

**How a spoiled vacation can change your worldview:
A study of the contribution of negative touristic experiences to existential authenticity**

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ABSTRACT

This research is designed to address the phenomenon of existential authenticity, acquired during travel and tourism. The current research is designed to legitimize the inclusion of negative experiences in the existing theoretical framework, which suggests that certain types of positive touristic experiences facilitate one's authenticity. Based on original existential theory and current developments in the field, this study engages qualitative content analysis of travel blogs to detect the categories of negative touristic experiences that that evoke individual's sense of self. As a result, a set of such categories emerges and demonstrates that, first, negative and positive contributing experiences may be classified similarly and, second, that negative experiences catalyze the sense of liminality, which, in turn, is a necessary requirement for the comprehension of existential authenticity. The result suggests that previously exclusion of negative experiences from the studies on authenticity in tourism is invalid and limits the understanding of the phenomenon.

Keywords: authenticity, liminality, touristic experience, travel blogs, existentialism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Introduction.....	4
Theoretical framework.....	6
The crisis of authenticity	6
Existential authenticity.....	7
From negative experience to liminality to authenticity.....	10
Methodology.....	12
Data analysis	12
Sampling.....	13
Analysis.....	14
Bodily feelings	16
Self-making	18
Miscommunication.....	22
Existential authenticity: the hard way	25
Conclusion and discussion.....	27
References.....	30
Appendix A.....	34
Appendix B	37

INTRODUCTION

The protagonist of Stephen King's horror story *Survivor Type* (1982) finds himself on a deserted island after a plane crash. He reminisces about his life, his childhood in a ghetto and a successful surgeon career, and comes to the conclusion that he is going to survive this misfortune as well. As food becomes his main concern and all resources are depleted, he engages his surgeon skills, cuts off his own body parts and eats them. Written in a form of diary, the story depicts the protagonist's proceeding insanity, caused by the aspiration to survive at any cost. The story brilliantly illustrates an abnormal case of self-tuning under extreme circumstances and, surprisingly, it is also very realistic and relevant to the phenomenon of existential authenticity as presented by Heidegger (1996).

Steiner and Reisinger (2006) list fundamental properties of authenticity according to Heidegger (1996). These properties include: mineness, or independency of thought; resoluteness, or courage to act separately from others; and situation, or outstanding experiences (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). The self-labeled *Survivor Type* protagonist, apprehends the fact that the line of behavior he has chosen, self-cannibalism in order to survive, is tabooed in the society, yet, he pursues it. His diary depicts moments of narcissism and increased self-esteem, moreover, the protagonist feels happy precisely because he was finally given a chance to express his personality. Striking realism of the story illustrates that authentic behavior sometimes takes socially animadverted or unaccepted forms and existential authenticity is most likely to be experienced outside the everyday frames, precisely, during travel.

Theoretical elaborations on the disclosure of existential authenticity through tourism are not numerous (Wang, 1999; Pons, 2003; Steiner, & Reisinger, 2006). A growing body of empirical research on existential authenticity is informed by an approach, presented by Wang (1999), who introduced the concept into the field (Kim, & Jamal, 2007; Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010; Rickly-Boyd, 2012b). Recent findings suggest distinguishing concrete categories of experiences that facilitate existential authenticity. These experiences include, in a first place, hedonistic pleasures: sex and alcohol consumption (Kim, & Jamal, 2007), and other positive experiences that are directly connected to bodily feelings (Rickly-Boyd, 2012b). The second category, experiences of self-making that are associated with identity construction or personal transformation, facilitate an individuals' ability to demarcate between the features of his or her social role and own self-awareness (Daniel, 1996). Finally, pleasurable experiences can be shared by a group of people at the same time, which creates a fertile ground for common appreciation of authenticity (Wang, 1999; Kim, & Jamal, 2007; Rickly-Boyd, 2012b).

One may notice the apparent difference in the tone of current empirical research on the topic and the *Survivor Type* situation, given here as a metaphor for existential authenticity. To be specific, the survivor neither had enjoyable experiences nor was he sharing these experiences with others; however, he comprehended his self and adjusted his behavior in accordance with it. It seems that existing accounts miss this side of authenticity, precisely that it can be facilitated by negative experiences as well. It can be legitimately argued that Stephen King's story is a fiction, and it cannot be seen as an example of real life logic. Nonetheless, considering negative experiences as facilitating existential authenticity is more theoretically correct than prescribing this function to positive experiences. Within existentialism, Heidegger, Sartre and Kierkegaard explicitly discussed the liberating function of negative experiences and emotions that push individual towards 'free floating' with accordance to personal perceptual schemes – which is an authentic mode of living.

Survivor Type demonstrates, in an exaggerated form, an authentic mode of living, which is characterized by the escape from the everydayness and the emergence of individual lines of behavior that are liberated from social norms (Vannini, & Franzese, 2008). The protagonist's authenticity was facilitated by negative experiences he has been going through: starvation, alienation and narcotic withdrawal behavior. Less extreme, but similar situations can be found in real life, when touristic experience contains a disaster, an accident or other negative situations, and yet it leads to personified independent behavior and perception (Cohen, 2012). The described phenomenon has a theoretical explanation, but is lacking empirical investigation.

The consideration of positive experiences as liminal, i.e. transitional and having ambiguous meaning, dominates in current research of existential authenticity (Crang, 1996; Wang, 1999; Noy, 2004; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Buchmann et al., 2010; Rickly-Boyd, 2013). The present research, however, makes an attempt to restore the position of negative experiences in the discourse on authenticity by distinguishing specific categories of the former and demonstrating their association with the latter. Due to the focus on negative experiences, the current research is extensively supported by existential theory. In addition, it refers to current developments in the field, in which categories of positive contributing experiences have already been distilled. Mixing and contrasting theoretical and empirical implications, the present study seeks to answer the question: *what negative touristic experiences form existential authenticity?*

Methodological approach takes into account novelty of the research and its relation to the existing knowledge. Qualitative content analysis is utilized to distil meanings from selected texts on the basis of pre-determined categories, but leaves a space for the appearance of new ones, thus, ensuring

needed flexibility and theoretical validity (Banayai, 2009; Banyai et al, 2011; Banayai, 2012, Tse, 2013). Travel blogs, treated as data sources, allow a researcher to access travelers' descriptions of negative experiences without bringing discomfort to respondents and investigate, what experiences are found meaningful and perception-changing.

The following paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an insight into theoretical discourses on authenticity in tourism studies; it considers the role of touristic experiences and liminality in the comprehension of existential authenticity. Chapter two contains a discussion on the rationale behind methodological choices of the research. Chapter three summarizes the categories, as revealed during the analysis, and their theoretical grounding and value. The final chapter contains the answer to the initial research question, discusses the limitations of the study and outlines the perspectives for future research on negative experiences and existential authenticity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE CRISIS OF AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity as a concept and a characteristic of touristic experience has been present in tourism research for the past 40 years, being mentioned for the first time in the influential work *The Tourist* by Dean MacCannell (1976 [1999]). The concept has roots in various disciplines, which explains its problematic and ambiguous character in tourism studies (Steiner, & Reisinger, 2006). The concept of authenticity migrated from museumology, in which it referred to the characteristic of an artwork that discerns it from 'falsifications' (Cohen, 2007). The museumological understanding of authenticity was adopted and adapted in empirical research on tourism and tourists (Rickly-Boyd, 2012a). In the academic literature authenticity can be synonymous to 'genuineness' (Theobald, 1988); 'pristinity' (Cohen, 2004 [1988]); 'sincerity' (Taylor, 2001); and 'creativity' (Daniel, 1996). The synonyms all describe, in essence, the same type, objective authenticity, as Cohen (2007) argues.

