A Critical Analysis of Authenticity: The Moral Virtue of Sartrean Philosophy

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Abstract

This article offers a critical analysis of the idea of 'Authenticity' as the moral virtue of Sartre's existential morality. Sartrean approach to morality leads us to the idea of authenticity which is treated as an alternative to traditional approach of morality in present time. The question is 'how is man to live the life of a moral creature?' From the existential approach, by being a social creature man must have to maintain the individuality. As we know, the individuality is the prime concern of any existentialist philosophers; and for them, we can attain our individual existence by apprehending the freedom as an inherent value of human reality. Jean-Paul Sartre, the most eminent existentialist philosopher so far, too begins his philosophical investigation with the same issue to offer a new kind of moral perspective to the socially living being apart from traditional and conventional moral system in our modern society. At the same time he offers an idea of 'Authenticity' as the moral virtue that focuses on the interpersonal relation in the society. Here my prime concern is to demonstrate the idea of authenticity after Sartre and then to search whether it would really be an accessible alternative approach to the moral man in the society. On the way to search I must go through a short description of his phenomenological ontology to understand the nature of human reality.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Consciousness, Freedom, Individuality, Morality*

1. Introduction

Existentialism as a philosophical movement always tends towards the existence of individual human being and deals with man's lived life. Sartrean philosophy, more precisely to say his moral discourse, basically deals with the questions that followed on his phenomenological ontology in relation to the concept of 'Being,'

'Freedom,' 'Responsibility,' 'Value theory,' 'Bad faith' and embattled social relations in the world. This essay shall thus first give a definitional introduction of Sartre's ontological analysis of human reality by exposing the notion of consciousness, being-in-itself, being-for-itself, the concept of nothingness, absolute freedom theory, the notion of bad faith and the reciprocal relations with individual and the others. Without considering these basic ontological expositions we would not reach at the idea of authenticity which is considerate as the moral virtue of Sartrean morality.

1.1. Consciousness

Sartre, as a phenomenologist, was very much influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martine Heidegger in his early life. He adopts phenomenological method in a modified way to demonstrate his ontological thesis of human actions and freedom for his own philosophy. He takes *consciousness* as the starting point of his philosophy and his phenomenological ontology deals with taking man as a conscious being. For him, *Being* is the fundamental to any ontological enquiry. He characterizes absolutely two separate regions of Being – the 'being-in-itself' (*en-soi*), the *massif* thing which is *what it is*, which is the object of consciousness; and on the other hand, the 'being-for-itself' (*pour-soi*), the conscious being which is the consciousness of objects and of itself as well. The 'being-for-itself,' or the *for-itself* in short, refers to the consciousness; and in most of the cases 'man' is used as its familiar meaning. Thus, the *for-itself* or *consciousness* is not perfectly one with itself, though it manifests itself through the world of things. It always has the ability to transcend itself by nature and so, "it is *not what it is* and is *what it is not*."[1] According to Sartre, the consciousness or the man has the potentiality to create his own essence by performing freely chosen actions. More precisely to say for Sartre, man creates not only his own self, but the whole world at once; he can even change the state of the world not only for his own, but for the whole humanity.

1.2. Freedom and Responsibility

What Sartre emphasizes as most important in his philosophy is of course freedom and he contends that consciousness is essentially freedom. What does he mean by saying that 'consciousness is freedom?' we may simply think that 'consciousness is free' or 'man is free.' But Sartre arguably state that if we just say 'consciousness is free,' that is, consciousness has freedom, we actually mean that freedom is merely a property of consciousness. And necessarily, it allows us to think that there may happen to exist more important properties than freedom; even, more important is that, it gives us the space for finding excuses as to why we were not really free in some particular circumstances. It may be for an emotional, or for sickness, or for some other particular pressing situation, we find a gateway to relief ourselves from the burdensome freedom and its consequent responsibility. So, by insisting that "consciousness itself is freedom"[2] Sartre

leaves no place for any excuses. Therefore, for Sartre, we are 'condemned to be free,' and there is no way of cancelling freedom except eliminating consciousness.

