my lower body becomes irreparably paralyzed. We can imagine that this is the type of catastrophe that might compel me to reassess my fundamental project as an Olympic athlete.

Yet, Sartre would say, nothing about this unfortunate event *causes* me to give up this project; the in-itself does not *determine* my choices. "Under no circumstances can the object which has appeared or disappeared *induce* even a partial renunciation of a project."²²⁴ Levy suggests that the catastrophic event somehow *causes* me to give up my

²²³ Levy, *Sartre*, 108.

²²⁴ *BN*, 649.

project “without my cooperation or consent.” Yet, we can imagine the athlete who, after an injury, does not give up her fundamental view of herself as an athlete, and simply sees the years after her athletic career as a failure and frustration of her life’s goals. I continue to see myself as an Olympic athlete trapped in a paraplegic’s body and thus become angry, frustrated, and resentful. Sartre states, “I can not be crippled without choosing myself as crippled. This means that I choose the way in which I constitute my disability (as ‘unbearable,’ ‘humiliating,’ ‘to be hidden,’ ‘to be revealed to all,’ ‘object of pride,’ ‘the justification of my failures,’ etc.)”²²⁵ I am in bad faith because I believe I have a fixed essence—as an Olympic athlete—that cannot be changed. From a normative perspective, we can apprehend the freedom of this decision, for we hold the injured athlete responsible for coming to terms with her injury, and for *choosing* a new project—perhaps one that can make use of different talents and that is not doomed to failure.

Still, even if changes in our external circumstances or exposure to different value sets or ways of life cannot *cause* us to question our fundamental projects or to experience the feeling of anguish, it certainly seems reasonable that they play some role in conditioning or inciting anguish. Such changes often allow us to imagine a different way being in the world, a different fundamental project. The injured athlete will question her project of Olympic athleticism only when she is able to imagine a different life, a different way of being for herself, which does not involve her Olympic athleticism. Sartre discusses how imagining a different way of being is important. He explains why a factory worker in the year 1830 who is subject to poor pay and working conditions does not organize a revolution:

²²⁵ *BN*, 432.

In so far as man is immersed in the historical situation, he does not even succeed in conceiving of the failures and lacks in a political organization or determined economy; this is not as is stupidly said, because he 'is accustomed to it,' but because he apprehends it in its plenitude of being and because he can not even imagine that he can exist in it otherwise...It is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we *decide* that these are unbearable.²²⁶

Thus, one questions one's project on when one imagines that one's life could be otherwise.

Furthermore, in order to imagine another state of affairs—a better life, better wages, and better working conditions—the factory worker needs certain things. Sartre goes on, “he adapts himself to [his sufferings] not through resignation but because he lacks the education—that is, the information—and reflection necessary for him to conceive of a social state in which these sufferings would not exist.”²²⁷ Thus, in order to envision a different life, I need “education and reflection.”

Even still, as a teacher of philosophy I know that education and reflection are not sufficient conditions for students to fundamentally challenge the way that they see the world, (especially education in the institutional sense). I can only offer them information, arguments, and skills of reasoning, and then hope that they willingly accept the conclusions that result from the employment of these skills. Remember, however, that one of the ways that Sartre describes bad faith is as a refusal to accept the conclusions of critical evidence and the willingness to be persuaded by non-persuasive evidence. Students whose fundamental project is to identify themselves with a certain religious faith, for example, may consent to minimally persuasive evidence—say, the beliefs and directives of their parents—and refuse to consent to more critically persuasive evidence

²²⁶ *BN*, 561.

²²⁷ *BN*, 561.

such as logical reasoning, empirical data, and historical record. In these cases, as a teacher, it seems that there is not much I can do to break through this pattern of bad faith.

Nevertheless, there are some projects that—with a little education and reflection—collapse like a house of cards. Sartre says that the reason we are ever able to challenge our fundamental project—to get out of the “closed system”—is that we are always prereflectively aware of our freedom to choose otherwise, which is to say, we are always subject to anguish (even though we may not always *feel* anguish). Continuing his discussion of the inferiority complex, Sartre says:

Yet at each moment I apprehend this initial choice as contingent and unjustifiable; at each moment therefore I am on the site suddenly to consider it objectively and consequently to surpass it and to make-it-past by causing the liberating *instant* to arise. Hence my anguish, the fear which I have of being suddenly exorcized (i.e., of becoming radically other); but hence also the frequent upsurge of ‘conversions’ which cause me totally to metamorphose my original project. These conversions, which have not been studied by philosophers, have often inspired novelists. One may recall the *instant* at which Gide Philoctetes casts off his hate, his fundamental project, his reason for being, and his being. One may recall the *instant* when Raskolnikoff decides to give himself up.²²⁸

Recall that, for Sartre, bad faith is “metastable” meaning that it must be constantly maintained. Thus the fundamental project, which is made in bad faith, is always subject to collapse—even though it appears, from the inside, that it can never be questioned. As Joseph Catalano puts it, “this uncritical stance, however, seems to go against the natural tendency of consciousness to question itself, and thus, according to Sartre, the individual living in bad faith will experience moments of anxiety.”²²⁹ The being of the for-itself is always a *question for itself*. Thus, it is the condition of consciousness to, at least

²²⁸ *BN*, 611-612.

²²⁹ Joseph Catalano, “Good and Bad Faith: Weak and Strong Notions,” In *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics* (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 108.

occasionally, consider its projects “objectively,” to step outside of them, to become reflectively aware of other possibilities.

This reflective awareness of our project, our possibilities, and our freedom is the condition for rejecting our or changing our projects, in what Sartre calls a “radical conversion.” A novelist himself, Sartre then turns to the work of literary writers who have told the stories of those who have given up their fundamental projects and made “conversions” to new ways of life. I will discuss the possibility of the conversion in more depth in the final chapter of this analysis.

For the next section of this chapter, I would like to explore some of the ways in which travel may serve as a kind of “education” and opportunity for reflection for the tourist. As such, travel has the potential to be a catalyst for the tourist to imagine a way of life different from her everyday existence, to be reflectively aware of her possibilities, and may evoke feelings of anguish. I will then suggest that because it is the inclination of most people to avoid such anguish, certain bad faith structures, behaviors, and patterns of belief and activity—i.e. checklist tourism—are embraced. These structures provide pre-established values and scripts for behaviors that allow the tourist maintain their fundamental projects.

The Anguish of Travel

Travel, by its very nature, has the opportunity to offer one new ways of seeing the world, a new range and diversity of experiences, new possibilities for one’s life. St. Augustine is credited with once saying, “The world is a book and those who do not travel

read only one page.”²³⁰ Other famous travelers offer similar words of wisdom about the activity. Mark Twain claims, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”²³¹ Sartre too, notes the possibility of change that travel offers. Roquentin, *Nausea*'s protagonist, is sharing photos of his travels to Spain and Morocco with a character whom he calls the Self-Taught Man. Thumbing through the pictures, the Self-Taught Man says:

Ah, Monsieur, you're lucky...[sic] if what they says is true—travel is the best school...It must be such an upheaval. If I were ever to go on a trip, I think I should make written notes of the slightest traits of my character before leaving, so that when I returned I would be able to compare what I was and what I had become. I've read that there are travelers who have changed physically and morally to such an extent that even their closest relatives did not recognize them when they came back.²³²

Indeed, travel, it seems, has the potential of *changing* people in some fundamental way.

Of course, as we've said already, not everyone travels in the same way for the same reasons. Not all travel is illuminating, thought-provoking, or life-changing. Indeed, I will argue that, in fact, checklist tourism is designed in such a way as to avoid the discomfort that change brings. Nevertheless, just as we are always prereflectively aware of our freedom, I suggest that we are also prereflectively aware of the possibility that travel may provoke in us the feeling of anguish and at the very least prompt us to

²³⁰ This quote is credited to St. Augustine in numerous travel books and websites, though I can find no evidence in any of his written work that it should be ascribed to him.

²³¹ Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad: Or the New Pilgrims Progress* (New York: Signet Classics, 1996), 490.

²³² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1964), 50.

reflect upon—if not to change—our fundamental projects. Let us turn now to some of the ways that such reflection may occur.

First, during the time of travel, the tourist is physically and/or psychically removed from many of her daily social roles and projects, such as those associated with her job, social circles, family, etc. The degree of this separation varies, of course, depending on the tourist's travel companions: family, friends, romantic partner, etc. One may feel the greatest sense of distance from the roles and projects of home if one is traveling alone. One may find oneself so removed from her way of life at home that the projects of home collapse, losing meaning. Indeed, some vacationers may have this experience when faced with the prospect of returning to an unsatisfying job, relationship, or living environment after traveling. In some ways, travel can be the type of “catastrophic” event that makes it easier to objectify and reflect upon one's projects, breaking through the closed, self-preserving loop of the fundamental project, and thus provoking anguish.

Furthermore, this simple distance from the projects of home can sometimes lead us to find ourselves stripped of our usual way of moving through the world. *New York Times* best-selling author Michael Crichton claims in his non-fiction *Travels* that this separation is what motivates his journeys. He says, “Stripped of your ordinary surroundings, your friends, your daily routines, your refrigerator full of food, your closet full of clothes—with all this taken away, you are forced into direct experience. Such direct experience inevitably makes you aware of who it is that is having the experience. That's not always comfortable, but it is always invigorating.”²³³ Indeed, when we are

²³³ Michael Crichton, *Travels* (New York: Harper Collins) 1988, xii.

missing the comfort of our familiar roles, relationships, and possessions we can more easily become distanced from those projects and faced with our own being in a new way. Sartre, of course, would not agree with any vision of the self that assumes a fixed nature or “true self” that we finally get in touch with during our travels (as Crichton’s comments could possibly suggest). Nevertheless, it is possible that, removed from our daily projects, we become aware of our being as contingent, in question, and free—that is, we feel anguish. As a visitor who is not engaged in any particular constructive project, the tourist may feel as though she is just simply “taking up space” in the world. Like Roquentin, she may experience the contingency of human existence as simply being “in the way.”²³⁴

Second, the tourist encounters new and sometimes very different sets of cultural, social, and historical values and practices in the destination locations of tourist travel that may come into conflict with her own. These encounters may cause the tourist to recognize the contingency of her own values and activities—that, had she been born in another part of the world, she may have an entirely different set of norms and mores by which to live. Writer Ralph Crawshaw states, “Travel has a way of stretching the mind. The stretch comes not from travel's immediate rewards, the inevitable myriad new sights, smells and sounds, but with experiencing firsthand how others do differently what we believed to be the right and only way.”²³⁵ The tourist may also realize that she is free to adopt some or all of these different values or practices, in spite of not having been raised with them. Such recognition can bring on anguish: the tourist becomes reflectively aware

²³⁴ *Nausea*, 173.

²³⁵ Ralph Crawshaw, cited in Craig Kielburger and Marc Kielburger, *Me to We: Finding Meaning in a Material World* (New York: Fireside, 2004), 54.

of the fact that ultimately *she* chooses her own life and values, for they have no external objective truth.

Third, tourist travel can bring on anguish because travel is sometimes associated with fear and danger, which often can act as a catalyst for anguish. Indeed, a small amount of danger is frequently part of the appeal of travel. One often wants adventure, new experiences, and exotica. A sense of fear or anxiety may accompany even the most mundane of new experiences: trying new and unfamiliar foods or drinks (and the associated fear of possibly becoming sick); navigating a new place and buying local goods without knowing the local language and customs; committing some sort of cultural *faux pas* and appearing foolish; getting lost or confused. At a more serious level, in urban settings, one might fear encountering pickpockets, thieves, rude or inhospitable people, or even those who might inflict bodily harm. In natural settings, the hiking or camping tourist may feel a vague sense of danger or fear of succumbing to the elements; of getting lost, sick, or injured without facilities nearby; of encountering ferocious animals; etc. There is the danger of not returning home when scheduled—of missing a bus or flight—or indeed, of not returning home at all, either because of choice or circumstance.

Sartre distinguishes between fear and anguish, but he recognizes that one may experience anguish when in a fearful situation. He says, “A situation provokes fear if there is a possibility of my life being changed from without; my being provokes anguish to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation.”²³⁶ For example, illustrates Sartre, a man who has just received a hard financial blow will fear

²³⁶ *BN*, 65.

the threat of poverty, but he will feel anguish a moment later when, wringing his hands, he asks himself, “What am I going to do?” One feels fear at the thought of falling off a precipice and anguish at the possibility of throwing oneself over.

The tourist in a new place and new situations may not only experience fear in the face of the various threats to health and safety but also anguish at the thought of being unequipped to handle the situation appropriately or of choosing to behave in a reckless way. In the face of a dangerous or inconvenient situation—for example, the tourist has lost her passport in a foreign country and cannot re-enter her own without it—she may experience the anguish of her freedom, saying “What am I going to do now?” Additionally, the tourist may experience anguish with the recognition of her free choice to travel to the unfamiliar or dangerous places at all. Thus, in anguish, the tourist may not only think: “What shall I do?” but also, “What have I done?” or “Why did I come to this place and put myself in harm’s way?” At these moments, again, the tourist confronts the freedom of being.

Recall that existential anguish is not a pleasant or desirable experience—and indeed, it is unsustainable if one wishes to be effective and functional. Thus, most people, most of the time, avoid confronting their freedom and flee into the “comfortable untruth” of bad faith. The possibility of encountering anguish during travel compels tourists to find some way of avoiding it. Checklist tourism provides a structure for travel that helps reduce the possibility of encountering existential anguish.

The Checklist Gives Structure

Checklist tourism is designed to help keep the feeling of anguish at bay. It does so in two major ways: first, it provides a layer of insulation around the tourist to help protect her from danger and from unfamiliar norms, people, and customs; second, it provides clear project with an established set of values.

One of the benefits of checklist tourism is the extensive infrastructure, which distances the tourist from the local culture and economy and provides a protective layer around the experience of travel, thereby prohibiting encounters with danger, fear, foreign values and customs, and ultimately, anguish, what Erik Cohen calls the “environmental bubble.”²³⁷ One may, of course, choose her involvement with the tourism industry: one can choose to take a guided tour around a city, traveling from site to site in an air conditioned bus, with a resident expert telling tourists what to look at and how to see it—or one can choose to go it alone, traveling through the sites on her own schedule and experiencing the sites without the framing of the guide. Yet, either way, tourist sites remain more or less within the “bubble” of tourism, for many of them have, at the very least, signs designating where to walk, where to keep off, and, usually, a small amount of information about each site. Furthermore, the sites are almost always surrounded by an infrastructure of tourist amenities, which include gift and souvenir shops, restaurants, lodging, public restroom facilities, and information centers, not to mention the swarms of

²³⁷ Erik Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism: Diversity and Change* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004), 183.

other tourists and the low likelihood of encountering local residents who are not involved in the tourism industry.²³⁸

Checklist tourists may find refuge in this highly structured environment, for it provides familiar comforts and safeties of home, while still allowing tourists to have the feeling of adventure, danger, and exotica. Thus, tourists will travel within the safe confines of an air-conditioned bus to an animal safari on the Sahara, to get just close enough to the “wild animals”—or even, “wild” people—to snap of few pictures and return home with tales and souvenirs, and then will retreat afterwards to the comfort and familiarity of a recognizable hotel name, complete with all the amenities of the industrialized West. Valene Smith recognizes this impulse when she says, “The tourist tends to be ‘interested’ in the ‘primitive’ culture but is much happier with his ‘safe’ box lunch and bottled soda rather than a native feast.”²³⁹ The only threat the tourist may feel is the possibility of being duped out of more money than a meal or a room is worth, but this risk is often outweighed by the alternative possibility of encountering bodily harm or enduring alien food, people, or practices. This safety helps stave off the possibility of dangerous, fearful, or unfamiliar situations, thereby also reducing the possibility of encountering the existential anguish.

The insulation of checklist tourism is not unique to checklist tourism, *per se*. Indeed, most modes of tourism—whether it is seaside lounging or hiking the Appalachian trail—offer a certain amount of infrastructure and protection. The second major way that

²³⁸ Ibid, 41.

²³⁹ Valene Smith, “Introduction,” *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Ed. Valene Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 13.

checklist tourism keeps anguish at bay—i.e. by providing a clear project and established values—is more unique to checklist tourism; in fact, it is part of what defines it as such.

The tourist has been removed from all her familiar roles and engagements of home, and can experience the feeling of anguish when encountering her own contingency. The list of checklist tourism gives the tourist a series of goals towards which she can strive—a list of sites to see—thereby making sense and meaning of an unfamiliar terrain and avoiding the anguished reflective awareness of one's freedom by taking up specific projects. In this way, the checklist tourist can still be traveling, in the sense that she is moving from site to site, but she avoids the anguish of the awareness of her own contingency. What's more, the checklist tourist enacts familiar activities—particularly the rather comforting activities of hiding behind a camera and consumer shopping, i.e. snapping photos and buying souvenirs—to give shape and purpose to travel and to one's being. The routine of checklist tourism, quite simply, gives tourists something to *do*.

This purpose of seeing all the sites on one's list explains why checklist tourism involves a great deal of movement, with very little lingering at one site or another. The checklist tourist stays just long enough to see the site, snap a photo, and buy a souvenir before moving on, and the tourist moves from site to site repeatedly enacting the routine. Slow, shapeless travel increases the possibility of encountering unknown situations without scripts for how to respond.

Some tourism scholars have noticed the hyper-mobility of tourist travel, particularly sightseeing, but do not connect this mobility to existentialist themes as I have done. Chris Rojek explains this compulsion to move as a desire for the pleasure of travel

itself: its novelty, its distinction from the everyday and from home, the change of routine and scenery it provides, etc. Rojek claims that the delight in motion for its own sake helps explain the constant urge to move that tourists often feel even shortly after reaching their “long-dreamt-of”²⁴⁰ travel destination. He states, in a tourist trip motivated by mobility, “sights become staging posts on a journey. One no longer embraces them with one’s soul. Rather, the tourist uses them to give shape to the passion of travel which would otherwise be shapeless.”²⁴¹ Although Rojek is right in saying that sites give shape to travel, I would argue that the reason we move so frequently from one to the next is not because of “passion of travel”—indeed, train, plane, bus, cab, and ferry rides are what usually cart tourists from site to site, and these are not always glamorous or desirable—but because tourists are afraid of what they may feel when they stand still for too long in a foreign place.