The paradigm of objective authenticity, according to which authenticity is addressed as given and authorized, prescribes this quality to touristic settings that guarantee the most fulfilling and 'true' touristic experiences. This paradigm dominated from the point when MacCannell (1976 [1999]) first described the phenomenon in terms of disguising casual, inauthentic objects behind the veil of authenticity for the sake of attracting tourists ('staged authenticity'). However, objective authenticity gradually became a highly problematic concept already by the end of 20th century.

A crisis was caused by the increasing dominance of assumptions about the contemporary world as globalized, commoditized and post-modern and hyper-real (Hughes, 1995). Globalization blurs boundaries between cultural identities and catalyzes homogenization processes (Hughes, 1995) - the existence of authenticity as 'originality' becomes debatable. Due to the commodification processes, cultural objects and practices lose their original meanings and, hence, authenticity, for the locals, who are forced to reproduce them in front of the tourists (Cohen, 1988). Finally, in the postmodern world, these reproductions, or simulations of authenticity become even more authentic than the initial cultural objects (Cohen, 2007), hence, authenticity itself is in everything and in nothing at the same time. Theoretical assumptions about globalization, communization and post-modernity initially led to the need to redefine authenticity or even abandon the irrelevant concept, as some researchers suggested (Reisinger, & Steiner, 2006). Fortunately, the latter didn't happen, and a new perspective on the phenomenon was introduced.

EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY

At the very beginning of the 21st century, as a response to the theoretical crisis, which was discussed above, a new approach to authenticity differentiated itself. Subjective authenticity as a concept arose from the assumption that a tourist setting is not the main component of authenticity, rather, subjective feelings about a place and one's state of being at this place play crucial role (Cohen, 2007). This new approach originated from existential philosophy and this type of authenticity was accordingly named 'existential' (Wang, 1999; Steiner, & Reisinger, 2006).

In this paper, existential authenticity will be defined as a mode of an individual self, associated with the realization of one's unique and free self- and world-perception. On a contrary to this state, the state of inauthentic self is characterized by the immersion in socially constructed and reinforced roles, norms, practices of the everyday life (Greaves, 2010). According to Heidegger (1996), the One [*das Man*], which basically means sociality, appear to claim and sustain shared inauthentic interpretations of the world and the individuals within it (Dreyfus, & Wrathall, 2005). The detachment, independence from the One, or from its manifestation in the form of modern institutions, is claimed to be authentic mode of living, desired by individuals (Vannini, & Franzese, 2008). This explains why tourists dwell in the perpetual search for the untouched and unspoiled 'authentic' cultural settings that are as far from their own culture as possible – they search for authenticity (MacCannell, 1976[1999]; Cohen, 1998).

Authenticity is a quality of a self that can switch between two modes of existence: authentic and inauthentic one (Heidegger, 1996). Thus, tourism and travel are acting as the means of distinguishing

an authentic self, because they contrast routine, which is structured and systemized so that the rigidity of experiences is reached and authentic selves are inactive (Greaves, 2010). Completely unfamiliar ‘languages’ or symbolic systems of the Other One break the established order and sustainability of the inauthentic self of the One, giving an individual an opportunity to be on his own, re-frame situations and use possibilities. A truly authentic person is one who considers presented possibilities, and therefore is able to choose between a course that the One will stick to or a course that is truly his or her own (Crowell, 2012). This quality of authenticity is further labeled as ‘comprehensiveness’. The comprehensiveness of existential authenticity also creates a principal possibility to detect it in the descriptions of individual experiences.

As it was mentioned earlier, unfamiliar settings of touristic attractions facilitate the sense of existential authenticity. For instance, this argument can be found in Brown’s (2013) article. She compares a touristic setting with *Spielraum*, a Heideggerian concept, which refers to ‘[a place in time and space that is] reprieve from the everydayness, which allows an individual to be thoughtful’ (Brown, 2013:183). Brown (2009, 2013) stresses that described reflective realm offers positive experiences, and it is a detachment from casual concerns and has an apparent therapeutic effect. Moreover, they put an individual into a liminal state, i.e. social vacuum designated for the transformation of self (Turner, 1992). Although existential philosophy does not engage ‘liminality’, it can be noticed that existential authenticity is catalyzed by undefined and borderline states of touristic experiences.

Contributing touristic experiences, on one hand, can be case-specific, for distinct *Spielraums* and social groups. For instance, Rickly-Boyd (2012b) highlights the liminality of rock climbers’ experiences, which can be seen in the feeling of timelessness. Crang (1996) in his study on reenactors proposes strong ties between authentic experiences and material artifacts that create a liminal perceptual space between a modern and medieval epoch. But there are also common types of experiences, which have a potential to facilitate existential authenticity in any travelling person (see table 1). These retrieving categories of contributing experiences, which can be found in all studies that touch on the topic, include: a) bodily experiences; b) experiences of self-making, such as: self-transformation, emergence of alternative selves; and c) social experiences in touristic *communitas* (Crang, 1996; Noy, 2004; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Buchmann et al., 2010; Rickly-Boyd, 2013).

Table 1. Overview of current categories of authentic experiences, utilized in theoretical and empirical studies

	Steiner & Reisinger (2006).	Wang (1999)	Kim, & Jamal, (2007)	Rickly-Boyd (2012b)
Intrapersonal authenticity	Mineness ¹	Bodily feelings ²	Bodily feelings ³	Bodily feelings ⁴
	Resoluteness ⁵	Self-making ⁶	Self-making ⁷	Liminality ⁸
	The situation ⁹			Sense of self ¹⁰
Interpersonal authenticity	“Leap ahead” of someone ¹¹	Family ties ¹²	Touristic communitas ¹³	Communitas ¹⁴
		Touristic Communitas ¹⁵		

Supported by the empirical evidence, assumptions about existential authenticity constitute a comprehensive theoretical framework for the current research. The assumptions demonstrate, first, that the certain types of liminal experiences are expected to contribute to existential authenticity, and, second, that there is a necessity to take into account the time lag, which is required to fully comprehend existential authenticity and to draw a line between authentic and inauthentic modes of being. The following section discusses the concept of liminality, involved in the processes of existential authenticity perception and comprehension through negative experiences. It explains what

¹ Desire to create an individual interpretation framework

² Connection between the mind and symbolic and sensual state of the body

³ Achieving bodily pleasure by means, suppressed by social order

⁴ Realization of the link between the body and the individual’s mind, lifestyle and identity

⁵ Desire to get away from mainstream routes and places

⁶ Touristic actions, motivated by the need for self-knowledge by escaping the routine

⁷ Abandonment of a social role of and individual and creation of an alternative self

⁸ Experiencing modified temporal (flow, or sense of timelessness) and spatial (mobility) characteristics

⁹ Every experience is “valuable in itself” (Steiner, & Reisinger, 2006:307)

¹⁰ Being motivated by the need to abandon everyday conventions in order to discover self or construct identity

¹¹ Highlight the possibility of authenticity to others

¹² Reestablishing intimate connections with family members

¹³ Construction of unmediated, intimate and ludic interactions and relationships

¹⁴ Being surrounded by individuals with similar motivations and meanings

¹⁵ Establishing connections on the principles of equality, genuineness and temporality

role do specific experiences play in the construction of existential authenticity, and also provides additional arguments to support the idea that precisely negative experiences should be utilized to detect existential authenticity in tourism.