Again, since consciousness is freedom, consciousness is totally free from any kind of determination, and thus spontaneous. No past resolution or any future proposal can determine our freedom. To defend his *absolute freedom* theory Sartre denies Freudian unconscious, he denies Marx's class conflict, he even argues against the *facticities* or the given worldly circumstances of our life. No factual state or any concrete situations, whatever it may be, it cannot be the condition of our being and freedom; it cannot be responsible for what *we are* and what *we do*. In each case, as a free conscious being, we can have the possibility to choose the meaning of the facticity and we can even transform the meaning of the facticity by our very projects towards future. According to Sartre, we cannot change the *coefficient of adversities in things* or the factual givens, but we are free to give them the meaning in the context of our projected future. T. Z. Lavine thus comments, "I live in the situation I have structured, which is a world of my own making, the world as it is for me, by the meaning I choose to give the facts of my life and by the projects I choose for my future."[3]

According to Sartre, freedom and responsibility are two most important and enduring pillar to build up an existentialist morality. Responsibility is, for Sartre, "the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom."[4] We cannot deny this "absolute responsibility" for whatever we *are* and we *do*. By taking responsibility as "absolute" Sartre wants to say that whatever happens to man, through other men as well, we must take the full responsibility for this. One has to take the responsibility not only for oneself but for the whole mankind. Thus, it is clear that having total freedom a conscious being is solely responsible for the meaning he accepts in a certain situation to live.

But there may arise some moral questions – what meaning do we give to the facticities of the world? What will be the sources from which we can get this meaning? Is there anything outside us that determines the value or meaning? All such question may arise in the situation, not when we are engaged in performing seemingly useful daily activities, but when reflectively we pay attention upon our daily activities. We found no such absolute source of truth that can help us to provide the meaning of the world. According to Sartre, man, as a conscious being, has no essence *a priori* that can be the foundation of truth or virtue for their life. The existential principle "existence precedes essence" suggests that man being exist in the world creates his own essence. By affirming Nietzsche's intense rejection of God, that is, by accepting that "God is dead" Sartre contends that there is no God or no other divine power that can be the foundation of man's essence. So, man, by its very nature, is alone and absolutely alone is the source of all possible meaning, truths and values for his own life in the world. And for

everything, man alone is responsible. Sartre says, "…being condemned to be free… he [man] is responsible for the world and for himself as way of being."[5]

1.3. Anguish and Bad Faith

Now we feel necessarily a kind of anguish within ourselves. Anguish, according to Sartre, is a necessary outcome of 'absolute freedom' and 'absolute responsibility.' For him, Anguish, by nature, is a reflective consciousness of our freedom; we face anguish as an internal possibility which cannot be determined by causal world. By being totally free, free from all kind of adversities in the world, when we discover that we are the being who is the sole foundation of all possible truths and values and there is absolutely nothing outside that can help us to confer values upon things, there is nothing left but to feel a certain type of anxiety in our own hearts. Certainly, thus, we are anguished in the face of freedom.

Inevitably, it leads us to choose the path to escape; in anguish there is such reflective force that we do not able to bear in our hearts and we have the natural tendency to get rid of such anguished apprehension. According to Sartre man adopts a certain reflective attitude towards consciousness to avoid anguish to which he calls 'psychological determinism;' and at the same time an attitude which has the antagonistic force that helps him to flight from anguish. In such circumstances, generally, we try to find excuses for avoiding the burden of total freedom and its consequent responsibility. We let ourselves to live like a being that has no freedom to choose, no potentiality to be something else – like a massif thing, like a being-in-itself. Sartre calls this reflective attitude 'bad faith' in the face of anguish.

According to Sartre, bad faith is a negative attitude or self-negation that belongs within the nature of human reality, where we lie to ourselves. It is an act of deception where we deceive ourselves or to say it is self-deception. In fact, Sartre wants to say that, by denying facticity or transcendency (which is considerate as the two distinct characteristics of consciousness) one makes himself to fall into bad faith. Sartre considers bad faith as a 'moral blame' that plays a negative role in his moral discourse. He thinks that bad faith reveals the *inauthentic* state of our life. Thus, to be a moral man or to say to be an authentic person man must live a life devoid from bad faith. In a word, to achieve *authenticity* man must refrain himself from the pitfall of bad faith. Consequently, Sartre accepts *authenticity* as the moral virtue in his moral discourse.

2. Aims and Objectives

Now, we get the pathway to discuss about the concept of authenticity in Sartrean philosophy. This essay offers a Sartrean moral perspective of authenticity as an alternative to conventional moral approaches. I already have tried to address that the traditional rights-based and utilitarian approaches to the morality in modern

time fall short to address modern man as an interconnected authentic individual who has the bravery to bear the burden of responsibility without any excuse. However, what does it means by the term 'authenticity'? More precisely to say, what does Sartre mean to say when he prescribes for moral man to be an authentic individual? So my research questions are as follow:

What is authenticity according to Sartre? What are the characteristics of authenticity? What is it for a man to be an authentic ideal in respect to the moral ground? Can a moral man achieve authenticity by refrain himself from the moral blame of bad faith at all? Can it be succeed to resolve the moral crisis for modern man? Or, it would be merely a social and political idea that would fall short to resolve the moral issues in modern time? Let's see.