Not only does checklist tourism give tourists a project and sense of purpose, but the sites on the checklist are thought to be infused with deep meaning and value, thus giving the project of traveling to them a sense of deep meaning and value. The tourist allows herself to believe in the transcendent value of “must-see” sites. Indeed, it is often the case that checklist tourists are often incredibly disappointed—and sometimes even feel a sense of failure or guilt—if they visit Paris without going to see the *Mona Lisa* or the Eiffel Tower. The vacation—which is supposedly defined as an activity of leisure, a break from work—is infused with the serious spirit of work, routine, and duties. The holiday is transformed from a playful to a serious endeavor in which much is at stake. In

²⁴⁰ Chris Rojek, “Indexing, Dragging, and the Social Construction of Tourist Sites” *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, Eds. Chris Rojek and John Urry (New York: Routledge, 1997), 71.

²⁴¹ Chris Rojek and John Urry, “Transformations of Travel and Theory,” *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, Eds. Chris Rojek and John Urry (New York: Routledge, 1997), 6.

the next section I will explore how this “spirit of seriousness” is at work in the tourist’s relationship to the “must-see” sites of checklist tourism.

The Spirit of Seriousness

Bad faith is infused with what Sartre calls the “spirit of seriousness,” which “considers values as transcendent givens independent of human subjectivity.”²⁴² Clearly, such an attitude is antithetical to Sartre’s convictions in *Being and Nothingness*, for he maintains that human beings are the source of all values. Sartre is unequivocal in stating that seriousness is in bad faith: “It is obvious that the serious man at bottom is hiding from himself the consciousness of his freedom; he is in *bad faith*.”²⁴³

Many Sartre scholars treat the concept of the spirit of seriousness as Sartre does in *Being and Nothingness*—in passing. Those who do address this concept directly discuss the spirit of seriousness as a moral dimension of Sartre’s work and often in contrast to Sartre’s notion of play.²⁴⁴ Indeed, Sartre raises the notion of seriousness in two major places in *Being and Nothingness*, one of which is a significant portion of his all-too-brief section entitled “Ethical Implications.” Ronald Santoni points to this moral dimension by citing a passage from this section of the text in which Sartre discusses the spirit of seriousness: “Thus we are already on the *moral* plane but concurrently on that of bad

²⁴² *BN*, 796.

²⁴³ *BN*, 741.

²⁴⁴ For example, Ron Santoni’s *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre’s Early Philosophy*; Juliette Simont, “Sartrean Ethics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, edited by Christina Howells (Cambridge University Press, 1992) Cambridge Collections Online. Cambridge University Press. (Accessed 03 June 2010); Linda Bell, *Sartre’s Ethics of Authenticity* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989); Ralph Netzky, “Playful Freedom: Sartre’s Ontology Reappraised,” *Philosophy Today*, 18, no. 2 (1974): 125-136; and Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995).

faith, for it is an *ethics* which is ashamed of itself and does not dare speak its name. It has obscured all its goals in order to free itself from anguish.”²⁴⁵ Sartre discusses the spirit of seriousness again in his posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*, in which Sartre attempts to piece together his treatise on ethics, promised in this last section of *Being and Nothingness*. Here he pits the spirit of seriousness against an authentic morality and play. We may thus understand and agree that the spirit of seriousness has an important ethical dimension and is significant for those attempting to understand Sartrean ethics.

However, there is an element of Sartre’s definition of the spirit of seriousness that has been underexplored in the scholarship on this topic. Most scholars write that the spirit of seriousness turns values into objects in the sense that it objectifies values, taking values as solid, inert, given—a fair interpretation. However, no scholar has sincerely developed the other half of Sartre’s definition of the spirit of seriousness, namely that it transforms objects—material, empirical objects—into values. Developing this part of Sartre’s definition of seriousness will be important for our understanding of the aesthetic and cultural context of checklist tourism.

Let us look, then, at this other side of the spirit of seriousness. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre defines the spirit of seriousness this way:

The spirit of seriousness has two characteristics: it considers values as transcendent givens independent of human subjectivity, and it transfers the quality of ‘desirable’ from the ontological structure of things to their simple material constitution. For the spirit of seriousness, for example, *bread* is desirable because it is *necessary* to live (a value written in an intelligible heaven) and because bread *is* nourishing. The result of the serious attitude, which as we know rules the world, is to cause the symbolic values of things to be drunk in by their empirical

²⁴⁵ *BN*, 796. Emphasis added by Santoni.

idiosyncrasy as ink by a blotter; it puts forward the opacity of the desired object and posits it in itself as a desirable irreducible.²⁴⁶

The first characteristic of the spirit of seriousness is that on which most scholars have focused. It is the understanding of values as fixed givens; it objectifies values. The second characteristic is very interesting, for understands things as desirable, not in their ontological structure, but in their mere materiality, their “empirical idiosyncrasy.” Thus, the value of bread is transferred from its ability to nourish human bodies to the material substance itself, and bread becomes an end-in-itself, a value of its own.

Sartre describes this process again in *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Imagine, he says, that I judge a particular painting to be of high artistic quality and I ask others if they agree with me. If others disagree with the judgment born from my freedom, I am reminded that, “everyone else also has such freedom but may use it to affirm and feel a diametrically opposed value.”²⁴⁷ I then must choose between denying my own freedom and considering myself as full facticity (I am uneducated about painting; I have no taste; I was fooled), and denying the freedom of my interlocutors. If I choose to do the latter, I may—in the spirit of seriousness—identify the painting itself as the source of its value, rather than my free judgment of it. “Instead of tossing up a demand/question as I did in the beginning, that is, instead of calling on freedoms to make a statute, with favorable prejudice, in favor of the picture I pass over to the spirit of seriousness and make the picture a *value/object*, a being/value that will serve me as a touchstone for classifying men as free or unfree.”²⁴⁸ I turn the painting into a “value/object” a “being/value.” This

²⁴⁶ *BN*, 796.

²⁴⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 209.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 209.

is not, I submit, simply a metaphor, but instead, I consider the *painting itself*, in its pure being, the in-itself, to have intrinsic meaning. Thus, the spirit of seriousness not only makes objects out of values, but also values out of objects.

There is a temptation here to read Sartre as a stark relativist, not only about ethical judgments but about aesthetic ones as well. It appears that Sartre claims that any assignment or judgment of value—i.e. “the painting is a good painting,” or “honesty is a virtue”—is in the bad faith spirit of seriousness. Is it fair to read Sartre this way? Juliette Simont suggests not, and points to a claim from Sartre that appears early in the *Notebooks*: “Values reveal freedom at the same time that they surrender it. Any ordering of values has to lead to freedom. Classify values in a hierarchy such that freedom increasingly appears in it. At the top: generosity.”²⁴⁹ Sartre makes two important claims here: that values both reveal and surrender freedom; and that there is a hierarchy of values—not based on some transcendent given truth, but based on the extent to which they reveal freedom—with generosity at the top. Thus, Simont concludes, “Value as such is not alienating. It is the driving force and the responsibility of the free project, the constantly renewed mobility of the relationship of freedom to the world.” Sartre is not a relativist, but merely asserts what he has said all along: freedom is the source of all values.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 9.

²⁵⁰ The degree of Sartre’s relativism has been an issue of debate for many scholars who have written about Sartre’s ethics and who must contend with Sartre’s provocative claim at the end of *Being and Nothingness*: “Thus it amounts to the same thing whether one gets drunk alone or is a leader of nations” (797). I will not give a comprehensive review this extensive debate, but simply remark that some notable contributions to it include: Linda A. Bell’s *Sartre’s Ethics of Authenticity*; T. Storm Heter, *Sartre’s Ethics of Engagement* (London: Continuum, 2006); and works by Thomas C. Anderson including *Foundation and Structure of Sartrean Ethics* (University Press of Kansas, 1986) and *Sartre’s Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993).

The spirit of seriousness is simply another way to read bad faith. Just as bad faith sees my transcendence—my freedom—as pure facticity, the spirit of seriousness sees the pure facticity of being, i.e. the in-itself, as transcendence—that is, as pure value. In treating things as values, I then treat myself as a thing which must submit to this value. “The spirit of seriousness is voluntary alienation, that is, submission to an abstraction that justifies one: the thought that man is the inessential and the abstract the essential.”²⁵¹ Thus, in the spirit of seriousness, I deny my freedom in favor of facticity; I am in bad faith.

We can clarify the freedom of values even further by pointing to the distinction Sartre makes between values and obligations in *Notebooks*, which will become important in our discussion of the “must-see” sites of checklist tourism. Simont claims, “Alienating compulsion is an aspect not of value but of its conversion into ‘obligation.’ Sartre thus distinguishes between value and obligation (or compulsion), the latter constituting an alienated destiny of the former while the former retains an opening onto freedom.”²⁵² Indeed, values differ from obligations, for Sartre, in that the former are my own creation—able to be revised and reappraised by my freedom—while the latter are not:

If I turn away from a value, it disappears, if I turn away from an obligation, it remains. If I advance toward a value, I have the impression that I am about to rejoin myself; an obligation always remains at a distance and I know from the onset that I cannot rejoin myself there, since *it is not me*. If I do not respect an obligation I change myself in relation to it but do not change it in relation to me. It remains the same: fixed like a look.²⁵³

²⁵¹ *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 60.

²⁵² Simont, “Sartrean Ethics,” 182.

²⁵³ *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 251.

This reference to “the look” indicates Sartre’s conclusion about the origin of obligation, which refers back to his discussion of the Other from *Being and Nothingness*.²⁵⁴ In the *Notebooks* Sartre states, “the demand, the obligation, duty, come to the For-itself from the Other. These are not dimensions of the For-itself as such, but living categories of the For-others.”²⁵⁵ Yet, this “look” of obligation is even more alienating than a look from the Other in that “I cannot turn back on it to look at it, it is a looking that can never be looked at.”²⁵⁶

Thus, the spirit of seriousness is a submission to obligations and duties, which are introduced to us by the Other and alienated from us because of their abstraction beyond human subjectivity. “Naturally, there most often follows some form of alienation, that is, the goal, as soon as it is collective, becomes what is essential and the person becomes what is inessential. Their true relationship is not disentangled until one puts an end to the spirit of seriousness and sees that the person *is* his goal.”²⁵⁷ Thus the human being—born into a world of duties and obligations—must navigate her way and express her freedom through and against her situation.

The Spirit of Seriousness and the “Must-See” Sites of Checklist Tourism

We can see the spirit of seriousness at work in the beliefs of the checklist tourist, manifested in the obligation she feels to visit the “must-see” sites of any particular destination. Dean MacCannell speaks to this sense of obligation when he likens the

²⁵⁴ Simont, “Sartrean Ethics,” 184.

²⁵⁵ *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 258.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 254.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 169.

contemporary tour to a modern pilgrimage, wherein tourists feel that they must travel to given sacred sites. Tourist trips are:

“extensive ceremonial agendas involving long strings of obligatory rites.” If one goes to Europe, one “must see” Paris; if one goes to Paris, one “must see” Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre; if one goes to the Louvre, one “must see” the Venus de Milo and, of course, the *Mona Lisa*. There are quite literally millions of tourists who have spent their savings to make the pilgrimage to see these sights.²⁵⁸

Extending MacCannell’s suggestion, we could go on to say that if one sees these sights, “one must” snap a photo of oneself in front of them and/or collect a postcard, key chain, or other bit of memorabilia by which to demonstrate that one has visited these contemporary sacred sites. Like the Medieval pilgrim, the contemporary tourist must return home with proof of his or her sacred journey. This sense of “must see” or “must do” assumes that tourist sites are intrinsically valuable, and the checklist tourist feels as though she is obliged to see them, thereby ignoring her freedom and traveling in bad faith.

Of course, there is room for some idiosyncrasy in the creation of the “must-see” list. Although there is a general cultural set of “must-sees,” there may also be different sets of “must-see” site which are specific to certain sub-cultures, which may or may not overlap with the mainstream “must-sees.” Graceland and Sun Studio are must-see sites for any Elvis fanatic visiting Memphis, while the Lorraine Motel and Civil Rights Museum is a must-see for any devotee of Martin Luther King Jr. visiting the same city. Sometimes the “must-see” sites of a particular sub-culture fall out of the mainstream norm, but there still remains a sense of obligation to the sites of the tastes and interests of the sub-culture.

²⁵⁸ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 43.

The spirit of seriousness plays a large role in the establishing and validating the list of must-see sites. First, the checklist tourist—in the spirit of seriousness—sees the value of the must-see sites as originating from outside herself, and perhaps even from all human subjectivity whatsoever. The tourism industry is infused with a strong commitment to transcendent values. Tourist literature, brochures, videos, websites and other media often describe destinations as “exquisite,” “magnificent,” or “awe-inspiring.” These messages are perpetuated and reinforced by the tourism industry, which aims to sell tourist sites on the notion that they are larger than life, and indeed, much more extraordinary. Tourists are sold the idea that sites hold some value that is not found within oneself, but out in the world. The reason for this grandiosity is, as social scientists Nelson Graburn and John Urry have argued, that tourist travel is predicated on the binary between the ordinary or everyday and the extraordinary.²⁵⁹ Tourists travel to particular places because they see them as grand or mythical and as distinct from the work-a-day routine at home.

Chris Rojek points out that the binary of the ordinary and the extraordinary is socially constructed through the use of myth, fantasy, and tall tales.²⁶⁰ These cultural tales, symbols, and fantasies are fractured and fragmentary, communicated to us in our everyday life through a variety of media, which, in the language of Sartre, are part of our factual situation. Rojek, inspired by the postmodern commitment to fragmentation and transience, suggests thinking of these images as files that one drags and indexes into folders, each of which represents a particular tourist destination. Files consist of printed

²⁵⁹ Nelson Graburn, “The Sacred Journey,” in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Ed. Valene Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

²⁶⁰ Rojek, “Indexing,” 53.

texts—such as travel brochures and websites, as well as novels and poems (Joyce’s “Dublin” in *Ulysses*)—theatre and film—(the “American West” of Sam Shepard’s plays, “New York” of Scorsese’s films)—and television—(the “Manhattan” of *Sex and the City*, the “Baltimore” of *The Wire*, the “America” of *Cheers* or the rather different “America” of *Baywatch*).²⁶¹

Although it may be true that tourists piece together images of certain destinations from a variety of media, there is frequently an underlying grand narrative that grounds the imagination of the checklist tourist. The myth specific to the historical sites that often line the route of the checklist tourist is the narrative of the greatness of human achievements throughout history, particularly those that represent or are seen as precursors to Western industrialization. Nietzsche’s concept of “monumental history,” discussed in his essay, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” is particularly useful here. According to Nietzsche, monumental history looks for the bright moments of progress to give a narrative of human existence. It operates on the belief

that the great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain, that this chain unites mankind across the millennia like a range of human mountain peaks, that the summit of such a long-ago moment shall be for me still living, bright and great—that is the fundamental idea of the faith in humanity which finds expression in the demand for a *monumental* history.²⁶²

The sites of the checklist tourist are often the sites that mark and celebrate the achievements that cast Western nations in a narrative of progress and triumph.

²⁶¹ Ibid. We should note further that the images of cultural media communicate a specific social imagining of a place, which, by definition is partial and incomplete. When it comes to non-Western or pre-industrial societies, the images that we receive of these places through Western cultural media frequently represent narratives of racism, xenophobia, or exoticism: the “Africa” of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, the “India” of *Ghandi*, the “China” of *Memoirs of a Geisha* or of Disney’s *Mulan*.

²⁶² Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” *Untimely Meditations*, Ed. Daniel Breazeale, Trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1997), 68.

This is not to say that certain tourist sites are not established as tourist sites for good reason. Indeed, one visits sites because they represent or celebrate the highlights in political, cultural, and military power; religious devotion; and art and architecture. That is, they tell the story of greatness. One can see this narrative over time traced through the must-see tourist sites: the ancient world is represented by the Great Sphinx and the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Parthenon, the Coliseum; the late medieval period by the Cathedral at Notre Dame, and other religious sites; the European Renaissance by the Sistine Chapel and the *Mona Lisa*; and modernity by the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House.

However, this reverence or appreciation turns into the spirit of seriousness when the tourist ignores the fact that the story is, in fact, a story, and that values are not in fact transcendent but “chosen,” originating from freedom. The spirit of seriousness is at work when the tourist believes that these sites are “desirables irreducible,” that have sucked in these values of greatness. Just as she consents to the mythology of the extraordinary beauty and paradise-like nature of tourist destinations, the tourist also allows herself to be convinced by the insufficient evidence of the mythical narrative of monumental history. Nietzsche, like Sartre, understands that the danger of a monumental mode of history is that the past becomes “distorted, beautified and coming close to poetic invention.”²⁶³ Just as Rojek tells us that tourist sites are predicated on myth and fantasy, Nietzsche claims that we may be “incapable of distinguishing between a monumentalized past and a mythical fiction.”²⁶⁴ Further, because the lure of these sites depend on the tourists’

²⁶³ Ibid, 70.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

willingness to believe in the myth—even though they know that such paradise is only a dream—we can conclude that such tourism is built upon and motivated in bad faith.