FROM NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE TO LIMINALITY TO AUTHENTICITY

Liminal state is a transitional deprivation of individual's sociality, state of ambiguity and 'invisibility' of social status (Turner, 1987). Turner (1992) conceptualized liminality and differentiated its characteristics; moreover, he distinguished its modern form, liminoidity. To simplify, liminality and liminoidity root in different levels: collective and individual respectively. One major difference is that liminal phenomena are a necessity for a society, as it ensures the reproduction of the social structure by playing the role of a 'social lift', which transfers individuals from one stratum to another (Sorokin, 1966). Liminoid phenomena are products of industrial society, used to demarcate 'work' and 'leisure' and facilitate creative activity. The function of liminality is to prepare an individual for a new social quality. Liminoidity harmonizes work and leisure and sustains individual's productivity, effectiveness and involvement in social processes.

Liminality might be a correct term to describe the state of travelling, because it can be argued that the contrast between 'the familiar and the faraway' is a paramount travelling feature (Urry, 2011: 13). Also, spatial distance makes an individual 'lost' and 'invisible' for the rest of society. However, upon the return, a tourist does not always acquire a new social status; thus, this liminal state of exclusion possesses no social function. Perhaps, true liminality of travel was only present in the time of discoveries and conquests, when Christopher Columbus in 1492 sailed to India as an explorer, and returned in 1493 as a colonizer of America.

Nowadays, however, not every tourist or traveler becomes Christopher Columbus. Modern leisure and business tourism are both far from the ideal type of liminal tourism. Modern tourism is marketed, supported and controlled by touristic industry that enchants tourists (Jansson, 2007). Thus, modern tourism has more in common with liminoidity, given its individualized character and entertaining, recreational functions (Cohen, 1988). However, touristic experiences are not always liminoid, or pleasurable and playful. Precisely negative travel experiences have a capacity to evoke liminality within liminoidity, challenge individuals' life preferences and goals, and, eventually, facilitate existential authenticity.

The ability of negative experiences to induce liminality and, thus, existential authenticity, is extensively investigated in psychological and medical research. For instance, Little et al (1998) suggest that cancer patients' experience liminality, acute or sustained, which are based upon

rejection, suffering, pain, fear and other negative emotions. Acute liminality strikes an individual with the presence of death that escapes the imaginary realm and becomes a perspective. Mortality evokes anxiety, angst and dread – liberating emotions that facilitate the comprehension of existence and help an individual to draw a demarcation line between personal reasoning and the reasoning of the One (Billington et al, 1998, Heidegger, 1996; Sartre, 1977). Sustained liminality, thus, is nothing else than authentic mode of living, in which individuals reassess the mortality of the body and reshape their adaptation strategies (Little et al, 1998).

Jewkes (2005) comes to the same conclusion in her study of prisoners. She states that, after a prisoner learns to cope with the initial state of fear, he becomes more self-conscious and resists the pressure of the personality-destroying penitentiary system in order to ‘retain the human freedom to choose their own attitude in any given circumstance’ (Jewkes, 2005:381). In this process one may again notice the similarities with Heidegger’s (1996:266) description of authenticity: “[Anticipation] brings... with the possibility to be itself... in passionate anxious freedom toward death”. This similarity again stresses an obvious association between liminality and authenticity.

Research and theoretical elaborations on liminality suggest several significant implications for the present research. Firstly, assuming the transformation of modern tourism into liminoid phenomenon, liminality in travel is conserved precisely due to the presence of negative touristic experiences. One possible way to experience liminality is to face a life-threatening event, in which a tourist faces mortality and futility directly. Secondly, it was shown that liminality is a necessary requirement for the comprehension of existential authenticity through negative experiences. Changed perception of death, from imaginary construct to a life fact, exposes to an individual the fact of ‘uncanniness’ (Heidegger, 1996), i.e. the need to rebuild a perceptual framework from scratch. As a result of accepting one’s mortality, an individual liberates from social conventions and reframes self in a new way.

All these points highlight the inherent problem in previous research on existential authenticity in tourism, precisely, the focus on positive experience and emotions, which are irrelevant to the original existential theory. One should bear in mind that such existentialists as Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre put the emphasis not on positive, but on negative emotions: angst, dread and anguish respectively (Little et al., 1998). Negative emotions acted as a starting point in the process of comprehending nothingness, inevitability of death and the freedom of existence. Liminality in this framework fulfills its transitional role and leads to the reconstruction of self, but only due to its rootedness in a negative, striking life event.

Throughout this paper I am attempting to advocate the use of negative touristic experiences for investigating existential authenticity, however, from the position of existential theory, it seem to be the most legitimate way. Surprisingly, existing research doesn't recognize the importance of negative liminal experiences for authenticity, perhaps, due to the fact that tourists prefer discussing only positive touristic experiences. Thus, contrary to existing research in the field, the present investigation focuses on the original treatment of liminality, existential authenticity and concomitant experiences. Within the described framework, the following supporting research questions are asked: which particular kinds of negative touristic experiences contribute to existential authenticity? What are the differences between contributing positive and negative experiences?

METHODOLOGY

DATA ANALYSIS

The goal of this research project is to distinguish the categories of negative touristic experiences that impact existential authenticity. Qualitative content analysis of travel blog posts was chosen as a research method. Current state of the literature on contributing authentic experiences allows using strictly defined and mutually exclusive pre-set categories of contributing positive experiences as reference points to ensure the completeness and the reliability of emerging categories of contributing negative experiences (Wodak et al., 2000; Miles et al., 2014). Moreover, qualitative content analysis, by systematically prescribing distinctive experiences to categories, results in the replicable and valid illustration of theoretical concepts (Krippendorff, 2004), which matches the goal of the present study to demonstrate the possibility of negative experiences to equally contribute to existential authenticity. Finally, qualitative content analysis is flexible enough to allow the adjustment of emerging categories to the research purposes. In the context of this study, new categories and, especially, sub-categories may appear due to the differences between negative and positive experiences and the fact that the existing theoretical model concentrated precisely on the latter.

Travel blogs were selected as data sources due to their capacity to distance an author from him or herself and from the audience. First, existing studies show that self-distancing helps individuals to cope with negative experiences and to create meanings out of them (Kross & Ayduk, 2011). At the same time, literature suggests that bloggers create distanced *alter egos* and insightfully reconstruct negative events (Papacharissi, 2010; Kross & Ayduk, 2011; Bosangit et al, 2012; Magasic, 2014). Hence, due to self-distancing in travel blogs, the description of negative experiences, thus, is presented as meaningful and reflexive. In addition, this manifestation of one's authentic experiences

in blogs is profoundly made more visible (Marwick & Boyd, 2010; Magasic, 2014). These features facilitate the researcher's task to trace the impact of specific touristic experiences on identity and self-understanding.

SAMPLING

Texts, i.e. blog posts, are treated in this study as the representations of negative travel situations (Wodak et al., 2000). The criteria were developed to constitute a research sample of blog posts that explicitly point at the association between negative experiences and existential authenticity, or senses of self, identity and independence of thought. The first criterion is structural, and it ensures that only blog posts about real experiences are considered. The criterion excludes such forms of blog posts as: a) lists of tips and rules, unless they are supported by personal stories and experiences; b) psychological/philosophical/sociological essays or articles. These requirements guarantee that only blog posts, which are narratives in their essence, i.e. have a plot and individual conclusions, are included in the sample.

The second criterion considers the content of blog posts. Appropriate text of text fragment mentions an occurred insight or vision, i.e. points at the self-understanding, self-realization, changed self-perception or resolutions about self. In addition, the description of connected negative experience is given. This description may include negative feelings and emotions, such as fear, anger, irritation, which were caused by spatio-temporal characteristics of tourist setting, by objects and/or people. The first requirement ensures the presence of existential authenticity, as it is explicitly reported in the narrative, while the second one demonstrates the essence of contributing negative experiences as it is represented by an individual.