3. Main Article

3.1. Meaning of Authenticity

In common terminology, the term 'authentic' is used in a strong sense of undisputed origin or authorship or in a weak sense of being 'truthfulness to oneself.' The second is what refers authenticity as a characteristic attributed to human being. This meaning of authenticity arises in the conjunction with the concept of morality. Being oneself, in one hand, is inescapable, since to perform any act or to choose something you must be with yourself. But on the other hand, when we say some of our thoughts, decisions or actions are not actually ours own, hence it does not really expressive of what one is; and this issue is considerate in the ground of morality, responsibility and identity. Of course, the latter sense, in Sartrean philosophy, we shall see, the characterization of a person who performs actions in accordance with motives, ideals or belief that are not really one's own is also expressive of what one is. Of course, we shall see, beyond the realm of philosophical discourse, the ideal of authenticity has had great impact on social and political thought of contemporary society. Therefore, to understand Sartrean 'virtue of authenticity' we must go through the investigation of the ideal of authenticity used in philosophy and literature before Sartre.

According to Heidegger, authenticity is the fundamental mode of the *Dasein* that must not determined and defined by others, that capable of finding its being in the midst of the world without apprehending itself as an impersonal reflection of being-with (*mitsein*). Authenticity is, thus, a very unique and personal project towards death without fleeing anxiety in the face of death. Rather, it is the courage to face the absolute freedom and take responsibility in the way of being committed to be moral. However, here we find some fictional figures that are presented as an authentic individual in various existentialists' literature; and try to find some common attributes of authentic individual in the moral discourse.

Kierkegaard has portrayed a mythological figure of Abraham as an example of an authentic hero in modern philosophical literature. This is probably the first fictional description of an authentic individual where Abraham transforming a murder of his son Isaac into a holy act, as if he is scarifying his son well-pleasing to God. From the ethical point of view Abraham commits a murder, but the religious faith transforms it as a sacrifice. "This contradiction consists the dread which can well make a man sleepless, and yet Abraham is not what he is without this dread."[6] This is because he is not an imbecile thoughtless God-believer, rather he struggled with his self-understanding and self-doubt, he fought against 'fear and trembling' for three days; and finally his authentic struggle help him to protect himself from self-deception.

Nietzsche, too, comes up with a fictional figure of Zarathustra to configure an authentic hero who exiles himself in a mountain to enjoy his spirit and solitude. There he enjoys the meaning of his existence comparing with the sun. He spoke to the sun thus: "You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine? ... I must descend to the depths, as you do in the evening."[7] To grip his own authentic existence Zarathustra too, like the sun, wants to cast himself away behind illumination, behind manifestation.

More recent literary work by existentialist philosopher Albert Camus also makes such portraits of authentic hero in his *The Stranger*. An authentic murderer confessed his crime before the prosecutor thus: "Every nerve in my body was a steel spring, and my grip closed on the revolver. The trigger gave, and the smooth underbelly of the butt jogged my palm.... I fired four shots more into the inert body, on which they left no visible trace.... I didn't believe in God.... I wasn't conscious of any 'sin'; all I knew was that I'd been guilty of a criminal offence.... I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy, and that I was happy still."[8]

Unable to point to any historical figure who can be objectively judged as an authentic person, they all configured fictional characters to address authenticity. The thematic presentations of these heroes refer to their will to transcend their own social predicaments to achieve a genuine authenticity and autonomy. This means that they have to be addressed not merely a rational being or a fellowman, but as a unique and concrete existing individual. They always strive to write their life stories themselves; they try to emphasis on their authenticity, a kind of self-efficacy and autonomy by being honest to the values they have invented for themselves. One of the common features of these fictional heroes is, of course, their desperate attempt to transcend the societal prevailing ethos. Here we can observe that the quest for authenticity is pronounced in an extreme situation, not only in personal crises but also in social and historical crises, against the objective, rational enlightenment of long-enduring ethos. Authenticity is, thus, in

one sense, nothing but an attempt to become oneself. But, it remains to be seen in term of the authenticity whether it gives any provocation that allow man to do *everything* since "God is dead." However, we must turn to Sartre to find what is authenticity in his philosophy?