The values of “Art,” “Freedom,” “Independence,” “Genius,” “Nature,” “Tradition,” “Courage,” “Romance,” “Beauty,” etc. are some of the transcendent values thought to exist out in the world, and the tourist believes that such values may be found in the course of the tour. The *Mona Lisa*, or the Eiffel Tower, or the Liberty Bell “drink in” these values, such that their “empirical idiosyncrasy”—their materiality—is seen as intrinsically valuable, a “desirable irreducible.” Tourists frequently see the *Mona Lisa*, for example, as some sort of transcendent definition of “true art,” rather than a painting that the tourist can freely chose to see as valuable or not. Furthermore, the souvenirs that represent these sites—the miniature replicas and the objects inscribed with names—seem to absorb some small piece of these transcendent values because of their relationship to the site, and become “opaque,” such that the pursuit of the tourist site may even become the pursuit of the souvenir itself. Indeed, the checklist tourist often considers a visit to a site successfully ended once the photograph has been taken or the souvenir collected. Rojek agrees: “Most tourists feel that they have not fully absorbed a sight until they stand before it, see it and take a photograph to record the moment.”²⁶⁵

Thus, in the spirit of seriousness, the checklist tourist sees the sites on the checklist, (and perhaps even the accompanying souvenirs), as intrinsically valuable. In doing so, she hides from herself that this checklist tour—as well as the sites she agrees to as “must-see”—is a freely chosen project. As Sartre, says, “man pursues being blindly by hiding from himself the free project which is this pursuit. He makes himself such that

²⁶⁵ Rojek, “Indexing,” 58.

he is *waited for* by all the tasks placed along his way. Objects are mute demands, and he is nothing in himself but the passive obedience to these demands.”²⁶⁶ Indeed, the tourist feels she *must see* certain sites when traveling to a particular region of the globe, as those they are demands, or obligations, to which she must be obedient. In doing so, the tourist is able to ignore her freedom, to ignore the fact that she may choose whatever travels she wishes, and to simply acquiesce to the “transcendent values” that pull her along. “The spirit of seriousness makes him see his myth as an obligation.”²⁶⁷

However, as Sartre reminds us, these objects are valuable only insofar as they are in a certain relationship with human freedom. These values are not given from a transcendent realm but created and affirmed by people and institutions. Yet, the checklist tourist, in bad faith, allows herself to be convinced by these mythical images of intrinsically valuable places and objects.

When the Site does Not Live Up to the Myth

There are times however, when tourists—full of high expectations of transcendent values and fantasies—find themselves at a site only to be grossly disappointed. Rojek describes this phenomenon nicely. He says that, because the elements which create tourists’ perceptions of certain sites

often draw on glamorous representations which are portrayed in guide books, movies and TV shows, it follows that sights are often anti-climactic experiences. Standing before the Sphinx in Cairo, or the Sydney Opera House, one may feel that the sight is not as breathtaking as one had been led to believe. The sky is not the right colour [sic] or the building materials look more weathered than in

²⁶⁶ *BN*, 796.

²⁶⁷ *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 61.

photographs. Although the tourist literature tends to emphasise [sic] feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment, it is worth noticing that tourism can also end in disappointment and a feeling that one's expectations have been deceived.²⁶⁸

Consider, as Rojek does, that the literature of tourism emphasizes feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment. These feelings of satisfaction are often contingent, however, on the site meeting all the expectations of glamour and grandeur. As Walker Percy, author of "The Loss of the Creature," notes:

the sightseer [to the Grand Canyon] measures his satisfaction *by the degree to which the canyon conforms to the preformed complex*. If it does so, if it looks just like the postcard, he is pleased; he might even say, "Why it is every bit as beautiful as a picture postcard!" he feels he has not been cheated. But if it does not conform, if the colors are somber, he will not be able to see it directly; he will only be conscious of the disparity between what it is and what it is supposed to be. He will say later that he was unlucky in not being there at the right time. The highest point, the term of the sightseer's satisfaction, is not the sovereign discovery of the thing before him; it is rather the measuring of the thing to the criterion of the preformed symbolic complex.²⁶⁹

When the tourist's expectations are not met, the tourist may feel let down, cheated, disappointed, even betrayed and angry.

These emotions reveal the degree to which the tourist allows herself to be convinced, in bad faith, by the myths of cultural media. Recall that bad faith is also allowing oneself to be convinced of something in spite of insufficient evidence or in willful ignorance of critical evidence. The tourist allows herself to believe the Hollywood version of Paris as a city of lights, love, and romance, and she consents to the vision of the Eiffel Tower as a shining symbol of this splendid city. Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that most tourists know, on some level or another, that the image they have of a particular place is not, and cannot be accurate. This image is built upon

²⁶⁸ Rojek, "Indexing," 54.

²⁶⁹ Walker Percy, "Loss of the Creature," *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One Has to Do with the Other* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1976), 48.

one-dimensional media images and ignores the empirical experience of reality as a collection of pleasant as well as unpleasant experiences: smog as well as sun, banality as well as ecstasy. To believe that in certain places, one may find only the pleasant, agreeable, beautiful, or romantic is at best wishful thinking, and at worst self-delusion, i.e. bad faith.

Although Percy suggests that tourists may feel as though they had back luck—seeing the site on a cloudy day, or from the wrong angle, or in some set of circumstances in which the site does not live up to expectations—and thus feel cheated, I would argue that it is just as likely that the disillusioned tourist questions the myth altogether. For example, when standing in front of the *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre, a tourist may ask, “What’s the big deal?” or “It’s so much smaller than I thought it would be.” Instead of blaming the moment of disillusion on the circumstances that inhibited the “correct touristic encounter” with the “truly” valuable or mythical site, the tourist may, in fact, call the fantasy into question. In such cases, the tourist may feel a certain amount of existential anguish. In asking “What’s the big deal?” the tourist suggests that perhaps the object is not a “desirable irreducible” but simply an object—one among many—that has been elevated to mythical stature over time. She may recognize the myth of glamour and value as such, thus encountering the reality of her own freedom and responsibility in determining the value of the site for herself.

Such encounters, as we’ve said, are rather uncomfortable and we human beings are compelled to avoid them. Therefore, regardless of the actual experience of the trip—the long lines, the hot sun, the sore feet, the desire for the next meal, and the less than impressive quality of the sites—tourists will likely pass on the romantic myth,

perpetuating the fantasy of the tourist site. It is not unusual to hear tourists who have recently returned from a trip claim that their destination was as beautiful and glorified as all the photos, films, and television shows claim it to be. Not only does the site remain mystified, but one's trip and experience of this site also becomes a fantasy. To again quote Nietzsche, "whole segments of [the past] are forgotten, despised, and flow away in an uninterrupted colourless flood, and only individual embellish facts rise out of it like islands"²⁷⁰—or, rather, like snapshots of oneself, smiling, in front of the mythic site. Indeed, it is part of the obligation of the tourist to perpetuate these myths, to allow both herself and others to believe in the mythic value of the site. As sociologist Scott McCabe states:

To construct tourism as different, distinct, separate and more meaningful than 'normal life' is to do what is required of ordinary members in accomplishing touristic social reality. Using natural language and having available a set of cultural discourses about appropriate tourist activities, tourists are both obliged and constrained by everyday life to construct their experiences in warrantable and credible ways. It is simply not acceptable to talk about touristic experiences in a resigned, bored or blasé manner. Society requires that members do not talk about tourist experiences as being drudgery, a set of chores to be undertaken, but rather as exciting, invigorating, renewing and relaxing. Therefore, touristic experiences are constructed in contradistinction to normal daily routine.²⁷¹

Thus, the tourist is incentivized by the Other to maintain and perpetuate the bad faith spirit of seriousness with regard to the sites of checklist tourism.

I have argued thus far that the checklist tourist consents to a list of must-see sites in the bad faith spirit of seriousness, which sees material objects as embodying transcendent, given values. For the checklist tourist who follows a circuit of historical

²⁷⁰ Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages of History," 70-71.

²⁷¹ Scott McCabe, "The Tourist Experience and Everyday Life," *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, Ed. Graham M.S. Dann (Oxon: CABI Publishing), 72.

highlights, these sites tend to emphasize values of grandeur, achievement, ingenuity, progress, art, beauty, and romance. Following this list of must-see sites helps the tourist avoid existential anguish, and thus is a project in bad faith. First, the tourist is able to avoid anguish because the checklist provides a structured itinerary for travel, providing tourists with a protective environment and familiar role. Second, as we've said, the tourist is able to accept the value of these sites as given, thus avoiding the freedom and responsibility involved in choosing values for herself. In the next chapter, we will explore what the tourist gains by physically traveling to the must-see sites of checklist tourism. That is, I will look more deeply at the project of the checklist tourist—why she leaves home to visit these sites, and what she hopes to achieve by doing so.

CHAPTER 5

POSSESSING THE WORLD THROUGH TOURISM

“Revolutionaries are serious. They come to know themselves first in terms of the world which oppresses them, and they wish to change this world. In this one respect they are in agreement with their ancient adversaries, the possessors, who also come to know themselves and appreciate themselves in terms of their position in the world.”²⁷²

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 1943

In the previous chapter, we explored how the checklist tourist, in the spirit of seriousness, accepts the value of “must-see” sites as transcendent, objective, and obligatory. In this chapter, I will explore the question of why—when a tourist can so easily see replicas, representations, and images of a checklist site—the checklist tourist travels great distances to be in the material, physical presence of the site, to see it in its “empirical idiosyncrasy.” This task requires a critical investigation of Sartre’s conceptions of “having,” or possession, as they relate to the body and to the bad faith of the checklist tourist. I argue that checklist tourists are contemporary versions of the serious “possessors” that Sartre alludes to in the epigraph above, who come to know themselves in terms of the world.²⁷³

²⁷² *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 741.

²⁷³ Sartre is not more specific about the identity of these “ancient adversaries” or “possessors,” though perhaps he is referring to a variety of groups of people throughout history who have colonized, conquered, and enslaved people around the world.

The Lure of the ‘Real Thing’

“Virtual tourism is the new next big thing, enabling us to visit all the sites without the bother of airports, carbon footprints and strange foreign ways,” claims journalist John Naish in a 2009 article of *The London Times*.²⁷⁴ Naish goes on to explore a variety of different virtual and cyber tourist options that have sprung up in the last ten years. The on-line company Heritage Key allows Internet access to a virtual world, in which virtual-tourists create an avatar that travels to digitally recreated sites, such as the Great Pyramids, (much like the popular on-line game “Second Life”). Researchers at the School of Computer Science at Bangor University in Wales are attempting to build a virtual reality “cocoon” that will attempt to replicate multiple sensory experiences of a site. The website “Googlesightseeing.com” offers “tours” that are satellite images cobbled together from Google Earth and Google Maps. The website offers this somewhat tongue-in-cheek motto: “Why bother seeing the world for real?”

Yet, in 1996, when virtual tourism was in its infancy, journalist Anthony Faiola predicted that virtual tourism would not replace actual real-life travel. “Indeed, technology in this vein is not about supplanting real travel, but rather stimulating it. After viewing serene farmers in Vietnam, the chorus of color on South Beach or an expedition to Mount Everest, the images may spur armchair travelers to get up and visit places they might not otherwise have.”²⁷⁵ Thirteen years later, Naish agrees: “Will all these magic pixels sate our globetrotting lusts and get us wanting digital tans instead? I rather think

²⁷⁴ John Naish, “Adventures in my dressing gown,” *The Times* (London, England), Saturday, December 5, 2009.

²⁷⁵ Anthony Faiola, “Net Worth—It’s never been easier to click and go—but does travel really compute?” *Washington Post*, Sunday, February 11, 1996.

they will sharpen our hunger to get out there.”²⁷⁶ Indeed, from 1999 to 2008, the number of real-life tourists more than doubled from 438 million to 922 million.²⁷⁷ Given that such real-life travel is much more costly than virtual travel, that it presents the possible discomfort of unfamiliarity and anguish, as I argued in Chapter 4, and that it requires one to change out of her pajamas, what compels would-be tourists to get out there?

More specifically, in a world where we can see thousands of reproductions of the *Mona Lisa*, the Eiffel Tower, or the Statue of Liberty—in print, on the web, on handbags, t-shirts, and lampshades—what draws checklist tourists all the way to see the original? Several scholars in tourism studies have acknowledged that such compulsion exists. Christoph Hennig, for example, states, “Like medieval pilgrims of yesteryear, today’s art tourists attach great importance to *physical contact*: Physical proximity to a work that one wishes to stand directly opposite for at least a short time, as well as being in touch with its ‘emanations’—reproductions, picture postcards and illustrated books.”²⁷⁸ However, Hennig, like most other tourism scholars, does not explore the roots of this desire nor the phenomenology of the experience of seeing the “real thing” in much depth.²⁷⁹ Chris Rojek is unique in his attempt to offer a more extensive account of this phenomenon, and it is telling that he appeals to the work of a philosopher—Walter Benjamin—in so doing.

²⁷⁶ Naish, “Adventures in my dressing gown.”

²⁷⁷ World Tourism Organization, “Tourism Highlights: 2009 Edition,” <http://www.unwto.org/facts/eng/highlights.htm>.

²⁷⁸ Christoph Hennig, “Tourism: Enacting Modern Myths,” in *The Tourist as a Metaphor of the Social World*, edited by Graham M.S. Dann, 169-188 (Oxon: CABI Publishing, 2002), 178.

²⁷⁹ Chris Rojek, “Indexing, Dragging, and the Social Construction of Tourist Sites” *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, edited by Chris Rojek and John Urry (New York: Routledge, 1997); Hennig, “Tourism: Enacting Modern Myths.”

In his “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin presents his notion of the “aura” of an object as its unique position in place and time.²⁸⁰ That is to say, the aura resides in the “empirical idiosyncrasy” of the object. Rojek claims, “the aura of an object is manifest by its magnetic power to attract us to leave our homes to see it for ourselves—what can be termed the *St Thomas Effect*.”²⁸¹ Rojek proposes that, when standing before the original, we come to believe in the cultural authority of the object, in the same way that upon laying his hands on the wounds and the body of Christ led St. Thomas to believe. Rojek’s claims resonate with our argument from Chapter 4, in which we explore how tourists believe in bad faith that material objects “drink in” the transcendent values with which they are associated. Tourists who uncritically accept the cultural authority or valuation of an object as a must-see site, do so in the spirit of seriousness, associating transcendent values with the material object that is unique in space and time.

However, I want to suggest that physically visiting tourist sites is not simply about reaffirming their cultural authority or transcendent value. This value may be part of what draws us to the site, but there is more to this story. As we discussed in Chapter 4, belief in the transcendent value of tourist sites are not always validated upon visiting them, for sometimes the sites do not live up to the myths. Instead, I submit that the tourist desires possession of the tourist site in a deep, ontological way. This possession or appropriation involves a certain physical and embodied relationship to the site in which the site is “overcome” or “conquered.” Such possession of the site allows tourists

²⁸⁰ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 221ff.

²⁸¹ Rojek, “Indexing,” 58.

to identify their own being with the material world and with the transcendent values that supposedly reside within it. Such a project is, of course, in bad faith.

Let us look more closely at Sartre's conception of the body so as better to understand embodied possession. Sartre claims that the body is experienced in three ontological dimensions, and I will explore how at least two of these ontological dimensions—the body for myself and the body as it is known by the other—are important for understanding the bad faith of the checklist tourist who travels to appropriate and possess.

Sartre on the Body

As Katherine Morris points out, Sartre's work on the body is often overlooked and underappreciated.²⁸² Furthermore, Sartre does not explicitly discuss the issue of the body until two-thirds of the way through *Being and Nothingness*. Catalano offers a convincing argument that, although Sartre is not expository about the body in the early chapters of the text, this is not because he understands consciousness as disembodied. Instead, "as a book, *Being and Nothingness* moves from the abstract to the concrete whole in such a way that the whole is always present, even if it is not being examined."²⁸³ Indeed, "the description of questioning the world, as given in the first chapter of the book, 'On the Origin of Negation,' seems not to arise from a body. If you do not finish the book, if you do not get to the chapter on the body, you can be misled; although, if you

²⁸² Katherine J. Morris, "Introduction: Sartre on the Body," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3-4.

²⁸³ Joseph Catalano, "The Body and the Book: Reading *Being and Nothingness*," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 31.

read carefully, Sartre's numerous examples would remind you that he is implicitly discussing the body."²⁸⁴ For example, the waiter in the café and the flirtatious woman on a date discussed in Part Two of *Being and Nothingness* are exemplars of embodied bad faith.

We should begin by recognizing that Sartre's conception of the body avoids and responds to the Cartesian mind-body dualism that has plagued Western philosophy for centuries. Descartes' difficulty arises in the incompatibility or chasm between two ontologically distinct substances: mind and body. For Sartre, however, human consciousness is not a substance but "nothingness." Consciousness is the negation of substance, and thus exists only in relationship to substance, thereby forestalling Descartes' problem before it even arises.²⁸⁵ However, Sartre's concept of the body is also somewhat complicated, for he does not maintain that it is a simple material substance; indeed, it is the locus of consciousness. Sartre outlines three ontological structures of the body: (1) the body as being for-itself (2) the body-for-others (3) the existence of the body as a body known by the Other. Let us look at each in turn, and then address some critical questions that have been raised about Sartre's schema.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 30.

²⁸⁵ Martin C. Dillon, "Sartre on the Phenomenal Body and Merleau-Ponty's Critique," in *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Jon Stewart, 121-143, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998); Richard M. Zaner, *The Problem of Embodiment* (Netherlands, 1964) 111, and others charge Sartre with maintaining a Cartesian dualism because of his ontological two ontological structures: the in-itself and the for-itself. Dillon, for example, states, "insofar as his attempt to ground the immanent and transcendent aspects of phenomena in the spheres of being-for-itself and being-in-itself constitutes an implicit reversion to dualist thought, his ontology is Cartesian" (125). This interpretation of Sartre is mistaken, however, because it neglects to acknowledge that the for-itself is not a substance, but a lack, thus avoiding Cartesian dualism.