A specialized site, TravelPod (www.travelpod.com) was treated as an array, out of which eligible collection units were extracted via theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling implies that the sample size was expanded until the point when all possible categories of contributing negative touristic experiences were covered and comprehensively analyzed. Keywords were used to retrieve the most suitable posts from the site. Using the criteria, an initial sample of 40 blog entries from TravelPod was collected. In addition, Google was utilized to complete the sample with 15 more amateur and professional blog posts. The use of search engine was proved to be a sufficient tool to collect the most popular and search-specific blog posts (Woodside, 2007; Pan, 2007; Bosagnit, 2009), and saturated the initial sample with suitable texts.

ANALYSIS

The first thing I would like to discuss in this section is the problems and opportunities, associated with the utilization of travel blogs as data sources. To begin with, some scholars suggest that travel blogs are not applicable in the research on immediate, ludic and liminal experiences, which are seen to be connected to existential authenticity. For instance, Magasic (2014) argues that blogging disrupts ordinary touristic practices by bridging them with everyday environments and discourses. Jansson (2007) makes the same conclusion in relation to information communication technology, which, he claims, disenchanting touristic destinations and routinizes experiences. As a result, the liminality, as the separateness from the society, is blurred. In addition, instead of being 'invisible' to the society and undergo a personal transformation, a blogger marks, highlights and expands presence in the social world through blog posts (Papacharissi, 2010). These conclusions can be summarized in the assumption that a blogger is deprived of liminality, or the state of alienation, uncertainty and transition, because he or she is always there 'for others'. Thus, the study on liminality through travel blogs may in fact be irrational; however, the present study deals only with the 'product' of liminality – existential authenticity, which is won precisely in the relation to the everydayness (Heidegger, 1996).

Existential authenticity in the present research is characterized as a reflexive quality of self and, thus, can easily emerge in travel blogs that are treated here as narratives with a plot and a conclusion. In fact, as the empirical data suggests, blogging complement touristic experience, but does not substitute it, as Magasic (2014) and Jansson (2007) argue. A blogger usually takes some time to formulate a message, to reflect upon the experience and to create a coherent story. Moreover, many bloggers see blog as a reflection of their own personality; sometimes blogs are animated and perceived as counselors, friends or even doubles. Touristic experiences may be influenced by the fact of blogging (for instance, when traveler takes a camera on a dangerous camel ride, just to make good picture for the blog), however, actual (experience) and reflexive (blogging) realm are parallel. Thus, existential authenticity is apprehended in the former, but it is comprehended and made visible to other people (including a social scientist), in the latter realm.

In essence, a blog frequently acts as a blogger's only connection to the everydayness, however, it is also the only way to evaluate and reflect upon the experiences, especially negative ones. As it was shown in the empirical evidence, negative experiences themselves are powerful accelerators of existential authenticity. They facilitate a set of 'existential emotions': dread, anger and anxiety and, thus, create an acute liminal space for the apprehension of one's self. It is assumed that authenticity is comprehended when an individual manages his or her fears and learns how to live with the fact of

death (Little et al., 1998), thus, an individual must pull him or herself out the ‘swamp’ of liminality, like Baron Münchhausen. Previously, it was not clear, how this can be done. The results of the present research, however, suggest the possible role of blogs in this process.

As it was discussed in the previous section, travel blogs were chosen as data sources precisely due to their ability to act as a self-distancing instrument of self-cognition and self-management. The empirical evidence does not only support this assumption, but demonstrates the place of blogs in the process of the comprehension of existential authenticity. This can be clearly seen on the example of a volunteer at Haiti, who works in the distribution system at a local refugee camp. On one day, he loses his journal, in which he usually reports about his experiences. He finds the journal several days later, and writes that he had experienced some extraordinary state of being:

I continued on, my mind retreating further and further into a mixture of desensitization mixed with a high alert for danger and a sense of urgency...

[Indianasteve, TravelPod¹⁶]

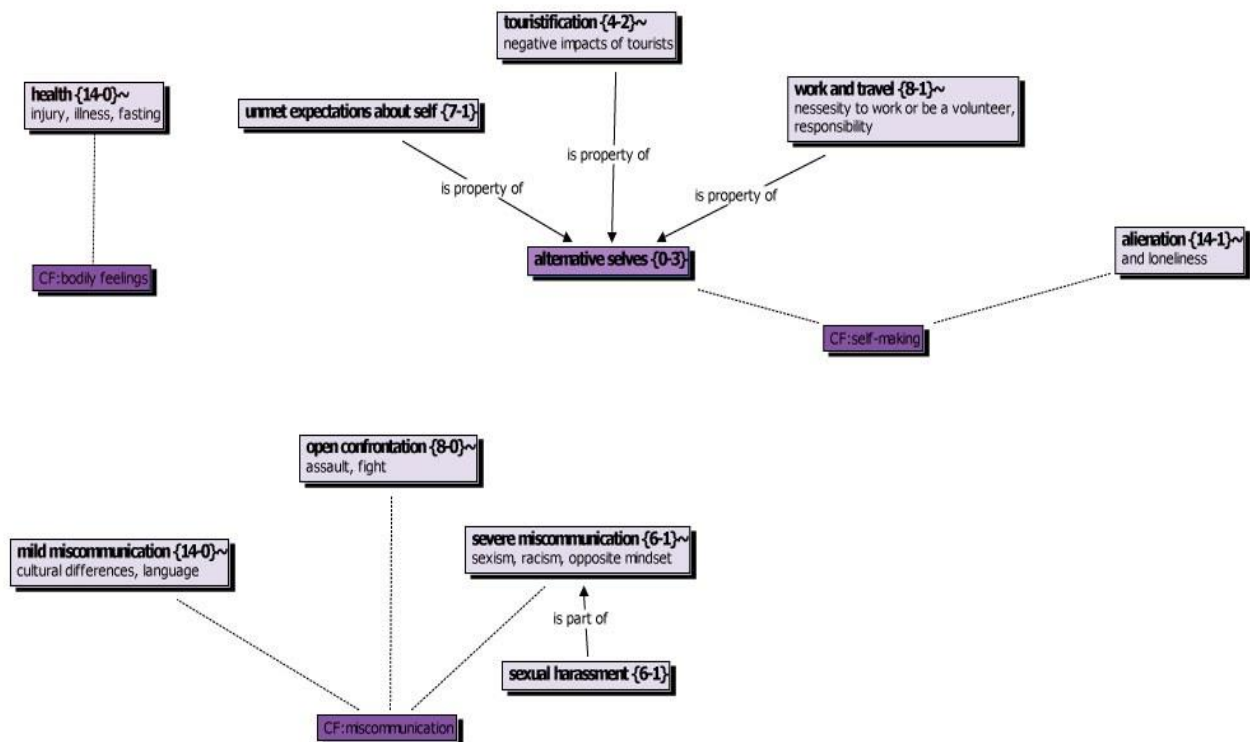
Uncertainty, alert, anxiety and disembodiment constitute a set of emotions that are usually prescribed to liminality (Little et al., 1998). Moreover, changed perception of time (*‘I lost track of days’*), confirms that this individual indeed experienced it. Shortly after he finds the journal, a blogger writes about the ‘authentic outcome’ of his journey – that he *‘learned to be tough skinned’*. The liminality of the state was mastered with the return of the journal, which acted as a bridge to the everydayness. The contrast between two states, liminal and routine, was exposed to the individual and, as a result, he ‘won’ his authenticity.