3.2. Sartrean Concept of Authenticity

We find Sartre's first reflection on *authenticity* in *Being and Nothingness* where he commits to devote it on an *ethical plane* in *future*. But his initial attempt on authenticity comes quite early to *Being and Nothingness* and his effort to construct a moral philosophy have been found in his *War Diaries* with a huge volumes of contribution as a forms of "Notebooks,"[9] which remain unpublished in his life time. But it is probably his major contribution to the 'existentialist' ethics. He constitutes an important aspect on authenticity in these "Notebooks." In the "Notebooks 12," he starts writing with these words:

> "I rather think I was authentic before my leave. Probably because I was alone. In Paris, I was not authentic. At present, I'm no longer anything. This leads me to clarify a few points regarding authenticity. First of all, the following: authenticity is achieved en bloc, one either is or is not authentic. But that doesn't at all mean that one acquires authenticity once and for good. …one does not 'benefit by acquired momentum' in moral conduct. … And the authenticity of your previous momentum doesn't protect you in any way against falling next instant into inauthentic. …a new authenticity has to be invented." (*War Diaries*, p. 219)

Authenticity is, thus, considerate in the ground of morality in Sartrean philosophy. He said in the *War Diaries*, "I can't really see anything but a moral code based on authenticity" (*War Diaries, Notebooks 3,* p. 94). Authenticity, for him, can be realized in terms of the 'human condition' where the *for-itself* confined himself into a situation; whatever may be the situation, human reality must determine itself to 'be-for' this situation. Being free human reality must recognize this 'being-in-situation' as it cannot withdraw itself from being freedom; even though it has no foundation, it is just thrown into the world. Rather, on the opposite, its endeavor is to make itself the foundation of its own being and this is why human reality can be a moral being. In situation man must recognizes the *facticities* and tries not to flee what he makes himself, and by motivating himself in the level where authenticity can be treated as the value for 'self-recovery.' Thus authenticity requires a kind of bravery for which one can assume the responsibility of what one *is* and is to *be* in any condition. In the context of authenticity one has to adopt its own reality without any excuse, without blaming the situation. Ronald Santoni comments, "This is the awesome responsibility to which I am condemned and which I *will* when I convert to "authenticity" and adopt human reality (freedom) as my own."[10]

3.3. Authenticity and Bad Faith

Primarily, we see in the "Being and Nothingness," Sartre examined authenticity in the ground of ontology, where authenticity is viewed in contrast with 'bad faith' and linked with 'good faith.' But Sartre does not use these terms i.e. 'bad faith' and 'good faith' merely synonymous to the words 'unauthenticity' and 'authenticity' respectively; because, he considers the term 'bad faith' to analyze as an anthropological concept of his ontology. In contrast, the term 'authenticity' is used as a moral code which can be replaced with the "Christian love commandment."[11] He, of course, considers that the *authenticity* must be excluded self-deception (bad faith) and for which it requires "no code of conduct but a way of life."[12] According to him, the individuals who are the 'authors' of their own life are not merely an instrument or complexes of instruments that are available to 'everybody' in so far, as the individuals are ready-made food packets, public transports or public gardens made for anyone. This would be the ordinary state of the individuals, or to say unauthentic state that lacks unique personality and lacks the possibility to overcome the tendency of bad faith. In opposite, by avoiding bad faith the individual can attain a kind of "self-recovery" to which Sartre calls "authenticity."[13]

As we see, in the *Being and Nothingness*, that Sartre refers authenticity as a "self-recovery" or, in quest of an ethical plane, authenticity is a kind of "deliverance and salvation;" but he did not explain any more on authenticity there.[14] Yet, it is reasonable that, he sometimes uses the term 'existence' to refer the 'true' or 'authentic existence' of the individual who does not afraid to face anxiety that comes from burdensome freedom in the way to achieve transcendent goals. Man is nothing but the sum of his actions, the necessity to be what he is not (i.e., to achieve transcendent goals); and these goals are taken only on his free choice for which he must have the realization of a profound responsibility. So, in performing actions it is required to be truthful, to be authentic and to oppose the absurdity arises from the experience of nausea. In other words, to be authentic man requires a kind of honesty, a kind of courage without which one cannot face the anguish; and hence, by trying to flee from anguish he emerges into bad faith to which Sartre considers as guilty of unauthenticity. According to Sartre, the facticity is, for man to be authentic, he must take the responsibility in the way of the creation of his own being, his own nature; for being free he lacks excuses or justifications for whatever he *is* or *is not*, he cannot avoid taking responsibility even when he discovers that he is not the foundation of his own existence but that being existed he only gives meaning to his existence.

To the extent I have analyzed the concept of authenticity after Sartre, it can be said that if I able to carry the anguished intuition with all the responsibilities, whatever it may be, I will be an authentic person. If, on the other hand, I find myself unable to carry this anguished apprehension in the face of 'absolute

freedom' and 'absolute responsibility,' I take refuse myself in bad faith to which Sartre called unauthenticity. Thus, Sartre's theory of freedom and its inevitable consequence of responsibility points to the human reality where there is no room for excuses. Any attempt to an excuse brings us down to a life of unauthenticity. But Sartre appeals to a moral man to achieve authenticity which can be taken as the antithesis of bad faith.