The Body as Being For-Itself

For Sartre, the body as being-for-itself is both facticity and transcendence. He says, “the body as facticity is the past as it refers to a *birth*; that is, to the primary nihilation which causes me to arise from the *in-itself* which I am in fact without having to be it. Birth, the past, contingency, the necessity of a point of view, the factual condition for all possible action of the world—such is the *body*, such it is *for me*.”²⁸⁶ Indeed, the body is a certain size, shape, color, sex, etc. all of which constitute my facticity, my situation. However, the body is not only facticity; it is not an inert object like other objects in the world because it is in and through my body that I perceive the world and that others perceive me. I do not understand or know my own body, or the body of others, as simple material objects, the way that one would know a stapler. Instead, “the body is the psychic object *par excellence*—*the only psychic object*.”²⁸⁷ As such, the body is not to be known *by* consciousness, but instead the *existence* of consciousness. Sartre claims: “the body can not be *for me* transcendent and known; the spontaneous, unreflective consciousness is no longer the consciousness *of the* body. It would be best to say, using ‘exist’ as a transitive verb—that consciousness *exists* its body.”²⁸⁸ My body *lives* my apprehension and perception of the world, as well as my engagement with the world.

Further, my body is the center of my perceptions and activities, and it is because of this body that I apprehend the world from a certain perspective.

²⁸⁶ *BN*, 431.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 455.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 434.

In this sense my body is everywhere in the world; it is over there in the fact that the lamp-post hides the bush which grows along the path, as well in the fact that the roof up there is above the windows of the sixth floor or in the fact that passing car swerves from right to left behind the truck or that the woman who is crossing the street appears smaller than the man who is sitting on the sidewalk in front of the café. My body is coextensive with the world, spread across all things, and at the same time it is condensed into this single point which all things indicate and which I am, without being able to know it.²⁸⁹

My body is “spread across all things” because it is the existence of my world. My body is the condition of the possibility of there being a world for me at all—and by “world”

Sartre means a web of meaningful relationships of instruments, project, and tools.

Simultaneously, my body is “condensed into this single point” as the locus of world, the unique perspective which makes it a particular *this*. “By the mere fact that *there* is a world, this world can not exist without a univocal orientation in relation to me.”²⁹⁰

Although Sartre claims that it is contingent that I exist, (as I am not the foundation of my own existence), if I am to *be*, I must be at a particular point, place, and perspective: “For human reality, to be is to-be-there; that is, ‘there in that chair,’ ‘there at that table,’ ‘there at the top of the mountain, with these dimensions, this orientation, etc.’ It is an ontological necessity.”²⁹¹ Thus, the body is both my contingency and my consciousness; it is yet another way of describing my ambiguous nature as freedom and facticity.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 419-420.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 406.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 407.

The Body-For-Others

In his discussion of the body-for-others, Sartre describes how the body of the other appears to me, because he does not want to confuse the structure of my body-for-others and the structure of my body as it exists as a body known by the other. He claims, “to study the way in which *my* body appears to the Other or the way in which the Other’s body appears to me amounts to the same thing.”²⁹²

Thus, when direct my gaze to the Other’s body I apprehend “the tool which I am not and which I utilize (or which resists me, which amounts to the same thing). It is presented to me originally with a certain object coefficient of utility and of adversity. The Other’s body is therefore the Other himself as a transcendence-instrument.”²⁹³

Indeed, the body of the Other is an instrument, which either serves or prohibits me, but it is also a *transcendence*. In seeing the body of the Other, I apprehend the *freedom* of the Other. I understand that his or her body is the locus of the world *for him or her*. Thus, just as my body is “spread across all things” so too is the body of the Other: “To be sure, the Other’s body is everywhere present in the very indication which instrumental-things give of it since they are revealed as utilized by him and as known by him.”²⁹⁴ The body of the other is not simply a material thing of flesh and blood—pure facticity devoid of freedom—for then it would be only a corpse and would be viewed the way other objects—tables, chairs, staplers—are viewed. Instead it is, a transcendence-instrument;

²⁹² Ibid, 445. Dillon has criticized Sartre for making this equivalence of my body for the Other and the Other’s body for me because he believes that Sartre cannot escape Cartesian solipsism. However, it is clear that Sartre’s analysis of the other as a transcendence-transcended and the experience of my body through the eyes of the Other (i.e. through the Look), that he preempts this solipsism.

²⁹³ Ibid, 447.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 448.

when I perceive the body of the Other, I apprehend the freedom of the other as well as his utility or adversity for me as a tool in the world.

The Existence of the Body as a Body Known by the Other

Finally, my body exists as a body that is known by the Other. That is to say, “it is by means of the Other’s concepts that I *know* my body. But it follows that even in reflection I assume the Other’s point of view on my body; I try to apprehend it as if I were the Other in relation to it.”²⁹⁵ I see myself the way the other sees me. Sartre gives a clear and lucid example this experience as self-awareness in the eyes of the other.

Imagine, he says, that motivated by jealousy I am peering through a keyhole at a scene inside a room. When peering through the keyhole, I am absorbed in the scene and I am consumed by my jealousy. But, suppose that I suddenly hear footsteps from down the hall and realize that someone is looking at me. I become ashamed because I realize that the other sees my body as crouched down peering through a keyhole. I am pulled out of my absorption in the scene of the room and my world is restructured towards the eyes of the Other. He sees me as spying. In this moment, I experience my own body as it is viewed by the Other. I am objectified in the eyes of the other and I feel my freedom limited by him. “With the appearance of the Other’s look I experience the revelation of my being-as-object; that is of my transcendence as transcended.”²⁹⁶

Sartre then goes on to outline a variety of our “concrete relations with Others,” including relationships of love, lust, desire, and hatred. Sartre claims that these

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 465.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 461.

relationships are fundamentally attempts to both possess and limit the freedom of the Other, but also for the Other to maintain his or her freedom so that he or she too may freely choose me. Thus, these are sado-masochistic relationships, in which one wants both to be pursuer and pursued, possessor and possessed, freedom and facticity; in short, one wants to be the in-itself-for-itself.

Much of the existing tourism literature explores the epistemic and ontological relationship of a guest tourist to the body of the Other and the political, social, and cultural consequences in a postcolonial era.²⁹⁷ Sartre's work on the viewing the body of the Other would serve these authors well. Indeed, much work has already been done in Sartre scholarship exploring Sartre's concepts of the body as theoretical framework of postcolonial philosophy.²⁹⁸ Although exploring relationships is beyond the scope of this project, I submit that these two bodies of work would be mutually beneficial to one another.

Some Critical Questions

In claiming that the body as being-for-itself is always the locus or center of experience, Sartre attempts to correct what he sees as a fundamental flaw in Western philosophy: the treatment of the body as an object to be studied, rather than a necessary condition of lived experience. As Sartre scholar Dermont Moran explains:

²⁹⁷ See *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* 2nd Edition, edited by Valene L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) and *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*, edited by Valene L. Smith and Maryann Brent (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2001)

²⁹⁸ For a useful anthology, see *Race After Sartre: Antiracism, Africanan Existentialism, Postcolonialism*, edited by Jonathan Judaken (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002).

Sartre applies this formal structure on his reflections because he is convinced that the philosophical tradition has misunderstood the body due to the fact that the orders of *knowing* and the orders of *being* have been conflated or inverted. Confusion between different ‘ontological levels’, ‘orders of reality’ or ‘orders of being’ is the cause of our philosophical problems concerning the nature of embodiment. Those who have made the objective body-for-others the basis of all understanding of the body have ‘radically reversed the terms of the problem.’ In effect, as Sartre evocatively puts it, this is ‘to put the corpse at the origin of the living body.’”²⁹⁹

Thus, Sartre emphasizes the body as *lived* rather than as studied.

However, not all scholars are convinced that Sartre’s solution to this problem is the most effective. Martin Dillon, for example, argues that Sartre’s separation of these three modes of the phenomenal body into ontologically different structures places Sartre in a position where he has no way to reconcile the body as it exists for itself with the body-for-Others; as such, the third ontological structure is impossible. “Sartre’s distinction is ontological—the body-for-itself *is* not the body-for-others—it cannot be construed as merely an epistemological distinction between differing cognitive modes of apprehending one reality...This being the case, one wants to know how the body as sensing and the body as sensed are related.”³⁰⁰ Dillon contends, then, that Sartre has, in fact, not escaped the threat of Cartesian solipsism, for like Descartes, he cannot reconcile internal and external consciousness. Sartre, however, acknowledges this difficulty. He says, “We are describing the for-itself’s structure of being although the Other’s presence in the world is an absolute and self-evident fact, but a contingent fact—that is, a fact impossible to deduce from the ontological structures of the for-itself.”³⁰¹ For Sartre, the fact that we experience shyness, shame, or pride—that we experience our own body as

²⁹⁹ Moran, “Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty,” 43.

³⁰⁰ Dillon, “Sartre on the Phenomenal Body,” 136.

³⁰¹ *BN*, 474.

objectified—allows us to conclude that the Other exists: “I in the recognition of my object-state have proof that he has this consciousness.”³⁰² This is not to say that the Other’s existence is necessary, but simply that it is the case, and, further, that the existence of the Other allows us to experience, our own facticity through our bodies.³⁰³

Plenty of scholars have questioned Sartre’s conception that the concrete relationships we have with others inevitably involves a bad faith sado-masochistic relationship of possession and control.³⁰⁴ Katherine Morris suggests, for example, “His declaration that ‘conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others’ is not simply outrageous, it is, it may be argued, outrageously false.”³⁰⁵ Phyllis Sutton Morris claims, “In [Sartre and de Beauvoir’s] emphasis on hostility, estrangement and conflict, however, they present an extremely impoverished picture of that experience.”³⁰⁶

However, as many have pointed out, Sartre implies in a footnote that such possessive and controlling sado-masochistic relationships are in bad faith and that another way of relating to people is possible. He states, “These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we can not discuss here.”³⁰⁷ Indeed, throughout *Being and Nothingness*—in the form of footnotes and asides—Sartre alludes to the fact that there is another “authentic” way of being that is not the subject of his analysis and

³⁰² *BN*, 475.

³⁰³ We must also note that Sartre claims that the Other need not necessarily be present for us to experience our own bodies as it is seen by Others.

³⁰⁴ K. Morris “Introduction: Sartre on the Body”; Phyllis Sutton Morris, “Some Patterns of Identification and Otherness,” in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, 148-160 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Gregory McCulloch, *Using Sartre* (London: Routledge, 1994); Arthur C Danto, *Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Viking Press, 1975).

³⁰⁵ K. Morris, “Introduction: Sartre on the Body,” 15.

³⁰⁶ P. S. Morris, “Some Patterns of Identification,” 152.

³⁰⁷ *BN*, 534.

which requires a future work. For further example, let us look in the last lines of *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre asks a series of questions about a freedom that chooses “not to coincide with itself but to be always at a distance *from* itself,” suggesting that this is not in bad faith but is “another fundamental attitude.”³⁰⁸ He then says, “All these questions, which refer us to a pure and not an accessory reflection, can find their reply only on the ethical plane. We shall devote to them a future work.”³⁰⁹ *Being and Nothingness*, it seems, is work devoted to describing *the bad faith attitude* toward the world. Thus, we can understand David Detmer’s conclusion:

Far from simply describing the human condition, Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* is describing the situation of human beings living inauthentically. (In fairness to those who read *Being and Nothingness* as addressing the human situation, it is important to note that Sartre sees bad faith, the futile quest to be God, interpersonal conflict, and misery to be, as it were, our natural, or default, condition. This is why a radical conversion from the situation toward which our ontological condition inclines us is needed.)³¹⁰

Thus, Sartre’s analysis of the body as objectified by others describes, not the *necessary* condition of humans, but the typical one.

Merleau-Ponty also offers a more developed and integrated view of bodily relationships, which differs from and challenges some aspects of Sartre’s schema of the body. For Merleau-Ponty, as a “body-subject” I am in the midst of the world of other “body-subjects,” and I am inherently open to and interrelated to them; this is not a relationship of conflict but of symbiosis. Although he does not address Sartre by name, it is clear that Merleau-Ponty pointedly argues against Sartre’s notion that my body is objectified by the Other. He says:

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ David Detmer, *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (Chicago: Open Court, 2008), 138.

We said earlier: in so far as the other person resides in the world, is visible there, and forms a part of my field, he is never an Ego in the sense in which I am one for myself. In order to think of him as a genuine *I*, I ought to think of myself as a mere object for him, which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge which I have of myself. But if another's body is not an object for me, nor mine an object for him, if both are manifestations of behavior, the positing of the other does not reduce me to the status of an object in his field, nor does my perception of the other reduce him to the status of an object in mine.³¹¹

Other critics wonder if Sartre's ontological categories of the lived body are exhaustive.

Phyllis Sutton Morris suggests, for example, that perhaps it is possible to have a kind of "distancing" of oneself from one's body, that does not necessarily involve the objectification of oneself.³¹² Both P. S. Morris and Michael Gillan Peckitt argue that pain and illness do not fit neatly into Sartre's schema because they precipitate this sort of distancing, and Betsy Behnke argues, along with Morris, that it is possible to have a sort of "lucidly lived awareness" that is not objectifying.³¹³ Indeed, these types of experiences seem plausible and do not fit clearly into Sartre's schema; however, this is not to say that Sartre's categories are wrong-headed, simply that they are incomplete.

Nevertheless, using Sartre's understanding of both the body and of possession in *Being and Nothingness* will reveal important insights both for understanding Sartrean bad faith and for understanding the phenomenon of the contemporary checklist tourist. In fact, Monika Langer usefully suggests that perhaps in the age of modernity—which is thematized by oppression, political conflict, and environmental destruction—Sartre offers a rather appropriate analysis of the body, perhaps one that is more appropriate than the

³¹¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Basic Writings*, trans. Thomas Baldwin (London: Routledge, 2004), 151.

³¹² P.S. Morris, "Some Patterns of Identification," 152.

³¹³ Michael Gillan Peckitt, "Resisting Sartrean Pain: Henry, Sartre, and Biranism," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, 120-129 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Betsy Behnke, "The Socially Shaped Body and the Critique of Corporeal Experience," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, 231-255 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

picture offered by Merleau-Ponty. She says, “It seems to me today, in what is commonly called ‘Western culture,’ many or most of us have a more uneasy relationship with our body and the world than Merleau-Ponty’s description would suggest. Increasingly, we seem to experience our body as an objective, anatomically defined body. At the same time, we increasingly seem to experience the world as an objective, ever more threatening environment.”³¹⁴ Perhaps, as Langer suggests, we in the modern West are more and more apt to experience our bodies in the bad faith spirit of conflict and possession. Recall, as well, that for most tourism scholars, tourism is the quintessential expression of modernity: an often-thwarted attempt to respond to or escape from the objectifying alienation of the modern lifestyle. As I have argued throughout this project, checklist tourism is not simply an attempt to escape from the alienation of modernity, but is, instead, a perpetuation, (whether or not one is reflectively aware of it), of the objectifying, bad faith attitude that characterizes modernity. The checklist tourist, in bad faith, objectifies the world and its values, (this is the spirit of seriousness, as we saw in Chapter 4), attempts to possess them, and in so doing, attempts to turn herself into an object as well. Thus, even if Sartre’s characterization of the lived body and our embodied relationships with others seems overly negative or too often characterized as bad faith, I suggest that it is still an appropriate model for analyzing the contemporary checklist tourist.

³¹⁴ Monika Langer, “Sartre in the Company of Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Duden,” in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 202.

The Body and Bad Faith

Let us now explore how Sartre's conception of the body elucidates and contributes to his understanding of bad faith. The third ontological mode, the experience of my body as a body for others, is often the point on which the self-deception of bad faith turns. For example, I deny the existence of others. Yet, as Lewis Gordon points out, "The outer/inner distinction militates against the solipsism occasioned by such a denial, for in effect it exemplifies a desire to be the only point of view, to be, literally, the world. How can there be inner/outer relations, however, when there is nowhere beyond the self? Such a self could not emerge as self except where distinguished from *another* self."³¹⁵ Thus, the denial of others is in bad faith, for it essentially denies my facticity and posits myself as pure transcendence. Similarly, if I deny my own point of view, privileging only the view of others, I deny my own consciousness and make myself into an object. Such a denial is tempting because, as Catalano points out, "for Sartre, the self is always vulnerable. I know my self as the other knows me. I am not in a privileged position when I attempt to understand myself. True, I have a more intimate awareness of myself but not a more objective one, in the sense of an unbiased view."³¹⁶ Indeed, Matt Eschleman has convincingly argued that bad faith is necessarily social—it requires the existence of others—for the only way it is plausible for us to objectify ourselves at all, is

³¹⁵ Lewis Gordon, "Sartre and Fanon on Embodied Bad Faith," in *Sartre on the Body*, edited by Katherine J. Morris, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 183.

³¹⁶ Joseph Catalano, "Successfully Lying to Oneself: A Sartrean Perspective." in *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics* (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 135.

that we experience being objectified by others.³¹⁷ As we discussed in Chapter 2, bad faith depends on a lie that is plausible.

In short, bad faith is the denial of one's being as embodied consciousness.³¹⁸ Let us look again at the example of the voyeur who is caught spying through a keyhole. If I were to try to explain myself, I might, in bad faith, try to deny that my crouching in front of a keyhole means that I am spying. I may attempt to reduce my body to mere facticity, claiming that it just happened to be bent in the particular angle and position—tying my shoe, perhaps—and that my consciousness is not the existence of my body. “Bad faith should now become clear in the context of the body; it follows all the examples of transcendence and facticity. In bad faith, I deny my body as *mine* through convincing myself that my ‘real perspective’ is my perspective *beyond* my body.”³¹⁹ What's more, in pre-reflective bad faith, I don't see myself as a voyeur or spy because, like the homosexual, I can equivocate the meaning of “to be” and claim that I cannot be defined by my acts at all: “I can not even define myself as truly *being* in the process of listening at doors. I escape this provisional definition of myself by means of all my transcendence. There as we have seen is the origin of bad faith.”³²⁰

We have seen, now, how Sartre views the body and how bad faith is a bodily phenomenon. Let us explore now the ways in which this embodied bad faith attempts to possess the world.