Although not all bloggers draw this connection between different states, blogs are still useful as the depictions of memorable, life-changing and disrupting events. The main purpose of the study was to pave the way for negative touristic experiences in the studies on existential authenticity, and through the utilization of travel blogs it was made possible to differentiate contributing negative experiences (see picture 1) and, using the notion of liminality, to trace their association with existential authenticity. Three broad categories of contributing negative experiences emerged in the analysis. First, bodily feelings, such as illnesses and injuries, were proved as contributing due to their direct connection to suffering and the perspective of death of the body and the mind. Second, self-making experiences were associated with transformation, uncertainty and presented a challenge for tourist’s own identity. Finally, experiences of miscommunication made an individual ‘invisible’ or excluded

¹⁶ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

from own society (alienation) or rejected and criticized by the Other. All these categories correspond to previously defined categories; however, they possess greater stimulating capacity due to their connection with major existential emotions – fear, anxiety and dread. The fundamental differences between negative and positive ways of comprehending authenticity are described in detail in the end of this chapter.

Picture 1. Categories of negative authentic experiences



BODILY FEELINGS

Broken bones and severe illnesses are the examples of the most horrific touristic experiences, especially for solo travelers. In reality, the fact of not being able to independently cope with an illness frightens tourists and even time can't erase these terrific memories:

How close I was to dying that night is something I'll never know for certain, but I was weak, exhausted down to my soul, and sick enough to scribble some last thoughts for my family ... I was at a low point in my life, and if that doesn't make someone contemplate the choices that put them in the

middle of Laos without access to a phone capable of calling for a medevac, then I don't know what else would...

[Shannon O'Donnell, A Little Adrift¹⁷]

In this blog post, the author reevaluated her attitude towards solo travelling, and the fear of facing similar situation frightens her. The blogger illuminates the uncommonness and rarity of such experiences, thereby, distancing herself from the negative situation and deducing the lessons from her life. We also may notice an occurred comprehension of death and mortality, facilitated by the acute liminality of illness. The blogger looks in the past and reevaluates her life choices that are now, given her mortality, appear irrational to her. As a result, just like many other travelers in similar situations, this female blogger indicates that the illness made her appreciate comfortable settings, social ties and technology, which allows asking for help when it is needed. We can see that, due to the fear of dying alone, travelers are ready to give up their independency and aspiration to follow unexplored paths, or authenticity, just to gain support and comfort when it is needed.

The loss of control over the body, combined with the detachment from the everyday life evokes such emotions as frustration, exhaustion and discouragement. Travelers tend to put the blame for negative experience on the fact of being away from their homes and assume that it is easier to cope with injury or illness then friends or family are around. Thus, problems with the body highlight travelers' solitariness and contrast the everyday practices of coping with an illness with corresponding travel practices.

Findings, obtained during the analysis of narratives, suggest that negative embodied experiences on touristic destinations are associated with the need for other people. Previously, an association with pleasure was proven true for sensual bodily feelings, which contribute to authenticity, because they are desired and experienced beyond social conventions and norms (Kim, & Jamal, 2007; Rickly-Boyd, 2012b). Positive bodily feelings are connected to one's desirable identity and are 'flattering', for instance, alcohol consumption may help an individual to expose their true intentions and attitude, make them 'brave' and 'irresistible'. Non-pleasurable bodily feelings, such as injuries and illness, tend to act by a different principle.

A disease is not flattering for an individual; rather, it exposes weakness or, in other words, it is 'insulting'. While travelling, especially travelling solo, an individual has no resources to cope with an illness: there is no family doctor, or family, or friends, who can help and comfort. The traveler is

¹⁷ <http://alittleadrift.com/>

ripped out the everyday practices of being ill, and, thus, is placed in a liminal zone (Graburn 1989), characterized by the abeyance of statuses or spatio-temporality, in this case - by experiencing and knowing the weaknesses of the body. Surprisingly, the traveler starts appreciating social ties, family and a sense of belonging. Perhaps, the traveler's aspiration here is to share this experience, return to a 'comfort zone', in order to maintain physical and mental health.

Unpleasant bodily feelings, hence, are acting by an 'insulting principle': they highlight all the weaknesses of a human body and sharpen the problem of being away from the habitual setting and the recourses of the everyday life. As it is visible in the blogs, in individual perception, a traveler attributes the responsibility for the disease to him or herself, which is a 'kind of being of Da-sein' (Heidegger, 1996:260) and a natural requirement authentic living, according to Sartre (Birt, 1986) and Heidegger (1996). To understand oneself as a weak body, hence, is to bear responsibility for behaving independently and pursuing personal identity as, for instance, a solo traveler or a long-time traveler. Moreover, as it is shown in the next section, not only the sense of the body can be insulted and lead to the comprehension of existential authenticity. Negative experiences may also challenge an individual's self-perception and self-positioning, thus, mark the outcomes of behaving authentically.

SELF-MAKING

Alienation is one of the most common negative experiences during travel. This experience appears at a certain stage of any travel; however, solo travelers are especially prone to it. Indeed, solo travelers appear to be fully excluded from the system of everyday social relations with family or friends. Moreover, their role expects the establishment of many new contacts with people, which is sometimes found exhausting:

I've tried to be more open, meet more people, make more connections, but I find the dynamic to be a little bit difficult.

[Cinnamongirl13, TravelPod¹⁸]

Influenced by alienation, tourists stop enjoying their travel and immerse in a somnambulistic liminal state, in which they notice nothing, but their negative emotions, associated with homesickness and the inability to share experiences. The latter explicitly points at the impalpable desire for interpersonal authenticity, which implies that the perception of experiences is common for a group of

¹⁸ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

people (Wang, 1999). It also suggests an escapement from the liminal state of alienation, precisely, by engaging in an inner dialogue and by sharing experiences with oneself:

As I crossed the pedestrian bridge, I thought to myself, “Jenn, this is going to be an amazing day. Everything is going to be fine,” and took one last swipe at my tears.

[Cinnamongirl13, TravelPod¹⁹]

In their blog posts about alienation, travelers frequently described sessions of self-conviction, self-reassurance and self-tuning, which helped them to turn loneliness into a pleasurable feature of their travel. The narratives about solo travel usually conclude with the statements about the fact of ‘realizing one’s strengths’ and learning to cope with alienation and loneliness:

Many parts of solo travel have made me a stronger person, but I respect that there are nuances to each of us-what makes solo travel so right for one person can become a negative for someone else... I recognize that loneliness is an impermanent state and one I just have to ride out until it slides back down the scale into solitude.

[Shannon O’Donnell, A Little Adrift²⁰]

During a travel, a tourist may be engaged in various situations, in which he or she should accept a completely new social role. However, on a contrary to a reenactment or a play, this role may be associated with undesired changes in behavior and challenge individual’s authentic self. Many blog posts described a traveler’s experiences as a volunteer or a worker in another country. These texts were included in the sample, because it was expected that these new social roles create specific conditions for existential authenticity. It was observed, however, that social roles of a traveler and a worker are contradictory, which causes such negative emotions as discouragement.

As a touristic experience, work and travel practices are usually negative ones, because they pervert the core idea of tourism, which includes entertainment, escapism, non-casual situations and etc (Cohen, 1988). Unnoticed and disrespected, work-and-travel tourists try to prove their usefulness, at

¹⁹ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

²⁰ <http://alittleadrift.com/>

least for themselves. The discrepancy between past and present work experiences illuminates some previously unnoticed sides of personality:

After the tent goes up I may just go home; I'm not feeling useful. The rest of the team gives me projects to keep me busy, but I just feel like I'm in over my head...I've come to realize I'm more of a planner than I realized.