Now I turn to the enquiry whether the authenticity can really be taken as the antithesis of bad faith; and if we are able to justify authenticity as the antithesis of bad faith, the human reality devoid from bad faith i.e. the authenticity is said to be attainable. In contrast it is also clear that if authenticity is achievable, it is possible for man to avoid the threat of bad faith as well. But the question I must raise again – 'What is authenticity?' Can authenticity be replaced by the idea of 'sincerity' or 'good faith?'

3.4. Authenticity and Sincerity

Now, if we consider the term 'sincerity' that sometimes used as an antithesis of bad faith, can it be equivalent to authenticity? Sartre arguably has shown us that 'sincerity' is nothing but a "phenomenon of bad faith." Because, the ideal of sincerity compels human reality to stay with itself, with its facticity; but man is not merely his facticity, he is more than that; since, as a conscious being, he *is* what he *is not*. As we know, for Sartre, consciousness *is* what *it is not* and *is not* what *it is*; that refers that man can never be identical with himself. Now the argument is very clear, that is, in bad faith man lies to one-self and he is pre-reflectively aware about it; but the fact is that he refuses to acknowledge it in the face of dreadful freedom in order to flee from anguish and apprehend himself as what he *is*. Though he knows very well that he is not totality of givens (facticity), he always has the possibility to transcend these given facts to what he *is not*. Now, consider the 'ideal of sincerity' which demands that man must be *for himself* only what he really *is*. Namely, in order to achieve sincerity, man must acknowledge himself what he is, he is oblige to be what he is; and this precise characterization is nothing but the definition of the being-in-itself (*en-soi*) which is *what it is*. He is, then, considerate as an individual within the framework of an organized state, where he is acted as per given nature or as per the demands of a social and cultural institution. In order to understand the ideal of sincerity Sartre gave the example of a 'café waiter' who acted very sincerely as per the institutional commandment or by given nature. And, in the same time, he shows that the waiter was performing as a being who denied all the possibility to transcend oneself, the possibility to be what he is not; and this being is nothing but identical with the *in-itself*, with the massif thing, as if he had nothing to do except being the waiter in a café. Thus, this consideration of the ideal of sincerity is nothing but the acceptance of bad faith. Therefore, authenticity and sincerity cannot be fundamentally regarded as synonymous or equivalent; since, sincerity

presumes an individual as a static subject, whereas to be an authentic it requires a constant becoming, self-transcendence and self-creation. So authenticity cannot be treated as equivalent to the ideal of sincerity; more to say, sincerity is merely a phenomenon of bad faith. In other words, sincerity cannot be the ontological antithesis to the bad faith.

3.5. Authenticity and Good Faith:

Sometime it seems that "good faith" would necessarily be an antithesis to bad faith; or to say, "good faith" can be a possible recovery from bad faith in order to achieve authenticity in the context of Sartrean morality where authenticity is taken as a moral virtue. But the fact, as Sartre describes in *Being and Nothingness*, is completely different; because 'good faith' cannot be an antithesis of bad faith at all. Rather, for Sartre, 'good faith' itself is another form of bad faith. In ordinary sense, Sartre uses the term "good faith" to refer the 'ideal of sincerity.' But we have seen that sincerity is nothing but a "phenomenon of bad faith." However, first of all 'good faith' is a *belief* about what one believes. In the same time, to believe something or someone in good faith we must have the knowledge about what we believe. But on the opposite, to have the knowledge of what we believe is no longer a belief. Thus, by denying a belief that no longer a belief, the ideal of good faith put itself into question. Suppose that a person wholeheartedly believes that his friend really like him. His belief is steady and solid, he decides to belief it in a way that he knows it; and this kind of belief we could call good faith. But Sartre claims that any such sort of believe must have some degree of uncertainty, this sort of belief would in fact a decision that must have maintained some distance from the believer. For Sartre claims, "To believe is not-to-believe."[15] Thus, the project of "good faith" seems fail to be the antithesis of bad faith as it constitutes itself as a "bad faith ideal" or to say it itself is a kind of bad faith.