³¹⁷ Matthew Eschleman, “The Misplaced Chapter on Bad Faith, Or Reading being and Nothingness in Reverse,” *Sartre Studies International* 14, no. 2 (Dec. 2008): 1-22; and Matthew Eschleman, “Bad Faith is Necessarily Social.” *Sartre Studies International: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Existentialism and Contemporary Culture* 14, no. 2 (Dec. 2008): 40-47.

³¹⁸ L. Gordon, “Sartre and Fanon,” 183.

³¹⁹ L. Gordon, 36.

³²⁰ *BN*, 348-49.

Possession and Appropriation

Remember that Sartre sees our primary relationship to the objects of the world as one of engagement—this engagement is, of course, bodily. The objects of the world appear to us in “instrumental complexes” to be used and we understand them in terms of our projects. For Sartre, human consciousness, the For-itself, is not a substance, but instead, a relationship to the world. Thus, insofar as we create our own identities, our actions and activities in relation to the material world define and constitute who we are: “to be is to act, and to cease to act is to cease to be.”³²¹

The objects and landscapes with which we physically and mentally engage in these actions become our possessions. “It is only when I pass beyond *my* objects toward a goal, when I utilize them, that I can enjoy their possession.”³²² In Part Four of *Being and Nothingness* entitled “Doing and Having,” Sartre presents a triad of human modes: “to be,” “to do,” and “to have.” He claims that in this triad, “‘to do’ is purely transitional.”³²³ “The ‘doing’ is reduced to a mode of having,”³²⁴ which is to say that we “have,” or possess, the objects of the world by engaging with them. Sartre enumerates several ways in which we engage with, and thus possess or appropriate the world: creating, knowing, using, destroying, overcoming, seeing, eating, etc. Each of these actions places us humans in relationship of appropriation with the world around us. Furthermore, the objects that we come to possess through out projects also constitute our

³²¹ Ibid, 613.

³²² Ibid, 754.

³²³ Ibid, 742.

³²⁴ Ibid, 736.

being: “The body of possession is an internal bond of *being*.”³²⁵ That is, when engaging with or making use of an object, we enter a certain relationship with it, in that we give it meaning, and it, in turn, defines us. Sartre says, “the pen and the pipe, the clothing, the desk, the house—are myself. The totality of my possessions reflects the totality of my being. *I am what I have*.”³²⁶ Doing is a mode of having and having is a mode of being.

Furthermore, Sartre claims that this desire to become identified with the material world is manifested in our desire to possess things. He says that in possession, we appropriate the world, and we desire identity with the objects possessed: “the desire of a particular object is not the simple desire *of* this object; it is the desire to be united with the object in an internal relation, in the mode of constituting with it the unity ‘possessor-possessed.’”³²⁷ This desire for complete unity with the material world has the same ontological structure as that of bad faith, and it characterizes our human condition. As Sartre says, “to-be-in-the-world is to form the project of possessing the world; that is, to apprehend the total world as that which is lacking to the for-itself in order that it may become in-itself-for-itself.”³²⁸

Sartre’s claim here is not an uncontroversial one. Indeed, one may question the presumption that any engagement with the world is one of possession toward the end of the ontological God-project. Unfortunately, Sartre’s conception of possession of the material world has received very little attention in the existing scholarship on Sartre. One of the few exceptions is Catalano’s *Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre’s Being and Nothingness*, in which Catalano works through this section of Sartre’s text. Catalano

³²⁵ Ibid, 750.

³²⁶ Ibid, 754.

³²⁷ Ibid, 751.

³²⁸ Ibid, 762.

reminds us, “The preceding discussion should not mislead us to think that we consciously seek to be God in every act of possession. The acts of our possessing are fundamentally nonthetic, and we live them rather than knowing them as symbols of our fundamental project to be God.”³²⁹ Our desire to possess and thus to be God, argues Catalano, is not necessarily part of our reflective awareness, just as most patterns of bad faith may not be part of our reflective awareness. Yet even if we concede that the bad faith of possessing is prereflective, some may still question the claim that possessing is inevitably part of the God-project.

Nevertheless, if we agree that *Being and Nothingness* is a description of the human condition in bad faith, we might suggest that, just as our relations with other people have the possibility of being authentic and non-possessive, so too does our relations with the material objects of the world have the possibility of being authentic, rather than an expression of the bad faith project to be God. It is simply that such a description is beyond Sartre’s scope for *Being and Nothingness*. What’s more, just as we suggested with Langer that the objectifying view of other people is an appropriate characterization of our relationships with Others in modernity, we may agree that so too is our relationships with the material world.

³²⁹ Catalano, Joseph, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's being and Nothingness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 221.

Possession as Embodied

Sartre claims that the common thread that binds the various acts of appropriation is “*to have for myself*”; that is, to be the unique end of the existence of the object. If possession is entirely and concretely given, the possessor is the *raison d’être* of the possessed object.³³⁰ That is, when one has a relationship with an object in which the object is in existence through her and by her, one feels possession of it. Sartre goes on to say that this possession requires a wholly embodied relationship with a site. In skiing, for example, I am able “*to possess* this field of snow.”³³¹ My speed, my weight, my ability to slide over the snow, the geometric plane that shifts before me as I slide down, all constitute my possession of this field. This appropriation is embodied, for it is through the body that one gains the unique perspective and meaning of the object appropriated. My body is “spread across” the field because it is through my body that I apprehend the field in a unique way, and thus possess it.

Furthermore, the body experiences the resistance of the hill to be skied or a mountain to be climbed, and thus, claimed. My *body* exerts and feels the effort; I see the landscape in a particular way, for a particular purpose, and as having a particular meaning. My experience of the mountain is as something to be climbed at this moment—rather than as something to be carved into or tunneled through, as a highway developer may see it—and thus it exists for me in a unique way:

This mountain which I climb is myself to the extent that I conquer it; and when I am at its summit, which I have ‘achieved’ at the cost of this same effort, when I attain this magnificent view of the valley and the surrounding peaks, then I *am* the

³³⁰ *BN*, 752.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 743.

view; the panorama is myself dilated to the horizon, for it exists only through me; only for me.³³²

The act of climbing the mountain, the experience of its steepness and its jaggedness felt through the fatigue in my body,³³³ and the achievement of reaching the top, constitutes my possession of the mountain or of the field of snow. “Here the snow is identical with *the Other*, and the common expressions ‘to overcome,’ ‘to conquer,’ ‘to master,’ *etc.* indicate sufficiently that it is a relation of master to slave...The peak on which a flag is planted is a peak which has been *appropriated*.”³³⁴ Just as one attempts to master the Other in a relationship of possession, so too does one attempt to master the landscape or the object through bodily engagement with it.

The Possession of Tourist Sites

This desire for possession—for having—is a factor in the checklist tourist’s quest for tourist sites. Checking a site off of one’s list is a type of conquest: I’ve been there and done that; I have that under my belt. It is part of *my* memory, *my* facticity, *my* past. The tourist who sees a photo of place she has visited in a movie will often claim, with an air of proud ownership or achievement, “I’ve been there.” Benjamin is also familiar with this feeling; he writes to Adorno about the summers of his youth, spent traveling with his family: “After we had visited one or other of the obligatory places around Freudstadt, Wengen or Schreiberhau, my brother used to say, ‘Now we can say we’ve been there.’”

³³² Ibid, 754.

³³³ Ibid, 586.

³³⁴ Ibid, 747.

This remark imprinted itself unforgettably on my mind.”³³⁵ Indeed, “been there, done that, have the souvenir” is the mantra of the checklist tourist.

When scholars of tourism discuss the possibility of possessing or appropriation in tourism, they tend to refer to the visual component—*seeing* is the appropriative act of sightseeing. In their essay on tourism and photography, for example, Carol Crawshaw and John Urry claim, “Tourism involves the visual appropriation of place.”³³⁶ The ubiquitous presence of the camera around the neck of the checklist tourist in fact seems to offer support for this claim. As Susan Sontag claims in her influential work on photography, “To photograph is to appropriate the things photographed.”³³⁷ Sydney Kasfir similarly claims, “Tourism itself is a form of collecting and taking photographs its most aggressive act of appropriation.”³³⁸ Indeed, vision is often privileged in the advertising and media of the tourism industry, not to mention in the history of Western thought. Sartre is not exempt from this prejudice: “what is seen is possessed,” though for Sartre, seeing is only one small piece of the puzzle of possession.³³⁹

However, the engagement that one has with a tourist site is not only visual. A checklist tourist will not be satisfied to simply see or take a photograph of an *image* of the sight; one must actually be in the physical presence of the site itself. Carolyn Korsmeyer has suggested that touch—or at least being near enough to possibly or

³³⁵ Benjamin to Adorno, May 7, 1940, in *The Complete Correspondence 1928–1940*, edited by Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 326.

³³⁶ Carol Crawshaw and John Urry. “Tourism and the Photographic Eye” *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, edited by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997), 179.

³³⁷ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1973), 4.

³³⁸ Sydney Kasfir, “African Art and Authenticity: A Text with a Shadow,” *African Arts* 25, no. 2. (Apr., 1992): 53.

³³⁹ *BN*, 738.

hypothetically touch—plays a key role in an object’s aura.³⁴⁰ Korsmeyer concedes that one cannot actually touch many privileged objects due to physical barriers or legal restrictions: the Declaration of Independence is under glass and if one tries to touch the Venus de Milo, a guard will swiftly step in to prohibit such contact. Yet, being “close enough to touch” is good enough for most, says Korsmeyer. Rojek’s allusion to St. Thomas’ belief in Christ after laying his hands upon the wounds of his body resonates here.

Yet, to isolate one sensory experience as dominating the tourist’s experience seems misguided and, as aesthetician Arnold Berleant notes, contrary to our actual experience:

While the visual mode of perception continues to predominate in psychological theory, other somatic contributors to spatial perception are slowly being recognized. We are coming to understand how vestibular stimuli which affect the sense of balance, along with auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, especially kinesthetic sensations of movement and muscle tension have a profound effect on depth perception. Indeed, the psychology of perception is accepting increasingly the idea the one’s body not just one’s vision, acts as the reference from which the distances of objects are judged.³⁴¹

Indeed, possession takes place not with a single sensory organ, but to understand it in relation to the entirety of my bodily presence. As Sartre says, my unique position in time and place ensures that the object exists *for me* in a unique way because my body becomes “spread across” it. I have a unique bodily relationship to it and a unique project for it. To be in the physical presence of a thing is to apprehend it, literally, as a part of myself; I appropriate it into my being, my existence. Thus, we can understand the pull of the tourist site; to be in its presence is to draw it into myself.

³⁴⁰ Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Chasing Auras” Plenary Lecture delivered at American Society for Aesthetics Eastern Division Meeting, Philadelphia April 4, 2009.

³⁴¹ Arnold Berleant, *Art and Engagement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 58.

In addition to actually being in its presence is the effort exerted on the journey there. Like the person who scales the mountain and feels a sense of ownership of it due to this achievement—i.e., the mountain is *mine*, it is *me*—the checklist tourist overcomes a great distance in an attempt to take possession of the sought-after destination. The plans I lay, the money I spend, the tickets I buy, the nine hour flight I endure, the early morning rise I make, the city streets I walk, the Acropolis hill I climb in my journey from Philadelphia to the Parthenon in Athens are all part of my achievement in the appropriation of the Parthenon. The claim, “I was there,” means not only that I happened to be in that place through some accident, but that I made the journey to that place, that I conquered it. I saw it with my own eyes, stood next to it, scaled it, touched it, perceived it from my unique location in space and time, and thus possessed it. This feeling of possession helps explain the sense of personal pride expressed whenever someone makes in this claim, for “I was there,” means, “I possess that. That is *mine*; that is *me* there.” Thus, the tourist desires to be in the physical presence of the tourist site because she wishes to appropriate it—to become its unique end—through her efforts.

Identifying with the Value of Sites through Possession

I argued in Chapter 4 that the checklist tourist, in the spirit of seriousness, sees the sites of the tour to be infused with a sense of mythic grandeur and transcendent value. I suggest now that not only does the checklist tourist take the must-see items of the checklist itinerary rather seriously, as sites of transcendent value and grandeur, but that she travels to and aims to possess these site through her bodily presence in an attempt to

identify, in bad faith, with this sense of greatness. As we stated in Chapter 4, the spirit of seriousness objectifies human consciousness. Serious thought “is a dismissal of human reality in favor of the world. The serious man is ‘of the world’ and has no resource in himself. He does not even imagine any longer the possibility of *getting out of* the world, for he has given to himself the type of existence of the rock, the consistency, the inertia, the opacity of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world.”³⁴² Also, as we stated above in this chapter, possession is in bad faith because it too manifests an attempt by the for-itself to become identified with the object possessed, to become the in-itself-for-itself. Given this, we may further argue that the checklist tourist who believes that tourist sites inhabit greatness travels to these sites not only to possess them as simple objects, but to possess them as objects that a full of mythic values. As such, the tourist then identifies herself not only with the sites, but with the values of greatness, beauty, romance, and danger that they are thought to represent.

The sites of the checklist tourist often tend to be associated with historical grandeur and, quite often, with lives of historic nobility, aristocracy, and the politically powerful. The middle-class tourist can now wander through sites that were largely inaccessible to common people in previous centuries: the Palace at Versailles, the pyramid tombs of Egyptian pharaohs, the homes of George Washington, Napoleon, or Christopher Columbus, and countless museums full of fine art and artifacts. Philosopher Suzanne Langer makes this point:

In the past, the masses did not have access to art; music, painting, and even books, were pleasure reserved for the rich. It might have been supposed that the poor, the ‘common people’, would have enjoyed them equally, if they had had the chance. But now that everyone can read, go to museums, listen to great music, at

³⁴² *BN*, 741.

least on the radio, the judgment of the masses about these things has become a reality...³⁴³

Thus, part of the appeal for the checklist tourist may be, in some degree, including herself in the fantasy of greatness, and thereby distancing herself from her mundane life back home.

Maxine Feifer depicts this impulse with her sardonic and witty description of “Homer” and “Mabel,” a couple who represent the checklist tourist en masse. In London, Homer and Mabel see the Changing of the Guard—recognizing it as something “great”—Westminster Abbey, and Hampton Court Palace. Upon returning to the tour bus, Homer reflects on their day:

At Westminster Abbey, the departed great men had seemed so *remote*: not real people who had ever lived and struggled, but more like abstractions of virtue or genius. But at Hampton Court, in the beamed halls, in the enormous kitchen where oxen had been roasted whole, a tourist could evoke a bygone golden age that seemed *super*-real compared with pallid sensations of the present. Though in real life he categorically preferred central heating and electric range to the open fire, and strove to equip himself always with ‘the latest’, at Hampton Court Homer found himself suffused with bittersweet nostalgia for a past he had never known. And since, as per prototype, he did not submit the fantasy to political analysis either, he automatically identified with the banqueting princes rather than with the kitchen staff.³⁴⁴

Feifer’s description captures the sense of mythic grandeur and nostalgia for the past, the middle class desire for comfort and the impulse to keep up with trends, and the identification with the aristocratic ghosts of history.

This identification with greatness is in bad faith. Like Sartre’s homosexual who claims that his sexual encounters with other men do not define him, as the middle-class

³⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard U. P., 1984), 31.

³⁴⁴ Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 228-29.

checklist tourist, I want to believe that—even though I work forty-nine weeks a year in an alienating office job, from which I feel very little sense of pride or satisfaction—that is not who I am. I am not determined by my daily activities. Instead, I am *really* “a traveler” who journeys to far-off extravagant places and participates in the mythic beauty of the romance of and glory of the Eiffel Tower at sunset, in beautiful Paris. I claim transcendence over the facticity of my daily situation, and I attempt to fully identify with the freedom I have to leave this daily work (however temporarily). I have inverted my facticity and transcendence, and thus, I am in bad faith. That I have saved and planned for my vacation, and see it as a way to redeem or justify my everyday life, means that I have much invested in the belief that my vacation destination is extraordinarily beautiful, grandiose, idyllic, etc. Thus, I allow myself to be persuaded that these places will live up to my fantasies of them, and I consent to the belief that when I travel to them, I will find my true identity in the fantasy.

Furthermore, as we’ve said, the fact that I am able to physically travel to these sites of greatness allows me to feel as though I can possess them—it is a way of capturing the fantasy and identifying myself with it. As tourist scholar Christoph Hennig states, “*Physical activity* invariably contributes to the effectiveness of myth—and that is precisely for what touristic travel provides space. It is possible because of the particular reality status of the tourist experience. It is located between the everyday world and the fantasy world. To put it simply: *tourism creates a fantasy world within which physical activity takes place.*”³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Hennig, “Tourism: Enacting Modern Myths,” 185.

This physical enactment of the myth not only allows me to feel identified with the site through my own connection to it, but also allows Others to see me as associated with the site through physical proximity. The impulse to say, “I was there,” to Others is a manifestation of the experience of my body through look of the Other. By visiting sites in the flesh, and placing my body in the physical presence of the site, I demonstrate to others my association with the value that the site represents. (This is why, as I will discuss in the next section, it is essential not only that I take a picture of Eiffel Tower, but that I take a picture of *myself in front of* the Eiffel Tower, so that I can demonstrate to Others my association with the site.)

Of course, as we discussed in Chapter 4, it is not always the case that tourist travel confirms or contributes to the myth; sometimes being in the physical presence of the site shatters the myth, though the tourist will nevertheless, more often than not, continue to reinforce the illusions of fantasy in the minds of others.

Souvenirs and Appropriation

For the checklist tourist, souvenir collecting is a means to extend the embodied possession of a site, both for one’s own sense of ownership and as a means to identify oneself with an object of greatness for others. As Sartre says, to possess an object is to be the unique end of it. The problem with tourist sites is that I am not the unique end of them—they are possessed by whole societies of people. I am only one of millions of visitors to the *Mona Lisa* every year, and that painting exists for and is appropriated by all the tourists who made the journey to see it. In his essay, “Loss of the Creature,”

Walker Percy alludes to this sentiment when he says, “It would be nearer the truth to say that if the place is seen by a million sightseers, a single sightseer does not receive value P but a millionth part of value P .”³⁴⁶ Indeed, part of the appeal of the tourist site is that it has such widely recognized value.

