Sartre's 'No' True to Creed

By WILLIAM BARRETT

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Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger raised a new concept of the individual being isolated as the focal point of his universe. Jean-Paul Sartre has built up the concept beyond the structure of being by the thought that man is not only isolated but has to bear the responsibility of creating the moral meaning of his actions. Sartre calls it "existentialism." Existence precedes essence, he says.

This concept is the basis of the philosophy of existentialism which Sartre built up in his famous book, 'Being and Nothingness.' Existence precedes essence, he says, in the sense that the individual, in order to become, must exist first, and then make the meaning of his existence.

In the book he notes that man is not born with an essence but is born with a 'nothingness.' Until he creates his own essence, he is nothing. He says man is called to create the meaning of his own existence. Sartre calls this a "brutal, intellectual, and moral" revolution.

He has said the object of philosophy is to give meaning to life. To do so, he says a man must realize the end of his existence is to achieve happiness.

The Sartre philosophy is then based on the idea of personal freedom and the individual's responsibility for his actions. Sartre has called it "a new humanism," and the philosophy will have to be judged according to this new standard.

Sartre has emphasized this in his book, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," which was published in English last year. He suggests that the idea is realizable. On the contrary, he says, to describe it is futile. Man does not feel free but is in the most painful situations, and then makes sacrifices what is called "freedom."

We are free because we are responsible, but this freedom is also a burden. The individual, in order to become, must exist first, and then make the meaning of his existence. Sartre calls this a "brutal, intellectual, and moral" revolution.

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