This interpretation leads us to consider that the ontological nature of bad faith seems to leave no room for the possibility of authenticity as the moral virtue in Sartrean philosophy. Catalano comments in this regard, "There may be no ontological antithesis to bad faith; and, in the abstract it may be possible to show how both an authentic and inauthentic life can be based upon the sole ontological structure of bad faith."[16] A.C. Danto also believes that it is quite impossible to form a moral theory from Sartre's ontology. Thus, in the ground of ontology it seems that we can never radically avoid the trap of bad faith. So, we need to discuss authenticity beyond the anthropological notion of Sartre's ontology where he goes on to suggest a kind of "self-recovery" to which "we shall call authenticity."[17]

4. Authenticity: as a Moral Virtue:

Now, if we want to analyse authenticity beyond the scope of Sartre's ontological nature of human reality, we would find variety of puzzles that arise in conjunction with the conception of authenticity in relation to moral issues. Thus, what is left in authenticity, if we consider it only in the moral plane, is essentially one's individuality with one's own life to live and own death to die.

However, before moving on to assessing authenticity, I would like to sketch a glimpse of the Sartrean moral perspective that helps us reconstructs the quality of authenticity. It is commonly criticised that Sartrean philosophy is lack 'moral theory' in the sense the word 'moral theory' is commonly used in philosophy.[18] It seems it is not a faulty claim, since he denies any moral principle or moral standard or a set of value that people can follow universally. Perhaps, Sartre's denial to any 'theory' is for he does not believe to make any rules generalize for all. For him, man is an individual who makes his own nature and invents values for his own. And probably that is the reason for which he failed to provide any so called 'moral theory' to the humanity. He only offers us his moral perspectives by denying the traditional, conventional moral laws and principles. Sartre accepts Nietzsche's intense rejection of God and claims that if there is no God, there is no such divine value or universal moral principles to guide or judge our freely chosen actions. As an unorthodox moralist he advocates two most powerful but little slogans: "man makes himself," and "you are free, so choose."[19] Through these two little slogans Sartre endorse a positive sense of morality for humanity where he emphasizes that man is inherently and unconditionally free, or to say, for him, "man is freedom;" and as an individual man is the sole creator of his own nature (essence) and of his own values. For Sartre, freedom is freedom of action, freedom of choosing, where no moral code of conduct or any such ideal standard can help you to decide what is to be done or to choose. You are thrown into such a lonely world where no one can help you except yourself. If you choose any kind of moral advice or any such standard that is nothing but another way to commit oneself. In this way, Sartre leads us to confront the situation where there is nothing else without choosing something; you cannot go anywhere without choosing anything. For Sartre, there is nothing left except choosing one alternative; because, we cannot refuse to perform any action, and only death can draw the line of our action. Again to choose we must be free, but "we are not free to cease being free."[20] Certainly, a question would arise, how can we determine whether an action that is chosen freely is morally right or wrong? In reply Sartre suggests that one action is morally right only when it is chosen freely by being free from self-deception and for which one must bears the full responsibility not only for oneself but for whole mankind. For Sartre says, "When we say that man chooses himself, not only do we mean that each of us must choose himself, but also that in choosing himself, he is choosing for all men."[21] On the other hand, the action not choosing in this way is morally wrong.

Thus, the responsibility which we have to bear is far greater than our expectations. Because we are not committing only for ourselves; we are, in the mean time, committing for all men, we are profoundly responsible for all men. Sartre also affirms it by saying, "In choosing myself, I choose man."[22] This realization proves that Sartrean morality is not simply a reflection of individual preferences. Rather he extended his moral vision to a kind of social theory that leads us to perform actions in the ground of social welfare. However, he recognizes Other person in the realm of his moral discourse where we must respect the freedom of the Other person as a free individual. This recognition of inter-subjective relation has left a great impact in his development of the moral perspective. Sartre says, "I am not opposed to the Other, for I am not "me;" instead we have the social unity of the they. … Authenticity and individuality have to be earned: I shall be my own authenticity only if under the influence of the call of conscience (Ruf *des Gewissens*) I launch out toward death with a resolute decision (*Entschlossenheit*) as toward my own most peculiar possibility. At this moment I reveal myself to myself in authenticity, and I raise others along with myself toward the authentic."[23]

5. Analysis

So far, as we have attempted to the discourse of authenticity as a moral virtue, we find Sartre proposes a moral view where we can choose any action with honesty and must acknowledge the responsibility for the consequence of what we choose. There he left no objective value that can legitimise our action; even, he left no deterministic excuses in choosing any action. The only criterion that he suggests for performing any action is authenticity, a true and lucid acknowledgement over every action in any situation. Certainly, at this point of discussion, we must pay our attention to the question whether the ideal of authenticity gives any provocation that allows man to do *everything* since the "God is dead."