This tension may help explain why tourists collect souvenirs. As MacCannell points out, “*Souvenirs* are collected by *individuals*, by tourists, while *sights* are ‘collected’ by entire societies.”³⁴⁷ The photo *I* took of the *Mona Lisa*, however, or the replica *I* bought, is possessed only by and for *me*. I am the unique end of the souvenir, and thus, I have complete possession of it. Souvenirs are a way for tourists to bring objects of public sights and spaces into their private homes where they can then continue the appropriative act of possession. Susan Stewart claims that:

a souvenir might mark the privatization of a public symbol (say, the Liberty Bell miniaturized), the juxtaposition of history with a personalized present (say, the year 1776 posited against today’s date with its concurrent private ‘dates’), and the concomitant transformation of a generally purchasable, mass-produced object (the material souvenir) into private possession (the referent being ‘my trip to Philadelphia’).³⁴⁸

This comment reveals and returns to the notion that the checklist tourist wants to take possession of the hallmarks of monumental history, integrating them into her personal identity, thus transforming freedom into facticity. Souvenirs are among the most common ways of attempting to make this appropriation.

³⁴⁶ Walker Percy, “Loss of the Creature,” in *The Message in the Bottle: How Queer Man Is, How Queer Language Is, and What One Has to Do with the Other* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1976), 46.

³⁴⁷ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 42.

³⁴⁸ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke U. P., 1993), 138.

Of course, some tourists attempt to appropriate tourist sites in other ways. Percy echoes my argument that tourists desire possession of sites, and he claims that quite often tourists feel a “loss of sovereignty” over a tourist site because they have been co-opted by the tourist industry. He suggests that a tourist who defers to the planners, orchestrators, and experts of a tourist experience gives up his sense of ownership over the place and the experience. The tourist attempts to reclaim possession, not simply through sightseeing and souvenir purchasing—which has been already co-opted by the “experts” of the tourism industry—but through making his mark on the place:

The tourist who carves his initials in a public place, which is theoretically ‘his’ in the first place, has good reasons for doing so, reasons which the exhibitor and planner know nothing about. He does so because in his role of consumer of an experience (a ‘recreational experience’ to satisfy a ‘recreational need’) he knows that he is disinherited. He is deprived of his title over being. He knows very well that he is in a very special sort of zone in which his only rights are the rights of a consumer. He moves like a ghost through schoolroom, city streets, trains, parks, movies. He carves his initials as a last desperate measure to escape his ghostly role of consumer. He is saying in effect: I am not a ghost after all; I am a sovereign person. And he establishes title the only way remaining to him, by staking his claim over one square inch of wood or stone.³⁴⁹

Indeed, in order to understand the modern tourist as such, it is important to see this practice within the context of consumer culture; Percy is right in this respect. Certainly the explorer who alone scales the “untouched” mountainside has a different experience than the tourist who follows the roped and marked path up the Acropolis. Perhaps the experience of appropriation and possession is phenomenologically different for each. According to Percy, the tourist must try to reassert his or her freedom in the face of a consumer culture that is designed to deny or suppress this freedom. He claims that tourists do so by carving their names in to the place, for example. However, it seems to

³⁴⁹ Percy, “Loss of the Creature,” 62.

me that most tourists come and go from a site without inscribing, “I was here,” into the site itself, but instead attempt to continue and solidify the act of appropriation and possession through the pre-existing consumerist structure.

Indeed, the souvenir market is an integral part of the structure of checklist tourism, making it easy and convenient for tourists to literally take possession of the site—or at least something that represents the site. Remember that one of the characteristics of the checklist tourist is that she or he will often move very quickly from one site to the next. Like Alexander the Great, the checklist tourist wishes to conquer as much as possible in what is generally a relatively short period of time. Thus, it behooves the tourism industry to facilitate the quick and easy purchase of souvenirs. The tourist has little interest in hanging around a site too long after arriving. As we have seen, one does not need to linger too long at a site once there because the act of overcoming the distance to reach and gaze upon the destination *is* the appropriative act for the tourist. The purpose of the trip is not to remain and engage with the destination site in an on-going instrumental project of appropriation, in which the site becomes mine through daily use. The purpose is to conquer the object through appropriative acts of overcoming.

This inability to continue the appropriative act through daily instrumental engagement with the site also explains the impulse of the checklist tourist to take photos and buy souvenirs. Sartre states that the possession of an object is, like bad faith, an ongoing project. When one acquires an object and takes it home, “the bond of ownership which is established is then a bond of continuous creation; the object possessed is inserted by me into the total form of *my* environment; its existence is

determined by my situation and by its integration in that same situation.”³⁵⁰ I consider this lamp *mine* because of its place in my space, its power to light *this* desk, *these* books; it is connected with my habits of reading and writing late. If I isolate this lamp from my environment and put it on the floor of a salesroom, it is no longer *my* lamp but just one in a class of lamps.³⁵¹ This integration into one’s own environment is part of what is missing in the appropriation of the tourist site itself. One may conquer the site through the appropriative act of overcoming inherent in the journey of the tourist, but this moment of triumph only lasts for just a moment. Soon the tourist will have to leave the site and thus can no longer continue the appropriative act.

As a means to mitigate this lack, the tourist acquires a souvenir. If the Eiffel Tower itself cannot be continuously appropriated, a miniature statue or photograph of it can. What’s more, the very act of acquiring the souvenir is part of the act of appropriation of the Eiffel Tower; it is the culmination at the end of the journey, and, perhaps, even the real goal of the checklist tourist. One travels a great distance, gets up early, braves the crowds not only to see the Eiffel Tower but also to snap a photo or buy a keychain miniature of the Eiffel Tower. This too is an act of appropriation, and one that may continue after the tourist returns home.

Once back in her own environment, the tourist can then insert the new acquisition and integrate into her daily life. The photo of the Great Sphinx and hung on my living room wall is now part of my aesthetic décor; it is a conversational piece that prompts an opportunity for me to recount my trip and to say, “I was there,” (and perhaps to pull out my photos of myself in front of the Sphinx), thereby reaffirming my appropriative act to

³⁵⁰ *BN*, 753.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Others, as well as my good fortune, my cultural capital, and my association with the grandeur and glamour of the sites; and it is part of my totality of possessions through which I continuously attempt to unify my being in the project of bad faith. “My simple life appears to me as creative exactly because by its continuity it perpetuates the quality of *being possessed* in each of the objects in my possession. I draw the collection of my surroundings into being along with myself.”³⁵² When these possessions reference mythical and extraordinary destinations and experiences my simple, middle-class life appears to me also as mythical and extraordinary.

The tourist, therefore, identifies with her souvenir possessions and with the myth of greatness and transcendent values that these souvenirs are thought to embody. The tourist transforms her vacation into a bad faith quest of must-see sites and must-buy souvenirs, thereby avoiding the potential anguish of travel. She travels to these must-see sites because making the unique journey and beholding the site from the unique perspective of the body allows her to feel possession of the site itself—along with the transcendent values it is thought to incarnate—both for herself and in the eyes of Others. She then acquires a souvenir so that she may continue this project of appropriation upon returning home, out of the presence of the site itself, and to affirm this appropriation under the gaze of the Other.

We have thus so far explored several ways in which the checklist tourist is in bad faith. In the next and chapter, we explore the possibility of an alternative mode of tourist travel that escapes bad faith and sees travel as an opportunity to exist in authenticity.

³⁵² Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

THE PLAYFUL TOURIST

“How is one to talk about 135 million Americans when we have only six weeks to spend here? It would require a ten-year stay. We are set down in a city where we pick up a few details. Yesterday it was Baltimore, today it is Knoxville, the day after tomorrow it will be New Orleans, and then, after admiring the biggest factory or the biggest bridge or the biggest dam in the world, we fly away with our head full of figures and statistics.

“We shall have seen more steel and aluminum than human beings. But can one talk about steel? As to ‘impressions’, they come as they please.

“‘Stick to the facts’ some people tell us.

“But what facts? The length of a certain shipyard, or the electric blue of the oxyhydrogen blowpipe in the pale light of a shed? In choosing, I am already making a decision as to what America is.

“On the other hand, some people say, ‘Get some perspective!’ But I distrust those perspectives that are already generalizations. I have therefore decided to set forth my personal impressions and interpretations, on my own responsibility. This America may be something I’ve dreamed up. In any case, I will be honest with my dream: I shall set it forth just as it came to me.”

- Jean-Paul Sartre “Individualism and Conformism in the United States,” 1945³⁵³

The checklist tourist, I have argued, is in Sartrean bad faith in a variety of ways. First, the checklist tourist avoids the anguish of travel by escaping into a pre-established structures and scripts of “the tourist.” Second, the checklist tourist posits and then feels obliged to follow the transcendent values imbued in the “must-see” sites of the checklist circuit. Third, the checklist tourist attempts to take possession of or appropriate the must-see site through bodily engagement with the sites themselves and with the souvenirs that represent these sites. All of these practices are ways in which the tourist attempts to turn

³⁵³ “Individualism and Conformism in the United States,” *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, trans. Annette Michelson (London: Rider and Company, 1955), 97.

herself into an object, to trade transcendence for facticity, and to pursue the desire to be self-identical, to be the in-itself-for-itself, to be God.

What are we to say for tourist travel at the end of this analysis? Is tourist travel inevitably in bad faith? Or is it possible, as Sartre suggests of bad faith in general, for the tourist to escape from bad faith and take on an alternative, authentic attitude in travel? What might mode of tourism look like? This chapter is devoted to exploring these questions. I will first explore play as a possible attitude of authenticity; then, I'll see how play may be infused into checklist tourism by exploring the mode of the "post-tourist"; finally, I'll explore the possibility of rejecting checklist tourism altogether in favor of a different, slower mode of tourist travel.

Play and Authenticity

Unpacking the concept of play will be useful for our analysis of the contemporary tourist, for Sartre defines play against the spirit of seriousness which has so far been a useful concept for our understanding of the tourist. If play is conceptualized in contrast to seriousness, perhaps play offers a useful framework for understanding a mode of tourism that differs from bad faith—possibly, even a model for existential authenticity.

Sartre defines play against the spirit of seriousness. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre says, "To be sure, it must be noted first that play as contrasted with the spirit of seriousness appears to be the least possessive attitude; it strips the real of its reality."³⁵⁴

As we explored in Chapter 4, a person in the spirit of seriousness sees values as

³⁵⁴ Jean-Paul, Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 740-741.

transcendent givens of the world, and then defines herself as subject to the demands and obligations of these values. As Sartre states, “The serious attitude involves starting from the world and attributing more reality to the world than to oneself; at the very least the serious man confers reality on himself to the degree to which he belongs to the world.”³⁵⁵

The spirit of seriousness, then, is in bad faith. Here, Sartre defines play against seriousness. He does so again in *Notebooks for an Ethics* when he says: “The challenge is a game [or play]. It is a break with the spirit of seriousness, expenditure, nihilation, passage to the *festival*. Indeed, the festival is liberation from the spirit of seriousness, the end of economies, the overthrowing of hierarchy, and the absorption of the Other by the Same, of the objective by intersubjectivity, of order by disorder.”³⁵⁶

Play differs from the spirit of seriousness because play is the exercising of freedom to set or choose one’s own rules or values, rather than assuming that rules or values are transcendent. In play, unlike in the spirit of seriousness, one sees the values of the world as originating from oneself. Sartre states:

What is play indeed if not an activity of which man is the first origin, for which man himself sets the rules, and which has no consequences except according to the rules posited? As soon as a man apprehends himself as free and wishes to use his freedom, a freedom, by the way, which could just as well be his anguish, then his activity is play. The first principle of play is man himself; through it he escapes his natural nature; he himself sets the value and rules which he himself has established and defined. As a result, there is in a sense ‘little reality’ in the worlds.³⁵⁷

In play, the rules and goals are contingent—that is, they are not *a priori* transcendent—and they are chosen and agreed to by the creators and players of the game. For example,

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 741.

³⁵⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 375. Note that the French “*jeu*” may be translated either as “game” or as “play.”

³⁵⁷ *BN*, 742.

in soccer, the chosen goal is to get the ball into the other teams goal net; the chosen rules are that no one, (except the person guarding the net), may use her hands to do so, that no one may go out of the bounds of a set field, that no one may purposefully injure another player, etc. There is no ontological necessity to these rules, but they are created and agreed upon in the context of the game.

Indeed, in play, “man apprehends himself as free and wishes to use his freedom.” This differs from bad faith’s prereflective apprehension of one’s freedom and the attempt to escape, avoid, or objectify that freedom. It also differs from the feeling of anguish that results from a reflective apprehension of one’s freedom and what may be a resulting paralysis, (think for example, of the paralyzed Roquentin of Sartre’s novel *Nausea*). Instead, play is the apprehension of one’s freedom, (though we will shortly explore the question of whether this apprehension is reflective or prereflective), and the *use* of one’s freedom to choose one’s own values. Thus, play seems to be neither bad faith, nor anguish, but some other mode of being.

If play is a different mode of being from both bad faith seriousness and mere anguish, can we say that play is a mode of authenticity? Sartre seems to be rather ambiguous about this point. Let us first explore the conditions of authenticity, and then we will see where play fits into this schema.

As I have noted throughout this analysis, Sartre makes very few references or allusions to the concept of authenticity in *Being and Nothingness*, mostly in the form of footnotes, asides, and promises for a future work on the topic, which, of course, was only posthumously published in its incomplete form as *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Because this provocative concept did not receive full attention from Sartre, scholars have been left

trying to piece together an understanding of it from the rest of Sartre's corpus.

Furthermore, Sartre's use of key terms on this topic is sometimes careless, confused, and inconsistent. Thus, we can profit greatly from the scholarship of many philosophers who have studied Sartre's notion of authenticity. Ronald Santoni offers a rich and responsible analysis of bad faith, good faith, and authenticity in Sartre's early philosophy, in a work under that same name. Santoni limits his study to Sartre's early works of *War Diaries*, *The Anti-Semite and the Jew*, the posthumously published *Notebooks for an Ethics*, and traces its roots in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, to develop this concept. Other commentators on Sartre's ethics, such as, Joseph Catalano, Thomas C. Anderson, T. Storm Heter, and Linda Bell look to Sartre's later, more Marxist inspired works as well, notably *Saint Genet*, and the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Let me now draw out some of the key insights from these scholars that will be important for better understanding authenticity's relationship to play.

The dominant interpretation of authenticity in this scholarship is that it requires an ontological conversion from the bad faith God-project, the desire to be the in-itself-for-itself, which is inevitably doomed to failure, to a project that takes freedom as its end. Anderson, for example, argues that, in authenticity, "Pure reflection, conversion, recognizes and accepts that failure, breaks with the God project, and replaces that vain goal with freedom."³⁵⁸ Authenticity also requires, according to Sartre, pure reflection rather than the impure or accessory reflection of bad faith. This conversion is, as Santoni argues, a "self-recovery" in which one not only apprehends one's freedom but also accepts it, and, more specifically, *wills* it to be so. Santoni says, "In my 'assumptive

³⁵⁸ Thomas C. Anderson, *Sartre's Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 53.

conversion,' in the *new* attitude which I adopt, I not only recognize that I am condemned to be free and am without excuse; I also *will* it."³⁵⁹ Sartre confirms this interpretation in *Notebooks*:

What really matters is that reflection is not contemplation. It is a form of willing. If the project is not recaptured contemplatively, at least it is recaptured *practically*. Reflection makes this project one's *own*, not through identification or appropriation but by consent and forming a covenant...Pure authentic reflection is a willing of what I will. It is the refusal to define myself by what I am (Ego) but instead by what I will (that is, by my very undertaking, not insofar as it appears to others—objective—but insofar as it turns its subjective face toward me). Is this what differentiates engineers and other 'serious' types, who consider their undertaking directly with the eyes of others, that is, in terms of objectivity?³⁶⁰

Thus, we see that authenticity is not simply a reflective contemplation of one's freedom, (which may result in anguish), but the *willing* of one's freedom, thus taking ownership of it. Furthermore, this conversion occurs on a *moral* plane—in the assuming of responsibility for one's project, one enters the realm of ethical responsibility. Thus, authenticity is an ethical as well as an ontological conversion.³⁶¹

This interpretation of authenticity depends in part on the reading of *Being and Nothingness* as a description of bad faith modes of being, which may be rejected under pure reflection—an interpretation for which I argued in Chapter 5—rather than as a necessary and inevitable fact of human existence. Anderson offers a persuasive argument for this interpretation as well:

In fact, Sartre stated explicitly in *Being and Nothingness* that he was dealing there only with descriptions on the level of impure, or accessory reflection. I might add that recognition of this is crucial for a proper interpretation of much of that ontology, for it means that it generally describes human reality, its relation to others and to the world, from the perspective of impure reflection (or sometimes

³⁵⁹ Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 92.

³⁶⁰ Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 479.

³⁶¹ Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith*, ch. 5 and ch. 6.

simply on the prereflective level) but not from the perspective of pure reflection or conversion. Sartre affirms this when he asserts, on the fourth page of his *Notebooks*, ‘*Being and Nothingness* is an ontology before conversion’!³⁶²

Indeed, Anderson points to a passage in *Being and Nothingness* in which Sartre seems to be very clear that one is able to reject the project of being God and take on the project of freedom. Sartre states:

This particular type of project which has freedom for its foundation and its goal, deserves a special study. It is radically different from all others in that it aims at a radically different type of being. It would be necessary to explain in full detail its relations with the project of being-God, which has appeared to us as the deep-seated structure of human reality. But such a study can not be made here; it belongs rather to an *Ethics* and it supposes that there has been a preliminary definition of nature and the role of purifying reflection (our descriptions have hitherto aimed only at *accessory* reflection); it supposes in addition taking a position which can be *moral* only in the face of values which haunt the For-itself.³⁶³

This quote leaves little room for argument about the nature of the conversion of authenticity as ontological as well as ethical. Again, here is another footnote from Sartre that claims that bad faith is escapable: “...that does not mean that we can not radically escape bad faith. But this supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted. This self-recovery we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here.”³⁶⁴ Thus, I stand, along with Anderson and Santoni, by my claim that the bad faith ontology described in *Being and Nothingness* can, according to Sartre, be rejected for an ontology, as well as an ethics, of authenticity.

