

On Jean-Paul Sartre's Existence precedes Essence

Jean-Paul Sartre's "Existence precedes Essence" involves the philosophical terminologies existence and essence. Existentialism being the main issue preceding essence to be. But what makes it controversial for some is the conjunction that ties them "precedes" and the placement of the subject and object. In order to better understand Sartre's philosophy, we must break it into component parts and with the use of a parable.

We talk for the example of this; is a paper knife. We would see the existence of the paper knife for its up surging, for what it is, and what it is for. Presumably, a fresh book where the pages have not yet been cut. Then, would it be a great idea to have something or a tool to cut those pages off to read the book. The pertinent thing here is, at first there is this idea. The idea where there is a need and a purpose of which is to cut papers to achieve. Then a conception of it, if it exists it would be able to fulfill a certain end. All of those things embodied in to one, the artisan would now fashion this paper knife and later comes into existence. The passage here we try to see the essence: what is it to be a paper knife, the idea of the paper knife, and the purpose. The point is that, the essence prior to the existence of the paper knife is already there before it even existed. The existence of the paper knife, comes after the essence. Hence, in this case essence precedes existence. It doesn't really need to anguish for its meaning, for its existence, or the meaning of its existence. The meaning of its existence hence, is to serve and fulfill its purpose in accordance with the idea of the artisan.

The paper knife as an example in contrast with human being's existence. We ask why do we exist, what is our purpose, and what is the meaning of our lives? Like the paper knife, the

traditional answer is its existence is to serve its purpose in accordance with the idea of the artisan. For human beings, it's not just the artisan-artisan, but the Great Artisan of all Artisan: God.

God had an idea of human beings, a conception of human beings, and with a certain end to fulfill. Then God create human beings in a mode of production like the paper and later human beings exist. Along the way, our existence as a human being; our essence precedes our existence. The creation of human beings must take into account that we are here to serve a purpose and that is to serve and fulfill God's purpose for human beings. Just like the paper knife it was created for a purpose.

In the philosophical existentialism where the latter's account is being rejected and the notion of God is suppressed, existence precedes essence: "It means that, first of all, man exist, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards defines himself" (Sarte. p. 16). Because of the nonexistence of God, we exist with no essence. We don't have an essence built in to us, since there is no God who had an idea or conception of us. What we have is our existence, we exist without any certain purpose or essence wherein taking into account it comes in later. With this human beings is like thrown into to world to exist an uncover its purpose all on its own, since there is no God to give him that purpose.

Human beings first comes into existence with no essential purpose, with no capacity, and no direction; that man has no human nature. It is man at the latter part makes of himself, that he is the one who shapes his being in finding that purpose of what he is for coming into existence. The nothingness of man would become something as what he conceives of himself. Human beings would evolve himself from the encapsulation of nothing and surge towards his existence. It is the creation of one's purpose that would determine of what he is. Human beings, would choose of what he wants to be as he molds himself to be. The purpose man is for man himself, that's why

“Man, is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself; he is therefore nothing else than his life” (Sarte. p. 32).

References:

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