Of course, we would see that, it gives approval to an 'authentic torturer' who without any doubt, without any excuse, honestly accepts the full responsibility for what he does. As we see in Camus' *The Stranger*, the hero, Meursault is presented as an authentic murderer who confessed his crime without any remorse; all he knew was that he had been guilty of a criminal offence. So, if authenticity is taken as a moral virtue, there will be no objective ground to reproach any action that has taken authentically. One could frankly say, 'I have chosen freely and sincerely to kidnap you and torture you until death, and I am ready to bear full responsibility for whatever the consequence of my choice.' A man, who chooses freely to rape and torture a woman merely to satisfy his sexual desire, can claim himself an authentic to his work. Apparently, this kind of activity is not only avoidable or intensely reprehensible; it can be considerate as strictly punishable. Nevertheless, we see that crime occurs in society, and in most of the cases criminals are punished, but the crime does not stop. In that situation, the

most crucial downfall is that the virtue of authenticity fails to distinguish a genuinely good action from genuinely torture or from true oppression.

More rigorously, we can say that there is no basic difference between authenticity and unauthenticity in choosing and in performing actions. As Sartre offers the only criteria of authenticity that can authenticate one's choices or actions: that is, the action must be chosen freely and have done with all honesty and lucidity, and that apprehends the full responsibility for the choice. Suppose, a young man, the son of an army man who killed by a Maoist, chooses to join in army to take revenge. On the other hand, a man, by influenced of Maoist ideal, chooses to join into Maoist movement against the administrative repression over the impoverished common people of 'Jangalmahal.' There is no greater justification for joining the army rather than to joining the Maoist Party. Both choices will be equivalent if chosen freely and authentically as prescribed by Sartre. T. Z. Lavine, thus, says, "…then anything that I freely choose to do meets the requirements of authenticity: one freely chosen act is as good as another, and there is no way of discriminating among my freely chosen acts."[24] Probably, for this reason, Sartre's virtue of authenticity, the project to avoid bad faith, falls short of providing any moral value to justify an action is morally good or the other is evil. Sartre is also arrived at this conjuncture, as we find a mysterious footnote in his *Being and Nothingness* (at the end of Part I, Chapter Two, "Bad Faith"), where he says, "it is indifferent whether one is in good or in bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith and slides to the very origin of the project of good faith."[25] Of course, in that footnote, he emphasizes that man can radically escape bad faith by reappropriating his previously corrupting being, by a kind of "self-recovery" to which he called "authenticity." That means, here, he is probably referring to a new and completely different kind of concept of authenticity, which would obviously be morally significant, which would clearly ascertain a kind of self-recovery from bad faith. Perhaps, this is an indication of a radical or political conversion to Marxism, through which he preserves the priority of authenticity over morality. Perhaps, he envisioned of such a non-oppressive society where people would not be treated as an instrument for each other, where people would not use each other as a mere means to achieve their goals; and people who are the author of their own lives could enjoy a free and authentic life. People of such a society can make it possible to overcome perpetually the tendency of bad faith. But I think the envisioned of such a society seems to be as abstract and void as the idea of "Utopian Society" or the idea of "Trusteeship" of M.K Gandhi. Even, it seems to me that, it is unrealizable and inapprehensible from Sartre's any work in his life time. More concretely to say, he failed to keep his promise to build up a moral treatise that he made at the very end of his *Being and Nothingness*. He is, probably, realized that constituting any sort of ethics may falls short to the architecture of phenomenological and ontological nature of human being; and in the mean time, probably he realized

that any attempt to a purely intellectual appeal renders morality meaningless and useless to any solitary reader. So I do not claim any kind of moral theory or ethics from Sartre's philosophy. Rather, I simply tried to present his 'moral view' in the field of philosophy that based on merely phenomenological and ontological architecture.

Therefore, to the extent we have discussed, the only thing we could find that sums up his moral view is: 'You are free, so choose and take the responsibility not only for yourself but for whole humanity.' And since, you are the sole creator of your own values, without finding any objective value or anything else (i.e. God) that can certify you what you are choosing is good or evil, the only consequence you have to confront is anguish. And in anguish, the very nature of human consciousness makes you to take refuse in bad faith in order to alleviate the anguished apprehension. There is no way out without falling into bad faith. Bad faith is, thus, the essential nature of human reality. The only difference is that we do not acknowledge this very nature of bad faith in our daily habituate lives; or better to say, we do not understand that we are really in bad faith.

6. Concluding Note

Having reached this juncture, where we have no choice but to be a victim of bad faith, I would like to extend the idea of authenticity to the level where we could say 'He is the authentic person' referring to certain historical figures. That does not mean that the definitional features of 'authenticity,' as we have discussed, would have been changed. I would just like to explain some different approaches to applying the features of authenticity and evaluating it. So far we have seen, authenticity is the mode of being that makes itself *be* by accepting the true nature of the for-itself; that is to say, by recognizing the inescapable nature of freedom and its consequence absolute responsibility. An authentic life is a mode of living where there is no place for any excuses; and it must be successful to avoid the trap of bad faith. For this, it is needed a pre-reflective consciousness, a lucid acknowledgement over the situation. Authenticity requires the ability to overcome the darkness of knowing the truths or self-doubt by a purifying reflection over the facticity of the world. Authenticity would be, then, the achievement of the bravery to face the threat of dreadful freedom, anguish and profound feeling of responsibility not only the consequence of one's own action but for whole mankind.