[Indianasteve, TravelPod²¹]

There are cases, in which a blogger is ashamed, discouraged or angry about his or her role as a tourist. Travelers frequently observe negative impacts of touristification, such as pollution, crime and profit-oriented local people. For instance, a male traveler claims that his negative experiences in Vietnam were due to his role as a White foreigner and a backpacker:

"She's telling her friends she's going to overcharge and rip you off because you're white," said a Vietnamese American who was also on my bus. "She doesn't think you will notice." It wasn't the money I cared about-it was her utter disrespect... They [Vietnamese] expect Westerners to spend money in Vietnam, so when they see travelers trying to penny pinch, they get upset and thus look down on backpackers and treat them poorly.

[Matt Kepnes, NomadicMatt²²]

The blogger's identity was challenged by the mistreatment; however, he rejects the imposed role of a 'moneybag' that could have helped him to win locals' respect. On a contrary, he realizes his difference from other tourists and defends his identity as a backpacker. Later in the narrative, he expresses his desire to pursue own authenticity, at the same time, he tries to deduce new order that should substitute current communication practices between locals and tourists. Thus, the tourist differentiates the ordinary and his ideal modes of living, which points at his ability to differentiate inauthenticity from authenticity.

Fails constitute a big part of negative experiences. In principle, any accident or a situation that does not go according to plan can be seen as a fail. However, in relation to a traveler's self, fails, connected with the overestimation of own capacities, are the most painful. They often evoke discouragement, fear and anger, and force a traveler to reevaluate individual goals. For instance, in his story about climbing a volcano in South Korea, a male traveler depicts his attempts to reach the peak

²¹ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

²² <http://www.nomadicmatt.com/>

on his own, ignoring ways, which were paved by other climbers. This aspiration literally describes implemented existential authenticity; however, the traveler fails to reach his goal and almost gives up the idea to behave authentically:

I try telling myself ... well, I tried...

And I swear, the volcano was laughing at me. Laughing at me!

I'll get you, Hallasan! Just wait until next time! Actually ... Maybe not. I will definitely conquer some other country's highest point instead.

[Regionalreverie, TravelPod²³]

Unmet expectations about self also include cases when tourists find themselves unprepared for a journey, when they have betrayed themselves or when they were had to do behave in a way they didn't want to. In the narratives on disappointment, for example, tourists frequently mentioned that they themselves were the reason of all occurred negative experiences:

Honestly, I hated Nepal. I really did. The nature of the people - laid back, no concept of time, never in a rush - combined with the nature of the country ... made the programme I was working on nigh on impossible. But it wasn't Nepal's fault, and my anger and misery made it hard for me to enjoy all the wonderful things Nepal had to offer, and that's something I now regret.

[Rachelrtw, rachelrtw²⁴]

In this example, a female traveler implies the concept of attitude towards touristic experiences, which frequently returns in travel narratives. Interestingly, upon the return, some travelers regret about their negative attitude and corresponding behavior, but, despite all negative events that happened to them, are eager to return to the visited country. This paradox arises some questions about the nature of authentic touristic experiences. Clearly, one of the perceptions is less authentic than another, because they are so contradicting. But which is which? This is the question that can be answered within additional empirical research, which addresses tourists directly.

In general, the process of self-making under negative circumstances tends to be similar to positive self-making. Patterns in the literature and in the current study resemble each other closely. For instance, Kim and Jamal (2007) describe self-making as an abandonment of a social role and the

²³ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

²⁴ <https://rachelrtw.wordpress.com>

emergence of an alternative self, which is created a pleasant mood ensured by positive touristic experiences. For the negative side of travel, a constrained necessity to take another's role as a worker, a tourist or a pessimist does not appear pleasurable. A forced alternative self changes an individual's position in the society; however, this liminal transition to another's role highlights individuals' own authenticity especially because of that. Just like with the contrast between the everyday and the travel, differences and contradictions between social roles inspire an individual to conserve own personality and to pursue own ways of acting.

In addition, only during a travel the liminal exclusion from social structures can be comprehended. A traveler experiences alienation and suffers from the inability to share experiences with somebody. Although alienation is associated with frustration, it is a fertile ground for existential authenticity, which implies a distancing and detach from established social connection. With the help of an inner dialogue, an individual manages to master self, to learn how to control negative emotions and to share experiences with him or herself.

One way or another, self-making is associated with advocating one's unique perception of self, which can be seen especially in the situations of alienation or an undesired social role. In such situations, an individual develops self-protecting and self-comforting (i.e. inner dialogue) strategies, which helps coping with the 'burden of freedom' (Rickly-Boyd, 2013: 414) to behave authentically. The presence of such strategies points at the comprehended existential authenticity, which is expressed in the demarcation between self-perception and the way in which others see or interact with an individual. Interestingly, similar strategies may be found in the situations, in which other people seem to bear the responsibility for a tourist's negative experience. I am talking about the cases of miscommunication, which cover all cases from casual misunderstanding to open confrontations.

MISCOMMUNICATION

Cases of miscommunication present the biggest family of negative experiences. Different types of situations that were classified as miscommunication include: linguistic problems, casual incomprehension due to interpersonal differences, crime, manifestations of racism and sexism (including sexual harassment), and also assaults and fights. For the purpose of the study, these experiences were classified under bigger categories: from mild or minor miscommunication (on a casual level) to open confrontations (i.e. serious crimes).

Cultural differences seem to be the major source of mild miscommunication and an annoying touristic experience. The fact of speaking different languages or having different perception of time and space creates a casual tension between a tourist and a local; it evokes irritation and, sometimes,

anger. However, tourists easily comprehend the source of negative emotions and learn to adjust their behavior. For instance, a male traveler in Haiti was predisposed to mistrust towards local people, but, after meeting a reliable guide, he can easily mark that previous reaction was caused by his personality:

Mishi I've come to find out is a trustworthy guy and also that it was my own misunderstandings and possible apprehension to being in an unknown situation which increased my level of mistrust towards others.

[Indianasteve, TravelPod²⁵]

The comprehension of cultural and linguistic differences, thus, transforms a negative experience of miscommunication into a better understanding of one's self, individual cognition and perception. Moreover, travelers tend to learn about local culture from mild miscommunication cases, which helps developing a more relaxed and tolerate attitude towards locals with respect to their authenticity. Here, a traveler does not necessarily have to protect own personality, but he or she observes a contrast with a local, and from this contrast some peculiarities of a traveler's personality become visible.

The essence and the outcomes of severe miscommunication, however, appear to be less positive. The most relevant and retrieving situation in this group is sexual harassment. In the following examples, female travelers describe sexual harassment and sexism they faced during their trips to Morocco:

It was also very uncomfortable to sit in the front seat next to him [a taxi driver] as he continued to grab our hands entwining his fingers with ours. We could pull our hands away but he would hold onto them still.

[Jackie, a comment on Never Ending Footsteps²⁶]

I suddenly had hassle from men in the street, too - grabbing me, trying to touch my breasts, telling me they liked my "American tits", whispering in French in my ear and then calling me a slut and a whore when I walked away.

[Lauren, Never Ending Footsteps²⁷]

²⁵ <http://www.travelpod.com/>

²⁶ <http://www.neverendingfootsteps.com>

Situations that involve sexual harassment always leave women with such emotions as discouragement, fear and shame. However, some female travelers stand up for themselves, comprehend their strengths and knowledge to fight back. For instance, a female blogger smartly brings a conversation with her harasser (who also appeared to be her driver) into a public space in order to shame him:

I looked him straight in the eye and said very loudly: “BECAUSE,” glaring, “YOU TOUCHED” I held up my open palm, “MY ASS” ... The clerks at the Eden hotel looked up in shock, and I continued...