Thus, we’ve identified three necessary and sufficient conditions for authenticity:

(1) radical ontological conversion from the God-project to freedom, (2) pure reflection

³⁶² Anderson, *Sartre’s Two Ethics*, 54.

³⁶³ *BN*, 742.

³⁶⁴ *BN*, 116.

(3) the willing of freedom, and thus a self-recovery. Let us look at each of these conditions and determine whether or not each is characteristic of play.

First: does play involve an ontological conversion from the God-project to freedom? Sartre seems to offer contradictory comments on this issue. The passage I cited above concerning “the project which has freedom as its goal” is vague about its referent. It appears as though “this particular type of project” to which Sartre is referring is, in fact, play. Let us add more context to this passage:

It might appear then that when a man is playing, bent on discovering himself as free in his very action, he certainly could not be concerned with *possessing* a being in the world. His goal, which he aims at through sport or pantomime or games, is to attain himself as a certain being, precisely the being which is in question in his being. The point of these remarks, however, is not to show us that in play the desire to *do* is irreducible. On the contrary we must conclude that the desire to do is here reduced to a certain desire to be. The act is not its own goal for itself; neither does its explicit end represent its goal and its profound meaning; but the function of the act is to make manifest and to present to *itself* the absolute freedom which is the very being of the person. This particular type of project which has freedom for its foundation and its goal, deserves a special study. It is radically different from all others in that it aims at a radically different type of being. It would be necessary to explain in full detail its relations with the project of being-God, which has appeared to us as the deep-seated structure of human reality. But such a study can not be made here; it belongs rather to an *Ethics* and it supposes that there has been a preliminary definition of nature and the role of purifying reflection (our descriptions have hitherto aimed only at *accessory* reflection); it supposes in addition taking a position which can be *moral* only in the face of values which haunt the For-itself. Nevertheless the fact remains that the desire to play is fundamentally the desire to be.³⁶⁵

Thus, it seems here that Sartre claims *both* that play is aimed freedom *and* that it is “fundamentally the desire to be.” Generally, “the desire to be” means, for Sartre, the desire to be self-coincidental, the desire to be God. This is how Ralph Netzky interprets

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 741-742.

Sartre's comments here.³⁶⁶ However, Netzky does not respond to the fact that in this above passage, it also seems that Sartre claims that the "desire to be" is the desire to be freedom, to make manifest one's freedom. Perhaps Sartre has changed his typical use of this terminology in this instance, due to carelessness or confusion. At the very least, he is ambiguous and vague about what he means.

Sartre also seems to associate play, or at least sport, with appropriation. He says, "it is seldom that play is pure of all appropriative tendency," and "there is always in sport an appropriative component."³⁶⁷ Appropriation, as we've said, is an expression of the bad faith God-project. "Conversion," Sartre says, "consists in renouncing the category of *appropriation*, which can govern only those relations of the For-itself with things."³⁶⁸ Thus, if play is appropriative in nature, as Sartre claims it is in the sports of skiing and mountain climbing, (as we discussed in Chapter 5), then play cannot be purely authentic, for it retains the God-project.

What, then, are we to make of the above passages about play, which seem to suggest that play is a clear renunciation of the God-project? To quote Sartre again: "As soon as a man apprehends himself as free and wishes to use his freedom, a freedom, by the way, which could just as well be his anguish, then his activity is play. The first principle of play is man himself; through it he escapes his natural nature; he himself sets the value and rules which he himself has established and defined." It would seem that the "natural nature" of man his "natural" tendency toward bad faith and the spirit of seriousness, which he escapes in play. Perhaps we can take a cue from Netzky, who

³⁶⁶ Netzky, Ralph, "Playful Freedom: Sartre's Ontology Reappraised," *Philosophy Today*, 18, no. 2 (1974): 130.

³⁶⁷ *BN*, 742.

³⁶⁸ Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, 479.

suggests that Sartre seems to miss the spirit of play when he likens it to appropriation. Netzky suggests that skiing and mountain climbing are activities that are easily interpreted as activities of appropriation, but suggests that such activities are not exactly representative forms of play. “It would seem far more difficult to claim that appropriation is the predominant desire if we examine such play activities as competing in a race, kite flying, or performing in a symphony concert.”³⁶⁹ Indeed, by claiming that skiing and mountain climbing are representative of play, and thus play is appropriative, Sartre seems to be missing some of the “playfulness” of play—that is, the expression and use of freedom for its own sake. Ultimately, Netzky argues that play *is*, in fact, a renunciation of the God-project at and ontological conversion: “If Sartre describes the project of being god (the desire of consciousness as being-for-itself to found itself in the in-itself) as the desire to be, according to our approach play manifests the opposite of such a project—play expresses the desire not to be.”³⁷⁰ I am ultimately in agreement with Netzky. It seems to me that Sartre’s description of play as the project which has freedom as its end, as the recognition and use of one’s freedom, and as the antithesis to seriousness defines play as a renunciation of the God-project.

Yiwei Zheng offers the opposite interpretation, claiming that play is, in fact, not a renunciation of the God project, but this is because Zheng wrongly believes that such a renunciation is impossible, that *Being and Nothingness* describes not only human consciousness in bad faith, but human consciousness as it necessarily and inevitably is. He states, “In authenticity we don’t stop trying to be God, and we don’t stop trying to be God with all our might. We cannot stop trying to be God. To that extent, the whole

³⁶⁹ Netzky, “Playful Freedom,” 130.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

ontological structure developed through *Being and Nothingness* is intact.”³⁷¹ Instead, for Zheng, the “authenticity” of play is that it is a *revaluation* of the God-project, (in favor of freedom), rather than a *renunciation* of it.

In authenticity we come to view the value of being God as *subordinate* to some higher value—freedom. I may never achieve the goal of the lesser value (being God), but in the process of trying to be God I may very well succeed in reaching the goal of the new and higher value (freedom). In authenticity the God-project serves a higher purpose—it serves to achieve freedom: we live the God-project only insofar as we recognize and will the God-project in pure reflection, and with the realization that we must inevitably fail at being God.³⁷²

Linda Bell, also argues that play is a solution for the futility of the God-project, which is inevitably due to failure, but which we cannot escape. She sees play as a metaphor for the person who “loses” at the futile project of bad faith—the attempt to be the in-itself-for-itself, i.e., the attempt to be God—but who “wins” in that she has exercised freedom and chosen her own values. Thus, for Bell and Zheng, the bad faith project becomes one that we strive toward in play, all the while knowing that we will never achieve it, (much like Kant’s regulative moral imperative toward which we must always strive.)³⁷³ For these scholars, play is *not* an ontological conversion.

However, both Bell and Zheng ground their interpretations, as I’ve said, on a misreading of the ontology of *Being and Nothingness* as the inescapable human condition, rather than as a bad faith attitude that may be rejected. Thus, due the conclusions my analysis of Sartre’s texts above, and my commitment to the possibility of an ontological conversion in authenticity, I am inclined to reject Bell’s and Zheng’s interpretation, and to conclude, with Netzky, that play is an ontological conversion.

³⁷¹ Yiwei Zheng, “Sartre on Authenticity” *Sartre Studies International* 8, no. 2 (2002): 133.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Linda Bell, *Sartre’s Ethics of Authenticity* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1989), 126-127; Zheng, “Sartre on Authenticity,” 133.

Let us look now at the second and third of the necessary characteristics of authenticity and determine their relationship to play. These characteristics are: pure reflection and a willing of one's freedom. As I cited above, in his *Notebooks*, Sartre links these two very closely: pure reflection *is* a willing of what I will, and, (as I've argued above), in the case of authenticity, what I will is freedom.³⁷⁴ Thus, is it the case in play that I reflectively *will* the project of freedom? Zheng asserts, "play is no doubt an unreflective consciousness, and authenticity is reflective," though he offers no argument for this assertion. He then argues that authenticity cannot be simply "a reflective rendering of play" because authenticity should be "practicable across the board in ordinary life," and one cannot play at every aspect of one's life, (or else one risks losing "all her securities" and will be unable to "satisfy her basic needs").³⁷⁵ It may be the case that authenticity should be a mode through which we can live ordinary life, but I am not convinced that play is excluded from this criterion. We may have a playful attitude toward even the most important tasks; in fact doing so may arguably make us more effective at such tasks, more resilient when things go wrong, and more able to reevaluate, adjust the "rules," and continue on. For example, suppose I am working to help end domestic violence in a particular city; indeed, this is a very serious and important endeavor. Yet, I may approach it with a playful attitude, being willing to try out new strategies, to change policies that are ineffective, and to help as many people as I can, knowing that I will fail some of the time. Although my work and goals are important,

³⁷⁴ In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre claims, "pure reflection [is] the simple presence of the reflective for-itself to the for-itself reflected-on," with the positing of a psyche or ego, as impure reflection does. For an analysis of pure reflection in *Being and Nothingness*, see Yiwei Zheng, "On Pure Reflection in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*," *Sartre Studies International: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Existentialism and Contemporary Culture* 7, no.1 (2001): 19-42.

³⁷⁵ Zheng, "Sartre on Authenticity," 136.

this does not mean that adopting a playful attitude toward them will result in my satisfaction with total failure; one who plays still tries to win the game.

Furthermore, in play and in authenticity we will not only our achievement of the goal of the game, but also will the game itself: “In other words, when I participate in the match in authenticity, although I still will the victory, the victory is only the secondary object of my willing: what I primarily will is my playing the match.”³⁷⁶ Thus, as a social worker against domestic violence, in authenticity, I am not only playful in my attitude toward my goals, but I am playful in my attitude toward the project itself. I will not only to help people, but I will my willing to help people; that is, I take full responsibility for my project as an expression of my freedom. At a deeper ontological level, in authenticity, I will my freedom—this, as Sartre states, in the meaning of pure reflection. I’ve argued this conclusion against Zheng’s claim that in authenticity we will an unreflective project (i.e. the God-project), rather than willing freedom.

Thus, I’d also like to contest Zheng’s assertion that play is unreflective. Indeed, it may be the case that in a tennis match, my intentional consciousness is concerned with the placement of the ball and my ability to hit it, but recall that Sartre’s definition of play is that it involves the choosing of rules and values. Thus, in order to even *begin* the game of tennis, I have to reflectively decide to consent to the rules. This becomes even more the case when I am playing a game that I have myself invented, (which seems to get to the heart of Sartre’s definition of play). In setting my own rules, I am willing my own freedom, and in playing the game, I am reflectively willing my playing of the game, rather than consenting to a series of rules that I see as transcendent givens. This willing

³⁷⁶ Ibid, 137.

of my freedom is at the heart of the definition of pure authentic reflection, and constitutes the “self-recovery” of authenticity.

I have argued for an interpretation of play as an authentic ontological and ethical conversion from the bad faith God-project to freedom, which one wills in pure reflection. Thus, I will proceed with an understanding of play as a mode of existential authenticity, defined against seriousness and bad faith. Play, as both Zheng and Netzky have pointed out, is not limited to ordinary games, sports, or other recreation. “We might also be able to playfully adopt certain social roles, and even to assume a playful attitude toward life itself.”³⁷⁷ “All we need to do is to insert the playful attitude and let it take over all other attitudes.”³⁷⁸ Let us, see then, how the playful attitude may be inserted into tourist travel, and consider some of the results.

Play in Tourism

First, let us note that tourism, as defined by most of the tourism industry and scholars who study it, is meant to be an activity of recreation. Nelson Graburn states, for example:

A major characteristic of our conception of tourism is that it is *not* work, but is part of the recent invention, *re-creation*, which is supposed to renew us for the workaday world...Tourism is a special form of play involving travel, or getting away from ‘it all’ (work and home), affording relaxation from tensions, and for some, the opportunity to temporarily become a nonentity, removed from a ringing telephone. Stemming from our peasant European (or East Asian) traditions, there is a symbolic link between staying: working and traveling: playing.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Netzky, “Playful Freedom,” 128.

³⁷⁸ Zheng, “Sartre on Authenticity,” 136.

³⁷⁹ Graburn, Nelson, “Tourism: The Sacred Journey,” *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, 2nd Edition, edited by Valene L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 22.

However, as we've seen throughout this analysis, the checklist tourist is not playing in the authentic Sartrean sense of the word that we've outlined above, but is, instead, quite often quite serious. In fact, the checklist's tourist's "obligatory" travel from one tourist site to the next, checking sites off an imagined or written list, attempting to possess and take ownership of them, seems to be more like work than play, even in the ordinary senses of these words. Thus, let us see if there is a way to inject the playful spirit back into tourist travel, so that the tourist may travel in a way that is playfully authentic—thus willing one's freedom—rather than in bad faith—escaping from freedom.

The Post-tourist

In 1984, Maxine Feifer introduced the term "post-tourist" to describe a tourist who has embraced play in tourism. The post-tourist playful, self-aware, and most importantly, understands her role as a tourist with a sense of levity. When Feifer takes trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, she asks her fellow travelers why they've come. "'Are you kidding?' answers a woman cheerfully. 'Because we're *tourists*.'"³⁸⁰ Indeed, the post-tourist understands that long lines, air-conditioned buses, and kitschy souvenir shops are part of the tourist experience, not a stain or impurity on the picturesque, mythical ideal.

Above all...the post-tourist knows that he is a tourist: not a time traveler when he goes somewhere historic; not an instant noble savage when he stays on a tropical beach; not an invisible observer when he visits a native compound. Resolutely

³⁸⁰ Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1985), 267.

‘realistic’, he cannot evade his condition of outsider. But, having embraced that condition, he can stop struggling against it and...then he can turn it around.³⁸¹

Thus, the post-tourist recognizes her facticity, her social position as a tourist, as an outsider in a foreign land. She does not try to deceive herself into believing that this position is escapable or that it can be easily traded in for some transcend ideal of grandeur or exoticism. The post-tourist plays at being a tourist.

We should note that, for Sartre, “playing” a social role can just as easily fall into bad faith as it can be a model of authenticity. Indeed, in Sartre’s discussion of the waiter in the café, he says,

All his behavior seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at *being* a waiter in a café...the waiter in the café plays with his condition in order to *realize* it.³⁸²

Indeed, it seems that simply playing a game is not sufficient for authenticity. One must play not to escape one’s freedom, but to affirm it. We might say that if one plays to escape freedom, he is missing the spirit of play, and perhaps not even really playing at all. As Netzky says, “The waiter is aiming at being; play desires not to be, it aims at freedom. Choice is a vital ingredient in play; and, to the extent that he is in ‘bad faith,’ the waiter is precisely seeking to avoid choice.”³⁸³ Thus, it seems that the waiter is not playing in the authentic sense that Sartre describes in the later pages of his work, but instead, Sartre “seems to be using the term ‘play’ in a rather casual sense (and we often do use it in this way) to refer to a ‘failing’ of reality, a state that is somehow *inferior* to

³⁸¹ Ibid, 271.

³⁸² *BN*, 102.

³⁸³ Netzky, “Playful Freedom,” 134.

the real.”³⁸⁴ Again, we see that Sartre is inconsistent in his use of this word.

Nevertheless, we will stand by our interpretation of play as authenticity.

As we argued in Chapter 4, the tourist who takes on the role of “tourist” in order to escape the anguish of travel that results from the reflective awareness of freedom is in bad faith. The post-tourist, however, *plays* the role of tourist. Just as if I were authentically playing at being a café waiter, I would assume that roles and duties of the café waiter, “while aware of the fact that I am not really bound by these rules. And the more I am aware that I am not bound by these rules and duties, the more strenuously do I adhere to them. In this way, I am playing with the being of a café waiter, I am mocking, taunting this ideal, as an ideal of being-in-itself.”³⁸⁵ As such, I am playing at being a waiter in order to affirm that I am *not* a waiter, in the ontological sense. Similarly, as a post-tourist, I am playing at being a tourist: I may still travel with a checklist, sit in an air conditioned bus, move quickly from site to site, snap photos, buy souvenirs, and perform all the same activities and behaviors I was as a checklist tourist in bad faith. The difference is that I do it now with lucidity and awareness of this role as a *role*, rather than as the definition of my being—that is, I am reflectively aware, rather than prereflectively aware, of my role-playing. I do not believe that I will achieve self-coincidence in being a tourist, and I realize that I may choose to leave this role at any time. That is, I am *freely choosing* to be “a tourist.” As such, I am mocking the role of the tourist, approaching it with a lightness, frivolity, and playfulness.

The same may also be true of the post-tourist’s approach not only to the role of the tourist, but also to the value of the tourist sites. As we argued in Chapter 4, in the

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 133.

spirit of seriousness, the checklist tourist sees the tourist sites as transcendently valuable, their materiality having “drunk in” these values. As play is the antithesis to seriousness, we may say that the post-tourist—the tourist who plays at being a tourist—is reflectively aware that tourist sites do not actually have transcendent value, but are valuable only in relation to human subjectivity. If the post-tourist plays at being a tourist, she may also play at accepting the transcendent value of tourist sites, all the while knowing that such value is *chosen*. Erik Cohen argues that such a touristic approach is possible in his essay, “Tourism as Play.” He suggests, “the tourist ‘plays’ as if the attractions (even the overtly contrived ones) represented or symbolized some independent, ontologically present but transcendent Reality—even as he ‘knows’ that such a Reality does not or cannot exist anymore according to his own, immanentistic construction of the world.”³⁸⁶ In this way, the serious attitude is abandoned, but the checklist tourist continues to tour the usual “must-see” circuit, knowing that these sites are only must-see if she chooses them to be so.