At first, I can certainly point to the Upanishadik concept of "Rishi" or a "Sthitaprajña" of the Bhagavad Gita to configure the characteristics of authenticity. In the Bhagavad Gita, a "Sthitaprajña" refers to a person who has possessed steady wisdom, who has attained a state of inner stability and a kind of balance. An individual who is called "Sthitaprajña" would not be elated in joy neither he is dejected by sorrow, even he would not be disturbed by any ups and downs of his life. He must have a deep understanding of the true nature of

reality, a firm judgement of the situation, which is free from all kind of hallucination. In a word, the Sthitaprajña always performs his actions in the spirit of love and affection without leaving any path to sorrow, lust, fear and delusion. Now, we could able to point a historical figure who can objectively be judged as an authentic person in terms of the Sthitaprajna, and he is none other than our great soul, the pioneer of modern society, Swami Vivekananda[26] who was not merely a rational being but a unique and concrete existing individual. He wills to transcend his own social predicaments to achieve a genuine authenticity and autonomy.

Authenticity is, thus, in one sense, nothing but an attempt to become oneself; authenticity is pronounced in an extreme situation, not only in personal crises but also in social and historical crises, against the objective, rational enlightenment of long-enduring ethos. Thus, authenticity is no more a mere idea; it is achievable by being a 'Sthitaprajña.' Only, I could say, our materialistic approach to the humanity and lack of true knowledge or wisdom make us selfish, greedy. We console ourselves only by acquiring and fulfilling our material desires and expectations. However, this state of our consciousness is always threatened by the pitfall of bad faith; and there is no exception. But one can achieve authenticity in terms of being a Sthitaprajña.

Notes and References

1. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 119.

2. Solomon, Robert C. *From Hegel to Existentialism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. p. 287.

3. Lavine, T. Z. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. New York, London: Bantam Books, 1984. p. 358.

4. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 708.

5. *Ibid*. p. 707.

6. Kierkegaard, Søren. *Fear and Trembling and The Book on Adler*. Trans. W. Lowrie, New York, London: Everyman's Library, 1994. p. 22.

7. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Portable Nietzsche*. ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin Books, 1977. pp. 121-122.

8. Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Vintage Books, 1946. pp. 39, 72, 73, 76.

9. Sartre starts writing of these *Notebooks* while he was a soldier. One of these emerging philosophical issues is, of course, *authenticity*. He wrote almost 14 (or 15,

which was probably unfinished) notebooks regarding his war experience out of which only five notebooks (Notebooks 3, Notebooks 5, Notebooks 11, Notebooks 12 and Notebooks 14) have been published posthumously and nine others were either lost or remain unfound. (Sartre, Jean- Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks from a Phoney War 1939-40*. Trans. by Quintin Hoare, UK: Verso, 1984.)

10. Santoni, Ronald. *Bad Faith, Good Faith and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995. p. 92.

11. Green, Norman N. *Jean-Paul Sartre: The Existentialist Ethics*. USA: The University of Michigan Press, 1960. p. 48.

12. *Ibid*. p. 48.

13. Sartre gives a footnote at the end of Part-I, Chapter- 2 (Bad Faith), where he points out that, "If it is indifferent whether one is in good or in bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith and slides to the very origin of the project of good faith, that does not mean that we cannot 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." (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 116.)

14. He comments in a footnote (*Being and Nothingness,* Part-III, Chapter- 3) that, "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 cannot discuss here."

15. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 114.

16. Catalano, Joseph S. *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995. p. 77.

17. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 116.

18. A moral theory that provides a set of values, principles or standards that will be approved commonly for all humanity and to be followed as morally valid.

19. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Trans. by Carol Macomber. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. p. 33.

20. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 567.

21. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Trans. by Carol Macomber, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. p. 24.

22. *Ibid*. p. 25.

23. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 332.

24. Lavine, T.Z. *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. New York: Bantam Books, 1984. p. 374.

25. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press, 1956. p. 116.

26. There may be more historical figure who could be pointed as an authentic person in terms of 'Sthitaprajna' of the Bhagavad Gita. For example: I can point to the name Goutam Buddha, Advaita Vedantik Sri Shankaracharya.