[The driver] let out a yelp like a dog that had been hit by a motorcycle and threw himself forward over the desk. “OKAY, OKAY!” he hissed, “Yes, yes, change contract! But not so loud, not so loud! They look at me!” Thank you, Vietnamese Shame Culture, for getting my back.

[Lillie, Around the World “L”²⁸]

Other reactions are not directed at harassers, however, they also help female travelers to restore their confidence and discover their ‘stronger selves’:

It was a lesson in the fragility of paths but also in a strength I didn’t realize I had: the next day I forced myself back to the same exact road to mirror my steps. If I didn’t go back then, I felt like they won.

[Jodi Ettenberg, Legal Nomads²⁹]

Women cope with sexual harassment differently: with patience and escape or with anger and a fight. However, in any case, this is a negative experience, which puts a woman in a liminal state: she is not a victim of a rape, but, her body or her mind was treated outrageously. As a reaction to this liminality, existential authenticity exposes itself, and a woman either accepts the fact of harassment and lets it go, or she stands up to strike back real or imaginary threat of losing her own self.

Open confrontations with the locals or other travelers are rare; however, they do happen with tourists. In the confrontations, the state of liminality, or the edge between becoming a victim and becoming a winner, is made more visible. In such situations, the result of confrontation is determined by the ability of a tourist to cope with extraordinary situations. Sometimes, there is just a threat of a

²⁷ <http://www.neverendingfootsteps.com>

²⁸ <http://www.aroundtheworldl.com/>

²⁹ <http://www.legalnomads.com/>

confrontation, which can be avoided with confidence. Travelers admit that their ability to cope with open confrontations roots in their knowledge about self-defense and past experiences. Moments of individual biography influence individual self-perception in a current situation, also, they expose a person's weaknesses and strengths.

Unlike its positive expression, the sense of *communitas*, miscommunication does not relate to the situations of shared authentic experiences, or interpersonal authenticity (Wang, 1999). Rather, it highlights the differences in the travelers and the locals' perception, i.e. creates a phenomenological distance. As inconsistencies are highlighted, an individual gains an opportunity to relate to the Other One and become authentic (Heidegger, 1996). In other words, an individual feels an apparent influence or pressure of social norms of another country, for instance sexism or racism. Resisting it, an individual becomes more sensible towards his or her own self. Thus, a tourist's self-awareness and authenticity arises in the acute clashes with the locals, who act as the carriers of alternative social norms.

EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY: THE HARD WAY

In this research, negative contributing experiences were classified similarly to positive ones. Categorization, provided by researchers in existential authenticity in tourism, includes three types: bodily feelings, self-making and the sense of *communitas* (Wang, 1999; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Ricky-Boyd, 2012); each type can find its variation in negative touristic experiences as well. There are several concluding remarks, through which I intend to highlight the novelty of the current research and its apartness from previous studies in the field.

Due to the utilization of travel blogs as data sources, it was possibly to detect that travelers show a tendency to help others to avoid negative experiences through providing advices. The strategy is referred in the literature as 'leaping in' for somebody. By providing recommendations about travel, the blogger 'leaps in' for the readers, or teaches others inauthentic behaviors by 'solving their problems for them' (Steiner, & Reisinger, 2006). Based on individual negative experiences, these pieces of advice highlight errors in blogger's own behavior, describe frightening consequences and deduce concrete actions that an individual should make. Among other suggestions, a blogger highlights the importance of a positive attitude:

There is no excuse for the man who threw a rock at the back of my head in Tangier, but I have a feeling it wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been giving off a hostile vibe and storming away from him in rage and frustration.

[Lauren, *Never Ending Footsteps*³⁰]

The rationality of this advice is questionable, but an assumption about blogger's intention can be provided. It is clear that the blogger was overwhelmed by liminality of constant harassment and, instead of discovering a 'stronger self'; she sinks deeper in this 'swamp'. For the others she suggests avoiding the liminality of harassment in order to enjoy a travel and, thus, rejecting its transitional function that can lead to the comprehension of authenticity. A research into the mechanism of advice deduction and its rationale is required to study leaping in strategies in detail.

An opposite strategy was frequently presented in travel blogs – tourists were 'leaping ahead' for somebody or encouraging others to search for authenticity and appreciate contributing experiences:

It's OK if you don't enjoy yourself. I know it's horrible. I know you don't want to go home and admit that you were wrong, but really - a bad experience can teach you as much as a good one in the long run.

[Rachelrtw, *rachelrtw*³¹]

Both leaping in and leaping ahead strategies were not previously described in the literature. As it was mentioned elsewhere, travel blogs are constructed in a way, which effects imagined audience and manifests a desired identity (Papacharissi, 2010). When a blogger suggests being encouraged by occurred negative experiences, instead of trying to avoid or reframe them, it demonstrates his or her capacity to draw a demarcation line between authentic and inauthentic modes of living, which, according to Heidegger (1996) is an evident characteristic of an authentic person. In these cases, travel blogs stand out as proofs of comprehended authenticity and, in addition, as tools that may inspire other's quest for authenticity.

There is an apparent difference between types of emotions positive and negative experiences evoke, but, theory and empirical evidence suggest more visible impact of the latter on existential authenticity. In literature, positive emotions such as sexual arousal, pride and gratitude are desired in the liminal spaces (Kim & Jamal, 2007). Existential authenticity is manifested through experiencing these emotions, which is made possible due to the disregard of social norms or the everydayness.

The contributing effect of negative experiences was guaranteed, for the most part, by strong negative emotions, such as fear, frustration and anxiety. Heidegger, Sartre and Kierkegaard prescribed the

³⁰ <http://www.neverendingfootsteps.com/>

³¹ <https://rachelrtw.wordpress.com>

liberating function of anxiety, dread and angst to the understanding of the inevitableness of death - point of ‘uncanniness of myself in my world’ (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2005). Anxiety and angst in travel are probably explained by the presence of different social and cultural context, which create the liminality. An act of self-cognition happens after an individual overcomes fears associated with unfamiliar setting. A reflexive account of this process retrieves frequently in blogs:

Mongolia showed me that I was tougher than I thought and that the rewards from overcoming personal fears is better than anything.

[Liz, *Young Adventures*³²]

The reason that I hold onto the ridiculously bad situations that I find myself in is because those are the ones that make me really feel like I have been placed out of my comfort zone and survived.

[Cecilia Haynes, *Unsettled TCK*³³]

In the quotes one can notice, how deeply negative experiences are appreciated. Although these bloggers claim that they became survivors during a trip, this, according to Heidegger (1996) was, probably, an original authentic mode of their self. Not all travelers, however, become survivors. Some of them have courage to accept sides of their selves that are not considered flattering, such as mistrust and dependence on others. Moral concerns aside, negative experiences and emotions allow an individual to accept and to be aware of own weaknesses. Weaknesses, as well as strengths, inform self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2009), which is an integral part of authenticity (Diddams, & Chang, 2012). Hence, negative experiences that engage both, flattering and insulting principles, inherit this duality of impact on existential authenticity and provide a complete and an unbiased insight into one’s self.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In existentialism, one may often come across such themes as despair, angst and dread, futility and alienation. Existential authenticity is seen as a greatest human achievement, but its price can become an unbearable challenge for some individuals. Given this, attempts to research existential authenticity through positive experiences look, at least, unobvious and, sometimes, inappropriate. Surprisingly, this approach is accepted for the studies on authenticity in tourism and leads to reliable results;

³² <http://youngadventuress.com>

³³ <http://www.ceciliahaynes.com/>

however, it leaves the other side of travel unexplored. The current study is aimed on reconciling the original existential reading of authenticity and negative experiences that facilitate it. At the same time, it treats current developments respectfully, by engaging the contribution of preceding studies to build theoretical framework. Merging the original theory with existing knowledge, the study utilizes qualitative content analysis to distinguish categories of negative experiences that have an association with existential authenticity.