In play, we need not say that tourist sites do not have any value whatsoever, for tourist sites frequently become so for a reason: they represent highlights, breakthroughs, or advancements in certain areas of human history. However, these values must always be seen as in relation to human beings, human values, and human history. Even more specifically, the tourist may choose to recognize that although some tourist sites may have historical or cultural significance or value for the general public, this value need not be affirmed or upheld by each individual tourist. I may recognize that the *Mona Lisa* is publicly considered a landmark artwork, even though I do not necessarily share in the

³⁸⁶ Erik Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism: Diversity and Change* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004), 91.

opinion that it is a prime representation of human art. In this way, I may choose my own values; I take responsibility for and affirm my freedom; I am no longer serious. I play at tourism.

What about the checklist tourist's bad faith desire to appropriate and possess the sites of tourist travel through bodily engagement with them? As I stated above, Sartre claims that some forms of play, particularly mountain climbing and skiing, are activities of appropriation. In Chapter 5, I likened checklist tourist travel to this type of appropriative activity. However, I also argued above that if play is about possession and appropriation—which is ultimately a desire to be the in-itself-for-itself—then it seems to miss the affirmation of freedom that characterizes play, and it is no longer authentic. I suggested that activities of appropriation should not be considered activities of authentic play. Thus, if tourism is a “sport” of appropriation, then we can no longer consider it an authentic form of play. Therefore, if the checklist tourist is to be a playful post-tourist, then it seems that possessing sites should no longer be part of her motivation for travel. If she wishes to check sites off an imagined list, she does so for fun, as a game, and not as attempt to become identified with, to capture, or to possess its “intrinsic greatness.” The post-tourist doesn't feel an exceptional pride, sense of belonging, or sense of identity at having been to the Eiffel Tower, but sees her trip there merely as one experience among many, which she may or may not choose to be important to her. She knows that her travels do not define her, and she knows that the sites of her tour are not automatically more valuable than any of her other experiences.

Thus, I submit that, through play, a tourist may be able to maintain all the behaviors, activities, and itineraries of the checklist tourist, while changing from attitude of bad faith to one of authentic play.

One may ask: Why does the post-tourist travel at all? If one has rejected the God-project and is no longer motivated by the desire to possession or capture the “must-see” sights, what draws the tourist from her home? As we discussed in Chapter 4, travel separates the tourist from her usual social spaces, relationships, and roles; thus, travel may be an opportunity and space for the tourist to exercise her freedom in ways that she may not do at home. At home, one usually feels the high stakes of one’s chosen identity and make take rather seriously one’s social role as a philosophy professor, or café waiter, or construction worker, or banker. However, she need not be serious about her role as a tourist. She may instead be the post-tourist, and in this way, the “play” of tourist travel returns, and travel becomes once again an activity of leisure, an opportunity for authenticity, (though this existential authenticity clearly differs greatly from the mythical imagined objective “authenticity” dreamt up by MacCannell’s tourist). Thus, one does not travel to possess and appropriate intrinsically valuable sites, or to get in touch with greatness or with pre-modern lifestyles, but to take advantage of an opportunity to affirm one’s freedom. Perhaps the playfulness and authenticity that one finds in tourist travel will spread to other areas of the tourist’s life, and thus tourist travel acts as catalyst for a more authentic mode of being in the world.

In this way, the affirmation of one’s freedom can become the primary goal of tourist travel. The checklist post-tourist may gain other benefits of travel, namely the fun of seeing the mass consumerism, kitsch and “hyperreality” of the “must-see” sites, and

perhaps even the fun of playing the game of mythical adventurer, or the naïve tourist. However, one may still object: Doesn't the checklist post-tourist miss many of what we may consider the great values of tourist travel, namely the opportunity to grow, to encounter new values and norms, and to see our own values, norms, and social roles in a new light? In Chapter 4, I argued that travel may provoke existential anguish because we are removed from our usual social roles, we have no predetermined projects with which we are engaged, and we encounter new and foreign values and norms. I argued that checklist tourism offers a structure through which the tourist may escape the feeling of anguish by avoiding these encounters with the unknown Other and taking solace in the comfort of a prescribed project of must-see sites. Thus, perhaps a more profitable use of one's travel is to reject the checklist altogether and to travel in a new mode, adopt a new set of behaviors. Perhaps if we no longer travel with a checklist, we will gain, grow, and learn more from our travel experiences, (as long as we are still able, I will argue in the next section, to play).

From Sites to Places

In his *Getting Back into Place*, phenomenologist Edward Casey offers a theoretical framework through which we may make an argument for a new kind of tourist travel. Casey claims that in the postmodern era, we humans are beginning to lose our sense of place. The incessant motion of late-capitalist societies has resulted in a sense of perpetual wandering. "Rushing from place to place, we rarely linger long enough in one particular place to savor its unique qualities and its local history. We pay a heavy price

for capitalizing on our basic animal mobility. The price is the loss of places that can serve as lasting scenes of experience and reflection and memory.”³⁸⁷ Casey distinguishes between what he calls places—these “lasting scenes of experience and reflection and memory”—and sites—mere backdrops or geographical locations for concrete human activity. Perhaps, checklist tourism is simply perpetuating the loss of place, for indeed, one rushes from site to site with little sense of the journey that brings us there and a lack of prolonged engagement. This loss of place results in a loss of the opportunity for reflection, self-awareness, and meaning making.

Casey calls for a revaluation of places and of the concept of “place.” Places, he says, are where we humans dwell and feel at home. To be in a place means to *experience* that place, “where *experience* stays true to its etymological origin of ‘trying out,’ ‘making a trail out of.’”³⁸⁸ Casey claims that to experience a place, we need to spend time there, to allow our physical bodies to come to know and recognize the orientation and organization of the things and structures of the place. Casey includes both constructed places—huts, houses, buildings, and schools—and natural or wild places in his concept of place, claiming that we humans have a need for each of these kinds of places and that both can be locations of human experiences. Places come to have a life of their own; because they are where lived experience occurs, they become infused with memories, tradition, ritual, and meaning. “Place itself is concrete and at one with action and thought.”³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), xiii.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

Casey claims that in the epoch of modernity, Western culture has seen a disappearing of the importance of place and the increase of what he calls “sites.” This change began with the scientific revolution’s championing of two concepts for understanding the world: space and time. Philosophers—such as Descartes, Leibnitz, and Kant—and scientists—such as Newton and Galileo—reconfigured the structure of the universe as simply an empty extended plane: Descartes’ *res extensa*.³⁹⁰ In such a conception of the world, inhabited living places do not exist, but, instead, things and people are located in mere sites. Casey says, “philosophy and physics, followed closely by psychology, also often operate on a model of manipulable positions in empty space—‘sites,’ as I shall call them.”³⁹¹ He claims that, in our postmodern society, we often think of the world in terms of sites, “as if changing places were just a matter of exchanging positions in a geographical board game having no significant stakes.”³⁹² I am reminded of a conversation between two girls, cited by sociologist Erik Cohen:

‘Where were you last summer?’
 ‘In Majorca’
 ‘Where is that?’
 ‘I don’t know, I flew there.’³⁹³

Casey further argues that the metaphysical and theoretical understanding of the universe in terms of sites has determined the landscape of contemporary Western culture. Sites, Casey seems to say, are locations where depth of experience and living change is missing and replaced by two-dimensional spaces, which pose as or contain mere representations of true experience.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 10.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid, *xiii*.

³⁹³ Cohen, *Contemporary Tourism*, 40.

Casey may suggest that the checklist tourist's relationship to tourist destinations is both informed by and perpetuates the reconception of our world as sites. He says:

To be in a place is to be somewhere in which movement in the local landscape and thus journeying in that landscape becomes possible. In a site, by contrast, we are stuck in space (as well as frozen in time) such that we can move effectively only insofar as we overcome distance at various rates of acceleration—the higher the rate, supposedly the better. In this circumstance, site-stasis sets in, and journeys become mere travels or trips. In contrast, being-in-place brings with it actualities and virtualities of motion that have little if anything to do with speed and everything to do with exploration and inhabitation, with depth instead of distance, horizon rather than border, arc and not perimeter.³⁹⁴

Checklist tourist trips, one might conclude, are cases in which we believe that the higher the rate of travel, the more ground covered, the more sights/sites seen, the better. The checklist tour, however, does not, as Casey says, allow for exploration and inhabitation. In fact, the tourist is often confined to a limited space behind the guardrail, on the tour bus, along the clearly marked path, which does not allow the tourist to “journey the landscape,” but only to view specific parts of it. Further, tourists often only remain at a given destination for a relatively short period of time: a few minutes, hours, or days.

The solution, Casey says, is to slow down, spend more time in a particular place, and traverse more the area than just the must-see site. Casey states, “If we are to get back into place in this nonprimary and nonsimple sense, we must take our time. A retarded movement back, a motion *in ritardando*, is prescribed. In exploring and discovering altogether new places, the tempo tends to be accelerated. But in the return to the nonorigin of an end-place, the proper rhythm is slow rather than swift, a matter of *gravitas* rather than *celeritas*.”³⁹⁵ Thus slowing down will allow us to build relationships and create memories in places. Perhaps it will also allow the tourist to take advantage of

³⁹⁴ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 289.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 297.

the great opportunities of travel, namely to encounter new and different values, behaviors, and mores, and to experience the feeling of our freedom, with an obligated and prescribed project and script.

In fact, this is the approach advocated by a slowly growing movement known as “Slow Travel.” Slow Travel encourages tourists to stay for a week or more in one location—preferably in a rented residence, rather than a hotel—and to think about sightseeing in terms of concentric circles around a single base, rather than a linear path from site to site. “The idea is that this forces you to settle into the rhythm and experience of local life during a part of your travels. . . . You become a temporary resident of your chosen city, village or countryside area.”³⁹⁶ The Slow Travel movement explicitly renounces the impulses of the checklist tourist. Slowtrav.com states, “Don’t feel obligated to see the must-sees. There is no rule that you have to visit every major tourist site within reach. Do what you want to do. You travel for yourself, not to follow someone else’s plan to be able to return home and list off all the famous things you saw.”³⁹⁷ We can see some sense here that the Slow Traveler intends to take ownership of her travels, to create her own rules and values.

The Slow Travel movement contends that this lack of time for exploration, inhabitation, and experience leaves tourists feeling disconnected to a particular location. There is not enough time and flexibility to experience the place—to learn and become a part of the rituals and traditions, to connect to the scene of lasting memory and meaning. Instead, the tourist trip becomes a simple movement from one geographic location to another, from one site to another, and the quest for place remains unsatisfied. “You do

³⁹⁶ Slow Travel, http://www.slowtrav.com/vr/one_week.htm.

³⁹⁷ Slow Travel, http://www.slowtrav.com/vr/must_sees.htm.

one trip to Europe, get a confusing overview, and never go back because you were running the whole time, you came home exhausted and your memory of the experience is a blur.”³⁹⁸ According to the Slow Travel literature, such trips will be more “rewarding,” “memorable,” “intense”, and the key to all of these rewards is that “you will be working and living at the local level and so will develop relationships with local traders and local people.”³⁹⁹

The question, however, is will this actually transform the tourist from the project of bad faith to existential authenticity? Do we need to slow down and start seeing tourist destinations as places to inhabit rather than sights to see? Will this provide us with more richness in tourist travel, while avoiding the project of bad faith? The answer, it seems to me, is not necessarily. Indeed, it seems that the Slow Travel approach to tourism can be done in the bad faith spirit of seriousness just as easily as checklist tourism is done, and, similarly, Casey runs the risk of reifying “places” as inherently valuable, just as much as tourists might do with sites. The slow tourist has not necessarily undergone the “radical conversion” of the fundamental God-project. Indeed, rather than imagining oneself an adventurer, witnesser of grandeur, or possessor of cultural or historical highlights, one falls right back into the search for traditionalism or the “authenticity” of a place that MacCannell claims is the goal of the tourist in the first place. As sociologist Jennie Moltz states, “Slow travel seems to have a very similar effect of essentializing and consuming local cultures and of immobilizing some cultures and people in order to

³⁹⁸ Slow Travel, http://www.slowtrav.com/vr/one_week.htm.

³⁹⁹ Slow Travel, http://www.slowmovement.com/slow_travel.php.

mobilize the slow traveler's own quest for self-actualization."⁴⁰⁰ Indeed, this "quest for self-actualization"—or as we might say, the quest to be the in-itself-for-itself—may not have changed. This time, one desires to see themselves and be seen a local inhabitant of their destination. The vacation is no less serious than it was on the must-see sightseeing trail—it simply has a different idea of what counts as a "must-see": instead of the leaning Tower of Pisa and the Roman Coliseum as checklist sites, one imagines "shop at traditional Italian market," "drink espresso at a local café," or "befriend small town Italian locals" on one's checklist.

In fact, in his "Loss of the Creature" Walker Percy illustrates how such a slow travel tourist experience can produce a great amount of anxiety, a desire to be done with the experience, and fleeing from the freedom of the present moment, just as I described with the widely recognized tourist sites. Percy paints the picture of an American couple who, while visiting Mexico, lose their way and stumble across a corn festival of local Indian inhabitants. They feel as though they have at last encountered the traditional true Mexico. Yet, they do not, says Percy, feel joy and relief at their discovery, but instead, they are anxious that at any moment this perfect genuineness might be destroyed: "A fellow Iowan might emerge from a 'dobe hut; the chief might show them his Sears catalogue."⁴⁰¹ Note that Percy's mention of the Sears catalogue emphasizes that a key part of this "authentic" version of Mexico, (in MacCannell's sense of the word), is that it is untouched by modern capitalism and the economics of mass-production.

⁴⁰⁰ Jennie Moltz, "Pacing Leisure Travel: Staycations, Slow Travel and The Amazing Race" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association, New Orleans, LA, April 8-13, 2009.)

⁴⁰¹ Percy, "Loss of the Creature," 53.

Suppose, Percy says, that the couple wishes that their ethnographer friend were there to witness this, but not because they want the information he can give them about the Indians or their ceremony; “they wanted him, not to share their experience, but to certify their experience as genuine.”⁴⁰² He says:

‘This is it’ and ‘Now we are really living’ do not necessarily refer to the sovereign encounter of the person with the sight that enlivens the mind and gladdens the heart. It means that now at last we are having the acceptable experience. The present experience is always measured by a prototype, the ‘it’ of their dreams. ‘Now I am really living’ means that now I am filling the role of sightseer and the sight is living up to the prototype of sights. This quaint a picturesque village is measured by a Platonic ideal of the Quaint and the Picturesque.⁴⁰³

Thus, we can see that moving off the beaten path, even if accidentally, is not necessarily a way to escape the bad faith of the checklist tourist. Instead, it may simply change the content of the checklist from the historically significant ruins of Tenochtitlan, co-opted by the tourist industry, to some image of a still living “authentic” traditional Mexican village and its accompanying rituals and practices. The project of “filling the role of the sightseer,” however, remains almost exactly the same, as does the spirit of seriousness in which the tourist believes that values are conferred and certified by some external, objective source.

Percy goes on to say something further about the desire this couple has to be done with this “real living” and this “authentic” experience as it relates to the desire to objectify and record it, both with internal and external memory. He says that they will feel “downright relief at leaving the valley and having the experience in the bag, so to speak—that is, safely embalmed in memory and movie film.”⁴⁰⁴ We can see that these

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 52.

sightseers feel the same impulse to make the present past so as to make it less threatening and to flee the free choices—and the possibility of anguish—that the situation requires. It is the bad faith impulse to transform freedom into facticity. Souvenirs and memories are much easier to deal with because they—in theory, do not make demands on one's freedom.

Thus, just because we have abandoned the checklist, this does not mean that we have abandoned the bad faith of the checklist tourist. The slow traveler, in order to be authentic, must adopt the attitude of play. If she understands an encounter with the local places and people as a “must-see” or “must-do” in itself, she is missing the spirit of play. She must decide her own values, set her own rules, and see travel as a means to use, explore, and express her freedom. If she does so, then perhaps abandoning the checklist will allow the slow tourist more opportunity for encountering and reflecting upon her freedom. Perhaps slow travel will provide opportunity for the tourist to encounter the values, customs, and mores of the destination culture, thus prompting the tourist to reflect more deeply upon her own. Indeed, in slow travel, we may be surprised by new experiences, rather than always knowing what to expect on the checklist tour. Indeed, it seems that slow travel we may not only the opportunities to explore and accept our freedom, but also the opportunity to grow in ways that extend beyond the bounds of our trip.

Nevertheless, the slow tourist must also still recognize the limits of tourist travel. We must be aware that even given a week or two in one place, we will not become one of the locals, an indigenous member of the culture. We cannot abandon our own factual past in favor of a Mediterranean, or Japanese, or Amish one. We must recognize that the

new values of the destination culture are not transcendent given any more than are our own. Additionally, as Feifer says, the slow traveling post-tourist, “knows the all about the ethos of ‘little places’ to eat or explore. He must be aware of the social implications of tourism to *really* little places like the By River in the golden triangle of Thailand; and conversely of what it means to blow a day’s wages on lunch in Paris.”⁴⁰⁵ I would add that the post-tourist must not be aware only of the social implications, but also of the ethical implications of tourism. This area of tourism studies is now growing, and, indeed, seems to be an important piece of the consciousness of the post-tourist.⁴⁰⁶

Regardless of whether we reject the checklist and travel more slowly or not, we must retain the playfulness of the post-tourist. Thus, we may recognize, like Sartre does in the epigraph of this chapter, that it may take ten years to get to know a place and people. Yet, even if we do not years to spend on our travels, even if we rush from one city and one site to the next, we can be honest and responsible for our impressions and our interpretations, to recognize that our choices and values are our own, and to tour in authenticity.

⁴⁰⁵ Feifer, *Tourism in History*, 271.

⁴⁰⁶ For an exploration of the ethical issues in tourism see, for example, Mick Smith and Rosaleen Duffy, *The Ethics of Tourism Development* (London: Routledge, 2003).

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