The discussion about liminality is included in the paper in order to explain the transformational impact of negative experiences on authenticity. It was demonstrated that certain types of negative experiences evoke liminality and associated negative emotions, which, in turn, bring an individual close to the understanding of the 'nothingness of life' within social structures. For instance, illnesses and injuries, included in the first distinguished category of contributing negative experiences, highlight the mortality of the body and also the need for others by disturbing the everyday pattern of being ill. Being ill, in conjunction with being away, thus, is associated with the burden of a traveler's lifestyle, which is comprehended and accepted as an authentic mode of living.

Liminality is visible in the situations then a traveler feels alienated or misplaced in a social structure. During the transitional stage of alienation, for example, a tourist experiences frustration and fear. However, through an inner dialogue, the tourist comes to the understanding of personal strengths, and starts to stubbornly advocate his or her own sense of self. The latter precisely refers to existential authenticity, which was comprehended in the resistance to alienation and exclusion.

Finally, a travel to another country is inevitably accompanied by cultural clashes, which take many different forms: from a casual miscommunication to an open confrontation. A tourist is exposed to a set of negative experiences that are associated with the difference between tourists' and locals' perception and value systems. In resistance to the Other authenticity, the tourist is 'winning' his own, which was illuminated for him during the conflict. This can be seen on the example of sexual harassment. The liminal character of sexual harassment situations facilitates the apprehension of existential authenticity. All of a sudden, a woman discovers her inner strength and develops a self-defense mechanism, which expresses itself in different forms. Existential authenticity emerges in the acts of accepting the situation and developing lines of behavior, which better suit an individual's personality.

The reader should bear in mind that the study utilizes qualitative methodological framework and, hence, is not able to make statements about the direction and strength of the association between

negative experiences and existential authenticity. Moreover, it does not address respondents directly, and some explanations and descriptions of individuals' self- and world-perception might be missed. Notwithstanding these limitations, the research introduces travel blogs as data sources to the field of studies on authenticity. Applied methodology stressed the reliability of current theoretical framework by transferring it into a new medium and engaging qualitative content analysis tool.

The present research indicated that negative experiences facilitate existential authenticity and precisely because of that they are highly appreciated by travelers. The most common outcome of such experiences is the realization of one's inner capacities. In a negative experience, a new, tougher and stronger, or more patient and peaceful self emerges, and this fact mitigates experience's worst outcomes and makes them valuable for tourists. Associated emotions always include fear, which, according to Heidegger (1996), is a perfect illustration of how an individual can authentically look in the past, present and the future at the same time. Indeed, travelers confess that during their most negative moments they developed a sort of sixth sense: at one moment they were foreseeing lines of probabilities, reevaluating their life choices and developing reactions. Just like a temerarious hare, which is got in a tight corner by a fox, a tourist in a stressful, terrifying or frustrating situation discovers his or her inner strengths and capacities and manages to comprehend inner potential. In the present research it was proven that negative experiences catalyzed tourists' capacity to observe and evaluate self and, thus, led to the comprehension of existential authenticity.

The results of the present research may appear useful in other areas besides tourism. The observed problem of women's self-perception and self-awareness during and after sexual harassment suggests closer consideration of the impact of the latter on authenticity. Another promising direction of research is the focus on self-distancing from negative experiences through blogs. In the present research, it was assumed that self-distancing takes place and this assumption was supported by the evidence from the empirical data. A research that concentrates on investigating the ability of blogs to remove the stress from negative experiences (i.e. firing or loss) will possess a great social relevance.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1. Code and code family lists

Code List	Code Families
absence of inauthentic options alienation alternative selves authentic outcome: relation to life authentic outcome: relation to major issues authentic outcome: relation to others authentic outcome: relation to self authentic outcome: relation to travel avoidance being away consistency: negative experiences and will never return	Code Family: authentic outcome Created: 17.05.15 09:03:26 (Super) Codes (8): [authentic outcome: relation to life] [authentic outcome: relation to major issues] [authentic outcome: relation to others] [authentic outcome: relation to self] [authentic outcome: relation to travel] [demarcation between authentic and inauthentic] [discovering personal strengths] [leap ahead] Quotation(s): 73
crime decision to move forward demarcation between authentic and inauthentic discovering personal strengths falling apart finances health hesitation inauthentic behavior in threatening situation leap ahead looking in the future mild miscommunication negative emotion: anger	Code Family: bodily feelings Created: 01.06.15 08:16:13 (Super) Codes (2): [health] [uncomfortable conditions] Quotation(s): 33
	Code Family: miscommunication Created: 17.05.15 09:47:29 (Super) Codes (4): [mild miscommunication] [open confrontation] [responsibility: local people] [severe miscommunication] Quotation(s): 45

<p>negative emotions: anxiety negative emotions: disappointment negative emotions: discourage negative emotions: distrust negative emotions: failure negative emotions: fear negative emotions: frustration negative emotions: pain negative emotions: shame negative emotions: weakness open confrontation</p>	<p>Code Family: negative emotions Created: 17.05.15 09:04:45 (Super) Codes (11): [negative emotion: anger] [negative emotions: anxiety] [negative emotions: disappointment] [negative emotions: discourage] [negative emotions: distrust] [negative emotions: failure] [negative emotions: fear] [negative emotions: frustration] [negative emotions: pain] [negative emotions: shame] [negative emotions: weakness] Quotation(s): 56</p> <hr/>
<p>paradox: negative experiences, but positive sides patience relation to similar situations responsibility: local people responsibility: nature responsibility: nobody responsibility: other tourists responsibility: tourist responsibility: nobody self-support</p>	<p>Code Family: responsibility Created: 17.05.15 09:06:52 (Super) Codes (5): [responsibility: local people] [responsibility: nature] [responsibility: nobody] [responsibility: other tourists] [responsibility: tourist] Quotation(s): 38</p> <hr/>
<p>setting preferences setting: Africa setting: America setting: Antarctica setting: Asia setting: Europe setting: Oceania severe miscommunication sexual harassment touristification travel motive: challenge</p>	<p>Code Family: self-making Created: 17.05.15 16:16:33 (Super) Codes (5): [alienation] [alternative selves] [touristification] [unmet expectations about self] [work and travel] Quotation(s): 35</p> <hr/>
	<p>Code Family: travel motive Created: 17.05.15 09:04:28 (Super) Codes (3): [travel motive: challenge] [travel motive: entertainment] [travel motive: identity construction] Quotation(s): 11</p>

travel motive: entertainment travel motive: identity construction troubles with law uncertainty uncomfortable conditions unmet expectations about self work and travel	
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APPENDIX B

The list of sources

<http://www.travelpod.com/>

<http://www.nomadicmatt.com/>

<http://alittleadrift.com/>

<http://www.ceciliahaynes.com/>

<http://www.legalnomads.com/>

<http://youngadventuress.com/>

<http://livinginanotherlanguage.com/>

<http://www.neverendingfootsteps.com/>

<https://www.reddit.com>

<http://andrewhy.de/>

<https://rachelrtw.wordpress.com>

<http://www.wheressharon.com/>

<http://confessedtravelholic.com/>

<http://www.aroundtheworldl.com/>

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com>

<http://scottexpedition.com/blog>

<http://www.diananyad.com/blog>